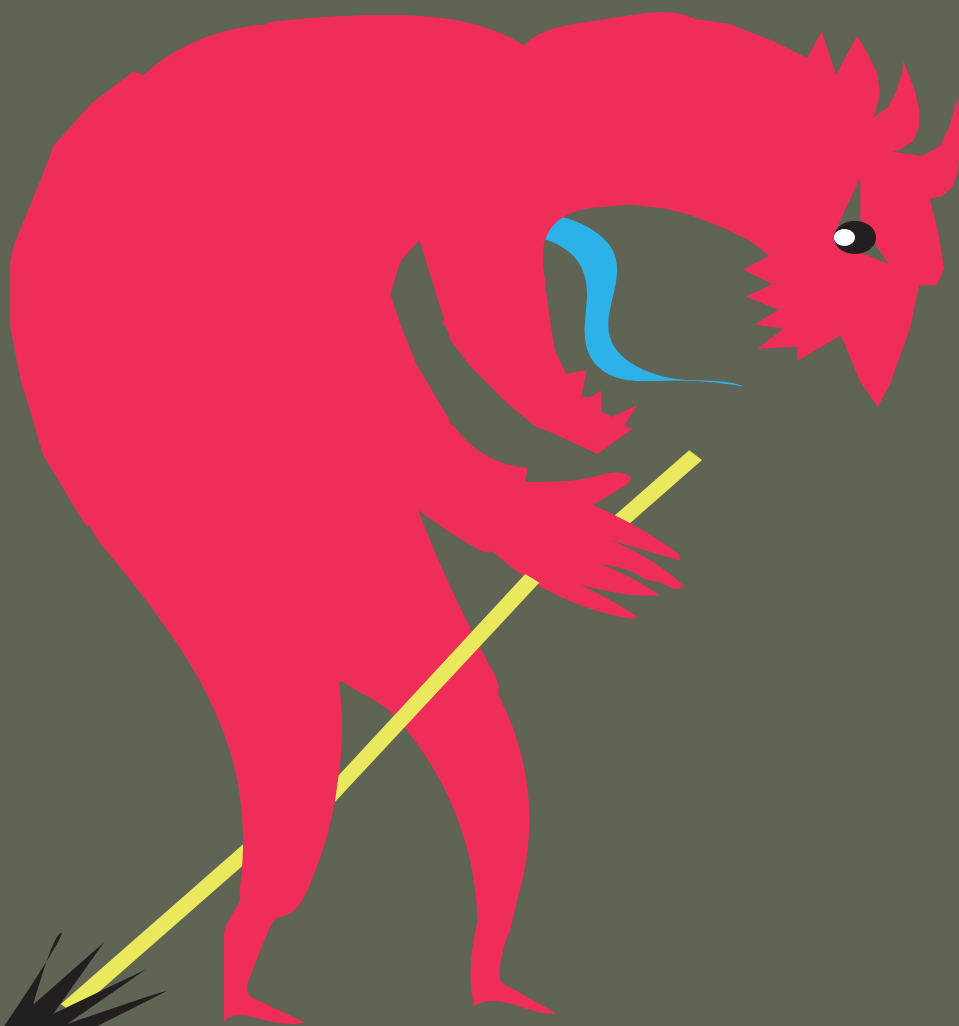


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5

2015

LITERATURA DZIECIĘCA – MEDIACJA KULTUROWA – ANTROPOLOGIA DZIECIŃSTWA
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE – CULTURAL MEDIATION – ANTHROPOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD



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Vol. 5

The Fantastic Realms

REDAKCJA / EDITED BY
JUSTYNA DESZCZ-TRYHUBCZAK, DOROTA MICHUŁKA
AND RYSZARD WAKSMUND



Wrocław 2015

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JUSTYNA DESZCZ-TRYHUBCZAK
University of Wrocław

The Fantastic Realms. Introduction

The very recent report on Polish teen readers, prepared by Zofia Zasacka from the Educational Research Institute in Warsaw, has shown that the literature of the fantastic—fantasy, SF, horror, Gothic novels, thrillers, paranormal romances, speculative fiction, dystopias, or vampire novels—constitutes the common experience of Polish young audiences regardless of gender, social, and economic differences (Zasacka: 86). As teen readers' comments cited in the report indicate, many of them associate the decisive point in the development of their reading biographies with becoming acquainted with fantasy fiction (25). Zasacka also stresses the formation of a canon of teen fantastic reads (104) that includes—understandably—J. K. Rowling, Stephenie Meyer, Suzanne Collins, and George R. Martin, as well as—most consistently—J. R.R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Terry Pratchett, Terry Goodkind, and Stephen King. The participants of the survey also mention such Polish authors as Andrzej Sapkowski, Jacek Piekara or Andrzej Pilipiuk. As this canon reveals, the literature of the fantastic is in fact a markedly cross-over phenomenon: young readers often become interested in authors writing for adult audiences. In broader terms, as suggested by the heated debate initiated by Ruth Graham's *The Slate Book Review* article from 2014, "Against YA," followed by A.O. Scott in *The New York Times Magazine* ("The Death of Adulthood in American Culture") and Christopher Beha in *The New Yorker* ("Henry James and the Great Y.A. debate"), the traditional age distinctions in literature readership have become obsolete in view of the cultural "erosion adulthood" (Scott n.p.). Obviously, the popularity of the literature of the fantastic among young and adult readers has also grown as a result of its turning into an invaluable and evidently unlimited resource for entertainment industry. This is obviously the case because of the FX potential of the fantastic genres translated into the medium of film or the video game. More fundamentally, as Brian Attebery points out in relation to fantasy in his 2014 *Stories about Stories: Fantasy and the Remaking of Myth*, the enduring appeal of this genre, as well of the fantastic mode in general, stems from its "adaptability to changing intellectual currents and its applicability to a host of social needs" (Attebery 2014: 6). Rosemary Jackson much earlier also pointed to the potential of the fantastic to express and "compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints" (Jackson 1981: 3). Yet we also agree with Rosemary Jack-

son, who much earlier pointed to the potential of the fantastic to express and “compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints” (Jackson 1981: 3). In times of the global challenges posed by environmental disasters, religious fundamentalisms, irresolvable military conflicts and economic crises, the fantastic undoubtedly offers both escape from and critical engagement with the troubles of the real.

It is no wonder then that the fantastic remains a significant interest for literary scholars, including children’s literature specialists. Suffice it to mention Anna Klaus’s *Child Saviours in English Fantasy Fiction for Children and Young Adults* from 2014, a study of the recurring motif of the child savior in children’s and YA fantasy published in the 19th, the 20th and the 21st centuries. Caroline Webb’s *Fantasy and the Real World in British Children’s Literature*, also from 2014, centers on the functions of specific thematic conventions of fantasy—folk and fairy tale motifs; heroic fantasy; wainscot societies; representation of witches; and “destinarianism” (Webb 2014: 117–19)—in selected works of J.K. Rowling, Terry Pratchett, and Diana Wynne Jones to “demonstrate how [they] deploy fantasy neither as mere escapism nor as a mask for didactic moralising, but instead make manifest the ethical power of fantasy and the imagination itself” (3). In her detailed readings, Webb argues for fantastical worlds as created intentionally to critically reflect real societies. *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers* (2013), edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad and Carrie Hintz, aims at presenting the recent proliferation of YA dystopian fiction “as a political, cultural, and aesthetic phenomenon” (Basu et al. 2013: 9). The essays collected in the volume offer insightful readings for example of Veronica Roth’s *Divergent* (2001), Suzanne Collins’s *The Hunger Games* trilogy (2008–2010), Catherine Fisher’s *Incarceron* (2007) and *Sapphique* (2008), Nancy Farmer’s *The House of the Scorpion* (2002) or Julie Bertagna’s *Exodus* (2002), positioning them within the tensions between didacticism and escapism, political radicalism and conservatism, and utopian hope and despair. *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction* (2014), edited by Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet and Amy L. Montz, attempts to explore dystopian fiction for young adults through the critical paradigm of liminality and girlhood: The eleven contributors to this collection argue for the genre as containing “an explicit exploration of the rebellious girl protagonist, a figure who directly contradicts the common perception that girls are too young or too powerless to question the limitations placed upon them, much less to rebel and, in turn, fuel larger rebellions” (Day et al. 2014: 4). The collection indeed shows in detail the many ways in which “young women in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century dystopian fiction embody liminality, straddling the lines of childhood and adulthood, of individuality and conformity, of empowerment and passivity” (4). Victoria Flanagan’s *Technology and Identity in Young Adult Fiction. The Posthuman Subject* (2014) focuses on texts representing young people’s engagement with technology as a positive phe-

nomenon. In her readings of Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game* (1985), M.T. Anderson's *Feed* (2002), the Hunger Games, Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies* (2005), Cory Doctorow's *Little Brother* (2008) and *Anda's Game* (2007) or Tanith Lee's *The Silver Metal Lover* (1981), Flanagan posits that by commenting on the ways in which technology can "enhance and deepen our understanding of what it means to be human in the modern era" (187), recent YA fiction highlights posthumanism as a crucial discourse shaping contemporary life.

The fantastic has also become the subject of the more and more popular cognitive approaches to literature. In *Reading for Learning* (2014), Maria Nikolajeva argues that in view of what we still do not know about life on earth and beyond it, non-mimetic modes of literature may in fact offer "more truthful representation[s] of reality" than realistic fiction does (Nikolajeva 2014: 46) in that they ask readers "to pay attention since there may be unfamiliar facts about the possible world that are of consequence" (44). Fantasy also poses serious cognitive challenges to readers in that it is farthest away from their everyday experience than any other form of fiction (43). As Nikolajeva argues, a fantastic world "stimulates cognitive activity in a different way than mimetic fiction. Readers must be alert; they cannot take anything for granted; they need to put together facts into a coherent whole to understand how this possible world works; they need to use attention, imagination and memory" (43–44). In the case of dystopias, Nikolajeva stresses, the experience of the fantastic world can be even more engaging as the genre offers "the exploration of the boundaries of a young person's body and mind" which is "augmented technologically and biologically" (155). While such valorizations undoubtedly simplify the intellectual and emotional potential of both the fantastic and the realist modes, the former may owe its popularity to the aforementioned adaptability and flexibility.

Nikolajeva's argument has been developed by Marek C. Oziewicz in *Justice in Young Adult Speculative Fiction: A Cognitive Reading* (2015), the most recent example of the application of cognitive criticism in the study of fantastic literature, centered on speculative fiction for young readers as "one of the most important forges of justice consciousness for the globalized world of the 21st century" (Oziewicz 2015: 4). As Oziewicz argues in his readings of such thematically and generically diverse, yet mostly Anglo-American, texts as the Harry Potter series (1997–2007), Nancy Farmer's *The House of the Scorpion* (2002) or Terry Pratchett's *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents* (2001), speculative fiction is an exceptionally effective framework for raising and exploring justice issues as it offers "cognitive and affective challenges" (10) that may shape young audience's own perceptions of justice even if this process occurs on a subliminal level. Relying on the concept of scripting as a universal cognitive mechanism that we all use to "structure our ideas and behavioral protocols, making them unreflexively available to our minds in their everyday functioning" (6), and also actualizing them in stories we tell and read, Ozie-

wicz shows what particular justice scripts may be recovered by young readers of fantasy, science fiction, dystopias, or alternative history as they witness instances of injustice experienced by literary characters.

The above review of the most recent discussions of the fantastic in children's literature testifies to the ongoing interest in the exploration of this mode from the historical perspective, in the context of new generic developments, and through the lens of new theoretical paradigms. Conspicuously missing is an empirical approach that could shed light on the actual reading experiences stimulated by the fantastic, which in turn would corroborate and expand for example the conclusions offered within the cognitive perspective by providing more culturally and socially situated analyses, as well as, and perhaps most importantly, acknowledging young readers' own perceptions of how they are affected by the fantastic in the context of their everyday lives. Some of the articles collected herein participate in the debate about the fantastic along traditional theoretical lines, while a few attempt to apply alternative approaches to provide a more culturally and socially contextualized analysis.

Volume 5 of *Filoteknos, In the Fantastic Worlds*, is monographic in nature and showcases a variety of recent approaches to the literature of the fantastic. In "Exploring and Creating Visions of the H+ Future with Young Adults the Theory of Trans/Post- Humanism and Young Adult Fiction", Justyna Deszcz-Tryhubczak and Agnieszka Małek-Bohusz argue for exploring reader response methodologies to investigate concrete readers' literary experiences as stimulated by the literature of the fantastic. The authors discuss a creative writing project that they conducted with a group of Polish teenagers reading M. T. Anderson's dystopian novel *Feed* as an example of such an approach. A reader response approach is also the focus of Catherine Posey's "Dreams, Fortunes, and Infinity: A Child Reader Engages with The Mysterious in Two Toy Fantasy Novels", DiCamillo's *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* (2006), and Russell Hoban's novel *The Mouse and His Child*." Analysing a child reader's perceptions concerning for example the themes of death and infinity, Posey makes a case for the need of investigating children's spiritual discourse in the context of their reception of the fantastic. The concern with the social impact of technology returns in Terri Doughty's "Putting the Punk in a Steampunk Cinderella: Marissa Meyer's 'Lunar Chronicles' ", which proposes to read Meyer's novel *Cinder* (2012) as providing as useful role model for contemporary girls negotiating their lives is the networked reality. Finally, Anna Bugajska's "Pretty is Who Pretty Talks: Pretty Talk in Scott Westerfeld's 'The Uglies' series" discusses Westerfeld's concept of "the prettytalk" as a critique of language dominated by political correctness that makes it difficult to address "ugly" problems besieging the contemporary reality.

While the above-mentioned contributions deal with Anglophone children's and YA literature, Karolina Jędrych's "Technopoly in the Land of Imagination" looks at an example of literary representations of Neil Postman's con-

cept of technopoly in Jan Brzechwa's *Travels of Mr. Kleks*. Jędrych shows how in Brzechwa's technopoly all aspects of human life lose their own significance to become elements technological progress. Polish children's fantasy is also the subject of Dorota Michułka's "Looking for Identity: Polish Children's Fantasy Then and Now". Michułka identifies discreet uses of the elements of Polish culture and the role of the national tradition in selected Polish fantasy texts (e.g. by Andrzej Sapkowski, Dorota Terakowska, and Beata Ostrowicka) to prove their significance as cultural expressions of Polish national identity.

Moving on to other fantastic genres, Katarzyna Slany's "Szczelinowość baśni magicznej. W odpowiedzi na inicjacyjne interpretacje baśni" relies on theories of folklore, psychoanalysis, and philosophy to discuss the motif of existential and mental experiences in magical fairy-tales as reflecting the concept of "the fissures of existence", proposed by Jolanta Brach – Czaina in her 1992 *Szczeliny istnienia [Fissures of Existence]*. A distinctly historical take on fairy tales marks Jadwiga Węgrodzka's "The Beginnings of the Fairy Story as a Genre for Children: Sarah Fielding's *The Governess*". Węgrodzka convincingly argues that while Fielding is undoubtedly the precursor of the school story, she should also be recognised for contribution to the emergence of children's fairy stories in English. The fantastic mode of magical realism is the subject of Olga Bukhina's "Magical Realism and Images of Death in Contemporary Russian Prose for Young Readers". Basing her discussion on the analysis of Dina Sabitova's *Gde net zimy [No-Winter Land]* (2011) and *Tri tvoich imeni [Your Three Names]* (2012), Ekaterina Murashova's *Klass korrektsii [Special Ed Class]* (2007) and *Gvardiya trevogi [The Alarm Guard]* (2008), Miriam Petrosyan's *Dom, v kotorom... [The House That...]* (2009), and Sergei Kuznetsov's *Zhivye i vzroslye [The Alive and the Adults]* (2011), Bukhina argues that the fantastic may be a means of questioning the taboo of death as it enables the emergence of an alternative discourse about real human predicaments.

The distinctly educational potential of the fantastic is discussed in Cristina Correro and Neus Real's "Fantasy, Literature and Early Childhood: From First Texts to Metafictional Picturebooks", which explores the potential role of the literature of the fantastic (e.g. fairy tales, fantasy picture books, or fantasy meta-fictional picture books) in the cognitive and emotional development of pre-school children. Katarzyna Biernacka-Licznar and Bogumiła Staniów's "La nascita di Cenerentola italiana e i suoi adattamenti apparsi al territorio di Polonia", concludes the main part of this issue. Relying on translational theories, the authors perform a stylometric analysis of selected Polish translations and adaptations of "Cinderella" to distinguish differences in the stylistic features of Polish versions of this fairy tale.

As has become a tradition in *Filoteknos*, the second part of the issue, "Varia", contains articles by Polish and international scholars that are unrelated to the main focus of this issue. They concern Polish children's literature in a broader perspective and European research into children's books. Bożena Olsze-

wska discusses the generic provenience of Jan Parandowski's *Zegar słoneczny. Opowiadania o Lwowie* [*The Sundial*, 1953] and sees it as a literary autobiography. Ada Bieber discusses representations of Janusz Korczak's mentorship in *Blumka's Diary* (*Pamiętnik Blumki*, 2011) and *Miss Esther's Last Performance* (*Ostatnie przedstawienie Panny Esterki*, 2013). Maciej Wróblewski analyzes the *puer senex topos* in war novel by Jerzy Przeździecki, Zbigniew Liskowacki, and Wiktor Zawada. Michał Kowalczyk's contribution focuses on Wiesław Hejno's puppet theater for young audiences. Broader historical and literary contexts emerge in Margarita Slavova's essay on theoretical models of investigating children's literature. Finally, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Professor Jerzy Cieślowski (1916-1977), a longtime employee of the Department of Polish Studies at the University of Wrocław, we include a translation of his 1979 article *The Topos of the Child and Childhood. A Synopsis*.

The concluding part of the issue is devoted to reviews and essayistic commentaries promoting recently published Polish scholarly works on children's literature and its historical, cultural and educational contexts. The book featured in this issue is Weronika Kostecka's *Baśń postmodernistyczna: przeobrażenia gatunku. Intertekstualne gry z tradycją literacką* [*The Post-Modern Fairytale: The genre transformations. Intertextual games with the literary tradition*, Warszawa 2014). It has been reviewed by Katarzyna Slany. The volume closes with a summary of Dorota Michulka's study *O szkolnej edukacji literackiej — dawniej i dziś* [*Ad usum Delphini. On school literary education – then and now*] and a synopsis of Agnieszka Karczewska's monograph *Polsko-żydowska republika marzeń. O 'Chwilce dla Dzieci i Młodzieży' (1925-1937)* [*Polish-Jewish Republic of Dreams "Chwilka Dzieci i Młodzieży" (1925-1937)*].

We are grateful to all the contributors to this issue of *Filoteknos* for their commitment to this editorial venture. We would also like to thank the external reviewers for their insightful comments and productive suggestions. We hope that the transfer of scholarship on the fantastic in children's literature between Poland and North America, which we have achieved herein, will prove to be useful to readers interested in this vital field of writing addressed to young audiences.

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Studies

JUSTYNA DESZCZ-TRYHUBCZAK ✦ The University of Wrocław
AGNIESZKA MAŁEK-BOHUSZ ✦ Independent scholar

“WE ARE THE NATION OF DREAMS” (M.T. ANDERSON, *FEED*): EXPLORING AND CREATING VISIONS OF THE H+ FUTURE WITH YOUNG ADULTS

Abstract: This essay argues for the necessity of supplementing adult critical interpretations of YA dystopian fiction with real young readers’ responses to texts and their own visions of what will happen to humanity. We see these culturally, socially, and politically situated insights provided by specific groups of young readers as a means of questioning stereotypical associations between youth and future that ignore the imperative of intergenerational effort to search for alternative ways of living. We provide an example of such a practice in the form of a reader response project centering on M. T. Anderson’s *Feed* as a critique of transhumanist and post-humanist thought.

Keywords:

THE THEORY OF TRANS/POST-HUMANISM AND YOUNG ADULT FICTION

M.T. Anderson’s *Feed* (2002) is a classical young adult dystopian text depicting humanity’s bleak future from the viewpoint of teen characters. The novel centers on a society in which a powerful corporation, FeedTechCorp, provides everyone with feeds, i.e. small devices implanted in early childhood. Feeds monitor the contents of all people’s thoughts and communication, so that their owners receive information about the latest products but know nothing about the current national and global political situation or about history and culture. Feeds also control physiological functions and when they break down and remain unrepaired, the human body slowly dies. Anderson’s apocalyptic vision of people as docile cyborgs prompted us to use his text in “The Theory of Trans/Post-humanism and Its Reflection in Popular Culture,” a creative writing project on transhumanism and posthumanism aimed at encouraging high school students to express their own visions of the future in writing. The particular workshop we are discussing herein was organized as part of Wro-

claw University's offer for the 2012 Lower Silesian Festival, an annual event popularizing science and academic research.¹

We found it exceptionally rewarding that although the participants were skeptical about posthumanist scenarios, including Anderson's, they wrote extraordinarily vivid accounts of posthuman futures. As Margaret Meek remarks, "[i]f we want to see what lessons have been learned from the texts children read, we have to look for them in what they write" (Meek 1988: 38). Sylvia Pantaleo stresses the sociocultural dimension of writing in the school context as a result of "the connections" emerging from "the reading, talking and the writing" (Pantaleo 2012: 55) the participants of projects like ours engage in. Hence we see the workshop as proving that the potential of YA adult dystopian fiction resides not only in encouraging young readers to comment on the existing visions of the future but also in enabling them to formulate and acknowledging their own hypotheses about the future that they would like to create for themselves. Jennifer Gidley and Sohail Inayatullah complain that "[a]s a global society, we are failing to actively listen to what young people are saying about the future" (Gidley and Inayatullah 2002: ix). We argue that creative writing tasks that incorporate queries about young people's thoughts as stimulated by literature not only provide direct access to their reception of literary phenomena but also empower them to reflect critically on their hopes and fears concerning the future. In view of the lack of empirical studies of whether, and if so, how, young readers are affected by dystopian texts, it is critical that children's literature scholars investigating this genre should devote less research effort to presumptive predictions about readers' reactions and move towards establishing response centered methodologies gauging how actual young readers react to the visions of the future in dystopian writing.² Whereas it could be argued that results of such an approach are obvious—readers read and respond to texts in different ways—the investigation of individual responses is especially relevant in the case of utopian literature, broadly understood as a manifestation of utopian thought and including YA dystopias.³ Fátima Vieira thus explains the "expressive catalytic" (Vieira 2010: 23) function of utopia:

¹ Teachers interested in particular events in the Festival's offer sign up their classes for them through an online system.

² The reflection on how real readers respond to dystopian fiction is missing in the three crucial studies of utopianism in children's literature: *Utopian and Dystopian Writing for Children and Young Adults* (2003), ed. by Hintz and Ostry, Bradford et al.'s *New World Orders in Contemporary Children's Literature: Utopian Transformations* (2008), *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers* (2014) edited by Basu et al., and *Victoria Flanagan's Technology and Identity in Young Adult Fiction. The Posthuman Subject* (2014). Flanagan concludes her otherwise excellent study ends with a rather vaguely hopeful comment that YA fiction may develop and explore a philosophy of post-humanism (191). There is no reflection on how young readers may become familiar with, understand and contribute to this philosophy.

³ As warnings alerting readers to social and political vices that may result in the degeneration of the status quo, dystopias fulfil the utopian function of catalyzing critical

[u]topia is [...] to be seen essentially as a strategy. By imagining another reality, in a virtual present or in a hypothetical future, utopia is set as a strategy for the questioning of reality and of the present [...] utopia is a programme for change and for a gradual betterment of the present; in that sense it operates at different levels, a means towards political, economic, social, moral and pedagogical reorientation. At last, utopia has become a strategy of creativity, clearing the way for the only path that man can possibly follow: the path of creation. (Vieira 2010: 23)

Sheer speculations about possible effects of texts containing utopian thought do not give justice to how readers use literary visions to conceptualize alternative world orders. We also agree with Margaret Meek and Michael Benton that both the very diversity of readerly reactions and the critical interest in and acknowledgment of them are absolutely imperative when studying "the literature that defines itself by reference to its young readership" (Benton 2005: 98). Finally, while it is impossible to generalize on the basis of such a small amount of data, our analysis of specific cases of the students' assignments enables us to preserve individual variation and a sense of the participants as young people whose individual voices should be acknowledged and respected.⁴

To provide a broader perspective for our discussion, we begin with a detailed description of the project, including an overview of transhumanist and posthumanist thought. We then go on to position *Feed* in the context of dystopian writing for young readers, which leads us to the analysis of the participants' visions of the future. We conclude with a reflection on the importance of bringing together young readers' responses to dystopian fiction and their own visions of the future as a radical critical practice counteracting default adult associations between youth and future.

THE WORKSHOP

The workshop was intended to acquaint the young participants with the current directions of the transhumanist thought and with its manifestations in popular culture, as exemplified by James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009) and *Feed*. We also planned to engage the participants in a discussion about various visions of the future. The participants were 15 high school students at the age of 16 and 17.⁵ The meeting was conducted in English, and all the participants had an intermediate level of English (B1) at the time.⁶ As a pre-session assignment aimed at acquaint-

attitudes and actions.

⁴ For a discussion about the merits of such supposedly limited approaches, see Farah Mendlesohn's What is this "child" you speak of? at https://www.academia.edu/6757126/What_is_this_Child_You_Speak_Of_A_paper_delivered_at_Roehampton_in_2012.

⁵ We wish to thank Mr. Wojciech Rajczakowski and his students from the 10th High School in Wroclaw for the participation in the workshop, the submission of the essays, and the permission to quote them herein.

⁶ We are referring to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages:

ing the students with *Feed*, we asked them to read selected excerpts from the novel in English, which, as we thought, contained either the most poignant elements of Anderson's critique of consumerism and technology or the harshest representations of youth as "configured through a computer network" (Zipes 2009: 90). The meeting itself consisted of a presentation on transhumanist thought and its reflection in popular culture. The participants were then asked to express their views on transhumanism and the excerpts from *Feed*. As a follow-up to the workshop, we invited the students to participate in a writing contest and submit an essay of 300 words in English about how they imagined posthuman futures. More specifically, they were asked to use their own ideas and the knowledge they acquired during the workshops to describe their visions of a "post-world", concentrating on technologies, people, relationships or anything else they thought might change in the future. We also assured the students that whereas stylistic proficiency was of importance, we were most interested in the contents of the essays.⁷

H+ THOUGHT IN BRIEF

The Humanity+ movement, which originated from transhumanist thought, offers a vision of a future when human beings will continuously exceed their capabilities, eventually leaving their human forms behind. Nick Bostrom, the leading transhumanist thinker, argues that humans may be improved by the already existing solutions, "such as education and cultural refinement, but also direct application of medicine and technology to overcome some of our basic biological limits" ("Transhumanist Values"). Transhumanism has diversified over time as a result of the development of different approaches to mind and body enhancement. One of the most progressive transhuman concepts is the notion of extropy proposed by Max More. According to More, "pursuing extropy means seeking continual improvement in ourselves, our cultures, and our environments" (More 2003: n.p.). Yet, as Bostrom claims, transhumanism needs to take humanity even to the point where we will be able to transfer our entities into computer versions of their former selves. These improved humans will operate in countless virtual realities at once or inhabit mechanical bodies. Simultaneously, the right

learning, Teaching, Assessment. For details, see http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Cadre1_en.asp. Although we realize that a reflection on the educational potential of such projects as ours in teaching English as a foreign language would also be of interest, this is beyond the scope of this essay. For extensive discussions of this issue, see *Children's Literature and Learner Empowerment* (2013) by Janice Bland. The question of the role of English language children's literature and creative writing in EFL education in Poland also deserves a separate discussion. We fear that our own experience of classrooms and applied linguistics courses for prospective teachers, however limited, suggests extreme reluctance on the part of teachers and specialists in methods of language teaching to employ literature.

⁷ All the participants received small prizes. The winners of the competition received books in English.

to remain unenhanced should still be respected (Bostrom 2003 n.p.). Victoria Flanagan points out that posthumanism should not be seen as "as ideology that entails the end of the humanist subject" but rather as "a reconceptualisation and expansion of the human subject" (11) as it interrogates the very essence of humanity.

The presentation part of the workshop provoked a rather sceptical reaction among the students, most of whom were not convinced about the probability of humans' evolving into trans- or posthumans as quickly as it is predicted by Bostrom and More. They also expressed limited enthusiasm about singularity, superintelligence, terraforming and pantropy, which they perceived more as science fiction than as a possible next step for humanity. The students were also asked to read Bostrom's "Letter from Utopia" (2008), in which Bostrom, imitating a posthuman who refers to himself as "one of [our human] possible futures" (Bostrom 2008:1), describes a perfect reality for humankind. The posthuman assures his predecessors that the idyllic future could not exist without their help and therefore it is crucial for humans to strive towards this perfect, albeit uncertain, goal. While the directness of *Feed* appealed to the students, they showed little interest in Bostrom's vision. This reserve may indicate that whereas transhumanism is well known among certain groups of adults, its propagators could devote more time to promote the idea of conscious self-enhancement amongst young people.

FEED AND TRANS/POST-HUMANIST THEMES IN LITERATURE FOR YOUNG READERS

Transhumanist and posthumanist movements have provoked numerous responses in popular culture, evoking either hopes for the glorious progress, or skeptical, if not apocalyptic, scenarios about the degeneration of the human race. As Bradford et al. note, posthuman futures found their way into Western children's literature as early as the 1980s, as reflected in Tanith Lee's *Silver Metal Lover* (1981) and Monica Hughes's *Devil on My Back* (1984) (155). They have remained significant themes of futurist fiction for young readers, including such recent texts as Catherine Fisher's *Incarceron* (2007) and *Saphique* (2010), Ally Condie's *Matched* trilogy (2010–2012), or Nancy Farmer's *The House of the Scorpion* (2002) and *The Lord of Opium* (2013). As Anderson's novel has been thoroughly analyzed, it suffices to mention that, unlike the majority of children's and YA books tackling humanity's prospects for the future and championing young protagonists who oppose the status quo,⁸ it focuses

⁸ *Feed* belongs to what Victoria Flanagan refers to as "an anti-technology representational paradigm in children's literature, which has prevailed since the 1980's" (2) and has been marked by the fear of the effacement of humanity resulting from its growing dependence on technology. Flanagan points to the recent increase in narratives depicting the influence of technology "in much more life-affirming and positive ways" (2).

rather disturbingly on a group of apathetic young people who do not even realize that they have given up their identity “for the sake of marketing trends and fashions communicated through the feed” (Bradford et al. 2008: 167).⁹ Victoria Flanagan also points to the theme of “‘participatory surveillance’” (152) as people willingly give up their privacy and subject themselves, as Mark Andrejevic puts it, not to “the top-down monitoring of employees by employers, citizens by the state, but rather [to] the peer-to-peer surveillance of spouses, friends, and relatives” (481). Violet, the only young character who understands that humans have become mere resources to be exploited by corporations, is doomed to fail in her rebellion as she is punished for it when FeedTechCorp refuses to repair her malfunctioning implant. Also the Coalition of Pity, an anti-feed group which hacks into feeds to make people think independently, does not succeed as people can no longer process data without their feeds and desperately long for them.¹⁰

This chilling portrayal of posthuman youth made us wonder how young readers respond to posthumanist ideas in general and to Anderson’s story in particular. Among the quotations from *Feed* which we had supplied were Titus’s comments about the educational system, depictions of his relationships with his parents, Violet’s musings on people’s dependence on feeds and the description of her agony. Moreover, we included more general quotes about the environmental crisis and Titus’s account of physical changes affecting humanity.¹¹ Having introduced the text and the author, we asked the participants to comment on particular themes in the novel. Obviously, just as other critics acknowledging the book’s potential influence on young readers as an invitation to think critically about technological progress or global politics, we had expected an animated discussion among the students. After all they belong to “the post-cyber generation” (Flanagan 4), which “have been surrounded by technology from a young age and are much more likely to either celebrate or at least normalise its impact on human society” (4). Moreover, as Clare Bradford argues, by making readers observe the events, *Feed* “is one of many contemporary texts that invite a critical and participatory style of reading. In doing so, it

⁹ For example, see Noga Applebaum’s discussion of *Feed* in *Representations of Technology in Science Fictions for Young People* (Routledge 2009), Clare Bradford’s “‘Everything must go!’: Consumerism and Reader Positioning in M. T. Anderson’s *Feed*.” *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures* 2.(2010):128–137; or Abbie Ventura’s Predicting a Better Situation? Three Young Adult Speculative Fiction Texts and the Possibilities for Social Change.” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 36.1 (2011): 89–103.

¹⁰ One of the most recent analyses of *Feed* can be found in Keith Booker’s “Compare/Contrast: media Culture, Conformism, and Commodification in Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 491* and M. T. Anderson’s *Feed*.” See *Critical Insights: Dystopia* (2013). Ed. by Keith Booker. 73–87.

¹¹ Reading the whole novel in English as an extracurricular activity would be too big a burden for the busy students, and they would most probably fail to handle the whole book. The students were also asked to read the summary of the novel at Wikipedia.

encourages readers to reflect on the consumerism and the neoliberal politics of their own time and to imagine the 'what-if' implications of a world in which these tendencies dominate political and economic life" (Bradford 2010: 136). Yet the overall response of the group was neutral. Several more eager students commented on the technological innovations mentioned in *Feed* but were reluctant to focus on social aspects of Anderson's vision.

This muted response was not caused by linguistic obstacles, as could be concluded, but by their lack of literary experience with futurist fiction. As the students indicated, they were not familiar with literature dealing with H+ themes, which could be the reason why they were not ready to respond to *Feed* in a more enthusiastic way. In more theoretical terms, the students' attitude and experience did not productively influence their reception of *Feed*, preventing them from relating the novel to their own concerns. As Lee Galda explains, "[p]erhaps [...] using literature to explore how the world works is easier when reading realistic fiction than when reading fantasy. The dissimilarities between our lives and the lives created by fantasists might prevent some readers from bringing their literal, real-world experiences to bear as they create the story world as they read" (Galda 1992: 129). In consequence, the students' limited transaction with *Feed* resulted, to use Galda's terms, in intense "disequilibrium," and so "a story world" had never been created (Galda 1992: 129). What the students most probably did experience was the "recognition of the 'gap' between the reader's real life and the world created in the text by the author" (Alsup 2010: 211), which in turn enabled them to embrace a critical distance towards *Feed* and enriched their knowledge. As Janet Alsup argues, "[s]uch a recognition and analysis of difference can lead to lasting personal growth for the reader" (Alsup 2010: 211), confirmed in our case by the contents of the participants' submissions.

VISIONS OF THE H+ FUTURE

All students submitted written depictions of trans/posthumanist futures, which reveals that these particular young readers were able to respond analytically to futurist texts, including *Feed*, and that, thanks to the workshop, they were "[f]reed from constraints of their own small worlds", thereby becoming "new' men and women, thinking about and imagining new worlds" (Britton, qtd. in Galda 1992: 141–142).¹² The essays differed with regard to the students' writing skills and their fluency in English. Yet it seems to us that their writings successfully communicated their hopes for and fears about the future.¹³ Below we discuss those samples of the students' writing in which we could discern direct influences of *Feed*. These nine accounts are presented predominantly from

¹² See James Britton *Language and Learning*. London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1970.

¹³ The feedback we provided consisted of comments referring both to the style and to the contents of the stories. With regard to the latter, we usually asked questions if we found something unclear or discussed briefly the ideas we found especially intriguing.

the point of view of people living in the future world.¹⁴ As we are interested in the thematic contents of the submissions, we have preserved the original wording and grammar.

The narrator of “The 2210 Year”, a letter sent back to our times, begins with a nostalgic reflection about the life on earth 200 years before, when it was still green and “people felt good on their planet. They were going to work for the families and watched television or did something what nowadays is strange and difficult to achieve.” In the remaining part of the story, he presents a number of changes that occurred in people’s lifestyle and the natural environment, including details that have most probably been inspired by *Feed*. One such reference is people’s laziness caused by automation of work or the lack of trees and oxygen and resulting in constructing oxygen factories, “which are not beautiful or fragrant but apparently more effective in production.” In this vision of the future, “[t]rees on our planet probably do not exist, maybe with the exception of schools, where they are grown for research.” Moreover, the narrator mentions the humanity’s conquest of the whole galaxy, aimed at terraforming other planets, and concludes critically that life in the year 2210 has some advantages “like modern entertainment or fast teleports, but the majority of qualities unfortunately are disadvantages so life is not as good as ever”. A similarly despondent mood suffuses “2085 AD,” whose narrator looks back at her childhood, when “it all started” and when people were forced to remain indoors to avoid the life hazard resulting from the growing emission of CO₂, “caused by big companies’ refusal to change their technology for more ecological, because they didn’t want to give up cheapest ways of production.” With time, everyone had “protective suits and every place was prepared for ‘closure.’” Today, as the narrator continues, “[o]ur houses are tightly cut off from the air. Each building has a special machine to produce artificial air.” As a result, interactions are strictly regulated: “We have also the right to meet with others face to face once per month in places called ‘common-rooms’ but earlier we have to set the meeting and reserve the term. If we want to get on place we have to call for a special taxi which is also well protected from the polluted air”. The narrator misses direct communication, which may be an allusion to the chats on feeds in Anderson’s novel. She complains about other changes, such as the disappearance of nature and the lack of natural food, which has been replaced by pills. The narrator skillfully evokes the sense of loss by providing such details as the fact that “you can’t eat more that your body needs, you even don’t want to because chocolate in a pill doesn’t taste like real chocolate”. She concludes with a sardonic remark that at least no one suffers from obesity.

¹⁴ The other essays provided a mixture of different perspectives. They contained speculations about the future of the world and humankind from a perspective of a person living in present times. One of the stories depicted a time traveler struggling to comprehend the reality he encountered. Among the essays there was also a depiction of a character living in the year 2525 who is satisfied with his life and hopeful for the future.

A depressing outlook for the future is also presented in "Like a Prison", set in 2094. In the " 'post-world'" people enjoy the achievements of technological progress—" [c]hildren have unusual toys like flying robots, stepping dolls with natural hair, notebooks instead books and exercise books"—but at the cost of remaining under constant surveillance, which they accept as they "have lost any ethical standards". Hence they do not protest against chips implanted in compulsory tattoos and wiretapping. The narrator admits that "the 'post-world' has some advantages, especially advances in medicine, but new solutions are used to carry our surgeries of the cerebrum to make children smarter". As he concludes in a prophetic manner, " '[p]ost-world' believes only in strong mind and technology. [...] I can't put into words what catastrophe awaits for us. It will be the price for our curiosity and belief in the power of technology". The apocalyptic overtones of this vision are redolent of the message spread by the hackers in *Feed*. Equally austere picture emerges from a recollection of a time traveler who jumps forward to the year 3050, when the world is much different from the reality of *The Jetsons*, a cartoon she enjoyed watching when she was a child. The new reality is that of the global warming, environmental degradation, and genetic engineering available to the affluent ones. It turns out that the narrator is the only person without a chip and, in legal terms, she does not exist at all. No wonder she is scared and feels suicidal.

A neutral account of the future is presented in "Post World", which also includes an element of the alternative history as in 2045 Moscow is the capital city of Poland. The narrator mentions several inventions, including "a new model of cell phone" with "all of facilities like for example nonstop access to bank account or artificial intelligence which helps the owner with online shopping" or "Mercedes Flyer", "the most advanced car which has ever been created, which can fly and has "an autopilot option". The narrator also identifies himself as a happy husband and father of two sons, who were projected by him and his wife "in the CPC (Children Projecting Center)", a place similar to Anderson's Conceptionarium, where everybody could design their child: "Customers of this center choose every feature of their future baby. You can choose eye color, shape of the ears and face, height and obviously gender but you cannot decide about character of your child". Yet, as the narrator points out, parents have the right to decide whether they want to design their offspring or not. In another alternative historical account, there is no violence, and Wroclaw of the 3020s has become the most technological advanced city in the world. As the narrator explains, "[h]uman body is made from metal in 50% and is controlled by electronic brain inside head. When people want to sleep, they are connecting themselves with an electronic sleeping capsule using cable, at morning they turn the battery charger off and slowly move their metal bodies to check the level of their batteries, when its full, they can finally wake up". There are also limitless possibilities of space travel. Still, even though people can easily communicate using "Mind-

Phones”, “a new generation of smartphones that can send minds and feelings”, just as it is the case in *Feed*, there exist no interpersonal relationships: “People don’t need each other to be happy. They can’t be lonely or angry. They also can’t be ill or injured because their bodies have self-repair function”. The narrator emphasizes that technological progress has substantially improved human life but nevertheless wonders, just as Violet does, whether life can be meaningful “if people can feel nothing? Isn’t life without risk, emotions and relations boring? Will a human be still a human or just a machine”? Emotions and relationships are the central theme of the story describing a brief meeting between Jimmy, whose life is basically chatting on the Internet and who can express his emotions only through emoticons, with Susannah, a girl from the past, who tries to stage a small-scale revolution that would teach people to show their emotions in their faces. Jimmy is afraid of meeting anyone in person and finds the date both stressful and exciting. Susannah takes him to a club when people are partying and Jimmy learns that adults prefer to leave their children in online chat rooms rather than share their lives with them. Jimmy experiences an epiphany and for the first time in his life he can cry and laugh. The relationship between Jimmy and Susannah seems to be a reference to that of Titus and Violet’s. While Violet dies, Susannah leaves Jimmy to continue her mission, and it is up to the boys to make use of the self-understanding and knowledge of the world they have gained.

Whereas the visions discussed above are not too optimistic about the posthuman future, two students submitted very hopeful accounts. One argues that years from now life will become very enjoyable: “in the future will not be wars because people will be happy and relaxed. All citizens will have their perfect jobs. [...] Seas and oceans also will be clean. There will be a lot of species of birds, flowers and trees. What is more there will not be noise and exhaust because people will only use electric cars. These cars will be very safe and citizens will not die in car accidents”. The student also proposes a vision of a future school in which children will be able to “talk about their interests and passions”, learning through teamwork. This vision is a variation on the corporation-run schools in *Feed*. The other student depicts a technologically advanced utopian world in which perfection is the ideal everyone wishes to pursue. Significantly, people agree on the very contents of this ideal: “Communicating with all people is easy, because everyone speaks ‘the language of perfection’. We get what we want and we give what other people expect us to give. The mentality has immeasurably changed, so we have different priorities than earlier. One of them and the most important is ‘the constant improvement’ of the ideal world, due to the fact that people believe in existing something posthumanic”. Although this account lacks any specific references to that of Titus’s, it presents a world that the reality from Anderson’s book could have become had it not been corrupted by greedy corporations and ideological indoctrination.

DISCUSSION

The students' visions of the future vividly convey their expectations, hopes and fears about the destiny of humanity. Simultaneously, they show a considerable degree of affinity with one another in that they focus on issues that are often of greatest significance to young people, such as romantic relationships, education or family dynamics. They also reveal a deep concern with the degradation of nature. Admittedly, some of the themes had been suggested to the students in the instructions, but they were free to decide what exactly, and in what form, they would write about. We believe that this clearly noticeable convergence of interests also stems from the students' acquisition of information presented to them during the workshop. The participants' writings offer powerful evidence that despite their initial reservations about posthumanist theory and Anderson's unfamiliar text, they found in the novel an appealing model for thinking about the future humanity. As noted earlier, we realize that our workshop and discussion thereof are far from conclusive. Yet we see it as a contribution, however modest, to "the evolutionary change, not sudden revolution—a progressive rethinking of the way readers create literary experiences for themselves with poems and stories" (Benton 2005: 89). The participants' transaction with Anderson's bleak vision of the text, channeled into their own creative work, enabled them to express their opinions about trans/post-humanist scenarios, becoming, to use Lee Galda's phrase, "a rich and rewarding virtual experience" (Galda 1992: 141). We also hope that the assignment revealed to them how much they are capable of broadening their own views both about the real world and about the future when reading dystopian literature. Finally, we hope that in the course of the workshop the students could see that their views do matter even though adults may rarely ask about them. As our workshop proves, young people's literary experiences certainly provide a platform for such encounters.

CONCLUSION

One of the most prevalent, and simultaneously stereotypical, associations held by adults about young people is that the latter represent the world's future. It is this connection that to a large extent inspires adult authors to write texts similar to *Feed*. As these authors most probably hope, such literature catalyzes readers' critical thinking and agency as it offers diverse scenarios of how transhumanism and posthumanism might affect humanity. Also children's literature critics usually limit their analysis of dystopian literature to how texts position the reader, whereas their analysis would certainly benefit from thinking more of specific young people, with their predispositions and interests, as lending the ultimate validity to proposed readings and interpretations. If adults do care about the future of the current young generation, they should certainly acknowledge and listen to the voices of the youth.

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Dreams, Fortunes, and Infinity: A Child Reader Engages with The Mysterious in Two Toy Fantasy Novels

Abstract: This article highlights one part of a study focusing on a phenomenology of ten and eleven year old readers' experiences of literary texts in spiritual terms. Two toy fantasy novels, Kate DiCamillo's *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* (2006) and Russell Hoban's *The Mouse and His Child*, feature several dimensions of mystery in their narratives. These dimensions of the mysterious, including several characters, a near death experience, and the concept of infinity, feature as part of the children's spiritual discourse about the books. One female child participant's responses, both oral and artistic, are discussed and analyzed, illuminating how children responding to stories in multiple ways can reveal their experience of those stories in spiritual terms. The notion of spirituality in this study remains fairly broad, but certainly encompasses the concept of the mysterious. The results of the study suggest that we should continue to ask children open-ended questions about their reading, invite them to respond through art, and realize that experiencing a text in spiritual terms is much broader than experiencing a text religiously.

Keywords: Children's Literature, Toy Fantasy, Mystery, Spirituality, Reader-Response, Children's Artwork

Dimensions of the mysterious in children's literature are appealing for both young and older readers, as evidenced by the immense popularity of books in the genre of mystery for Middle Grade and Young Adult readers. As readers dive a bit more into this realm of the mysterious in texts, however, we can gain insight regarding the relationship between mystery and the spirituality of literature. Part of my dissertation research included using reader-response to investigate the experiences of ten and eleven year old readers reading two toy fantasy novels. I was particularly interested in the meaning of their reading experience in spiritual terms, and one dimension of this experience included discussion of the mysterious aspects of these stories.

In this article, I discuss aspects of mystery that appear in Russell Hoban's *The Mouse and His Child* (1967) and the contemporary Middle Grade novel, *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* (2006) by Kate DiCamillo. I then share the results of talking with one of the child participants in my research

study, specifically in terms of her discourse about mystery. The notion of “mystery-sensing” comprises one dimension of spiritual sensitivity in children, and as a result, I was extremely interested in the children’s discourse about mystery in the texts (Hay with Nye 1998). My investigation of this participant’s discourse and artwork revealed that one aspect of her experience of these books in spiritual terms related to her discussion of these mysterious aspects of the stories. First, however, it is necessary to present a clear conception of spirituality on which I relied in my research.

DEFINING SPIRITUALITY

As I present a concept of spirituality by which my own study is guided and framed, I recall what one Norwegian researcher of children’s spirituality, Sturla Sagberg, states in an article on children’s spirituality within the context of Norwegian education: “Theories of spirituality must be discussed and developed, but it is hermeneutically and epistemologically sound to keep in mind that a theory carries the marks of distance from the actual experience” (1997: 364). A definition of spirituality formed a framework around my thinking about children’s lived experience of a literary work in spiritual terms, and as a result, I kept Sagberg’s advice in mind: “The concept and the theory belong to the researchers, the experiences and expressions belong to the children—a fact which should fill the researcher with some humility” (1997: 364).

I conceptualize spirituality as a universal tendency in humans to reach out for deep connection with something greater than themselves, recognizing that there is something beyond the here and now, beyond the physical realm. This spirit potentially exists in every human being (Hay with Nye 1998). I also affirm the idea of spirituality as a lived reality, discussed in Helminiak’s 1996 book, *The Human Core of Spirituality*. Spirituality “refers to everything one does that expresses or enhances one’s awareness of and commitment to the transcendent dimension of life” (1996: 34). As Hay and Nye discovered, “mystery-sensing,” one dimension of spiritual sensitivity in children, alludes to immersion in wonder or awe, and also refers to the role of the imagination in reflecting on the mysteries of life (Hay with Nye, 1998, p. 71–72). Characters, symbolic statements, and supernatural events created a tone of mystery in these texts that elicited rich and nuanced discourse from some of my participants. This discourse reflected a spiritual nature in the way the children began to ponder, imagine, and wonder. As a result, this conception of spirituality as both a reaching out for connection and a “mystery-sensing,” guided my investigation into what it meant for a young reader to experience a text in spiritual terms.

First, I chose two novels for children that reflected some spiritual dimensions but were not explicitly religious texts. Both texts highlight the significant

inner journeys of the characters, and though these characters are toys, their struggles and victories reflect aspects of the human experience. The stories both engage with the issue of maintaining hope and perseverance in the midst of extreme pressure and despair. My personal responses to the texts as well as some critical and professional analyses of the novels played a role in my selecting them. Choosing a contemporary children's novel along with a slightly older classic exposed the child readers in my study to two different styles of children's literature. The stories proved to be ones that my participants enjoyed reading, and also happened to reflect several dimensions of mystery that these young readers mentioned in their discussion. Each plot illuminates thought-provoking and engaging journeys.

METHODS

For my study, I recruited four children to meet with individually three times. I used the phenomenological three interview series with each participant. Within phenomenological studies, the intent is to describe in detail the experience of participants of a particular phenomenon. The aim is not to develop general claims, and this is why sample sizes are small. Some studies show that using small numbers of children is necessary in order to keep comparisons small (Benton, Teasey, Bell, & Hurst, 1988: 33; Hade 1988). Others suggest that researching a small number of children can result in a richer and deeper understanding of their experiences and keeps the data easier to manage (Benton, Teasey, Bell, & Hurst, 1988; Tisdall, Davis, and Gallagher, 2009).

Freeman & Mathison highlight the individual interview as a space where children can "share an experience or reflect on an event" (2009, 88). Whether it is a fifteen minute or an hour-long interview, the individual interview can yield rich data (102). Transcriptions of interviews can be challenging to analyze, reflecting the need to keep the number of interviews lower rather than higher (Tisdall et. al, 2009, 75).

Rather than conduct a complex and extensive study in terms of participants, texts, and time, Benton encourages the researcher to strive for in-depth analysis (1988). For this reason, I limited my project to four children reading two toy fantasy novels. Due to the lack of space, in this article I only focus on one participant of my study. However, this participant's verbal and artistic discourse illuminates fascinating insight into the experience of reading a text in spiritual terms.

THE PARTICIPANT

I recruited "Leonora" after informing a friend that I was looking for children in the 5th grade who would be willing to read two novels and meet with me three

different times. Eleven years and one month old, Leonora was in the fifth grade at a local elementary school at the time of the study. Animated, she talked with her hands and had chin-length brown hair and brown eyes. My first impression of her was of a talkative girl who seemed willing to answer any question I posed. She chatted freely about books, school, writing, drawing, her pets, and her family, and friends.

The eldest in her family, Leonora has a younger brother and a younger sister. Considering the career paths of a lawyer, actress, or pastry chef, Leonora has not decided on one vocation yet. Her favorite subjects in school include reading, writing, science, and everything else but math. She enjoys reading fantasy, mystery, and school stories, though not science fiction. *Heidi* (1880) by Johanna Spyri and *Dragonrider* (1997) by Cornelia Funke are two of her favorite books. Leonora likes to garden, draw, knit, swing, and sit in her fort. She stated that she liked to draw but does not do it a lot, though she enjoys drawing outside.

Leonora's mother is Methodist and her father is Catholic, so the family attends two churches. She sometimes helps her father with hospitality at the Catholic Church and though she is too old for morning Sunday School, she attends the evening Sunday School, where, as she said, they were learning about God's creation as well as the church's basic beliefs about God.

In our first interview, Leonora talked about different supernatural abilities and communicated that she is drawn to stories featuring the topics of royalty and superpowers. She said she would like to have the superpower of telekinesis, as well as the ability to fly or become invisible. Though she relished the idea of annoying the boys in her classroom by pushing books off their desk while invisible, she considered the implications of helping the world with her superpowers.

Leonora: And I think um I'd also be interested in super powers that could somehow help the world. Like maybe being able to reproduce stuff that you normally can't reproduce like oil.

Katie: Mmm hmm. That would be a really good super power to have.

Leonora: Yeah. Telekinesis technically could do something for the oil spill because someone with telekinesis could lift the oil out and just put it wherever they need it.

Katie: Mmm hmm.

Leonora: Yeah. So they could have people doing that instead of all the stuff they're trying to do.

Leonora's responses revealed her to be a sensitive, caring, and creative eleven year old, comfortable sharing her thoughts about God, church, her friends, and the spiritual dimension of life. Leonora's responses in all three interviews revealed her tendency to make personal connections. Additionally, she often transitioned into more mysterious topics such as dreams and the possession of superpowers through her discourse about her reading.

THE MIRACULOUS JOURNEY OF EDWARD TULANE

Kate DiCamillo's illustrated toy fantasy (2006) focuses on the journey of a china rabbit, Edward Tulane, who is introduced as a selfish being in the beginning of the story. However, after becoming separated from his owner and connecting with a variety of people on his journey to finding Abilene, his heart begins to open up to others and change. Through hardships, joys, and challenges, Edward Tulane discovers the importance of love. The emphasis on relationships with others and the role these connections play within a person's spiritual development constitutes an important aspect of spirituality in *Edward Tulane*. The inclusion of the word "miraculous" in the title suggests that this novel might carry religious undertones, but in fact, the story is not overtly religious or didactic.

THE MOUSE AND HIS CHILD

The narrative of Russell Hoban's *The Mouse and His Child* details the toy mice's quest to find the dollhouse, a family, and become self-winding. Through the journey, they meet a variety of other characters, encounter challenges, and overcome hardships. Considered a classic, the toy fantasy features symbolic and philosophical levels that will keep both adult and child reader engaged with the trials and victories of the windups.

Like *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, *The Mouse and His Child* concludes with the central characters reunited in a secure community, but unlike Edward, the mouse and his child now do have a certain degree of independence. At the same time, the pair actively voices their need for those around them to assist them, and so even though they are self-winding, the story ends on the note that they will still depend, in some ways, on their friends. In this way, both novels illuminate the significance of relationships within the human experience.

There are two aspects of mystery in each of the toy fantasy novels. In *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, it is the character of Pellegrina, the grandmother of China Rabbit Edward's owner, and Edward's dream/near-death experience. In *The Mouse and His Child*, it is the character of Uncle Frog and the notion of Infinity. First, Pellegrina's character in *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* does not seem to play a major role in the story, and yet her presence is woven throughout, affecting the protagonist at multiple points in the narrative.

INVESTIGATING THE CHARACTER OF PELLEGRINA

Abilene's grandmother, Pellegrina, represents a mysterious character that plays a small but significant part in the story. Since she bought and helped to com-

mission the creation and dressing of Edward Tulane, she represents his creator. In addition to Abilene, Pellegrina treats Edward as an equal, and the bedtime story she tells her granddaughter and the rabbit indirectly focuses on Edward's egotism and selfishness. Later, when Edward is stuck on the bottom of the sea, he considers whether Pellegrina had played a role in his being thrown overboard. He remembers her words whispered to him after the bedtime story: "You disappoint me" (DiCamillo 2006: 35). He also thinks about Pellegrina when he is strung up on a pole as a scarecrow, stating to a crow he thinks is Pellegrina that he no longer cares if she turns him into a warthog or not, referencing the fate of the unloving princess in the story (112). When Edward and Bryce seek their fortune in Memphis, and Edward dances in the street, he thinks he glimpses Pellegrina in the crowd, and again, speaks to her, explaining that his heart is broken (149). Though Pellegrina appears as herself in the beginning of the story, the references to her influence throughout the story reflect a deeper significance to her character. This creates a sense of mystery and speculation surrounding the role she plays, and clearly illuminates the author's deft ability to create significant gaps for the reader to interpret. Pellegrina's character does not represent the only mysterious aspect of the narrative; Edward's experience of blacking out after his head is damaged could be understood as either a near-death experience or a dream.

EXPLORING EDWARD'S DREAM/NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE

Chapter Twenty-Two constructs a mysterious and almost spiritual moment in Edward's life. The chapter opens immediately after the rabbit's head has been cracked on the counter at the diner, and thus, the end of Chapter Twenty-One implies the possibility that the rabbit is entering eternity. One significant aspect of this experience is that Edward is able to walk, and while walking, he discovers that he has grown wings. When he realizes that Sarah Ruth is represented in the sky as a constellation, he attempts to fly up to her, but Abilene, Bryce, Lucy, Bull, Nellie, and Lawrence are present and request that he stay on the ground. The chapter represents the only moment in which Edward is surrounded by all of his friends he has met during his journeys, except for Sarah Ruth. In this sense, then, it seems to function as a pivotal point in the narrative, since he refrains from going up to the constellation, and yet, though he remains with the others, he feels intense sadness at the prospect of living without Sarah Ruth. In addition to walking, he is able to cry—an action he cannot perform as an inanimate object in the rest of the story. Furthermore, this chapter is represented visually on the cover of the novel, illuminating it as an important aspect of the story. One of the children in my research study provided fascinating and revealing comments about this particular moment in the narrative and chose to focus especially on its mysterious tone. Before discussing her responses about *Edward Tulane*, I highlight those dimensions of the other

novel my research participant read that also elicited discourse focusing on the mysterious.

Two aspects of *The Mouse and His Child* relate to the mysterious and deserve a closer analysis.

ANALYZING UNCLE FROG

The character of Frog, or as the mouse child calls him, “Uncle Frog” represented another character of interest within my participants’ discourse. Frog’s first genuine fortune is depicted as spiritual in nature in the text. The previous times Frog had delivered fortunes, he spoke exactly what he felt the hearer wanted him to say. Frog’s experience with the mouse and his child, however, was quite different:

So the frog intended, but as he looked at the coin and the seeds he found himself unable to speak the words he had planned. He had practiced the seed and coin oracle many times, but never before had he experienced anything like what was happening to him now. All else beyond the patterns in the snow departed from his vision; his ears hummed, and other sounds all vanished, leaving him alone with the voice of his mind and the dark seeds dancing in the stillness of their mystic changes. (Hoban 1967: 25)

This passage reflects a mystical quality as Frog experiences for the first time the revelation of something completely outside his understanding. What he shares with the mouse and his child, and later with Manny Rat, can be considered “prophecies.” Lois Kuznets calls Frog’s message to Manny Rat a “disturbing prophecy” (1994: 176). Though Hoban does not explicitly label Frog’s fortunes as prophetic, some readers describe his message in this way. One possible reading of the character of Frog is as a figure that helps the mouse and his child, and speaks into existence the future, as a means of helping them to reach it. At the same time, the author leaves gaps in the narrative, creating a tone of mystery and mysticism around the character of “Uncle Frog” and his fortunes. However, this is not the only dimension of Hoban’s text that infuses the story with the mysterious.

IDENTIFYING INFINITY

The concept of infinity emerges in *Mouse* through the repeated appearance of the Bonzo dog food can label, depicting a dog holding a tray of Bonzo dog food, which depicts another dog, and so the pattern continues. The toy mice continue to run into the dog food can label, whether it is through the theatre troupe who are performing the play, “The Last Visible Dog,” or through the philosophical ponderings of C. Serpentina at the bottom of the pond. The sea turtle poses a question regarding the meaning of infinity, directed toward the

toy mice. The mouse child does not hesitate to grapple with this complex notion, and Hoban constructs a child reader who is invited to consider the mystery of infinity herself.

In both novels, these dimensions relate to the category of the mysterious, and their role in the stories invite readers to speculate about what is beyond. These aspects of the stories allude to the idea of “religious mystery,” something that Pinsent suggests “can be created only if the reader realizes that there is no natural explanation for the events which occur...” (2001: 18). Neither author provides a direct explanation for these dimensions of the stories; instead, they only imply their potential significance, leaving gaps for multiple interpretations of the same event. The notion of religious mystery can be connected to the concept of spirituality in a text, since spirituality can represent a reaching beyond into the realm of the “unknowable.” These moments of mystery in the texts certainly reflect points at which the reader has no way of knowing whether something is one thing or the other. As a result, it is not difficult to propose that there is a relationship between mystery and spirituality, especially in terms of the idea that our cultural understanding of spirituality often requires us to be comfortable with the unknown, the unexplained, and the as of yet, unseen.

DISCOVERING MYSTERY THROUGH READER-RESPONSE

As I analyzed the transcripts of the interviews with my ten- and eleven-year-old readers, I detected examples of talk about spirituality within the participants’ responses to aspects of the stories that reflected the mysterious or the non-material. A book categorized as “spiritual” can “move [readers] into a different realm that transcends everyday life and the world as youngsters usually see it” (Wangerin qtd. in Ratcliff and May 2004: 12). The supernatural is often considered mysterious, and certainly, all aspects of the novels related to this category featured some element of mystery or the unknown. They included Edward’s dream or near-death experience and the character of Pellegrina in *Edward Tulane*, and the fortunetelling Uncle Frog and the question of infinity in *Mouse*.

TALKING ABOUT EDWARD’S NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE

Three pages of the interview transcript with my participant, “Leonora”, was devoted to her discourse about Edward’s near-death experience in Chapter Twenty-Two of *Edward Tulane*. Eleven years and one month old, Leonora was in the fifth grade at a local elementary school at the time of the study. She highlighted this as a “very interesting part” during which Edward “was sort of in a way dead and he saw all the people he loved but then, and he started to go up to the stars and um Bull caught him, and in a way, I guess, saved his life.” I then asked whether she thought he was near death or having a dream, and she reiterated her last statement that he was near death, and there was a reason for this opinion:

Yeah. And he, like, I guess he was sort of knocked out and he was sort of like going to when he was...and like at that part what I think could have happened... (looking at pages), I think what could have happened, I think he was sort of going towards death because the girl they said was up in the sky so he was sort of floating up towards the sky like he was going to die. So I think he probably was. 'Cause I think if something dies it might, like, it might have a flashback of anything they could have done better in their life. So that's probably um what he's flashing back on all the people he liked and he's sort of going away but Bull helps him.

As Leonora interpreted Edward's near-death experience, she considered it in terms of what happens when people are about to leave this world. She stated that Edward learns a lesson through this moment as "he stayed because he had a lot of people that he loved and he needed to be with them."

Without any prompting from me, Leonora considered the implications of this chapter in the novel:

Leonora: I wonder what it would have been like if they didn't have that chapter in there.

Katie: Mmm hmm.

Leonora: 'Cause that chapter he sort of realizes that he doesn't want to die and he stays on earth.

When I mentioned that this moment in the story is depicted on the cover, I wondered what Leonora thought it meant—the fact that Edward is walking towards the door of a large house. "Well, um, I think the picture means he's like um maybe he's walking towards his death and everybody comes outside and so technically they're stopping him." This interpretation illuminates the cover as rather ominous, since the house represents Edward's death. Leonora used both the text and the cover illustration to support this interpretation.

This chapter in the novel illuminated a mysterious experience that elicited much discourse from Leonora. She specifically pointed out that she had gone back and re-read that portion of the story, "the part where he like almost dies." Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, this chapter represented the focus of Leonora's artwork for the novel. On a twelve by eighteen inch piece of white paper, Leonora drew the figure of Edward Tulane flying in the night sky (see Figure 1).



Fig. 1. Leonora's Drawing in Response to *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*

Complete with yellow and purple wings, the rabbit takes up the entire surface of the paper and his arms stretch in front of him towards the moon, depicted in the upper right hand corner of the picture. Stars outlined in black are peppered around and beneath Edward, and he is wearing a red blouse with green trousers. Leonora explained, "Well, I really like purple, red, and yellow... And green. But I didn't like want to put red in this because it sort of clashed with the shirt, so um, and green was also in the pants so I put those colors." Leonora said she wanted to emphasize Edward's happiness and added that she accomplished this by making him as large as she could. Because he really wanted to fly, his joy is complete through his soaring in the sky. She filled in her drawing with hatching and cross-hatching, creating a colorful and luminous picture. Edward's near-death experience elicited many comments from Leonora, represented by both her verbal and artistic discourse. Just as significant, however, was Leonora's discussion of the mysterious Pellegrina in the novel.

TALKING ABOUT PELLEGRINA'S CHARACTER

Leonora brought up the character of Pellegrina two times during our discussion, and she attributed a magical ability to Pellegrina by suggesting that she was a witch and cast a spell on Edward. Later, she said that she really wanted to know what happened to Abilene's grandmother and if she did see Edward dancing in Memphis. Recalling the "witch" label Leonora had given her, I asked if she thought Pellegrina was a "wicked" character. She replied, "No, like I think she was sort of telling a story to what she thought might happen to Edward, almost as if she knew it was going to happen to him." She stated that Abilene's grandmother told the story on purpose, and that Edward realized that by describing the character of the princess in the story, Pellegrina was talking about him. Leonora's comments revealed her speculation about another mysterious aspect of the book that leaves room for multiple interpretations.

TALKING ABOUT FROG'S FORTUNE

Leonora's interest in characters with strange and unexplainable abilities also emerged from her responses to *Mouse*. As I asked Leonora about her thoughts on the lines of poetry at the beginning of the novel, she suggested that only after she read the entire book did she understand their significance. She then commented, "It's almost like a prophecy, I guess, like in the Percy Jackson books." When I asked her how it related to the story, she said, "Like prophecy sort of tells what's going to happen...Just like Uncle Frog's prophecy." Leonora opened the book and reviewed the passage. She explained how the Frog's fortune related to the mice's journey: "I guess the scattering is all the people they meet and then they're all re-gathered." When I asked her if she thought it was important for the mouse and his child to hear Frog's message, she said, "I guess 'cause he

sort of knew that all the people that they knew would get scattered and that's why he wanted to find the seal and the elephant." Leonora's response indicated a close reading of the text, specifically in terms of the content of Frog's fortune and its relationship to the lines of poetry at the beginning of the story.

TALKING ABOUT INFINITY

The Bonzo dog food can in *Mouse* introduces the notion of infinity into the story. I asked the children to describe for me their definition of infinity. For Leonora, infinity represented "forever" but she said, "Technically nothing lasts forever. Um, everything that you think lasts forever is really perpetual."

Katie: So tell me, so—

Leonora: But I guess the dog technically did last forever because it kept going and going and you couldn't really find the stopping.

Katie: Yeah. So infinity, so if infinity is forever, what would you use the word infinity to describe? Is there anything we can describe with that term?

Leonora: Um, I think it could be, I'm not sure because the sun's not infinity. Um, maybe God's infinity?

After discussing the idea of going on forever, she moved into making a link to a school project that involved the students painting a wall at the end of the school hallway.

Yeah, and my teacher joked they, we were going to hang on the school for infinity and she said someday it will be in a museum and "this was what the kids in the old days..."

As this comment demonstrates, some of her responses reflected a frequent connecting to personal aspects of her life including school, friends, and family.

THE MYSTERY OF EDWARD'S NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE

There were four events or characters in the stories that highlighted ambiguity or mystery. Edward's dream or near-death experience elicited both verbal and artistic discourse from Leonora that reflected her grappling with what it means to be near death as she supplied interpretations of a crucial moment for the protagonist relating to his inner journey. Of the four children, only Leonora brought up Edward's near-death experience without my asking her.

Leonora's comments took up three pages of the interview transcript, reflecting her interest in this ambiguous chapter. She interpreted what transpired during Edward's experience, actively filled in gaps in the narrative, and shared her thoughts on what might happen when someone is near death. In this way, the novel acted as a catalyst for discourse from Leonora about what can be perceived as an uncertain and heavy issue: being near death. This discourse can be

situated within Leonora's desire to ask God "what happens when I die," shared during our first interview. The question of what happens after death constitutes a serious question of meaning, and it is one young and old have been grappling with for centuries. Leonora also chose to focus on Edward's near-death experience in his artwork. Wilson and Wilson discovered that a significant number of the drawings of children they analyzed involved the subject of death. They recognized that "Children are no more immune to contemplations of death than any other group" (1979: 15). It is interesting that Leonora echoes a cultural speculation about near-death experiences: seeing the entirety of one's life before one passes away. Many people have expressed similar occurrences when being near death—the position of reflecting on the entire span of a life. In this way, Leonora reveals her cultural literacy in relation to a phenomenon that is still largely unknown and mysterious.

In addition to providing a space for Leonora to express her ideas about an inevitable aspect of life, death, her speculating about the chapter also revealed deeper thoughts about Edward's character and the central conflict of the story. Leonora shared her idea that the chapter portrayed Edward making a crucial decision for the plot's resolution, and her artwork amplified the notion of Edward's desire for connection. In this way, working through an interpretation about what transpired in an ambiguous chapter of the book engineered deeper understandings of the narrative as a whole.

Her wondering about life after death may also reflect her engaging with a serious question of meaning, understood as value sensing in the context of Hay and Nye's categories of spiritual sensitivity (1998). This resonates the concept of "spiritual questing," one of the characteristics Hyde discovered when researching children's spirituality (2008). One aspect of spiritual questing involved the children talking about major issues and values of life (2008: 125). Hyde discovered that the children's search for meaning was not always expressed in the context of their religious framework. Certainly, Leonora's comments reflect her thinking about life after death, but this thinking was not explicitly situated within the beliefs of her religious tradition.

THE MYSTERY OF PELLEGRINA'S CHARACTER

The mysterious character of Pellegrina, the one "responsible for Edward's existence," represented a figure that Leonora labeled as a witch. Her comments reflected a general interest in a character who plays a significant role in the story and yet is shrouded in mystery.

Leonora talked at length about Edward's dream, and demonstrated interest in Pellegrina's character. She seemed aware that Pellegrina played an important role through her telling of the story, attributed a prophetic ability to the character, and her comments indicated her belief that Pellegrina did exercise some power over the fate of Edward. Like *Edward Tulane, Mouse* also featured

a character that played a significant part in the journey of the protagonists and embodied mysterious characteristics at the same time.

THE MYSTERY OF FROG'S FORTUNE

Uncle Frog's fortune represented another aspect of *Mouse* that elicited comments from Leonora relating to dimensions of life that are mysterious or ambiguous, such as prophecy. As a result, exploring this character and his role in the story opened up an opportunity to further discuss more mystical parts of life, such as the idea of prophecy or dreams. Leonora discussed the prophetic characteristic of Frog's fortune, using the term "prophecy" explicitly. Her reference to the Percy Jackson books also attests to the ways in which her reading of other fantasy novels speaks to her understanding of this toy fantasy. Certainly, the repertoire of texts that child readers bring to any research study involving reader-response should be taken into account.

Leonora's responses again reflected her close reading of the text. Her discussion about searching for the meaning of the lines of poetry at the beginning of the novel and her connecting their message to Frog's fortune reinforce Pike's idea that reading and responding to poetry can encourage readers' spiritual discourse (2000). Leonora went through the passage detailing the fortune in the text, she supplied interpretations for phrases such as "a painful spring" and "a scattering regathered." She effectively situated Uncle Frog's fortune within the plot of the story, though its rhetoric at first seemed ambiguous and mysterious. This demonstrated that she was comfortable with working through the meaning of an unclear aspect of the story.

Like the character of Pellegrina in *Edward Tulane*, Uncle Frog delivering a fortune to the toys in *Mouse* represented an aspect of the novel that provided an opportunity for Leonora to share her ideas about something bordering on the mystical and ambiguous. Even if children do not articulate fully formed ideas and interpretations about such aspects of novels, it may be helpful to ask them open-ended questions about these issues, thereby making space for reflection. In addition to Uncle Frog's fortune, another part of *Mouse* represented a point of discussion that elicited telling insights on the part of the participant. The character of C. Serpentina and her ponderings about infinity concern the next section of this analysis.

THE MYSTERY OF INFINITY

When the issue of infinity came up in our discussion, Leonora at first said nothing lasts forever, but she later questioned whether God is infinity. Rosenblatt argues that every reader brings her unique background and worldview to bear on the text (1978). As a result, the meaning of any aspect of a literary work can be different for each reader. Leonora's idea about God as infinity was a ten-

tative question at first, reflecting her thinking through the idea as well as her initial uncertainty as to whether anything deserved the term. She then moved to a personal experience that had made her think about infinity. At her school, she and her classmates helped decorate a part of the hallway, and their teacher commented that they would be represented by their work for years and years to come. The notion of their lasting beyond their lives brought up Leonora's thinking about infinity. This shift from a tentative question that maybe infinity was God to something the teacher said reflected Leonora's processing a complex concept by applying both her worldview and her experiences.

Hart's suggestion that even very young children can reflect on philosophical, complex topics is relevant here. Some of Leonora's responses amplified Hart's findings that children's spirituality is expressed in unique ways and that children's perception of the world can teach adults something (2003: 131).

THE CHILDREN'S ARTWORK AS SPIRITUAL EXPRESSION

I introduced the picture which Leonora drew in response to the novel in the discussion of my findings. Her artistic response illuminated her deeper engagement with some spiritual aspects of the stories. Coles found in his research that exploring children's pictures helped him to understand their ideas about God and spirituality (1990).

As I examined Leonora's artwork in terms of its content and structure, and also analyzed her discussion of her artwork, I recognized themes in the image that connected with the themes in her experience of the texts. These themes enabled a deeper understanding of her experience of the stories. As Pike mentions, there is a "potential for spiritual engagement" when children create art and respond to it (2002: 13). Certainly, some of Leonora's responses related to intangible and ambiguous content in the stories, and as she responded through multiple methods, her experience of the story was deepened. For example, as I explored the content and structure of Leonora's picture of *Edward Tulane*, I discovered that her picture illuminated her further engagement with one mysterious aspect of the story (see Figure 1).

Her picture featured a drawing of Edward attempting to fly up into the sky, the scene discussed in Chapter Twenty-Two. Using three bright, primary colors to color in the most space, Leonora's drawing did not appear ominous, as the book cover might to some readers. She certainly engaged a different color scheme than the one featured on the cover of the novel, using bright red, green, blue, yellow, and purple markers. Black was used to outline the rabbit's body and wings, for the stars, and for the outline of the moon. Edward appears to have a pleasant expression on his face, but Leonora commented that he is very happy in the picture, and so she made her drawing "really big." I asked the children questions about their artwork in an attempt to understand their pictures from their perspective.

As Wilson and Wilson have discovered, every drawing contains significance and therefore adults should ask questions and strive to enter the child's drawing world (1979: 37). Leonora effectively expressed a happy atmosphere in her picture through both literal expression, as indicated by Edward's facial appearance, and through content expression, as reflected by the usage of bright colors. His hands are raised in front of him in his attempt to fly, but it almost seems as if he is worshipping the stars and moon. Our perspective of Edward is a closer one than we receive in the illustration on the cover of the novel. Thomas & Silk suggest that investigating the constructed perspective in the illustration provides further understanding of the representation (1990: 89) Leonora has chosen to give the viewer a detailed view of Edward's attempt to fly, and the placement of the stars beneath him implies that he may already be airborne.

Leonora's choice to depict this moment visually reflects her deep interest in an event that was not fully explained by the text. She had re-read this chapter in the book, considering it worthy of a second look. Her re-reading of, speculation about, and interpretation of this moment in the story alongside her drawing all reflect her interest in Edward's near-death experience. The power of this chapter lies in the gaps it leaves open for the reader, and Leonora did not hesitate to supply potential meanings for such indeterminate sections. By drawing a picture of the scene, she continued to fill in gaps, even after her discussion about the narrative had ceased. As a result, it may be that by asking children to draw a picture related to a book they have just discussed will actually expand their engagement with the story.

These findings suggest that some young readers are interested in discussing mysterious dimensions of some narratives. Analyzing their discourse revealed that their talk about mystery featured in their understanding of the texts in spiritual terms.

EXPERIENCING TEXTS SPIRITUALLY, BUT NOT RELIGIOUSLY

As Coles's research suggests, children are natural philosophers and can talk about complex spiritual matters (1990). Though in some religious traditions adults may perceive young people as needing extra assistance in order to understand spiritual concepts, my experience with these children revealed them as capable of discussing and reflecting on complex and sophisticated aspects of texts, including spiritual dimensions. The children questioned, interpreted, and reflected on complex topics such as perceptions of the Divine, near-death experiences, and infinity. They also drew meaning from the novels in a way that highlighted their understanding of how the toys' journeys related to the human experience. Some of their responses reflected several dimensions of spiritual sensitivity, as discussed in Hay and Nye's research (1998). These categories included mystery sensing and value sensing.

Though the participants all possessed religious backgrounds, either Mennonite or Catholic or Protestant, their discussion of the books included a spiritual discourse that was not always explicitly religious. I asked the children whether anything in the book reminded them of God, but as discussed earlier, they did not always find something in the story that encouraged them to think about the Divine. Though some of the children did talk about God when I asked them this question, their responses reflected a perception of God that was not particularly religious. By this I mean that the idea of the Divine as the character of Sarah Ruth or the Muskrat did not explicitly match a more traditional depiction of God, as might be discussed within the children's religious traditions. As Coles warns,

Nevertheless, so often our notions of what a child is able to understand are based on the capacity the child displayed in a structured situation. If the child fails to respond to a researcher's predetermined line of questioning, the researcher is likely to comment on a "developmental" inadequacy. (1990: 23)

My findings suggest that adults should not expect children's spiritual responses to a text to fit their framework of spirituality, though certainly this can happen. What the children's verbal discourse indicates is that with time and open-ended questions, adults can encourage young readers to share their ideas about a story in terms of how it relates to the spiritual aspect of life.

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Putting the Punk in a Steampunk Cinderella: Marissa Meyer's "Lunar Chronicles"

Abstract: Focusing on the first novel, *Cinder*, in Marissa Meyer's 'Lunar Chronicles' series, this paper examines her blending of fairy-tale and steampunk motifs in order to rewrite the meme of "Cinderella", identified not only as a narrative of family dysfunction and child abuse, but also as a narrative of feminine passivity and wish fulfilment. After identifying the key motifs from "Cinderella" present in the novel, the abusive stepfamily, the seemingly abject heroine, the prince, the pumpkin transportation, and the ball, the discussion progresses to address two powerful steampunk motifs associated with the Cinderella character, Cinder: the maker, or mechanic, and the cyborg. As a maker, Cinder is empowered by her knowledge of technology and ability to tinker with it, for she is able to use her skills to resist those who would abuse her, and as she is a cyborg, she also has control over her own body. Her cybernetics also empower Cinder, allowing her to resist both mental and physical attacks. Comparing Meyer's use of steampunk motif to popular applications of steampunk to "Cinderella," such as Rod Espinosa's "Steampunk Cinderella", which focus on aesthetics over politics, illustrates the degree to which her depiction of Cinder is connected to one of the punk aspect of steampunk, the rebellion against social injustice. Meyer does not rewrite the meme of abuse in "Cinderella," but in her revision of the story, she demonstrates how a girl might resist being defined by her abuse, and she rewrites the meme of female passivity as Cinder works through a process of identity formation. Compared to the novel's female characters that use traditional markers of femininity to disguise their manipulations and cruelties, the cyborg mechanic Cinder emerges as a positive role model for girls.

Key Words: Fairy Tale, Steampunk, Meme, Cinderella, Gender, Young Adult

Marissa Meyer's "Lunar Chronicles" comprises four volumes: *Cinder* (2012; based on "Cinderella"), *Scarlet* (2013; based on "Little Red Riding Hood"), *Cress* (2014; based on "Rapunzel"), and *Winter* (2015; based on "Snow White"). The series is a generic hybrid, a mash-up of science fiction, fantasy, and fairy tale, with elements of steampunk. The fairy tale motifs are strongly evident in the books, while the steampunk elements are less overt but nonetheless play a key role in Meyer's revisioning of the dominant memes of the innocent persecuted heroine tales she rewrites. This paper focuses mostly on the charac-

ter of Cinder, the central character of the first volume, whose story is woven throughout the series, to explore the ways in which Meyer uses steampunk motifs to rewrite the meme of “Cinderella,” a message about feminine passivity and wish fulfilment. Cinder is obviously based on Cinderella, but instead of a girl banished to the ashes on the hearth, she is a mechanic, in steampunk terms a maker, with a basement storage room workshop. Although much Young Adult steampunk has focused dominantly on the genre’s aesthetics, steampunk as a social movement also has an agenda to change radically our relationship to technology, one of the “punk” elements of steampunk. Makers are valorized for reclaiming human ownership of technology, in opposition to average consumers who use new technologies but cannot make or fix them. Steampunk also, as Jenny Sundén notes, “mak[es] explicit . . . an intimate relationship between femininity, embodiment and technology” (Sundén 2015: 381). As a maker, Cinder has greater agency than Cinderella. She is also a cyborg, a hybrid being that is essentially human but with body parts replaced or modified by technology. In steampunk literature, the cyborg is a figure that challenges our understanding of what is human, and in this case of what it means to be female. Meyer’s use of steampunk motifs establishes *Cinder* as a strong revision of the “Cinderella” meme that speaks directly to current adolescent anxieties about femininity, agency, and identity.

Meyer indicates in an interview at the back of the Square Fish paperback edition that she was inspired by the Chinese variant of “Cinderella,” “Yeh Shen”, because of her fascination with Asian culture (Meyer 2012: n.p.). This allows her to play with the association between Cinderella’s famous slipper and constrictions of the female body. Tyler Scott Smith points out that although Yeh Shen does not bind her feet according to southern Chinese custom, the story still celebrates the smallness of Yeh Shen’s foot: the King falls in love not with Yeh Shen, but with the tiny shoe she has left behind (Smith 2013: 6). Instead of fetishizing the tiny shoe, and by implication the tiny foot that fits it, Meyer focuses on the pain and constriction caused by her heroine’s unnaturally small foot. Linh Cinder lives in New Beijing, part of the Eastern Commonwealth, in the second century of the Third Era, after World War IV; in this alternate reality, the moon was colonized in the 1970s, and Lunars are viewed with suspicion by those on earth. Cinder, eventually revealed to be a Lunar, is a cyborg because it was the only way for her to survive horrific injuries in an accident from her early childhood, when she was escaping the assassins who killed her birth parents. Among her cybernetic implants is an artificial foot, and her wicked adoptive mother controls Cinder in part by forcing her to continue to wear the foot that was designed for her child’s body, despite her having long outgrown it. Before we first encounter Cinder suffering with her too-small cybernetic foot, we see the connection between Meyer’s novel and the fairy tale made overt with the epigraph to Book One of *Cinder*: “While her sisters were given beautiful dresses and fine slippers, Cinderella had only a filthy smock

and wooden shoes” (Meyer 2012: 1). The novel is divided into four books, each with an epigraph from the fairy tale, the remaining three as follows: “There was no bed for her, and at night when she had worked herself weary, she had to sleep by the fire in the ashes” (Meyer 2012: 84); (in the voice of one of the stepsisters) “You want to go to the festival, all covered in dust and dirt? But we would only be ashamed of you!” (Meyer 2012: 187); and “The prince had the stairway smeared with pitch, and when Cinderella tried to run away, her left slipper got stuck” (Meyer 2012: 283). These epigraphs highlight Cinderella’s abjection and status as an object, whether of her adoptive family’s disgust or the prince’s desire. The novel is also littered with allusions to the fairy tale: Cinder’s too-small mechanical foot (instead of a dainty slipper), Adri the abusive adoptive mother (instead of the wicked stepmother), a salvaged pumpkin-coloured, ancient car (instead of a coach), and Cinder being forced to pick up and sort tools before the ball (instead of picking lentils out of the ashes on the hearth), for instance. All of these motifs encourage us to read the novel as a Cinderella story.

But what exactly is a Cinderella story, and how do we read it? Each of the tales that Meyer revises in the series falls into the innocent persecuted heroine category, noted for an “emotional emphasis on intra-family relationships that are important to the heroine,” particularly regarding the heroine’s experience of and response to abuse from close family members (Jones 1993: 21). “Cinderella” is the most widespread and popular of these stories: there are hundreds of variants from around the world, not to mention numerous retellings in picturebooks, short stories, and novels. Fairy tale scholar Jack Zipes suggests that certain tales like “Cinderella” thrive in this way because they are carriers of cultural values that remain relevant; he applies to fairy tales the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins’s theory of the meme as a unit of cultural transmission. He describes the fairy tale-as-meme as one “that has been canonized in the Western world and become so memorable that it appears to be transmitted naturally by our minds to communicate information that alerts us to pay attention to a specific given situation on which our lives may depend” (Zipes 2006: 14). According to Zipes, the meme of “Cinderella” addresses “issues of child abandonment, family legacy, sibling rivalry, and parental love” (Zipes 2006: 115). Certainly these topics are at the core of all versions of the tale. I would suggest, however, that in Western culture the most popular meme associated with “Cinderella” is the rags-to-riches story. Jane Yolen identifies the American Cinderella as “a spungular caricature of her hardier European and Oriental forebears”, and the mass-market American version as “a tale of wishes-come-true-regardless”, a fantasy of wish-fulfillment (Yolen 1977: 21, 27). Similarly, in their investigation of three contemporary rewrites of “Cinderella,” Karlyn Crowley and John Pennington point out that the story “seems in need of gender refashioning” (Crowley and Pennington 2010: 298), after working their way through a

lengthy description of pop-culture depictions of sweet girls who are found by their princes. The dominant meme of “Cinderella” in Western culture seems to be that good things happen to nice, deserving girls.

Applications of memetics are somewhat controversial. As Gregory Shapiro notes, “[m]emes are not material things, and yet they are defined through robust biological analogy and materialist mechanics” (Shapiro 2009: 96). There appears to be a tension between the implied determinism of the meme and human free will when considering narrative memes. Here the analogy with evolution is helpful: not only is the meme not static (Zipes 2012: 20), but any narrative meme transformation, or mutation, to continue the biological analogy, occurs through human interaction with and response to iterations of the tale (Silva 2012: 49). Therefore, not only does the meme analogy effectively represent why certain fairy tales are replicated more than others, but it also offers the possibility of narrative evolution. According to Zipes,

The choices that we make when we seek to transform the world are intertwined with ethics, aesthetics, and politics. As we continue to form and reform fairy tales in the twenty-first century, there is still a glimmer of utopian hope that a better past lies ahead, but more practically, a fairy tale like “Cinderella” replicated as meme reveals to us what we have not been able to resolve and how much more we need to know about the world and ourselves. (Zipes 2006: 127)

This latter is the work I see Meyer performing with her character Cinder, not so much resolving all issues in the “Cinderella” meme, but rather showing us new ways to think about how we might address them, in terms that are relevant to contemporary culture. The length of the series allows Meyer to explore in greater depth the element central to “Cinderella” stories: the intra-family conflict that the heroine must somehow negotiate and transcend. Indeed, intra-family conflict is more complicated here than in most “Cinderella” stories, for not only does Cinder have her adoptive mother and guardian, Adri, along with two adoptive sisters, like the stepfamily so familiar from the fairy tale, but she also has a birth family: the evil Lunar Queen Levana is her aunt, and Winter, the Snow White figure mentioned only in passing in *Cinder* as the stepdaughter forced to self-mutilate by Levana, is her step-cousin. It is these latter relationships that become more important to Cinder as she moves beyond Adri’s sphere in her quest to defeat Levana. Yet family is not the single factor in Cinder’s identity formation. More than the unwanted and unloved child, she is doubly alien as a cyborg and a Lunar. This combination of factors might make her the most abject of Cinderellas, but Meyer revises what Jane Yolen calls the American “Cinderella” story of female patient suffering and goodness rewarded by redefining female worth as rooted in female agency and emphasizing her heroine’s superior humanity when compared to that of many of the unmodified human characters.

Cristina Bacchilega, writing on postmodern transformations of the fairy tale, has noted that “they are doubling and double: both affirmative and questioning” (Bacchilega 1997: 22). This is so of *Cinder*, which on the one hand replicates the Cinderella meme, both in the motif of the child abused by family and in the motif of the girl who is ultimately recognized and valued. On the other hand, *Cinder* does challenge aspects of the Cinderella meme: Cinder resists being defined by her family, and she learns to both value herself and expect to be valued in her difference from societal norms. Meyer achieves this in part by blending generic elements, combining in *Cinder* two key figures from steampunk fiction: the maker and the cyborg.

Although Meyer makes use of these two steampunk motifs, *Cinder* does not fit the classic definition of steampunk literature as defined in a special issue of *Neo-Victorian Studies*:

[Steampunk] can mean a narrative set in Victorian London; one set in a futuristic world that retains or reverts to the aesthetic hallmarks of the Victorian period; a piece of speculative historical fiction that deploys Victorian subjects; or a text that incorporates anachronistic versions of nineteenth-century technologies. (Bowser, Croxall 2010: 1)

The novel has nothing to do with Victorian London, Victorian aesthetics, or anachronistic nineteenth-century technologies. Indeed, it is set far in the future, and the only anachronistic technology, really, is Cinder’s old combustion engine car. This does not mean, however, that *Cinder* cannot be seen as using steampunk elements. The definition of steampunk is the subject of much critical debate; it is fraught because there are three distinct aspects of steampunk. There is a steampunk literary tradition reaching back to the 1970s, but steampunk has also become associated with an aesthetic movement focused on costume, decorative arts, and role-playing, as well as a political movement that rejects contemporary consumerism and human subordination to technology. The steampunk aesthetic is in danger of becoming a formulaic cliché that seems to celebrate an imperialistic culture. This leads the critic and editor of major steampunk anthologies Ann VanderMeer to argue in the introduction to *Steampunk III: Steampunk Revolution* for a definition of steampunk as an attitude, claiming that the “punk” aspect of steampunk demands that it become “something other than its origins indicate,” that it push generic boundaries (VanderMeer 2012: 11). Meyer does just this by incorporating the steampunk tropes of the maker and cyborg with her fairy tale motifs and science fiction.

Most pop-culture applications of steampunk to “Cinderella” focus squarely on aesthetics. An online search for “steampunk Cinderella” turns up varied sites, all focused on giving Cinderella, character and story, a steampunk “look”: instructions for costume make-up for Halloween, a dance recital, a steampunk version of Jules Massenet’s opera *Cendrillon*, to name a few. A good example of this aesthetic approach to steampunk applied to “Cin-

derella” is Rod Espinosa’s *Steampunk Cinderella*, a comic book published a year after *Cinder* and collected in the trade edition of his *Steampunk Fables*. Here, Cinderella is a comical figure, scurrying between various steampunk contraptions, most malfunctioning, designed to help her with her domestic chores. As Rebecca Onion points out, “misinterpretation of an aesthetic *movement* as simple aesthetics leaves the deeper relation between human and object unexamined” (Onion 2008: 156). Setting Meyer’s depiction of Cinder against pop culture uses of steampunk as a matter of “simple aesthetics” highlights the political implications of Cinder-as-maker. The *Steampunk Bible* classifies steampunk makers as those who “typically restore obsolete devices and modify modern technology” (VanderMeer, Chambers 2011: 96). Cinder not only has her workshop in the storage space below her family’s apartment, but she has a stall at the weekly market, where people in her community hire her to make repairs and modifications to various technological items. She is known as “the best mechanic in New Beijing”, with many of her customers initially shocked to discover she is a teenage girl (Meyer 2012: 10). The steampunk maker, or mechanic, is a powerful figure in much steampunk literature. Whereas those who use technology without understanding how it works are ultimately helpless to control it, the maker exercises control over technology; this ability to tinker with technology is seen as the most “punk”, or rebellious, aspect of steampunk in terms of the implied critique of our relationship with technology (Bowser, Croxall 2010: 22).

Cinder’s skills as a mechanic empower her in a number of ways and are essential to her self-assertion and development of agency. It may seem they are only another aspect of her servitude to her adoptive mother, as she supports her family with them and is forced by her status as a cyborg to remain under Adri’s guardianship. However, she applies her maker skills in a plan to free herself from her situation: with the help of the automaton Iko, she takes an old, combustion-engine car from a junkyard to her workshop, where she can tinker with it and turn it into a vehicle for escape. Later, as her adventures continue in *Scarlet*, she uses her tinkering skills to put Iko’s personality chip, all that’s left of her after Adri destroys the android and sells most of her parts, into a spaceship’s auto-control system, “rescuing at least one person who matter[s] to her” (Meyer 2013: 154). Most important, as a mechanic, Cinder has the capacity to repair herself. She has a synthetic hand and foot, a control panel in the back of her head, control wires along her spine, some metal vertebrae, four metal ribs, synthetic tissue protecting her heart, and metal splints supporting the bones of one leg; she is “36.28 % not human” (Meyer 2012: 82). In much steampunk literature, the automaton or the cyborg, often female, is at the mercy of the male maker. I’m thinking here of Ekaterina Sedia’s Mattie in *The Alchemy of Stone*, who cannot gain control of the key that keeps her alive and whose maker punishes her by taking her eyes, or the steam dancer, from the short story of the same title by Caitlin R. Kiernan, who is at the mercy of the man who saved

her and made her first a cyborg and then his wife; he teases that he will make a window into her head so she cannot keep any secrets from him. Unlike these female figures, Cinder is able to change her own parts and does not need any male mechanic to adapt and control her body. When we first encounter her, she is removing her “too-small” foot and enjoying the resultant sense of freedom as she waits for a replacement foot to be delivered (3). Cinder’s rejection of the part and its attendant limitations suggests that she will rebel against the traditional role of Cinderella, just as she becomes a rebel in her continued resistance to Levana, stating at the end of *Cress* that she is “going to start a revolution” (Meyer 2014: 550).

Certainly Cinder as mechanic and cyborg is represented as the opposite of the traditional fairy-tale princess-in-waiting. As a mechanic, she is usually dirty, covered with oil and grease. She is also described as lacking in standard feminine attractiveness: “If Cinder’s body had ever been predisposed to femininity, it had been ruined by whatever the surgeons had done to her, leaving her with a stick-straight figure. Too angular. Too boyish. Too awkward with her heavy artificial leg” (34). Tellingly, however, culturally defined female beauty is brought into question with Levana, whose beauty is a facade, a glamour that hides not only a cold, vicious heart, but also a physically unattractive face. When he first sees her in person, Kai notes that her beauty is “unnatural” (Meyer 2012: 184). Likewise, Cinder notes that Adri, “with her face shimmering with too much power and her lips painted horrifically bright . . . almost look[s] like a reproduction” (Meyer 2012: 21). Levana, Adri, and Pearl, one of Cinder’s adoptive sisters, work hard to project socially acceptable feminine personas, yet none is a particularly attractive human being. In contrast, Cinder, when she finally arrives at the ball, which she has decided to attend only to warn Prince Kai of Levana’s plot to marry then kill him, presents herself in a rumpled ball gown that belonged to her deceased younger sister, wearing a too-small foot because Adri has confiscated her proper foot, and covered in stains from her pumpkin car/coach. Cinder is well aware that she does not belong at the ball, but her concern for those she cares about outweighs any anxieties about propriety or her less than fairy-tale-princess appearance.

Citing Donna Haraway’s “Cyborg Manifesto”, Bowser and Croxall note that the cyborg in steampunk, blurring boundaries between hierarchical distinctions such as human versus machine, offers “radical feminist possibilities” (Bowser, Croxall 2010: 27). While it might be a stretch to imagine *Cinder* as a feminist manifesto, certainly the novel complicates the human-machine binary, and since this process is centred on the female cyborg Cinder, there is also an exploration of gender and power. Cinder is seen by many as not-human; when she escapes from prison in *Scarlet*, a crowd viewing the news footage agrees with the statement by one viewer that he would “put a bullet right through her head. And good riddance” (Meyer 2013: 12). In the Eastern Com-

monwealth, cyborgs are expendable: there is a draft that forces them to serve as guinea pigs in the search for a plague cure. They are “hated and despised by every culture in the galaxy” (Meyer 2012: 292). When Cinder’s much loved younger adoptive sister Peony falls ill of the plague, Adri attacks her: “Do *your kind* even know what love is? Can you feel anything at all, or is it just . . . programmed?” (Meyer 2012: 63; italics mine). Similarly, Levana responds to an android’s expression of sympathy that “[t]he idea that a pile of metal could experience emotion is insulting” (Meyer 2012: 213). Interestingly, early on, when Cinder first sees Prince Kai’s android, Nainsi, she notes that it is an older model because of its “mock-feminine shape” (Meyer 2012: 8). People do not want their androids to look like humans. What seems to be most disturbing about cyborgs is that they are human and not-human at the same time, blurring the binary distinction.

To some extent Cinder internalizes the societal prejudice against cyborgs. When she is first told of her true identity as the Lunar Princess Selene, she cries, “No. I can’t. I can’t be a queen or a princess or—I’m nobody. I’m a cyborg!” (384). Until she is publicly outed at the ball, Cinder tries as much as possible to pass as being fully human. She also has absorbed the earth bias against Lunars. When first presented with the possibility that she might be Lunar, she is horrified:

To be cyborg *and* Lunar. One was enough to make her a mutant, an outcast, but to be *both*?... Lunars were a cruel, savage people. They murdered their shell children. They lied and scammed and brainwashed each other because they *could*. They didn’t care who they hurt, so long as it benefitted themselves. She was not one of them. (Meyer 2012: 178)

Cinder struggles with the double identity of cyborg and alien. Writing of steampunk romance, Julie Anne Taddeo comments that “the heroine’s own struggle to refashion her identity takes center stage” (Taddeo 2013: 50). This is particularly so for Cinder. Adopted, she is constantly made aware by Adri that she is unwelcome and not part of the Linh family, despite Garan having given her his surname. She is also aware that as a cyborg she is an object of disgust for many humans. When she has to accept her Lunar heritage, she thinks that “she had no idea who she was anymore. No clue who she was supposed to be” (Meyer 2012: 385). This is a significant difference from most “Cinderella” stories. Generally, Cinderella knows who she is: she had a mother, and she has a father, however absent or incompetent he may be. It is only the temporary hostility of her stepmother that forces her to disguise her identity. A key feature of most “Cinderella” stories is the recognition by others (particularly the prince) of the heroine’s true worth; there is no process of identity formation for the heroine. In Cinder’s case, however, she must negotiate the different factors of her heritage, societal expectations, and her own desires to shape an identity. A key element in her sense of self is her pride in her maker abilities, but she must

integrate her cyborg and Lunar components to, as Dr. Erland puts it, “accept who [she] truly is” (Meyer 2012: 384).

Cinder begins to come to terms with her cyborg self when it saves her from Levana. It is unusual for a Lunar to be a cyborg because Lunars, who have the ability to manipulate bioelectrical energy, are opposed to cybernetics, and perhaps for good reason. Cinder’s cybernetic implants allow her to see through Levana’s glamour and recognise her lies. At the crisis moment, when she faces down Queen Levana, as Cinder resists the queen’s compulsion to kill herself, she “call[s] forth every nanobyte of strength she possess[es]” and attempts to kill the queen instead. In between pointing the gun at her own head and then pointing it at Levana, she notices that she feels “different. Strong. Powerful” (Meyer 2012: 364). In *Scarlet*, we see her making good use of the enhanced cybernetic hand Dr. Erland gives her at the end of *Cinder*, using its various tools to break out of jail and jumpstart a spaceship. When she encounters another prisoner, Carson Thorne (think of the prince from “Rapunzel”), she matter-of-factly borrows a vid-cable from his portscreen and opens her skull panel in front of him to replace her own defective cable. When he shows revulsion in observing she has a portscreen in her head, her reaction is utterly nonchalant: “Something like that” (Meyer, 2013: 34). As a maker, she is perhaps more prepared to accept the benefits of her cybernetics than she might otherwise be if she had no understanding of how they work or ability to repair them.

It is more difficult for her to accept her Lunar identity. Human fear of Lunars is highlighted by Kai’s acknowledgement after Cinder’s escape in *Scarlet* that it is Cinder’s Lunar abilities to manipulate rather than her cybernetics that disgust and frighten him. He wonders “how many times she’d tricked him” (Meyer 2013: 66). Whereas Cinder the cyborg is attacked as being unable to have or display human feelings, Cinder the Lunar is assumed to be inhumanly duplicitous and malevolent. Since most of the novel is focalized through Cinder, we see that she most certainly does have human feelings. For instance, when she realizes that the cyborg draft has been a ruse to locate her, she feels ill at the thought of those killed in the process. It is simply the visual markers of her feelings that she cannot display, as she has no tear ducts to weep and her sensors prevent her from blushing. Both weeping and blushing are particularly associated with feminine sensibility, yet in the novel, the woman who works hardest to present a conventionally feminine image, Adri, views a feminine appearance, similar to Lunar glamour, as a tool to manipulate men; as she says to the dressmaker, she “expect[s] results” from the dresses being made for her daughters (Meyer 2012: 23). Levana uses her glamour to project the image of a warm and nurturing queen to disguise her ruthless ambition and cruelty. In contrast, Cinder is very reluctant to use her Lunar abilities to manipulate others. She reflects that “[s]he could make people see things that weren’t there. Feel things they shouldn’t feel. Do things they didn’t mean to do. She could be

anyone. *Become* anyone” (Meyer 2012: 387). Being Lunar seems to offer her a world of possible identities, which is both “sicken[ing] and frighten[ing]” to her. It is harder for Cinder to counter the accusation that she is a monstrous Lunar because she fears herself; whereas she knows she is capable of human emotion despite her cybernetics, she does not know if she can be Lunar and still be humane.

This is another key way in which *Cinder* picks apart the Cinderella meme, not only in Zipes’s formulation of a tale that addresses family dysfunction and child abuse but in the Western popular narrative of wish fulfilment. Cinder must come to terms with how to define family and her place within one. She is well aware of her adoptive family’s dysfunctionality and has enough self-worth to recognize that Adri is not behaving as a mother should: “[t]he woman was supposed to be the one to protect *her*, to help *her*” (Meyer 2012: 131). At this point, having escaped the betrayal of Adri selling her to be a test subject, Cinder recognizes that she might as well have no family as have Adri and Pearl. Her Lunar family also puts the “dys” in dysfunction, as her aunt has murdered her mother, tried to murder her, and forced her beautiful stepdaughter to mutilate herself. Cinder’s birth mother was not a loving or lovable woman either. She was promiscuous, so no one can clearly identify Cinder’s father, and she was responsible for the law requiring Lunar families to destroy those children who are born without the ability to manipulate bioelectrics. Many “Cinderella” stories feature the heroine striving to please her abusive family and, more often than not, passively waiting for them to accept her. There are, of course, the variants such as the Grimms’s “Cinderella” [“Aschenputtel”], in which the stepsisters are punished by having their eyes pecked out by doves, but the birds are representatives of the heroine’s birthmother; she herself initiates no aggression. More common in Western popular iterations of the story, based on the Disney version, itself based on Charles Perrault’s “Cinderella, or The Little Glass Slipper” [“Cendrillon, ou la petite pantoufle de verre”] is a young woman who is sweet, meek, and incapable of anger. In contrast, Cinder feels hatred for Adri and fights back when the androids arrive to take her away to the labs for plague research, knocking out one with the timing belt from her outmoded car. Likewise, after Adri takes Cinder’s new foot, forcing her back into the too-small foot from her childhood, Cinder “want[s] to rampage through the house, destroying everything” (Meyer 2012: 281). Cinder does not accept her family’s abuse. Caught between an adoptive family she rejects and a birth family she rightfully fears, Cinder instead creates a family of the heart for herself in her adoptive sister Peony and her android companion Iko. Even after they are taken from her, when she decides to escape from jail at the end of *Cinder*, she takes with her Peony’s identity chip and Iko’s personality chip. In later volumes in the series, Cinder will create a community for herself that comprises humans, an android/space ship, a genetically created wolf soldier, and a Lunar shell. Rather than finding ways to accommodate dysfunction and putting up

with abuse, Cinder creates an alternative way of living in companionship, love, and respect with others.

This is not simply the wish fulfilment of which Jane Yolen speaks when criticising the Western Cinderella, for Cinder has to work on her own behalf. Dr. Erland is a possible fairy godfather when he gifts Cinder with new cybernetics to assist her jail break, but the choices, effort, and risks are hers. In embracing all facets of her self, including the technology that is a part of her, she finds the strength to rebel against the fate that is being forced upon her. This first volume in the series ends with Cinder rejecting passivity. She thinks “[i]t would be so simple to let it happen. So simple not to fight back” (Meyer 2012: 386). Nonetheless, she realizes that “she ha[s] to try” and cuts out her ID chip preparatory to breaking out of jail. Having removed the item that society used to identify her, Cinder is now free to form her own identity. The book’s final lines present some of her options:

A deformed cyborg with a missing foot.
A Lunar with a stolen identity.
A mechanic with no one to run to, nowhere to go.
... a ghost. (Meyer 2012: 387)

In the subsequent volumes in the series, as Meyer weaves in additional fairy tale narratives, variations on the innocent persecuted heroine story that continue the subversion of the meme of the passive female victim, Cinder will work to integrate her different selves and shape an independent identity that is determined by neither social norms of femininity nor by physical limitations of humanity. As a cyborg mechanic, Cinder embodies rebellious power, rejecting her family’s and her society’s judgment of her and using her skills to take control of her own life. She challenges our notion of what it means to be female and human.

I am not suggesting here that steampunk motifs are the only way to cause a needed memetic mutation to “Cinderella”. However, I think Meyer’s use of them is an effective strategy, particularly for the current cultural moment. Despite decades of feminist critique, the meme of the sweet girl rewarded for her beauty and goodness continues to thrive. Indeed, Disney’s 2015 live-action remake of its iconic *Cinderella*, directed by Kenneth Branagh and starring Lily James, does not significantly rewrite the meme presented by the 1950 animated version; the movie’s website describes Cinderella’s goal as trying to “have courage and be kind.” In other words, she still must suffer the trials of her step-family with patience and niceness as she waits for her opportunity to dazzle the prince. The film has also generated much criticism for its seeming fetishization of the tiny, perfect female body (VanderWerff 2015; Robinson 2015). As well as the pervasiveness of the Cinderella meme, another strong element that affects adolescent girls today in Western society is the human relationship with technology. On the one hand there is anxiety about girls being left behind boys in

the development and use of technology; on the other hand, we worry that girls are obsessed with the more superficial applications of technology available on their smart phones, that as they become increasingly connected digitally they become less capable of making meaningful human connections face-to-face, and that they are victims rather than users of technology as social media becomes a tool for shaming girls for various transgressions against societal feminine norms of appearance or behaviour. In contrast, by employing the 'punk' element of steampunk, Meyer provides assurance that technology can empower girls. Her steampunk Cinderella, maker and cyborg, demonstrates instead that a girl's value lies not within her appearance or adherence to societal norms, but rather within her strength of character, her agency, and her capacity for rebelliousness against injustice.

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Pretty is who pretty talks: Prettytalk in Scott Westerfeld's "The Uglies" series

It is often that children and young adult literature takes as its point of departure an ethical problem, with the view to either discouraging a certain behaviour or propagating some attitude or worldview, be it in an overt or covert manner. At the same time, though, we can name many titles which provide social criticism, and rather than reinforcing the contemporary cultural mores, they deconstruct them, taking a necessarily satirical angle. *The Uglies* (2005–2008) seems to belong to the latter category, inscribing itself in the much-discussed genre of young adult dystopia, which precludes the criticism of such phenomena as totalitarianism, globalization and uniformization. Westerfeld in his cycle foregrounds the modern problems connected with the body and the implications of the fast-paced biotechnological changes.

The Uglies are set c. 2300 in America, no longer divided into states but with life organized around cities (such as New Pretty Town or Diego), inhabited by exceedingly beautiful human beings, living peacefully and comfortably, surrounded by smart technology, fulfilling all their dreams and desires. Everyone on reaching their sixteenth birthday is subject to a radical plastic surgery to match the standards set by the International Committee for Morphological Standards. People are made "pretty" rather than beautiful: extremes are avoided, since they counteract the generalized notions of harmony, agreement and peace, desired after a biotechnological disaster that hit the Earth before the Prettytime. In the world where everyone is pretty and medically enhanced to prevent decay as much as possible, there are no reasons to be jealous or resentful. In particular, the conflicts based on skin colour and other physical features are stalled before they are even born.

Such initial conditions clearly position *Uglies* as a socio-eugenic dystopia: a subgenre being an amalgamate of social ones (like Orwell's *1984*, 1949) and eugenic ones (like Huxley's *Brave New World*, 1932). (Claeys 107) Indeed, the threads of the two are inseparably connected in Westerfeld's image of a "pretty" world. On one hand, the cycle depicts a neigh-totalitarian control over the citizens: Special Circumstances, like Orwellian thought-police, are tracking all "ugly", independent actions and ideas. On the other hand, the series is built around the concept of bio-manipulation, akin to Bokanovsky's Process

in Huxley's book: at each stage of life there comes an operation, which – while changing the outward appearance – touches also the brain. Lesions made by doctors ensure “pretty” attitude to life: complacent, agreeable, shallow and focused on entertainment.

Just like in the classic dystopias mentioned above, the question of the relation between the language and power is raised. It turns out that the marker of being a pretty is not only a surgically modified face, but also – and perhaps more importantly – the patterns of speech. In *Uglies* the author creates a particular slang, which arises as a result of the lesions, thus confirming to the authorities that the subject is fully controlled. However, Westerfeld hints that prettytalk – and prettythought – are not necessarily a product of a physically lobotomized society: “Maybe some people had always been pretty-heads, even back before the operation had been invented” (*Pretties* 218).

The author seems to suggest that his novels can and should be read as a commentary on and a reaction to the elements of “prettiness” in our own society. Already in 1985 Neil Postman in his *Amusing Ourselves to Death* delineated dumbing down of the American society and crumbling down of the culture of the written word, superseded by the culture of entertainment. His insightful dissection of the modern emphasis on image, impression and fun, in place of deeper reflection, holds valid also today. In the world where the chief medium become newsfeeds, “form excludes content” (7). Marcel Danesi, focusing on carrying on teenage culture to other stages of life, provides the data revealing our equivalent of prettytalk – or rather “uglytalk”, made up of vulgar expressions (21–22, 27).

The author himself brings the question of prettytalk to attention in his comments in *Mind Rain* (2013) and *Bogus to Bubbly* (2009). Among others, he underlines that a major inspiration when creating the slang of the pretties was for him a book by Evelyn Waugh, *Vile Bodies* (1930). This story about the Golden Youth in the wake of the Great Depression shares with Westerfeld's world not only words like “bogus” or the abundant use of the suffix “-making”, but also the portrayal of insensible pursuit of pleasure, which takes the place of looking for meaning. (*Bogus to Bubbly* 185) In both cases, content-free speech is an indicator of deeper ails of the society. It is especially interesting when one realizes that the diagnosis of Westerfeld came on the eve of the 2008 economic crisis, showing the endurance and applicability of the same patterns over longer periods of time.

This article intends to discuss the specific slang in *The Uglies* series as revealing the major problems of “prettythought”, such as: shallowness, lack of individuation, the pursuit of entertainment or the propensity to lie. Taking into account the abovementioned studies, such an analysis will testify to the presence of concrete problems in the contemporary world and the weakness of „forever young” culture (as dubbed by Danesi in the title of his book).

Before moving on to the analysis, it is worthwhile to recapitulate the plot, so as to facilitate the understanding of the discussion below. In Westerfeld's

dystopia the society is organized into: uglies – especially people before the operation, but also those who escaped the operation and those who were cured (the two groups called also randoms¹); new pretties – right after the operation, roughly in their teens and twenties, middle pretties – with an assigned job, and crumbliies – the oldest version of pretties. Apart from them, there are also Specials – “cruel pretties”, superhumans acting as a police force, and their subdivision, Cutters. The groups with the lesions comprise all kinds of pretties, with variations in the placement of the scars: to ensure “bubbleheadedness” or perfect obedience. All kinds of pretties use “prettytalk” to some degree, but it is the most prominent in the speech of new pretties, which will provide the bulk of examples for the present analysis.

The main heroine is adventurous Tally Youngblood, dreaming of becoming a pretty one day. However, on reaching the awaited day of the operation, she learns that it was postponed until she finds where her friend Shay escaped to – the Smoke, an organization of free-thinking uglies. While in the Smoke, Tally learns about the lesions and the cure for them, and – inadvertently – betrays her new friends to the Special Circumstances. Shay is turned into a pretty, and Tally gives herself up to be altered as well. She means to escape and to take the cure, to become an example for others. However, when the time comes, she is forced to split the nano pills with Zane, the leader of the Crims clique, who also seeks to liberate himself from the patterns of prettythought by extreme sensations. What ensues is a disaster, resulting in crippling Zane and making Shay and Tally join Special Circumstances. Only through her personal battle against her lesions, the sense of guilt and entrapment in the enhanced body, does Tally learn to accept weakness, ugliness and “randomness” of others. In the end, the cure for “bubbleheadedness” is spread all over the world, finishing Prettytime.

As far as the “pretty” language, one of the first things one notices in the linguistic organization of Westerfeld’s dystopia is the conversion of the basic adjectives “pretty”, “ugly”, “special” and “random” into nouns, which serve the classification of people all over the dystopian world. It runs much deeper than the usual “the rich” and “the poor”: in the Prettytime we speak about “a pretty”, “an ugly”, “a special” and “a random”, which expresses dystopian uniformization. People are robbed of their individual identity as soon as they turn sixteen not through the inclusion into the collective “the”, but through the imposition of an impersonal “a”. Each person becomes only a cog in the machine, a protrusion of a ready-made cookie-cutter image. Shay in *Uglies* realizes it and this is why she wants to escape:

¹ Randomization implies freeing one’s imagination and creativity, high changeability as well as deeply ingrained disregard for authority. Randoms are subject to the swings of emotions and their actions are often affected by personal interests. By far the best example of randomization is Diego – a city with no original secret police, where the rebels first succeeded in the massive healing of the citizens. (*Specials* 211, 213)

Ugly faces were always asymmetrical; neither half looked exactly like the other. So the first thing the morpho software did was take each side of your face and double it, like holding a mirror right down the middle, creating two examples of perfect symmetry. ...

Even without much work, Shay's face was already welcoming, vulnerable, healthy...pretty.

"Don't you think you're beautiful?"

Shay didn't look, just shrugged. "That's not me. It's some committee's idea of me." (*Uglies* 41, 44)

This conversion, just like in Newspeak, results in impoverishment of language. "Pretty" and "ugly" can be applied not only to people, but also to thoughts and deeds, becoming umbrella terms for a range of meanings as different as "good", "stupid", "conceited" in the case of the first one, and "bad", "natural", "free" in the case of the second one. (e.g. *Uglies* 49, 80, 102, *Pretties* 140, 139) The usage depends on the speaker. Obviously, the authorities give preference to the good, stupid and conceited society, over bad, natural and free citizens. The confusion of meanings is considerable, resulting in "pretty befuddlement" (*Pretties* 106) or – more often – "pretty haze" (e.g. *Pretties* 144, 173), effectively preventing the majority from making a clear judgment. Arrested in the process of maturation, new pretties perceive the world in terms of entertainment and boredom, rather than good and evil. To emphasize it, Westerfeld introduces the categories: "bogus" and "bubbly". They are excellent examples of how deprived of significance "pretty" words are.

"Wake up, pretty-head"...

"No," he murmured. "Sleepy." ...

"Then it's time to get up. We'll be late for ice-skating." ...

"Ice skating is bogus."

"Sleeping's bogus. Get up and be bubbly."

"Bubbly is bogus"...

"Bubbly is not bogus, lazy-face."

When her hand had grown sufficiently cold, Tally placed it on his bare chest.

He flinched but didn't fight back

"Now that was bubbly."

"I thought bubbly was bogus." (*Pretties* 96–97)

This is an exchange between the main heroes of *Pretties*, the second installment of the series. Tally and Zane have undergone the operation, however, they both have a non-conformist, adventure-seeking attitude. Seeking authentic feelings and thoughts by defying the world of manufactured happiness, Tally and Zane keep themselves "bubbly" by starving themselves and by substance overuse (caffeine, calorie-purgers). The quoted conversation is their attempt to cheat the city interface, which listens to them through the cuffs they have to wear as suspects.

“Bogus” and “bubbly” appear in so many contexts so many times that the frequency of their occurrence in the series already makes them empty of meaning. The basic meaning of “bogus” nowadays is “fake” (*Merriam Webster Dictionary*. “Bogus”), but it can be used to express displeasure at something. In *The Uglies* it stands for such words as, e.g. “lame”, “weird”, “fake”, “boring”, “wrong” (e.g. *Specials* 340, 346, *Pretties* 291, 218, 122). It does not only replace a wide range of adjectives: it also invades other lexical categories, extending to nouns (“bogusness”, *Uglies* 383) and adverbs (“bogusly”, *Pretties* 65).

However, even “bogus”, for all its marvellous endurance (even beyond the Prettytime in *Extras*), can itself be replaced by “non-bubbly” (creating a close tautology in “lame, non-bubbly clique”, *Pretties* 53). “Bubbly”, like “bogus”, is versatile enough to fit in most of the contexts connected with pleasurable or exciting experiences. Usually denoting something positive (“happy”, “cool”, “good”, “stimulating”), it was chosen by Westerfeld because of the connotations with champagne, the preferred beverage of pretties (*Mind Rain* 10). In *Pretties* the buzzword between the Crims, and particularly between Tally and Zane, is “stay bubbly” – that is, stay alert, conscious, aware of what is going on (e.g. *Pretties* 58, 70, 89, cf. *Merriam Webster, Urban Dictionary*). The search for extreme, death-defying experiences helps them to wring themselves out of the control of the system.

However, already in *Specials*, the third part of the cycle, “bubbly” fades into the realm of derogatory and contemptuous terms, reserved for those thinking in the average manner (e.g. 86, 109). Tally with her friend Shay are turned into Cutters – an extreme version of the Special Circumstances agents. Their senses and reflexes are boosted and their bodies suited to live in the wild, to hunt down rebels. The intensity with which they experience the world makes them abandon “bubbly” in favour of “icy”: rather than champagne intoxication, their excitement, aggressiveness and staying constantly alert can be compared to the effects of drug abuse (particularly amphetamine, called “ice” in slang, *Urban Dictionary*). They refer to pretties as “bubbleheads” (e.g. 131, 160). “Bubbly”, once fallen from grace, outside the Prettytime is used only mockingly, in contradistinction to “bogus”. Thus, it is clearly a prime feature of the prettytalk, associated with shallowness, vanity and lack of intelligence. (*Extras* 7, 9–10)

Both “bogus” and “bubbly” can be intensified, but the range of adverbs is limited. Pretties use either “totally” (the most frequent), “utterly” or “deeply”.² (e.g. *Pretties* 46) Intensifying an already meaningless word makes the whole expression even more vague. Examples abound, ranging from “deeply hungry”, through “utterly bubbly-making” to “totally ouch” (*Pretties* 46, 110, 47). “Totally” and “utterly” can be used also as stand-alone words, expressing confirmation of preceding statement.

² It is worth noting that „utterly” and “deeply” are used mostly in the second volume of the cycle, *Pretties*, tying them closely with the spoilt youth culture of the New Pretty Town. With the crumbling of the system they lose their place in the slang.

Zane and Tally skipped breakfast – a meal they hadn't eaten for the last month – and layered up in the elevator down to the front door of Pulcher Mansion, speaking fluent pretty along the way.

“Did you see the frost, Zane-la? So icy-making.”

“Winter is totally bubbly.”

“Totally. Summer is just too... I don't know. *Warming* or something.”

“Utterly.” (*Pretties* 98)

In the above example it can be seen how narrow the linguistic – and cognitive – horizon of pretties is. The use of adverbs derived from “total” and “utter” signal that pretties would not have much more to say about winter and spring, besides them being “icy” and “warming”. Their whole experience encompasses simple sensations and the judgments passed are obvious and tautological.

Clipping of some words has a similar effect. Plastic surgery, rather horrible in the description of Shay (*Uglies* 49), becomes an everyday “surge”, while those addicted to weird operations are called “surge-monkeys”. (*Pretties* 22, *Extras* 7) Cameras become “cams”, especially when they are flying ones – “hovercams” (e.g. *Specials* 107, *Extras* 3). Perhaps the most telling example is dehydrated food, called by shortened names: for instance, spaghetti bolognese becomes SpagBol and Swedish meatballs SwedeBalls. Supposedly enhancing communication, it produces decontextualized linguistic hash. Dehydrated food loses its natural taste and size, and the names entail the “clipping” of meanings: Italian spaghetti loses with internationalized Spag, and “meat” is taken out of “meatballs” (meat being considered ugly food, *Uglies* 89–90). The process works also conversely: the original dehydration of meaning results in the contraction of forms, and pretties – channelling expression through the body – seem unable to produce elaborated language.

Another characteristic trait of the speech of the new pretties, and one that endures beyond Prettytime, is affixation. The generative prefix hover-, attached to such nouns as “board” or “cam”, is not welcome in prettytalk, as it signifies freedom. It is randoms who use hoverboards to fly away – pretties prefer hot-air balloons. (e.g. *Pretties* 23, 199, *Specials* 36–46) First and foremost, prettytalk makes use of compounds created with the help of two suffixes: – making and –missing. The first one is – like “bogus” – the heritage of *Vile Bodies*. Instead of saying, e.g. “It makes me happy,” a pretty would say “It's happy-making” (*Pretties* 177). In abundant use in the New Pretty Town, it is attached to such words as “pretty”, “sad”, “dizzy”, “scary”, “vex”, “nervous”, etc. (*Pretties* 8, 346, 54, 120, *Extras* 198, *Pretties* 76). Such an affixation has profound consequences. The strategy of incorporation, on the one hand, emphasizes emotion or judgment, but on the other hand, removes the personal perspective from the statement. The direct object, “me”, is dropped as redundant, and so is independent thought. What is more, the affixation softens the statements, which could potentially spark discord, e.g. “Think they are pretty-making?” (*Pretties* 23).

The multiplication of the suffix –making in ordinary speech contributes to the overall watering down of concepts and their simultaneous uniformization. Whether it is “pretty”, “icy”, “bubbly” or “dizzy”, or even “sad”, all the words can take the same suffix, which provides a safe anchor and a platform of understanding. In effect, everybody is kept docile. The effect is so powerful as to positively chain people to the comfort of shared linguistic space, not marred with “ugly” disagreement. As Shay, refusing to abandon her prettiness, states:

“I’m happier in this body. You want to talk about brain damage? Look at you all, running around these ruins playing commando. You’re all full of schemes and rebellions, crazy with fear and paranoia, even jealousy. ... That’s what being ugly does. ... From what I can tell, ‘cured’ means being a jealous, self-important, whiny little ugly-brain. It means thinking you’ve got all the answers.” (*Uglies* 390, 392)

The same function is fulfilled by the second of the suffix pair, – missing. It can be used as an independent word, as in: “You are so missing.” (i.e. “You do not understand”, “You’re not up to speed,” *Pretties* 5, cf. *Urban Dictionary*), but it is much more often compounded with some noun (brain-, fashion-, face-, etc., *Pretties* 46, *Extras* 14, 139). To be “face-missing” (*Extras* 135) is to actually lack something, in this case, recognition count in the social media. To be “fashion-missing” is, of course, a metaphor. Avoiding the negative connotations of “unfashionable”, which would explicitly exclude the target recipient from the “fashionable” group, it implies simply diverging from the mainstream (which in the pretty world is just as bad, but corrigible).

Pretties avoid arguments. They never get angry enough to scream at each other (*Pretties* 138). Their language is more descriptive and emphatic, which results in “civil debates” rather than “wild arguments” (cf. *Specials* 213). Even names sometimes receive –la or –wa (Tally-wa, Zane-la, Shay-la), which makes the speech acquire a sing-song quality.³ There are numerous other suffixes in use, e.g. –challenged or –shattering, bringing to mind political correctness. The most important of those is –slanting, which is taken by one word: truth⁴.

The expression “to slant the truth” is in common use in English, and can be encountered in various examples, meaning distorting the facts or presenting them in a biased way. (*Merriam Webster Dictionary*. “Slant”) The choice of words is symptomatic of relativism, characteristic for the modern culture. However, as Postman points out, in the public discourse, the distinction between truth and lie is nonexistent (110), so what occurs is no simple swapping of one value for another:

³ More on the suffixes –la and –wa at Scott Westerfeld’s website: scottwesterfeld.com. Given the overall Japanese inspirations of the author, evident from his books, it seems justified to see in them the reflection of –kun or even –chan, endearment suffixes in Japanese.

⁴ Admittedly, there is one example of „story-slanting” (*Extras* 386), but the rest of the examples feature solely “truth”.

My point is that we are now so thoroughly adjusted to the “Now... this” world of news – a world of fragments, where events stand alone, stripped of any connection to the past, or to the future, or to other events – that all assumptions of coherence have vanished. And so, perforce, has contradiction. In the context of *no context*, so to speak, it simply disappears. ... [T]here is no Newspeak here. Lies have not been defined as truth and truth as lies. All that has happened is that the public has adjusted to incoherence and been amused into indifference. (Postman 110–11)

Truth-slanting is well-suited for those living in the Prettytime. Not only does the government lie to the people. Lying is also a skill desired to outwit the Special Circumstances and would suggest the ability to think outside the box. Tally – the protagonist of the first three volumes – can be very often found lying, deceiving and hiding the truth, also with the help of prettytalk (e.g. *Uglies* 196, 290–294, *Pretties* 96–98, 176–179, 294, 340–341, *Specials* 148–151, *Extras* 268–269). In *Extras*, though, the world is changed and the ambiguous question of the morality of lie is probed further by Westerfeld. Truth-slanting remains a dangerous heritage of the Old System also for the post-pretty environment of kickers – young reporters from Japan. Aya, a fifteen-year-old ugly, finds herself constantly lying to achieve her goals. She is confused as to the moral evil of “truth-slanting”, and is forced to reconsider her behaviour when she starts to date Frizz Miruno, who designs a surgery which frees him from the lying compulsion he cannot beat off in any other way (*Extras* 40). He recurses to biomanipulation in search for the lost ethical system, but the artificiality of this solution is ridiculed by Tally.

“Let me get this straight,” Tally said to Frizz. “You had to get brain surge just so you could *talk about things*?”

“I used to lie all the time,” he said. “I couldn’t trust myself, so I had to change.” (*Extras* 298)

Only meeting Tally and Aya convinces Frizz that brain modification is not the way to make proper moral judgments. Rather, it is depriving oneself of the possibility of choice – “just like bubbleheads” (*Extras* 52).

Considering all the linguistic processes of the prettytalk: clipping, affixation and euphemization of language, coupled with its impoverishment (not much improved in *Extras*), the confusion about the question of truth and lie is understandable.

For the first year after being cured, Hiro had jumped from clique to clique: Extreme Surge, the city hoverball team, even a tour in the wild as a Ranger trainee. He hadn’t stuck with anything, shifting aimlessly, unable to make sense of freedom.

Of course, in that logic-missing first year a lot of people were confused. ...

People’s faces were so different since the mind-rain⁵, the new fads and inventions and cliques so unpredictable. It made the city sense-missing sometimes. (*Extras* 31, 38)

⁵ Mind-rain signifies the worldwide spread of the cure for prettiness (*Extras* 8).

The patterns of prettytalk endured beyond the pretty surgery and lesions. The world became richer, but the restored meanings had to be fitted into the already existing forms. The heavy reliance on adjective-noun conversion, descriptiveness and compounding betray the attention to the shifting qualities rather than “threads of permanence” (*Specials* 88) – the unchanging truths. Without anchoring in objects and certainties, people were left in the world of floating modifiers. The attempt to resurrect the old, “Rusty” religions ended up with creating a software spouting nonsensical sets of rules (*Extras* 37–38). Only “telling people stories”, not truth-slanting, but uncovering the patterns underlying the chaos of newsfeeds, allows to construct a new reality (*Extras* 197).

The samples of prettytalk, presented above, allow one to discern the patterns of thought, implied by and induced by the numerous linguistic processes in the discussed slang. The world in Westerfeld’s distorting mirror is organized around simple dichotomies, supplanting the absolute Good and Evil: pretty vs ugly, bogus vs bubbly, revealing, first of all, the subjectivisation of perception. The changes in social functioning grounded in these basic oppositions can be catastrophic: the unconscious association of “ugliness” with rebellion, crime and stupidity results in very concrete repressions. Secondly, the dichotomies testify to the shallow pursuit of an imposed version of happiness, associated with pleasure and entertainment. The overuse of the four terms empties them of meaning, impoverishing the actual individual experience and limiting the cognitive horizons.

There are similar instances of linguistic processes, reinforcing the basic confusion, relativity and uniformization. The platform of understanding hinged on suffixes is an interesting example of dissociation from the actual world, created by nouns (truth, fashion) and individual opinions and sensations expressed by adjectives (sad, happy, icy). Clipping, at the very least, results in obliterating the national differences and hints at the aforementioned “dehydration of meaning”, like in the case of Spagbol. However, it may have more profound consequences: “crim” instead of “criminal”, “surge” instead of “plastic surgery” create pet names for the oppressive, unjust or even evil parts of reality, making it not only easy to digest, but even welcoming.

Euphemization has a similar effect. Westerfeld follows into the footsteps of Orwell, although his irony is not as biting as to create Miniluv or Minipax. “Special Circumstances” is not a term of endearment, but a license, justifying the organization’s immoral acts. By using a comparatively complex expression (especially for the pretties), they manipulate others to perceive them as better, more intelligent, more advanced, and thence – entitled to godlike power over people (cf. esp. the Special experiment in *Pretties*, 242–298). The simplicity of forms and sing-song like quality of prettytalk lull the consciences and keep the society docile. Using Bertrand Russell’s term, pretties lack the “immunity to eloquence” (Postman: 26), which means that they are easily convinced by harmonious music of the words or agreeably sounding speech.

As suggested by Westerfeld, the patterns of prettythought are enhanced by the lesions, but are inherent in us as humans and augmented by the contemporary entertainment and forever young culture. As Marcel Danesi points out,

Media programming, too, has become thoroughly linked with adolescence. TV comedy, for instance, is frequently moronic in its use of adolescent humour. ... Typical verbal exchanges between [Beavis and Butthead] included: 'Cool,' 'Sucks' (school sucks, life sucks), 'Nachos rule,' 'Burn it,' 'Dude,' 'Chicks,' 'Ass,' 'Asswipe.' (27)

As meaningless and primitive as “prettytalk”, the speech of the heroes of the show is nevertheless “ugly”, effectively posing as a reaction to the emptiness of the correct and neutral adult language. In its essence, though, it ironically reveals the basic predicament of the modern society, breeding thoughtless youth who transform into thoughtless adults.

The development of technology, more and more geared towards fulfilling one's desires, is augmenting the dumbing-down processes, which Westerfeld allows to imaginatively develop to paint the vision of his dystopian future. In the eighties of the twentieth century Neil Postman saw the danger in television, but his words ring true also in the age of the Internet.

Entertainment is the supra-ideology of all discourse on television. No matter what is depicted or from what point of view, the overarching presumption is that it is there for our amusement and pleasure. That is why even on news shows which provide us daily with fragments of tragedy and barbarism, we are urged by the newscasters to “join them tomorrow.” What for? One would think that several minutes of murder and mayhem would suffice as material for a month of sleepless nights. We accept the newscasters' invitation because we know that the “news” is not to be taken seriously, that it is all in fun, so to say. Everything about a news show tells us this – the good looks and the amiability of the cast, their pleasant banter, the exciting music that opens and closes the show, the vivid film footage, the attractive commercials – all these and more suggest that what we have just seen is no cause for weeping. (Postman 87)

The above diagnoses are reflected in the *Uglies* series. From the beginning of the cycle Westerfeld makes clear that – with or without lesions – people in general have a predilection for being pretty-minded.

For that matter, shallow and self-centered was how brand-new pretties were supposed to be. As an ugly Peris had made fun of them—but he hadn't waited a moment to join in the fun. No one ever did. So how could you tell how much was the operation and how much was just people going along with the way things had always been? ...

Tally wondered which had come first: the operation or the lesions? Was becoming pretty just the bait to get everyone under the knife? Or were the lesions merely a finishing touch on being pretty? Perhaps the logical conclusion of everyone looking the same was everyone thinking the same. (*Uglies*: 258–259)

What follows are, of course, the patterns of language. Westerfeld's cycle, so close to our everyday experience, seems to confirm that in the attempt to get rid of offensive language we try to construct a politically correct, universalist discourse, losing touch with the "ugly, real-life problems" (*Uglies* 258). The author, though, does not offer a solution. Even in *Extras*, after the freedom to be random has been restored, one observes powerful confusion of the societies: "Some actually decided to reverse the mind-rain – not just old crumbles, but new pretties, too. Even Hiro had talked about turning back into a bubblehead" (31). Tally's way – resisting internal "prettiness" or "specialness" by sheer willpower – is not entirely successful (298). Thus, the *Uglies* cycle can be seen as a warning against the irreparable damage the contemporary trends in language and culture may inflict on the society, in this way in a subtly grim manner fulfilling the role of a dystopian narrative.

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Technopol w krainie wyobraźni. O „Podróżach Pana Kleksa” Jana Brzechwy

Streszczenie: W artykule analizuję i interpretuję dwa fragmenty *Podróży Pana Kleksa* Jana Brzechwy. W drugiej z cyklu powieści o przygodach profesora Ambrożego Kleksa autor miesza różne gatunku prozatorskie: powieść podróżniczą, przygodową, fantastycznonaukową i baśń literacką. Artykuł poświęcony jest dwóm fragmentom nawiązującym do stylistyki science fiction — wizycie Kleksa w Patentonii oraz na Przylądku Aptekarskim i Obojga Farmacji.

W artykule przedstawiam te dwa państwa jako literackie realizacje technopolu, o którym pisał Neil Postman. W tym systemie wszystkie działania ludzi podporządkowane są rozwojowi techniki. W opozycji do technopolu jest Pan Kleks, który jest — zgodnie z terminologią Postmana — przedstawicielem kultury posługującej się narzędziami, czyli korzystającej ze zdobyczy techniki, ale nie podporządkowującej się jej. Przedstawiciele technopoli przedstawionych w *Podróżach*, poświęcając swoje życie dla rozwoju techniki i nauki, tracą — lub już stracili — zdolność empatii i radości życia. Dobrowolnie wyrzekli się również tego, co jest istotne zarówno dla Ambrożego Kleksa, jak i dla podróżujących z nim Bajdotów — snucia opowieści i zapisywania ich. Kwestii niepiśmienności technologii poświęcona jest ostatnia część artykułu.

Keywords: fairy-tale, science-fiction, Brzechwa, technopole, Postman, Ong, orality

MIĘDZY BAŚNIĄ A SCIENCE FICTION¹

Cykl Jana Brzechwy o perypetiach niezwykłego profesora, Ambrożego Kleksa, na który składają się *Akademia*, *Podróże* oraz *Tryumf Pana Kleksa* należy do klasyki polskiej literatury skierowanej do młodego odbiorcy. Miejsce uprzywilejowane zajmuje tu *Akademia*, od kilkunastu lat obecna w spisach lektur szkolnych. To właśnie o niej w literaturze przedmiotu znajdziemy najwięcej wzmianek, zarówno w artykułach naukowych, jak i metodycznych. W tym artykule chciałbym w związku z tym przedstawić interpretację dwóch epizodów drugiej części *Pana Kleksa* — *Podróży*. To opowieść o tym, jak Ambroży Kleks,

¹ W artykule przyjmuję za *Nowym słownikiem poprawnej polszczyzny* pisownię „science fiction” oraz „fantastycznonaukowy” (Markowski 2003: 905). Spotykane są także zapisy: science-fiction, literatura fantastyczno-naukowa. (Żabski 1997: 210–211; Callois 1967).

„sławny ten mędrzec, dziwak i podróżnik, uczeń wielkiego doktora Paj-Chi-Wo, założyciel słynnej Akademii, wylądował pewnego dnia całkiem przypadkowo w jednym z portów Półwyspu Bajkańskiego” (Brzechwa 1985: 92) i postanowił pomóc jednemu z narodów zamieszkujących państwo położone na zachodnim brzegu półwyspu — Bajdotom. Otóż Bajdoci „przejawiali niezwykle zamiłowanie do układania bajek. W alejach i parkach bajkopisarze odziani w barwne stroje i uwieńczeni kwiatami opowiadali bajki tak niezwykle, że nikt ze słuchaczy nie umiałby żadnej z nich powtórzyć” (Brzechwa 1985: 92). Nikt nie umiałby powtórzyć, a z ich zapisem był pewien kłopot. Otóż Bajdoci znali jedynie... biały atrament. Pan Kleks, dowiedziawszy się tego, zgłasza się na ochotnika do Wielkiego Bajarza, władcy Bajdocji, i deklaruje, że wyruszy na wyprawę w poszukiwaniu „barwnika, który atrament uczyni czarnym” (Brzechwa 1985: 96). Profesor otrzymuje od Wielkiego Bajarza trójmasztowiec wraz z załogą i rusza w daleką podróż w nieznane. Jego kolejnymi przystankami są baśniowe i niebaśniowe krainy: Abecja, Wyspa Wynalazców ze stolicą w Patentonii, Parzybrocja, Przylądek Aptekarski, Nibycja.

Książki o Ambrozym Kleksie bywają określane mianem „groteskowo-fantastycznych opowieści prozą”² (Frycie 1982: 264), „baśni”, „baśni nowoczesnej” (Waksmund 2000: 244, 375), „opowieści fantastycznej” (Tylicka, Leszczyński 2002: 289), zaś sama Akademia (jako szkoła, nie powieść) została nawet nazwana „kunsztowną baśnią literacką” (Romanowska 1996: 11). Problemy z przypisaniem cyklu o *Panu Kleksie* do konkretnego gatunku literackiego wynikają z faktu, iż, jak pisze Anna Szóstak: „pisarz bawi się i żongluje konwencjami, na zasadzie żartobliwego pastiszu nawiązując do schematu baśni, powieści SF, prozy podróżniczo-przygodowej” (Szóstak 2003: 244).

Baśniowość świata przedstawionego bardzo silnie eksponowana jest w *Akademii*. Zauważmy, że pierwszy już rozdział tej opowieści nosi tytuł *Ta oraz inne bajki*. Do „innych bajek” prowadzą furtki w murze otaczającym Akademię, zaś główny bohater, Adaś Niezgódka, dowiaduje się, że pan Kleks ma nawet swoje własne bajki. W powieści pojawiają się baśniowe rekwizyty — cudowne przedmioty takie jak: czapka bogdychanów, pompka powiększająca, sennie lusterka. Mamy tu również zwierzęta, którym nadano cechy ludzkie — szpaka Mateusza i złowieszczego króla wilków. Sam pan Kleks to przecież *homo magicus*; choć zaprzecza, jakoby był czarownikiem (Brzechwa 1985: 22), to przecież wysyła oko na Księżyc, potrafi leczyć chore sprzęty, latać, a na końcu opowieści zamienia się w guzik. *Podróże Pana Kleksa* również już w pierwszym rozdziale „mówią” nam, że są baśnią, posługując do słowami rozpoczynającymi baśniowe opowieści: „Działo się to w czasach, kiedy atrament był jeszcze zupełnie, ale to zupełnie bia-

² Możliwość czytania *Pana Kleksa* na lekcjach języka polskiego (przy czym domyślam się, że chodzi o *Akademię Pana Kleksa*, nie o całą trylogię) przez pryzmat groteski proponują Anna Janus-Sitarz (Janus-Sitarz 1997: 116) i Bożena Chrzastowska (Chrzastowska 1987: 94).

ły, natomiast kreda była czarna. Tak, tak, moi drodzy, kreda była jeszcze wtedy kompletnie czarna” (Brzechwa 1985: 91). Koniec opowieści także związany jest z baśniową metamorfozą — profesor Kleks siłą woli przechodzi przemianę w butlę czarnego atramentu, tak pożądanego przez Bajdotów.

We wszystkich trzech częściach przygód Pana Kleksa oprócz elementów baśniowych, nonsensownych, groteskowych, przygodowych, z różnym natężeniem pojawiają się także przedmioty czy – jak je nazywa Stanisław Lem – pola problemowe fantastyki³ (tu rozumianej jako fantastyka naukowa): zagadnienia koegzystencji ludzi i robotów, utopii i projekcji futurologicznej. Wystarczy wspomnieć ożywioną lalkę, mechanicznego chłopca, którego można nazwać androidem (Jędrzych 2010/2011) — Alojzego Kukuryka. Jego pojawienie się w *Akademii Pana Kleksa* sprawia, że baśniowa opowieść kurczy się, by w końcu pokazać, że była jedynie opowieścią. Mechaniczny, inteligentny Alojzy (już jako Alojzy Bąbel) staje na drodze Kleksa jeszcze dwukrotnie i dopiero w *Tryumfie* profesorowi udaje się nad nim zapanować.

Alojzy, element w baśni obcy, bo pochodzący z innego porządku, z gatunku science fiction, nie jest jedynym przedstawicielem pasującym raczej do fantastyki naukowej. W tym artykule przedstawię jak w krainie wyobraźni Jana Brzechwy, w drugiej części cyklu — *Podróżach Pana Kleksa* — przedstawione zostały państwa, w których życie mieszkańców podporządkowane jest nauce i technice. Państwa Patentóńczyków oraz Aptekarzy reprezentują naukę przeciwstawioną wyobraźni, ludzkiej uniwersalnej moralności oraz życiu w zgodzie z naturą. I choć *Podróże...* zostały wydane w całości w 1961 roku, można do analizy i interpretacji wybranych przeze mnie fragmentów posłużyć się nowszymi metodologiami, także kulturoznawczymi. Szczególnie opis kultury Neila Postmana z *Technopolu. Triumfu techniki nad kulturą* (1992) staje się tym, który pomaga odczytać na nowo powieść Brzechwy. W dwu fragmentach *Podróży* — fragmencie o Wyspie Wnalazców oraz Przylądku Aptekarskim i Obojga Farmacji — jeśli weźmiemy pod uwagę teorię Neila Postmana – obserwujemy konflikt między kulturą posługującą się narzędziami a technopolem. Ten właśnie konflikt chciałabym tu zaprezentować.

MONOPOL NA WYNALAZKI

Wyspa Wnalazców, na którą trafia wyprawa Bajdotów pod przywództwem Ambrożego Kleksa, posiada wszystkie cechy technopolu, o którym Postman pisze:

„Technopol to pewien stan kultury. To również stan umysłu. Polega na deifikacji techniki, co oznacza, że kultura poszukuje sankcji w technice, znajduje w niej satysfakcję i przyjmuje od niej rozkazy” (Postman 2004: 91).

³ Polami problemowymi fantastyki naukowej omówionymi przez Lema są np. „Katastrofa”, „Roboty i ludzie”, „Kosmos i fantastyka”, „Utopia i futurologia” (Lem 1989).

W technopolu wszelkie formy życia kulturowego są podporządkowane panowaniu techniki i technologii (Postman 2004: 70), technika myśli za ludzi (Postman 2004: 69), którzy zamienili się w armię specjalistów, posiadających wiedzę tylko z jednej konkretnej dziedziny (Postman 2004: 109). Ludzie ci coraz bardziej, głównie swoim zmechanizowanym zachowaniem oraz brakiem tradycyjnej moralności, upodabniają się do maszyn.

Tak właśnie dzieje się na Wyspie Wynałazców, w państwie Patentonii. Jej mieszkańcy posiadają w życiu jeden cel – produkcję wynalazków:

„Patentonia to kraj bogaty i ludzie żyją tam po sto lat, ale poza pracą nic dla nich nie istnieje, ani śpiew, ani tańce, ani rozrywki, a sen jest nieznanym zjawiskiem. Po prostu połykają specjalne pastylki, które zastępują odpoczynek i usuwają zmęczenie” (Brzechwa 1985: 114).

Mamy tu do czynienia ze specjalistami całkowicie oddanymi pracy, a ponadto zazdrośnie strzegącymi swoich odkryć. Do obu tych rzeczy sami się przyznają i wydają się być nawet z tego dumni: „W naszym kraju nie znajdziecie rozrywek ani zabaw, jako że cały czas poświęcamy pracy” (Brzechwa 1985: 121). Jak podkreśla pan Kleks: „Patentończycy nie cierpią podglądania ich tajemnic i są ogromnie podejrzliwi” (Brzechwa 1985: 114).

Państwo Patentonczyków jest jakby powiększoną do rozmiarów świata fabryką, w której nieustanny ruch jest gwarantowany przez mechanizm taśmy produkcyjnej. Nieustanny ruch – ale nie zmienność. Wszystko tu jest precyzyjnie zaplanowane i jednako we, jak jednakowe są zjeżdżające z taśmy fabrycznej części maszyn. Poczynając od Dworca Magnesowego, na który przybywa z Abecji bajdocka wyprawa, po ulice Patentonii, wszystko trwa w nieustannym ruchu przesuwających się chodników, pojazdów oraz migających świateł. Jako budulec mieszkańcom Wyspy Wynałazców służą wyłącznie metal i szkło:

„Dworzec Magnesowy była to ogromna hala, wyłożona metalowymi płytami i nakryta szklanym dachem. Płyty przesuwały się automatycznie i otwierały raz po raz przejścia, korytarze i tunele, w które wjeżdżały lub z których wyjeżdżały najrozmaitsze pojazdy. Ruch na dworcu regulowała skomplikowana sygnalizacja dźwiękowo-światlna. Co chwila w różnych miejscach zapalały się i gasły czerwone i zielone światła, przez głośniki padały nazwy miast i stacji kolejowych oraz wszelkiego rodzaju informacje. Wszystko to odbywało się z niezwykłą precyzją, a przy tym bez udziału jakichkolwiek widzialnych istot” (Brzechwa 1985: 116).

Jeśli chodzi o samych Patentonczyków, wydają się oni również produktem, jednym z wynalazków. Wszyscy wyglądają podobnie, jakby zjechali z tej samej taśmy. Nie chodzi tu wyłącznie o ich ubiór – „prosty i jednolity” (Brzechwa 1985: 117), ale także wygląd zewnętrzny:

„Patentończycy wyróżniali się nie tylko tym, że posiadali jedną nogę, ale nadto przewyższali Bajdotów wzrostem o trzy głowy. Mieli też nosy niezwykle długie

i bardzo ruchliwe, tak jak gdyby węż stanowił najważniejszy zmysł tych istot. Mężczyźni byli zupełnie łysi, kobietom zaś od połowy głowy wyrastały rude włosy, zaplecione w trzy krótkie warkoczki. Dzieci pod tym względem niczym nie różniły się od dorosłych” (Brzechwa 1985: 117).

Patentończycy są „podobni jeden do drugiego jak bliźnięta” (Brzechwa 1985: 124), mieszkają w jednakowych domach, noszą te same stroje; również towary, dostępne na Wyspie Wynalazców, są dla wszystkich takie same. Wszelkie zbędne, zabierające czas czynności zostały wyprowadzone poza ciało Patentończyków: mierzeniem temperatury, zaplataniem warkoczy, cerowaniem skarpetek, a nawet dezynfekcją nosa zajmują się specjalne automaty (Brzechwa 1985: 124). Nie istnieje życie towarzyskie, ponieważ nie ma już miejsc, gdzie można by je prowadzić. One również zostały zastąpione przez automaty: „Wzdłuż ulicy stały nieprzerwanym szeregiem automaty zastępujące sklepy, restauracje i kawiarnie” (Brzechwa 1985: 124). Istnieje jednak wielka różnica między kawą z automatu, a podobnym napojem wypitym w specjalnym, przeznaczonym do tego celu miejscu, w miłym towarzystwie. Dlatego, mimo iż państwo wynalazców początkowo budzi podziw Bajdotów oraz pana Kleksa – po jakimś czasie zaczyna ich nużyć, a nawet przygnębiać:

„Bajdoci nie ukrywali podziwu dla wynalazczości Patentończyków, ale w głębi duszy byli zdania, że zastąpienie sklepów przez automaty odbiera życiu znaczną część uroku. O ileż piękniej wyglądały ulice Klechdawy, z rzęście oświetlonymi wystawami sklepowymi, gdzie każdy mógł nabywać przedmioty stosownie do swego upodobania i gustu! Natomiast wyroby Patentończyków, podobnie jak ich stroje, wykonane były według jednego wzoru, posiadały jednolity kształt i barwę, co sprawiało przygnębiające wrażenie” (Brzechwa 1985: 124).

W piekle jednakowości pojawia się tęsknota za różnorodnością, za prawdziwym życiem. Zauważmy, że konflikt między jednakowością a różnorodnością możemy zaobserwować we wszystkich książkach będących antyutopiami. Każda totalitarna utopia oferuje wszystkim swoim poddanym jednakowe domy, ubrania, jedzenie, a nawet życie. Tak wygląda świat *Roku 1984* Gorge’a Orwella, *Nowego wspaniałego świata* Aldousa Huxley’a, a w literaturze przeznaczonej dla młodego odbiorcy — świat *Dawcy* Lois Lowry. W przypadku ostatniej książki jeden z jej bohaterów mówi wprost o decyzji „przejścia na jednakowość” (Lowry 2003: 100). Taką decyzję podjęli również Patentończycy – nie wydają się jednak z niej niezadowoleni. Czy to jeszcze ludzie, czy już maszyny?

Zarówno Bajdoci jak i Ambroży Kleks są przedstawicielami – zgodnie z terminologią Postamana – kultury posługującej się narzędziami. Podstawową cechą [wyróżnienie moje – K.J.]

„wszystkich kultur posługujących się narzędziami było to, że te narzędzia wynajdywano przede wszystkim w dwóch celach: miały **rozwiązywać konkretne i palące problemy życia materialnego** – na przykład wykorzystanie energii wodnej, wiatraki i pług, albo **miały służyć symbolicznemu światu sztuki**, po-

lityki, mitu, rytuału i religii – jak konstruowanie zamków i katedr oraz wynalezienie zegara mechanicznego” (Postman 2004: 37).

Bajdocka wyprawa ma na celu przywiezienie do stolicy państwa – Klechdawy – czarnego atramentu, którym będą mogły zostać wreszcie utrwalone wszystkie bajki opowiadane w Bajdocji. Nie poszukuje się więc narzędzia dla niego samego, ale by służyło owemu „symbolicznemu światu sztuki”, a nawet – obrzędu. Wszak to twórca najpiękniejszej bajki, wybierany raz na dwadzieścia lat podczas zjazdu, zostawał nowym władcą kraju, Wielkim Bajarzem, którego naród „czcił (...) i okazywał bezwzględne posłuszeństwo” (Brzechwa 1985: 93). Opowiedziana bajka ma więc wartość nie tylko estetyczną, ale również polityczną. Mieszkańcy Bajdocji nie są w stanie zapamiętać stale powiększającej się liczby historii, stąd konieczność umieszczenia ich na zewnętrznym, w miarę trwałym nośniku, jakim jest zapisany papier.

Bajdoci ponadto są świetnymi ogrodnikami oraz żeglarzami, nigdzie jednak narrator nie daje czytelnikowi choćby najmniejszego sygnału, który pozwoliłby wnioskować o podporządkowaniu się ludzi narzędziom. Różnica między Bajdotami a Patentonczykami jest taka, że ci pierwsi używają swoich narzędzi, natomiast ci drudzy – choć tego nie zauważają – podporządkowują się im.

W takim świecie nie ma miejsca na żadne opowieści wywodzące się z ludzkiej potrzeby fantazjowania, które w tym wypadku – czyli świata przedstawionego powieści Brzechwy – odpowiadałyby temu, co Postman nazywa wielką opowieścią biblijną, która „dostarczała odpowiedzi na pytania zarówno fundamentalne, jak i praktyczne” (Postman 2004: 78). Patentonczycy nie mają już żadnych pytań, które mogliby zadawać sobie albo jakiemuś wyższemu bytowi, ponieważ posiadają przepisy, regulujące ich życie. Prawo Wyspy Wynalazców nie jest jednak oparte na odróżnianiu dobra i zła, ponieważ jego źródłem nie jest żadna „wielka opowieść biblijna”, a „wielka opowieść Postępu”, dokładniej zaś – opowieść technopolu [wyróżnienia moje – K.J.]

„z jej naciskiem na postęp bez granic, prawa bez odpowiedzialności i technikę bez kosztów. **Opowieść technopolu nie ma moralnego rdzenia.** Zastępują go wydajność, korzyść i postęp gospodarczy. Obiecuje ona raj na ziemi dzięki wygodom postępu technologicznego. Skazuje na banicję wszelkie tradycyjne fabuły i symbole sugerujące stabilność i porządek, a zamiast tego opowiada nam o świecie, w którym prym wiodą umiejętności, ekspertyzy technologiczne i ekstaza konsumpcyjna. Dąży do wyprodukowania funkcjonariuszy, którzy będą utrzymywać w ruchu technopol” (Postman 2004: 215).

Patentonczycy to doskonali specjaliści, funkcjonariusze technopolu, których „Bóg (...) nie mówi o słuszności, dobru, miłosierdziu ani łasce. Ich bóg mówi o wydajności, precyzji, obiektywności. I dlatego pojęcia takie jak grzech i zło znikają z technopolu. Pochodzą z wszechświata moralnego, którego teologia specjalizacji nie bierze pod uwagę” (Postman 2004: 112–113). Wynalazcy nie

wahają się surowo ukarać każdego, kto złamie ich prawo. Nie będą brać pod uwagę ani wieku, ani motywów „przestępcy”; nie istnieją dla nich żadne okoliczności łagodzące. Dlatego też Pietrek, kuchcik na bajdockim statku, kilkunastoletni chłopiec, który powodowany dziecięcą ciekawością podpatrzył i uruchomił najnowszy wynalazek Arcymechanika, zostaje zamieniony w groteskową maszynę – automat do lizania znaczków pocztowych. Odwaga i ciekawość Pietrka, cechy postrzegane jako pozytywne przez pana Kleksa, nie są tu w ogóle brane pod uwagę. Ocenia się nie motyw, lecz czyn, który z punktu widzenia Bajdotów nie zasługiwał na tak surową ocenę. Dla Patentonczyków jednakże maszyna przedstawia wyższą wartość niż ludzkie życie.

Wyznawcy technopolu zazdrośnie strzegą swoich tajemnic – z samej niechęci ich ujawnienia. Ślepy bajdocki sternik otrzymuje od władcy Patentonii okulary o opalizujących szklach, które umożliwiają mu widzenie. Kiedy wyprawa postanawia opuścić nieprzyjazną wyspę, sternik podejmuje decyzję o pozostaniu na niej, ponieważ, jak mówi Arcymechanik „Opalizujące szkła szybko tracą swą moc i często trzeba je zmieniać. A zmienić je można tylko w Patentonii. Pozwólcie więc waszemu sternikowi, aby został u nas” (Brzechwa 1985: 125). Arcymechanik nie chce zdradzić tajemnicy swojego wynalazku. Podkreślmy, że nie jest to automat służący rozrywce, ale okulary będące panaceum na ślepotę. Coś, co znacznie ułatwia życie, pomaga chorym. Wynalazek taki powinien zostać jak najszybciej upowszechniony. Sekret mechanizmu jest jednak wart więcej niż potrzeby człowieka. Tak jak w *Roku 1984* partia pragnie władzy dla samej władzy, tak w państwie Patentonii jego mieszkańcy wytwarzają wynalazki dla samego wytwarzania ich.

Mieszkańcy Patentonii posiadają wiele cech, które Erich Fromm przyporządkował osobom nekrofilnym: są uporządkowani (Fromm 1994: 18), kochają „porządek i kontrolę, i w akcie czynienia porządku zabijają życie” (Fromm 1994: 17), które traktują w sposób mechaniczny. Wydaje się, że orientacja nekrofilna cechuje również specjalistów, czy szerzej – wyznawców technopolu – opisanych przez Postmana. Towarzyszy ona nieuchronnie postępującej technicyzacji życia i ludzkiego myślenia.

Bjadoci i pan Kleks, afirmujący życie we wszystkich jego przejawach, są przedstawicielami orientacji biofilnej, której „esencją jest miłość życia przeciwstawiona miłości śmierci” (Fromm 1994: 19). W myśl zasad etyki biofilnej [wyróżnienia moje – K.J.]

„Dobre jest to, co służy życiu, zło to to, co służy śmierci. **Dobro jest to szanowanie życia**, wszystkiego, co sprzyja życiu, wzrostowi, rozwojowi. Zło jest tym, co ogranicza życie, zawęża je, dzieli na części. Radość jest cnotą, a smutek grzechem” (Fromm 1994: 21).

Bjadoci, jako osoby biofilne, nie są w stanie zrozumieć i przyjąć światopoglądu nekrofilnych Patentonczyków – tak samo wynalazcy nie przyjmują racji poddanych Wielkiego Bajarza. Niemożliwie jest porozumienie między nimi.

Początkowa fascynacja doskonałym światem w obliczu okrucieństwa ponad miarę – zamiera.

Przyjrzyjmy się jeszcze jednej kwestii dotyczącej wynalazków. Otóż władca Patentonii wita profesora Kleksa takimi słowami:

„Dumny jestem, że mogę powitać w naszym kraju uczonego tej miary, co pan Ambroży Kleks, któremu mam do zawdzięczenia pomysły wielu naszych wynalazków. Pomysły te nie mogły być wprowadzone w życie w ojczyźnie pana Kleksa wskutek braku odpowiednich materiałów i urządzeń technicznych, ale ich opisy i plany, świadczące o geniuszu tego uczonego, dotarły do nas i pozwoliły nam zrealizować wiele doniosłych wynalazków ku pożytkowi naszego kraju” (Brzechwa 1985: 120).

Czy Ambroży Kleks, który wymyślił wiele wynalazków, do których należą m.in. pompka powiększająca, kluczyk otwierający wszystkie zamki, pudełko do przechowywania płomyków świec, samogrające mosty, automaty przeciwkatarowe „i wiele, wiele innych” (Brzechwa 1985: 121) należy jeszcze do kultury posługującej się narzędziami, czy zaczyna powoli przechodzić na stronę miłośników techniki? Pan Kleks wykonuje opisy i plany, ale brak odpowiednich technologii uniemożliwia mu skonstruowanie automatów. Nasuwa się tu skojarzenie z najsłynniejszym renesansowym malarzem i wynalazcą, Leonardem da Vinci, w którego szkicach odnaleziono plany maszyny latającej. Ambroży Kleks, podobnie jak da Vinci, wyprzedza swoją epokę, a raczej – swoją rzeczywistość. Ponieważ jest mieszkańcem baśni, w której technologia nie ma prawa się rozwinąć, jego wynalazki pozostają w sferze planów i pomysłów. Dopiero przemieszczenie się ze świata baśniowego do świata fantastyki naukowej, jakim jest Wyspa Wynalazców, umożliwia przekonanie się o możliwościach realizacji tychże planów i pomysłów. Pompka powiększająca, której pan Kleks używał w swojej Akademii np. do zwiększania rozmiarów jedzenia, była przedmiotem magicznym. Tu zaś okazuje się, że jedyna magia, jaka „tkwi” w pompce, to magia techniki.

W ciągu całego cyklu *Pan Kleks* coraz bardziej widoczna jest fascynacja tytułowego bohatera techniką. W *Akademii* i *Podróżach* technika jest nacechowana wyłącznie negatywnie, jako źródło zła i destrukcji. Natomiast już w *Tryumfie* sprawa nie jest tak oczywista. Optymistyczne plany „zbliżowania” gospodarki narodowej i masowej produkcji androidów służących ludziom, czynią z pana Kleksa niemal wzór technofila, który wpatruje się w technikę „jak kochanek w swoją lubą, nie widzi w niej żadnej skazy i ani trochę nie obawia się przyszłości” (Postman 2004: 17). Ambroży Kleks powoli opuszcza kulturę posługującą się narzędziami, by przejść do technokracji. Opuszcza (choć nie do końca) bajkę na rzecz science fiction. Alojzemu – narzędziu – będzie odtąd według Kleksa podporządkowana cała rzeczywistość. Zupełnie jak w technokracji, gdzie „narzędzia odgrywają centralną rolę w intelektualnym świecie kultury. Wszystko musi, do pewnego stopnia, ustąpić przed ich roz-

wojem” (Postman 2004: 43). Obywatele technokracji nie są jednak tak podporządkowani technice jak obywatele technopolu. Wiedzą oni jeszcze, że „nauka i technika nie dostarczają filozofii życia i dlatego trzymają się filozofii swoich ojców” (Postman 2004: 64); ponadto są przekonani, „narzędzia powinny być ich służącymi, a nie panami” (Postman 2004: 64).

APTEKARSKA PRECYZJA

Cechy technopolu i orientacji nekrofilnej posiada nie tylko Wyspa Wynałazców, której mieszkańcy znają wszystkie sekrety mechaniki, ale także państwo farmaceutów mieszczące się na Przylądku Aptekarskim i Obojga Farmacji. Mieszkańcy kraju rządzonego przez Magistra Pigularza II, podobnie jak Patentowiczycy, są specjalistami w jednej dziedzinie. Nieobce im są tajniki chemii organicznej i nieorganicznej, co sprawia że na Przylądku „opracowywane są wszelkie najnowsze leki: pigułki, maści i mikstury, w które Przylądek Aptekarski zaopatruje apteki i drogerie całego świata” (Brzechwa 1985: 148).

W kraju Pigularza II (tak jak w Patentonii) wszystko jest jednakowe – pawilony zbudowane ze szkła, izby mieszkalne, pożywienie (wyłącznie zioła):

„Stolica państwa zabudowana była długimi szklanymi pawilonami, które na podobieństwo gwiazdy zbiegały się przy centralnym placu. Stał na nim pomnik Magistra Pigularza I, założyciela miasta i odkrywcy witamin. W pawilonach wytwarzano leki, natomiast izby mieszkalne znajdowały się w podziemiach” (Brzechwa 1985: 149).

„Obiad, którym uraczono pana Kleksa, składał się z dań nader osobliwych. Po zupie z dziurawca podano bitki z aloesu w sosie rumiankowym oraz sałatę z kwiatu lipowego, a na deser racuszki z siemienia lnianego polane sokiem miętowym. Na zakończenie obiadu wniesiono napój ze skrzypu i szalwii” (Brzechwa 1985: 148).

Jednakowy jest także strój aptekarzy (białe kitle), zarost (oczywiście tylko w przypadku mężczyzn) oraz wiek. Także liczba ludności jest stała: „5555 osób, w tym 555 kobiet” (Brzechwa 1985: 149), dzieci zaś w ogóle nie ma, ponieważ „Magister Pigularz II wynalazł tabletki odmładzające, dzięki którym ludność utrzymywała się stale i niezmiennie w tym samym wieku. Dlatego też zmiana pokoleń stała się zbędna, a dzieci — niepotrzebne. Ludności ani nie ubywało, ani nie przybywało” (Brzechwa 1985: 149).

Dla prawdziwej młodości i idącemu z nią zawsze w parze szukaniu nowych rozwiązań starych problemów na Przylądku Aptekarskim miejsca nie ma. Aptekarze zdają sobie jednak sprawę z tego, iż ich system, choć nienagannie funkcjonujący, nie sprawdzi się na całym świecie — dlatego też nie wyjawiają sekretu pigułek odmładzających. Jeden z dygnitarzy mówi Panu Kleksowi: „Nie chcemy, aby również w innych krajach dzieci stały się niepotrzebne. Świat bez dzieci byłby smutny jak nasz przylądek. Mówiąc to, dygnitarz połączył kitla otarł

łzę i ciężko westchnął” (Brzechwa 1985: 149). Ta sytuacja to jedyny raz, kiedy któryś z mieszkańców przylądka przejawia empatię i nie jawi się jako bezduszna maszyna odmierzająca proporcje kolejnych mikstur.

Poza tym przypadkiem aptekarska precyzja nie dopuszcza żadnych odchyleń od przyjętej normy. Wszystko jest równo wyliczone; nie ma możliwości popełnienia błędu, nie ma też miejsca na indywidualność. W państwie farmaceutów nie istnieją żadne kolory ubioru prócz białego, jedynie władca ma kitel zdobiony złotym haftem, a Admirał Floty złotymi galonami (Brzechwa 1985: 149). Państwo to jest sterylne, żeby nie powiedzieć – wysterylizowane. Nic dziwnego, że Magister Pigularz II to „władca smutny i poważny” (Brzechwa 1985: 149). Niezwykłą martwością Przylądka Aptekarskiego podkreśla jeszcze fakt, iż jego mieszkańcy posługują się wyłącznie językiem łacińskim – martwym, ale do dziś używanym przez lekarzy i farmaceutów do określania np. nazw chorób i leków.

Przypadek Patentonii oraz Przylądka Aptekarskiego i Obojga Farmacji pokazuje, że nie ma znaczenia, czy specjaliści produkują wynalazki czy leki dla całego świata. Niezależnie od tego, co wytwarzają, są wszędzie tacy sami. Pozbawieni uczuć, indywidualności, zdehumanizowani.

W takim środowisku świetnie odnajduje się ożywiony przez Kleksa w *Akademii* Alojzy Bąbel. Uczeń doktora Paj-Chi-Wo rozpoznaje go w Pierwszym Admirale Floty Przylądka Aptekarskiego i Obojga Farmacji. Początkowo nawet wydaje się, że zbuntowany wychowanek profesora posiadał już jakieś uczucia, gdyż wobec swojego dawnego nauczyciela zachowuje się uprzejmie i z szacunkiem. Okazuje się jednak, że to maska, którą przybrał, by uzyskać konkretne korzyści:

„Pierwszy Admirał nachylił się do ucha pana Kleksa i rzekł poufnie:

– Czcigodny profesorze... Jesteśmy genialnymi farmaceutami, ale brak nam doświadczonych marynarzy. Chciałbym zwerbować pięciu Bajdotów do mojej floty. Proszę mi w tym dopomóc.

– Chyba zwariowałeś, Alojzy – zachnął się pan Kleks. – Spójrz na ich wykrzywione twarze i zapadnięte brzuchy... Pozdychaliby jak muchy na tych wazszych ziółkach... Do takiego wiktury trzeba zaprawiać się od dziecka. Wybierz to sobie z głowy, Alojzy.

I gniewnie prychając wielki uczony odwrócił się plecami do swego wychowanka (...). Gdyby się nie był odwrócił, dostrzegłby na twarzy Pierwszego Admirala wyraz takiej złośliwości i szyderstwa, że na pewno miałby się od tej chwili na baczności” (Brzechwa 1985: 151–152).

Alojzy nie zważa na odpowiedź Kleksa; zrobi wszystko, by osiągnąć cel, nie licząc się z ludźmi – podobnie jak genialny komputer HAL 9000 z *Odysei kosmicznej* Stanley’a Kubricka. Mechaniczny człowiek nie potrafi ocenić, co jest dobre, a co złe; brak sumienia czy też podstaw moralności pozwala mu działać wyłącznie na swoją korzyść, przy jednoczesnym minimalizowaniu start własnych. Jego celem jest zatrzymanie na przylądku bajdockich marynarzy. Pan

Kleks kategorycznie odmawia udzielenia Alojzemu pomocy w tej sprawie, nieświadomie poddaje mu jednak najprostsze rozwiązanie problemu. Bąbel, jako logicznie myśląca maszyna, podejmuje efektywne działania:

„– Co to wszystko znaczy? – krzyknął groźnie pan Kleks. – Proszę o natychmiastowe wyjaśnienie. Znów zaczynasz swoje dawne sztuczki, Alojzy!

– Tak, tak! Zaczynam! – zawołał zuchwale Alojzy Bąbel. – Chce pan zobaczyć swoich zaginionych Bajdotów? Zaraz ich panu pokażę.

(...) Pierwszy Admirał Floty pchnął jedne z drzwi i oczom pana Kleksa przedstawił się niezwykle widok. Na szerokim łóżku leżało pięcioro niemowląt w powijkach. (...)

– Oto pańscy Bajdoci – rzekł z szatańskim chichotem Pierwszy Admirał. – Będą się zaprawiali od niemowlęctwa do naszego wikt... Zgodnie z pańskim życzeniem, cha-cha-cha! Dostali dobrą porcję odmładzających pastylek! Nie żałowałem im! Nieźle ich odmłodziłem, co?! Cha-cha-cha!...” (Brzechwa 1985: 152).

Z ludzkiego punktu widzenia działanie Alojzego jest złe, z punktu widzenia maszyny zaś – po prostu skuteczne. Jako skuteczny, precyzyjny oraz pozbawiony uczuć, mechaniczny człowiek doskonale pasuje do swojego nowego domu.

TECHNOLOGIA NIEPIŚMIENNA

Profesor Ambroży Kleks stoi po stronie bajki, kultury posługującej się narzędziami (przez prawie cały cykl) oraz reprezentuje orientację biofilną. Jego przeciwnicy, w tym przypadku Patentonczycy i przedstawiciel Aptekarzy, Alojzy, są natomiast przedstawicielami świata science fiction, technopolu oraz zorientowani są nekrofilnie. Do opozycji tych dodajmy teraz jeszcze jedną, którą odnaleźć możemy we wszystkich książkach cyklu, a więc w *Akademii*, *Podróżach* i *Tryumfie*: pismo – niepiśmienność. Nie chodzi tu przy tym o niepiśmienność równą oralności – w rozumieniu, w jakim opisał ją Walter Ong (Ong 1992), ani o wtórny analfabetyzm.

Przeciwnicy pana Kleksa, reprezentujący wysokorozwinięte technologie – Patentonczycy oraz poddani Pigularza II – nie posługują się pismem. Dzieje się tak jednak nie dlatego, że go nie znają. Nie, oni stoją już o szczebel wyżej; pismo nie jest im już potrzebne lub nie było im potrzebne n i g d y, ponieważ dysponują doskonałą pamięcią. Nie muszą niczego utrwać, wyprowadzając wiedzę poza ciało; są w stanie wszystko zapamiętać. Przywodzą na myśl (kolejny już raz) maszyny, komputery o niesłuchanie pojemnych twardej dyskach, magazynujące dane.

Podróże Pana Kleksa opisują mozolną i pełną przeszkód wędrówkę Bajdotów w poszukiwaniu atramentu. Pamięć poddanych Wielkiego Bajarza nie jest tak pojemna, by pomieścić nowo powstające bajki. Mózg w ciągu życia człowieka nie gromadzi wszelkich informacji – dla naszego własnego zdrowia po-

zwala nam zapominać pewne rzeczy, nie dopuszcza do przeładowania pamięci. Tymczasem, na Przyładku Aptekarskim, Alojzy Bąbel mówi:

„Pisanie jest godne gryzipiórków, lecz nie farmaceutów. Po prostu każdy z nas w swoim dziale zna na pamięć tysiąc dwieście recept. I to nam wystarcza” (Brzechwa 1985: 151).

Arcymechnik na Wyspie Wynalazców zaś:

„Atrament nigdy nie był nam potrzebny, albowiem posiadamy zdolność zachowania raz na zawsze w pamięci wszelkich słów, cyfr i myśli. Pamięć nasza nigdy nie zawodzi, dlatego też nie robimy żadnych notatek, nic nie zapisujemy ani nie utrwalamy, choćby to były najbardziej złożone wykresy lub formuły matematyczne” (Brzechwa 1985: 123).

Pismo nie jest jedyną rzeczą, której Patentończycy nie potrzebują. Rzadko posługują się również mową, choć potrafią porozumieć się we wszystkich znanych językach. Między sobą komunikują się... odczytując swoje myśli! Nie posiadli jednak zdolności telepatii, za to wynaleźli niejako jej protezę – specjalne okulary:

„których szkła podobne były do małych ekranów. Odbijały się na nich myśli Patentończyków, przybierając kształt ruchomych obrazów, i dlatego wymiana słów była całkiem zbędna” (Brzechwa 1985: 118).

Komunikowanie się za pomocą obrazów świadczy w tym wypadku o ubóstwie myślowym Patentończyków. Mimo iż dysponują ogromną pamięcią, ich myśli odznaczają się równie wielką prostotą. Wydaje się, że nie operują oni symbolami, lub operują nimi w bardzo małym stopniu (każdy język jest przecież symboliczny). Być może obce jest im również pojęcie metafory. Ich życie wewnętrzne nie jest zbyt bogate: „nie miewają myśli, które chcieliby ukryć przed innymi” (Brzechwa 1985: 118). Specjalizacja Patentończyków jest tak daleko posunięta, że w ich mózgach nie ma już miejsca na nic poza formułami matematycznymi; nic poza tym, co potrzebne jest do sprawnego wykonywania pracy.

Warto wspomnieć, że nie tylko członkowie społeczeństw wysokorozwiniętych są niepiśmienni. Także mieszkańcy Parzybrocji, do których Pan Kleks wraz z Bajdotami trafia po wizycie w Patentonii, reprezentujący w *Podróżach* typ dobrego dzikusa, nie posługują się pismem. Jest to jednak niepiśmienność, podobnie jak oni, pierwotna. Parzybroccjanie pozostają w kręgu kultury oralnej. Nie znają pisma teraz, nie znali go nigdy; nie wykształcili nawet samej idei pisma. To lud żyjący w zgodzie z naturą, nieposługujący się metalem, nieużywający nowoczesnych zdobyczy techniki. Ich jedynym „narzędziem” porozumiewania się jest mowa.

Parzybroccjanie zatem reprezentują oralność (w rozumieniu Ongowskim), pan Kleks – piśmienność, zaś Patentończycy i farmaceuci – w zasadzie trudno

określić. Wtórą niepiśmienność? Pamięć absolutną? W każdym razie jest to taki sposób magazynowania wiadomości i porozumiewania się, który zbliża ich do maszyn, a tym samym oddala od ludzi.

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Looking for Identity: Polish Children's Fantasy Then and Now

Abstract: The specificity of the texts which are introduced in this article (e.g. works of Antoni Gawiński, Andrzej Sapkowski, Beata Ostrowicka, Andrzej Pilipiuk, Dorota Terakowska and Jacek Dukaj) consists in discreet use of the elements of Polish culture and the role of the national tradition, and it can be analyzed as an allegory of the Polish nation's history and the role of national heritage – topics present in, among others, references to national myths (e.g. polemics with Romantic myths) with the strategy of metahistory, or as an element of intertextuality with refer to popular legends and folk tales. As theory of identity has it, identity both determines a reflexive attitude of the subject to oneself and exposes his or her attitude to others, especially when it regards an individual's activity, often filtered through the prism of socio-cultural context, history, politics and past experiences. When protagonist is travelling through history – the basic factors shaping an individual, social or cultural identity include language, time, space and memory.

Keywords: fantasy, history, polish national myths, intertextuality.

1. PROTAGONIST TRAVELLING THROUGH HISTORY – AN INTRODUCTION

The basic factors shaping an individual, social or cultural identity include language, time, space and memory (e.g. Bauman 2000, Giddens 2001, 2009 Smith 2009, Taylor 1996, Calhoun 1994, Watkins 2005, Kłoskowska 2007).

As theory of identity has it, identity both determines a reflexive attitude of the subject to oneself and exposes his or her attitude to others, especially when it regards an individual's activity, often filtered through the prism of socio-cultural context, history, politics and past experiences. Polish fantasy literature for children and adults has good traditions in this regard.

Maciej Parowski in an article of a very relevant title *Happy Rebellion and Bitter Victory* (dreams and disappointments in the Polish modern fantasy in the last quarter-century) notes about Janusz A. Zajdel – writer – precursor (forerunner) of sociological science fiction:

Although it has been 25 years since the death of Janusz A. Zajdel (1938–1985), talks about Polish fantasy will still start with him for many more years to come.

He set civic and moral standards, renewed Polish fantasy, and masterfully described Polish history up until 1989. During the communist era his novels were read with joy and hope. Zajdel used literature to expose communism and accurately predict that this inhumane system was nearing its end. Barracks of space prisons attacked by corrosion (*Paradise, the World in orbit*); the villains' servant gone crazy with remorse (*Complete Truth about Planet Xi*), electronic black-market money changer rooting around in a country conquered by aliens discovers he is participating in a game of appearances that squanders human energy (*Limes inferior*) (Parowski 2012:63)

In this paper, I am going to discuss the significance of the above factors in the following Polish speculative literature: children's fantasy texts [also known as "fairytale fantasy", "contemporary fairy tale" (as described by Stanislaw Lem), or "fairy tale for adults"] that go beyond the perception level of a young reader: *Przygody Okruszka* [*The Adventures of the Little Crumb*] by Antoni Gawiński (1922), *The Witcher Saga* (*Wiedźmin*) by Andrzej Sapkowski (1990), *The Witches' Daughter* (*Córka czarownicy*) (1988) and *The Loneliness of the Gods* (1998) by Dorota Terakowska, *The Land of Colors* (*Kraina kolorów*) by Beata Ostrowicka (1999), the series of stories about Jan Wędrówycz (2002–2012; trans. John Traveler) by Andrzej Pilipiuk, or *The Crowman* (*Wroniec*) by Jacek Dukaj (2009).

In these stories, magic is given a broader meaning when treated as a field of science, a part of Nature, and a connection between protagonists and Nature's forces (e.g. in Terakowska's *The Loneliness of the Gods*).

The specificity of these texts, which consists in discreet use of the elements of Polish culture and the role of the national tradition, can be analyzed as an allegory of the Polish nation's history and the role of national heritage – topics present in, among others, references to national myths (e.g. polemics with Romantic myths) or to popular legends and folk tales. They appear in, for example, a story collection by Andrzej Sapkowski titled *Sword of Destiny*, where one can find threads from legends about the basilisk, the Wawel dragon, or princess Wanda. Furthermore, Andrzej Pilipiuk's series about Jakub Wędrówycz shows a half-Polish, half-Ukrainian protagonist as grotesque and caricatural. The protagonist's red, drunken face, big nose, poor peasant clothes and a crumpled cap are universally recognizable by Polish readers, while it is a clear accumulation of negative attributes of Polishness (the latest book has a telling title of *Homo moonshinicus*).

Through a world of "national symbols", clear signs of national tradition and legacy, with stories which are rooted in a clear setting (Rybicka 2008, Sławiński 1978) and thanks to distinct traits of character, the work's meaning is given a universal character. Each of these texts (mentioned above) is open to a deeper existential reading when seen in a broader axiological context, which is reflected in another, alternative world marked by the presence of magic and ethical principles, such as righteousness, honesty, fairness, and friendship. In

this case, the quest of young protagonists, who is going “through adventures” (Szymkowska – Ruszała 1985) may be maturing while searching for the meaning of life and their own identity, or who are trying to understand the identity of their nation, also turns into their “inner journey”, acquires existential interpretation, universal features and becomes a metaphor for everybody’s destiny (Hunt 1987; Ross Val 2003; Sundmark 2014)).

The structural axes of the above-mentioned fantasy texts concern, first and foremost, their protagonists’ journeys, emphatic creations of the worlds traversed, and missions to save the world (also their own: e.g. the fantasy world as in *The Adventures of the Little Crumb* and *The Land of Colors*), the father (*Crowman*), the truth about the world, family (*The Loneliness of Gods*), which is often also a beginning of a new era. The discussed texts have at the same time a deeper, philosophical dimension, which is human lot considered in terms of Fate, Fortune, and Chance. In this perspective, protagonists adventures – even if they are active and inventive – are not always theirs to control. Especially important is the group of characters who support the protagonists, which leads to interpreting fantasy texts in the social context and treating the motif of journey as a metaphor of social life: “a metaphor of primacy of social life over isolationism” (Gemra, Rudolf 2003).

Also the category of time calls for broader interpretations as it assumes different meanings: apart from plot time (linear time of subsequent events), one can find also mythic time, biblical (religious) time, and historic time. After all, looking for one’s identity means also drawing on the past (antiquity), history, and legacy of traditions. Past is often given shape through a hard-to-define feel of antiquity (e.g. in the *Witcher* saga or in Anna Brzezińska’s *Saga o zbóju Twardokęsku* [trans. *The Saga of Twardokęsek the Bandit*]¹ the reader discovers the atmosphere of the Middle Ages thanks to a masterful stylization for the Old Polish language and clearly depicted characters of knights). Moreover, this antiquity is often achieved through the use of common props, such as clothes, descriptions of architecture and customs, as well as well through historiosophic references (e.g. in Gawiński’s *The Adventures of the Little Crumb* one can find a clear reference to the Romantic vision of the history of the Polish nation, including the image of graves of heroes). Terakowska’s *Córka Czarownic* [trans. *The Witches’ Daughter*] is itself a political metaphor for a country trying to fight for its freedom. It might be a reference to the theme of Poland enslaved, and an attempt to show the importance of tradition and the will to fight conveyed in national songs – for instance in “Pieśń Jedyna” [The Only Song], which can be associated with the power of a folk bard’s song – as represented by Halban’s song from Mickiewicz’s *Konrad Wallenrod*². In his narrative poem,

¹ See all the parts of saga: *Zbójecki gościniec*, 1999; *Plewy na wietrze*, 2006; *Żmijowa harfa*, 2007; *Letni deszcz. Kielich*, 2004; *Letni deszcz. Sztylet*, 2009.

² A. Mickiewicz, *Konrad Wallenrod, powieść historyczna z dziejów litewskich i pruskich* (Petersburg 1828) – Polish patriotic romantic narrative poem set in 14th-century Grand

Mickiewicz compares such a song to the biblical Ark of the Testimony, which binds the past with the present.

2. AROUND THE ROMANTIC TRADITION:
REMEMBRANCE AND MEMORIES (ONEIRIC AND MYSTIC STRUCTURES –
A. GAWIŃSKI'S *THE ADVENTURES OF THE LITTLE CRUMB*)

Przygody Okruszka is a multilayered, ambiguous, symbolic, and philosophical fable (fantasy) of magic and marvel, featuring Okruszek, a little boy who copes with evil that wants to conquer a wonderful Fairy Land.

One of the most important reception planes of the text is created by the overlapping of the real and magical worlds. The text features real and fairy characters, and nature becomes the real background of events as well as the realm of magic and wonder (the world of nature coexists here with the world of fantasy in opposition to the real, material civilisation). An additional stimulus for the boy's actions is his discovery of the past, history and the graves of the heroes who died for the motherland. (Oziewicz 2010, Oziewicz 2008, Dębek 1997)³

Antoni Gawiński should thus be regarded as one of the founders of the Polish literary fairy tale and the *fantasy* (Waksmund 2003: 219, 247).

We enter the Fairy Land—the realm of poetry, music and art defended by Okruszek, a poet's son—owing to reveries, dreams and visions (*Słownik literatury dziecięcej i młodzieżowej*, 2002: 329–330). These elements of Young Poland's literary imagination—the oneiric motifs—so pronounced in Gawiński's oeuvre, go hand in hand with some aspects of the contemporary fantasy genre.

Duchy of Lithuania. “The concept of „Wallenrodism” (Polish: “*Wallenrodyzm*”) — the striking of a treacherous, possibly suicidal, blow against an enemy — and certain powerful fragments of the poem, have become an enduring part of the Polish psyche and found resonance in the Polish uprisings of the 19th and 20th centuries. The poem included a reference to Machiavelli's dictum that a leader must be both a lion and a fox.. Its encouragement of what would later be called “patriotic treason” created controversy, since its elements of deception and conspiracy were thought incompatible with Christian and chivalric values”. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konrad_Wallenrod with references: Ch. Murray, 2004 *Encyclopedia of the Romantic Era, 1760–1850*, volume 2. Taylor & Francis. p. 740 and Cz. Miłosz, 1984, , *History of Polish Literature*. University of California Press. p. 220 and A. Witkowska, R. Przybylski, 2003, *Romantyzm*, Warszawa

³ The generic features of fantasy literature undoubtedly include the motif of transforming and rectifying reality by children appointed to fulfil this mission in the world which for various reasons has become evil or confused. This motif refers to the turning points and climactic events in history (of a country or of the world). For this reason fantasy literature represents the mythical thinking about the world and although ‘it derives equally from the fable, mythology, legend, medieval chivalric romances, and adventure novel,’ it clearly ‘transfers into literature the structural principles of myths... with the clear ethical dimension of each element of the presented world being one of the generic dominants of the text’ (Dębek 1997: 103)

Grzegorz Leszczyński defined the function of dream in Young Poland's literary fairy tale in the following way: "the oneiric convention made it possible to retain a close connection between the protagonist's real surroundings and the fantastic world. The protagonist does not have to search for the way to the fantasy land: it as if extends in him...the dream of Young Poland's fable protagonist not only is the other side of reality, but it also penetrates the reality itself, it is made up of its matter, it is built out of it. Unlike in the 19th century, the dream is not so much a reference to the precisely defined semantic field as an evocation of a certain atmosphere, a certain mode in which the human psyche functions, a certain manner of experiencing and reacting to phenomena. The oneiric character of the presented world is evoked by the dreamy landscape, its colours, characteristic understatements, muffled sounds, symbols, figures, mysterious, hardly comprehensible events which have basically no beginning and no end." (Leszczyński 1990: 44)

The dream in *Przygody Okruszka*, however, has a clearly defined function. It is not only a vision in a sleep; the protagonist does not come back to his own world after awakening. Just the opposite: Okruszek wakes up in a different world, a Fairy Land, because like a romantic hero he has a mission to accomplish there. Grzegorz Leszczyński claims that one of the generic features of Young Poland's fable is its protagonist who 'is filled with anxiety and dynamism and he dislikes passivity' (Leszczyński 1990: 44). Such a protagonist can be certainly recognised also in young romantic Kordian (protagonist of Polish national drama written by Juliusz Słowacki, determined to restore the freedom of his country by killing Russian Tzar) This model is excellently embodied in an active and brave boy from Gawiński's fairy tale.

The protagonist's inner strength derives both from angelic support and parental affection: 'to fall asleep in the elemental space in the embrace of a gliding Angel... Is there anything more beautiful? It can happen only to a child for whom a loving and nostalgic mother prays' (Gawiński, *Przygody Okruszka*: 91). The passage into another world is gentle: 'the boy slept soundly and he did not wake up even when the luminous Guide parted with him and left him on the elevated bank of a swirling river at the edge of impenetrable woods. The sky brightened in the East, and the stars disappeared one by one in the blue abyss. The dew appeared; a new day was approaching' (Gawiński, *Przygody Okruszka*: 91). Correlated with the protagonist's inner experiences the description of the new world to which Okruszek is conveyed is impressionistic, subjective and 'angelic'; it is evocative and saturated with lyricism (Leszczyński 1990: 42). After he wakes up, the protagonist is led by the Earth Spirit to the Forest. In Gawiński, the Earth Spirit takes on the form of a sage. In C.G. Jung's theories (*Phenomenology of the spirit in fables*), the 'spirit' is symbolised most frequently by a figure of an old man frequently associated with the father complex; sometimes it is an old sage (or a Romantic hermit) who guides the protagonists and teaches them how to act in the world (resorting to the imperative

mood of: Go! Take! See!) and apart from 'cunning, wisdom and knowledge... manifests...also moral features' (Jung 1993: 438–450). Uncovering layers of the ground, the Spirit shows Okruszek the past and history. He unearths for the boy truths which are not magical and marvellous, the world which is not the realm of fantasy and fable, but the real history, the graves of the heroes who died for the motherland – mother: 'on their bones and ashes rustling forests will thrive, fertile fields will yield crops, the houses will rise and the towns will be peopled on the swirling rivers...But whatever happens, it will happen on this soil full of love, saturated with sacrifice and faithful devotion...And all this will happen under the eternally watchful eye of those who lie in their beloved Mother's lap...they are her invisible guards: the HEROES' (Gawiński, *Przygody Okruszka*: 92). The quoted passage clearly echoes the Romantic convention and resembles the poetics of Juliusz Słowacki's mystical dramas (e.g. *Ksiądz Marek* or *Król Duch*), in which the historical processes are shown in allegorical visions of events and persons important for the Polish nation dramatised in the plays as the spirit(s) of history (White H., 2000)

The scene of showing the graves of national heroes in Gawiński's fable provides then the patriotic context of Poland's past. The Spirit teaches the boy how to become a hero and makes him realise how great a mission he has to accomplish: 'The Fairy Land, which has brought you up, is in great danger because evil forces want to conquer it. You will fight and you can win, but remember that above all lands, things and powers is Merciful Father in heaven...' (Gawiński, *Przygody Okruszka*, 92). It's thus clear that the religious dimension of the text has a significant role to play here – the boy's spiritual leader himself refers him to God despite his great faith in the protagonist's inner strength: 'The boy was good and just to everybody; his heart loved all these creatures, all this wide earth whose inside he saw open and mighty; he loved also people whom he missed more and more' (Gawiński, *Przygody Okruszka*, 96).

Evocations of the past are then very important in the story. By learning to understand history, the young protagonist learns how to act. In the fable an important role is played also by the motifs of 1. testimony of the Squirrel, an eye-witness of the events, 2. chronicles and books, e.g. one-hundred-year-old Raven Riri. 3. memories of the dying Fairy-Friend-Granny. Owing to these components, the structure of the work's narrative is partly retrospective.

The symbolism of the book in literature and culture is extremely complex. As Dariusz Cezary Maleszyński states, 'the *topos* of the Book was connected with grand structures of thinking about the design of all-being, the world, the human existence' (Maleszyński 1992: 23).⁴ In Young Poland's period, as we can

⁴ The book as a symbol is discussed by E.R Curtis in *Topika*, [w:] '*Studia z teorii literatury. Archiwum przekładów „Pamiętnika literackiego”*', Wrocław 1977, t. 1. Among others we can see it as a book of time, experiences, soul, history, fate, love, nature, heavens, memory, beauty, future, reason, heart, creation, world, mind, universe, magic books and sacred books; Curtius devotes separate passages to *Arabian Nights*) Maleszyński writes that by

observe in Gawiński's tale, 'the topos of the Book had also a pronounced cognitive aspect...the book was strongly connected with the sense of human works being determined by some higher structures, a language that the whole reality speaks' (Maleszyński 1990: 30).⁵

3. LEGACY OF TRADITIONS AND MORAL CONTEXTS –
WORKS BY BEATA OSTROWICKA (E.G. *KRAINA KOLORÓW*)
AND DOROTA TERAŁOWSKA
(E.G. *CÓRKA CZAROWNIC AND SAMOTNOŚĆ BOGÓW*)

Inspired by the works of Edith Nesbit about sand-fairy Psammead (*Five Children and It*⁶, *The Story of the Amulet*⁷) and Rudyard Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill*⁸, Beata Ostrowicka bases her fantasy worlds on time-travel motifs and poetics of journey through parallel worlds. Clear references to looking for identity in the past can be found in such texts as, among others, *Niezwykłe wakacje*, *Eliksir przygód* or *Kraina kolorów*. *Niezwykłe wakacje* [trans. *Incredible Holidays*] is based on the motif of a magic stone that grants wishes to its owner. The protagonist, teenage Kate, who lives in a region of the Polish mountains, uses the stone to translocate to the seaside, become invisible, or visit the 17th century to read a document destroyed ages ago (it is a reference to John III Sobieski's victory in the Battle of Vienna in 1683). *Eliksir przygód* [trans. *The Elixir of Adventures*] takes us to Poland and Venice of the 17th century. It tells a story of a mysterious jewel case that permits travel in time. The heroine, 12-year-old Helenka Dudzińska, lives in the 17th century but travels to the 20th century in

means of 'the discussed metaphors critics have interpreted reality (as an ordered systems of signs), time and destiny (especially the future, but also history, as a process), human life (as writing), and total knowledge (as a dream about penetrating the fundamental mystery). Formally, one should speak about the "great" and "small" topicality of the Book across the ages, which includes 1. the topos of the Book (the metaphor of the world full of signs, especially the book of nature, commented extensively on by E.R. Curtis); 2. the mythical topos of the Book, the topos of the Book as the myth: the only, transcendent, incomprehensible Volume (the beginning of the Koran states 'this is the Book, it cannot be doubted'); Bruno Schultz writes 'I call it simply the Book' (qtd. in Maleszyński, *op.cit.* pp.23–24).

⁵ Discussing the theme of *the book* in children's literature, one should consider also Maria Konopnicka's famous tale about orphan Mary, which features a chronicler Koszałek-Opalek, who 'has found a live book of spoken and direct word, superior to the grand project of the written *Dwarfs' History*' (see M. Konopnicka *About Dwarfs and Orphan Mary*, Warsaw 1955, p. 197).

⁶ *Five Children and It* (1902, Polish edition in transl. of Irena Tuwim, *Pięcioro dzieci i „coś”*; first Polish edition shorted in version *Dary* – 1910)

⁷ *The Story of the Amulet* (1906, Polish edition in transl. of Irena Tuwim, *Historia amuletu* 1968)

⁸ *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906, Polish edition in transl. of Helena Niemirowska and Franciszka Arnsztajnowa – *Puk* 1924; in transl. of Józef Birkenmajer *Puk z Pukowej Górk* – 1924)

her search for a cure. Some events are set in the ruins of Ojców castle, where a sort of passageway between the two realms is located.

Ryszard Waksmund remarks:

The passage between the periods takes place in accordance with the 'monistic theory of space', as Andrzej Zgorzelski called it, which claims that movement is only possible in a single plane, along the axis of past – future, while there exists a choice of direction and a multitude of starting and finish points (Zgorzelski 1997; Oziewicz 1998: 87) It leads to a breach in the laws of the depicted world, yet the aim of this motif is not to achieve horror – the characters get quickly accustomed to time travels – but rather generational solidarity, which stems from the belief that experiences and problems of teenagers are universal across historical periods. Therefore, there is no point in rebelling against norms, standards, and authorities. What counts is adventure and good time – without consequences that would disturb the social and personal *status quo* of the characters (Waksmund 2007: 105).

Yet another structure of fantasy (here: alternative) worlds is manifest in *Kraina Kolorów* [trans. *The Land of the Colors*]. A world of the Grays and grayness is connected to a world of the Colors by a stone arch. The poetics of the title suggests the central theme of the story. The dominant semantic and structural elements are colors, harmony and disturbances in them but also good and evil. For instance, the dominance of violet is a sign of tyrannical Lady Beautiful, who took the throne from Lady Wise and Good. Important are also calls and greetings that follow the said poetics: “May colors never omit your life!” or “For blackness!”

The author juxtaposes the realistic world of Polish provinces (full of generic names of villages and small towns) and the land of colors beyond the Gate of Passage, where one can encounter such names as the Two-Colored Brook, the Turquoise Sea, the Black Claws, and the Colorless Valley. The clear opposition between grayness and colorfulness suggests obvious interpretations, while the cultural symbolism of colors provokes interesting associations of moral nature.

“Dorota Terakowska’s texts that were written in the 1980s – writes Jolanta Ługowska – contain many allusions to the political reality, which allows to interpret those texts as stories with a key. Therefore, the characters have to face the reality of a totalitarian system and actively oppose satraps who use their unlimited power against the people” (Ługowska 2003, 2007). In this regard, two of Terakowska’s many novels stand out – *The Witches’ Daughter* and *The Loneliness of the Gods*.

Vivid, expressive, full of imagery and dynamic, focused on discovering one’s identity, *Córka Czarownic* by Dorota Terakowska is a very special tale about maturation: . The story may be interpreted on two levels: first, as a didactic tale “about children and for children”, and second, as a political metaphor, which discusses the issue of a country trying to fight for its freedom.

The protagonist of the story is a girl with golden hair, Luelle, who is destined to learn her name and origin at the age of 17. She is selected by the Witches, who protect the royal family from the ultimate destruction, to fight the enemy. The Witches, protectors of the girl's secret identity and her caretakers, convey their wisdom, knowledge and magical abilities on Luelle: "They work secretly, which gives a factual tone to this fantasy story, combining Polish myths and tales, still present in readers' minds, with Celtic overtones, constantly noticeable in Terakowska's novel." (Nowacka 1992) Luelle goes through various emotional states, needs and desires and after many struggles and sacrifices she matures into a Woman-Queen. The variety of emotions she also experiences include "hunger, desire, fear, hatred, gratitude, loyalty, pride and scorn." (Nowacka 1992) The yearning for freedom exists here in parallel to the explicitly shown process of the protagonist's maturation (the psychological initiation). The process of initiation itself (the search for one's identity) very clearly refers to the model of maturation represented by Sir Lancelot or Sir Percival in the context of "a conscious acceptance of the great heritage of past traditions." Analyzed like that, the beautiful story by Terakowska expresses the deep philosophy of life and "the dark world of Celtic fantasy." Genologically the text is situated "at the intersection of the morality play with mythology and a hint of fairy tales" (Nowacka 1992) – similarly to the works of J.R.R Tolkien or Ursula Le Guin. One of the most interesting images in the story is a vivid and rich symbolic description of the perfect homeland (perhaps the biblical paradise?) of Luelle's – a world of the Great Kingdom, affluent and happy, managed by sensible and wise rulers:

The Kingdom was prospering, the orchards were giving plenty of fruit, the wheat was growing, and the bards were teaching The Only Song to the citizens of towns and villages. Witches accumulated wisdom, like bees honey in their hives, and that is why king Luil XXIII decided to abolish knighthood and Luil XXIV ordered the destruction and burial of anything that could lead to violence. The vulnerable Great Kingdom was then attacked by black Urghs, and the happy citizens were turned into frightened slaves, living under the whip of the Invaders." (Nowacka 1992)

The dark events of invasion are described in a gothic color palette, stylized in places to seem like the biblical Apocalypse – black Invaders ride black horses and "the wind blows the ashes of unburned balefires." (Nowacka 1992) Just as the Tiara in Hogwarts, the Holy Stone (or the Oracle Stone), which recognizes the "clear intentions of royal descendants," becomes the most important site of worship. However, in the moment of truth (the adult princess goes through the Trial of Stone) the Stone rejects the chosen girl. In the novel, the level of didacticism is fully exposed (it might be considered a shortcoming in Terakowska's text) – the Witches "moralize" their pupil, stating the goal very clearly and delivering the ethical messages. Despite the fact that they make mistakes

in instruction (like parents in real life), the whole story is characterized by “a certain simplicity of the world” and it ends well, with hopes for a better future, even for the enemy⁹. Terakowska’s text meets the criteria of an obligatory reading for younger readers – it paints an interesting psychological picture of a maturing protagonist. The fantastical level of the story is full of symbols and it stimulates the imagination of a child, encouraging the discussion on the issues of tradition, war, and enslavement. The text also reflects on values and attitude, commenting on such important topics as axiology and the standard of education.

Interpretations of Terakowska’s novel *The Loneliness of Gods* are related to philosophy and worldviews. The text presents images of Slavic deity Svetovid, thoughts on the beginnings of Christianity in Poland (the new God of Kindness replaces former tribal gods of cruelty) and historical moments of emergence and development of a “civilization of cities” (Baluch 2000). In this context, the novel becomes also a didactic story about the necessity of mutual tolerance between people of different religions, customs, and culture

Nevertheless, the moral dimension of the text seems to depend on the depiction of the world: the name of the protagonist (Jon on the Way) becomes fully meaningful, while the final scene of finding the truth emphasizes his maturity and unveils his identity. Obvious signs accompany the protagonist looking for his identity – stretches of forest, mountains, roads (for example: the forest hides a village of the local community; Jon travels on a mysterious and symbolic road; Jon climbs a mountain on the top of which stands a devastated statue of Svetovid) – and the River signifies the border between two worlds that cannot be crossed (the taboo of the River is broken only by Jon when he rescues a drowning girl named Gaia, who later becomes his wife and mother of his child). Because of this event, Jon has a stronger need for facing the world “beyond the River”. Jon knows from the Priests that this is a region under influence of an old god Svetovid, who is in a slow agony (becoming a thing of the past) (Gemra, Rudolf 2006: 149- 143).

Formation of values in Jon’s community is the responsibility of “spiritual guides” – the Shaman of the old world competes for power with new Priests. “The new world” is also represented by the civilization of cities, which (when discovered by Jon) makes him realize his inner need for change. Secrets of the world (forbidden borders, understanding the natural world, the despair of the old god Svetovid, the importance of building a new temple for the new God), unveiled thanks to the journeys, help comprehend the value of life, universal truths about family happiness and the power of father’s love for his son. They also allow for the compromise between tradition and modernity.

⁹ Zieliński, J., *Dojrzewanie do wolności*, the book’s review in: Web. <www.fantastyka.pl>

4. HISTORIC DISCOURSE WITH ELEMENTS OF POP-CULTURE
(CARICATURE, GROTESQUERY, AND PLAY ON LITERATURE:
ANDRZEJ PILIPIUK'S SERIES OF STORIES ABOUT JAKUB WĘDROWYCZ,
ANDRZEJ SAPKOWSKI'S *THE WITCHER*, JACEK DUKAJ'S *CROWMAN*)

In the literature for youth and children, cultural identity is connected with expressive portrayals of protagonists, around who the whole depicted world seems to be structured. A literary character – standing for a particular type of people – can, aside from individual traits, have traits of certain social groups, classes or even whole nations. In the case of Pilipiuk's protagonist, the author concentrates on character traits and features of appearance, actions, thoughts, and words, his emotions and feelings. The name of Jakub Wędrowycz, which connotes wandering and journeys, seems to be significant. In fantasy fiction for younger readers, characters are often stereotypical, possessing traits characteristic for a given model. Their traits are often exaggerated (e.g. knight – bravery, wanderer – curiosity of the world, peasant – scruffiness). Sometimes such characters refer to an ex-literary model coming from the real world.

The following is the description of Jakub Wędrowycz – the protagonist of Pilipiuk's series:

Andrzej Pilipiuk's Jakub Wędrowycz is a horrendous old boozier, a village exorcist, bootlegger and poacher, who scares others off with his looks, smell, and manners – or rather lack thereof. Together with his equally repulsive friends, he gets drunk, distils moonshine, starts fights and eliminates representatives of the enemy family – the Bardaks. Due to some supernatural abilities, he also exterminates ghosts, vampires, zombies, and any other kinds of “paranormal vermin”. In his spare time, he lifts spells, undoes curses, sometimes even saving humanity. All his deeds are achieved under the influence and he values cunning and brute force more than subtle ways of resolving conflicts. The figure of Wędrowycz is an essence of all typical Polish vices, flaws, and stereotypes. Still, his rudeness, boorishness, lack of conscience and moral principles, together with his arsenal of weapons and explosives, give him the edge over any enemy (Gemra 1997; Rudolf 2001; Lichański 1997)¹⁰

In the case of Andrzej Sapkowski's protagonist, cultural identity is built through plays on literature, which here take the form of intertextual references to popular texts of culture (also Polish) and cultural borrowings. Although the author plays with texts and quotes, representing a “post-modern aesthetics of pleasure”, he evokes select national symbols through the use of popular – even “cult,” if we were to use a pop-culture naming – Polish legends and fairy tales.

¹⁰ See: Tymoteusz Wronka – interview with Andrzej Pilipiuk <http://katedra.nast.pl/artukul/2092/Wywiad-z-Andrzejem-Pilipiukiem>. See also E. Rudolf, *Świat istot fantastycznych we współczesnej literaturze popularnej*, Wałbrzych 2001 and http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jakub_W%C4%99drowycz

For instance, *The Witcher* is a story about a princess changed into a lamia (Pol. strzyga). The story is a clear adaptation of a folk legend by Roman Zmorski titled *Strzyga*. Researchers of folk tales, such as Aleksander Brückner, emphasize that the creature is female. Strzyga (of Balkan origin) was a blood-sucking vampire with claws, a female demon with two souls (Strzelczyk 2007:194).

The works by Roman Zmorski (1822–1867) belong to folk lyric of Polish Romanticism in the style of so-called “black romanticism”. It is characterized by romantic frenzy, madness, fatalism, and despair. Events are set at gloomy nights, while plots abound in motifs of death and horror of existence. The world depicted – divided into the fantastic and the realistic layers – features characters popular in pagan folk tales, such as lamias (pol. strzygi), drowners (pol. utopce) or water nymphs (pol. rusalki).

In Zmorski's text, the Strzyga from the title – the daughter of King Goździk – was born from incest between the king and his sister. The child transforms into a monster that attacks people at full moon. However, the king's love for his monster child is so great that he promises half of his kingdom and his daughter as wife if someone lifts the curse. The deed is achieved by a handsome but poor orphan named Martin, who is given his reward. Sapkowski reworks/rewrites Zmorski's story: instead of an orphan, a white-haired, scar-faced witcher appears in the court, saying he is not interested in marriage, just money promised by the king. When the curse is lifted, the princess changes into a mentally ill teen girl who acts like a child, not a pretty woman.

In a story from *The Sword of Destiny* collection, we find a basilisk – a creature from Warsaw legends that can be killed with a mirror. In Sapkowski's version, the Witcher does not bring this crucial piece of equipment, which gawkers comment as follows [my translation]:

It was clear from the beginning that he would find only death, as many before him. He didn't even have a mirror, only a sword. Everybody knows that only a mirror can kill the basilisk”

The Bounds of Reason is, on the other hand, a story about the Wawel dragon and a cobbler's apprentice named Dratewka. The pre-text of this legend tells of a smart boy who defeats the dragon using not a sword but a lamb stuffed with sulphur. When the dragon eats the lamb, it gets thirsty, drinks from the Vistula river, and eventually bursts. Sapkowski uses this story in a playful way. First, people are led to believe that the dragon is just a figment of their imagination. When it turns out that the dragon is real – made of gold and called Viltrentenmerth. The dragon is finally defeated, but the stereotypical roles are reversed. The dragon is in fact a kind, wise, and beautiful being, while its victor (here: Kozojed) is a rude, stupid, and greedy man, who is rightfully punished at the end of the story.

Among Sapkowski's works, one can find one more Polish legend, this time with patriotic overtones. It's a legend about Princess Wanda, who loved a Pol-

ish man and – in the pre-text version – having rejected a German suitor committed suicide by drowning in the Vistula river. The title of the legend is literally “About Wanda who didn’t want a German”. Sapkowski’s take on the story is about a Vanta who drowns herself in the Duppa river because she is ugly and nobody loves her (Roszczynialska 2009; Majkowski 2013; Parowski 1991, Bereś 2005)

Except popular threads and motifs from legends and fairy tales, Sapkowski stylizes his saga for the medieval period in terms of culture and language. Many characters have traits typical for a medieval knight (Geralt of Rivia is brave, lives according to the witchers’ creed, defends the weak; Reynard of Toussaind takes knighthood vows and admires the lady of his heart). Among them is a wise, educated, and caring ruler, who is a reflection of a medieval ideal. His name is Esterad Thyssen, a ruler of Kovir. Sapkowski’s descriptions of battles resemble those from Sienkiewicz’s *The Teutonic Knights*. Especially vivid is the image of the battle of Brenna, in which warriors use actual medieval weaponry and equipment, such as swords and axes.

It seems that the most interesting element of Sapkowski’s saga is the creation of characters: “they arrive at the end of their journey not innocent and unblemished, which makes them more believable in the reader’s eyes,” says Gemra. Many characters have deepened character traits; what is highlighted is their undeserved solitude, alienation, isolation, inability to function in a xenophobic world ruled by stereotypes. It is especially true for the two protagonists: Geralt of Rivia and Ciri, a girl fated to become a witcher. Ciri is deprived of her family home, and when she is cast into the fray of war, she is alone to cope in the world of humans and elves. Geralt is a mutant, a human and non-human at the same time. His profession brings gratitude of those defended against monsters, but on the other hand leads to rejection and solitude. Similarly lonely is sorceress Yennefer, Geralt’s lover, whom magic made beautiful but infertile (Geralt’s mutation made him sterile, too). Because of her abilities, Yennefer exists on the periphery of normal life (Gemra 2007).

Novel *Narrenturm* (2002) is set in precisely defined time and space. It begins in 1425 during the Hussite Wars in the Lower Silesia.

The novel starts a cycle about Reynevan, also called Reinmar, who spends his time on women, medicine combined with magic, involuntary warring and wandering, during which he has extraordinary adventures and meets fantastic creatures known from fairy tales and German and Slavic demonology (Gemra 2007).

Jacek Dukaj’s *Crowman* presents many references to the history of Poland, allusions to the political system, grotesque images of the Polish reality in the 1980s. *Wroniec (Crowman)*¹¹, published in 2009, is a phantasmagoric tale about the

¹¹ No published English translation of the book exists. An excerpt, titled *The Crowe* has been translated into English for the publisher Wydawnictwo Literackie by Stanley Bill (available on-line). In this paper a handful of formulations have been borrowed from

Martial Law in Poland as seen by a child. It's a richly illustrated book, stylized as a magical fable. The protagonist is a boy wandering across a city plunged in darkness. His goal is to find his father, who has been kidnapped by a black bird (the eponymous Crowman). Time, space, and memory are the three distinct elements that bind the tale together.¹²

The book revolves around a particular historical moment, that is the Martial Law, which was proclaimed on Sunday morning, December 13, 1981, by the Military Council of National Salvation (the Polish acronym, WRON, reverberates in the word *Wroniec* – Crowman). For many years, the Martial Law was depicted in the “Polish literary memory” in a Romantic and Messianic manner. (Matynia 2005). However, it wouldn't feature in literature for children. When the Martial Law was declared, Dukaj was 7. Therefore, we can construe the book's protagonist – little Adam – as a representation of the author. Adam – like Carroll's Alice – strives to the utmost to make sense of the world of adults and its rules.

The book can be interpreted along two divergent lines. The first one sees *Wroniec* as a simple allegory of the fate of Poland and Poles under the Martial Law. The author frames people and institutions connected to the communist regime as evil characters from a horror story or a gloomy fairy-tale, the purpose of which is to emphasize the “martyrological” vision of the nation. The other interpretative line assumes that the fantastical creation of the historical world (remade into a pop-cultural image) is in fact a critique of the memory mechanism – even despite the fact that the author clearly tries to organize various icons and symbols of the past. (Thelen 1998) The martyrological narration, framed in the form of a nightmare, is conveyed by a child whose memory has been molded by tales of knights, dragons, and pirates – these inspirations transpire also in the grotesque and farcical illustrations (Deszcz- Tryhubczak 2013; Staley 2006)

The opening of the story is evocative of the fairy-tales poetics, on the one hand, and the family saga convention, on the other. The narrative emphatically foregrounds the perspective of a child-recipient with his/her typical images of the world and value hierarchies. Even before the eponymous Crowman makes his first showing, mysterious “ugly gentlemen” appear, evoking a sense of anxiety: “Listen to a story of what did not really happen:

Once upon a time, there was a boy whose name was Adam. Adam had a mum and a dad; he had a little sister, a granny and also uncles and aunts. They all lived in a big city on a river ... (Dukaj, *Wroniec*: 7)¹³

that translation; all such references are acknowledged in the related footnotes. (translator's note)

¹² See, Dariusz Nowacki, http://wyborcza.pl/1,75475,7213988,Wroniec__Dukaj__Jacek.html#ixzz2pFT7DA90 and P. Sterczewski, „Dukaj i krytycy robią stan wojenny. O Wrońcu i wokół Wrońca at <http://www.polisemia.com.pl/numery-czasopisma/numer-3-2010-3/dukaj-i-krytycy-robia-stan-wojenny-o-wroncu-i-wokol-wronca>.

¹³ Original quotations come from J. Dukaj J., *Wroniec*, illustrated by Jakub Jabłoński,

In those times there were no computers. There was no Internet. There were no electronic games, either. Black-and-white TV sets showed only two channels. On both, ugly gentlemen kept talking about boring matters. There were no American films on. And there was no music to listen to on iPods or mobiles. There were no mobiles. At Adam's place there was no phone at all. (Dukaj, *Wroniec*: 8)

That winter, the ugly gentlemen appeared on TV also instead of a Sunday show for children. Schools were closed, even some kindergartens were closed, too. (Dukaj, *Wroniec*: 10–11).

One of the factors that affect the reception of the text is the Romantic tradition. In this respect, Dukaj's book can be explored as an allegory of enslaved Poland, at the same time indebted to and polemical with the Romantic legacy with its prevalent Messianistic attitudes. The story's atmosphere is conjured up by a combination of Gothic elements, martyrology-related motifs and the echoes of freedom fighters' conspiracy. Central to it are consciousness-raising and integration of the nation, both crucially involving efforts on the part of a writer-dissident who cherishes and activates the word and sacrifices himself for the motherland (Przybylski, Witkowska 2003). Also the themes of commitment, sacrifice and death in the name of the "God, honor, motherland" slogan evidently represent the Romantic heritage. The author invests heavily in the metaphor of conspiracy rendered in the book as the (always capitalized) Underground. The structure and mechanisms of the Underground become perhaps the most salient symbol of freedom struggle under the Martial Law: the Underground is a multi-storey, labyrinthine grid of corridors. The Romantic individualist protagonist types are conveyed in some characters of the book, such as little Adam himself or Mr. Concrete. In the context of the debate on fighting strategies, their ethical positions imply that a common protest is being orchestrated in order to slay the Crowman (the situation resembling Słowacki's young Kordian's involvement in a conspiracy to assassinate the Tzar¹⁴). Notably, the greatest enemy here is not so much the system as its embodiment – a huge, anthropomorphized bird, *Wroniec*/the Crowman. He is an allegory of evil, a figure inhabiting the top of a high tower – a dictator and/or a czar. It is the Crowman himself that arrives at little Adam's home to snatch his father away:

The huge Crowman was sitting in the shattered window, on the broken frame. It was just like the one Adam had dreamt of – black, glistening and horrible. The Crowman spread its wings and covered the whole wall from the library to the shelf unit. In one crooked claw it clutched Adam's bleeding father; the other

Kraków 2009. The translations provided are by the translator of the article, unless indicated otherwise.

¹⁴ Kordian is the eponymous character of Juliusz Słowacki's drama, which is reckoned one of Poland's national classics. Staged first as a Romantic disappointed lover, Kordian develops into a troubled, internally conflicted freedom fighter involved in a (failed) czar assassination plot. (translator's note)

sank into the windowsill. It raised and violently lowered its huge beak, a heavy and sharp pickaxe. It jabbed Adam's Mum. Mum tried to rescue Dad, to pull him away, but she failed. The bird did not miss. She fell on the floor, screaming in pain. The Crowman opened its beak and shook the red drops off. It screeched so fearfully that its voice echoed in the neighborhood (Dukaj, *Wronice*: 16–17)

The tattered curtains and hangings fluttered around the Crowman. The icy wind blew fountains of snow inside. The light at the ceiling swayed, making the Crowman's warped shadow leap across the faded wallpaper. [...] Pitch-dark peepers must have emitted some invisible paralyzing rays because Adam could not move his feet, not forward and not backward, either. The bird's dead, icy gaze froze the boy into the floor – SON! – screeched the Crowman. – Crack! – went one of the light bulbs.

All of a sudden, the Crowman furled his wings, yanked Adam's unconscious father and plunged into the night, carrying him away. (Dukaj, *Wroniec*: 17–19)

Steeped in the Romantic tradition, the bird-of-prey symbolism is a clear reference to Mickiewicz's *Forefathers' Eve* Part II, a drama in which the very moment that the ghosts of the dead are summoned from the netherworld, a worldly revenge for their wrongdoings is also dealt out, among others, by owls, eagle-owls and ravens ("You had no mercy, lord! Hey, owls, eagles and ravens, let us show no mercy either."). The raven is a symbol of death and war, disease and plague. In traditional representations, the birds followed soldiers and pecked out the eyes of the slain. This deeply entrenched motif powerfully resurfaces in Stefan Żeromski's writings, with one of his outstanding short stories titled "Ravens and crows will rend us" deploying it both literally and symbolically. The story dwells on the cruel demise of the 1863 insurgents, whose dead bodies scattered on the battlefields were pecked into pieces by birds. The image of the killed insurgents serves also as a metaphor of the bleeding country ripped apart by the foreign powers that partitioned Poland. (Cf. Goya's *Disasters of War* prints).

The atmosphere of the book also bears a clear Romantic imprint. The personified Crowman and his henchmen evoke the sense of horror, anxiety and complete annihilation: there is "nothing" left amidst the darkness of "the night."

They are coming: THUMP- STAMP, THUMP-STAMP, THUMP-STAMP!

There was no home anymore. They broke it, they smashed it, they tore it, knocked things over, spilled things, dirtied them, hurt them, destroyed them. Adam looked into his sister's bed. Empty. No trace of Mum, Grandma, or Uncle Kaz. All the windows open or shattered. Wind and snow are raging in the ruins. (Dukaj, *Wroniec*, 23–24).

The passage quoted above conjures up a range of deeply negative emotions: TERROR, FEAR, APPREHENSION, NIGHTMARE, DESPAIR, FRUSTRATION, HELPLESSNESS. The images of dread are only enhanced by, for example, the helmeted MOMOs¹⁵ bristling with truncheons, their leather belts tied

¹⁵ The name Momo consists of the repeated acronym of Citizens' Militia (Milicja Obywa-

around their waists, and the growling HOUNDS (“crouching with their muzzles dropped half-open, their headlight peepers not ablaze yet, cold sweat dripping down their tinplate sides, their chromed claws scratching the asphalt.”)¹⁶

The sense of horror is evoked also by staccato phrases and non-finite clauses picturing the frightful night on which: “Street. Street. Black Windows. Ravens. Snow. Frost. Night. Owls’ eyes. Street. Street. Noises of the machines of war. Monsters from the shadows. The Grey of old picture tubes. Street. No people around. Only ravens. And should anyone in the street. Would be Rooks.¹⁷ Nobody there. In the streets. Night” (Dukaj, *Wroniec*: 129). The contemporary humanities research is fascinated with memory. The culture of memory as a methodological notion has been thoroughly studied, particularly in Germany, with special attention devoted to collective and cultural memory,¹⁸ although exploration of individual (private) memory also provides precious insights. Dukaj’s story combines both memory types (historical – collective and private) because the narrative recounts the (mis)fortunes of one young protagonist and his family. Apparently, it is dominated by selective and restricted depiction of phenomena, the perspective rooted in poetics of space (including places of memory and memory of places) and schematic division of characters into good and evil ones. The most elaborately enhanced motif is an escape into the world of fantasy, which is a specific (though not mimetic) reflection of reality, providing its caricatured representation.

It seems that Dukaj is actually seeking a key to historical and cultural understanding of the past events and finds the child-protagonist with his child-specific – DIRECT – world perception a useful device. The nightmarish struggles of the time (with tanks rolling in the streets, militiamen patrolling towns, tear gas sprayed amidst demonstrations, truncheon-armed Motorized Reserves of the Citizens’ Militia, squad cars transporting arrested protesters, and the curfew called “the raven’s hour” in the book) take on the form of fantastic images, bizarre creatures, hybrid technical devices – machines constructed of various objects and materials, all of them grotesque and monstrous inventions (e.g. ZŁOMOT¹⁹).

telska – MO) popularly despised as the regime’s minions involved less in the protection of citizens and crime investigation than in violent enforcement of antidemocratic repressions. (translator’s note)

¹⁶ In the original SUKA (Polish for a bitch) – a commonly used slang term denoting police cars used to transport the arrested and convicts. The use of “hounds” here is inspired by Stanley Bill’s translation (translator’s note)

¹⁷ In the original *Wroniaki*, a derivative of *Wroniec*, expressive of something younger and less ominous than *Wroniec*, but subordinate and obedient to him. The use of “Rook” here and below is inspired by Stanley Bill’s translation, see footnote 22. (translator’s note)

¹⁸ Another view of the phenomenon is conveyed in autobiographical texts, diaries and memoirs, which feature so-called “individual memory.” Roma Ligocka’s autobiographical tale *Dziewczynka w czerwonym płaszczyku*, 2001

¹⁹ ZŁOMOT is one of the book’s many untranslatable, semantically rich neologisms: it

Portrayals of combats with personified phenomena that typified the martial law period (the motorized troops' brutality, tear-gassing the protesters, etc.) are a masterful artistic device which on the one hand allows a getaway from the historical into the fantastic and on the other engages the reader in the interpretive process. The intriguing logic of capitalized proper names and consistent imagery – symbols representing the totalitarian system – virtually calls for explication and deciphering. The sustained character- and plot-construction coupled with the dynamic narrative framed in sensational adventure poetics inspires the reader to get involved in a literary game, but also to make a conscious effort at grasping the sense of the unfolding events. The author produces a series of caricatures and grotesque visions of the world in order to analyze the social structures and relations between the political power wielders and their subordinates and to expose hidden agendas, corruption and treason. He shows from the inside the structures and workings of bureaucracy and official control, the mechanisms of social manipulation that rely on a highly contrived system of censorship and denunciations. Here is a vivid image of Screecher-Owl Snitchers²⁰:

The longest alley across the estate was lined with telephone poles. Their wiring was always beset with Screecher-Owls. With their eyes shut and their claws clenched tightly around the wires, they listened in on the conversations drifting along from one telephone to another. Every now and then a Screecher-Snitcher would open his peepers, shake his head in amazement and fly up. Adam stared at the birds up in the grey sky. They headed downtown. – They report to the Crowman – muttered Mr. Jan in a low voice. – Everybody reports to the Crowman. The eastern part of the firmament was enveloped in a thick, black cloud. (Dukaj, *Wroniec*: 37- 38)

The memory of the Martial Law has also preserved the image of CENSORSHIP in the minds of the citizens. In Poland, censorship was particularly consolidated in the 50s of the 20th century at the height of social realism, an ultimately ideologized propagandist enterprise. Censorship received then elaborate institutional shapes and spread ubiquitously, encompassing all spheres of life. In her article “Children’s Literature Censorship in Totalitarian States: The Third Reich and the GDR,” Christa Kamenetsky, citing Hannah Arendt’s theory, states:

combines three words ZŁO (evil), ZŁOM (iron scrap) and ŁOMOT (thrashing and onomatopoeic thumping), and at the same time very closely resembles the Polish acronym of the Motorized Reserves of Citizens’ Militia Troops – ZOMO – notorious for their brutal suppression of popular protests. The passage is full of references to products which the official propaganda celebrated as evidence of Poland’s industrialization, technological advancement and truly socialist lifestyle.

²⁰ In the original text the Screecher-Owls are called *Słuchacze* (Listeners), which rhymes with the Polish name for the bird species (*Puchacze*). The phrase “Screecher-Owl Snitcher” used here is borrowed from Stanley Bill’s translation, (translator’s note)

Totalitarianism differs from a mere dictatorship by a pervasive ideology and all-embracing centralized censorship that permeates all aspects of life. According to Hannah Arendt, one of the strongest methods of totalitarian control is a combination of terrorism and propaganda, which is most effective because it is institutionalized. (Kamenetsky, 1996: 434)²¹

We believe that at this reception level, Dukaj's work approximates Czesław Miłosz's *Bound Mind*, a philosophical-political essay published in 1953 in France, where the writer cooperated with the famous *Culture*. The essay presents the figures of four authors of Miłosz's acquaintance. "Encoded" as Greek letters, Jerzy Andrzejewski, Tadeusz Borowski, Jerzy Putrament and Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński (*alpha, beta, gamma* and *delta*, respectively) are all entangled in the Stalinist system, with the essay delving into their conduct, decisions and morality, sketching thereby complex ideas and human relationships.

In his essay, The Nobel-Prize winner outlines "two facets" of life in the totalitarian system: resistance and underground struggle on the one hand and collaboration with the government, treason and emigration on the other. Similar issues are probed into also by Dukaj in his portrayals of complicated realities. An account of Uncle Kaz's betrayal and the depiction of the double agent figure in *Wroniec* are interspersed with images of citizens being "tempted" with allures of colorful, dollar-based America. Opulent America exerts influence over virtually EVERYBODY – both the upright and honest resistance movement activists (people of the Underground) and the party-members, eulogists of the Crowman-czar. The "dollar seduction" reveals the inherent weaknesses of human nature.

Disappointment, resignation and despair are prompted in the story by the rifts in the underground fighting groups and the Church. The "insurgents" assembled in the Underground are articulate about the loss of their close ones and believe in the power of their FOREFATHERS (ancestors' ghosts), but they loiter passively, steeped in "unpower," desperate and yet "resigned" at the same time. The only feat they are capable of accomplishing is tea-drinking and cigarette-smoking²².

²¹ Cf. also H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York 1966; L. P. Bloomfield, "Civil Society. Strengthens the Fabric of the Press," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 8, 1996, p. 19. See, R. J. Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism: A Study of "Brainwashing in China"*, New York 1961, pp. 419- 436. Similar conclusions are formulated by Kamila Budrowska in *Literatura i pisarze wobec cenzury PRL 1948–1958*, Białystok 2009.

²² "The publication of *Wroniec* turned out to be a controversial event in the Polish literary world, attracting both positive and skeptical reviews, which either stressed Dukaj's unconventionality and innovativeness or castigated his tale's bizarreness, heavy-handedness and overabundance of political allusions. The merit that definitely cannot be denied to Dukaj is that he managed to create a platform for a cross-age reading of the book, and thus for cross-generational reflection on Martial Law". J. Deszcz – Tryhubczak, *op.cit.*, s. 142.

CONCLUSIONS

Discovering cultural signs of national history in fantastic literature for children is an opportunity to understand national identity, which is, on one hand, rooted deeply in the Romantic tradition, and – on the other hand – sometimes merges with symbols of contemporary pop-culture and ludic aspects (such as caricature, parody, hyperbolization, grotesque, play on words, playing with convention). All these strategies of “attracting” the reader help understand the past, objectify and modernize the reception of tradition, filter it through emotions and put it into a new perspective.

My considerations in conclusion will be indebted to Stefania Wortman's important insights formulated in her *Od baśni ludowej do powieści fantastyczno-naukowej*. The scholar's objective was to depict reality through fairy tale:

the fairy tale is located in time and despite its fantastic elements it issues from reality and is realistically and historically grounded. In the fairy tale the folk expressed its epoch and problems, and its anxieties and dreams were embodied in the figures of fairies, witches, dwarfs, magic wands and flying carpets... The modern fable, if it wants to be something more than just a parody of the folk tale and fairy tale, must have its own character: its own reality and its own fantastic component (Wortman 1968: 130)

Because of the sphere of fantastic world, which plays a specific role in each single text, we may say that fantasy (like fairy tale): “is a guidebook through the real world; it reveals to children the wonders of their everyday surroundings as well as of the nation's past” (Wortman 1968: 130).

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Szczelinowość baśni magicznej. W odpowiedzi na inicjacyjne interpretacje baśni

Abstract: The article *Fissures of magical fairy-tales – responding to initiation interpretations of fairy-tales* presents Pierre Péju’s research standpoint outlined in his book *La petite fille dans la forêt des contes* (*The Little Girl in the Fairy-Tale Forest*; in Poland published as *Dziewczynka w baśniowym lesie. O poetykę baśni: w odpowiedzi na interpretacje psychoanalityczne i formalistyczne*). I propose to treat the methodology employed by the French author as transgressive or ‘fissured’, since it pertains to borderline existential and mental experiences in fairy-tales. These experiences are linked to breaking personal, social and cultural taboos. Examples of transgressions are presented in symbolic and archetypal images across various cultural texts and include insanity, perverse eroticism, cruelty, cannibalism and atrocities. Péju’s interpretative ideas are discussed in the context of Jolanta Brach-Czaina’s philosophical arguments on the ambivalence of human nature. In this sense, I refer to Brach-Czaina’s concept of “fissures of existence” and the perspective of analytical psychology developed by Carl Gustav Jung, who links transgressions to confrontations with the archetype of a shadow in his works. Theoretical considerations focused on the transgressive nature of fairy-tales are concluded with an interpretation of a chosen fairy tale from the Brothers Grimm’s collection.

Keywords: fairy tales, transgressive, homo viator, ‘fissures of existence’

Baśniami magicznymi/ludowymi nazywa się opowieści zakorzenione w tradycji ludowej, które wywodzą się z przekazów ustnych i nie posiadają konkretnych autorów¹. Spisane w XVII wieku przez Charlesa Perraulta oraz w XIX przez braci Grimm są zbiorami anonimowych opowieści, które powstały wraz z narodzinami języka². Baśnie ludowe to krótkie utwory epickie przesycone cudownością

¹ Pojęcie baśni magicznej/ludowej odnosi się tutaj bezpośrednio do zbiorów braci Grimm i Charlesa Perraulta, określanych przez badaczy literatury dziecięcej jako „formy proste” w XIX wieku zaadaptowane na grunt literatury dziecięcej. Kwestia pokrewieństwa baśni z bajką zwierzęcą, legendą, anegdotą, podaniem i innymi gatunkami folklorystycznymi nie leży w kręgu moich zainteresowań, nie wchodzi one bowiem w skład literatury „osobnej”. Próbę uporządkowania różnych typów i definicji baśni znaleźć można w opracowaniach J. Ługowskiej, *Ludowa bajka magiczna jako tworzywo literatury*, Wrocław 1981, Eadem, *Bajka w literaturze dziecięcej*, Warszawa 1988.

² Zob. J. Wais, *Ścieżki baśni. Symboliczne wędrówki do wnętrza duszy*, Warszawa 2006, s. 10–16.

i fantastyką³. Fundamentem wszystkich baśni jest magia, której źródeł należałoby szukać w funkcjonowaniu społeczeństw pierwotnych⁴. Do uniwersalnych baśniowych wyznaczników należy: 1) nieokreśloność akcji, każda baśń dzieje się bowiem zawsze i wszędzie, co sprzyja ponadczasowej wymowie tych opowieści; 2) stale powtarzający się zbiór tematów/motywów/wątków; 3) dwubiegunowość świata przedstawionego, czyli klasyczny podział przestrzeni na *orbis interior* i *orbis exterior* (przestrzeń oswojoną/przestrzeń obcą); 4) obecność bohaterów silnie stypizowanych, reprezentujących w jednoznaczny sposób dobro lub zło; 5) trójkowa kompozycja fabularna oparta na schemacie: oddzielenie – doświadczenie inicjacyjne lub transgresyjne – powrót⁵.

Baśnie magiczne są opowieściami funkcjonującymi w kulturze na wzór mitów, jako że oba te pierwotne gatunki powstały wraz z narodzinami mowy ludzkiej i ich funkcja, jak pisał Mircea Eliade w książce *Sacrum, mit, historia*, polega na ustalaniu wzorów, obrzędów i czynności ludzkich⁶. Baśnie i mity opowiadają więc historię świata i całej ludzkości. Bruno Bettelheim, znawca baśni, w książce *Cudowne i pożyteczne. O znaczeniach i wartościach baśni* pisał, że „niektóre baśnie i opowieści ludowe wywodzą się z mitów, inne zostały przez mity wchłonięte. I jedno i drugie zawierają doświadczenie zgromadzone przez społeczność, która chciała przekazywać mądrość przeszłości pokoleniom żyjącym i przyszłym (...) przemawiają do nas językiem symboli, reprezentujących treści nieświadome”⁷. Warto też za Jadwigą Wais, autorką książki *Ścieżki baśni*, zauważyć, że baśnie wielokrotnie wyrażają doświadczenia o wiele starsze i bardziej uniwersalne niż mity, można rzec odwieczne⁸. Mówią do nas za pomocą archetypów, czyli praobrazów zakorzenionych w nieświadomości zbiorowej, które są tożsame dla wszystkich kultur, oddają więc jedność ducha ludzkiego⁹. Kwestia genezy baśni magicznej i jej stosunku względem mitu nie ma zasadniczego znaczenia dla dalszych rozważań, warto jednak zauważyć, że dokładne omówienie tego tematu znajduje się w pracy Anny Czabanowskiej – Wróbel *Baśń w literaturze Młodej Polski*.

³ Zob. J. R. R. Tolkien, *Drzewo i liść oraz Mytopoeia*, tłumaczenie zbiorowe, Poznań 1994, s. 81–82.

⁴ Zob. J. Krzyżanowski, *W świecie bajki ludowej*, Warszawa 1980, s. 47. Magia odnosi się do antropomorfizacji i animizacji baśniowego świata, obecności w nim istot czarodziejskich, atawistycznych metamorfoz, niezwykłych przedmiotów oraz numinotycznej przestrzeni.

⁵ Zob. J. Ługowska, *Bajka w literaturze dziecięcej*, op. cit., s. 82, E. Mielecinski, *Poetyka mitu*, przeł. J. Dancygier, Warszawa 1981, s. 326, A. Jolles, *Proste formy*, tłum. R. Handke, „Przegląd Humanistyczny” 1965, nr 5, s. 77.

⁶ Zob. M. Eliade, *Sacrum, mit, historia. Wybór esejów*, przeł. A. Tatarkiewicz, Warszawa 1970, s. 29.

⁷ B. Bettelheim, *Cudowne i pożyteczne. O znaczeniach i wartościach baśni*, przełożyła i przedmową opatrzyła D. Danek, t. I, Warszawa 1985, s. 240.

⁸ Zob. J. Wais, op. cit., s. 10–13.

⁹ Zob. P. Matywiecki, *Baśń jako marzenie o sensie literatury (Pomysły do dalszego rozwinięcia)*, [w:] *Kulturowe konteksty baśni*, red. G. Leszczyński, Poznań 2005, s. 32–33.

Baśń i mit łączy przede wszystkim przewodni topos drogi i archetyp Homo Viator¹⁰, które są podstawowymi i uniwersalnymi sposobami ludzkiego bycia w przestrzeni od najprostszych przestrzennych metafor aż po wielkie wędrówki i wyprawy¹¹. Droga to zjawisko zrodzone z przestrzennej wizji świata w kulturze i czasowej kategorii jego pojmowania, problematyka przestrzeni umożliwia więc wyrażanie ważnych kulturowo sensów¹².

W podstawowym tego słowa rozumieniu „droga” ma dwa znaczenia. Po pierwsze może oznaczać proces, w wyniku którego pewien podmiot zmienia miejsce w przestrzeni: po drugie – szlak, trasę tego przemieszczania się (rzeczywistego lub potencjalnego). Ta dwuznaczność okazuje się pomocna w rozważaniach nad sposobem istnienia szeroko rozumianej „drogi” w kulturze. (...) Kluczowym elementem antropologicznego sensu „drogi” jest wzajemne odniesienie do siebie człowieka i przestrzeni.(...). Istnieją drogi proste i kręte, drogi do celu i drogi do nikąd, drogi edukacyjne i inicjacyjne, a w końcu drogi w świecie i drogi poza świat. Te ostatnie wiążą się szczególnie z kontekstem całościowej wizji świata (...) i ontologicznego miejsca w nim zaświatów, a także z pojęciem zmiany, mistycznego doświadczenia, osiągnięcia granic ludzkiego poznania. Droga jako ruch w przestrzeni będzie bardzo podatnym nośnikiem sensu przemiany, a więc również swoistej odnowy, inicjacji w duchowość¹³.

Najwyrazistsze są dwa paradygmaty drogi: linearny i kołowy¹⁴. Pojęcie linearności wyprowadzić można z pojmowania świata jako hierarchicznego łańcucha istnień opisanego przez Arthura O. Lovejoya¹⁵, a kołowości z cyklicznego „mitu wiecznego powrotu” Eliadego¹⁶. Paradygmaty te wiodą do odmiennych opisów świata. Linearność wiąże się ze wszystkim, co hierarchiczne, statyczne, przestrzenne, niezmiennie i celowe. Kołowość natomiast opisuje świat przy pomocy kategorii zmienności, czasowości, ruchu, dynamizmu, chaosu, ciemności¹⁷. Linearny schemat fabularny pojawia się szczególnie w mitach inicjacyjnych¹⁸ i zwykło przyjmować się, że wędrówka bohatera baśni ma analogiczne znaczenie do wędrówki inicjacyjnej podejmowanej przez bohatera mitu.

¹⁰ Por. J. Abramowska, *Peregrynacja*, [w:] *Przestrzeń i literatura*, red. M. Głowiński, A. Okopień – Sławińska, Wrocław 1978, s. 125–158.

¹¹ Zob. A. Wieczorkiewicz, *Wędrowcy fikcyjnych światów. Pielgrzym, rycerz i włóczęga*, Gdańsk 1996, s. 9–13.

¹² Por. Ibidem, s. 7–9.

¹³ Ibidem s. 12–20.

¹⁴ Zob. L. Wiśniewska, *Człowiek w drodze*, [w:] *Człowiek w drodze. Materiały z III Międzynarodowej Sesji z cyklu „Świat jeden, ale nie jednolity”*. Droga w świecie literackim, red. L. Wiśniewska, t. I, Bydgoszcz 2000, s. 47–58.

¹⁵ Zob. A. O. Lovejoy, *Wielki łańcuch bytu*, przeł. A. Przybyśławski, Warszawa 1999, s. 22, 26.

¹⁶ Zob. M. Eliade, *Mit wiecznego powrotu*, przeł. K. Kocjan, Warszawa 1998, s. 1–10.

¹⁷ Zob. M. Kładź, *Bohaterowie Dantego i Milтона między kołowością a linearnością dróg*, [w:] *Tożsamość i rozdwojenie*, red. J. Kubik, S. Kowalik, J. Szupryczyński, A. Wojas, U. Wójcicka, G. Jarzyna, Bydgoszcz 2002, s. 140.

¹⁸ Por. L. Wiśniewska, *Oblicza tożsamości. Oblicza rozdwojenia*, [w:] Ibidem, s. 11.

Joseph Campbell w książce *Bohater o tysiącu twarzy* pisał, że klasyczny schemat wyprawy bohatera mitologicznego i baśniowego wywodzi się z mitów inicjacyjnych i wygląda następująco: oddzielenie – inicjacja – powrót¹⁹. Zgodnie z tym schematem fabularnym bohater udaje się na wyprawę ze świata zwyczajności (*orbis interior*) do krainy obcej, numinotycznej, infernalnej (*orbis exterior*), gdzie stacza walkę z tajemnymi siłami, odnosi zwycięstwo i powraca wzbogacony duchowo, stając się osobowością maniczną²⁰. Zwrócimy jednak uwagę, że tak postrzegana wyprawa jest swoistym rytuałem przejścia, obrzędem magicznym, dzięki któremu bohater osiąga wyższy poziom wtajemniczenia egzystencjalnego i staje się tym, który „wie”²¹, poznaje samego siebie, zyskuje status osoby dojrzałej i jako taki może powrócić do miejsca, z którego wyszedł²².

Ten klasyczny – linearny – schemat fabularny i wpisany w niego rytuał inicjacyjny ma więc niewątpliwie zastosowanie względem mitów, niekoniecznie jednak odnosi się z równą prawidłowością do świata przedstawionego baśni magicznej²³. W baśni bowiem schemat fabularny opiera się nie na linearnej drodze bohatera²⁴, lecz na wskazanym wyżej schemacie kołowym, w którym najbardziej istotny jest motyw zbłądzenia, zbroczenia z obranej ścieżki i wejścia w wymiar *exterior* postrzegany jako nieokreślony, chaotyczny, grozotwórczy, numinotyczny i mediumiczny zarazem²⁵, w którym wszelkie doświadczenie oparte jest zwykle na uczuciu strachu²⁶. Mowa więc tutaj nie o zjawisku symbolicznej inicjacji w życie, lecz o transgresji w „szczeliny istnienia”²⁷, co metaforycznie rozumieć należy jako przekroczenie doznań realnych, świadomych i wejście w obszar fantazmogennej nieświadomości. Baśnie „(...) stwarzają możliwość wyjścia poza zastaną rzeczywistość, przekroczenia granic świata poznawalnego przez zmysły, pogrążania się w sobie, ale zarazem wędrówki do terytoriów niedostępnych doświadczeniu (empirycznemu – K.S.)”²⁸. O „szcze-

¹⁹ Zob. J. Campbell, *Bohater o tysiącu twarzy*, przeł. A. Jankowski, Poznań 1997, s. 34–36.

²⁰ Por. J. Abramowska, *Topos i niektóre miejsca wspólne badań literackich*, [w:] Eadem, *Powtórzenia i wybory. Studia z tematologii i poetyki historycznej*, Poznań 1995, s. 8. W tradycji grozy sfery *interior* i *exterior* zastępują pojęcia *locus amoenus* i *locus horridus*.

²¹ M. Eliade, *Mit wiecznego powrotu*, op. cit., s. 28.

²² Zob. J. R. R. Tolkien, op. cit., s. 79. Tolkien formułę powrotu wiąże także z motywem życiowego spełnienia, osiągnięcia szczęścia przez bohatera, pokonania niemożliwego.

²³ Schemat fabularny baśni magicznej z perspektywy strukturalizmu omawia W. Propp w morfologicznym ujęciu baśni: W. Propp, *Morfologia bajki*, tłum. W. Wojtyga – Zagórska, Warszawa 1976, Idem, *Nie tylko bajka*, przeł. D. Ulicka, Warszawa 2000. Propp przedstawia schemat fabularny baśni z perspektywy funkcji postaci.

²⁴ Zob. J. Abramowska, *Peregrynacja*, op. cit., s. 125–158.

²⁵ Zob. P. Péju, *Dziewczynka w baśniowym lesie. O poetykę baśni w odpowiedzi na interpretacje psychoanalityczne i formalistyczne*, przeł. M. Pluta, Warszawa 2008, s. 20–16.

²⁶ Por. G. Leszczyński, *Baśń jako matryca doświadczeń egzystencjalnych*, [w:] *Kulturowe konteksty baśni. Rozigrana córka mitu*, red. G. Leszczyński, t. I, Poznań 2005, s. 68.

²⁷ Zob. J. Brach – Czaina, *Szczeliny istnienia*, Kraków 1992, s. 131–132.

²⁸ J. Papuzińska, *Zatopione królestwo. O polskiej literaturze fantastycznej XX wieku dla dzieci*

linach istnienia” myśleć należy w sposób symboliczny jako dnie psychicznym ludzkiego jestestwa, gdzie obnażone zostają „najszybsze modalności bytu”²⁹. Transgresja w „szczeliny istnienia” jest zatem zobrazowaniem „zejścia bohatera w głąb samego siebie” lub by użyć poetyckiego określenia Jolanty Brach – Czajny „bywania w szparach psychicznej egzystencji”³⁰, co dokładniej wyjaśniają następujące słowa:

Odnalezienie szczeliny pozwala nam zsunąć się z jasnej, gładkiej powierzchni w mrok, opuścić obszar, na którym ostre światło oczywistości spłaszcza widzenie. (...) nie czujemy się źle pośród obiektów znajomych i w częstym używaniu wygładzanych naszą ręką, bo kontakt z nimi pozwala wierzyć, że istnieje trwały ład, pewność, spokój, których pragniemy. A jednak nawet znajomy świat wielokrotnie zaskakuje nas i uderza obcością, bo najbardziej zagrożone erozją jest właśnie to, co wygładzone leży na łysej powierzchni. (...). Drobnych zmian nie zauważymy, aż do dna, gdy znajoma, łagodna rzeczywistość rozsypuje się pod dotknięciem ręki. Do szpar erozja nie ma łatwego dostępu. Nawykliśmy do życia w jasności, gdzie śmiało możemy mówić; wiemy, rozumiemy, i lęk nas ogarnia przed mrokiem szpary. A wobec niewątpliwiej wygody położenia, które zajmujemy, wydaje się nawet dziwne, że mimo wszystko skłonni jesteśmy ryzykować i porzucać powierzchnię, by wnikać w mroczne szczeliny (...). Można nawet powiedzieć, że nie potrafimy powstrzymać się od tego. (...) w końcu pozwalamy, by szpary wciągnęły nas, (...) bo chcemy nie tylko zobaczyć – to niemożliwe w mroku – co doświadczymy czegoś, co jak podejrzewamy jest ukryte. Dla nas. Decydujemy się więc (...) nie cofać przed wyzwaniem, nie ignorować go, nie omijać otwierającej się przed nami szczeliny, lecz wnikać w nią. Zagłębianie się w mroczne pęknięcia rzeczywistości niepokoi nas i trwoży, ale towarzyszy nam nadzieja, że sięgniemy jakichś głębszych warstw bytu (...)”³¹.

Szczególne znaczenie w świetle baśniowej transgresji w „szczeliny istnienia” ma typ bohatera i rodzaj przestrzeni, które proponuje odbiorcom baśni. Baśniowy Homo Viator (bohater drogi) jest bowiem postacią szczelinową, transgresyjną, numinotyczną i mediumiczną³². Nigdy nie trzyma się obranej ścieżki, preferuje błądzenie, ucieczkę od powszedniej, jawnej, codziennej, dojrzałej egzystencji na rzecz egzystencji psychicznej dziecka – osobistej, „nocnej”, ukrytej. Jest to postać silnie zinfantylizowana i sfeminizowana – dziecko/dziewica, ułomek/głuptas – określana mianem *Everymena*, z którym łatwo się identyfikować³³. Trudno bowiem doszukiwać się w nim cech osobowościowych mito-

i młodzieży, Łódź 2008, s. 93.

²⁹ M. Eliade, *Sacrum i profanum. O istocie religijności*, przeł. R. Reszke, Warszawa 1996, s. 33.

³⁰ J. Brach – Czajna, op. cit., s. 132.

³¹ Ibidem, s. 130–131.

³² Por. K. Slany, *O baśniach*, [w:] *Ziarno miłości. Baśniowe opowieści klasy I a*, Kraków 2008, s. 7–16.

³³ Zob. B. Bettelheim, op. cit., s. 86–95.

logicznego herosa, ucieleśnienia *superego*, będącego poza zasięgiem ludzkich możliwości³⁴. Pragnieniem baśniowego bohatera nie jest więc inicjacja, lecz transgresja, jego wewnętrzne konflikty są bowiem odzwierciedleniem starcia *ego* („ja” podporządkowanego zasadom rzeczywistości) z *id* (sferą instynktów, popędów), dzięki czemu w pełni wyraża ambiwalentną naturę ludzką, stając się uniwersalnym punktem odniesienia dla każdego człowieka niezależnie od rasy, wieku i płci³⁵. Ponadto jest on zawsze reprezentantem magicznego sposobu myślenia o świecie, predestynowanym do błędzenia i zredukowania swojego bytu do „szczelinowości” – bycia w świecie fantazmogennym³⁶. Jest sylwetką „rozstajną”, chwiejną, nieujarzmioną przez kulturę, żądną odkrywania mrocznej strony świata i własnej natury, wniknięcia w sferę strachu, która kusi ciemnością, wilgocią i cieniem³⁷. Baśń daje zatem swym postaciom możliwość wejścia w „szpary istnienia”, gdzie skrywa się ich tajemne, złowrogie jestestwo, w których otwierają się na doznania samych siebie w każdej, nawet najbardziej monstrualnej i demonicznej postaci.

Czasoprzestrzeń³⁸, do której trafia baśniowy bohater, by doświadczyć transgresji w „szczeliny istnienia” jest niejednorodna. „Są w niej rozdarcia, pęknięcia; są fragmenty przestrzeni jakościowo różne od innych”³⁹, których doświadcza się na zasadzie przeciwieństw między obszarem *interior* (znanym, oswojonym, ontologicznie ustanowionym centrum, punktem stałym) a *exterior* (bezkształtem, chaosem, peryferiami), będącymi symbolicznymi ekwiwalentami obszaru bezpieczeństwa i numinotyczno – mediumicznego miejsca granicznego⁴⁰, które epatuje grozą i do którego bohater czuje się „powołany”⁴¹. Przestrzeń dzieli tu swoisty typ progę, zaś fabuła systematycznie eksponuje moment poruszania ku jednej z tych sfer, co postrzegane jest jako naruszenie granic⁴². Centrum jest tu swoistym imago mundi, o którym Eliade pisze jako o symbolicznym środku, mikrokosmosie⁴³, wobec którego na zasadzie opozycji ustanowiony jest obszar (nie)świata, zamieszkały przez poczwary, demony,

³⁴ Zob. Ibidem.

³⁵ Zob. Ibidem.

³⁶ Zob. P. Péju, op. cit., s. 35–39.

³⁷ Zob. Ibidem.

³⁸ Zob. M. Bachtin, *Czas i przestrzeń w powieści*, tłum. J. Faryno, „Pamiętnik Literacki” 1974, s. 273. Czasoprzestrzeń pojmowana jest tutaj jako kategoria „formalno – treściowa” wyrażająca nierozłączne sprzężenie porządku czasowego i przestrzennego w utworze artystycznym.

³⁹ M. Eliade, *Sacrum, mit, historia*, op. cit., s. 61.

⁴⁰ Por. L. Stomma, *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej w XIX wieku*, Warszawa 1986, s. 154.

⁴¹ R. Caillois, *Człowiek i sacrum*, przeł. A. Tatarkiewicz, Warszawa 1995, s. 19.

⁴² Zob. M. Aguirre, *Geometria strachu*, [w:] *Wokół gotycyzmów, wyobrażenia, groza, okrucieństwo*, przeł. A. Izdebska, red. G. Gazda, A. Izdebska, J. Płuciennik, Kraków 2002, s. 19.

⁴³ Por. M. Eliade, *Święty obszar i sakralizacja świata*, [w:] *Antropologia kultury. Wiedza o kulturze. Zagadnienia i wybór tekstów*, oprac. G. Godewski, Z. Kolankiewicz, A. Mencwel, M. Pęczak, wstęp i red. A. Mencwel, cz. 1, Warszawa 1995, s. 150.

upiory, rozciągający się poza granicami mikrokosmosu, chaos⁴⁴. W baśni magicznej przestrzenią *exterior* jest zawsze las – miejsce przynależne w tradycji wierzeniowej obłąkanym, obcym, czarownicom, mordercom, banitom, demonom, wilkom, czyli wszelkim istotom o destrukcyjnej tożsamości, wzbudzającej paniczny strach⁴⁵. *Orbis exterior* jako przestrzeń graniczna jest miejscem transgresyjnym, symbolicznym i fantazmogennym, co sprawia, że bohater nie istnieje w niej ani w świecie społecznym ani w świecie zwierzęcym⁴⁶. W przestrzeni tej dochodzi do głosu to, co zdaniem społeczeństwa jest tajemnicze, zakazane i rodzi się na gruncie potępienia i odrzucenia, zaś w świecie wyobrażeń pojawia się jako pragnienie transgresji w zło, co wynika z dualizmu natury ludzkiej⁴⁷.

Znamienny jest fakt, że transgresja w „szczeliny istnienia” znajduje swe odzwierciedlenie w koncepcji archetypów i integracji osobowości Carla Gustawa Junga. Jung pracując nad psychiką człowieka, treściami jego skojarzeń, snami, stanami napięcia i instynktownymi reakcjami, przyjął tezę, że pod świadomym, „powierzchniowym” intelektem, istnieje myślenie „głębinowe” posługujące się pierwotnymi obrazami o naturze symbolicznej⁴⁸. Obrazy te są starsze niż „historyczny człowiek”, pozostają zawsze żywe i stanowią zasadę funkcjonowania ludzkiej psychiki⁴⁹. Zdaniem Junga istnieją jako uniwersalne dyspozycje umysłu, strukturyzujące wzorce psychologicznego zachowania⁵⁰. Te dyspozycje nazwał archetypami, pojawiającymi się w mitach, baśniach, snach, deliriach i omamach różnych obszarów kulturowych, które to obrazy i asocjacje okazały się określać ludzkie postawy i zachowania oraz determinować bieg życia ludzkiego⁵¹. Archetypy powstają w obszarze nieświadomości zbiorowej i mogą być tylko potencją, ale mogą też zostać wyprowadzone na powierzchnię świadomego życia psychicznego i wówczas pojawiają się w postaci pierwotnych wyobrażeń, personifikacji oraz symboli⁵².

Jako obrazy zakorzenione w nieświadomości zbiorowej są zbiorem treści wspólnych ludziom i determinują ludzkie możliwości funkcjonowania psychicznego, co dokładnie przedstawił Jung w omówionym przez siebie procesie psychicznym, nazwanym indywiduacją, kiedy to człowiek przeżywa treści nieświadome poprzez rozpoznawanie kolejnych archetypów pełniących funk-

⁴⁴ Zob. M. Eliade, *Sacrum i profanum*, op. cit., s. 68.

⁴⁵ Zob. B. Bettelheim, op. cit., s. 220.

⁴⁶ Zob. P. Péju, op. cit., s. 39–41.

⁴⁷ Zob. Ch. R. Altman, *W stronę teorii gatunku filmowego*, przeł. A. Helman, „Kino” 1987, nr 6, s. 20.

⁴⁸ Zob. A. Baluch, *Maska i żywioł. Wzorce fabularne w literaturze dla dzieci*, [w:] *Ocalone królestwo*, red. G. Leszczyński, D. Świerczyńska – Jelonek, M. Zając, Warszawa 2008, s. 131–133.

⁴⁹ Zob. Z. Rosińska, *Jung*, Warszawa 1982, s. 44.

⁵⁰ Zob. Ibidem.

⁵¹ Zob. Ibidem, s. 46.

⁵² Zob. A. Kępińska, *Żywioł i mit*, Kraków 1983, s. 6–10.

cję symbolicznych drogowskazów na drodze do integracji psychicznej⁵³. Proces ten polega na wyjściu człowieka od stanu dezintegracji, czyli jego aktualnego i świadomego „ja” (w baśniach polega to na wyjściu ze sfery *interior*, która jest dla bohatera „pępkiem świata”), następnie przejściu duchowej konfrontacji z coraz głębszymi warstwami psychiki (w baśniach etap ten realizuje się w trakcie transgresji w obszar *exterior*) i dojściu do reintegracji na nowym, wyższym poziomie świadomości (w baśniach sytuację tę oddaje odwieczny motyw powrotu lub odnalezienia niszy)⁵⁴. Proces ten ma charakter dialogu między obecnym „ja” i „ja” potencjalnym, a jego celem jest asymilacja i integracja nieświadomych treści psychiki⁵⁵. Jung porównał omawiany przez siebie proces do labiryntu, w którym przetrwa ten, kto zachowa samego siebie, a jednocześnie zasymiluje nieświadome treści⁵⁶. Warto zwrócić uwagę na porównanie samego procesu indywiduacji do labiryntu, gdyż jak zaznacza Jerzy Prokopiuk we *Wstępie do Archetypów i symboli* Junga: „wraz ze wzrostem „światła” – ego (...) gęstnieje jednocześnie sfera rzucanego przez nią „cienia”: sumy zaniedbanych i odrzuconych, stłumionych i nie zrealizowanych właściwości psychicznych (...)”⁵⁷. Mowa tu o naturze najistotniejszego dla procesu indywiduacji archetypu Jungowskiego – określanego mianem Cienia, który jako symbol nieświadomości indywidualnej, ale też zbiorowej, reprezentuje sferę lęków pierwotnych oraz zło rozumiane jako instynktowna natura człowieka, która kłóci się z ogólnie przyjętymi wartościami społeczno – kulturowymi⁵⁸. Rozpoznanie archetypu Cienia ma decydujące znaczenie dla indywiduacji człowieka.

W świetle baśniowej transgresji, będącej symbolicznym ekwiwalentem procesu indywiduacji, najistotniejszym z Jungowskich archetypów jest właśnie Cień jako ucieleśnienie nieświadomości osobowej⁵⁹. Cień jest archetypem w najłagodniejszej wersji ambiwalentnym, niejednokrotnie jednak bardzo mrocznym, dlatego, jak zaznacza Jung, „rzuca wyzwanie całej osobowości, mimo to jako reprezentacja ciemnych aspektów psychiki stanowi nieodzowną podstawę samopoznania”⁶⁰. Natura Cienia jest destruktywna, emocjonalna, infernalna, niemal krwiożercza, a na pewno „żarłoczna” i nadmierne jego eksplorowanie wieść może do obsesji, obłądki lub nawet opętania⁶¹. Ogromne znaczenie dla powyższych rozważań ma fakt, że konfrontacji z indywidualnym Cieniem towarzyszy zawsze mrocznie zaprojektowana przestrzeń, wyizolowane środowisko, rozpoznawalne dla „projektanta”, lecz i jemu poniekąd obce –

⁵³ Zob. Z. Rosińska, op. cit., s. 31.

⁵⁴ Por. J. Prokopiuk, *Wstęp*, [w:] C. G. Jung, *Archetypy i symbole. Pisma wybrane*, wybór, przełożył i wstępem opatrzył J. Prokopiuk, Warszawa 1993, s. 12–17.

⁵⁵ Zob. Ibidem.

⁵⁶ Zob. Ibidem, s. 12–13.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, s. 24.

⁵⁸ Zob. C. G. Jung, *Cień*, [w:] Idem, *Archetypy i symbole...*, op. cit., s. 68–71.

⁵⁹ Zob. Ibidem, s. 68.

⁶⁰ Ibidem.

⁶¹ Zob. Ibidem, s. 69.

będące eksterioryzacją sfery Cienia⁶². W baśniach, mitach, legendach, snach, projekcjach, środowiskiem tym jest nacechowany mediumicznie i numinotycznie las, gdzie Cień ma zawsze charakter osobowy. W baśniowym imaginariu, w którym wszystkie mroczne fantazmaty wywiedzione są z demonologii ludowej, Cień spersonifikowany jest zawsze w postaciach grozy realizujących żarłoczną, kanibalistyczną i nekrofiliczną tożsamość „wilka”: 1) drapieżnego zwierzęcia, 2) mordercy, 3) ludożerczyni/dzieciojada, 5) monstrum humanum oraz postaci antycypujących los ludzki po śmierci: 6) kostuchy i diabła. Spotkanie z personifikacjami Cienia w baśniowym *exterior* i spojrzenie w oczy absolutnemu złu, stanowi, jak podkreśla Jung, doświadczenie traumatyzujące, a zarazem wstrząsające, które wieść może do duchowej przemiany bądź upadku psychicznego⁶³. W chwili bowiem, kiedy Cień nie ulegnie procesowi przemiany (oswojeniu, ucywilizowaniu) lub też nie zostanie zniszczony (wyegzorcyzmowany), zyskuje magiczną władzę nad ciałem i psychiką bohatera, który staje się mu podległy. Nieudana konfrontacja z Cieniem jako wcieleniem lęków, obsesji, ciemnych instynktów, wiedzie do rozpacz, swoistego „wejścia w siebie” i ogarnięcia przez „wewnętrzny” demona⁶⁴. Dochodzi wówczas do symbolicznego „pożarcia” bohatera przez jego upersonifikowany Cień i przyjęcia tożsamości Bohatera Cienia, jednostki wysyczonej złem na wzór morderców, katów, szaleńców i innych dewiantów obecnych w kulturze⁶⁵.

Na podstawie powyższych rozważań łatwo zauważyć, że między zbłądzonym bohaterem baśniowym – dzieckiem, dziewczcą lub ułomkiem – a jego „wewnętrznym prześladowcą”⁶⁶, archetypowym Cieniem, spersonifikowanym w postaci „wilczego” monstrum, zachodzi szczególny pasożytniczy typ więzi, który Erich Fromm określił mianem nekrofiliczno – kanibalistycznej relacji między „owcą” a „wilkiem”⁶⁷. Jest to modelowa sytuacja grozy, w której zbłąkany, niewinny, lecz podatny na fantazjogenne postaci i przestrzenie bohater baśni określane przez Fromma „owcą”, zostaje zwiedziony w oczywistą przestrzeń lasu przez „wilka” / „wewnętrznego” / „głębinowego” prześladowcę, który ma zamiar pochłonąć swą ofiarę i zdesakralizować jej ciało.

Bohaterowie baśni są więc istotami *szczelinowymi*, nieustannie poszukującymi „dróg rozstajnych” wiodących do sfer strachu i tabu, ukierunkowanymi na imaginacyjną transgresję w mroki nieświadomego i spotkanie ze swym indywidualnym Cieniem/ „głębinowym” prześladowcą spersonifikowanym pod

⁶² Zob. Ibidem, s. 71.

⁶³ Zob. Ibidem.

⁶⁴ Por. Z. W. Dudek, *Psychologia integralna Junga*, Warszawa 1995, s. 111.

⁶⁵ Zob. Z.W. Dudek, *Cień w kulturze*, [w:] „Psychologia Cienia. Albo albo”, Warszawa 1992, nr 2, s. 6–22.

⁶⁶ Por. C. S. Pearson, *Nasz wewnętrzny bohater, czyli sześć archetypów według których żyjemy*, tłum. G. Brelik, W. Grabarczyk, Poznań 1995, s. 200.

⁶⁷ Por. E. Fromm, *Anatomia ludzkiej destrukcyjności*, przeł. J. Karłowski, słowo wstępne M. Chałubiński, Poznań 1998, s. 200–250.

postać potwora o tożsamości „wilka”. Noszą w sobie destrukcyjną tendencję realizowania Frommowskiej wizji „owcy”, ich przeznaczeniem jest popaść w „szczeliny istnienia” i doświadczyć totalnej ciemności i „zwilczenia”. Warto też zauważyć, że sfera nieświadomego w baśniach to przestrzeń mediacyjna, ale i opozycyjna, ujawnia bowiem ambiwalencję postaci, która nie tylko konfrontuje się z Cieniem/„wilkiem”, lecz często dąży to tego, by nim pozostać. Przestrzeń „wilcza” jest więc antropomorfizowana, wpływa na psychikę bohatera, ewokuje określone obrazy, pogłębia stan „wejścia w głąb siebie” i nie ułatwia wyjścia.

Znakomitą egzemplifikacją dziejów baśniowego bohatera i jego transgresji w „szczeliny istnienia” jest baśń o *Mądrej Elżuni*⁶⁸, którą w szczególności sposób interpretuje badacz baśni magicznej Pierre Péju⁶⁹. Według niego opowieść o *Mądrej Elżuni* jest baśnią wyjątkowo okrutną, kończy się bowiem sadystycznym motywem zniknięcia młodej kobiety sponiewieranej i wypędzonej przez męża. W baśni tej rodzina, spostrzegłszy, że młoda Elżunia osiągnęła wiek odpowiedni do małżeństwa, postanawia wydać ją za męża. Bohaterka nazywana jest powszechnie „mądrą Elżunią”, a jej mądrość jest darem nieokreślonym i dziwnym, bliskim jasnowidzenia. Ludzie postrzegają ją jako „dziewkę wieszczą”, która w przyszłości zajmować się będzie babieniem. Kiedy pojawia się kandydat na męża (Jaś), wymaga od członków rodziny, by udowodnili niezwykłą mądrość Elżuni. W trakcie wspólnej kolacji matka posyła Elżunię po piwo, ta zaś długo nie wraca. Wszyscy niepokoją się o nią i po kolei schodzą do piwnicy, by zobaczyć, co zajęło dziewczynie tyle czasu. Okazuje się, że siedzi ona na podłodze i płacze z powodu siekierki zawieszanej u powały. Zobaczywszy ją, miała bowiem widzenie, że gdy jej dziecko zejdzie kiedyś do piwnicy, siekiera spadnie i je zabije. Na skutek złej wróżby z ust „wieszczey” Elżuni wszyscy zaczynają lamentować i zawodzić. Jaś zaś od początku sceptycznie nastawiony do swej narzeczonej, ze śmiechem nad gronem głupców, zdejmuje siekierkę z powały i postanawia tylko wtedy ożenić się z Elżunią, jeśli napotka na swej drodze trzech większych głupców niż ona. Tak się dzieje. Wówczas Jaś powraca i żeni się z Elżunią.

Od razu na początku małżeństwa zagania ją do pracy, ale Elżunia woli wypoczynek w sianie i sen na ciepłym słońcu. Kiedy zapada noc, Jaś znajduje ją śpiącą w polu. Tak aby niczego nie poczuła, zawija żonę w siatkę na ptaki upstrzoną małymi dzwoneczkami i zostawia samą w ciemnościach pól. Panuje głęboka noc, kiedy Elżunia się budzi. Ciemność i przestrzeń przerażają ją, zaś dzwonenie maleńkich dzwoneczków powoduje, że ma wrażenie, iż oszalała. Wraca do domu, nie mogąc się wyplątać z sideł dźwięczących przy każdym jej ruchu. Wówczas Jaś postanawia rzeczywiście doprowadzić swą żonę do szaleństwa i przez zamknięte drzwi oznajmia jej, że Elżunia dawno jest w domu, za-

⁶⁸ *Mądra Elżunia*, [w:] *Baśnie Braci Grimm*, przeł. E. Bielicka, M. Tarnowski, postłowie H. Kapełus, t. I, Warszawa 1986.

⁶⁹ Zob. P. Péju, op. cit., s. 26–40.

tem ona, „nocna” kobieta, nie jest Elżunią. „Ach, Boże, więc to nie jestem ja!” – wykrzyknęła Elżunia i rzuciła się do ucieczki. Przerażona pukała do wszystkich drzwi, ale ludzie przepędzali ją jak obłąkaną zjawę. Baśń kończy się słowami: „Pobiegła więc daleko za wieś i nikt jej więcej nie widział”.

W interpretacji Péju Elżunia po wygnaniu jest bohaterką zbłądzoną, przerażoną, podążającą, by zderzyć się z czernią nocy, zasłuchaną w metaliczne odgłosy własnego ciała, która nie ma dokąd wrócić i nie zna celu swej drogi. Badacz podkreśla, że w wersji Grimmów „Elżunia znika ze wsi w momencie, gdy ucieka już tylko przed nieznaną samą sobą. W ciągu kilku chwil dla dziewczyny mijają wieki i staje się bliższa tysiącletnim drzewom i instynktowym, odwiecznym wędrownikom zwierząt”⁷⁰. Ciemność lasu, do którego wkracza, przypomina otchłań, w której uwalniają się drapieżne myśli. Elżunia odarta ze swej wizjonerskiej, wieszczej tożsamości, podlega mocy „wewnętrznego”, niezgłębionego oblicza, które przejmuje władzę nad jej ciałem, ogarnia całe jestestwo i w sposób symboliczny „pożera” ją. Do jej degradacji przyczynia się mąż, wydawałoby się ucieleśnienie rozumu, antagonistą intuicyjnej natury Elżuni, w rzeczywistości postać demoniczna, sprowadzająca uporządkowane emocje Elżuni do pierwotnego lęku. Demon, który wpędza ją w ostępy szaleństwa, skazuje na banicję i transformację do postaci leśnej wiedźmy, kalając piętnem poprzez „uwięzienie jej ciała w dzwoneczkach i myśli w cieniu”⁷¹. Jej ciało i umysł podlegają stygmatyzacji, skazana zostaje na życie w przestrzeni odmieńców, obłąkanych, banitów, gdzie, aby przetrwać, trzeba być „wilkiem”. Być może więc Elżunia zatraciwszy siebie w mroku, poczuje zew „mięsnosci” rozumianej jako:

(...) kategoria należąca do takich cech naszego istnienia, które dane są nam bezpośrednio i uchwytywane w samym akcie naszej tu obecności. Otwieramy się na mięsność dopiero dzięki pośrednictwu pojęć, które bywają zdolne do wstrząśnięcia naszą uwagą i skierowania jej ku dostrzeganiu stanów rzeczy. Mięśne w istnieniu jest to, czego nie można zeń odrzucić, pozbyć się, od czego nie można się uwolnić, co nie może być od istnienia odłączone. Mięśność (...) jest dana dojmująco, bo jest, i dlatego jest oczywista, nawet jeśli nasza myśl nie szarpie jej swymi szczypcami. Nie musimy o niej mówić, żeby wiedzieć. Mięśne jest to, co dane jest nam w życiu tak mocno, że aż drżymy, i czego nie możemy się zaprzeczyć. (...) mięsność wiąże się z całkowitym odsłonięciem na doznania, jest to bowiem pewna postawa, w której przyjmujemy świat bez osłony, można by powiedzieć; bez skóry. Zezwalamy, by wrażenia zapadały w nas tak głęboko, jak one same mogą zapaść, nie natrafiając na żaden sprzeciw czy opór z naszej strony. Nie zawsze dzieje się to mocą naszego postanowienia, czasami siła samego uderzenia jest tak wielka i pada ono tak niespodziewanie, że musi rozstać się każda tkanka (...). Omawiana tu kategoria odnosi się również (...)

⁷⁰ Ibidem, s. 146.

⁷¹ Ibidem, s. 144–147.

do tego, co w istnieniu najbardziej zmysłowe, dotykalne i bujne. Tryumfująco cielesne (...) ⁷².

Kim się wówczas stanie? – zadaje retoryczne pytanie Péju – odpowiadając: potworem. I w następujących słowach antycypuje los bohaterki: „po długim błąkaniu się, postradawszy do reszty tożsamość, w końcu ukojona głęboką ciszą lasu, żywiąc się korzonkami, rozdarła, ale wciąż drżąca, być może utykając, zbuduje sobie nędzną chatkę i tak, wsparta na kosturze jak na kuli, będzie czekała, nie czekając na nic, będzie mówiła sama do siebie, nuciła, a jeżeli któregoś razu przechodzić będzie tamtędy jakieś zbłąkane albo wypędzone dziecko, zwabi je i pożre jako upostaciowienie żarłoczności i obłądu” ⁷³. Péju wyraźnie w swej interpretacji ukazuje proces „zwilczenia” psychiki bohaterki, która pogrąża się w chtonicznej przestrzeni lasu w zachłannym pragnieniu pożerania – unicestwiania. Transgresja w „szczeliny istnienia”, czyli wejście w obszar własnej nieświadomości, opiera się więc tutaj na doświadczeniu „otchłanności” – stanu totalnej dezintegracji psychicznej, w którym postać interioryzuje tożsamość „wilczą”. W przestrzeni „szczelinowej” każdy bohater baśniowy doświadcza grozy istnienia, obcując z własnym, indywidualnym, destrukcyjnym pragnieniem lub lękiem. Postaci baśniowe nastawione są bowiem na doznania „głębinowe” i skazane na pastwę lasu i drzemiącego w nich Cienia. W ich symboliczną biografię wpisane jest przekroczenie fantazmogenne, nie zaś standardowa inicjacja.

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The beginnings of the fairy story as a genre for children: Sarah Fielding's *The Governess*

Abstract: Sarah Fielding's *The Governess* (1749), recognised as the first fiction written for the child reader, contains the first examples of literary fairy stories for children embedded in a frame narrative. "The Story of the Cruel Giant Barbarico, the Good Giant Benefico, and the Little Pretty Dwarf Mignon" and "The Princess Hebe" display some features of traditional fairy tales, but seem primarily influenced by French literary fairy stories of the 17th century, especially in their moralised variety. Fielding's fairy stories are innovative in modifying the predominantly adult focus of their French models by providing receptional venues for children-addressees. Also the stories go beyond straightforward moralising by deploying metaphorical suggestiveness and inviting philosophical reflection. However, their semantic potential is controlled and actually diminished by the metaliterary functions of the narrative frame which focuses on inculcating exclusively moral and strongly reductive interpretations meant to safeguard the child-receivers against excessive emotional involvement.

Keywords: Fairy story, Sarah Fielding, *The Governess*, Enlightenment, education

Though Sarah Fielding (1710–1768) is not widely read nowadays, her place in history is assured by real and unprecedented achievement, which explains why she is still present in academic research. Her vital place in the eighteenth century educational discourse is attested, for instance, in a recent book on *Written Maternal Authority and Eighteenth-Century Education in Britain* (2014) by Rebecca Davies, who devotes a whole chapter to Sarah Fielding, although its strictly cultural perspective differs from the more literary one I adopt in this study. Fielding's innovative book *The Governess, or, Little Female Academy* (1749) is considered to be "the first fiction specifically written to amuse children" (Briggs 1989: 224) and the first example of the school story (Simons 2008: 178). As Candace Ward, a recent editor of *The Governess* observes, the book is exceptional also in presenting the education of girls: "Perhaps Fielding's most provocative appropriation of Lockean educational philosophy is the underlying assumption [...] that girls as well as boys are capable of exercising reason" (Ward 2005: 30). Moreover, Fielding's text is remarkable for its unprecedented inclusion of fairy stories in a book for children (Avery and Kinnel 1995: 69–70), the authorial decision marking "new directions in children's

literature” (Ward 2005: 29). I intend to focus on the fairy stories embedded in *The Governess* to examine the genre conventions they use and the semantics of the structural relations within them. I will also discuss the influence of the frame narrative on the stories, and especially the tension between the reception rules as projected by the embedded texts and as defined by the frame. Though Fielding has the deserved status of the precursor of the school story, I think that her role in initiating original fairy stories in English and in adjusting them to the audience of children deserves stronger emphasis.

I will speak about fairy stories rather than fairy tales following the proposal of Wiesław Krajka, who distinguishes between the fairy tale as referring to the oral folk tradition and the fairy story as describing literary realisations of this tradition. Fairy tale is usually identified with the folktale genre of the tale of magic represented by plots nr 300 to 745 in Aarne and Thompson’s *The Types of Folk-Tale*. The folktale embraces a wide spectrum of oral genres, some of which – such as local legends, romantic tales, tales of the stupid ogre or animal tales – often contribute to literary fairy stories. Orally delivered folktales apparently did not differentiate between various types of audience and did not presuppose separate reception roles for children. Nor did this situation change when literary fairy stories were first produced.

A brief outline of the development of the fairy story will be useful in providing the genre context for Fielding’s stories. The first English text employing fairy tale features in a literary context appears as early as the fourteenth century in “The Wife of Bath’s Tale” in Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*. In the four subsequent centuries, however, the presence of this tradition emerges mainly in the fashion for fairies in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century drama and poetry and in the chapbook stories avidly read by both adults and children. The influence of the seventeenth century Puritan attitudes of suspicion and disapproval prevented the entry of the fairy tales into the English literary system at the time when first in Italy and then in France literary fairy stories enjoyed genuine if brief popularity (Zipes 1989: xiii). Although Italian and French literary fairy stories used folktale plot patterns¹ and operated with fairy characters, talking animals and magical transformations, they aimed to entertain adults, and deployed thematic and stylistic qualities appropriate for courtly audiences (Waksmund 1998: 22; Blamires 2008:85). Universally used telling names and emblematic setting elements added to the semantic expressiveness of the stories or else enhanced parodic intentions (Waksmund 1998: 15–16). The settings were usually courtly, the themes included courtship, seduction, and marriage, while the style involved lofty vocabulary and complex syntax of sophisticated discourse. Only Charles Perrault’s collection *Histoires, ou contes du temps passe* (or *Contes de ma mere loye*), published in 1697, ap-

¹ Ryszard Waksmund in his Introduction to an anthology of French fairy stories relates many of their plots to plot types listed in Aarne’s and Thompson’s *The Types of Folktale* (Waksmund 1998: 17)

appears as an exception to the rule of presupposed adult readership. Though verified morals appended at the end of each tale still address adult readers, Perrault's narratives use a simple and direct style presumably much closer to the folklore sources and more appealing to the audience of children. It is probable that Perrault's collection of fairy stories was the first to provide reception roles for both adults and children. This doubleness of address² possibly finds its parallel in the uncertainty over the authorship of the stories, which were originally published under the name of Charles Perrault's son Pierre (Carpenter and Prichard 1995: 402–403).

It was due to the French models gradually translated into English that fairy tales eventually found their way into the literary circulation in England. The first translation of Madame d'Aulnoy's fairy stories appeared as early as 1699 (Quayle 1983: 69). However, Perrault's collection, probably translated already in 1729, mainly served as a bilingual manual for learning French at least till 1768 (Carpenter and Prichard 1995: 179). Evidently, fairy stories for children required some educational justification. All in all, the reign of reason during the Enlightenment did little to recommend this type of fiction. Folk fairy tales epitomized superstition and irrationality since they included magical and fantastical elements. John Locke's ideas about human cognitive development made it mandatory to expose young minds to strictly rational ideas. This attitude finds a pithy expression in the famous eighteenth century story for children *Goody Two-Shoes* (1765): "People stuff Children's Heads with Stories of Ghosts, Fairies, Witches, and such Nonsense when they are young, and so they continue Fools all their Days" (Part II, Ch. VI). As pointed out by Karen Coats, Enlightenment rejected "imagination and emotion" as cognitive tools (2010:78):

[...]self-appointed guardians of children's literature, such as Anna Laetitia Bar-bould, Sarah Trimmer, Mary Wollstonecraft and Maria Edgeworth, followed the Locke injunction to keep children away from fantastic tales of supernatural creatures in order to ensure that their growth in rational judgement would be unperturbed by irrational fears and wishes for things that didn't exist under a rationalist or empiricist paradigm. (Coats 2010: 78–79)

Eighteenth century educators saw fairy stories as too distant from the child's everyday experience to inculcate what they perceived as an appropriate view of the world.

A gradual admission of Antoine Galland's version of *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments* into English culture at the beginning of the eighteenth century was due to the fashion for Orientalism rather than appreciation of fairy tales. Galland's text was definitely aimed at adults (which certainly did not deter children from reading it) but at the end of the eighteenth century a heavily

² I refer to the distinction among single, double and dual address in children's fiction developed by Barbara Wall in *The Narrator's Voice. The Dilemma of Children's Fiction*.

moralised children's version appeared in English under the title *The Oriental Moralist or the Beauties of the Arabian Nights Entertainments* (Carpenter and Prichard 1995: 27). The moralising use of fairy stories in the English context may have derived from the general preponderance of moral tales as well as from direct French models such as, for instance, Francois Fenelon's collection of moral tales published in English as *Twenty Seven Moral Tales and Fables* in 1729 (Carpenter and Prichard 1995: 185). In his collection – including beast fables, mythological tales, and fairy stories – magical elements are retained only to serve a moralising purpose (Waksmund 2000: 192)³.

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John Locke's cognitive theories not only stimulated keen discussions on education in the eighteenth century England but also favoured strictly mimetic formats in fiction for young readers. It should not be surprising that Sarah Fielding's book uses a mimetic school setting so obviously conducive to considering the process of education. Although this process in *The Governess* is described to include "all useful Knowledge", it is the acquisition of moral attitudes and not of factual information that is the main concern in the fictional school. The narrator specifically mentions such desirable features as obedience, kindness, affection, neatness and gentility which are particular objects of the governess's attention (Fielding 2005: 49). However, what receives the strongest emphasis through repetition is the moral lesson about the peace of mind resulting from the control of emotions and leading to lasting happiness.

The convention of the frame story used in *The Governess* allows for the presentation of varied educational experiences of the girl-characters: conversations, visits to places outside the school, and reading. All these activities lie beyond the usual school schedule and take place during recreation hours. This evidently expresses the idea that education involves not only formal teaching but all experiences – provided they are appropriately employed for the moral benefit of the student. It is this generous understanding of education which allows Fielding to embed in her school narrative not only a versified fable, a lyric of a song, a romantic tale, a letter, and several confessional autobiographies⁴, but also two fairy stories and a summary of a play. The latter were highly suspicious in the eighteenth century cultural context as too imaginative and too immoral. "Fielding seems deliberately to have included a range of genres" (Briggs 1989: 226) to represent all possible literary experiences and to prove that they may be educationally useful.

Engendered by the combined influences of Puritanism and rationalism, the climate of hostility to and suspicion of anything fanciful or imaginative makes the appearance of fairy stories in such an early text for children as *The Gov-*

³ Alan Richardson in his *Literature, Education and Romanticism* discusses the fusion of fairy story and moral tale on many English examples (1994: 112–142).

⁴ My focus on fairy stories precludes the discussion of these genres here – important as they are for the understanding of *The Governess*.

erness particularly remarkable. It is also worth emphasising that the author included fairy stories originally composed for the book, and not versions of traditional folktales or translations of foreign stories, which may testify to literary ambitions. In Fielding's book two texts can be seen as defined by fairy story conventions (Darton 1982: 97). One of them – "The Princess Hebe" – is subtitled "A Fairy Tale" which (semi)paratextually identifies its generic shape. Its use of exotic names – such as Abdallah and Abdulham, for example – identifies the embedded text as an Oriental fairy story while its connection to *The Arabian Nights* emerges through the use of inset stories within the main one. The narrative technique of embedding (together with thematic links) makes "The Princess Hebe" an intratextual parallel to the main text of *The Governess*. The other inset text, titled "The Story of the Cruel Giant Barbarico, the Good Giant Benefico and the Little Dwarf Mignon", evidently belongs to the class defined in folklore as the tales of the stupid ogre. Such tales, about weak characters bettering devils or giants, constitute an accepted part of the tradition shaping literary fairy stories.

Both fairy stories embedded in *The Governess* contain elements of traditional fairy tales such as characters of giants and fairies, but also kings, queens and princesses, as well as persecuted orphans. The plots follow characteristic patterns of departure from home, attempted or actual imprisonment by the evil adversary, testing of the protagonist, magical journeys, or fight with the antagonist. The stories present magic objects (a fillet in "The Story of the Cruel Giant..." and a magic wand in "The Princess Hebe") which influence the course of action. In a fashion typical of fairy tales the main characters illustrate the extremes of good and evil.

The folktale features are not sufficiently predominant to define Fielding's stories as retellings of traditional lore. Much more conspicuous is the influence of the French literary fairy stories produced by the grand ladies for the amusement of guests in their sophisticated literary salons. This influence – visible in Fielding's choice of the characters of courtly ladies, courtly settings, elegant speeches the characters make, and in the sophisticated style of narration – forcefully suggests the adult as the assumed receiver of the stories. Equally characteristic is the use of telling names for many characters, for instance, Barbarico, Benefico, Mignon, or Brunetta. The impact of the more obviously moralising format represented by Fenelon appears in moral comments voiced by the characters and the narrator. Fenelon's influence also seems responsible for plot developments leading to clear lessons in morality.

In "The Story of the Cruel Giant Barbarico, the Good Giant Benefico and the Little Dwarf Mignon" the contrast of the two giants – sharply delineated by the narrator in the opening of the tale – accords with the generic rules of the fairy tale. However, the detailed descriptions of each giant's external appearance and internal disposition are not at all typical of the folk sources and add to the semantic spheres of good and evil. The evil giant is described as delight-

ing in cruelty but “never satisfied”, always “in Agonies”, unhappy and “tortured with inward Rage and Grief” (Fielding 2005: 69–70). The description of the character’s inner state is functional for the moral message of the story: the narrative repeatedly underlines that violence and cruelty lead to wretched unhappiness of the very perpetrator of horrid deeds. The good giant enjoys peace of mind resulting from his acts of goodness as he always tries to help those who have been injured by Barbarico. The narrator carefully emphasises the prudence of Benefico, who knows that he is too weak to attempt the destruction of the evil giant. The tendency to reveal the inner world of the characters points to the influence of the French literary models⁵. The descriptions, together with the telling names, make it emphatically clear that the giants represent the values of good and evil – not only in the abstract sense typical of traditional fairy tales, but also in the philosophical sense inviting serious reflection. The narrator’s presentation of the two characters indicates that evil is its own punishment, just as good is its own reward. The course of action further underscores this point by presenting the destruction of the evil giant and the rewarding of the good one⁶. The fairy tale’s simple axiology seems here supplemented by indirect philosophical and psychological reflection: evil appears self-destructive in the axiological sense (Barbarico contributes to his downfall), and leads to torment in the psychological sense. Analogously, good emerges as a self-justifying force capable of overcoming or at least outlasting all adversity, and as an obvious individual choice leading to satisfaction and happiness.

⁵ References to characters’ thoughts and feelings abound in the stories by Madame d’Aulnoy; compare, for example, “Finette Cendron” where the reader has constant access to the title protagonist’s inner world (<http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/authors/aulnoy/1892/finettecendron.html>; 12.04.2015).

⁶ It should perhaps be added that Fielding’s attempts to merge the folk plot patterns and characters with the literary conventions of more courtly French fairy stories are not always entirely successful. The scene in which the prudent Benefico cuts off the head of Barbarico – who is completely helpless and unable to move but conscious of what is happening – may strike the (modern?) reader as repulsive and ambiguous, to say the least. This reaction seems to be the result of the narrative technique of revealing to the reader the inner world of the characters’ thoughts and feelings so that it is difficult not to imagine the anguish of the helpless Barbarico “gnashing his horrid Teeth and again rolling his ghastly Eyes on all around” (Fielding 2005: 81). Moreover, in the scene in question the good Benefico seems to be doing exactly what Barbarico used to do to his victims and for precisely the same reason: because he is stronger. Generally in the story the parallel between the two giants seems to function in suggesting the freedom of moral choices – either for good or for evil. In the scene of killing, however, the parallel seems to extend beyond the basic common ground (both are giants) to the area of actions undertaken by both characters: when these become disturbingly similar, the resulting ambiguity of good and evil appears to undermine the axiological assumptions of the story and defeat its moral purpose. In my opinion Fielding’s story does not quite succeed as a coherent literary creation, which should not detract from the respect due to her valiant attempt.

A similar axiological differentiation is demonstrated in the spatial settings⁷. In “The Story of a Cruel Giant...” the fictional space is divided into a wild area of “craggy mountains overgrown with brambles and briery thickets” where “the hideous Barbarico” (Fielding 2005: 70) inhabits a “gloomy cave” on the one hand and on the other the “hospitable castle” (72) which is the “happy place” (82) where Benefico lives. The sharp contrast of the mountain cave and the castle suggests a juxtaposition of wilderness and civilisation. There is an evident correlation between the violent and cruel Barbarico – and the setting of wild mountains and a rough cave. Equally significantly, the good giant Benefico lives in his peaceful and hospitable castle. The wild mountain setting is linked with violence which brings fear and harm to other characters; the civilised setting of the castle is associated with peace, security and happiness. The spatial divisions in correlation with features of characters seem to invite generalisations further qualifying the notions of good and evil. Thus good may be defined in terms of civilised order and evil equated with wild nature. Moreover, the evil giant imprisons other characters in his “gloomy cave” tormenting them and starving for sport. Two prisoners are presented in detail: Mignon, kidnapped from his family as a child and kept for many years, and Fidus, whose separation from his beloved Amata is the inciting moment of the action. The severing of family and love bonds by the giant seems suggestive of the disruptive nature of evil, while the reunion of family members and lovers in result of Benefico’s triumph expresses the unifying and harmonizing nature of good.

The motif of imprisonment by the evil giant also seems to encourage further reflection on the nature of evil, especially since Barbarico’s cruelty emerges as somewhat compulsive in its nature. It may appear that since evil is semantically equated with imprisonment, then good must by necessity imply freedom. And it does, but only to a certain extent. When all characters are reunited, Benefico “led the delighted Company into his Castle, where Freedom was publicly proclaimed; and every one was left at Liberty either to remain there with Benefico, or, loaded with Wealth sufficient for their Use, to go where their Attachments or Inclinations might invite them” (Fielding 2005: 83). The main characters immediately make the choice of staying in Benefico’s castle, which, without actually suggesting imprisonment, associates them with a limited, enclosed location. The voluntary residence with one giant, as opposed to the enforced stay with the other, seems to indicate that in the philosophical sense good does not imply unbounded freedom but recognition of and unforced subordination to positive values, such as kindness, faithfulness, patience and prudence. Kindness and faithfulness characterise Mignon, Barbarico, Fidus and Amata. The examples of Barbarico and Mignon additionally highlight the benefits of self-control: Benefico’s prudence controls his desire to pursue Barbarico, and Mignon’s patience controls his

⁷ Some of the following of observations on the organisation of space in both stories were first sketchily formulated in my article “Baśnie w (kon)tekście osiemnastowiecznym: Sarah Fielding i jej *Guwernantka*” (2012: 310–311).

despair during his long imprisonment. Fielding's narrative demonstrates that the choice of these values is entirely reasonable and logical since "Happiness [...] is the natural Consequence of Goodness" (84) as the secondary narrator remarks at the end of the giants' story.

Another semantically important setting present in the same story is "a pleasant valley" with "a little Rivulet winding its gentle Course through Rows of Willows mixed with flowery Shrubs" where "a little natural Arbour [is] formed by the Branches of a spreading Tree, within the Meadow's flowery Lawn" (Fielding 2005: 70). Two characters who belong to this peaceful setting are a pair of faithful lovers: Fidus and Amata. The Arcadian suggestiveness of the valley setting, strengthened by the names of the lovers, clearly points to the generic influence of pastoral romance on Fielding's stories⁸. Moreover, the pastoral space seems to function as a borderline between the wilderness and civilisation; it appears to suggest a space where nature – still in its wild state – acquires a pleasant and hospitable aspect favourable to humanity by providing shelter and sustenance. Though Barbarico invades the Arcadian setting to separate the lovers and imprison Fidus, the inclusion of the pastoral space implies a more nuanced vision of nature than the one based on the binary division underlying the main opposition in the story: between the two main characters and their respective settings of wilderness and civilisation. After the killing of the evil giant "sweet Peace and rural Innocence [will] reign in all their Woods and Groves" (82) suggesting the unperturbed diffusion of pastoral qualities. In other words, the triumph of good, equated with the values of order and civilisation, seems also to indicate the fusion of civilisation with nature defined by pastoral values. The liminal setting of the pastoral, initially invaded by the wildness of evil, is finally unified with the civilised sphere of good.

The "in-between" setting of the pastoral valley finds an interesting constructional parallel in the sphere of characters. The binary opposition of the two giants, which has so far focused our attention, is actually modified by the third character: "the little pretty Dwarf Mignon" as he is designated in the title. Kidnapped from his family at the age of five, Mignon is already a young man at the time of the main events, though he is small in stature and performs the role of a page to Barbarico. The contrast to the giant emphasises his smallness. Mignon is kind and patient but also timid and physically weak. Yet it is he who finds a magic fillet by means of which he manages – albeit with trembling hands – to incapacitate Barbarico so that Benefico can finally kill him. Mignon's role in the main plot serves to underline – in the fashion of traditional tales – the power of the weak and insignificant: orphans, younger siblings, or children. When Mignon is eventually reunited with his sister Amata, he stays with her and Fidus in Benefico's castle, again representing the third character linked with an obvious pair (as

⁸ Since an admixture of romance features characterised French fairy stories (Waksmund 1998: 22), the presence of pastoral associations may also point to Fielding's indebtedness to French authors.

he is with the giants in the title). Though this plot solution is sometimes interpreted as subversive of traditional endings, it may also metaphorically suggest the role of the child. The possibility of such an interpretation of this character is supported in the frame narrative where, after the conclusion of the story, the girl-listeners share their impressions. The youngest, appropriately named Miss Polly Suckling, says “with some Eagerness: ‘My greatest Joy was in the Description of Mignon; and to think that it should be in the Power of that little Creature to conquer such a great Monster’”, which another girl interprets as an obvious case of identification since “Miss Polly Suckling only liked that Part about Mignon, because she was least in the School; and Mignon being such a little Creature, put her in Mind of herself” (Fielding 2005: 86).

Mignon appears as a pivotal character not only in terms of his role in the plot but primarily because of his possible role in reception. Through the choice of characters, events and settings “The Story of the Cruel Giant...” invites philosophical reflection on good and evil, and thus can be assumed to presuppose the adult as the intended addressee. However, the introduction of the character of Mignon – small, weak and timid – seems to create a reception prospect for the child-addressee by inviting identification and the possibility of vicarious empowerment. The ambiguous character of Mignon as a diminutive adult may also suggest a certain vision of the child who, though certainly weak and small, is still expected to perform according to the same values that should rationally govern adult behaviour. This rational and virtuous ideal is evidently achieved by the girls in Mrs. Teachum’s school in the frame narrative. It is important to notice that it is not an ideal for a child – limited and accessible to his/her undeveloped capabilities – but an ideal for a human being: rational and virtuous, making informed and logical moral choices which will infallibly lead to happiness, both his/her own and others’.

The second fairy story embedded in the school narrative of Fielding’s book focuses on contrasted female characters, with the title figure of the Princess Hebe achieving the role of the protagonist in the second part of the text. The story is longer and more complex than the previous one though both share many constructional similarities: two giants are here replaced by two fairies – Sybella and Brunetta – linked with characteristic and semantically significant settings. The opening section introduces a contrast of good and bad characters, which is later echoed in the embedded story of the fairy Sybella. The inciting event of the plot is the exile of a good queen and her little daughter by an evil usurper. The exiles finally receive help and protection of Sybella who invites them to share her modest house in the Placid Grove. When Sybella tells the queen the story of her life, further contrasts of two queens and then two princesses appear. Sybella is herself a victim of the persecution by her evil step-sister Brunetta, who lives in a splendid castle not far from the Placid Grove.

Interestingly, Princess Hebe” operates with spatial oppositions similar to those in “The Story of the Cruel Giant...”: the castle is contrasted with the natural

setting of the wood, while both locations are also the dwellings of the two opposed characters. However, the values ascribed to the settings, and hence their evaluations are completely reversed. The castle belonging to the evil Brunetta is full of charming people, moving through lavishly furnished rooms filled with delightful music and amusements. This pleasant aspect, however, is only an appearance designed to deceive the naïve Princess Hebe. The castle is soon revealed as a place of quarrels, malice, screams and confusion where all characters give way to uncontrolled emotions and where the protagonist is wretchedly unhappy. In contrast, Sybella's home is rather small and modest but silent and peaceful. Moreover, a magically impenetrable hedge seals it from the outside world and prevents anyone from entering without the invitation of the fairy. The most essential aspect of the spatial contrast here seems to involve the opposition of the outward show and unruly commotion with peace and silent solitude. The two locations may metaphorically refer to the "world" in the sense of social life and to the private or even internal world of an individual person.

In both considered stories the axiological valorisation and the metaphorical significance of space settings, though completely different, seem to evoke the same conflict of reason and emotions. In the giants story wild mountains and the rough cave signify violent passions, while the safety of the hospitable castle represents the sphere of reason. In the "Princess Hebe" the castle, expressive of social life, teems with passions, while the modest house in the woodland clearing denotes the inner space of peaceful reflection. This flexibility of ascribing semantic values to similar spatial locations testifies to artistic ingenuity of Fielding.

Another similarity binding the two stories concerns the presence of the pastoral settings. In "The Princess Hebe" Arcadian space is introduced by a song sung by a beautiful shepherdess, Rozella, in a pleasant meadow. Soon the shepherdess and Hebe become friends and pass

[...] some Hours every Day in walking around that delightful Wood, in which were many small green Meadows, with little Rivulets running through them, on the Banks of which, covered with Primroses and Violets, Rozella, by the side of her sweet Companion, used to sing the most enchanting Songs in the World: the Words were chiefly in Praise of Innocence and a country Life. (Fielding 2005: 131)

The shepherdess Rozella is really a temptress sent by the evil Brunetta, and the pastoral setting soon becomes a scene of temptation to disobedience, which gradually weakens the virtuous resolve of Hebe. The beauty of the pastoral setting, just like the dazzling luxury of the castle, is only a backdrop which may be used with evil intent to lull the naïve. In "The Princess Hebe" the castle and the pastoral meadows are both contrasted with the Placid Grove, which stands for the inner space of an individual as opposed to the outside world in civilised and natural aspects. Only when the character is entirely at peace with herself, is she ready to venture into the world.

In “The Princess Hebe” character contrasts seem to reiterate the opposition of rational control of one’s emotions on the one hand and of giving way to passions or desires on the other. The events of the story consistently show that a calm mind fortified with appropriate principles can withstand all adversity. The motif of magic gifts offered to a royal child – frequent in fairy stories – is in Fielding’s text employed to list these principles. When the fairy Sybella tells the Queen:

‘I am ready to endow this little princess with any gift in my power [...] [t]he queen considered a little while, and then desired Sybella to endow the princess with only that wisdom which would enable her to see and follow what was her own true good, to know the value of everything around her, and to be sensible that following the paths of goodness and performing her duty was the only road to content and happiness. (Fielding 2005: 122–123)

However, the gifts come with one condition: absolute obedience, which constitutes another crucial value in the part of the story concerned with education. It is characteristic that obedience is presented as binding to young female characters: the young Sybella in relation to her father, and Hebe in relation to her mother. The plot of Hebe, tricked into submitting herself to the power of the evil Brunetta, illustrates the dangers of thinking for oneself – a very suspicious activity in Fielding’s story – as leading to disastrous consequences.

The character of Hebe, especially in the context of obedience, appears to fulfil a role similar to Mignon in the previous story. Hebe represents a child – especially that the story focuses on her education – thus creating a reception prospect for a young receiver. Differently from Mignon, however, Hebe changes from a rather thoughtless and gullible girl into a mature and responsible person who eventually becomes a queen. Disobedience teaches her a painful lesson which eventually helps her acquire mastery over herself – her final royal status serving as a metaphor of this achievement.

In spite of remarkable constructional and thematic similarities between the two fairy stories, they differ in their semantic dominants. While “The Story of the Cruel Giant...” is primarily philosophical, “The Princess Hebe” seems more concerned with the inner (or psychological) entanglements of good and evil, treated as human choices rather than philosophical concepts. The story shows the inclination towards evil as resulting from wrong education (on the example of Brunetta), and from sustained temptation or trickery (on the example of Hebe). Hebe also illustrates the crippling effects of guilt and shame which make repentance almost impossible. The choice of good is the result of wise and patient guidance, and thus can be acquired through proper education. It goes without saying that such a choice brings happiness.

The two embedded texts evince strong influence of French literary fairy stories in the presence of courtly characters and settings, the presentation of the characters’ mental states, and sophisticated style involving long and syntactically complex sentences. Even the generic admixture of pastoral conventions

points to the French fairy stories as Fielding's source. The qualities derived from French models, together with complex considerations of philosophical and psychological aspects of good and evil, seem to indicate the adult as the intended receiver. However, it is important to observe that Fielding's narratives do not display themes of courtship and seduction characteristic of the French stories, but concentrate on family relationships and the education of the young. Moreover, the inclusion of child-like characters – weak and timid like Mignon, or naively self-assured like Hebe – seems to provide reception prospects for the child receiver, since the child may identify with these characters and gain a sense of vicarious empowerment from their histories. Creating her fairy stories Fielding was evidently influenced by French models in which literary fairy stories were produced for adults. Still maintaining the predominantly adult tone and interest, she is able to adjust thematic concerns and characters so as to accommodate the young receiver. Applying Barbara Wall's idea of single, double and dual address in children's fiction, I would venture that Fielding's fairy stories – as well as *The Governess* as a whole – operate with the dual address. However, while Fielding's book as a whole is primarily addressed to children with “an adult reader simultaneously satisfied” (Wall 1991: 36), the fairy stories assume a primary adult audience, but invite a child receiver by means of emotional identification with a character, vicarious sense of empowerment and such thematic concerns as education and family relationships. Even if Fielding's stories may appear as derivative in their relation to the French models, they are definitely innovative in initiating the process of adjusting the fairy story genre to the new audience of children.

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It seems, however, that Sarah Fielding, as a pioneering author of original literary fairy stories in English, did not entirely trust her young readers to focus on the morals while withstanding the seductive forces of suspense and enchantment. The frame narrative of girls at school not only provides the motivation for the stories to appear, but also introduces extensive metaliterary commentary which functions to safeguard and direct the reception – firstly of the listeners within the fictional world of the school and secondly of the readers of Fielding's book. Metaliterary passages illustrate faulty and inappropriate responses (for instance, the initial fragmentary reception focusing on isolated aspects – such as Mignon – without the ability to comprehend the story as whole) and gradually correct them, guiding the receivers to the proper, that is moral, understanding. The function of the frame is to control the listeners' excitement arising from the fabulous and suspenseful elements of the stories (illustrated by their reactions and comments) and to turn the girls' attention to the moral aspects. The frame's controlling function involves the gradual subjugation of the pupils' emotions or impulses to reason – which on the primary narrative level enacts exactly the same lesson of control that the characters in the embedded stories have to learn. The narrative frame serves as a meta-

receptional guide, or even a handbook, teaching to interpret fictional texts in order to control oneself⁹.

Interestingly, the moral interpretation of the fairy stories inculcated in the frame, evidently reduces their semantic potential: for instance, it completely ignores the metaphorical values of the spatial settings or the possible philosophical suggestiveness of characters, settings and events. Moreover, the girls are discouraged from the aesthetic reception appropriate in view of the literary qualities of the inset texts in favour of a strictly instrumental¹⁰ one: “Miss Jenny desired them to consider the moral of the story, and what use they might make of it, instead of contending which was the prettiest part” (Fielding 1995: 85). A still further reduction takes place in the flat rejection of magical and supernatural elements. The governess dismisses them as only an additional amusement and explicates them in a parabolic way¹¹ suggesting that it is the possibility of a parabolic translation of the story elements into moralising lessons that makes fairy stories acceptable. However, the parabolic reduction is rendered inadequate as an interpretative strategy of Fielding’s fairy stories by the very narrative strategies they employ. Because the secondary narrators dwell on the characters’ emotional states, the fictional figures acquire sufficient mimetic validity to prevent their reduction to mere parabolic personifications. While the controlling metaliterary comments in the frame attempt to turn the fairy stories into moralizing one-dimensional parables, in actual fact the embedded narratives offer rich interpretative possibilities (which the present analysis has definitely not exhausted) and various reception strategies.

Another important contextual aspect connected with the embedded fairy stories in Fielding’s book is the fact that they are not told, which would evoke the usual storytelling situation, but read aloud by one of the girls to the other pupils. Such a narrative situation certainly underlines the literary (written) character of the presented fairy stories (as opposed to traditional oral ones). The motif of reading texts pre-defined by authoritative adults, who give the texts to the girls, by fusing the voice of the author and the reader-performer, additionally emphasises the theme of control, which is posited as both the aim and the means of education. The girls are supposed to learn the subordination

⁹ Actually, the skill of interpreting fictional texts is to be transferred to life events: the girls are learn to “read” their own lives and other “non-fictional” events consistently applying the same interpretative tools. Their own autobiographical narratives are the test of their new ability. For the discussion of textualisation of experience in the eighteenth century culture see Richardson 1994: 133–7; for the discussion of aspects of textualisation in Fielding see Węgrodzka 2010: 496–500.

¹⁰ The aesthetic and instrumental styles of reading are distinguished by Michał Głowiński (1988:145–147).

¹¹ “[...] giants, magic, fairies, and all sorts of supernatural assistances in a story, are only introduced to amuse and divert; for a giant is called so only to express a man of great power; and the magic fillet [...] was intended only to show you that by patience you will overcome all difficulties” (Fielding 1995: 84–85).

of their unruly emotions to the authority of reason, and they acquire this ability through constant practice of obedience to the authority of their elders, who control what and how they read.

The controlling function of the frame expresses a crucial ambivalence in the treatment of literary fiction – both in Fielding’s book and in its cultural context. Fiction, epitomised in fairy stories, appeals to readers by engaging their curiosity and emotions. But the process of education envisioned in *The Governess* aims to put emotions under strict control. The central theme of opposition between passions and reason emerges also in the relation between the fairy stories and their narrative frame. This tension, informing all aspects of Fielding’s book, suggests a conceptualisation of literature for children as a site of mediation between the claims of emotion and the rule of reason (Węgrodzka 2012: 317–318).

Creating the first English literary fairy stories and addressing them to children, Fielding evidently struggled to reconcile the disparate materials of folk-tale conventions and sophisticated French models with her explicit educational aims. Admittedly, Fielding’s fairy stories are not artistic masterpieces. Yet they constitute a valiant creative attempt in their complex patterning of settings and characters, and in their semantically rich consideration of philosophical and psychological aspects of good and evil. They are also boldly innovative in the cultural and literary context of the eighteenth century rationalism. Importantly, by highlighting child-like characters in her stories and presenting them as reception venues for child readers, Fielding paved the way for the later complete structural reorientation of the fairy story, which would eventually emerge as a children’s genre geared to what the adults perceived as children’s concerns, abilities and needs.

However, the pressure of the frame story in *The Governess*, with its stress on the metafictional control of the potentially dangerous excitement and inattention to morals, leads to a peculiar reduction of the fairy stories to parabolic instruction in virtuous behaviour¹². Paradoxically, by detracting from the emotional appeal, semantic richness and aesthetic quality of the stories, the frame narrative downgrades the significance of her achievement as an innovative author of the first original English fairy stories in a book for children. While Sarah Fielding’s invention of a framed school story established a widely imitated convention, her pioneering fairy stories are sadly, but perhaps unsurprisingly, forgotten.

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¹² In the 1820 revision of *The Governess*, Mrs. Sherwood removed Fielding’s fairy stories altogether and replaced them with straightforward moral tales, only one of which (“The History of the Princess Rosalinda”) preserved some tenuous relation to the fairy story genre.

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Magical Realism and Images of Death in Contemporary Russian Prose for Young Readers

*Apples, peaches,
Pumpkin pie.
How many years
Until I die?*

Jump rope rhyme
A Treasury of New England Folklore

The image of death in Russian children's literature has been a subject of significant changes over the last two decades, and especially in comparison to nineteenth-century and Soviet literature. Death and violence rapidly entered the social discourse and especially the media discourse in the transition period of the 1990s. During the post-Perestroika time, the physical reality of death (including the death of children) became a significant part of children's and young readers' literature.

In this article, the analysis of the depiction of death and use of magical realism is based on examples from well-known recent works for children and young readers. These books deal with death by using the elements of magical realism and moving death into a different realm where it can be challenged and conquered, even though death is still present in the "real" world. In Dina Sabitova's *Gde net zimy* [*No-Winter Land*] (2011) and *Tri tvoich imeni* [*Your Three Names*] (2012), the main theme is coping with the death of parents. In Ekaterina Murashova's *Klass korrektsii* [*Special Ed Class*] (2007) and *Gvardiya trevogi* [*The Alarm Guard*] (2008), it is the death of a young person who saves his friends at the cost of his own life. In teens' literature, Miriam Petrosyan's *Dom, v kotorom...* [*The House That...*] (2009), and Sergei Kuznetsov's *Zhivyye i vzroslye* [*The Alive and the Adults*] (2011), death is seen as an opponent; death is the antagonist the characters in the book try to wrestle with... with a grave risk to their own lives. All these books were published during last several years in Moscow.

In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, the death of children was portrayed realistically and, at the same time, sentimentally in Russian children's literature. It was always used as a teaching tool, mostly for the purpose of developing compassion in children and for children. The books of Lidiya

Charskaya, for example, followed the recipes of the nineteenth-century French and English sentimental and romantic literature. One of her most famous heroines is Princess Nina Dzhavakha, a girl from Caucasus. “In a blatantly melodramatic scene Nina dies in the boarding school, a pure heart-rending example of Romantic youth death” (Hellman 180).

Dmitry Grigorovich in *Guttaperchevy Mal'chik* [*The Gutta-Percha Boy*] (1883) and Vladimir Korolenko in *Deti podzemelya* [*The Cave Children*] (1885) used a more realistic, “with its emphasis on social justice and moral obligation,” approach (Hellman 119). In their books, the death of a child is a recurrent theme. These writers clearly stayed in the tradition of the great nineteenth-century Russian literature. Often, their books were not yet books for children, but books about children or memories of the author’s own childhood.

Apart from the death of children, it was also the death of small and vulnerable pet; for example, *Mumu* in Ivan Turgenev’s famous story about a little dog which belonged to the serf, a mute man Gerasim. Gerasim was ordered by a wealthy landlady to kill the dog, his only friend and companion. Set in the nineteenth-century Russia, this short story has been widely read in schools in the Soviet time and now. At the same time, death was always present in the fairytales, but there it was the death of bad and ugly creatures who try to kill the hero and instead die themselves.

In Soviet children’s literature, death was still used as a didactic instrument but of a very different kind. “Since in the Soviet Union children’s literature was seen as an important part of literature, it was supposed to be written according to socialist norms” (Salminen 19). This affected writing for children dramatically. Soviet literature served primary as a teaching tool telling young readers “what is good, and what is bad” (this expression comes from the title of a famous poem for children written by Vladimir Mayakovsky in the 1920s).

With the rare exceptions, the description of death in children’s books existed as a heroic death of a young pioneer or of a young communist during the various Russian revolutions and wars, or during the period of collectivization. Heroic death was the only one “allowed” in children’s books. But the hero really never dies; he (almost always he) is beyond death—it is the direct way into immortality and the Soviet “sainthood.” The iconic figure of Pavlik Morosov, who was killed by his own father (after the boy reported the anti-Soviet activities of his father to the authorities), became a paradigm of a Soviet martyr’s death. The story of Pavlik Morozov is discussed in details in Catriona Kelly’s *Comrade Pavlik: The Rise and Fall of a Soviet Boy Hero*. This paradigm was again and again repeated in the stories for children describing young Soviet warriors killed by the Fascists. Apart from that, death was not really a part of a story for children, as if it did not exist in ordinary life. Maksud Ibragimbekov’s novella *Za vse khoroshee—smert'* [*Death for All Good Things*] (1974) was a rare example of portraying an encounter with possible death in children’s literature of the 1970s.

Only a few books available at that time in translation were talking about death. One of them was a book of a remarkable Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren, *Bröderna Lejonhjärta* [*The Brothers Lionheart*] (1973, Russian translation 1981). As Eva-Maria Metcalf states, “A common topos in children’s literature underlies the story about the Brothers Lionheart, namely, that imagination and stories can change one’s outlook on life and, ultimately, change one’s life by providing both the inspiration to fight and to persevere as well as the means to escape an unbearable reality” (Metcalf 167). This book in many aspects is a predecessor of the post-Soviet children’s literature of magical realism. *The Brothers Lionheart* is an interesting example of winning over death by getting infinite chances of living your life again and again. An American counterpart of the book seriously discussing the death of a child became available in Russian two decades later. It was Katherine Peterson’s *Bridge to Terabithia* (1977, Russian translation 2003). Even though the direct influence cannot be proved, the post-Soviet novels for children started using the same patterns which have already been explored by other authors writing for children; for example, by Philippa Pearce in her *Tom’s Midnight Garden* (1958, Russian translation 2011) which, like the books I am discussing, has “acquired every feature of the realistic psychological novel besides possessing all the assets of the fantasy genre” (Nikolajeva 119).

With the end of the Soviet censorship, the portrayal of the grim reality of existence (for example, the depiction of the state orphanages or of a family of drinking parents) as well as bringing non-heroic death back into children’s and young readers’ books became again possible. However, such books of the twenty-first century rejected the realism of the previous epochs (both the realism of the nineteenth-century style and the Socialist Realism of the Soviet period). The shift away from the Socialist Realism signified the desire of the writers to tell the truth without the dictates of any authorities.

“Commingling of the improbable and mundane” (Rushdie 4), magical realism has given contemporary Russian writers the necessary freedom to talk to young readers about serious, previously tabooed issues. Literary tools such as magical realism and fairytale elements combined with quite realistic contemporary settings provided new ways of portraying death in children’s and young readers’ fiction. As in a fantasy tale, the necessity of the secondary world in order to solve the problems of the primary world dictates the incorporation of magical elements into the generally realistic narrative. “One of the unique features of magical realism is its reliance upon the reader to follow the example of narrator in accepting both realistic and magical perspectives of reality on the same level” (Bowers 4), especially if it is a child-reader. This literary device combines reality and fantasy in the way they are interconnected in children’s imagination.

In 1995 Maria Nikolajeva wrote: “As for recently written literature, fairy tales and fantasy are still the most prominent genre” (109). Since then, this trend is even more prominent. “Russian and Soviet children’s literature has had

a pattern to follow even in Russian adult literature, which has a strong tradition of describing magical events” (Salminen 9). Talking about magical realism in the Russian tradition, one cannot avoid mentioning two influential Russian writers: Nikolai Gogol of the nineteenth century, and Mikhail Bulgakov of the twentieth. These are the authors from whom both Ekaterina Murashova and Dina Sabitova clearly take their inspirations. I believe that the choice of magical realism as an artistic tool in portraying death also came partly out of the influence of science fiction and fantasy literature where death is a typical part of the plot and is not finite in any sense. For example, in J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, Elves and even one of the hobbits (Bilbo) do not die; they simply leave the Middle Earth for the other realm. In C.S. Lewis’ *The Last Battle*, when old Narnia died, “[a]ll of the old Narnia that matter, all the dear creatures, have been drawn into the real Narnia” (Lewis 759).

Magical realism is more often used to describe writing for the grown-up audience. “Children’s literature, however, has not been included in discussions of magical realism, nor have studies of children’s fantasy taken into account discussions of magical realism” (Rosenberg 77). I will try to analyze the contemporary writing for children and teenagers through the prism of using magical elements in the realistic narrative. Even though “[i]n the field of Soviet children’s literature, fairy tale and fantasy had their important place” (Salminen 22), magical realism is quite different from a traditional or literary fairy tale, especially when the magical elements are embedded into the core of the otherwise realistic writing.

As we know, three is a magic number in fairy tales, and there are three most interesting female writers in Russian magical realist literature for teens and pre-teens. All three are relatively new in the literary world. They are of the generation of people whose life was shaped by growing up in the Soviet Union and by the radical changes in the time of Perestroika. The fourth writer discussed in this article is a well-known male writer of the same generation.

A muscovite Dina Sabitova writes about parenting and adoption and writes out of experience. Already a mother of two, she adopted a sixteen year old girl. Her book *No-Winter Land* is about two orphans, a teenage boy Pavel, who has a very serious attitude toward life; and his younger sister Gul’, who dearly loves her rag doll Lya’ka made by her grandma. This doll is a very important character; she is one of three narrators in the book. Two others are the children, Pavel and Gul’. Another unusual character in the book is an ancient brownie Aristarkh who is invisible to all but Pavel. He is not just a simple house elf; he is full of wisdom and speaks several languages because he used to live in the university library. The grandmother, the corner stone of the family, dies, and the mother soon disappears. Two children are left to their own devices with very little money and an even smaller supply of food. After an attempt to manage on their own, they are taken to the orphanage, with two “family protectors,” Lya’ka and Aristarkh, left behind in their old shabby house.

This book is a tragic story of coping with a parent death; and the book's unexpected turns and twists make the reader's heart ready to stop. At the same time, it is an uplifting story, and it is full of hope against hope. "Many fairy stories begin with the death of a mother or father; in these tales the death of the parent creates the most agonizing problems, as it (or the fear of it) does in real life" (Bettelheim 8). Gul' herself twice comes very close to death; firstly, she gets into the severe depression after overhearing the news of her mother's death. Gul' seems to lose her ability to speak. She also lost her desire to live. "Her eyes did not shine anymore; she was silent, and she did not have any contacts with anyone" (Sabitova, *No-Winter* 128).¹

Gul' always had her own way of communication with the doll, but now the girl does not even care about the loss of her beloved Lyal'ka. Nevertheless, Pavel is sure that his sister and the doll should be reunited. Pavel is certain, "Lyal'ka will be able to call Gul' back" (79), back to life. He turned to be right, and the magical intervention of the doll which pulls her little mistress back from the dankness of despair into the light of life changes the course of the otherwise realistic narrative.

Deus ex machina style (apart of the fact that this part is actually based on a true story), the mother of Gul's best friend from school decides to adopt her and her brother, but it is not yet the happy end. Gul' again falls severely ill; this time with a physical illness. It is clear that if nobody will help right away, she would not be able to recover. Again, help comes from the magically abled creatures; the doll Lyal'ka sent the brownie Aristarkh to fetch Gul's adopted mother, who, of course, has no idea that it is Aristarkh's doing. The magical elements are seamlessly woven into the realistic narrative, and Lyal'ka and Aristarkh are essential because only the magical intervention can help. Earlier in the novel, Aristarkh helps Pavel to find the envelope which was left to the boy by his mother. The envelope contained the information about the father of Pavel and the father of Gul'. Every time when children desperately need help, magical creatures slightly alter the reality of everyday life so that children can get what they need.

Sabitova's more recent book *Your Three Names* is about a girl who gets a new name and a new identity in each of three (magic number again) versions of her story. All three names are the diminutives of her name Margarita. Ritka/Margo/Goshka's life moves through various ordeals: drunken, poverty stricken parents, foster care, and an orphanage. In her first life, Ritka lost her parents in the horrible house fire. The only thing that survived the fire is her school backpack which "still strongly smells of cinder" (Sabitova, *Your Three* 83).

In her "second life," the girl was fostered by a couple which in the beginning seems to be nice to her. They call her Margo, and she hopes to become a part

¹ All quotations from Sabitova, Murashova, Petrosyan, Kuznetsov, Chernyak, Lebedushkina, and Ulitskaya are given in my translations

of her new family. But the situation changes, and the couple decides to “return” the girl back to the orphanage. By then, she is thirteen, and her chances of being adopted are practically equal to zero. Goshka does not want her previous life to be a part of her present; so, she changes her name again. She is able to work through the death of her parents which was an accident. It is much more difficult to deal with the betrayal of the “adoptive parents” who voluntarily rejected her. Two parts of the book have alternative endings; one—real—is sad and even tragic, and another one is a fantasy of the possibility of a better life. In the first alternative reality Ritka’s parents do not die; the father quit drinking and started working and rebuilding the house. In the alternative ending of the second part, the “adoptive parents” decided to keep Margo in the family. Both magical alterations fool a reader for a moment.

Sabitiva constantly works with the theme of parent/grandparent death which is unavoidable. The death of a child can be averted, but only by introducing magical reality. Gul’ saved by her doll Lyal’ka and by the brownie Aris-tarkh; Ritka’s avoiding death in the fire is almost a miracle. In Sabitova’s books, we do not see a full blown secondary world; it is just a glimpse of it. But magical reality always appears where the battle against death is fought. The child is powerless and weak in the “real” world, but the magical reality is able to empower her. This is “[t]he subversive power of magical realism” which “breaks distinction between the spirit world and the material world, between the living and the dead, between past, present and future” (Razmi and Jamali 113), and allows the solution of the problem to come from the realm different than the realm in which the problem exists.

In Ekaterina Murashova’s books, the secondary world plays a much more important role. In my understanding of the secondary world, I follow the original definition given by J.R.R. Tolkien in 1938: “What really happens is that the story-maker proves a successful ‘sub-creator.’ He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is ‘true.’ It accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside” (37). Jenniliisa Salminen comments on Tolkien’s definition and clarifies it: “By a secondary world, I mean a literary chronotope that is in some way manifest in the text and differs from the primary world of the text. The primary world is a textual world that can be defined as the basic chronotope of the text” (4–5).

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the secondary world as a world of adventure and escape in Ekaterina Murashova’s books. The contemporary authors, of course, are not the first who brings the secondary worlds into the writing for Russian children. This literary device was broadly used in both pre-Soviet and Soviet literature. “Secondary worlds in Soviet children’s fantasy have their roots in the folk and literary fairy tale and Russian adult literature containing supernatural elements” (Salminen 15). Nevertheless, as Salminen stressed, “In the spirit of both the optimism typical of children’s literature and the optimism typical of Soviet socialist realism, the protagonists in

Soviet children's fantasy tend to succeed in their quests" (30). This part—success or failure of the protagonists—plays itself out quite differently in post-Soviet literature for children.

Apart from being a writer, Ekaterina Murashova is a child psychologist in St. Petersburg. In the last decade, she published several novels for young adults as well as a few popular psychology books for parents. She freely uses magical reality in her novels. *Special Ed Class* is the book which made her famous. This class is for physically disabled and mentally handicapped children with whom teachers and often even parents have no idea what to do. It is a miniature world in itself. In this book, for the first time, maybe, in post-Perestroika children's literature, the reality of the tragic life of kids who are shoved into this class for being unconventional and underprivileged is shown openly and clearly.

Again, the magical world comes in contact with the ordinary world. With the help of a new student Yura, other kids in the class are now able to take refuge in a dreamland where they are not disabled any more, and everyone looks "beautiful and smart" (Murashova, *Special* 86). Using often quoted C.S. Lewis' words, this is the world which "could be reached only by magic" (21). First, Anton, who is an extremely intelligent student with some uncontrollable emotional outbursts, is able to follow Yura into the secondary world of Yura's fantasy. The teacher describes Anton as "a hero who for some reason refuses to be a hero" (Murashova, *Special* 175). As Jenniliisa Salminen writes, "The children's adventures, either fantastic journeys in a secondary world or more realistic, yet extraordinary events in the primary world, give them an opportunity to be free from adult supervision—for a while. After the time out, the children return to their familiar everyday life" (8). Unfortunately, most of the children in the class are practically free of adult supervision even in the real world. Nevertheless, the escape to the secondary world, "a parallel one...or maybe a perpendicular one" (Murashova, *Special* 53), as Yura describes it, gives them a chance to solve problems which are utterly unsolvable in the primary world. Events in that magical land can even affect the situation in the ordinary and difficult "real" life. If the princess in the castle will be freed in the secondary world, the beautiful girl Stesha who is captured by a gang of the ill-intended high-school kids, the sons of the rich and influential parents, can be freed in the primary world. A legally blind boy gets his vision back in the dreamland and is able to keep it in the real world.

The experiences of the secondary world improve the life of kids drastically. Yet, death cannot be completely conquered. Yura dies helping Anton and other classmates to save Stesha. The death of the main character, Yura, like in a sentimental novel of the nineteenth century, becomes a teaching moment, mostly for the adult characters in the novel. Because of the tragic events of Stesha's kidnapping and Yura's death, the teacher and the school principal now see clearly to what degree these underprivileged kids are not getting any help. The source of help is only in the magic of the secondary world (in which adults, naturally,

do not believe). Larissa Rudova, nevertheless, believes that the ending of the novel is optimistic and has a therapeutic effect for the book characters; they are now ready to mature, “psychologically, emotionally, and socially” (210).

Here the secondary world is an “open world” in the terminology of Maria Nikolajeva; it has some contact with the primary world, and both primary and secondary worlds are present in the text (36). More exactly, it is “the land beyond.” It is important that this world does not have any borders with the ordinary world of everyday life. “The magical land lies beyond the map since it does not fit on earth” (Nikolajeva 44). The open secondary world is described, in this particular case, as a place where one can fight the death threats and various distractions of the primary world.

The other novel of Ekaterina Murashova, *The Alarm Guard*, is again about a class, but a very different one. The classmates are organized in a group which helps everyone who needs their help, from a crow caught in the net to a homeless child in the manhole. It is a book about collectivism in the best meaning of this word and about individual responsibility. All kids in this class, with the exception of three new students, are joined by some kind of “telepathic” connections. This and other paranormal abilities allow them to work seamlessly as a team. They act as one organism aimed to “right” various small and not that small “wrongs” of this world. The connection between children rests on efforts of a young man named Bert (he is the brain and the soul of the group).

The cruel and ruthless mafia people try to steal this quite useful secret. As Yura does in *Special Ed Class*, the leader of the group, Bert, dies protecting his friends and the computer program he invented. This program allows the group to stay connected. This connection is never properly explained in the novel; its nature lies in the area of the magical masked as technological. In both books, the reader is basically present at the moment of the death of the principal character. Both deaths are heroic, but they are the heroic deaths in the “regular” life, not during war time, or during revolutionary struggles. This makes these books quite different from the literature for children of the Soviet era.

The idea that the death of the main character, especially a child, can serve as redemption and salvation for everyone in the book is not new in Russian literature. In the already mentioned nineteenth-century realistic short novel of Vladimir Korolenko, *The Cave Children*, one of the main characters, a little girl Marusya, dies from consumption, and her death moves everyone and pushes all characters in the book to act their best. In her two novels, *Special Ed Class* and *The Alarm Guard*, Ekaterina Murashova uses the same literary device but in a very different way. Her writing is very far from the sentimentality of the nineteenth century.

Murashova’s latest novel, *Oдно chudo na vsyu zhizn’* [*One Miracle in a Lifetime*] (2010), brings together those who are rarely seen together: nice, “clean” kids from an elite school, a gang of under-aged criminals, and two extra-terrestrials siblings. In this book nobody dies but an old man who is a secondary

character. Nevertheless, death is in the air. It is all around in the life of kids who are the members of the gang and live marginal lives of social outcasts. Everything is leaning towards death, and the reader might even expect it as a possible outcome of the plot. But the intervention of the celestial forces, the alien twin brother and sister, changes destiny, and the main protagonist gets the treatment regimen for his youngest brother who is gravely ill.

“Typically, readers of magical realist fiction must look beyond the realistic detail and accept the dual ontological structure of the text, in which the natural and the supernatural, the explainable and the miraculous, coexist side by side in a kaleidoscopic reality, whose apparently random angles are deliberately left to the audience’s discretion” (Arva 60). This quite accurately describes the way the next book I will discuss needs to be read.

An animator from Erevan, a capital of Armenia, Miriam Petrosyan, wrote a lengthy novel (the second edition was published as a three-volume book). *The House That...* is about a boarding school for children and teens with various physical problems (and of course, mental and psychological ones). The book is written in Russian and got several prestigious Russian awards; it is an epic drama and a phantasmagoric, nightmarish story of kids who are stuck with their disabilities. For them, the House is a safe haven and, at the same time, a prison where they are locked up for their entire school years. Many of them are in wheelchairs, on crutches, or with prostheses; for many, the House is the only home they know. Each group of kids lives in its own dormitory; they form a Pack with its own Leader. These Packs became their immediate families.

So, the primary world of *The House That...* is the boarding school, “the house near the edge of the town” (Petrosyan 7). The town does not even have a name. It could be anywhere in the former Soviet Union or beyond. The new areas of the cities look so much alike that it became the subject of jokes and even comedy movies. The secondary world is given only in glimpses, but it is very important, because it is the secondary world which intimately connected with the fear and attraction of death. The novel immediately calls for various symbolic interpretations. M.A. Chernyak, for example, suggests that “[t]he world of the House is a full blown metaphor of childhood which inevitably needs to be abandoned” (58).

Olga Lebedushkina compares the House with Harry Potter’s Hogwarts, the safe place for the main character, the place that the students do not want to abandon (186). Despite symbolic elements of the book, its characters are not merely symbols; they are suffering children and teenagers. Petrosyan paints a whole gallery of their quite vivid portraits. Nevertheless, none of their real names, but one, are known to a reader. Each kid has a nickname, for example, Sphinx, Blind, Smoker, even Skull and Death. The girls too have nicknames: Mermaid, Witch, and Rat. The same for the principal and counselors, they also go by the nicknames; for example, the principal of the school called Shark. The reality of life with its regular school program and everyday breakfasts and

lunches intermixes with dreams, nightmares, and fantasies creating heavy, dense prose, enjoyable and scary to read. Magical reality and ordinary life are mixed together in very complicated patterns. In the “open” secondary world the threat of death is constantly present. Death is also present in the primary world. Many of these kids are sick, some die, and some barely survive deadly health conditions. But death is not only physical death. The high-school graduation is also interpreted by students like death. Leaving the House, their only home, for any reason is also some sort of death. Death is everywhere. It hides around the corner.

The book constantly uses the symbolic meaning of death. For example, one of the students asks for permission to visit his friend in the tiny in-house hospital, The Graveyard, as it called by students. This friend soon will be sent to another facility. “Do you know how they talk here about these who left the House? Like if they are the dead. And you don’t want me to be with the person who soon will be dead for us?” (Petrosyan 207). The fear of leaving the House and especially of the graduation has almost a fairytale motif of going to “the other side” (into adulthood/death) and points to the deeply hidden archetypical layers of the narrative. Perhaps, death is better than life outside of the House. It is “the step into emptiness. Not everyone is capable of that” (479).

One of the main narrators, a boy nicknamed Smoker, feels himself like a dead body in the Pack he is assigned to live in. Kids around him are like old men without any joy of life. For the painting competition, Smoker submits a drawing named “The Tree of Life.” The tree has plenty of skulls and thousands of worms on its branches, even though the skulls at the first sight look like pears. He feels that the photograph of the graves at the cemetery should be on the walls next to the photos of the school graduates. “Each room of the House has plenty of their own dead,” he said (169).

Not only symbolic, but also the actual death is present in the book. First of all, it is the death of Moose, a teacher. Moose is murdered by students, and the killers are never found. One of the students nicknamed Blind keeps the murder weapon—the knife with the traces of blood—which killed his beloved teacher. He himself is also capable of murder, and kills a rival leader, Pompei. Death is an ordinary thing in the place where sick children live. These who fought death and won are very special. The boy nicknamed Death because of his grave illness survives and gets a new name, Ginger, which stresses his vitality.

But the main battle with death is fought in the secondary world of fantasy. The secondary world does not have clear borders. Blind (he is blind in the real world) travels through the magic forest and walks through the school hall at the same time, easily moving from one dangerous world to another. In the magic forest he is not blind at all; he is capable of everything, even of being a free forest animal with six legs. Another student, Sphinx, is capable of traveling to what he, just like Yura in *Special Ed Class*, calls “parallel worlds” (674).

Others also created their own worlds. They are not visible, but Sphinx feels them: one kid is always surrounded by imaginary trees; a choir singing *Dies irae* is always around the other kid; and the third one, Lord, seems to be locked in “his castle with the walls covered by moss, and only rarely allows himself to lower the drawbridge” (195). The important part of their lives is traveling “to the other side,” into the realm of horrible and attractive fairy tales where the fighting with death takes place. The real world does not give these kids an opportunity to do so. Death is the biggest threat, and at the same time, death is an attraction, a desire, Freudian *Thanatos*. Can this story be told without magical realism? No, it is too full of pain, suffering, and, indeed, the most horrible reality of life. Petrosyan’s book immediately became very popular, and is already used in the role plays similar to the role plays around J.R.R. Tolkien’s books. “Actors” do not kill each other for real, of course, but they use real couches and wheelchairs.

Sergei Kuznetsov’s *The Alive and the Adults* is his only book for young readers. A writer and an activist, Kuznetsov writes mostly for an adult audience and is particularly interested in political issues. *The Alive and the Adults* is written as a dystopian novel for teenagers, and set in a world with a mixture of fantasy and the recent Soviet past. In this alternative reality, the world is divided into the realm of the alive and the realm of the dead. With all its fantastic elements, the book at the same time is a quite realistic portrait of Brezhnev’s late Soviet society, especially where it talks about school and family/society relationships.

It is not easy to decide on its genre. Is it magical realism or sci-fi? “However, science fiction is as difficult a term as magical realism, so to provide an adequate distinction between the two forms relies upon a certain degree of acknowledgment of the slipperiness of the models and their terms and definitions” (Bowers 29). The book falls somewhere in-between. “The borderline between fantasy and other literary genres, foremostly science fiction, is sometimes blurred” (Salminen 3), and “[m]any of the problems of definition arise because of the frequent difficulty of placing text into narrowly defined genres and categories” (Bowers 29). In *The Alive and the Adults*, Kuznetsov, as many of today’s authors, chooses to discuss the contemporary issues through the allegorical narrative.

A group of four teenagers try to change the world they live in. As in *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins and in *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, these kids are called to change the rules of the game and to transform the whole world. The Realm of Dead itself is their major opponent. They need to save the mother of one of them who is now “on the wrong side” of the world divided into two parts. Despite all obstacles and dangers, they succeed in saving her and bringing her back to life. For these kids, everything is an adventure; even in the most dangerous moments, they act as a fighting team, with the Death as an opposite team. Three longtime friends and a new girl in class are like Alexandre Dumas’ three musketeers and d’Artagnan fighting the Cardinal Richelieu’s

Guards (Dumas's book was loved by generations of Russian readers). Despite the adults' opinion that "only in the books do four friends change the world once and forever," these kids understand that "they really changed the world. It never will be the same" (Kuznetsov 291).

In Petrosyan's and Kusnetsov's novels written for teenagers, the fight with death transforms into a form of play. Petrosyan describes a mortal fight which one of the characters of the book gets involved in: "It is his jump into the other world, the world without pain and blindness; he is capable of shifting time there—every second becomes eternity where everything is a play.... This is the only game he knows how to play with the others" (609).

It is difficult to draw the exact border between a fairy tale (or J.R.R. Tolkien's "fairy-story"), fantasy, and magical realist narrative, especially in children's literature. I believe that exactly the dealing with the very serious matters of life and death gives us, readers, a hint that we are now in the magical realism land. Magical realism has much sharper edges and requires not only the presence of two different, primary and secondary, worlds, but their intermingling to the degree that the reader is not quite sure where she is now.

The magical realist elements are strongest exactly in the parts of the books immediately connected to the life and death experience. According to Bruno Bettelheim, "throughout the fairy-tale literature, death of the hero—different from death of old age, after life's fulfillment—symbolizes his failure" (180). In contemporary literature, the main character, a hero in Vladimir Propp's terminology, does not necessary need to be a winner in the conventional fairy-tale meaning. She is not slaying a dragon or finding a treasure, but the possibility of fighting death in the book gives strength to the reader to combat her own fear of death and the real experience of death of relatives or friends.

Still, in Russia, death is often a taboo topic in conversations with children and even teens. The books I am discussing break this taboo. Patriarchal societies (both pre-Soviet and Soviet) had various (even through sentimental and partial) ways of dealing with death; now these mechanisms are not working any more. As the result, the culture does not provide any clear ways for a child to go through the emotions of dealing with death. Obviously, our understanding of death is culturally constructed and shifts, sometime dramatically, with the changes in the social situation.² The books I describe are the first attempts to create necessary conversation about death with children and teens. "All's well that ends well" principle does not work anymore in contemporary children's and young readers' Russian literature. That is why the fantastic elements are so crucial. They allow a child/teen to have a break, a pause necessary for accessing reality. They make reality less scary. At the same time, they make it more real.

² The interesting examples of such changes in the attitudes toward death are shown in Jesamy Harvey's article "Death and the Adorable Child: *Marcelino Pan Y Vino* (1954; 1991; 2000)."

Bruno Bettelheim suggests that fairy tales help children to deal with the issues of death more than the rational explanations of parents. “The fairy tale, by contrast, takes these existential anxieties and dilemmas very seriously and addresses itself directly to them: the need to be loved and the fear that one is thought worthless; the love of life, and the fear of death. Further, the fairy tale offers solutions in ways that the child can grasp on his level of understanding” (10). Fairy tales, Bettelheim argues, match the mindset of children better than realistic children’s books written in the relativistic discourse of the scientific age. “The fairy tale proceeds in a manner which conforms to the way a child thinks and experiences the world; this is why the fairy tale is so convincing to him. He can gain much better solace from a fairy tale than he can from an effort to comfort him based on adult reasoning and viewpoints. A child trusts what the fairy story tells, because its world view accords with his own” (45). This can be extended to magical realist narratives, or to narratives with the strong elements of magical realism.

As Maria Nikolajeva clearly stated, “The evolution of the fantaseme makes it possible to take up psychological, ethical, existential problems which became manifest as part of the more sophisticated fantaseme variables....The magic adventure is no longer an end in itself.... [T]he the secondary chronotope experience becomes a way to shape the identity” (118). Fighting with death in the secondary world brings new victories and new opportunities to talk about reality. That requires new literary devices. Incorporating elements of magical realism allows writers to go much deeper into exploration of theme of death and dying than is possible in fully realistic literature. Moreover, according to a well-known Russian writer Lyudmila Ulitskaya, “Death is the most interesting topic to write about.”

NOTES

1. All quotations from Sabitoba, Murashova, Pertosyan, Kuznetsov, Chernyak, Lebedushkina, and Ulitskaya are given in my translations.
2. The interesting examples of such changes in the attitudes toward death are shown in Jessamy Harvey’s article “Death and the Adorable Child: *Marcelino Pan Y Vino* (1954; 1991; 2000).”

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Fantasy, Literature and Early Childhood: from First Texts to Metafictional Picturebooks

Abstract: This article focuses on fantasy in literature for early childhood to show when and how this genre unfolds in books addressed to up to six-year-old readers. Departing from a far-reaching notion based on the classical distinction between the realistic and the fantastic in children's literature, we analyse a selection of texts of increasing complexity in light of the specific modes in which fantasy enters them. Our ultimate aim is to present the ways in which the fantastic is constructed in these texts and gives them shape with regard to plots, characters, scenarios, symbology and temporality on the one hand; and on the other, the way in which this changes with respect to how the audience grows in age. As fantasy provides children not only with pleasure and fun but also with a means of literary education via a genre-based path, this paper simultaneously—and explicitly—proposes a progressive fantasy tour for young children. This tour has three main visiting areas: 1) ethno-poetics, fairy tales and first books; 2) fantastic picturebooks, and 3) fantastic metafictional picturebooks. Each is exemplified with internationally acclaimed titles and local works. Taking into account the cognitive and emotional development of young children, we are convinced that this itinerary, which is easily adaptable to any western cultural context, can help young readers to both enjoy and understand fantasy, a key genre for emergent readers, to the extent that it enables them to gain pleasurable access to culture on the whole, develop reading efficiency while having fun, and enhance imaginary and cognitive abilities.

Keywords: Early Childhood, Fantasy, Picturebooks, First Text, Children's Literature

1. FANTASY AS A GENRE AND ITS MODES IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Studies on children's literature generally agree that fantasy did not begin until the 19th century and did not actually become established as a literary trend until the end of the Second World War (Hunt, 1994). But how can fantasy be understood exactly with regard to works written for young children? It is not easy for scholars or educators to agree on one single conceptualisation of fantasy as it is an amorphous core genre in which boundaries are difficult to set (Nikolajeva, 2012). [Note 1] The distinction between the realistic and the fantastic has nevertheless been one of the most far-reaching strategies in the re-

search on the evolution of children's literature. Given that this article focuses on literary works for early childhood, this distinction is useful to provide a global opening perspective on the three groups of texts for up to six-year-old children, established with regard to the audience that is rapidly growing and developing in every way: (1) ethnopoetics, fairy tales and first books; (2) fantastic picturebooks; and (3) fantastic metafictional picturebooks. Farah Mendlesohn (2012) distinguishes 'four distinct modes of fantasy, defined by the way in which the fantastic enters the text and the rhetorical voices, which are required, construct the different types of worlds that emerge: [...] the portal-quest, the immersive, the intrusion and the liminal. In the portal-quest the protagonist enters a new world; in the immersive the protagonist is part of the fantastic world; in the intrusion the fantastic breaks into the primary world (which might or might not be our own); and in the liminal, magic might or might not be happening.' (James and Mendlesohn, 2012: 2). This categorisation will be used to show how fantasy operates in each group of the analysed works, for these modes actually comprise all the specific literary elements that do not correspond to a consensual external reality as well as their narrative effects from single objects or folk story characters to a complete imaginary world or paracosmos (MacKeith, 1983). This is so because in children's literature on the whole, in Maria Nikolajeva's words (2012), fantasy as a genre accounts for several different phenomena: magic introduced into ordinary life by a set of varied mechanisms; stories of different types of extraordinary creatures (anthropomorphic animals, animated toys and dolls, miniature people and mythical characters); secondary or alternative worlds and time displacement.

Nikolajeva also underlines a very significant fact: children's fantasy (as opposed to adult fantasy) is displayed in narratives intended for 'an audience that has not yet developed a clear distinction between reality and imagination; one that does not dismiss magical worlds and events as being implausible; that has a stronger potential for secondary belief' (Nikolajeva, 2012: 60). This is especially the case in texts for young children (it must be stressed that we are not considering here, for example, crossover texts for young adult readers). And it is especially relevant if we bear in mind that fantasy provides young children with models of behaviour and habits that go beyond realistic or daily life references. It does so by means of symbolic characters such as witches and fairies, dwarfs and giants, dragons and aliens, which is to help children to learn what is fair and unfair, good or evil, trustful and deceiving, right and wrong, in their culture (Colomer and Duran, 2001). In other words, fantasy helps children to order their own environment because everything on the fantasy level is consistent, well planned, fixed and fair (Yolen, 1981). Thanks to fantasy, emergent readers—who start out as listeners—also come across and integrate key social constructions that enable them both to establish themselves in their community while learning cultural codes and to enter the agora of tradition (Colomer and Duran, 2001; Colomer, 2005). Regardless of adult perspectives and beliefs,

fantasy orders the real world and helps children to understand it and become part of it. At the same time, as Peter Hunt puts it, children 'will be more open to genuinely radical thought and the ways of understanding texts; they will be more flexible in their perceptions of text; and, because play is a natural part of their outlook, they will regard language as another area for playful exploration. They are less bound by fixed schemas, and in this sense see more clearly (Hunt, 1991: 57).

Even though children may be more inclined than adults to accept fantasy as part of their lives, from birth to puberty they undergo a complex process of psychological and cognitive development. This process takes place at different stages and, as previously mentioned, requires different types of texts which should become increasingly more complex, thereby allowing for the integration of textual and genre codes to as an essential part of children's development as readers (Hunt, 1991: 74 and 87). In view of this, it seems logical that fantasy does not appear at the same time or in the same mode in the texts intended for them. Fantasy can therefore be regarded not only as a narrative way of learning (given its diversity throughout the reading process), but also as a genre that offers the possibility to gradually increase children's literary competence. [Note 2]

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE FANTASTIC: ETHNOPOETICS, FAIRY TALES AND FIRST BOOKS

Contact with culture begins as soon as a baby is in the cradle (Yolen, 1981); when a new-born starts to actively listen to nursery rhymes, jingles, children's songs and short and very simple tales. Afterwards, the baby starts to interact with the adult by means of finger games and peek-a-boo, going from an exploratory stage to a more symbolic one. In almost every culture some of these first games and songs belong to the fantasy genre; it enters them in the immersive mode and therefore introduces children to fantastic worlds inhabited by fantastic characters such as dancing giants, lost dwarfs or flying elephants. These first fantasy texts expand the child's perceptions in terms of literary and world experiences. They are intended to stimulate emotions and curiosity because the words and stories they tell are not yet rational but offer an experience for the senses rather than the mind (Butler, 1980). Later on in the progressing literary experience of children, ethno poetics—and in particular fairy tales—are also placed in the fantastic by means of the immersive mode. Plots, characters and scenarios will be set in fantastic places with no need to distinguish between fantasy and reality (a distinction still not operative in children's minds). Nowadays, this oral richness has been expanded to different media. The forms of transmission of this cultural heritage have changed and acquired new channels which keep oral dissemination alive not only through intergenerational traditional word-of-mouth and printed books but also through different multimedia formats.

Since the 1990s there has been a need for new literary and educational materials that would correspond to the continuous growth in the numbers of children participating in Early Childhood Education in Europe (Eurostat, 2015). Western literary circuits have been editing increasingly more books for this audience (Gremio de Editores de España, 2014) although only some specific titles introduce sufficient fantastic elements, thereby proposing other ways of representing real worlds and offering, at the same time, high levels of aesthetic and artistic value (Correro, 2013). It is well known that contact with these types of first books, when they are of sufficient quality, enables young children to find landmarks, perceive regular features in what is represented and therefore have the ability to predict patterns in the near future (Butler, 1980). But fantasy also provides all the necessary tools for children's linguistic, literary and cultural development.

If we first consider the current production of books for children of under three years of age, it can be stated that many authors (e.g., the Belgian illustrator Jeanne Ashbé, the French illustrator Xavier Deneux and the French author Claude Ponti) show how fantasy can be introduced and developed without excessive simplicity and with high quality literary results. In almost all their works, which unfortunately have not yet been translated into other languages, young children can slowly access fantasy, mainly by means of the immersive and intrusion modes of the genre (the most common types at this early stage). These first books provide children with a gradual access to fantasy; it is merely a matter of time with regard to when and for how long they will encounter fantasy because, as we know from oral literary heritage, first encounters do not last more than several minutes. Fantasy thus enters these texts via the intrusive mode, interrupting by means of very simple and short subplots and not taking more than a few seconds or pages. The first, clear example of how the fantastic breaks into the primary world is *Derrière la poussette* (1994) by Claude Ponti, printed in cartonée. Here, the child protagonist, and also the reader, have to imagine who is behind a baby stroller; for only a few seconds, it is possible to imagine, predict and anticipate, as in a game, who or what is going to hide behind it. Then, once the toddler has turned the page, a fairy, a monster dressed as a witch or any "something else" may be pushing the stroller instead of the beloved mother, although at the end of the book—and as a positive resolution of this miniplot within it—the mother is the person who actually does the pushing. This enables the young child to return to reality and normality even though nowadays this normality could be considered as gender-stereotyped. Yet it does not invalidate the literary quality of this picturebook. Ponti text, published for the first time in France in 1994 by l'École des Loisirs, not only shows how to support an initial trip into fantasy with excellent literary texts (using few characters and scenarios in a very simple plot), but also points to the potential of fantasy to help young children to accept or adapt to the temporary absence of parents and therefore come to terms with reality. Unfortunately,

there are not many books of this genre for this very early age bracket because nowadays titles for toddlers are mainly non-fiction books, such as alphabets, number and counting books, informative books and board books. This is a worrying phenomenon as fantasy provides young children with the possibility to escape from their limitations and dream about other possible worlds. This is also described in the most significant research on early childhood, i.e. studies carried out by Marie Bonnafé (1994, 2001, 2003). For Bonnafé, fantasy must be claimed and recovered in first books for young children because they are undoubtedly essential in their early years (Bonnafé, 2001). Another significant example of how fantasy enters young children's books is the work of Katsumi Komagata, and especially his books from the series *Little Eyes*. This is a collection of ten titles written for his daughter to give her an artistic book experience by playing with shapes, colours, perspectives, movements and so on, in a progressive itinerary which clearly acknowledges Bruno Munari's *I Prelibri*'s legacy. In some of the titles of this series the child has a dual role as reader and as main character. By using a portal, the protagonist goes into a fantasy world by means of participation. Komagata's books thus highlight that reading and understanding in early childhood depends on children's interaction through movements, anticipations, play and imagination (which digital children's literature has been continuously exploring since it appeared), thanks to which -and clearly therefore through visual and interactive narratives- the Japanese artist is able to create small fantasy episodes in almost all of his books. His books actually demand a commitment to the ability to imagine, which is crucial to children becoming interested in books and the arts in general.

The progressive sophistication of fantasy in texts for young children is therefore linked to children's development. At the beginning, the immersive mode is mostly predominant, especially in ethnopoetics and fairy tales. What is sung, played and told in their first months of life is unreal, and the veracity of this is not questioned by the child. Then, when children are about one year old, the range of available literature widens and books with toddlers' stories can belong both to fantasy and reality although with a clear preference for the latter genre, and especially for its educational, non-fictional subgenres. Apart from such exceptions as Komagata's work, fantasy as a genre has little presence in these books. When it is present, it is mainly through the mode of intrusion by means of very simple and short miniplots. Such fantastic miniplots (fairy stories and fantastic small episodes), characters (anthropomorphic or not) and symbology (magic spells and objects, etc.) will however increasingly gain space and time -more pages and seconds- in fictional books written for children of a slightly older age. In this sense, picturebooks are real jewels that allow children to become permanently acquainted with fantasy.

Before children become immersed in this complex subgenre of children's literature, some especially simple works can operate as a bridge towards this new literary world. One of the most recommended titles widely used in Span-



A Taste of the Moon by Michael Grejniec



Kids playing as in the book

ish pre-schools with children under three is Michael Grejniec's picturebook *A Taste of the Moon*, which tells the story of a group of animals that want to know what the moon tastes like. To achieve this initially unattainable purpose, they work together to obtain a piece of the Earth's white satellite. In the end, the smallest animal, the mouse, is the one that gets a bit of the moon and shares it with the others. Fantasy enters this narrative in the immersive mode as the reality-based protagonists (common animals) are turned into fantastic creatures (animals that speak and work together rather than eating each other) and have a very difficult or even "impossible" goal, two very attractive and already familiar features for little children (who on the one hand will have already heard about many animals that can talk through fables and fairy tales and, on the other, are well familiar with struggling every single minute of their lives to achieve very difficult and apparently "impossible" goals such as tying their shoelaces).

The appeal of this story was proved by the results of an empirical project carried out in a kindergarten in Barcelona, where reading experiences with a group of children aged between one and two were collected during the school year 2012–2013. This project showed that books such as this can awaken toddlers' interest in the reading of more complex stories than the usual first books for little children [Note 3]. These young children discovered a fantasy world, a new scenario,

and a consistent, fair and logic paracosmos where the characters act like individual protagonists rather than "proper" animals. The more they understood the story thanks to rereading and playful complementary activities, the more pleasure they experienced in the realm of fiction. Most of the toddlers in the class, previously uninterested in literature, not only were transformed into motivated readers after their experience with *A Taste of the Moon*, but also became more competent readers while integrating literary knowledge (about fantasy and a specific narrative structure) that would help them with other picturebooks.

3. BECOMING EXPERTS: FANTASTIC PICTUREBOOKS

“My father has wings because he makes me fly to dreamland”
Nicolau, 3 years old

Children’s imagination has no limits. As in the case of the afore-quoted Nicolau, at some point in their lives many children think their father is a hero, a giant or a dragon. According to several studies (Seiffge-Krenke, 2000; Nikolajeva, 2012), more than 20% of children aged between three and six actually have imaginary friends that they use as a therapeutic tool. Sometimes they may even imaginethings in another cosmos or penetrate parallel worlds since the border between reality and fantasy is still blurred for them. First picturebooks are in fact often related to imaginary friends and other worlds. Puppets and marionettes, for example, can come alive, as occurs in Gabrielle Vincent’s *La petite marionette* (2009), where a child and a puppet live a story of friendship). Vincent’s marionette enables children to develop their imagination and experience wonder, again thanks to an intrusion of fantasy in the protagonist’s real world. This is because the attraction to fantasy starts in early years, but changes with maturation. Hence, as mentioned before, fantasy in books grows progressively and in parallel to children’s growth. These first fantastic stories are crucial to children’s progress with regard to language acquisition and to young readers’ cognitive, emotional and cultural development. Structurally, children are faced with a plot, a climax and an ending. The initial reader will go through different stages which range from single episodes to first complete stories with quite predictable endings. But the comprehension of all this requires a certain expertise and cognitive maturity. Three-year-old children are therefore already able to understand more complex stories thanks to their referential universe which facilitates literary comprehension.

Some literary elements also offer tools enabling emergent readers to understand stories, and picturebooks, through the relationship between their texts and images, are especially remarkable in this sense. Michel Rosen’s rhymes and Helen Oxenbury’s drawings in *We’re going on a bear hunt*, for example, facilitate the comprehension of the meaning of a plot that takes place between a real world and a fantastic world. The rhyming text is easy to remember and repeat although the sound and musicality are more important than the meaning of the words. In this work, drawings that go from full-colour to black-and-white illustrate a journey from reality to fantasy, where the real and the imagined alternate from page to page. In this way, the liminal mode of fantasy, as defined in James and Mendlesohn 2012, is brought into play, which is certainly the least common mode of fantasy in books for early ages. This is because the reader may or may not be sure that the magic moment of a bear hunt may or may not be happening in a game based on the ambiguity of the signifier and signified. Finally, once the characters are at home, and obviously back in reality, the bear cannot go inside. The existence of these two parallel worlds of re-

ality and fantasy (with no clues about either) is very clear and visually easy to understand for a young child thanks to images and colour changes. All literary elements (verbal, visual or structural) are perfectly aligned in this picturebook, as the rhymes, the illustrations and the plot are combined in line with imagination and daily life without any explicit denial or affirmation of one or the other. Hence one wonders whether magic (i.e. what is not rational) has an actual and definite place in it. Not surprisingly, this picturebook has become a canonical text in young children's literature.

A more recent work from Japan addressed to children of up to three years of age is *The Tea Party in the Woods* by Akiko Miyakoshi. It tells the story of a little girl who is going to help her father to bring some food to her grandmother. As in the *Little Red Riding Hood* classic, the protagonist gets lost in the forest, which in this case is covered in snow. Instead of the big bad wolf, however, she comes across a house full of anthropomorphic animals playing music and eating cakes. The protagonist enters this new fantastic world through the forest which is the door that opens the way to the fantastic world. In this fantastic story, the portal-quest mode from beginning to end, the little girl returns to reality, thanking her invisible friends and offering her grandmother several pieces of their cakes. The cake symbolises the bridge between the real world and the paracosmos, a piece of fantasy in the protagonist's reality. The black-lined images and the scant symbolic colour details give the reader some interpretive clues in this oneiric picturebook, which plays with the magic of fairy tales and builds a complex and sophisticated narrative. This narrative demands complete comprehensibility in stark contrast to the previously cited examples (where the child was expected to listen or to look at images without fully understanding them), probably because at this stage children are completing a specific development period (from four to five years old): they already know the importance of meaning and the ways in which it is related to language ability even when the events are located in another world.

Beyond their different levels of complexity and the degrees of literary education they demand of young children, all the texts analysed so far demonstrate the necessary talent of the authors and illustrators of picturebooks devoted to early childhood. These authors have mastered the possible literary links between fantasy and reality in this multimodal medium. As soon as children of four and five years old reach this point of reading training, the doors for more sophisticated fantasy texts open and another step forward can be taken on the journey towards -and through- fantasy as a genre.

4. A STEP FORWARD: FANTASTIC METAFICTIONAL PICTUREBOOKS

Once children are acquainted with fantastic picturebooks and their basic mechanisms, and especially with the modes of fantasy in this medium, it is time to start reading picturebooks in which fantasy comes together with metafiction,

i.e. picturebooks where the fantastic plots, characters, scenarios, symbology and temporality that partly or totally give shape and sense to the narrative demand that the audience reflect on fiction itself and become explicitly aware of its procedures.

Metafictional picturebooks for young children are actually crossover books, for they are also addressed to (or at least intended to attract the interest of) the adult audience. Despite their double addressee, metafictional picturebooks do not actually tend to belong specifically to either the realistic or the fantastic genre but are located indistinctly in both. Here it should also be pointed out that in the case of this category we are not only dealing with postmodern literature but also with previous works where the fantastic enters the narrative in its four characteristic modes, all of them well represented by means of specific combinations of ordinary life with magic, with the extraordinary and with the unexpected. This element in turn obliges readers to reflect on reality, its literary representations and the communicating vessels, as well as possible or diluted boundaries between the two. Ultimately, we are dealing with picturebooks that emphasise the linguistic, and in this case also visual, nature of literature in order to make the audience consider how fiction actually challenges our frames of reference.

Despite the fact that humour (a common companion to fantasy) is often of great help in this sense, metafictional picturebooks nevertheless require complex intellectual strategies of comprehension and interpretation that can only be put into practice with strong reading backgrounds and experiences. Consequently, these books should be the final stop on the early childhood literary itinerary proposed here although it should obviously be a continual and recurring practice over a reading life). To illustrate this last phase, we will analyse five texts by award-winning, canonical writers from two different European traditions: the more international English-speaking on the one hand, exemplified by Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963), Anthony Browne's *Changes* (1990) and Emily Gravett's *Again!* (2011); and, on the other, the local, i.e. Iberian, authors, exemplified by Pere Calders' *Brush* (2009) and Javier Sáez Castán's *La merienda del señor verde* (Mr Green's Snack, 2007). [Note 4] These five titles not only provide a wide perspective on fantastic metafictional picturebooks from the middle of the 20th century up to the first decade of the 21st century, but also display how the modes of fantasy interact and combine in these types of works— sometimes even ironically to transgress their regular functioning and stress more, if possible, the conventional rules of fantasy as a genre.

The classic picturebook by Sendak could be read (and occasionally it should be in order to fully benefit from it) in earlier stages of the fantastic literary itinerary for young children, where they can enjoy the plot, identify with the protagonist's feelings and rebellion, and have fun with the characters in the fantastic scenario. Once these previous reading experiences have been had, a

further step can be taken by paying attention to the ‘synergy of meaning to favour various levels of interpretation’ of this ‘typical secondary world fantasy, in which a child escapes into an imaginary world away from a conflict with his mother’ (Nikolajeva, 2012: 59). For what is actually real and fantastic in this portal-quest story depends on how readers understand Max’s one-year trip to the land of the monsters. The scenario of this fantastic secondary world is accessed through a time displacement, and therefore in this case temporality accounts for a more complex kind of portal-quest (in comparison to the strictly spatial ones which only imply a change of place). Regardless of the question of access, the physical space of the monsters—and therefore the characters as well—may be understood as a product of Max’s imagination or as a dream (at any rate a psychological reality). Nevertheless, what the protagonist senses (and the story does not exclude the possibility to explain why he senses it) is no doubt as strong and shocking an experience as the realistic situation in which his mother calls him *monster* and sends him to bed with no supper. The issue here, then, has nothing to do with the dichotomy between reality and fantasy regarding facts, characters, time, space and symbols (let us remember the hot supper that works as the Proustian element which brings Max back home), but rather with layers of reality—be it fantastic or realistic and fictional in any event, to the extent that representations always are— within the fictional world created by Sendak. Thus, readers are urged to question reality and fantasy as stable frameworks of reference and to start thinking about the blurring of boundaries between the fixed conceptions of both, to the extent that reality is filled with fiction (imaginary events, dreams or any account of some particular facts) and fiction can be filled with different realities [Note 5]

Changes by give the author here, constitutes a great example of the intrusion category of fantasy in metafictional picturebooks, for it displays an everyday reality into which fantasy breaks by means of Joseph (a child who could be four or five years old, considering his height) and his fear of the hypothetical meaning of what his father said before going to fetch his mother: ‘he had said that things were going to change’. At the end of the story the readers discover that a new-born baby has arrived in the family, but until the very last page what is linearly followed is the protagonist’s internal anxiety which is turned into a fantastic, external and scary metamorphosis of his everyday, environment. The transformations which take place are underlined by the important paratext of the title, which is very generic and therefore ambiguous. – Moreover, they are located at the core of the visual narrative in order to show (literally) both the relevance of intertextual connections to construct cultural and literary meanings and the unstable and arbitrary nature of the relationship between not only words and concepts (signifier and signified), but also between artistic work and frameworks of reference, i.e. between art and reality experienced in ordinary life by readers [Note 6] For this reason, *Changes* opens with a very concrete spatial and temporal setting (Thursday morning at a quarter past ten)

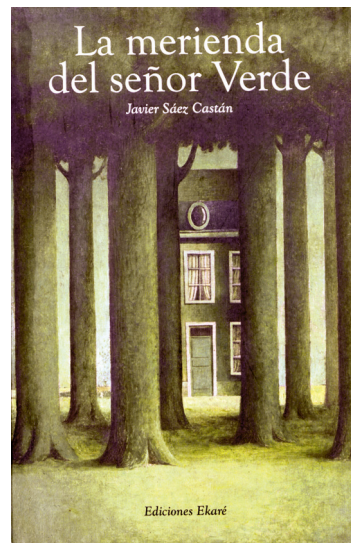
and the protagonist is both named and surnamed (Joseph Kap): it could not be more specific in order to place readers in a realistic scenario. But as soon as the verbal text states that Joseph notices something strange in the kettle, and when the visual text shows what that 'something strange' means, readers are aligned with the protagonist's perspective (thanks to the third person narrator, internal focalisation and free indirect discourse). These words are immediately confronted with the unexpected image of a concerned child staring at a kettle with feline ears, a tail and paws, which in fact that gradually turns into a cat. The words in the text are sufficiently vague and generic so as to not exactly tell readers what the images are showing, which is a brilliant mechanism unmasking conventional links between language and reality. The reader can visually witness Joseph's fear without any need for the text to make it explicit. This fear thus becomes the subjective agent of the objective and paradoxically fantastic changes that happen inside and outside the house: apart from the cat-kettle, a slipper becomes a bird; the bathroom sink gets a mouth and a nose; a sofa and an armchair transmute into a crocodile and a gorilla; a ball metamorphoses into an egg from out of which a stork flies. The metaphorical threat that Joseph felt when he heard his father's comment becomes materially literal in the narrative through the unrealistic but vivid reshaping of daily objects based on the child's imagination (a symbol of the protagonist's fear). The humoristic disruption of everyday logic and the undeniable evidence of the fact that words and meanings are multiple and unstable thus undermine any cultural, social or political authority outside the text. Simultaneously, as a 'normal' story is told (a child faced with the experience of having a sister), and partly thanks to the connection to surrealist aesthetics, readers are prompted to think about the complex—and ultimately diluted—boundaries between the imaginary and the real, the fantastic and the ordinary, reality and its representations and interpretations, i.e. about conventional schemas and ideas about the world, about people and about things.

Emily Gravett's *Again!* presents an inverse situation through the immersive mode of fantasy, but in a very specific way. Here the fantastic is made 'ordinary' by setting extraordinary characters (a female dragon and her baby) in a conventional family scenario: a child goes to bed and is told a story by one parent so that he quickly falls asleep. The mythical creatures in the plot are easily superimposed and identified with a human mother and her playful and naughty son by means of anthropomorphism achieved through their characterisation and actions. Paratexts are crucial in this sense: the cover of the picturebook shows the little dragon holding his baby-blanket with drawings of red dragons and a red book; the endpapers show the little dragon playing, eating cookies and drinking milk, brushing his teeth, having a bath and taking his blanket and his book (i.e. all kinds of things children normally do before going to bed). Just before the beginning of the story, however, the image of the little dragon shows him winking, so that the reader can guess that he probably has some

funny plan in mind (which his fantastic nature endorses). The events of the story do not immediately explore this possibility because what happens first is that the mother starts reading a dragon's tale (a secondary story in the plot) to her child, thus maintaining the narrative thread of the 'human' evening routine. A fiction within a fiction thus becomes the central element of a diegesis that develops into growing tension insofar as the little dragon keeps asking his mother (who is becoming increasingly more tired and sleepy) to read the secondary story again and again, and gets angrier and angrier due to the fact that the poor adult finally falls asleep. After yelling 'again!' ten times, the little dragon completely ignites (his originally green skin turns red, a colour that reflects that of the book the mother has just read to him), bursts into flames and burns the book that tells *his* story. As a result, readers end up with a hollow volume in their hands (from the last page of the narrative, back cover included). Apart from the comic effect of such a transgression, the protagonist's irritation that ultimately explodes into a destructive flame and literally pierces a hole in the material book by Gravett. On the one hand, it destroys all boundaries between the story read within the story and the story itself (that of the little dragon)- [Note 7] This favours a triple dissolution of reading and narrative planes which exposes the literary game of Russian dolls that shapes this picturebook and humorously undermines the ability to effectively differentiate or assign them different qualities in terms of fantasy and reality. The plot, characters, time, space and symbols work together to make the audience laugh and, at the same time, question the stability of both notions and of their usual cultural representations.

The power of fantasy, which can actually transgress any limitation and blur all borders, is at the heart of Pere Calders' *Brush*, which represents the liminal mode in this selection of fantastic metafictional picturebooks. This is the story of a child whose family decides to get rid of Turc, their puppy, the day after the little dog eats the father's hat. The child, deeply upset, does his best to find another pet: he tries out his aunt's canary, the lamp in the family library, a ball and other things. Having failed because of the huge difference between them all and Turc, he realises that he needs an actual substitute that is similar to his dog but does not affect his memory. He searches all over the house until he finds a huge old-fashioned brush in the attic; after touching its bristles, he feels like stroking the back of a dog, so he ties a piece of string to it and a few minutes later he becomes convinced that the 'Brush, a dog of a rare breed, follows him all over the place [Note 8]. That night, the brush unexpectedly comes alive in front of the child. His family, however, will not believe it and actually mock him until Brush becomes the means of the father's defence from a thief who breaks into the house the following night. Although both the textual and the visual narrative are so generic that it is not possible to know whether magic really happens or is a result of the child's desire and actions, the protagonist's parents change their minds, accept Brush as the family's new pet and build him a little kennel

in the garden with a sign on top: 'He may not be real, but he deserves to be'. In this delightful plot, full of humour, ambiguity and ironic linguistic resources, fantasy offers a comic contrast between the narrow and conventional understanding of adult reality and the wider and open viewpoint represented by the child, who is not only willing to imagine all sorts of animate and inanimate pet alternatives but also conjures up wonder and accepts it right away and perhaps even makes it happen. Far from imposing preconceived values or ideas on the facts, the protagonist genuinely takes what life offers him and makes it (literally) wonderful. 'I've found a brush that is actually a dog' (page number) he tells his mother without any questioning based on how things should or are supposed to be according to social and cultural prerogatives. In contrast, adults remain attached to these prerogatives: at first they deny whatever escapes rational thought and, when they are confronted with fantasy (which they cannot simply accept as grown-up human beings), they immediately relocate it within the limits of their own understanding of the world. Hence although they do build the kennel for Brush, they save their rationality by installing the aforementioned sign on top of it. In this metafictional picturebook, fantasy significantly transforms and improves reality thanks to the enrichment provided by the new possibilities it brings (pets, for example, can be animals as well as many other things, as children keep teaching us every day both in literature and in life) and thus makes the readers rethink the ways in which they look at the world and conceive what is real and what is not only to conclude that that nobody knows for sure the difference between reality fantasy. The picturebook remains textually and visually one hundred percent ambiguous about the actual nature of Brush: it could be merely an inanimate object that the child believes to be a dog due to how much he misses Turc. Therefore, the power of his could explain the scene with the thief (a case in which he would have thrown the brush at him). On the other hand, magic could have actually happened and the brush could in fact have become Brush. The liminal mode of fantasy is therefore the best category to classify Calders' work: *Brush* undoubtedly belongs to the fantastic genre but nonetheless stands on the very border between reality and fantasy with regard to its plot, characters, time, space and symbology. There is no way to affirm if one possibility or the other is aimed for, because the text comprises both, thus presenting, beyond the story itself, the impossibility to know anything for sure. However, as soon as we are born, culture and society start to tell us what to believe and what to reject, what to



Una merienda en el bosque

accept as real and what to refute. In a very postmodern spirit, this metafictional picturebook makes it clear that there are no absolute conceivable realities or absolute truths but only cultural and social constructions that we should be as aware of as possible before trying to understand or interpret anything. This is a very important lesson for emergent readers on their way to become expert readers.

Our final example in this category of early readings is Javier Saéz Castán *La merienda del señor Verde* (*Mr Green's Snack*), which constitutes a subversion of the portal-quest and the intrusive modes of fantasy with the immersive mode as a point of departure, and therefore shows how metafictional picturebooks transgress all conventions precisely in order to make readers become aware of them and thus become more expert readers while at the same time having fun and enjoying literature. Clearly connected to surrealism in its deployment of a very powerful imaginary world—which is responsible for the humour in the narrative because it is crucial to its articulation of meaning— this amazing picturebook inverts the usual functioning of fantasy as regards three of our categories of analysis: here, in a most significant way, it is reality that intrudes into the primary fantastic world in which the characters are immersed (and to which they actually belong) through a reversed portal-quest. The extraordinary is thus ironically naturalised in a movement that opens up the possibility to equate reality and wonder at the end of the story. The message is limpid: beauty and the fantastic are already here, and it is up to us to see and enjoy them. As the note on the last page suggests: ‘Colours are not only part of our perception but also belong to? our language and thought. Few things better reflect the joy and diversity of life, and yet, as with most truly good things, they often go unnoticed and we do not usually realise the wonderful gift they represent [Note 9] The point of this picturebook is that, in the end, reality and fantasy are one and the same. What matters is not only how we perceive them, but also how we think and talk about them. Young children can learn to do this with wonderful books such as this.

They need to do so, however, through a progressive itinerary of complexity that helps their understanding and enjoyment of fantasy and their training as increasingly expert readers. We see it as a tool to be used by teachers who accompany children on this tour of wonder and, therefore, in their process of growing as literary readers and, ultimately, human beings, along the path of fantasy. Something that no one should ever miss out on, as Javier Saéz Castán's picturebook teaches us.

NOTES

1. And to which there have been many critical approaches in general (beyond children's literature) closely related to mimesis and representation. Kathryn Hume provides a useful overview of both critical approaches

and historical perspectives in her already classical book *Fantasy and Mimesis* (1984). One of the most recent contributions to the subject is *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*, edited by Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn, to which this article owes much of its theoretical framework.

2. Some considered texts may not be available in all countries due to origin and translation policies and those coming from the oral tradition may obviously differ from country to country. Nevertheless, similar or parallel works will no doubt exist regarding modes of fantasy and could therefore be easily replaced. The specific selected corpus we offer comes from a database held by the GRETEL research group at Universitat Autònoma Barcelona (Autonomous University of Barcelona), which includes a ranking of the most recommended international books from 2000 to 2015 (those most recommended by prestigious institutions and agents) and was created on the basis of critical reviews, international awards and selection lists. For further information on these recommended books in GRETEL's database, see <http://gretel.cat/en/node/85>.
3. The empirical project was carried out in Escola Bressol Can Caralleu in Barcelona with a group of children aged between one and two during the school year 2012–2013. The picturebook of the Polish author/illustrator *A taste of the Moon* presents anthropomorphic characters where the story is told by means of a repetitive and accumulative narrative-fantastic structure, i.e. one that implies a greater degree of difficulty in understanding than simple linear plots.
4. Pere Calders (1912–1994) is one of the most frequently read Catalan writers world-wide (see Sawicka 2004 for an overview of the reception of Catalan literature in Poland, where Calders is included as one of the authors translated into Polish). In 1955 his short story *Raspall* (*Brush* in the English translation) was originally included in a collection intended for adults, *Cròniques de la veritat oculta* (*Chronicles of the Hidden Truth*). Yet due to its child protagonist and narrative traits, in the 1980's it began to be published solely for children. Since then these children editions have often been reprinted, for example in 2009 by Mars, a publishing house which converted this text into a picturebook format (a different text, illustrated by Carme Solé Vendrell). The precedence of Calders as an author, however, explains that the analysis of his work precedes that of the book by Javier Sáez Castán (1964-), an award-winning Aragonese author of the 21st century who published his first work in 2000.
5. For a very interesting discussion on this subject in a class of five-year-old children, see Chambers 1993: 124–128 (referred to in the Spanish translation of the author's world-wide renowned book, *Tell Me*).
6. This analysis is based on the considerations of poststructuralism, frameworks of reference and intertextuality exemplified in Browne's picture-

- book, which constitute the 16th section of the teaching resource *From Picturebook To Literary Theory* (1994), edited by John Stephens and Ken Watson, a very useful and interesting work for teachers and researchers devoted to applying theoretical tools to children's literature so as to understand the variety of literary mechanisms and modes.
7. In Emily Gravett's *Again!* the characters of the former are going back into the latter through the hole in the book, and, on the other, between the little dragon's story and the reality of the reader.
 8. All translations from Catalan and Spanish (from texts by Calders and Sáez Castán) have been provided by the authors of this paper.
 9. The Spanish text reads as follows: 'Los colores forman parte no solo de nuestra percepción, sino también de nuestro lenguaje y pensamiento. Pocas cosas reflejan mejor que ellos la alegría y la variedad de la vida, y sin embargo, como casi todas las cosas verdaderamente buenas, a menudo pasan desapercibidos y no solemos reparar en el maravilloso regalo que representan.'

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La nascita di *Cenerentola* italiana e i suoi adattamenti apparsi in Polonia

Abstract: The timeless fairy tale “Cinderella” has attracted readers’ interest and intrigued children’s literature scholars for centuries. The two classic versions of the story are to be found in Charles Perrault’s volume of *Contes de ma mère l’Oye* (1697) and brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s collection of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812–1815). Literary research (Ruth B. Bottigheimer) recognises Giambattista Basile as the European father of “Cinderella”. The Italian writer authored *Pentamerone*, a collection of tales which, as a whole, inspired the Brothers Grimm.

In Poland, “Cinderella” comes in a great variety of versions. Both the tale recorded by the Brothers Grimm and the story written by Perrault have been translated and adapted, separately or combined. Basile’s version is not known in Poland as his volume of *Pentamerone* has not been translated into Polish till this day.

In the article, we analyse selected Polish translations of “Cinderella” (1910–2006) in the perspective of literary translation theories. We show how the text has been domesticated by translators and appropriated to cater to the needs of Polish readers. Individual Polish translations are analysed stylometrically, with comparisons of language minutiae in the studied text corpus revealing similarities and differences between particular translations and adaptations.

Key words: *Cenerentola*, fairy tales, adaptation, translation, Giovan Francesco Straparola, Giambattista Basile, stylometry

DA DOVE VIENI, CENERENTOLA?

La letteratura per l’infanzia svolge un ruolo importante nello sviluppo dei bambini¹, è una enorme fonte di immagini, suoni, elementi necessari per far crescere ed educare il fanciullo. Secondo Jack Zipes la fiaba “può essere considerata l’evento culturale e sociale più importante nella vita della maggior parte dei bambini”².

¹ K. Reynolds, *Children’s Literature: a Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 4.

² J.Zipes, *Chi ha paura dei fratelli Grimm? Le fiabe e l’arte della sovversione*. Milano:

La nascita della fiaba letteraria in Europa è stata possibile grazie ai due favolisti italiani (spesso dimenticati nelle storie di letteratura per l'infanzia) Giovan Francesco Straparola e Giambattista Basile; la loro profonda influenza sulla letteratura per l'infanzia in Europa, soprattutto in Francia, è indiscutibile³.

Giovan Francesco Straparola è una figura affascinante nella storia della letteratura italiana per l'infanzia. Ad oggi poco si sa della sua vita; gli studiosi non sono nemmeno certi del vero nome dell'autore delle *Piacevoli notti* (1550–53). Il libro fu ristampato varie volte, tradotto in francese (1560, 1580) e in tedesco (1791), ma fu incluso dal Papa nell'indice dei libri proibiti. Nelle narrazioni di Straparola il lettore scorge, nascosta dentro le fiabe letterarie, la vita popolare italiana. L'opera dell'autore italiano ha dato vita allo sviluppo della fiaba letteraria in Europa e ha influenzato tra l'altro scrittori come: Basile, Madame d'Aulnoy, Madame de Murat, Charles Perrault, Eustache Le Noble, Jean de Mailly e i fratelli Grimm⁴. La novità dell'opera di Straparola sta nel fatto che l'autore scriveva in italiano in un'epoca in cui il latino era ancora dominante sui testi prodotti nella penisola italiana.

A differenza di Straparola, sulla vita e l'opera di un altro autore italiano, Giambattista Basile, sappiamo molto. La fama di Basile è legata alla raccolta di cinquanta fiabe scritte in dialetto napoletano, *Lo cunto de li cunti ovvero lo trattenimento de peccerille* (*Pentamerone*), pubblicata postumo nel 1634–1636. Il famoso critico italiano Benedetto Croce nel 1925 a proposito dell'opera di Basile scrisse: "L'Italia possiede nel *Cunto de li cunti* o *Pentamerone* del Basile il più antico, il più ricco e il più artistico fra tutti i libri di fiabe popolari⁵".

Con la maggior parte delle sue storie Basile cercava di ottenere il favore di un pubblico adulto. Le sue fiabe letterarie, a differenza di quelle di Straparola, nacquero dai racconti popolari (i racconti orali delle balie, delle governanti) e venivano raccontate durante i banchetti con musica, giochi e danze. Basile era affascinato dalla gente di campagna, dalla loro vitalità. Nella sua opera, che si svolge spesso nei luoghi di Napoli, svela le differenze tra i contadini e i raffinati aristocratici. I racconti di Basile furono ristampati numerose volte nel corso del XVII secolo: le prime traduzioni apparse sono quelle dal dialetto napoletano all'italiano, successivamente tradotte anche in francese. La fortuna dell'opera di Basile interessò, durante il XVII e XVIII secolo, soprattutto l'Italia e la Francia.

Tra le varie storie riprese dalla tradizione popolare e riscritte in un raffinato dialetto napoletano da Basile, troviamo la fiaba *La gatta Cenerentola*.

Mondadori, 2006, p. 12.

³ J.Zipes, *op.cit.*, p. 27. R.B.Bottigheimer, *Straparola's "Piacevoli notti": Rags-toriches fairy tale sas urban Creations*, [in:] *Merveilles&contes*, vol. 8, No. 2 (1994), pp. 281–296.

⁴ J.Zipes, *op.cit.*, pp. 29–31.

⁵ B. Croce, *Giambattista Basile e l'elaborazione artistica delle fiabe popolari*, [in:] *La Critica. Rivista di Letteratura, Storia e Filosofia*, diretta da B. Croce, 23, 1925, p.1, p. 65.

Nel nostro articolo ci concentreremo sulla fiaba di *Cenerentola*, sul successo ottenuto in Polonia e sul processo di traduzione e adattamento dal punto di vista dell'analisi stilometrica.

Oggi *Cenerentola* è una delle fiabe più famose al mondo. Non si può mettere in discussione il suo successo. La diffusione di *Cenerentola* nella cultura popolare è stata oggetto di vari studi scientifici⁶. L'immagine della bella e buona fanciulla vestita di stracci che finisce sposa al principe è molto conosciuta nel folclore. L'espansione della televisione e delle versioni digitali di *Cenerentola* ha mutato nell'ultimo ventennio la ricezione della fiaba.

La fiaba *Cenerentola*, conosciuta in tutte le culture, conta settecento versioni⁷. Le fonti della fiaba ci portano in vari posti, vicini e lontani, tra cui vogliamo ricordarne almeno due: la Cina e naturalmente l'Italia. Le due versioni cinese e italiana sono state prese in considerazione, e dunque studiate e analizzate, dagli studiosi solo nei primi decenni del ventesimo secolo. Col passare del tempo le fonti cinesi e italiane sono state "dimenticate". Nel mondo europeo la storia di *Cenerentola* è iniziata con la pubblicazione di Basile; tuttavia trovare un polacco che conosca tanto la fonte cinese della fiaba di *Cenerentola*, di Ye Xian, quanto la fonte italiana di Basile⁸ intitolata *La gatta Cenerentola* è molto difficile. Al contrario, la *Cenerentola* dei Grimm ha conosciuto un successo e una diffusione mondiale, oltre ad essere la versione più nota in Polonia⁹.

È interessante sapere che proprio a Breslavia nel 1846 venne pubblicata la prima versione tedesca de *Il Pentamerone* o *Lo cunto de li cunti ovvero lo trattenemiento de peccerille* di Giambattista Basile (traduzione di Liebrecht), nella quale era proprio Jakob Grimm ad occuparsi dell'introduzione e in cui comparivano motivi e personaggi rintracciabili in una terza celebre raccolta di fiabe, «*Les contes de ma mère l'Oye*» di Charles Perrault pubblicate in Francia nel 1697¹⁰.

⁶ B. Bettelheim, *Cudowne i pożyteczne. O znaczeniach i wartościach baśni*, Warszawa, WAB, 2010, pp. 368–42; B. Staniów – K. Biernacka-Licznar, *Kopciuszek w Polsce. Udomowienie, adaptacja czy degradacja baśni z kanonu*, «Kulturowa tożsamość książki», Wrocław, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2014; *Wprowadzenie do analizy przekładów baśni braci Grimm na język polski*, «Przekład artystyczny a współczesne teorie translologiczne», Katowice, „Śląsk” Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1998, a cura di P. Fast; E. Pieciul-Karmińska, *Polskie dzieje baśni braci Grimm*, «Przekładaniec», n. 22–23, 2009–2010.

⁷ B. Staniów, K. Biernacka-Licznar, *Kopciuszek w Polsce. Udomowienie, adaptacja czy degradacja baśni z kanonu*, op.cit.

⁸ Cfr. la tesi di Mila Moioli, *Ye Xian e le sue sorelle*. L'autrice rivolge la sua attenzione al lavoro di LU Rong, *Il significato della scarpa e del piede femminile*, in *Tongling Xueyuan Xuebao*, 1, 2007, p. 96.

⁹ B. Staniów, *Grimm's Fairy Tales in Poland. The analysis of publishing production in the years 1895–2011*. «Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis». Folia 171, XII (2014), pp. 5–18.

¹⁰ Volevo ringraziare il dott. Marco Carpi per avermi dato questa informazione.

Ogni *Cenerentola* è in qualche modo ispirata al lavoro di Basile, anche se nel corso dei secoli la fiaba è stata modificata e spogliata di alcuni elementi presenti nel testo italiano. In Polonia l'editore Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza di Varsavia aveva pubblicato nel 1992 la traduzione polacca di otto fiabe dell'autore napoletano, e tra di esse non c'era *La gatta Cenerentola*.

Cenerentola è senz'altro una delle fiabe con più lunga formazione (notiamo varie fonti della sua "nascita": cinesi, italiane, egiziane). In Europa oggi sono conosciute soprattutto due versioni della fiaba: la prima risale a Perrault, la seconda ai fratelli Grimm, i quali fecero poi da punto di riferimento, come suggerisce Franco Trequadrini¹¹, molto più di quanto abbia fatto Perrault.

Per diverse ragioni, che vanno ricercate nelle biografie dei fratelli Grimm e di Perrault, la fiaba ha subito varie modifiche da parte degli autori: i primi hanno aderito allo spirito popolare, mentre l'autore francese si è lasciato andare a una libera manipolazione, cercando di offrire al pubblico francese una fiaba mondata dalla crudeltà, in una versione che risulta più aristocratica.

Le *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* di Jakob e Wilhelm Grimm nacquero in un momento storico e culturale fondamentale per la cultura europea. Le loro fiabe furono elaborate nel XIX secolo, in piena fase di ricerca folklorica. I due fratelli, ricercatori e redattori delle fiabe, proponevano al pubblico "una rappresentazione vivida e credibile del mondo rurale ed artigianale nel quale vige il senso assoluto di giustizia che è del popolo e che ben si confà al carattere della fiaba"¹². La protagonista, Aschenputtel, cerca di aiutare le sorelle eseguendo compiti impossibili, pur di andare al ballo; alla fine è il principe a riconoscere la ragazza mentre lei prova la scarpa; la versione tedesca è più crudele: le sorellastre vengono punite per il resto della loro vita per la loro rabbia e l'invidia; uscendo dalla chiesa, infatti, dei piccioni gli cavano gli occhi, rendendole del tutto cieche.

L'esempio dei fratelli tedeschi attirò in Europa l'attenzione degli studiosi di etnologia e di demopsicologia di quel tempo.

CENERENTOLA IN POLONIA

La ricezione polacca delle fiabe grimmiane cominciò nel 1868. Maria Krysztofiak ha proposto una breve analisi della storia delle traduzioni delle fiabe, citando i lavori di Połczyńska e Załubska, e di Buras¹³. Le prime traduzioni in polacco delle fiabe dei Grimm comparvero nel 1868 (*Kopciuszek dla grzecznych dzieci* [Cenerentola per i bambini bravi]). Alcune fiabe scelte dei Grimm vennero pubblicate

¹¹ F. Trequadrini, *La fiaba attraverso le generazioni*, Napoli, Liguori Editore, 2006, p. 47.

¹² F. Trequadrini, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

¹³ E. Połczyńska, C. Załubska: *Bibliografia przekładów z literatury niemieckiej na język polski 1800–1990. Tom I: 1800–1918*. Poznań, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM 1995, tom II: 1919–1939. Poznań, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 1994. Maria Krysztofiak, *Przekład literacki a translatoologia*, Poznań, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 1999, pp. 151–152.

in lingua polacca nel 1895 con il titolo *Baśnie dla dzieci i młodzieży*¹⁴ [Fiabe per i bambini e per i giovani] nella traduzione di Cecylia Niewiadomska e *Bajki domowe i dziecinne* [Fiabe domestiche e giovanili] nella traduzione di Z. A. Kowerska nel 1896. Fino al 1918 le traduzioni delle fiabe dei Grimm vennero pubblicate con frequenza; tra queste la più nota fu quella di Tarnowski, affiancata anche da quelle di Londyński Bolesław (pseudonimo di Mieczysław Rościszewki), Elwira Korotyńska, Joanna Colonna-Walewska e Kazimierz Wroczyński¹⁵. La traduzione di Perrault, invece, non fu mai completa, ma focalizzata solo su alcune fiabe¹⁶. Tra il 1918 e il 1939 vennero pubblicate altre traduzioni delle opere dei Grimm (*Raccolta*), e le loro *Fiabe* appaiono pubblicate 32 volte da diverse case editrici e in diverse traduzioni; *Cenerentola* viene pubblicata 9 volte, ma come fiaba a sé. Nel 1956 Stefania Wortman curò una raccolta delle *Fiabe* dei fratelli Grimm, usando la traduzione di Marceli Tarnowski dagli anni Venti. La selezione di fiabe di Wortman è stata pubblicata regolarmente fino al 1997. Analizzando la tabella con il numero delle pubblicazioni delle opere dei Grimm e di Perrault in Polonia tra gli anni 1944–2012, osserviamo una differenza tra il numero delle traduzioni dei Grimm e quelle di Perrault. Nel 2012 Bogumiła Staniów ha pubblicato i risultati delle sue ricerche dedicate alla bibliografia di *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* in Polonia, un'analisi diacronica di 200 anni a partire dalla pubblicazione dei fratelli Grimm in Germania¹⁷.

Tabella 1. Numero di pubblicazioni delle opere dei Grimm e di Perrault in Polonia negli anni 1944–2012

Autore	Totale	Numero delle pubblicazioni negli anni 1944–2012						
		1944– 1955	1956– 1965	1966– 1975	1976– 1985	1986– 1995	1996– 2005	2006– 2012
J. e W. Grimm	129	6	4	4	9	20	56	30
Ch. Perrault	68	0	1	2	4	15	35	11

Fonte: *Ruch Wydawniczy w liczbach*, 2013

È interessante notare che *Cenerentola* nel XIX secolo fu assorbita da tanti autori polacchi che reinterpretarono e adottarono la fiaba. Gli autori utilizzavano spesso il titolo di *Cenerentola* senza citare la fonte della fiaba¹⁸.

¹⁴ J. Grimm, *Baśnie dla dzieci i młodzieży*, G. Gebethner e R. Wolff, Warszawa, 1895.

¹⁵ J. St. Buras, *Bibliographie deutscher Literatur in polnischer Übersetzung vom 16. Jahrhundert bis 1994*, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1996, pp. 224–229.

¹⁶ B. Krassowska, A. Grefkowicz, *Bibliografia literatury dla dzieci i młodzieży 1918–1939. Literatura polska i przekłady*, Warszawa, Biblioteka Publiczna m.st. Warszawy, 1995.

¹⁷ B. Staniów, *Grimmowie w Polsce. Rekonesans bibliograficzny w 200 lat po „Kinder- und Hausmärchen”*, in: *Książka, biblioteka, informacja: między podziałami a wspólnotą III*. J. Dzieniawska, M. Olczak-Kardas (Ed.) Kielce, Uniwersytet Jana Kochanowskiego, 2012, p. 47–64.

¹⁸ Cfr. A. Grefkowicz et al., *Bibliografia literatury dla dzieci i młodzieży 1901–1917. Li-*

Nella nostra indagine sul processo di trasformazione di alcune “traduzioni” polacche di *Cenerentola* cercheremo di presentare i cambiamenti avvenuti nel XX secolo dal punto di vista dell’evoluzione storica della traduzione e delle analisi stilometriche.

EVOLUZIONE STORICA DELLA TRADUZIONE DI *CENERENTOLA*

Nonostante la pratica traduttiva abbia una lunga tradizione, il campo di studi della traduzione si è sviluppato soltanto verso la metà del XX secolo¹⁹. Melissa Garavini nel libro dedicato alla traduzione della letteratura per l’infanzia dal finlandese all’italiano ricorda le fondamentali teorie dedicate al ruolo del traduttore, evidenziando la presenza di molteplici fattori culturali e ideologici che influenzano la traduzione stessa²⁰.

Concetti come strategie di addomesticamento, accettabilità, estraniamento o adeguatezza²¹ sono sempre stati fonte di discussione nell’ambito della traduzione, e in particolare nel processo di quella traduzione letteraria dove è coinvolto non solo il traduttore, ma anche l’autore dell’originale, il lettore, la casa editrice e l’illustratore.

Uno dei primi studiosi che ha attirato l’attenzione sulla traduzione per l’infanzia è stato Göte Klingberg (1978, 1986). Lo studioso sostiene che “l’integrità e l’estetica letteraria di un testo di partenza debbano essere rispettate il più possibile²²”. Secondo la teoria di Klingberg basata sull’ipotesi che l’autore originale ha già pensato e considerato i potenziali lettori-bambini, “adattando” il testo al loro livello, la traduzione deve essere sempre fedele all’originale, nonché mantenere la sua stessa funzione. La pionieristica teoria di Klingberg si basa sul grado di adattamento del testo originale: se il grado è elevato, allora il testo è di più facile lettura: al contrario se il grado è basso, allora si riscontrano maggiori difficoltà di lettura. Klingberg è dell’opinione che l’autore del testo fin dall’inizio adatta il proprio testo “alla futura traduzione”. Il punto di vista di Klingberg è stato criticato da molti studiosi, tra cui Puurtinen (1995), Vermeer (1997), Oittinen (1993); nel caso della fiaba di *Cenerentola* la teoria di Klingberg non trova l’applicazione. Naturalmente non si può ignorare l’opinione

teratura polska i przekłady, Warszawa, Biblioteka Publiczna m.st. Warszawy, Biblioteka Główna Województwa Mazowieckiego, 2005. B. Krassowska, A. Grefkowicz, *Bibliografia literatury dla dzieci i młodzieży 1918–1939. Literatura polska i przekłady*, op. cit.; E. Boczar, *Bibliografia literatury dla dzieci i młodzieży – wiek XIX. Literatura polska i przekłady*, Warszawa, WUW, 2010.

¹⁹ J. Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies. Theories and Applications*. London and New York University Press, 2012, p. 13.

²⁰ M. Garavini, *La traduzione della letteratura per l’infanzia dal finlandese all’italiano: l’esempio degli albi illustrati di Mauri Kunnas*, Annales Universitatis Turkuensis, Turku 2014, p. 118.

²¹ Garavini, op. cit., p. 123.

²² Klingberg 1986, p. 17 ora in: M. Garavini, op. cit. p. 125.

di Klingberg, ma, come vedremo più avanti, la fiaba di *Cenerentola* ha seguito in Polonia “la via della manipolazione” ad opera dei traduttori: in alcuni casi la traduzione non è stata fedele all’originale, in altre occasioni storiche è stata adattata al principio morale e religioso vigente in Polonia (il periodo antecedente la Seconda guerra mondiale e quello del comunismo), in altri casi ancora la “chiusura” di alcuni traduttori non offriva ai bambini polacchi spunti sulle diversità culturali contenute nella fiaba *Cenerentola*.

Secondo la nostra opinione, per l’analisi delle traduzioni polacche di *Cenerentola* possiamo utilizzare la prospettiva del traduttore-lettore speciale (Oitinen 1993, 2000).

Per comprendere la ricezione di un libro dobbiamo prendere in considerazione vari elementi, tra cui il paese d’arrivo, il momento storico preciso nel quale arriva la traduzione, la collana, la fascia di età del lettore.

Come abbiamo già segnalato nelle pagine precedenti, in Polonia la fiaba di *Cenerentola* è stata tradotta da vari traduttori e pubblicata da differenti case editrici per un lungo lasso di tempo (partendo dal 1895 al 2009, quando è apparsa una nuova traduzione, della famosa traduttrice di lingua tedesca Eliza Pieciul-Karmińska). Naturalmente nell’arco di sei anni (2010–2015) sono apparse nuove versioni della fiaba; a ben vedere non si tratta di nuove traduzioni, ma di riedizioni di vecchie traduzioni, tra cui quella più famosa di Marceli Tarnowski.

La traduzione richiede sempre un processo di manipolazione che avviene nel processo di produzione del testo. Ogni traduttore si basa sulla particolare cultura di una specifica epoca e nel suo lavoro troviamo il segno delle sue caratteristiche stilistiche e individuali. Lo studio della traduzione, come afferma Bassnett²³, ha bisogno di una pluralità dei voci (di essere collegata allo studio della cultura). Nel caso di *Cenerentola* abbiamo l’esempio della traduzione non solo di un testo, ma di una vera e propria cultura, quella dell’epoca nascosta nella fiaba.

ANALISI STILOMETRICA DI CENERENTOLA

La stilometria è la tecnica analitica ormai diffusa nel campo della letteratura che permette agli studiosi misurare e confrontare i tratti caratteristici dello stile letterario²⁴. La fase interpretativa è preceduta da una fase analitica che comprende l’elaborazione numerica dei testi e la loro comparazione. Nell’ambito della scienza attributiva, come rilevano i due studiosi Paola Italia e Paolo Canettieri, si usano «criteri che si è soliti distinguere in “esterni” e “interni”»²⁵.

²³ S. Bassnett, A. Lefevere, *Constructing Culture, Essay on Literary Translation*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, 1998.

²⁴ L. Mercuri, *Questioni attributive nel medioevo spagnolo: il libro di Alexandre*. La tesi del dottorato di ricerca. Università degli Studi di Roma “Sapienza”, anno 2011.

²⁵ P. Italia, P. Canettieri, *Un caso di attribuzionismo novecentesco: il “Diario Postumo” di*

Gli autori italiani, basandosi sul lavoro di Harold Love e citando la versione inglese, si riferiscono ai criteri “primi”, come a criteri di natura contenutistica, e ai “secondi” come a criteri che normalmente comprendono aspetti formali, tra cui: “l’analisi retorica, metrica e stilistica ed intertestuale²⁶”.

Lo studio quantitativo e statistico dello stile letterario (stilometria) è inteso come l’insieme “dei tratti formali che caratterizzano (in complesso o in un momento particolare) il modo di esprimersi di una persona o il modo di scrivere di un autore²⁷”. La scelta dei testi da confrontare costituisce una delle operazioni più delicate dell’analisi stilometrica. Lo stile di un traduttore/autore può maturare e arricchirsi durante la sua carriera artistica.

I metodi utilizzati finora negli studi di stilometria sono legati alle misurazioni relative al calcolo delle parole (soprattutto la loro lunghezza e la loro frequenza) e delle frasi (il numero delle parole di cui la frase è composta, la sua lunghezza).

La presente ricerca propone di misurare, con metodi e strumenti informatici, la distanza fra le otto versioni di *Cenerentola*, scelte per la nostra ricerca, apparse in polacco dal 1910 al 2006. Per il nostro scopo, abbiamo usato le tecniche di attribuzione confrontando tra loro otto tipi di testi di *Cenerentola*, per vedere se esiste una differenza sostanziale tra essi, sia per le traduzioni, sia per gli adattamenti della fiaba. Tutte le versioni di *Cenerentola* scelte per la ricerca sono basate sulla versione dei Grimm o di Perrault, anche se non sempre l’autore (il traduttore) della versione polacca ha dato l’informazione relativa alla fonte della fiaba.

Visto che su otto testi solo uno (quello del 1964) era fruibile in rete, abbiamo dovuto digitalizzare le versioni cartacee e trasformarle in formato *txt*; per

Montale, «Cognitive Philology», n. 6, 2013, p. 11; D.V. Erdman – E.G. Fogel, *Evidence for Authorship: Essay on Problems of Attribution*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1966; G. Contini, *Il Fiore e il detto d’amore attribuibili a Dante Alighieri*, Milano, Mondadori, 1984. Cfr. anche H. Love, *Attributing Authorship: An Introduction*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 51: «Attribution studies distinguishes conventionally between internal and external evidence. Broadly, internal evidence is that from the work itself and external evidence that from social world within which the work is created, promulgated and read; [...] External evidence [...] covers the following kinds: (1) Contemporary attributions contained in incipits, explicits, titles, and from documents purporting to impart information about the circumstances of composition [...]; (2) Biographical evidence, which would include information about a putative author’s allegiances, whereabouts, dates, personal ties, and political and religious affiliations; (3) history of earlier attributions of the work and the circumstances under which they were made. Internal evidence [...] covers (1) Stylistic evidence; (2) Self-reference and self-presentation within the work; (3) Evidence from the themes, ideas, beliefs and conceptions of genre manifested in the work». Ora in: P. Canettieri, *Le impronte digitali dell’autore. Un metodo di attribuzione automatizzata per i testi delle letterature romanze*, «Le forme e la storia», n.VI, 2013, 2, pp. 231–232.

²⁶ P. Canettieri, *op.cit.*, p. 232.

²⁷ C. Segre, *Avviamento all’analisi del testo letterario*, Torino, Einaudi, 1985, p. 53.

evitare elementi estranei che potessero interferire con l'analisi. È stata appositamente eliminata la punteggiatura dei testi, la suddivisione in capitoli e, laddove si presentava, la numerazione dei versi.

Successivamente i testi sono stati analizzati con il programma KWIC.

In elenco le versioni esaminate:

1. *Kopciuszek [Cenerentola]*, Wydawnictwo Salonu Malarzy Polskich, Kraków 1910, autore sconosciuto; Cen 1
2. Bracia Grimm, *Baśnie*, Złota Biblioteczka, 4; Warszawa 1929, traduttore: Bolesław Londyński; Cen 2
3. *Kopciuszek [Cenerentola]*, Kraków 1942, autore sconosciuto; Cen 3
4. *Kopciuszek [Cenerentola]*, Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 1959, autore sconosciuto; Cen 4
5. Wilhelm e Jakob Grimm, *Kopciuszek*, Nasza Księgarnia, Warszawa 1964; traduttore: Marcei Tarnowski; Cen 5
6. *Baśnie Braci Grimm*, Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, Warszawa 1982; traduttori: Emilia Bielicka, Marcei Tarnowski Cen 6
7. Charles Perrault, *Bajki*, red. Hanna Januszewska, Nasza Księgarnia, Warszawa 1988; Cen 7
8. Wilhelm e Jakob Grimm, *Kopciuszek*, Kraków 2006, traduttore: Karol Barzyk. Cen 8

I testi disponibili ci hanno permesso di prendere in esame diversi elementi linguistici: la lunghezza media della frase, caratteri o sillabe, lo studio del lessico, la lunghezza media delle parole. Per la ricerca sono stati anche considerati alcuni rilevanti tratti stilistici come la percentuale relativa delle diverse parti del discorso (sostantivi, verbi, aggettivi, ecc). Il metodo di misurazione attribuito alle versioni polacche è più utile nei testi più lunghi. Nel nostro caso la lunghezza dei testi era diversa, e dipendeva dal traduttore/autore e anche dall'anno in cui era apparsa la traduzione/l'adattamento letterario.

Usando il programma KWIC abbiamo analizzato l'intero corpus delle *Cenerentole* prese in considerazione (Cen1 – Cen8) ed è stato misurato il numero totale delle parole in ogni testo; abbiamo calcolato: la lunghezza dei testi, la lunghezza delle parole all'interno dei testi, la frequenza di parole monosillabiche, la frequenza di parole vuote (quindi non dipendenti dal contenuto, come in polacco: *i, ale, o, nie, bez, z*) e la ricchezza del lessico di ogni testo. Abbiamo osservato in particolare come cambia la struttura linguistica all'interno di ogni testo (calcolo della frequenza delle parole o della loro lunghezza, ricchezza lessicale).

Nel nostro caso abbiamo considerato il valore statistico di ogni opera ricordando la data di produzione e il fatto di avere a che fare con diverse forme letterarie, come la prosa e la poesia, che presentano diverse proprietà statistiche. In alcuni casi non ci siamo trovati davanti a una vera e propria traduzione, ma a un breve adattamento letterario (come nel caso delle versioni *Cen 1, Cen 3, Cen 4*). In due casi, *Cen 5* (1964) e *Cen 6* (1982), il traduttore è Marcei

Tarnowski; in questi testi abbiamo osservato dei leggeri cambiamenti a livello della lingua, meno del 10%, rispetto all'anno della pubblicazione.

I dati ottenuti sono stati raggruppati in una tabella e poi, sulla base di essi, abbiamo costruito il relativo grafico.

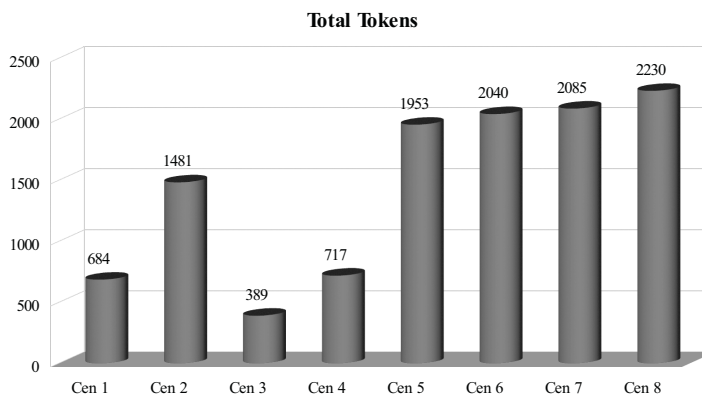


Fig. 1. Il numero totale delle parole nel testo *Cenerentola*

L'analisi del contenuto permette di raggruppare i testi analizzati in due gruppi: il gruppo di Grimm, a cui appartengono i seguenti testi: *Cen 2*, *Cen 3*, *Cen 4*, *Cen 5*, *Cen 6*, *Cen 8*, e il gruppo di Perrault: *Cen 1*, *Cen 7*.

Le versioni dei Grimm (*Cen 2*, *Cen 3*, *Cen 4*, *Cen 5*, *Cen 6*, *Cen 8*) danno "lo spazio alle voci narranti" soprattutto alla matrigna; Cenerentola rimane muta solo in due casi (*Cen 3*, *Cen 4*), mentre il principe viene sentito (ma poco) in ogni opera, tranne la *Cen 2*. Nel secondo caso, invece, paragonando le voci delle sorellastre, della fata e degli animali notiamo la presenza della voce degli animali (uccelli) in ogni testo e le variazioni dell'uso delle parole nel caso della fata e delle sorellastre.

Le due versioni di Perrault (*Cen 1*, *Cen 7*) sono abbastanza diverse dai testi grimmiani: nel caso del testo *Cen 1* parlano tutti i personaggi, ma nel testo *Cen 7* sentiamo solo Cenerentola; molto "attive" sono però anche le sorellastre (nel testo *Cen 7* le sorellastre parlano di più) e anche la fata è abbastanza presente²⁸.

Le narrazioni proposte dai Grimm e da Perrault sono cambiate nel susseguirsi delle loro traduzioni e adattamenti in polacco. La variabilità delle versioni grimmiane è, per esempio, da mettere in relazione con la situazione culturale in cui la traduzione veniva realizzata, dipende anche dalla politica della casa editrice e dal momento storico. I testi pubblicati prima della Seconda guerra mondiale introducono per esempio l'aspetto della fede: "Dio vede e Dio provvede" (*Cen 4*); nelle versioni pubblicate nell'epoca del comunismo non troviamo più queste frasi.

²⁸ Volevo ringraziare il dr hab. Maciej Eder per il Suo aiuto nelle analisi di Consensus Tree.

I metodi di analisi statistica di un testo letterario messi a disposizione nel corso degli ultimi anni sono numerosi e assai diversificati, sia per quanto riguarda i caratteri presi in esame (lunghezza delle parole, loro distribuzione, frequenza di utilizzo di termini significativi, lunghezza e costruzione delle frasi), sia per ciò che concerne il trattamento matematico delle informazioni così ottenute, sia per gli obiettivi che ci si propone.

La fiaba di *Cenerentola* continua ad appassionare i lettori e gli spettatori come poche altre, raccontando la quotidianità attraverso il velo delle metafore e dei simboli. L'immaginario fiabesco espresso nel corso del periodo analizzato (1910–2006) è stato sottoposto alle naturali mutazioni storiche dal punto di vista della traduttologia e del processo storico in cui sono stati pubblicati i testi. Dalle indagini stilometriche è risultata una differenza tra i testi.

Possiamo concludere che il nostro esperimento ha permesso di paragonare i testi di vari traduttori/autori e, a fronte della precisione attributiva, vediamo dei leggeri cambiamenti delle traduzioni, dovute probabilmente non al traduttore o all'autore dell'adattamento stesso ma alle case editrici e all'anno di pubblicazione.

Nel complesso, il metodo di analisi qui adoperato sembrerebbe essere utile nei casi in cui abbiamo a disposizione porzioni testuali di altre traduzioni/adattamenti, soprattutto di quelli pubblicati negli anni 1895–1939. L'estensione della quantità testuale a disposizione potrebbe sicuramente aumentare l'efficienza del sistema.

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Mentoring in an Heterotopic Space – Janusz Korczak’s Orphanage in Contemporary Picture Books

Thinking about mentors and their significance refers among other things to their influence through conversations, council and education. By especially focusing on mentoring abandoned Jewish children during the time of the Nazi regime, it becomes necessary to ask for the particular way of mentoring, and the spatial and intellectual environment in which this took place. With regards to the importance of space, and also spacial aspects in narration which focus on the time of the Nazi regime, Lydia Kokkola points out:

The [...] spatial dimensions are so interwoven within representations of the past that they cannot be separated. That is, we cannot consider an historical time period without also considering the space in which the events took place.¹

No doubt, Janusz Korczak could be seen as a mentor through his pedagogy, his literary work, and his leading role in his orphanage, especially during the time of the Nazi regime, where he practiced his democratic ideas, and thereby, became a famous figure in the Polish history. This is why his orphanage can be understood as a heterotopic space, with clear utopian characteristics, albeit surrounded by cruelty, hunger, and death during Nazi’s occupation.

The connection between mentoring and space becomes evident in contemporary Polish picture books (which were first published in Germany), and which focus on the legacy of Korczak’s work and on the particular outcome of his influence in the view of the children as beneficiaries. The books *Blumka’s Diary* (*Pamiętnik Blumki*, 2011) and *Miss Esther’s Last Performance* (*Ostatnie przedstawienie Panny Esterki*, 2013) do so by making Janusz Korczak’s orphanage in Warsaw, and later in the Warsaw Ghetto, subject of the narratives. *Blumka’s Diary*, written and illustrated by Iwona Chmielewska, is addressed to young and middle grade readers, narrated through a child’s diary. The story in *Miss Esther’s Last Performance*, by Adam Jaromir and Gabriela Cichowska, is addressed from middle grade to all-age-readers in an even more sophisticated way. I argue, that the orphanage with its inner space leads to the relation of this particular space and the larger environment in those narratives, thus empha-

¹ Kokkola, Lydia. *Representing the Holocaust in Children’s Literature*. New York, London: Routledge, Kindle edition 2009, Kindle location 1677.

sizing the inner values in terms of pedagogy and democracy. In terms of style and organization of narrative discourse, I will demonstrate, that the meaning of space is portrayed mainly in the images of the picture books, which explicitly highlights the conditions of the ghetto and the orphanage. Moreover, in both narratives, the orphanage turns out to be understood as an heterotopic place, as Michel Foucault described in *Of Other Spaces* 1966/67.

With regards to the previous points, mentoring abandoned Jewish children functions also as an environmental question. As a mentor, Korczak built his orphanage as a place for vulnerable children, who are placed at the same time at the center of the narrative through their own narrations of the stories in both picture books to discuss—besides, in both books there is a second narrator, an authorial narrator in *Blumka's Diary* and Korczak himself in *Miss Esther's Last Performance*. In my opinion, it is important to understand these picture books place their main focus on the children's perspective inside the orphanage, because as Jewish orphans, they were extremely vulnerable. Giving them a voice retrospectively is one of the main stylistic aspects of both examples. Especially having juvenile narrators here who lost their lives in Treblinka makes the narratives a highly imaginary act of puzzling children's lives, who became victims of the Holocaust. Elie Wiesel, famous Noble Peace Prize winner, and survivor of Auschwitz and Buchenwald, points out:

Children eternally evoke innocence and beauty. They are defenseless and harmless. They are frail and vulnerable. Is this why, in wars, they are the first victims? Adults hate one another and it is children who pay the price. Adults fight and children die. The first to be targeted for annihilation by the Nazis were the Jewish children, a million and a half of them. [...] Nothing is so despairing to some of us as the suffering of children, nor is anything as uplifting as the endeavor to help them in their conquest of happiness.²

Narrating the children's life in Korczak's orphanage means, as we have seen so far, dealing with vulnerability and building a heterotopic space that helps to protect the children. If we consider Michel Foucault's essay *Of Other Spaces* here, it becomes obvious that Foucault's concept fits this example. Heterotopia is, in the words of Foucault, a utopian concept, which becomes real at a concrete location, and at a concrete point in time.³ Distinguishing between "crisis heterotopias" and "heterotopias of deviation", as Foucault does,⁴ the orphanage is somehow on the borderline between those two, similar to Foucault's example of retirement homes. In the case of the Jewish orphanage, we are dealing with a minority of vulnerable orphans, who are "in relation to society and

² Wiesel, Elie. „[Tikvah Means Hope].“ Tikvah. Children's Book Creators Reflect in Human Rights. New York: SeaStar Books, 1999, p. ix.

³ Foucault, Michel. "Der Utopische Körper." Trans. Bischoff, Michael. Die Heterotopien/ Les Hétérotopies Der Utopische Körper/ Le Corps Utopique. Zweisprachige Ausgabe. Mit Einem Nachwort Von Daniel Defert. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2013, p. 10.

⁴ Foucault, Michel. „Of Other Spaces.“ Diacritics Vol. 16.No. 1 (1986): p. 24.

to the human environment, in which they live”⁵ in a vulnerable position and without any natural protection, which could be considered a crisis. As children from who suffered mental and health issues after traumatic experiences, the characters of the picture books could also conform to the term of deviation in relation to the required norm. Moreover, as Jewish children in the time of Nazi regime, living in the Ghetto in occupied Poland, they are marked in deviation from the required Aryan ideal. We can also consider some other aspects of a heterotopia: a main function of the orphanage is to educate these children in order to become part of society. Dr. Korczak’s house put this to practice through non-normative pedagogy, which also marked this orphanage as a heterotopia, based on utopian ideals. This orphanage was only open to Jewish orphans, and by default, a closed territory for all others. The orphanage was open to the surrounding environment, and most importantly, to the world in an intellectual way, which refers to Foucault’s description of a “system of opening and closing”⁶

By taking a closer look at the inside of the picture books, the spatial values, become obvious. While *Blumka’s Diary* mainly creates an inner map of the heterotopic space of children, mirroring Jewish identity, in *Miss Esther’s Last Performance*, the very specific, and spatially limited life inside the orphanage in the Ghetto is described in detail. Analyzing both picture books here, they, however, appear to be read as a two-piece-narrative in terms of history. While Blumka’s fictional diary is written before the war, *Miss Esther’s Last Performance* takes place during World War II, after the orphanage was forced into the Warsaw Ghetto. Therefore, I will focus first on *Blumka’s Diary*, followed by analyzes of *Miss Esther’s Last Performance*.

In *Blumka’s Diary*, Iwona Chmielewska builds the heterotopic place out of a fictional diary. While the genre of the diary links to a factual existence of the orphanage, the visual of fine drawings, sampled as a series of collages, which puzzle different perspectives, and materials together by ignoring proportions or reality in order to create complex spaces of reflection and understanding. Particularly avoiding to visualize the orphanage as much too realistic on the visual, it points rather to the heterotopic character by referring to the intellectual concept. Moreover, the artistic method of the collage is perfectly suited to include the complexity and diversity in the narrative. It is not only meant in terms of content, but also in an interpretive or even symbolic way. For example, Chmielewska uses writing paper as a visual leitmotif to point out the fictionality of the narrative, and also to demonstrate that it is often paper that keeps the stories, and therefore the memory alive.

Picture books raise questions of linearity mostly by using text, less so than images. In this case, the beginning and the end of the diary mark a clear time

⁵ Foucault, Michel. „Of Other Spaces.” *Diacritics* Vol. 16.No. 1 (1986): p. 24.

⁶ Foucault, Michel. „Of Other Spaces.” *Diacritics* Vol. 16.No. 1 (1986): p. 26.

frame, which could also be understood as a reference to Foucault's statement that heterotopias were often linked only to a slice of time, and therefore are understandable as heterochronies.⁷ On the first page, the reader sees the front of the closed diary, which Blumka is about to fill with her stories about life in the orphanage. The story ends on a visual level by showing a typical wagon train used for transporting people to concentration camps. The very last page shows the closed diary, with some forget-me-not flowers slightly peeking out, which refers to the motivation to tell this particular story. Time is important as far as it becomes clear that the whole story came to an end by the murder of the children by the Nazis. In between this frame, every single page refers to another child, which does not have to be read chronologically, so that the book itself could be read like an image or a map, without a necessary direction. On every page, a particular child is introduced to the reader with its own talents, dreams, and personal features. The visual level shows a lot more details than mentioned in the text, giving a better sense for the environment, and the inner life of the heterotopic.

Therefore, the story does not work without the concrete location shown through the images. In some images from the book, Chmielewska locates the concrete place of the orphanage on the map of Warsaw. The reader also sees Warsaw from a bird's eye view at the Vistula River. This perspective is similar to a map, and with the pieces of paper flying above like clouds, a view opens on a geographical place. The sepia colors as well as the diary point to the past, and suggest that this place once existed. Other images zoom closer to the concrete location and house, and help to build a sense for the topographical place, making readers aware of the real existence of the orphanage and its inhabitants. Through these images, the readers also learn what it means to have the safety of a home, similar to a haven, and being rooted in a concrete place and culture. Through the text of the fictional diary, and the images of places, space, and their inner social and cultural life, Chmielewska creates „a sense of the specific time in which the events are set as well as a sense of place.“⁸ Every page maps a social field, belonging to each young character, which links not directly to historical, but cultural details of Jewish life before the Holocaust. In doing so, every page shows a recurring image construction. The lower part of the diary always appears on the top of the page. On the top of the page always appears the lower part of the diary from which several details of the story are dropping out on the visual level. All elements are arranged in a specific order on the page. The verbal part is mostly anecdotal, and the pictures refer only partially to the text. They show a lack of narrative linearity, because we hardly see an image construction with a horizontal line, nor any sequences of pictures organized in panels, or sequences of time. However, the pictures show mostly the

⁷ See Foucault, Michel. „Of Other Spaces.“ *Diacritics* Vol. 16.No. 1 (1986): p. 26.

⁸ Kokkola, Lydia. *Representing the Holocaust in Children's Literature*. New York, London: Routledge, Kindle edition 2009, Kindle location 1702.

strong social and cultural connection inside and outside the orphanage. The images also show strong aspects of the children's identity and their agency in their heterotopic society, and environment.

The meaning in *Blumka's Diary* comes mostly from locating this heterotopia in the Polish history of the upcoming Holocaust, and for erasing access to the world of the orphans and their individual characters. By doing so, the value of life comes to the fore, as well as the success of Korczak's pedagogy. The pictures point explicitly to Korczak's ideas of equality by transforming those into concrete images, such as showing young Blumka and Dr. Korczak as the same in size, and in their style of dressing. This example demonstrates, that although drawn in a realistic style, and simultaneously providing details of Jewish life in the orphanage, the images overcome the limitation of realism by demonstrating the intellectual value of the particular place in pictures which are understandable for young readers.

This particular way of developing life stories in Korczak's heterotopia, and referring to social and cultural aspects, brings the picture book close to the method of mapping in the fine arts, which does not follow the goal of geographical correctness, but the examination of the space of cultural knowledge, biographies, and life stories from individual perspectives. I suggest through this analysis, that we can understand the whole diary-book as an artistic map of life at this historical place. For understanding this kind of artistic map, it is important to keep in mind that the method of mapping in arts include various forms of aesthetic research. Denis Cosgrove claims the "uniquely close connection"⁹ of maps and images:

Maps, in common with other forms of illustration, have the goal of making present a distanced absence, although some artistic images arguably make the further claim of creating a 'virtual space', since their 'aura' refigures the space in which they are located.¹⁰

As maps select and mark information as important to create an understanding of a landscape, these images in the picture books share important information about the orphanage and its children, in order to 'read' and 'understand' their stories at that particular place, and the surrounded environment. By pointing with each page to the story of another child, linearity and the passing time are almost ignored. The young readers are spared from the upcoming brutality of the Holocaust.

In the even more complex picture book *Miss Esther's Last Performance*, it is not only the social-cultural aspect, but also the historical space which the images bring to light. This book interweaves the verbal and the visual, avoid-

⁹ Cosgrove, Denis. „Maps, Mapping, Modernity: Art and Cartography in the Twentieth Century.” *Imago Mundi* Vol. 57.No. 1 (2005): p. 36.

¹⁰ Cosgrove, Denis. „Maps, Mapping, Modernity: Art and Cartography in the Twentieth Century.” *Imago Mundi* Vol. 57.No. 1 (2005): p. 37.

ing any blank white space. Concrete images are found nestled in the sepia and dark background as well as the typography. Therefore, it is hard to separate the verbal and the visual part, as they appear to be a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a German term which points to the interdependence of text and image. As Katie Trumpener points out:

Precisely because of its ambitions to represent the world itself, the picture book frequently understands itself as a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (a work integrating multiple art forms and appealing to multiple senses), and hence reflecting more general trends in visual, literary and intellectual culture. Unlike other forms of children's literature, the picture book makes meaning largely through its visual format, the way its images relate to one another, to the verbal text, and to the space on (and physical layout of) the page.¹¹

This interdependence as well as the spacial quality become clear already in the paratext right at the beginning, where a text and a hazy background picture of the orphanage introduce the reader into the story. It is remarkable, that the concrete geographical place, and its heterotopic dimension become subject of the introduction, or better in the paratext, which is often used to point to the ‚true‘ background of a story or in order to build a more authentic perspective:

Warsaw Ghetto. Right at the southern wall of the Ghetto [...] stood once a gray, four-story building: the last legal seat of the Jewish orphanage called Dom Sierot, directed by Dr. Korczak. It was during that dark, hard time home for 200 children [...] and what was going on inside, what these children saw, heard, and thought – that is what this book is about, narrated by two of the inhabitants: a 12-year-old girl named Genia, and the doctor himself.

Although we enter the inside of the orphanage here, the outside locality is still important in building a sense for the whole environment, and historical situation. It becomes clear that the orphanage as the central space is surrounded by Poland, which had been occupied since 1939 by the Nazis, and the city of Warsaw separated into the ‚non-jewish‘ part since 1940. It is located in the dark space of the Jewish Ghetto, and therefore, we could understand it as lying at the center of concentric circles, which represent the cruelty of the Nazi ideology. The dark environment is also visible in *Miss Esther's Last Performance* by the voice of Dr. Korczak, and his visits in the streets of the Ghetto. The hopeless atmosphere, the pain, the death, the hunger, and the loneliness accumulate in the dark gray, black, and brown colors of the collages, which do not form strong contours, but rather lead to the feeling of growing despair. Even the individual characters seem to dissolve in this atmosphere. Only the faces of Dr. Korczak, and most children are sharp and in contrast to the dull background.

¹¹ Trumpener, Katie. „Picture-Book Worlds and Ways of Seeing.” *The Cambridge Companion to Children's Literature*. Ed. Immel, M. O. Grenby and Andrea. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 55.

While Chichowska uses diverse material for the collages, the faces come from fine pencil lines, which make them clear, but also vulnerable at the same time. The fine lines of their faces also highlight their starvation, helplessness, and loneliness. The dark eyes of these children left on the streets lent them a feeling of old age beyond their years.

Since Korczak refused the offer to escape to the other side of town to safety, he is surrounded by a territory of helplessness. As we could understand the visual space here as the center of concentric circles inhabiting the most vulnerable children, it turns out to be a very strong locality. It lies, so to speak, in the calm eye of a hurricane – at least for a period of time. While the reader follows Janusz Korczak walks around the streets begging for money, food, and fuel for heating, he reflects on the street urchin children as well as the separated territories, and the power of separation. He also states the porosity of the Ghetto, when he says: “The wall, 3 meters high, 18 kilometers long – but still – there are people who could pass it...” Here is a reference to Foucault’s statement about the system of opening and closing of spaces, by showing the Ghetto as a prison, but also occasionally showing the porosity on the visual the walls open for those who know how to overcome it. But for Korczak and his children, there is no chance of overcoming their prison, so they withdraw from the outside, and build a heterotopic community in the inside of the house.

The reader enters the inside in three ways in this picture book. First, the reader follows the first narrator Genia, the girl who represents the inner perspective of a child, and who describes the daily life, the other children, and the nurses in the house. Second, there are images showing fragments from the inside: rooms, stairways, and other inner places of the house. Third, the reader enters almost physically, as there are, hinged pages in a certain portion of the book which function like the front of a dollhouse. While the outside is still in sepia and dirty colors, the text states: “Our white house.” Only by opening, the house turns out to be white inside: White background, shining light, the children wear white dresses, moreover the white walls point symbolically to the pure beauty of the children and the utopian space. All children have finely drawn faces, and they build a quiet and respectful community, listening to the boy who plays the violin. This example shows the contrast between the interior, heterotopic space inside the orphanage, and the dark surrounding environment of the Ghetto.

Inside of Korczak’s orphanage, the reader comes in contact with spaces of humanity, education, and hope. With the term ‘hope,’ I do not refer to the concrete hope of leaving the Ghetto, but more generally the hope of a better world, led by equality and human rights. Every child is part of a peacefully functioning community, in which they build up their education, help one another, and attain a sense for the value of human life. Every child has the right of privacy, owns a private box filled with individually important things like photographs, and some even write a diary. With these different tools of development, they

are able to build a strong sense of their own identities, which are varied, and not reduced to a archetypal Jewish orphan violently separated from the world. For example, a small girls describes herself like this:

I am Hella.
 I am a person.
 I am a girl.
 I am a daughter.
 I am from Warsaw.
 I am from Poland.
 Who would have thought, I am so much? (33)

Another boy frames the value of the orphanage in this way: “Without this house, I would never have known that there are honest people in the world, and that one can speak the truth. I wouldn’t have known, there are fair laws possible in this world.” (33) The goodness depicted in the interior of the orphanage also mirrors the colorful accents in the images. For example, the children care for plants, which are in green and red, read colorful books, and wear clothes which include red. These accents seem to symbolize the mental strength of these protected children, and the impermeability of the heterotopia against evil.

But the images also demonstrate the spatial limits of the orphanage, which the children barely leave during the last months of their lives. It is impressively demonstrated in the images, for example, when we see a German soldier in the shadow of the Ghetto wall. Even more significantly, and meaningfully, the spatial limitation is demonstrated in another image, which is mostly in black and white, and follows a worm’s-eye-view, down from the ground along the high buildings to a light full moon in the sky. This image lets us feel in a very expressive way the helplessness and powerless situation that imprisoned inhabitants have in the Ghetto. By guiding the view from deep within the Ghetto to the limitless sky and the bright moon, it references a strong feeling of hope, and the deep wish to overcome the spatial limits with its horrors of the Nazi regime. While we have seen the brutality and hopelessness surrounding the orphanage, the narrative shows how these boundaries are overcome by the humanity and imagination from inside. This is demonstrated at the end of the narrative by rehearsing a play. Miss Esther, the title figure, and nurse in the orphanage, introduces the play *The Post Office* by the Bengali polymath Rabindranath Tagore to the children, which deals not only with the subject of imagined places, but also with the subject of death. By practicing the play on stage, the children not only bring their individual talents together, but, moreover, withdraw more from the outside. By using their imaginations as well as their bodies as actors and dancers, they build an imaginary space which connects them to the world of the Indian culture. They not only flee the present danger of deportation, but, they also overcome the inhumanity of the Nazi regime as well as the limited topographical space in the Ghetto.

As a mentor, Korczak understood the importance of creating a place and inner space, which is different from the outside reality. Therefore, space is not only a container, but a world of its own, which includes pedagogical and cultural concepts. This kind of space, as the orphanage is shown in the two picture books, is more than a separate place. It includes its own rules, ways of living, and cultural concepts, which can be strong enough to resist the brutality of fascism with dignity, by building a heterotopia based on utopian ideals. The two contemporary picture books discussed here, re-construct Korczak's heterotopia not only as a linear narrative in its pure form, but also from the inside in the eyes of the young inhabitants as a space of democracy, humanity, and development. We can see from these examples that books can appear as fictional memories from the interior with spatial qualities that help young readers today to understand history, identity, and abstract concepts in order to shape their understanding of the world. And, most importantly, these books demonstrate that it is mentorship that is the basis for a child to become who they are meant to be, even in the dark times of fascism that allowed them only limited space in a ghetto, marked them as a deviation from the greater society, and allowed children to be murdered.

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A Boy Pretends To Be An Adult

Abstract: The article is devoted to the topos of *puer senex*, which brings together desired features of a child and features of an adult, found in Jerzy Przędziecki's, Zbigniew Liskowacki's, and Wiktor Zawada's war novels addressed to a young reader. Throughout centuries, writers often deployed the topos to persuasive aims. In children and young adult's literature, however, especially the 20th century-literature, the motif is rarely used. Though not devoid of ideological elements, an example of its deployment is the figures of boys in the war novels by Liskowacki and Zawada. In the case of the protagonist in Przędziecki's *The three of the black river*, the *puer senex* topos was used in a subtle way. The writer tells a story of eight-year old Wojtek against the background of the war that has just broken out with much psychological insight into the child's sensitivity and its psycho-physical abilities. Although only in the time of war vicissitudes, the protagonists in Liskowacki's and Zawada's novels assume the role of adults so strongly that it is difficult to differentiate between their soldier feats and feats of a regular army. The protagonists in the novels by Liskowacki and Zawada are true heroes. They successfully confront well-organized German troops during the Warsaw Uprising (Z. Liskowacki's *We, from Marymont*) or fight offensively the occupant's army along with the Uprising's soldiers in the surroundings of Zamość (W. Zawada's *The great war with the black flag, The Cacti of Green street, The wood school of Cactus the Rifleman*). The writers heroicise the boys by means of the *puer senex* topos. They try to balance fictive elements, which allow them to present unusual portraits of the children condemned to having to fight in the times of war, against historical details so that the presented stories may acquire documentary features.

Keywords: topos *puer senex*, World War II, Warsaw Uprising, pretending, adult

The *puer senex* topos (the boy/old man) dates back to antiquity. I was a popular hagiographical motif almost until the dawn of the modern era. According to Ernest R. Curtius, it was a desired balance between the elements of youth and maturity that made this motif persuasively attractive¹. Noticeable also beyond the confines of the European culture, it was widely used in portraying rulers, spiritual leaders and other figures as extraordinarily capable individuals. Chil-

¹ E. R. Curtius, *Literatura europejska i łacińskie średniowiecze*, transl. A. Borowski, Kraków 1997, p. 107-110. [E.R. Curtius, *European literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, transl. A. Borowski, Kraków 1997, pp. 107-110.]

dren who are intellectually capable in a way characteristic of sages can also be found in Polish folk culture, which only emphasizes the universal value of such anthropological depictions of people predestined to do things which are out of the ordinary².

The *puer senex* motif occurs rather rarely in children's literature, which does not make much use of this particular figure. This segment of literature promotes primarily the motif of a young man, with all the weaknesses and shortcomings of that particular age, in order to juxtapose this motif with mature characters, such as parents and their friends, relatives and teachers. There is, however, a group of texts written by authors who indirectly, and perhaps also unknowingly, make use of the *puer senex* theme. My concern here is with war literature addressed to young readers, which was particularly popular in the 1960s and 1970s. In my paper I concentrate on selected novels by Wiktor Zawada, Ryszard Liskowacki and Jerzy Przeździecki, whose works today are largely forgotten.

The horrors of war, occupation and the Holocaust determined the way of portraying children as people who had to cope with the challenges of the time. These challenges often ruthlessly forced children to adopt certain social roles of adults. This is only one aspect of the phenomenon under discussion, which is perhaps less tragic than the fate of Jewish children. The latter is recorded in numerous documents, including literary memoirs with autobiographical overtones, which illustrate the brutal realities of the world engulfed by war. At this particular instance, one should mention the works by Henryk Grynberg, Michał Głowiński, Jerzy Kosiński and Ida Fink.³

Under these circumstances, the young characters, boys and girls alike, had to face certain death or witness the death of their nearest and dearest. To some extent, the idea of *make-believe*, a theory on children's *imaginative play* which unfolds on various levels of human activities, could prove to be of some use, given that war or any other moment of historic, social or cultural upheaval motivates one to make extraordinary efforts. This observation can also be referred to children, who on account of their cultural status were subject to other rules than adults. The writers felt compelled to seek an original profile for their juvenile characters due to a number of their specific features, such as their scant life experience, physical frailty and an insufficient ability to handle stress, all of which must have had a bearing on surviving war, revolution and other disasters. This profile was expected to combine the manifest features of a child with selected features of an adult. It gives some verisimilitude to the figures of

² T. Kalniuk, *Mityczni obcy. Dzieci i starcy w polskiej kulturze ludowej przełomu XIX i XX wieku*, Toruń 2014. [T. Kalniuk, *The mythical others. Children and old men in Polish folk culture at the turn of the 19th century*, Toruń 2014.]

³ J. Kowalska-Leder, *Dzieciństwo czasu Zagłady*, [in:] *Wojna. Doświadczenie i zapis. Nowe źródła, problemy, metody badawcze*, Kraków 2006, p. 308. [J. Kowalska-Leder, *The Childhood of the Holocaust*, [in:] *War. Experience and record. New sources, problems, research methods*, Cracow 2006, p. 308]

children who suffer the hardships of war, violence and other forms of evil. In my view, the young characters of war novels have to fight in combat with the enemy in order to survive. Despite the evident differences in potential represented by the figures of children and adults (e.g. German soldiers of World War II), the Polish writers weave the narrative in a way to demonstrate the victory of the former. In keeping with the realistic convention (enriched with historical detail) and with a view to obtain a persuasive effect, they make use of the fact observed in developmental psychology: children spend their time playing and the language of play is for them a fairly effective way of communicating with the world. It helps them master their fear, overcome their weaknesses or explain to themselves the inexplicable. The notion of play, divorced from reality, is an object of creative manipulation orchestrated by the writers. In doing so, they illustrate the transition from 'playing war games' to 'taking part in war', from pretending to be a soldier to actually being one:

The term 'make-believe play', as it is used in this book, denotes a genre of play which has been designated by various other names, such as 'imaginative play', 'fantasy play', 'symbolic play', 'pretend play', 'as if play', or 'sociodramatic play'. Many writers have referred to the concept of play in general and to that of make-believe, particularly as "illusive", "slippery" or "hard to define". To my mind, this verdict is unjustifiable. I believe that make-believe play can be defined exactly, in a way which clearly sets it apart from various different, superficially similar phenomena such as other forms of play, imitation, symbolization, pretending, fantasy, storytelling, drama, rituals and delusions⁴.

It has to be noted that the phenomenon described by Shlomo Ariel has two stages: animation comes as the first one and is followed by identification. Thus, the performative character of *make-believe* in this particular context is, in my view, crucially important, although its manifestation in literary texts dealing with war looks differently than in the actual psychological experiment of Ariel. The literature for children and young readers dealing with World War II can be treated primarily as a sort of two-tiered play.

The first of these tiers – I shall refer to it as 'textual' – is played out by writers who make references to historical events and construct the literary worlds based on their own memories or those of other people (also with some recourse to the sources). Owing to that, these texts evince distinctive documentary traces. Nevertheless, the juvenile figures are a projection, a sort of performative play of an adult person who makes use of the semantic signs of childhood in order to recount tragic events. A child in the texts under discussion usually mitigates the dramatic impact of war at the expense of authenticity. It is rare to find a writer who in depicting terrible situations would emphasize, using the literary figure of a child, the dramatic impact of war seen through the eyes of

⁴ S. Ariel, *Children's imaginative play. A visit to wonderland*, London 2002, s. 5.

a young person. It is so in the short stories by Henryk Grynberg and Ida Fink - but this is literature addressed to adult readers.

The second tier runs through the world portrayed by the authors who experienced war in their teens and later on, in the era of communist Poland, published their work, which to some extent resonated with the propaganda of the then communist authorities. They heroicised their characters in one way or another by referring to the *puer senex* topos. The very young characters, who are only about to grow into adolescence, face situations where they have to choose social behaviour which is normally ascribed to adults. Liskowacki and Zawada endowed their characters with such features as exceptional prudence, responsibility for oneself and others (including adults: parents, relatives, neighbours), heroicness, self-sacrifice, bravery, physical strength and psychic resilience. Przeździecki in his turn adopted a different solution: he stuck to the balance between the features characteristic of children and the positive features of adults. Wojtek, his eight-year old character from the novel *Troje znad czarnej rzeki* [*The three of the black river*], is more authentic than the characters of Liskowacki and Zawada. He does not fight with German soldiers, although his quality of being smart and cunning helps him save his friend from death.

The analysis will concentrate on the following works: the war trilogy by Zawada (*Kaktusy z Zielonej ulicy* [*The Cacti of Green street*], *Wielka wojna z czarną flagą* [*The great war against the black flag*], *Leśna szkoła strzelca Kaktusa* [*The wood school of Cactus the Rifleman*]), Liskowacki's novel *Z zielonych ulic na barykadę* [*From green streets onto the barricade*] and the series of nine short stories by the same author, initially published in separate fascicles under the common title *Historia dłuższa niż wojna* [*A history longer than war*] and, finally, the book by Przeździecki titled *Troje znad czarnej rzeki* [*The three of the black river*].

The last of these novels stands out of the rest on two accounts. Firstly, the action begins in the late 1930s and ends as the German troops seize Poland's territory. The war strand of the narrative complements the picture of Wojtek's life with his parents in Sosnowiec. Secondly, one has to note the way in which Przeździecki describes the war seen from a child's perspective. It is rid of gentle, child-like heroicness, which is so characteristic of the texts by Zawada and Liskowacki. In Przeździecki's prose, a child is a victim who does not attempt to fight, but only strives to understand, in the absence of parents, the reality of the world crushed by the forces of evil. The feeling of shock triggered by the entry of German troops to Sosnowiec, the absence of his father, who joins the Polish army, and the emotional distress of the mother - it all makes Wojtek look for rescue in compensatory activities. He plays war games in his imagination and defeats the forces of evil in a way that seems miraculous:

Oto on, Wojtek, wynajduje taki cudowny czołg, który nie boi się pocisków nawet największych armat. Jedzie tym czołgiem do Berlina. Po drodze wszyscy strzelają. Bombardują go samoloty, a on nic - wciąż jedzie. Jest już w Berlinie. Wybiega masa żołnierzy, a wszyscy strasznie do niego strzelają. Trach!Trach!

Trach!Trach! – odbijają się kule od zaczarowanego czołgu. I nagle patrzy, a tu, na tarasie ogromnego domu, w białym fotelu siedzi człowiek z wąsikami i pije herbatę – Hitler! Ostrzegają wszyscy Hitlera, że Wojtek jest najdzielniejszy. [...] Aż tu on, Wojtek, mówi: „Hitlerze, poddajesz się?” A ten, że nie, i nawet sięga po karabin. I wtedy Wojtek strzela i zabija Hitlera, i wojna jest skończona⁵. [Here is he, Wojtek, he invents such an amazing tank that is missile-proof and is resilient to even the heaviest artillery. He drives the tank to Berlin. Everybody is shooting all around. He is bombarded by planes, yet he keeps driving. He is already in Berlin. Troops of soldiers are attacking him and are fiercely shooting at him. Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! - bullets are bouncing off the magical tank. And suddenly, on a terrace of an enormous building, he spots a man with a moustache, sitting in a white armchair and sipping tea – it's Hitler! Everyone warns Hitler that Wojtek is the bravest one. [...] And Wojtek asks him: “Do you surrender, Hitler?” He says ‘no’ and even tries to grab a rifle. And then Wojtek shoots Hitler dead, and the war is over.]

Wojtek is too weak to be able to oppose in any conceivable way the disastrous calamities of war. This is why he engages in ‘a fight’ in his imagination. Nevertheless, the justice meted out to Hitler, even though it is done only in play, illustrates the determination of the boy. At first, facing the perplexity of adults, Wojtek deals with the evil, and later on adopts the role of an adult as he rescues his Jewish friend, Abramek, who is shot by a German soldier. In this suggestive way, *Przeździecki* illustrates how an eight-year-old boy, experiencing the atrocities of war, is forced in a flash to make decisions which enable him to protect the vulnerable (weaker than himself, like Abramek). The realistic or naturalistic qualities of the key moments of *Przeździecki*'s novels make the reader feel the atmosphere of war and demonstrate the ordeals which children have to confront. The innocent, carefree world falls into ruin and is replaced by an atrocious world. In these circumstances, all that counts is to save one's life at all costs. It is only possible thanks to the boy's ability to become an adult at least for a moment. It is best illustrated in the scene where the boy scavenges for food:

Ze śmietnika koło niemieckiej restauracji uciekły dwa szczury. Przemagając uczucie wstrętu i bojaźni, zagłębił rękę w ciemnej czeluści. [...] W kilku puszkach z przymkniętymi, blaszanymi denkami zostały resztki tłuszczu i mięsa. Widocznie szczury jeszcze do nich nie dotarły. Zbierał dłonią i jadał⁶. [Two rats escaped from the rubbish tip by the German restaurant. Overcoming repulsion and fear, he glided his hand into a dark opening. [...] There were some remnants of fat and meat in a few tins with half-closed lids. Apparently the rats didn't get the food. He took it out with his hand and ate it.]

This and several other scenes from *Przeździecki*'s novel illustrating the survival of the boy make one think of the dramatic situation of the young people

⁵ J. *Przeździecki*, *Troje znad czarnej rzeki*, Warszawa 1975, s. 285. [J. *Przeździecki*, *The three of the black river*, Warsaw 1975, p. 285]

⁶ Tamże, s. 319.

who for various reasons were not evacuated from Leningrad.⁷ The heroicism of children, emphasised by the Soviet propaganda, involved something else than directly combatting the enemy. The preserved documents (diaries, photographs) demonstrate that children trapped in Leningrad, a city entrenched at the time like a fortress, could not avoid the evil experienced by adults. Daily confronted with the death of their dearest relatives and friends, they must have matched mature people in terms of psychic resilience. Perhaps they played the role of adults only in times of war; not because they were particularly willing to do so, but because they had to do this so as to save themselves and others. The documents from the siege of Leningrad quoted by Kirschenbaum demonstrate that the main cause of death of adults and children alike was hunger rather than fighting with the Germans. Thus, the phenomenon in question, so widespread in concentration camps and ghettos, determined the behaviour of all people, including the young.⁸

The characters in Zawada's and Liskowacki's novels are primarily communal in nature – young boys, usually still in their teens (Zawada includes also younger children), who engage in a direct fight with the enemy. The texts by Liskowacki are set in the Warsaw of the Warsaw Uprising, while Zawada places his war narrative in Zamość and the neighbouring forests controlled by groups of guerrilla soldiers. Despite the differences in historical detail, these two authors apply similar strategies of depicting the distinct traits of the young characters. In the first stages of the war they are portrayed as children who are not fully aware of the dramatic situation. The prolonged holidays, the general excitement and the vehement course of events – all of this encourage children to play. The war, in spite of the present German troops, still makes them think of a playground game. One of the first scenes of the novel *My, z Marymontu* [*We, from Marymont*] by Liskowacki presents the main character, possibly the author's alter ego, as he meets little boys playing war games in a courtyard. Despite the fact that Warsaw is now seized by the Germans, the children play a game which under these circumstances may seem entirely absurd. Apart from imitating the adults, they also decide the outcome of the war which has barely started. They take revenge on the actual enemies, i.e. German soldiers, by placing the figures who represent them in play in the position of the defeated.

The war vicissitudes of the Marymont boys end tragically during the Warsaw Uprising. It is the crucial moment in the story of the teenage boys who

⁷ L. A. Kirschenbaum, *Innocent victims and heroic defenders. Children and the siege of Leningrad*, [w:] [in:] *Children and war. A historical anthology*, ed. by J. Marten, New York 2001.

⁸ M. Wróblewski, *Głód – proza obozowa*, [w:] *Sensualność w kulturze polskiej*, red. W. Bolecki. Dostęp: 6.04.2016 <http://sensualnosc.bn.org.pl/pl/articles/glod-proza-obozowa-988/> [M. Wróblewski, *Hunger – concentration camp prose*, [in:] *Sensuality in Polish culture*, ed. by W. Bolecki. At <http://sensualnosc.bn.org.pl/pl/articles/glod-proza-obozowa-988/>]

make the rapid transition from play to the real combat, where the death of the closest relatives and friends happens almost every day and becomes an ordinary matter. Liskowacki heroicises his teenage characters by endowing them with features characteristic of adults. Not only can they overcome their fear, but also the grief over those who were killed in front of their very eyes; mostly adults and, more rarely, their peers:

Gdy kapral, zaniepokojony ciszą na strychu, pobiegł tam i zaraz przyniósł wiadomość, że „Kmicic” zabity, Michał tylko zęby zaciął. W gardle rósł mu jakiś skowyt, jęk, ale przemógł się i „Sosna” natychmiast zrozumiał, że trzeba tę śmierć właśnie ciszą uczcić⁹. [When the corporal, feeling uneasy about silence in the attic, ran there and was back at once, and told them that “Kmicic” was killed, Michał only clenched his teeth. He felt some howl build in his throat, some groan, but he overcame that and “Sosna” immediately understood that the death was to be honoured just by silence.]

For the most part they are extraordinarily brave, responsible, unflinchingly determined. Their resolve to fight is as firm as that of professional soldiers. As the narrative unfolds, the differences between the adults and children fighting in the Uprising become blurred. Only their appearance, their voices and the clumsy way of smoking cigarettes betray their tender age. They take upon themselves a great responsibility and care after the destitute women who, having lost their husbands and sons, expect the news about their closest relatives and friends engaged in the Uprising. In Liskowacki's novels, the boys imitate the parlance of adults and the military jargon as though fighting were their only work. Such scenes, to be found particularly midway through the whole series (in *Z zielonych ulic na barykady* [*From green streets onto barricades*]), exalt the young characters. It is also a sort of literary persuasion, which aims to endow the presented world with realistic features.

No, to my teraz z nimi podyskutujemy o wojnie. Chłopcy, robimy odskok pod tamte drzewa. Ja ich zachodzę z przodu, a wy czekacie w krzakach na moją serię. I będziecie kosić tych, którzy z boku, po skrzydełkach będziecie kosić, kapujecie?¹⁰ [Well, we are going to discuss some war with them now. Boys, we are heading for those trees. I will take them by surprise from the front, and you wait in the bushes for my shot. And you will be clipping the wings of those on the side, clipping their wings, all right?]

In spite of the dramatic experiences, the boys of Marymont who form the clandestine group ‘Revenge’ almost miraculously survive. They lose their contingent along the way and more than once face imminent death only to ‘become’ brave soldiers in the end. Liskowacki, in a way characteristic of propa-

⁹ R. Liskowacki, *Wracamy do domu. Powieść dla młodzieży*, Poznań 1978, s. 95. [R. Liskowacki, *We are returning to home. A novel for young adults*, Poznan 1978, p. 95.]

¹⁰ Tamże, s. 21. [*Ibidem*, p. 21]

ganda materials, describes the ‘experiences’ of his characters to glorify the boy who fight in the Uprising, accompanied by a girl playing the supporting role. The narrative is certainly not devoid of historical truth, given that the participation of children and young people in the Warsaw Uprising is a commonly stated fact observed by scholars. Nevertheless, the aggregation of adult features in a child to the extent proposed by Liskowacki can be seen as an example of a literary play with stereotypes (the brave young soldiers fighting in the Uprising) and the *puer senex* topos, used instrumentally for educational purposes.

Patrzył w milczeniu na swych kolegów siedzących na stertach wypalonych cegieł. Tyle spraw pięknych razem przeżyli, tyle lat łączyła ich przysięga złożona w dniu, w którym z ich woli, z ich dziecięcej nienawiści do wroga zrodziła się tajna grupa „Zemsta”. Później los ich rozdzielił, przyszli z Marymontu na Żoliborz, aby walczyć także za marymonckie uliczki. A teraz znowu są razem. Przez prawdziwe piekło przeszli i nikogo nie muszą opłakiwać. Żyje cała piątka i tylko Antek zostawił w Warszawie lewą dłoń¹¹. [He was looking in silence at his friends who were sitting on stacks of burned-out bricks. They lived together through so many beautiful things, their oath united them them, the oath sworn on the day when, fed by the childish hatred of the enemy, they wilfully formed a secret group “Revenge”. Then, their fate separated them, they came from Marymont to Żoliborz in order to fight also for the Marymont streetlets. And now they are together again. They have lived through real hell and they do not need to mourn anyone. The whole five are alive, and only Antek has left his left hand in Warsaw.]

Wiktor Zawada in his projection of the ‘war boys’ has gone even further. He proposes a model of a child who possesses the features of an adult and a jester, the symbol of wisdom popular in the European culture. The series of his novels about the ‘Cacti’, the children of Zamość, scintillates with humour and wit, which mitigates the atrocities of war. The author does include in his narrative some cruel events, such as the death of doctor Gold and other Jewish inhabitants of Zamość as well as the ever-present hunger and the frequent instances of betrayal and denunciation, but for the most part the narrative revolves around the ‘fight’ of the ‘Cacti’ with ‘the black flag’ (as illustrated in the title of the middle part of the whole series). Despite their tender age, they behave as if they were adults, which can be seen in the key moments when they overcome their fear. In particular, one should note in this context the killings of the Jews:

Tymczasem pochód śmierci podpełza ku rampie kolejowej, ginąc wśród baraczków i między stertami skrzyń. Z wolna cichną strzały i krzyki. Na ulicy pozostają – jednakowo bezwładni – ludzie i ich rzeczy. Chłopcy niczego tak nie pragną, jak uciec od tych straszliwych obrazów, skryć się w zaciszu własnego domu i wypłakać w samotności lęk i groźbę. Ale oto dostrzegają kilka postaci w brunatnych bluzach i czarnych spodenkach Hitlerjugend. Przechodzą spokojnie, jakby tuż obok nie leżały ciała pomordowanych, lecz mierzwa postawio-

¹¹ Tamże, s. 136. [*Ibidem*, p. 136]

na przez konie. Jedni patrzą przed siebie obojętnie, inni nieznacznie odwracają głowy na widok krwi¹². [Meanwhile, the march of death creeps towards a loading platform, and disappears among little barracks and piles of crates. Shots and shouts slowly subside. In the street there remain, equally immobile, people and their belongings. The boys wish to escape from the horrible sight for dear life, wish to hide in the quiet of their home and cry he tears of fear and horror in solitude. But then they spot a few figures wearing brown Hitlerjugend shirts and black shorts. They calmly pass by, as if there was lying matted horse straw, not the bodies of the murdered ones. Some are looking indifferently ahead, others slightly turn their heads away from the sight of blood.]

The shrewdness and cunning of the boys from the 'Cacti' group, confronted with the neatly organized and extremely well trained German soldiers, reveals the more 'light-hearted' aspect of World War II. The novelistic world of Zawada is studded with historical detail and presents a boy who under the circumstances not only takes over the features of his father, but proves his stamina in harrying the enemy with fairly subtle games. The author replaces the direct confrontation with childish pranks, which have substantial impact on the reality without losing the elements of spontaneity and improvisation. In this way, the invaders are ridiculed and portrayed as grotesque rather than menacing figures, devoid of their own will and without a hint of humanity. Zawada describes his German characters in a way which deprives them of all positive features. The hyperbolisation is applied with a view to present the 'Cacti' group against this background as an exceptional team, even though not entirely free from minor shortcomings (vanity, gluttony and talkativeness).

The boys from Zawada's novel can make their own choices as regards the tactic of harrying the enemy by means of various pranks. However, they also know how to make use of weapons. They do this in a playful manner:

Teraz Jasiak wpełznął pod stodołę i wyciągnął żołnierski plecak. [...] Rozpiął paski i otworzył klapę plecaka. Z wnętrza wydobył nowiuteńką maskę z pochłaniaczem, garść naboju karabinowych, ładownicę, pas i bagnet. Znowu sięgnął pod stodołę, wyciągając tym razem hełm, prawdziwą polską „donicę”¹³. [Now Jasiak crept under the barn and took out a soldier's backpack. [...] He undid the straps and opened it. He took out a brand new gas mask, a handful of rifle cartridges, a belt, and a bayonet. Again, he slid his hand under the barn, this time producing a helmet, a genuine Polish ,pot-helmet'.]

The numerous acts of courage exhibited by the boys who fought German soldiers often led to their arrest. In this situation, Jasiak, a ten-year-old member of the group, learns fairly quickly how to behave in order to survive. In the

¹² W. Zawada, *Wielka wojna z czarną flagą*, Lublin 1968, s. 94. [W. Zawada, *The great war with the black flag*, Lublin 1986, p. 94]

¹³ W. Zawada, *Kaktusy z Zielonej ulicy*, Lublin 1967, s. 45. [W. Zawada, *The Cacti of Green Street*, Lublin 1967, p. 45.]

numerous scenes presenting the direct confrontation of Polish children with German soldiers one can often observe a phenomenon which Zawada emphasised, namely that the ruthless adults disregarded the fact that they were dealing with children. In a similar way the author 'encouraged' his young characters to accept or play the roles of adults: they shoot at the Germans, destroy the means of military communication or steal their documents. At critical points, when there is a need to exhibit courage and bravery, they follow the example of their fathers. One boy from the group is portrayed saying the following words when facing a dramatic moment:

Nie! Nie! Nigdy nie będzie Niemcem. Choćby z nim uczynili nie wiadomo co, nie przejdzie na stronę tych zbirów. [...] to Niemcy aresztowali mu ojca, wysłali do strasznego obozu w Majdanku. Za to właśnie, że nie chciał pójść na ich służbę. Nigdy, nigdy nie zdradzi swojego tatusia! Nie okaże się gorszy od niego¹⁴. [No! No! He will never be a German. No matter what they would do to him, he will not join the thugs. [...] It is the Germans who have arrested his father and sent him to a terrifying concentration camp in Majdanek. Because he refused to join them. He will never ever betray his daddy! He won't prove to be worse than him.]

Despite the painful and tragic experiences, the young characters of Zawada 'return' under the rein of their parents who survive the war and take up their interrupted school education. They return to the role of a child who is not entirely independent and requires care and attention from adults. The role of a mature person is thus discarded, even if not with full acceptance.

The boys portrayed in the novels by Przeździecki, Liskowacki and Zawada play the roles of adults, particularly of their fathers or uncles. Even though they were forced to do so due to the circumstances of war, they manage (except for Wojtek, the eight-year-old from the book by Przeździecki) to get their bearings in what seems to be a new world for them. The authors heroicise these boys and seek to find a balance between fiction, which portrays extraordinary juvenile figures forced to fight in war, with historical detail; this is with a view to give an air of a documentary to the proposed narrative. Certainly, the historical sources testify to the fact that children took part in the Warsaw Uprising and guerrilla warfare, but do not confirm that these children thought and behaved like adults.

¹⁴ W. Zawada, *Leśna szkoła strzelca Kaktusa. Powieść dla młodzieży*, Lublin 1969, s. 17. [W. Zawada, *The wood school of Cactus the Rifleman. A novel for young adults*, Lublin 1969, p. 17.]

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Małe laboratorium teatru lalek, czyli Wiesław Hejno nie tylko dla dorosłych

Abstract: The present paper seeks to describe and examine Wiesław Hejno's theatrical productions for children and adolescents, which were staged in the Wrocław Puppet Theatre in the period 1981–2002, when Hejno was the artistic director of the theatre. Hejno received international recognition as a stage director of puppet performances that he produced for adult audiences in collaboration with the scenographer Jadwiga Mydlarska-Kowal. At the same time, his productions for younger spectators have attracted little, if any, critical attention, despite the fact that they were worked on by the very same team of artists. Such underrepresentation in the critical discourse, as I argue, seems completely unjustified. This article aims at pointing out some of the distinctive features that make up Hejno's authorial vision of productions for children and adolescents. Simultaneously, it both provides a glimpse into some of the director's greatest achievements in this field and draws links between his works that are intended for two different audiences: adults and children. What is emphasized in particular is Hejno's resistance against infantile tendencies in contemporary puppet theatre and his idea of an artistically mature theatre which puts much faith in the imagination, associations and extraintellectual impressions of a yet unsophisticated spectator.

Keywords: Wrocław, puppet theatre, children, Wiesław Hejno (1936–), Jadwiga Mydlarska-Kowal (1948–2001)

W 2015 r. przypada jubileusz sześćdziesięciolecia pracy artystycznej Wiesława Hejny – wybitnego reżysera teatru lalek, aktora, scenarzysty, publicyisty i pedagoga. Międzynarodowe uznanie zapewniły mu przede wszystkim inscenizacje realizowane na Małej Scenie dla widzów dorosłych Wrocławskiego Teatru Lalek w okresie kierowania przez niego tą placówką w latach 1981–2002. Wypracowany w tym czasie przez artystę styl przyjęło się określać mianem „teatru Hejny”¹. Jego znakiem rozpoznawczym stały się reinterpretacje wybitnej literatury polskiej i światowej, przedstawiane na scenie lalkowej za pomocą nowatorskich pomysłów inscenizacyjnych wykorzystujących m.in. teatralny potencjał metafory plastycznej. Formuła teatru Hejny mogła się dopełnić dzięki wspólnej pracy kierowanego przez reżysera zespołu artystów, w tym

¹ Por. m.in. M. Waszkiel, *Dzieje teatru lalek w Polsce 1944–2000*, Warszawa 2012, s.212–218; S. Srokowski, *Teatr Hejny*, „Opole”, IV 1985.

przede wszystkim scenografki – Jadwigi Mydlarskiej-Kowal i kompozytora – Zbigniewa Piotrowskiego. Za najistotniejsze osiągnięcie wrocławskiej Małej Sceny najczęściej uważa się tzw. tryptyk *Fenomen Władzy*, na który złożyły się spektakle *Proces Franza Kafki* (1985), *Gyubal Wahazar* Stanisława Ignacego Witkiewicza (1987) oraz *Faust* Goethego (1989).

„Napisane” za pomocą środków teatru lalek sceniczne rozprawy Hejny na temat ludzkiej kondycji i „nadrzędnych sił porządkujących lub wymuszających zachowanie jednostki”² nie tylko spotkały się z entuzjastycznym przyjęciem w kraju i za granicą, ale doczekały się również licznych analiz krytyczno-teatralnych czy filologicznych. Spektakle z tych samych lat zrealizowane poza Małą Sceną uznać należy na tym tle za niemal przemilczane, mimo że powstały w wyniku współpracy tego samego zespołu artystów. Niniejszy artykuł stawia sobie za cel częściowe choćby wypełnienie zaistniałej w ten sposób luki.

Na mniejsze zainteresowanie wyreżyserowanymi przez Hejnę spektaklami dla dzieci i młodzieży złożyło się zapewne wiele różnych elementów. Oryginalność, siła i wielowymiarowość inscenizacji dla dorosłych, a w końcu także ich międzynarodowy sukces, skupiły niemal całą uwagę obserwatorów wrocławskiej sceny. Ponadto niewielu krytyków dysponowało w tym czasie kompetencjami niezbędnymi dla profesjonalnej oceny spektakli lalkowych kierowanych do młodszej publiczności. Wszystko to sprawiło, że o niektórych inscenizacjach Dużej Sceny WTL z ostatniego dwudziestolecia XX w. dowiedzieć się dziś można jedynie z okolicznościowych wydawnictw samego teatru, opracowań dotyczących scenografii Mydlarskiej-Kowal oraz kilku zaledwie, zdawkowych i nie zawsze składnych notatek prasowych. Swoistym paradoksem pozostaje fakt, że marginalizowana część dorobku reżyserskiego Hejny trzykrotnie przewyższa liczbę realizacji dla dorosłych i kierowana jest do widza, z którym teatr lalek najpowszechniej jest kojarzony.

W popremierowych relacjach prasowych powtarzały się dwie reakcje: zachwyty nad plastyczną stroną widowiska oraz przekonanie, że spektakl – w opinii recenzenta – wykracza poza granice właściwe dziecięcej percepcji. „Ten gęsty Eintopfgericht ugotowany przez scenarzystę i reżysera mający być może zadowolić i diabła i anioła najmniej w moim przekonaniu interesuje adresatów spektaklu – dzieci” – ocenił *Polskie szopki i herody* Zdzisław Smektała³. „Nie akcja jednak zupełnie ściągała uwagę moją i dzieci. Zachwycona i rozbawiona patrzyłam na piękną scenografię (...). Maski były świetne” – odnotowała Bogda Stachurska po obejrzeniu *Księżniczki Turandot*⁴. „Oto na oczach publiczności rozgrywa się pojedynek trzech osobowości: autorki sztuki, scenografki i reżysera. Walka jest wyrównana, momentami pasjonująca, ale na Boga – dlaczego muszą to oglądać dzieci?” – grzmiał autor recenzji spektaklu *Magiczne imię*⁵. „Oczywiście, jak

² W. Hejno, *Pośród lalek i ludzi* [w:] *Pośród lalek i ludzi*. Wydawnictwo jubileuszowe z okazji 50-lecia Wrocławskiego Teatru Lalek, Wrocław 1997, s.19.

³ Z. Smektała, *Misz-masz w Betlejem*, „Słowo Polskie”, 24 II 1982.

⁴ B. Stachurska, *Choćby scenografia...*, „Wieczór Wrocławia”, 17 V 1983.

⁵ (mir), *Pojedynek w imię magii*, „Wieczór Wrocławia”, 30 XI 1998.

zwykle wspaniałe są maski. Aktorzy świetnie >>odziani<< przez scenografkę Jadwigę Mydlarską-Kowal” – zauważyła Zofia Frąckiewicz oceniając oprawę *Ali Baby i 40 rozbójników*⁶. Ta sama autorka chwaliła również plastykę *Komedii dla mamy i taty*: „Jak zwykle oryginalną scenografią czaruje widzów Jadwiga Mydlarska Kowal”⁷. Leszek Pułka po obejrzeniu *Akropolis wrocławskiej. Szopki* relacjonował natomiast: „Było zaledwie poprawnie i raczej nie dla dzieci. (...) Trzeba sporej gimnastyki, by wytłumaczyć kilkulatkom, dlaczego np Herod zmienia się we Fryderyka (...) Czy przedszkolaki są odpowiednim adresatem takich politycznych pomówień i patriotycznych zachęt?”⁸. W innej recenzji tego samego przedstawienia dodał: „Bezwarunkowo piękne są za to pełnoformatowe marionety Jadwigi Mydlarskiej-Kowal. Pomysł, by ożywić kamienne posągi ratusza, jest przedniej marki”⁹.

Kwestią zasadniczą wydaje się określenie adresatów poszczególnych scen Wrocławskiego Teatru Lalek w okresie dyrekcji Wiesława Hejny. Uproszczeniem byłoby zastosowanie dychotomicznego podziału na spektakle dla dzieci i dorosłych, gdyż poza Małą Sceną prezentowano przedstawienia skierowane do zróżnicowanej wiekowo grupy odbiorców. Kandydując na stanowisko dyrektora teatru reżyser wprost odniósł się do tej kwestii: „Chciałbym również powrócić do istniejącego tu kiedyś układu w sensie adresata, dla którego działamy. Chodzi mi o trzy sceny: dla przedszkolaków, dzieci szkolnych i widzów dorosłych”¹⁰. W późniejszej praktyce przywołany podział nie był jednak konsekwentny i stanowił raczej pewien uogólniony model. Dzieci i młodzież szkolną można było przykładowo dzielić dalej – na uczniów klas 1–3, uczniów klas wyższych oraz młodzież licealną. O właściwy dobór widza dbała przede wszystkim organizacja widowni, a założenia dotyczące sformalizowania podziału adresatów wedle kryterium wieku zmieniały się w czasie. W roku 1999 stworzono przykładowo formułę Wędrownej Sceny Edukacyjnej¹¹ kierowanej głównie do młodzieży szkolnej, przy czym ta sama grupa widzów niejednokrotnie zasiadała na widowni Małej Sceny. W tygodniu teatr odwiedziały przede wszystkim zorganizowane grupy, co stanowić miało swoiste „przedłużenie” procesu edukacyjnego¹², a w weekendy widzowie, którzy nabyli bilet w kasie, a zatem... wszyscy¹³. Najmłodszy pojawiali się nadto najczęściej wraz ze swoimi opiekunami, którzy stanowili poniekąd kolejną grupę

⁶ Z. Frąckiewicz, *Biedny bogaczem*, „Słowo Polskie”, 02 II 1995.

⁷ Z. Frąckiewicz, *W domu Stasia*, „Słowo Polskie”, 11 I 1996.

⁸ L. Pułka, *Truskawkowa Akropolis*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 18 I 2000.

⁹ L. Pułka, *Szopka wytworna*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 15 XII 2000.

¹⁰ Z. Frąckiewicz, *Teatr dla dzieci i... dorosłych*, „Słowo Polskie”, 5–7 VI 1981.

¹¹ Por. m.in. H. Jurkowski, *Wrocławski teatr lalek [w:] Lalki i my. Wydawnictwo jubileuszowe z okazji 55-lecia Wrocławskiego Teatru Lalek*, Wrocław 2002, s.73.

¹² Zob. W. Hejno, *Mój wrocławski teatr lalek [w:] Kalendarz wrocławski 2002*, Wrocław 2002, s.289.

¹³ Por. m.in. S. Nikćević, *Dzieci rozumieją więcej. Festiwalowe rozmowy. Wiesław Hejno, Vecernji list*, 28 VIII 1985.

widzów. Wiesław Hejno miał oczywiście pełną świadomość wielobarwności całej tej mozaiki¹⁴.

Objęmując kierownictwo wrocławskiej sceny lalkowej, Hejno dysponował już bogatym bagażem doświadczeń reżyserskich i aktorskich, które determinowały jego postrzeganie teatru lalek, w tym teatru dla dzieci¹⁵. Punktem odbicia dla własnych wizji i zamierzeń twórczych było dla Hejny ogólne wyobrażenie tego teatru, ówczesna kondycja polskiego i światowego lalkarstwa, a także opinie o możliwych kierunkach jego rozwoju wyrażane w kręgach teatralnych twórców. Wolny od jakichkolwiek kompleksów przypisywanych niekiedy środowisku, Hejno – autentyczny pasjonat estetyki lalkarskich środków wyrazowych – snuł plany dalece wykraczające poza stworzenie sceny służącej li tylko przygotowaniu widza do odbioru „prawdziwego” teatru dramatycznego. Reżyser sprzeciwiał się przy tym popularnej wówczas idei „teatru lalek bez lalek”¹⁶ i negował dążenie do perfekcji w animacji naśladowczej jako zasadniczą wartość artystyczną. Zapowiadał, że obok lalki na prowadzonej przez niego scenie pojawiać się będzie maska i aktor żywego planu¹⁷.

Można obcować z przedmiotami w sposób głębszy i rozumniejszy (...). Chcemy zbadać wszystkie możliwości, jakich dostarcza tworzywo teatru lalek. Pragniemy zgłębić jego materialność, pamiętając, że lalka teatralna jest jednocześnie dziełem sztuki kryjącym w sobie idee. Najbardziej interesuje nas kontakt aktora z lalką. (...) Chcemy poczuć przedmioty lub zastygnąć w ich martwocie (...) Jesteśmy na początku drogi. Nie wiemy, dokąd nas ona zaprowadzi¹⁸.

– głosił tekst ogłoszonego przez Hejną w 1982 r. manifestu Małej Sceny. Mimo że dokument dotyczy twórczości teatralnej dla dojrzałej publiczności, bez wątpienia mówi on również wiele o samym twórcy. Zdradza jego szczególne wyczulenie i wrażliwość na potencjał ukryty w wyjątkowym środku wypowiedzi scenicznej, jakim jest lalka.

O założeniach dotyczących spektakli dla dzieci Hejno opowiedział szerzej w artykule przygotowanym tuż po zakończeniu pracy na stanowisku dyrektora WTL:

Absolutnie nie satysfakcjonował mnie infantylny teatr dla dzieci, a właściwie teatrzyk lalek, z jakim powszechnie spotykamy się do dziś. Dzieciom pragnąłem zafundować teatr na ich miarę – poważny artystycznie. (...) teatr wartościowy w warstwie literackiej i estetycznej, perfekcyjny wykonawczo, mieszczący się w pojęciu „świątynia sztuki”. Słowem, młodego widza chciałem traktować serio¹⁹.

¹⁴ W. Hejno, *Mój wrocławski...*, s.294.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, s.287.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, s.286, W. Hejno, *Pośród lalek...*, s.13.

¹⁷ Z. Frąckiewicz, *Teatr dla...*

¹⁸ Wrocławski Teatr Lalek, „Scena Mała”, 1982–1983, tekst manifestu w archiwum teatru.

¹⁹ W. Hejno, *Mój wrocławski...*, s.286.

Rzeczywiście, przeciwstawienie teatru infantrylnego artystycznemu jako wyraz programowego buntu przeciwko obserwowanemu w inscenizacjach lalkowych zdziecinnieniu, powracało wielokrotnie w wielu wypowiedziach z okresu sprawowania funkcji dyrektora WTL w odniesieniu do obu prowadzonych scen²⁰.

Osobą, która w największym stopniu pomogła w realizacji zamierzeń twórczych reżysera, stała się odkryta dla teatru przez Hejnę scenografka, Jadwiga Mydlarska-Kowal. Artyści zetknęli się ze sobą za sprawą Eugeniusza Geta-Stankiewicza tuż po wyborze nowego dyrektora WTL²¹. Od tego momentu wspólnie, doskonale uzupełniający się artystyczny duet wspólnie realizował prawie wszystkie projekty reżysera na obu scenach teatru. Współpraca ta przerwana została dopiero przedwczesną śmiercią plastyczki w 2001 r., a zatem trwała niemal do końca dyrekcji Hejny. „Była tą osobą, z którą można było, a nawet należało rozpocząć systematyczne budowanie teatru artystycznego. Wywiedzionego z przeczuć, ale i artystycznego buntu przeciwko zastanej estetyce i infantrylizmowi przedstawień dla dzieci” – wspominał później reżyser²². Mydlarska-Kowal w pełni podzielała zapatrywania Hejny na teatr dla dzieci. Można nawet podejrzewać, że przejęła jego poglądy, gdyż przed rozpoczęciem pracy w WTL artystka nie miała doświadczenia w projektowaniu scenografii teatralnej²³, a teatr lalek kojarzył się jej właśnie z infantrylnością²⁴. Wyznaczanie z reżyserem kierunku zmian szybko zrewidowało jej przeświadczenia. „To dorosłym się wydaje, że do dzieci trzeba podchodzić infantrylnie, a to bzdura” – mówiła w jednym z wywiadów²⁵.

„Świątynia sztuki – artystyczny teatr lalek dla dzieci traktujący poważnie młodego widza” to zamysł, którego realizacja nie mogła nie napotkać na swoisty opór materii. Wizje i programy artystyczne reżysera, nawet sprawującego jednocześnie funkcję dyrektora sceny, pozostają przecież uwarunkowane realiami, w których jego działania są osadzone. Realia kierowania publicznym teatrem gwarantowały Hejnie prawdziwą „rzeczywistość konfrontacji”, i to konfrontacji na wielu płaszczyznach. Program artystyczny spotykać się musiał z planem usługowym statutowo przypisanym instytucjom kultury, akt kreacji z koniecznością sprzedaży biletów i zarabiania pieniędzy, ambicje twórcze konfrontowały się natomiast z oczekiwaniami i wyobrażeniami widzów, opiekunów zorganizowanych grup szkolnych, a w końcu także recenzentów²⁶. W tym kontekście należy osadzić słowa reżysera, który funkcjonowanie sceny dla dzieci opisywał również w nieco odmiennym tonie:

²⁰ Por. m.in. Z. Frąckiewicz, *Teatr dla...*; S. Nikćević, *op. cit.*; A. Sachanbińska, *Teatr bez magii nie istnieje... Rozmowa jubileuszowa z Wiesławem Hejną*, 24–26 II 2000.

²¹ Por. m.in. W. Hejno, *Pośród lalek...*, s.14; W. Hejno, *Wrocławianka z wyboru* [w:] *Kalendarz wrocławski 2002*, Wrocław 2002, s.404.

²² W. Hejno, *Odeszła wielka artystka*, „Teatr Lalek” 2001, nr 2, s.36.

²³ *Ibidem*, s.36.

²⁴ A. Sztylek, *Lalki podświadomości*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 24 III 2000.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ W. Hejno, *Mój wrocławski...*, s.286.

Na Dużej Scenie widowia rodzinna oczekiwała klarowności, aby po spektaklu rodzice czy opiekunowie mogli nawiązać kontakt z dzieckiem, odpowiedzieć na pytania, wrócić w rozmowie do treści spektaklu.(...) Podstawą wykładni akcji scenicznej i funkcjonowania w niej bohaterów muszą być jasne przesłania (...) Pogodna baśń, radość, śpiew, taniec, przygoda, żart, lekkość wyznaczały estetykę i jakość spektakli dla dzieci²⁷.

Prawda o wrocławskich inscenizacjach dla dzieci z okresu dyrekcji Hejny jak zwykle leży gdzieś pośrodku. Dowodzą tego choćby przytoczone powyżej opinie i głosy recenzentów. Przystępność, lekkość i radość nie zawsze cechowały spektakle wystawiane na Dużej Scenie i z całą pewnością nie było to dziełem przypadku. Hejno programowo nie zamierzał jedynie podążać za widownią, lecz pragnął nade wszystko kształtować jej gusta²⁸. Starał się uniewrażliwić na pusty aplauz²⁹. Obok kreowania spektakli wychodzących naprzeciw zapotrzebowaniu i wyobrażeniom publiczności, niejednokrotnie także wartym uwagi, wielokrotnie ulegał pokusie poszukiwania nowej formuły teatru dla dzieci. Artysta, który uważał, że teatr lalkowy stanowi „niezwykle narzędzie poznania”, a w relacjach aktora z przedmiotem, lalką, przestrzenią „odsłaniają się zagadki naszego istnienia i funkcjonowania na świecie”³⁰, zwyczajnie nie potrafił ograniczyć się wyłącznie do budowania na scenie kolejnych „pogodnych baśni”. Realizując spektakle dla dzieci i młodzieży, zdarzało mu się eksperymentować w zakresie kodu teatralnego dialogu z widzami na poziomie niemal zbliżonym do tego, który stał się wyróżnikiem Sceny Małej.

Przyjrzyjmy się teatralnej statystyce. W okresie swojej dyrekcji Wiesław Hejno wyreżyserował na scenie Wrocławskiego Teatru Lalek trzydzieści premierowych spektakli i pokazów, z czego jedynie siedem zaprezentowanych zostało na Małej Scenie dla widzów dorosłych. Przy dwudziestu realizacjach Hejno współpracował z Jadwigą Mydlarską-Kowal, która jednak nie uczestniczyła m.in. w opracowaniu żadnego z trzech pokazów tzw. teatru ulicznego i tytuł premier *Wędrowną Sceną Edukacyjną*. Oprawę muzyczną do osiemnastu przedstawień (w tym sześciu spektakli Małej Sceny) stworzył Zbigniew Piotrowski, który obok Hejny i Mydlarskiej-Kowal miał największy udział w kreowaniu odrębności stylu teatru Hejny. Nie sposób oczywiście przeanalizować w tym miejscu wszystkich premierowych pokazów Dużej Sceny. Nie jest to również celem niniejszego artykułu. Spróbujmy jednak prześledzić znaczące momenty z jej historii i wskazać zasadnicze cechy, zależności czy też zjawiska składające się na jej artystyczną formułę.

Pierwszym efektem współpracy Hejny i Mydlarskiej-Kowal stała się premiera spektaklu *Polskie szopki i herody* (1982) w opracowaniu dramaturgicznym Henryka Jurkowskiego. Los zdecydował, że estetyka szopkowa swoistą kłamrą rów-

²⁷ *Ibidem*, s.289.

²⁸ Por. B. Stachurska, *Widownia nas nie zawodzi*, „Wieczór Wrocławia”, 22 III 1983.

²⁹ W. Hejno, *Mój wrocławski...*, s.287.

³⁰ *Fenomen Władzy. Proces. Gyubal Wahazar. Faust.*, red. W. Hejno, Wrocław 1994, s.8.

niez zamknęła dorobek artystycznego duetu na Dużej Scenie, ostatnim zrealizowanym wspólnie przedstawieniem dla dzieci i młodzieży była bowiem *Akropolis wrocławska*. Szopka tego samego autora z roku 2000. Wystawiane w odstępnie dwudziestu lat spektakle, poza twórcą scenariusza, wybitnym znawcą polskiej szopki³¹, łączył przede wszystkim kompilacyjny charakter³².

Tekst *Polskich szopek i herodów* stanowił syntezę tradycji szopkowej, a składały się na niego m.in. fragmenty szopek: warszawskiej, krakowskiej, ludowej oraz „herodowe” dialogi. „Pomysł mógł się zrodzić tylko w głowach do szaleństwa opętanych lalkami. Scenariusz taki stanowi materię nie do pogodzenia i już w swoim zarodku mieści zawiązek klęski” – oceniała później kompozycję spektaklu Bożena Frankowska na łamach „Tygodnika Kulturalnego”³³. Przygotowane przez Mydlarską-Kowal pierwsze projekty scenograficzne zrobiły na Hejnie wrażenie swoją lekkością, pomysłowością, rozmachem i ukazaniem postaci w ruchu³⁴. Plastyczka nie była jednak zadowolona z wyniku swojej debiutanckiej pracy. W jednym z wywiadów udzielonych po latach z właściwą sobie swadą stwierdziła: „Dzisiaj, gdy z perspektywy czasu patrzę na ówczesne projekty, myślę, że wyrzuciłabym takiego scenografa za drzwi”³⁵. Spektakl łączył środki planu lalkowego z grą w planie żywym i czerpał ze stylistyk o zróżnicowanej proveniencji geograficznej i historycznej.

Premiera *Polskich szopek i herodów* przypadła w drugim miesiącu po ogłoszeniu stanu wojennego. Pomimo odgórnego zawieszenia działalności instytucji kulturalnych powiązanej ze „zgromadzeniami” publicznymi, teatry lalkowe mogły wznowić przedstawienia już od stycznia 1982 r., co było zapewne konsekwencją postrzegania ich jako infantylnego, dzieciennego teatru kukielkowego. Pokazy tego spektaklu nabrały szczególnego wymiaru, wpisując się w kontekst społeczno-polityczny, a to przede wszystkim za sprawą skarykaturowania postaci życia publicznego, użycia robotniczych kostiumów aktorów żywego planu oraz dołączenia do scenariusza kolędy robotniczej z 1905 r., zawierającej m.in. poruszające słowa „nie ma łańcucha dla wolnego ducha”. Prezentacja spektaklu podczas Międzynarodowego Festiwalu Teatrów Lalkowych w Bielsku-Białej w 1982 r. wywołała popłoch wśród ubeckich obserwatorów³⁶. Przedstawienia jednak nie zdjęto i było ono z powodzeniem pokazywane przez kilka sezonów. W grudniu 1988 r. „Słowo Polskie” donosiło o dwusetnym spektaklu: „Atrakcyjny tekst Henryka Jurkowskiego, ciekawa inscenizacja Wiesława Hejny, barw-

³¹ Por. m.in. J. Sztaudynger, H. Jurkowski, H. Ryl, *Od szopki do teatru lalek*, Łódź 1961.

³² H. Jurkowski, *Wrocławski...*, str.49, 73.

³³ B. Frankowska, *Niech żyje wolna pacyna*, „Tygodnik Kulturalny”, 1 VIII 1982.

³⁴ Por. m.in. W. Hejno, *Pośród lalek...*, s.14; W. Hejno, *Wrocławianka...*, s.404.

³⁵ A. Głuch-Klucznik, *Twórczość scenograficzna Jadwigi Mydlarskiej-Kowal*, praca magisterska pod kierunkiem prof. dr hab. J. Deglera, Wydział Lalkarski PWST w Krakowie, Wydziały Zamiejscowe we Wrocławiu, 1996, brak numeracji stron.

³⁶ Por. m.in. W. Hejno, *Pośród lalek...*, s.14; W. Hejno, *Wrocławianka...*, s.404; H. Jurkowski, *Wrocławski...*, str.49.

na scenografia Mydlarskiej-Kowal przyciągają do teatru całe rodziny znajdujące w tym widowisku radość tradycji Bożego Narodzenia³⁷.

Scenariusz przedstawienia *Akropolis wrocawska. Szopka* napisany został przez Jurkowskiego na specjalne zamówienie dyrektora teatru w związku z tysiącleciem Wrocławia. Nie dziwi zatem, że tradycyjne sceny szopkowe połączone zostały w tym przypadku z motywami nawiązującymi do historii i współczesności miasta. Po dwóch dekadach od premiery *Szopek i herodów* twórcy nie zrezygnowali tym samym z oparcia struktury bożonarodzeniowego spektaklu na zestawieniu i przeplataniu rozmaitych wątków. Uzasnieniem tej konsekwencji może być sukces poprzedniej kompilacji, historyczna formuła szopki, a także zbieg dwóch świątecznych okazji. Część recenzentów również wykazała się konsekwencją, oceniając po premierze koncepcję owego przedstawienia: „Trudno pokochać takie pogmatwanie wątków, stylów i gatunków, które wynika z braku pomysłów, nie z ich nadmiaru” – odnotował Leszek Pułka na stronach „Gazety Wyborczej”³⁸. Prasowe oceny spektaklu, którego premiera przesunęła się tym razem na styczeń z uwagi na remont teatru, jak zwykle były jednak podzielone³⁹.

Tytuł szopkowego przedstawienia dość swobodnie nawiązał do słynnego dramatu Wyspiańskiego. Dla Wrocławia rozumianej metaforycznie Akropolis nie stanowi oczywiście Wawel. Zgodnie z zamysłem twórców jest nią miejski Ratusz, jako swoista „>>księga dziejów<<, historyczny symbol władzy, suwerenności, tożsamości, tradycji i trwania⁴⁰. Rzecz precyzyjnie objaśniał program spektaklu, który, podobnie jak w przypadku *Szopek i herodów*, stał się polem pouczającego historycznego miniwykładu. Najważniejszymi postaciami spektaklu scenariusz uczynił zdobiące ratusz kamienne figury, które ożywały dzięki cudownej mocy Bożego Narodzenia. Od strony inscenizacyjnej moc ta znalazła wydatne wsparcie w sile talentu Jadwigi Mydlarskiej-Kowal – autorki wspaniałych, docenionych przez recenzentów lalek⁴¹. Były to głównie lalki pełnoformatowe, wielkości człowieka, teatralnie imitujące fakturę i masę kamiennych posągów. Wkomponowana w strukturę spektaklu *Legenda o mistrzu odlewniku* brawurowo odegrana⁴² została na scenie pacynkowej z wykorzystaniem parawanu, a całość otrzymała, odpowiadającą konwencji, interesującą oprawę muzyczną, przygotowaną przez Bogusława Klimsę. Odnosząc się do skomponowanej przez siebie szopki, Henryk Jurkowski napisał: „Sądzę (...), że dzięki odrębności wobec innych szopek utwierdzała swoistość kultury Wrocławia, i to w wielu wymiarach⁴³. Trudno nie zgodzić się z autorem.

³⁷ (m), *Szopka x 200*, „Słowo Polskie”, 27 XII 1988.

³⁸ L. Pułka, *Truskawkowa...*

³⁹ Por. m.in. B. Sola, *Szopka z Wrocławiem w tle*, „Słowo Polskie”, 17 I 2000.

⁴⁰ Program teatralny spektaklu *Akropolis wrocawska. Szopka*, red. M. Lubieniecka, Wrocławski Teatr Lalek, sezon 1999/2000.

⁴¹ L. Pułka, *Truskawkowa...*

⁴² Por. m.in. *Ibidem*.

⁴³ H. Jurkowski, *Wrocławski...*, s.77.

Akcentowanie tożsamości kulturowej Wrocławia i regionu stało się istotną ideą przyświecającą Hejnie podczas pracy nad projektami Dużej Sceny. Poza *Akropolis wrocławską* tematy osadzone w kontekście lokalnej historii i kultury pojawiły się również w przedstawieniach: *Baśń o smoku Strachocie* oraz *Jadwiga ze Śląska*. Obie premiery odbyły się w drugiej połowie 1996 r. Tekst do pierwszego przedstawienia napisany został wierszem przez ówczesnego kierownika literackiego teatru – Krzysztofa Kopkę. Podstawą scenarusza stała się w tym przypadku miejscowa legenda, według której nazwa jednej z wrocławskich dzielnic – Strachocin – pochodzi od zamieszkującego tam niegdyś smoka. Barwna historia, osadzona w realiach popularnych wrocławskich ulic, stała się okazją do zaprezentowania popisu animacji marionetek sycylijskich zaprojektowanych przez Mydlarską-Kowal w baśniowej estetyce. Inscenizacji towarzyszyła melodyjna, chwytliwa muzyka Zbigniewa Piotrowskiego oraz dosyć oryginalny (niestety nie dla wszystkich czytelny) zabieg scenograficzny. Polegał on na rezygnacji z zaprezentowania na scenie... smoka. Symbolizowała go wielka rama ze smoczymi łuskami i oczami, która okalała akcję sceniczną, ujawniając co jakiś czas pewne „przejawy życia”. Z uwagi na powstały niedosyt i wyraźne oczekiwania dzieci, lalka całego gada pojawiła się w końcu w holu teatru.

Zupełnie inny charakter miała inscenizacja *Jadwigi ze Śląska*, która przygotowana została w związku z jubileuszem pięćdziesięciolecia teatru. Także i w tym przypadku scenariusz wywiedziono z legendy, jednak treść i struktura tekstu bliższe były raczej scenicznej kronice historycznej aniżeli typowej baśni dla dzieci. Sztukę napisali wspólnie Ruth Bloss i (ponownie) Krzysztof Kopka, a jej bohaterką uczyniono żyjącą na przełomie XII i XIII w. świętą Jadwigę z Andechs w Bawarii. Późniejsza mieszkanka Wrocławia uznawana jest za jeden z symboli budowania mostów pomiędzy narodami polskim i niemieckim z uwagi na zawarte (w wieku lat 12), udane małżeństwo z Henrykiem I Brodatym, księciem Śląska i Wielkopolski – władcą, który stał się również jednym z bohaterów *Akropolis wrocławskiej*. Mosty właśnie uczyniono powracającym motywem spektaklu.

Przedstawienie prezentowało skomplikowane, a miejscami także bardzo dramatyczne losy świętej w konwencji opowieści snutej przez narratora. Stosunkowo ascetyczna oprawa spektaklu, pozbawiona wszelkich teatralnych „fajerwerków”, opierała się głównie na wysmakowanej kompozycji drewnianych form. Historię przywołano do życia, wykorzystując lalki różnych technik, pośród których dominowały marionetki, prowadzone przez animatorów we franciszkańskich habitach. Oddająca ducha czasu scenografia Mydlarskiej-Kowal mogła zauroczyć gustownym wyważeniem, estetyczną spójnością i dopasowaniem do tematu przedstawienia. Pracę artystki jak zwykle docenili recenzenci⁴⁴.

Jadwiga ze Śląska pośrednio nawiązywała do współczesnej rzeczywistości politycznej, jednak przedstawienie Hejny posiadało również kontekst między-

⁴⁴ Zob. m.in. (kak), *W teatrze lalek*, „Gazeta Wroclawska”, 14 X 1996.

narodowy o bardziej osobistym wymiarze. Współautorkę spektaklu, urodzoną we Wrocławiu Ruth Bloss, powojenne losy zawiodły do Schwabach w Bawarii. Tam od 1945 r. prowadziła (istniejącą nadal) lalkową scenę Schwabachen Marionettenbühne, z którą WTL współpracował przy inscenizacji *Jadwigi ze Śląska*. Podjęta kooperacja stanowiła późną realizację wieloletniego marzenia Bloss o odnowieniu kontaktu z teatrem lalek w rodzinnym mieście⁴⁵. Jej teatr przygotował nadto replikę przedstawienia w Bawarii.

W okresie swojej dyrekcji Hejno kilkakrotnie sięgał po teksty autorów wrocławskich. Obok sztuk Krzysztofa Kopki reżyser zaadoptował na scenę w 1998 r. m.in. liryczną opowieść *Magiczne imię* wrocławskiej poetki Urszuli Koziół. W 2000 r., w związku z 45-leciem pracy artystycznej, postawił sobie natomiast ambitne zadanie przetłumaczenia na język sceny poezji Tadeusza Różewicza z nominowanego do nagrody Nike tomu *Zawsze fragment. Recycling*. Prasa skutecznie podgrzewała przedpremierową atmosferę: „Mistrz lalek przemówi słowami mistrza pióra” – brzmiała zapowiedź jubileuszowego spektaklu⁴⁶.

Przedstawienie, któremu nadano skrócony tytuł *Recycling* (2000), wystawione zostało w ramach Wędrownej Sceny Edukacyjnej, programowo przygotowanej na prezentację poza siedzibą teatru. Formuła sceny polegała na przybliżaniu wartościowych propozycji literackich poprzez pokazy eksponujące tekst kosztem teatralizujących zabiegów inscenizacyjnych. Stworzona przez Beatę Fertalę oprawa scenograficzna spektaklu ograniczała się zatem do pięciu kubłów na śmieci, jednego krzesła, drobnych rekwizytów oraz kilku dziecięcych figurek i lalek w stylu Barbie. Skromne, ale wymowne znaki teatralne oszczędnie „uruchamiane” były przez piątkę aktorów, którzy w pierwszej kolejności interpretowali przypisane im fragmenty poezji. Poeta, urzędnik, kłoszard, bankier i kobieta, pozostając w swoistym zawieszeniu fabularnym, słowami Różewicza stawiali gorzkie diagnozy rzeczywistości dwudziestego wieku.

Premierę prasową *Recyclingu* połączono z wystawną uroczystością z okazji przypadającego jubileuszu. Odbierając oklaski, gratulacje i kwiaty, bohater wieczoru stwierdził, że dopiero po latach zrozumiał specyfikę teatru lalek⁴⁷. Nieobecnego Tadeusza Różewicza reprezentowała synowa poety, Małgorzata, która w imieniu rodziny podziękowała za spektakl. W atmosferze teatralnego święta ówczesny prezydent Wrocławia, Bogdan Zdrojewski, wygłosił entuzjastyczną ocenę kierowanej przez Hejną placówki: „To najlepszy teatr lalek nie tylko w Polsce, ale i na świecie”⁴⁸. Po upływie roku od pamiętnego wieczoru Hejno miał powrócić do twórczości Różewicza udaną premierą *Śmieszego staruszka* (2001), tym razem na Małej Scenie wrocławskiego teatru.

⁴⁵ Por. m.in. H. Jurkowski, *Wrocławski...*, s.65; PL, *Sztandary i marionetki*, „Gazeta Dolnośląska”, 11 X 1996.

⁴⁶ PL, *Recycling teatralny*, „Gazeta Wyborcza” 24 III 2000.

⁴⁷ PL, *Nie tylko recycling*, „Gazeta Wyborcza” 28 III 2000.

⁴⁸ Jos, *Różewicz u lalek*, „Gość Niedzielny”, 9 IV 2000.

Recycling był trzecim i najbardziej rozbudowanym inscenizacyjnie przedstawieniem Hejny na Kameralnej Sceny Edukacyjnej. Wcześniej zaprezentowane zostały: *Tragedya o polskim Scylurusie* Jana Jurkowskiego (październik 1999), pozbawiona opracowania scenograficznego, oraz *Dialog krótki na święto Narodzenia Pana naszego Jezusa Chrystusa* (grudzień 1999) z figurkami wyrzeźbionymi przez Mariana Opisa.

Spośród tych spektakli Hejny, które intencjonalnie wpisywały się w kanon oczekiwania widzów, i jednocześnie bliskie były wyobrażeniu lekkiej, baśniowej sceny dziecięcej, dwie realizacje wydają się zasługiwać na szczególną uwagę: *Kot, Pies i Jazz* Barbary Szczepańskiej i Macieja Dyma (1988) oraz *Krawiec Niteczka* Kornela Makuszyńskiego w adaptacji reżysera (1993). W obu przypadkach istotną rolę odegrała oprawa muzyczna przedstawienia oraz scenografia Jadwigi Mydlarskiej-Kowal.

Kot, pies i Jazz to musical, do którego przebojową muzykę napisał (i zaśpiewał jedną z piosenek) Jacek Zieliński, członek i współzałożyciel zespołu Skaldowie. Zgodnie z koncepcją spektaklu, prostej historii rozgrywającej się w świecie zwierząt towarzyszył prawdziwy przegląd gatunków muzyki popularnej (m.in. jazz, reggae, rock and roll, ragtime, soul, gospel i samba). Radosne, kolorowe przedstawienie, w którym świnki chrząkają w rytmie country, a niedźwiedzica śpiewa bluesa okazał się prawdziwym hitem Wrocławskiego Teatru Lalek. Ogromna w tym zasługa wykonawców, których interpretacje wokalne i brawurowe układy taneczne wzbudzały autentyczny zachwyt publiczności w każdym wieku i spotkały się z wysoką oceną recenzentów⁴⁹. Do sukcesu musicalu przyłożyły się też piękne maski (głowy) zwierzęcych postaci zakładane na dłonie aktorów, którzy wykorzystywali je często w nieszablonywy sposób – w różnorodnych, zwykle zabawnych układach i kombinacjach. Na scenie pojawiły się m.in. koty, psy, kaczkę, świnki, wilki, lisy, niedźwiedzie, raki, sroki i żaby, ale to muzyka i taniec, do którego choreografię ułożył Leszek Czarnota, były rzeczywistymi bohaterami popularnego spektaklu Hejny.

Udanym powrotem do muzycznej formuły przedstawienia okazał się spektakl *Krawiec Niteczka*, wystawiony w 110 rocznicę urodzin Kornela Makuszyńskiego. Autorem muzyki był tym razem Bogusław Klimsa. Choreografię do spektaklu po raz kolejny przygotował Leszek Czarnota. „Powieś to wielce urokliwa, ale mało komu przyszłoby zapewne na myśl, iż można z niej zbudować wspaniałą dziecięcą musical. Taką wyobraźnią jest obdarzony tylko wielki czarodziej Wiesław Hejno, twórca, poszukujący wciąż nowych pomysłów realizacji przedstawień dla dzieci” – relacjonowała po premierze Alina Sachanbińska⁵⁰. Na zaprojektowaną przez Jadwigę Mydlarską-Kowal scenografię składały się proste, pomysłowe rozwiązania. Wykorzystano m.in. rekwizyty w postaci powiększonych atrybutów zawodu krawca (szpulka, nożyczki,

⁴⁹ Por. m.in. (peg), *Musical Skalda*, „Express wieczorny”, 21 IV 1988; Z. Frąckiewicz, *Gdy lis jest detektywem pantery*, „Słowo Polskie”, 2 II 1988.

⁵⁰ A. Sachanbińska, *Krawiec Niteczka*, „Wieczór Wrocławia”, 11 V 1994.

igła itd.) oraz osadzone na kijach płaskie fomy lalkowe reprezentujące twarze baśniowych bohaterów – po jednej stronie zasmucone, a z drugiej radosne. Istotną rolę przypisano również rozbudowanym, kolorowym kostiumom, które dominowały nad noszącymi je aktorami. „Reżyser chciał, bym był formą. Poruszam się od pięty po czubek głowy, ale nie jako ciało, lecz jako forma niesiona przed ciałem” – tłumaczył zamysł twórców Ryszard Kaczmarek, odtwórca tytułowej roli⁵¹. Szczególnie interesująco rozwiązana została kulminacyjna scena wspinaczki po drabinach prowadzących do dziurawego nieba nad Pacanowem. Kluczem do jej przedstawienia okazał się sugestywny ruch sceniczny wykonywany niemal wyłącznie na poziomie sceny, a zatem horyzontalnie. Wymyślny układ działań zaproponowanych przez choreografa skutecznie spełnił swoje zadanie, którym było przede wszystkim uruchomienie wyobraźni młodego widza. Wykonawcy spektaklu *Krawiec Niteczka* spotkali się z entuzjastycznymi ocenami swoich kreacji⁵², a na Dużą Scenę WTL kolejny raz zawitał taniec, śpiew, porywająca muzyka i radosna zabawa.

Wiesław Hejno wielokrotnie sięgał po adaptacje klasycznych pozycji literatury dla dzieci. Tak było m.in. w przypadku przedstawień: *Dziki łąbędzie* według H.Ch. Andersena (1990), *Kot w butach* Heinza Kahlana (1992), czy *Ali Baba i 40 rozbójników* Krzysztofa Kopki (1995) – wszystkie trzy ze scenografią Jadwigi Mydlarskiej-Kowal i z muzyką Zbigniewa Piotrowskiego. Inscenizacje Hejny za każdym razem wyraźnie różniły się koncepcją artystyczną i zastosowanymi środkami, przy czym pierwszy z wymienionych tytułów najdalszy był od schematycznego przeniesienia na scenę zaktualizowanej wersji znanej historii dla dzieci.

Dziki łąbędzie miały swoją premierę tuż przed Bożym Narodzeniem 1990 r. Hejno zaskoczył widzów poetycką wizją nowej, nieco mroczniejszej adaptacji baśni Andersena. Posłużył się przy tym szczególnym językiem znaków teatralnych, wpisanych przede wszystkim w wizualną stronę przedstawienia. Charakter inscenizacji determinowały przenikające się liryczne obrazy budowane z fantazyjnych form plastycznych, zaprojektowanych z rozmachem przez Jadwigę Mydlarską-Kowal. Pierwszorzędne miejsce przypadło bogato zdobionym, dużym lalkom umieszczonym na specjalnych tacach wnoszonych kolejno na scenę przez aktorów. Baśniowi bohaterowie ożywali dzięki nietypowej animacji. Konwencja zakładała, że aktor nie tyle „gra lalką”, co stanowi niejako źródło jej teatralnej energii. W spektaklu pojawiły się także m.in. środki teatru cieni, półpłaskie formy oraz maski. Wykreowaną w ten sposób atmosferę przedstawienia podkreślał dominujący półmrok oraz oprawa muzyczna bazująca na urozmaiconej, niesztampowej melodyce.

Recenzenci jak zwykle podzielili się w swoich ocenach. Zofia Frąckiewicz w popremierowej relacji przedstawionej na łamach „Słowa Polskiego” określiła

⁵¹ L. Pułka, *Zaszywanie dziury w niebie*, „Gazeta Dolnośląska”, 8 II 1996.

⁵² Por. m.in. A. Sachanbińska, *Krawiec...*, Z. Frąckiewicz, *Musical o krawcu*, „Słowo Polskie”, 11 V 1994.

spektakl jako „piękny i poetycki”⁵³. Dziesięć lat później autorka innej recenzji prasowej stwierdziła natomiast, że „mimo przepięknych lalek (...) trudno było znaleźć w tym przedstawieniu coś dostępnego dziecięcej wrażliwości”⁵⁴. Nie wykluczone, że to, czego nie udało się odnaleźć recenzentce, zostało dostrzeżone przez siedmioletnią Kingę, której w 2001 r. „Gazeta Wyborcza” zdecydowała się oddać głos w sprawie oceny spektaklu. Dziewczynka uznała, że to „nie jest śmieszna bajka, ale trochę smutna”, a najbardziej przypadł jej do gustu szelest skrzydełek łabędzi. Swoją wypowiedź rozpoczęła natomiast słowami: „To była ładna bajka”.

Dzikie łabędzie to interesujący przykład poszukiwań oryginalnej formuły poetyckiego języka sceny dla dzieci. Kolejną, być może najpełniejszą ilustracją „poważnego, artystycznego teatru dla młodego widza”, był spektakl *Komedia dla mamy i taty* (1996) według *Juweniliów* Stanisława Ignacego Witkiewicza.

Tworzywem spektaklu stała się dziecięca twórczość późniejszego autora Szewców. Staś Witkiewicz spisywał bowiem swoje zabawne i nieco ironiczne obserwacje codziennych wydarzeń już w wieku ośmiu lat. W ten sposób powstały jego najwcześniejsze mini-sztuki, *Komedia z życia rodzinnego* oraz *Karaluchy*, które chłopiec osobiście drukował i sprzedawał znajomym rodziców za jednego centa. Dziewięć lat po sukcesie przedstawienia *Gyubal Wahazar* Witkacego na Małej Scenie, *Juwenilia* okazały się niezwykle atrakcyjnym materiałem do wystawienia na Dużej Scenie WTL.

Po premierze *Komedii dla mamy i taty* Tadeusz Burzyński relacjonował:

Teatr nie opowiada żadnej historii. Zaprasza do podjęcia gry wyobraźni, którą dyryguje Staś w postaci lalki przypominającej nieco Przyjemniaczka z przedstawienia *Gyubala Wahazara* w tymże teatrze na scenie dla dorosłych. (...) Główną odpowiedzialność za to »szaleństwo« wzięł na swoje barki Wiesław Hejno, który rzecz całą wymyślił, skonstruował i uruchomił na scenie”⁵⁵.

Plastyczny wyraz postaci małego Stasia, cechującego się ostrością rysów i dużymi oczami, rzeczywiście mógł budzić pewne skojarzenia z projektami Jądwigi Mydlarskiej-Kowal stworzonymi dla Małej Sceny. Była to trójwymiarowa lalka wielkości dziecka, prowadzona przez jedną aktorkę przy zastosowaniu rozbudowanych zabiegów animacyjnych. Z lalką chłopca kontrastowały płaskie, znacznie prostsze i większe formy lalkowe postaci dorosłych. W spektaklu wykorzystano także m.in. scenki pantomimiczne, teatr cieni, grę w planie żywym oraz kombinacje użytych form i technik (np. „przyłączanie” głowy aktora do płaskiego korpusu lalki).

Wszystkie te środki pozwoliły na zaprezentowanie bogatej palety doznań przefiltrowanych przez dziecięcą percepcję i wyobraźnię. Przyjęta optyka ośmioletniego Stasia najzwyczajszym wydarzeniom z życia codziennego (je-

⁵³ Z. Frąckiewicz, *Elza i jedenaastu braci*, „Słowo Polskie”, 31. XII 1990.

⁵⁴ (gałązka), *Mrówki są pożyteczne, a łabędzie nie*, „Tygodnik Piast”, 13–19 VI 2001.

⁵⁵ T. Burzyński, *Teatrzyk małego Stasia (Witkacego)*, „Gazeta Robotnicza”, 10 I 1996.

dzenie obiadu, wykonywanie zdjęcia itd.) nadała zaskakujący wymiar. Dorosli okazali się więc nieco dziwni, trochę śmieszni, a nadto nieporadni i nielogiczni. W kolejnych odsłonach krzatali się bez ładu, kłębili, obracali do góry nogami, wykonywali zmarionetyzowane ruchy, lewitowali, coś mówili, a przy tym oddziaływały im się głowy...

Spektakl, utrzymany miejscami w poetyce zwariowanego snu, jest wyrazem poszukiwań twórczych nakierowanych na eksponowanie możliwości wyrazowych teatru lalek i jego odmienności względem żywego planu. Zaprojektowane przez Mydlarską-Kowal stosunkowo proste formy, dzięki różnym typom działań animacyjnych i zróżnicowaniu relacji lalki z aktorem umożliwiły swobodne budowanie metafory plastycznej. Dowolny wycinek rzeczywistości mógł stać się czymkolwiek innym, nabrać nowego znaczenia, zbudować dalszy krąg skojarzeń i zależności. Różni widzowie spektaklu śledzili nieco odmienne historie, gdyż istotną część świata przedstawionego dopowiada indywidualna wyobraźnia. *Juwenilia* Witkacego stały się dla Wiesława Hejny doskonałym pretekstem, by ten potencjał lalkarskich środków wyrazowych zaprezentować na scenie dla dzieci.

Komedia dla mamy i taty stanowiła popis warsztatowych umiejętności całej obsady spektaklu. Była także swoistą partyturą zespołowych działań scenicznych, którą kompozytor Zbigniew Piotrowski precyzyjnie zestroił z własną wspaniałą partyturą muzyczną. Przedstawienie zdobyło liczne nagrody, w tym pierwsze miejsce na Międzynarodowym Festiwalu Teatrów Lalek w Pradze w 1997 r. Jury praskiego festiwalu jednomyślnie wybrało spektakl wrocławski spośród propozycji 21 zespołów reprezentujących 17 krajów. To znaczący sukces inscenizacji Hejny, której część rodzimych recenzentów nie wróżyła żadnego powodzenia⁵⁶.

Ostatnim wyreżyserowanym przez Hejnę przedstawieniem dla dzieci była *Calineczka* (2002). Powrót do twórczości Andersena mógł nastąpić dzięki sztuce napisanej przez Agnieszkę Zaskórką na specjalne zamówienie teatru. Spektakl odbiega od poetyki, która stała się wyróżnikiem inscenizacji reżysera. Przede wszystkim *Calineczka* zrealizowana jest w formule monodramu. Wszystkie postaci historii, a jest ich czternaście, kreowane są na scenie przez jedną aktorkę – Annę Kramarczyk. Scenografię do spektaklu, już po śmierci Mydlarskiej-Kowal, zaprojektowała Beata Fertała. Artystka ta współpracowała wcześniej z Hejną przy projektach teatru ulicznego, jak również tworząc oprawę spektaklu *Recycling*.

Mikroświat *Calineczki* stworzony został dzięki lalkom różnych technik (m.in. lalka żyworówka, zmechanizowana kukła, marionetka niciowa, marionetka sycylijska i lalka demonstracyjna). Tworząc formę plastyczną głównej

⁵⁶ Leszek Pułka napisał m.in.: „Mimo, że *Komedia dla mamy i taty* żyje i zmienia się z próby na próbę, ze spektaklu na spektakl, nie wróżę jej wielkiego sukcesu nawet u przedzłokaków. Przede wszystkim brak w przedstawieniu Wiesława Hejny magii słowa, może nawet jakiegokolwiek magii (...)” L. Pułka, *Za dużo w jednym*, „Gazeta Dolnośląska”, 9 I 1996.

bohaterki, realizatorzy kierowali się chęcią uniknięcia przesadnej idealizacji⁵⁷. Lalka przedstawiająca tytułową bohaterkę, konstrukcyjnie zbliżona do japońskiej techniki bunraku, jest więc bliskim realizmowi wyobrażeniem czteroletniej dziewczynki.

Ostateczny kształt każdego monodramu w istotny sposób uzależniony jest od osobowości scenicznej, warsztatu i osobistego zaangażowania wykonawcy. Anna Kramarczyk, pracując nad *Calineczką*, wykorzystwała bogate doświadczenie sceniczne, które pozwoliło jej na samodzielną animację wszystkich lalek. Aktorka potrafi również modulować głos w różnych rejestrach, dzięki czemu uzyskiwała odrębną jego barwę dla każdej z postaci. Bohaterów *Calineczki* różnicuje nadto sam sposób mówienia. Już na poziomie scenariusza rozstrzygnięto, że każdemu z nich przypisana zostanie charakterystyczna głoska (np. żabie specyficzne „r”, rybie „o” itd.)

Zawierając młodej autorce tekstu i początkującej scenografce, Hejno jeszcze raz dowiódł umiejętności trafnego doboru współtwórców swoich dokonań. *Calineczka* stała się jednym z najpopularniejszych przedstawień Wrocławskiego Teatru Lalek. Grana przy pełnej sali, niejednokrotnie na specjalne zamówienia widzów, miała dotychczas ponad 500 odsłon i w niezmiennym kształcie utrzymuje się na afiszu do dzisiaj.

Już pobieżny przegląd spektakli Hejny dla dzieci i młodzieży dowodzi, że reżyser konsekwentnie realizował program artystyczny zapowiadany przy obejmowaniu funkcji dyrektora sceny. Nade wszystko nie uległ tendencjom minimalizującym rolę lalki, która w jego teatrze pozostała centralnym instrumentem ekspresji scenicznej, a przy tym okazją do poszukiwania oryginalnych formuł i kontekstów. W konsekwencji, podobnie jak w przypadku Małej Sceny, kluczową rolę odgrywała twórczość plastyczna Mydlarskiej-Kowal.

Oprawę scenograficzną artystki do przedstawień dla dzieci opisała Honorata Sych:

Dzieciom pokazywała inny niż dorosłym świat – jasny, kolorowy, bez niepokojących dysonansów. Z lekkością i wdziękiem rysowała postaci krasnoludków, królewien, rycerzy, królów i smoków. Bawiła się wykonując je i chciała, żeby bawiły się dzieci oglądając na scenie kolorowy, pogodny i mądry świat, ale znacznie częściej również jej spektakle dla dzieci prowadziły w stronę poetyki snu czy marzenia na jawie⁵⁸.

Sama scenografka niechętnie udzielała wywiadów, a przy tym niezwykle rzadko odnosiła się wprost do swojej twórczości dla najmłodszych. Najbliższą jej formą wypowiedzi były wizje plastyczne, projekty scenograficzne, lalki i spektakle. Jednym z wyjątków jest wywiad z 2000 r., w którym stwierdziła: „Lalki, które robię dla dzieci, są ładne inaczej, mają coś wspólnego ze sztuką, a nie

⁵⁷ Por. m.in. program teatralny przedstawienia *Calineczka*, Wrocławski Teatr Lalek.

⁵⁸ H. Sych, *Tajemnice teatru lalek*, Łódź 2010, s. 180.

z rynkiem. To takie antidotum na lalki Barbie. I dzieci to kupują⁵⁹. Znacznie częściej Mydlarska-Kowal pytana była o swoje turpistyczne formy kojarzone ze sceną dla dorosłych: „Bardzo często zarzuca mi się, że moje lalki są brzydkie. A sztuka przecież nie znosi kanonu, nie podlega kanonowi piękna. Podobnie myślę, że los ludzki nie znosi upiększeń” – tłumaczyła w rozmowie z Aleksandrą Maksymiak⁶⁰. Innym razem precyzowała: „otaczają nas ludzie, którzy wewnątrz są jak moje lalki na zewnątrz”⁶¹. Zapytana o źródła upodobania do ekspresjonistycznych, turpistycznych scenografii, plastyczka wyjaśniała z kolei: „Nie wiem. To już jest w człowieku, to w duszy gra”⁶².

Czy Mydlarska-Kowal wyżej ceniła swoją twórczość dla dorosłych? Zapewne tak. Z projektów, które wykonała, najbardziej lubiła te stworzone do *Procesu* i *Gyubala Wahazara*⁶³. Z niepublikowanego wywiadu udzielonego Anecie Głuch dowiadujemy się, że w pewnym momencie scenografia dla dzieci zaczęła artystkę zwyczajnie męczyć ze względu na jałowość tematów podejmowanych w dziecięcej dramaturgii, które uważała za mało inspirujące⁶⁴. Mogło być wiele powodów tego artystycznego wyczerpania. Plastyczka, podobnie jak Wiesław Hejno, sprzeciwiała się infantylizmowi w teatrze. Tworzyła scenografię „mówiącą”⁶⁵ – plastykę sceniczną, która była nośnikiem komunikatu, syntezą, symbolem. Pod koniec XX w. teatry lalek nieustannie zmagaly się natomiast z niedoborem wartościowej dramaturgii dla najmłodszych, dramaturgii niosącej interesujący i niebanalny przekaz⁶⁶. Artystka skarżyła się ponadto na szybkie tempo pracy przy spektaklach dla dzieci⁶⁷. Z pewnością niepoślednią rolę odegrały wreszcie estetyczne upodobania artystki.

Trudno zaprzeczyć, że Mydlarska-Kowal najchętniej i najpełniej realizowała się poprzez przedstawianie niepokojących aspektów ludzkiej egzystencji – cierpienia, lęku, rozpacz, bezsilności, starości, rozkładu. Artystyczna predylekcja, wspomniana „gra duszy”, nie wyznaczała jednak ram jej twórczych możliwości. Estetyka prac Mydlarskiej-Kowal w nieuprawnionym skrócie określana bywa turpizmem – terminem dalekim od całościowego ujęcia zróżnicowania stylów, jakimi w rzeczywistości się posługiwała. Dotyczy to w szczególności spektakli dla dzieci. Owa wszechstronność stanowi wyzwanie dla historyków

⁵⁹ A. Sztylek, *op.cit.*

⁶⁰ *Chcę mieć swój własny świat. Z Mydlarską-Kowal rozmawiał Aleksander Maksymiak*, „Teatr Lalek” 1988, nr 1–2, s. 31.

⁶¹ Za: A. Koecher-Hensel, *Damy polskiej scenografii i kobiety demoniczne*, „Teatr” 2001, nr 1, s.70.

⁶² A. Sztylek, *op.cit.*

⁶³ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁴ A. Głuch-Klucznik, *op. cit.*, brak numeracji stron.

⁶⁵ Por. m.in. W. Hejno, *Wrocławianka...*, s.404; E. Olinkiewicz, *Gdy rysuję szczegół widzę go w przestrzeni. Świat plastyki Jadwigi Mydlarskiej-Kowal*, „Teatr Lalek” 1995, nr 1–2., s.29–35.

⁶⁶ Por. m.in. W. Hejno, *Pośród lalek...*, s.12, 20.

⁶⁷ Por. m.in. A. Głuch-Klucznik, *op. cit.*, brak numeracji stron.

sztuki i teatrologów, wykazujących zrozumiałą skłonność do klasyfikowania, określania tendencji oraz wyszczególniania etapów działalności. Różne oblicza twórczości artystki były przy tym efektem łatwości, z jaką poddawała się nowym artystycznym bodźcom: „Kiedy projektuję kolejną scenografię muszę zapomnieć o wszystkim, co robiłam przedtem. Każdy z autorów, każdy tekst wymagają specyficznego potraktowania”⁶⁸. Porównując prace tworzone do spektakli dla dorosłych i do różnych spektakli dla dzieci, trudno uwierzyć, że wszystkie one wyszły spod jednej ręki. Obok hiperrealistycznych, mrocznych obrazów, pojawiają się projekty operujące m.in. dosadnością uproszczeń folkloru (*Polskie szopki i herody*), poetycką baśniowością (*Dzikie łabędzie*) czy lekkością i humorem rodem z kart komiksu (*Entliczek Pentliczek*). Przykładem zderzenia żywiołów twórczych artystki może być opisana już lalka wyobrażająca Stasia Witkiewiczą w *Komedii dla mamy i taty*, która ekspresją twarzy budzi bliskie skojarzenia z projektami dla dorosłych. Niewyczerpany był zasób inspiracji Mydlarskiej-Kowal. W codziennych sytuacjach nieustannie tworzyła, szkicując na prawie wszystkim, co znalazło się w zasięgu jej dłoni. Bez względu na obrany styl kreska artystki za każdym razem prowadzona była z fenomenalną swobodą, projekty zawierały nowe koncepcje przenikania formy i treści, a lalki tworzone na ich podstawie zyskiwały uznanie widzów.

W ślad za zróżnicowaniem stylów i konwencji podążała w spektaklach Hejny dla dzieci różnorodność form i technik lalkowych⁶⁹. „W tym jest wielka siła teatru lalkowego, że właściwie stale zmieniają się w nim formy. Tak jak ludzka wyobraźnia, fantazja są nieograniczone, tak nieograniczony jest właściwie świat teatru lalkowego” – stwierdził reżyser w programie telewizyjnym „Klub teatralny »5«”, zapytany przez dziecko, czy nie obawia się, że w teatrze lalek wszystko już było⁷⁰. Hejno rzeczywiście unikał kopiowania zarówno cudzych, jak i własnych sprawdzonych już rozwiązań inscenizacyjnych. Tworzył teatr poszukujący, który zaskakiwał nowymi doświadczeniami scenicznymi, co stało się jedną z charakterystycznych cech także Dużej Sceny. W swoich realizacjach wykorzystywał m.in. płaskie, planszетowe formy (*Krawiec Niteczka*, *Komedia dla mamy i taty*), maski (*Kot pies i jazz*, *Ali baba i 40 rozbójników*), marionetki niciowe (*Jadwiga ze Śląska*), marionetki sycylijskie (*Baśń o smoku Strachocie*), kukły (*Polskie szopki i herody*), pacynki (*Akropolis wrocławska. Szopka*) oraz liczne oryginalne formy plastyczne i lalki hybrydowe (m.in. *Entliczek Pentliczek*, *Księżniczka Turandot*, *Dzikie łabędzie*). Wiele w tym z pewnością zasługi jego sztandarowej scenografiki, która wolna była od schematów myślenia lalkarskiego, przy czym jej projekty nie zawsze precyzowały rozwiązania techniczne – często zależało to od rozstrzygnięć reżysera i konstruktora. „Zastana rzeczywistość scenograficzna tetru lalek nie budzi we mnie więk-

⁶⁸ J. Mydlarska-Kowal, *Scenograf w teatrze lalek*, maszynopis w archiwum teatru, kwiecień 2000 r.

⁶⁹ Por. m.in. W. Hejno, *Pośród lalek...*, s.20.

⁷⁰ *Klub teatralny »5«*, real. M. Łopata, TVP SA Oddział we Wrocławiu 1995.

szych emocji. Chcę mieć swój własny świat, swój własny styl (...) W moim przekonaniu w ogóle nie korzystam z technik tradycyjnych” – twierdziła⁷¹.

Ów arsenał, często autorskich, form i technik lalkarskich stawał się narzędziem realizacji coraz to nowych koncepcji inscenizacyjnych. Efektem wyjątkowej synergii reżysera i scenografki stawały się przy tym realizacje intencjonalnie unikające iluzyjności czy naśladownictwa. Niemal w każdym przedstawieniu stosowano animację odkrytą (z widocznym animatorem), która umożliwiała eksperymentowanie w zakresie wariantów relacji aktor-lalka i aktor-maski. Heterogeniczność artystyczną spektakli Hejny dopełniała wielość formuł ich prezentowania (m.in. Duża Scena, teatr uliczny, Wędrowna Scena Edukacyjna).

Tworzony przez Hejnę teatr był zatem placówką łączącą ambicje artystyczne z walorami warsztatowymi. Zamysły reżysera nie miałyby jednak szans na realizację, gdyby nie wysmienity, skupiony na wspólnych zadaniach zespół aktorski WTL. W różnym czasie należeli do niego (lub nadal należą) m.in. Irmina Annusewicz, Anna Bajer, Elżbieta Echaust, Jan Fornal, Józef Frymet, Ewa Giedroń, Aneta Głuch-Klucznik, Jolanta Góralczyk, Krzysztof Grębski, Ryszard Kaczmarek, Anna Kramarczyk, Bogdan Kuczkowski, Anna Helman, Aleksander Maksymiak, Barbara Pielka, Sławomir Przepiórka, Jacek Przybyłowski, Jacek Radomski, Edyta Skarżyńska i Marek Tatko.

Odrębnej uwagi wymaga dobór tematów podejmowanych przez Hejnę w spektaklach dla dzieci i młodzieży. Na tym polu wyraźnie dostrzegalny jest zarysowany już, nieuchronny kompromis, który podzielił inscenizacje na te wpisujące się w kanon przedstawień dla dzieci (m.in. *Krawiec Niteczka*, *Kot w butach*, *Calineczka*, *Ali Baba i 40 rozbójników*) oraz będące wyrazem poszukiwania tematów oryginalnych (m.in. *Jadwiga ze Śląska*, *Akropolis wrocławska*, *Szopka*, adaptacja *Dzikich łabędzi*, *Komedia dla mamy i taty*, *Recycling*). Ta druga grupa odgrywa szczególną rolę, stanowi bowiem odejście od zastanej formuły teatru lalek, poglądów na jego temat, a nadto także oczekiwań sporej części widzów. To również realizacja deklarowanego buntu przeciw teatrowi infantylnemu i wyraz poszukiwań propozycji nowej, autorskiej.

Konstruując spektakle dla dzieci i młodzieży wrocławski reżyser niejednokrotnie przedkładał tematy i język właściwe poezji, filozofii, a nawet kronikom historycznym nad uproszczony kod klasycznej, baśniowej twórczości dla najmłodszych. Pomimo niesłabnącego zapotrzebowania publiczności na inscenizacje dziecięcej klasyki, powracał do przedstawień poruszających zagadnienia istotne, a nieraz również nietatwe w odbiorze. W częstych odniesieniach do kulturowego i historycznego kontekstu związanego z regionem dostrzegalny jest m.in. dydaktyczny aspekt teatralnego przekazu artysty, daleki jednak od dydaktyzmu naiwnego, tak typowego dla schematycznego repertuaru dziecięcego.

⁷¹ *Chcę mieć swój własny...*, s.31.

Wybierane przez Hejnę tematy nade wszystko mają uniwersalny charakter, gdyż zdaniem reżysera taki właśnie charakter właściwy jest teatrowi lalek⁷², który – o ile tylko nie epatuje erotyką, czy brutalnością – może być odbierany przez widzów w każdym wieku⁷³. Artysta był zdania, że dziecko nie zawsze musi rozszyfrować cały zaprezentowany przekaz, choć zawsze powinno być za-intrygowane magią sceny. W ten sposób powstał teatr wymagający – z nowym typem wrażeń scenicznych i nowym typem odbioru. Teatr ufający wyobraźni młodego widza i jego wrażeniom pozaintelektualnym. Tworzone w nim inscenizacje wymykają się w efekcie prostym ocenom w kategoriach ładny-brzydki, mają bowiem rozpalać teatralnie, wpływać treścią i formą na wyobraźnię, czy skłonić odbiorcę do podążania za dalszymi skojarzeniami.

Mała Scena kierowana była do dorosłego widza, Duża zaś miała zatem wymiar uniwersalny, co uwidoczniło się już od pierwszego przedstawienia z okresu dyrekcji Hejny – *Polskich szopek i herodów*. To przestrzeń kreacji, w której obok *Kota w butach* pojawia się m.in. *Akropolis* i *Prometeusz*, za każdym razem odwołując się do wrażliwości zarówno dzieci, jak i towarzyszących im dorosłych. Takie pojmowanie teatru lalkowego bliższe było wzorcom zagranicznym, przy czym sam reżyser posługiwał się m.in. przykładem Bread and Puppet Theatre Petera Szumana jako „teatru o ogromnej sile oddziaływania na każdy rodzaj publiczności”⁷⁴. O własnym teatrze artysta pisał natomiast: „Na większość spektakli przychodzili widzowie nieależnie od klasyfikacji, dla kogo one. Jest dobrze, kiedy teatr jest dla wszystkich”⁷⁵.

Manifest artystyczny Małej Sceny, głoszący konieczność pogłębionej analizy tworzywa teatru lalek i relacji aktora z lalką, można zatem w pewnym stopniu odnieść również do sceny dla dzieci, gdyż obie przestrzenie twórcze łączyła przede wszystkim osoba reżysera i jego myślenie o lalce teatralnej jako instrumencie totalnym, który posłużyć może do podejmowania nawet najtrudniejszych problemów egzystencjalnych, ontologicznych czy poznawczych⁷⁶. Obie artystyczne formuły, formalnie i programowo wydzielone, łączyła także scenografia Jadwigi Mydlarskiej-Kowal, muzyka Zbigniewa Piotrowskiego oraz zespół aktorski Wrocławskiego Teatru Lalek. Jeśli zatem scenę dla dorosłych określić można mianem „laboratorium teatru lalek” ze względu na poszukiwania w obrębie potencjału wyrazowego tej dziedziny sztuki, oryginalność form plastycznych, a także z uwagi na interesujący materiał dramatyczny, to scenę dla dzieci określić można „małym laboratorium” dokładnie z tych samych powodów. Naturalnie różnica tkwiła m.in. w rytmie pracy, gdyż inscenizacja dla widzów dorosłych mogła ukonkretniać się latami, podczas gdy scena dziecięca domagała się nieustannych premier. Zdarzało się jednak, jak było to w przy-

⁷² Por. m.in. S. Nikćević, *op.cit.*

⁷³ Por. m.in. W. Hejno, *Mój wrocławski...*, s. 289.

⁷⁴ W. Hejno, *Teatr zbiorowym poetą*, „Sprawy i ludzie”, 12 I 84.

⁷⁵ W. Hejno, *Mój wrocławski...*, s. 294.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, s. 286.

padku *Dzikich łabędzi* czy *Komedii dla mamy i taty*, że teatralne języki obydwu scen w znaczący sposób upodabniały się do siebie. „Artystyczny krwioobieg krążył z Dużej Sceny na Małą” – zauważył Józef Frymet, aktor występujący w niemal wszystkich ważniejszych realizacjach Hejny⁷⁷. Wpływ doświadczeń zespołu zdobywanych przy pracy „małego laboratorium” na późniejsze realizacje przedstawień dla dorosłych wydaje się w tej sytuacji oczywisty.

Doniosłość inscenizacji dla dzieci i młodzieży rozpatrywać można także w kontekście pojęcia „teatr Hejny”. To utarte określenie ma charakter środowiskowy i z tego względu nie jest łatwe do zdefiniowania. Zwykle uważa się, że określa ono styl wypracowany przez zespół artystów tworzących pod przywództwem wrocławskiego reżysera, który pełnił jednocześnie funkcję dyrektora teatru. Marek Waszkiel, analizując to zagadnienie, uznał, że „teatr Hejny” jest zjawiskiem zamkniętym śmiercią Jadwigi Mydlarskiej-Kowal i zmianą dyirekcji teatru w 2002 roku, przy czym odnosił się jedynie do spektakli Małej Sceny⁷⁸. Nie sposób arbitralnie rozstrzygnąć, czy można objąć tym terminem również twórczość tego reżysera dla dzieci, jednak z przywołanych już powodów trudno też rozpatrywać owo określenie w pełnym oderwaniu od niej. Niemal całkowite pomijanie w piśmiennictwie tej części działalności Hejny uznać natomiast trzeba za pozbawione podstaw.

Artystyczne wybory reżysera dotyczące przedstawień formalnie kierowanych do niewyrobionej, niedorosłej publiczności, w wielu przypadkach dzieliły zarówno widzów, jak i krytykę. Recenzenci podążali przy tym za własną intuicją i wyobrażeniem teatru dla dzieci, Hejno zaś, konsekwentnie nie zważając na negatywne opinie, za własnym doświadczeniem i wizją artystyczną. Zapewne istotę sporu stanowił punkt odniesienia dla wyrażanych ocen, odmiennie lokowany pomiędzy biegunami: teatr zastany – teatr nowy, dla dzieci – uniwersalny oraz rozrywkowy – artystyczny, poszukujący. W istocie twórcze poszukiwanie stało się w tym okresie warunkiem rozwoju teatru lalek wskutek poczucia wyczerpania dawnych formuł, wyznaczanych m.in. przez Sergieja Obrazcowa. Teatr poszukujący to także teatr narażony na artystyczne pomyłki czy potknięcia, od których nie był wolny również ten realizowany przez Wiesława Hejnę. Warto przy tym zauważyć, że prasowe opinie na temat inscenizacji na Dużej Scenie WTL w wielu przypadkach były spolaryzowane, a intuicję recenzentów, którzy wróżyli spektaklowi porażkę (m.in. w przypadku *Polskich szopek i herodów* oraz *Komedii dla mamy i taty*) zwykle negatywnie weryfikował czas, czego dobitnym świadectwem stawała się duża liczba zagranych przedstawień, wznowienia i przychylność festiwalowych werdyktów. Trudno w końcu nie spostrzec, że artystyczna osobowość Wiesława Hejny, osobowość „lalkarza-filozofa”, twórcy pragnącego penetrować wszystkie wymiary lalkarskich środków wyrazu, najpełniej zrealizować się mogła dopiero w przedsta-

⁷⁷ J. Frymet w rozmowie ze mną z dnia 6 VIII 2015.

⁷⁸ M. Waszkiel, *op.cit.*, s.212–218.

wieniach tworzonych na Małej Scenie dla dorosłych. Dopiero tutaj dojrzały, a zarazem oryginalny przekaz lalkowego teatru, podejmujący bogate treści ambitnej literatury, spotkać się mógł z najwłaściwszym odbiorcą, a przedstawienia zyskać zasłużone uznanie.

Mimo upływu dziesiątek lat od rozpoczęcia pracy artystycznej Wiesław Hejno nigdy nie zrezygnował z przyglądania się lalce. Z nieślabnącym entuzjazmem próbuje dociec jej istoty, poszukuje nowych możliwości wyrazowych, ukrytych znaczeń, odniesień i kontekstów „aktora magicznej formuły”, jak zwykł o niej pisać. Dowodzą tego wykłady Hejny na Wydziale Reżyserii Teatru Lalek we Wrocławiu, jego ostatnia książka poświęcona konstruowaniu spektakli lalkowych *Reżyser lalki* oraz najnowsze dokonania sceniczne.

Autor pragnie podziękować swoim rozmówcom za udzielenie wywiadów, które istotnie wpłynęły na kształt opracowania: Józefowi Frymetowi, Anecie Głuch-Klucznik, Krzysztofowi Grębskiemu, Wiesławowi Hejnie, Katarzynie Krajewskiej, Annie Kramarczyk, Marii Lubienieckiej, Teresie Mak, Jerzemu Makowskiemu, Aleksandrowi Maksymiakowi i Annie Proszkowskiej

LISTA SPEKTAKLI DLA DZIECI I MŁODZIEŻY WYREŻYSEROWANYCH PRZEZ WIESŁAWA HEJNĘ W OKRESIE JEGO DYREKCJI W WTL⁷⁹ :

- ▶ *Polskie Szopki i herody* – 05.02.1982 – sc. duża (wiek szkolny)
- ▶ *Księżniczka Turandot* – 12.05.1983 – sc. duża (wiek szkolny)
- ▶ *Kosmiczna odyseja* – 22.06.1985 – sc. duża (wiek szkolny)
- ▶ *Kot, pies i jazz* – 21.01.1988 – sc. duża
- ▶ *Dzikie łabędzie* – 22.12.1990 – sc. duża
- ▶ *Kot w butach* – 05.01.1992 – sc. duża
- ▶ *Entliczek pentliczek* – 18.04.1993 – sc. duża
- ▶ *Krawiec Niteczka* – 08.05.1994 – sc. duża
- ▶ *Ali Baba i 40 rozbójników* – 31.01.1995 – sc. duża
- ▶ *Komedia dla mamy i taty* – 07.01.1996 – sc. duża
- ▶ *Śpiewanie z bajki* (gala pios. dziecięcej) – 03.03.1996 – sc. duża
- ▶ *Baśń o smoku Strachocie* – 23.06.1996 – sc. duża
- ▶ *Jadwiga ze Śląska* – 12.10.1996 – sc. duża
- ▶ *Prometeusz* – 10.05.1998 – sc. duża
- ▶ *Magiczne imię* – 22.11.1998 – sc. duża
- ▶ *Tragedya o polskim Scylurusie* – 15.10.1999 – wędrowną sc. edukacyjną
- ▶ *Dialog krótki na Święto Narodzenia Pana Naszego Jezusa Chrystusa* – 03.12.1999 – wędrowną sc. edukacyjną
- ▶ *Akropolis wrocławska. Szopka* – 16.01.2000 – sc. duża
- ▶ *Recycling* – 26.03.2000 – wędrowną sc. edukacyjną
- ▶ *Komedia Puncta* – 06.05.2000 – teatr uliczny
- ▶ *Ostatnia pieśń Pulcinelli* – 25.06.2000 – teatr uliczny
- ▶ *Pietrzyńka, czyli Wańka-Olaboga* – 25.06.2000 – teatr uliczny
- ▶ *Calineczka* – 22.02.2002 – sc. mała (przedszkolna)

⁷⁹ Opracowano na podstawie: *Lalki i my*. Wydawnictwo jubileuszowe z okazji 55-lecia Wrocławskiego Teatru Lalek, red. M. Lubieniecka, Wrocław 2002, s.97–116.

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Podróż w dalekie lata (*Zegar słoneczny* (1953) Jana Parandowskiego)

Abstract: *Zegar słoneczny* [trans. *The Sundial*] by Parandowski is a collection of 13 short-stories loosely based on the author's memories of childhood and early youth spent in a Lvov school. Written in a chatty and humorous manner, with a touch of lyricism, the stories assume a form of a sentimental recollection of a journey to distant years. Lyrical phrasing, careful choice of words, and poetic images hint at the artistic profession of the author. Because of these qualities the work becomes coherent in terms of semantics and composition. The narrator travels through his life in all possible directions and between many different planes (apartment in Lvov, neighborhood of the family house, urban areas, infinitely big "the rest" which is connected with childhood). He ignores the succession of events and uses them to bring back the atmosphere and mood of years long gone, and the images of his family and himself from the past. By referring to the present, the narrator also presents the continuity of tradition and existential repetitiveness, which may be discovered in a simple gesture or situation. All the above mentioned aspects of Parandowski's work show that it belongs to the trend of double-addressee autobiographies.

Keywords: Jan Parandowski (1895–1978), autobiography, childhood, family home

Cóż wiemy o czasie? Czy w istocie w jego strumieniu jest wczoraj i jutro? Czy też jedna chwila bieżąca, nad którą pochyleni widzimy swoje odbicie, zbratane w płowym blasku czerwcowego słońca – ojciec i syn, dwaj chłopcy owiani tą samą baśnią?¹

Powrót (powroty) w dzieciństwo integralnie wiąże się z czasem: przeszłym i teraźniejszym. Wspomnienia z przeszłości snuje z reguły człowiek dorosły, emocjonalnie i intelektualnie ukształtowany, dojrzały, który mimo temporalnego oddalenia patrzy na siebie z pozycji dziecka, tj. jego sposobu odbioru i przeżywania świata oraz z pozycji dorosłego. Retrospektywa sprzyja mityzacji. Z zakamarków pamięci wyłaniają się fragmentaryczne obrazy, zdarze-

¹ J. Parandowski, *Zegar słoneczny*, Warszawa 1978, s. 93. Lokalizacja dalszych cytatów w tekście.

nia, postaci, pojedyncze słowa i urwane zdania, które układają się w całe ciągi pozytywnych emocji. „Przeszłość uczuć” góruje nad terażniejszością. Wyrzucając z pamięci to, co przykre, bolesne, pielęgnujemy i utrwalamy to, co dobre, radosne, przyjazne. Dzieciństwo powraca z całą intensywnością barw, kształtów, zapachów i światem książek, czyli światem wyobraźni albo światem pamięci... Książki dzieciństwa! Stoją na wyciągnięcie ręki w równym szeregu, niczym regularne wojsko na półkach i półeczkach domowej biblioteczki, uzupełnione po latach o te pozycje, które wyrwały się głęboko w pamięci dziecka: *Mały lord*, *Mała księżniczka* i *Tajemniczy ogród* Frances Elizy Burnett. W czulej pamięci przechowuję teksty zasłyszane?, wyuczone?, zapamiętane! To drobne wierszyki – nie wiem, czy już czytane samodzielnie, czy też słyszane z ust mamy (dziś zlokalizowane dzięki nieustannej penetracji utworów dla dzieci) oraz urokliwe opowiadania Jana Grabowskiego *Reksio i Pucek*; *Puc*, *Bursztyn i goście*, *Europa*, Ewy Szelburg-Zarembiny *Najmilsi*, *Włóczęgi Północy* Jamesa Olivera Curwooda, ukochany cykl Hugh’a Loftinga o Doktorze Dolitte i jego zwierzętach, jak i Kornela Makuszyńskiego i Mariana Walentynowicza słowno-obrazkowe historyjki o przygodach Koziółka Matołka. Równie fascynujący był dla mnie zaczarowany świat baśni, zwłaszcza Andersena, których smutek przenikał mnie całą. Ich sens odsłaniał mi się powoli, po wielokrotnym czytaniu, uzmysławiając metaforyczność literatury. W zachwyty wprowadzały mnie też *Baśnie z 1001 nocy*, zwłaszcza o cudownej lampie Aladyna, latającym dywanie, Ali Babie i czterdziestu rozbójników, a z polskich autorów: baśnie Janiny Porazińskiej, Ewy Szelburg-Zarembiny, Marii Konopnickiej. W tym spisie znalazły się powieści dla dziewcząt z nieśmiertelną *Anią z Zielonego Wzgórza* Lucy Maund Montgomery, powieściami Makuszyńskiego (*Panna z mokrą głową*, *Szaleństwa panny Ewy*), *Dzikuską* Ireny Zarzyckiej oraz – ze względu na starszego brata – te adresowane do chłopców: *Robinson Crusoe* Daniela Defoe, *Szkoła Orląt* Janusza Meissnera, *Księga dżungli* Rudyarda Kiplinga, *Winnetou* Karola Maya i cykl powieści o przygodach Tomka Wilmowskiego Alfreda Szklarskiego.

Książki dzieciństwa, jak i dom rodzinny, dzieciństwo z łatwością można przywołać. Przeszłość powraca zarówno do nas, jak i ludzi pióra. Z tą różnicą, że ci ostatni potrafią wspomnieniu z dzieciństwa nadać artystyczną formę. Nic dziwnego, że dzieciństwo jako gniazdo pamięci i czas fascynacji naiwną urodą rzeczy jest dla wielu twórców tematem literackich eksploracji. Wystarczy wymienić tu Kazimierza Brandysa, Marię Dąbrowską, Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza, Juliana Kadena Bandrowskiego, Jana Parandowskiego, Janinę Porazińską, Melchiora Wańkowicza, Jadwigę Żylińską... Podejmowane przez pisarzy (a w ostatnim dziesięcioleciu również przez ludzi z pierwszych stron gazet) próby zmierzenia się z rzeczywistością minioną unaoczniają siłę i trwałość autobiograficznej tradycji. O atrakcyjności tworzywa autobiograficznego decyduje pragnienie ocalenia tego, co przemijające, chęć ucieczki i schronienia w mitycznej krainie spokoju i bezpieczeństwa. Raj dzieciństwa jawi się jako

przestrzeń, w której nie ma w zasadzie strachu i przemocy. Jest przestrzenią najbliższą nie tylko metaforycznie, ale i dosłownie. To przestrzeń wewnętrzna, przestrzeń życiowa, przestrzeń osób najmocniej nas kochających – matki, ojca, przestrzeń domu – bliska sercu i pamięci. Im głębiej zapadamy w czas przeszły – czas dzieciństwa, tym lepiej się w nim czujemy, gdyż utkana z nici pamięci otulina chroni nas przed złem teraźniejszości. Pamięć daje siłę przetrwania, przywołuje wartości, które inspirowały wybory, daje dystans, pozwalając uwzględnić wszystkie okoliczności w czasie i przestrzeni².

Stąd nie wywołuje zdziwienia fakt, że spośród trzech różnych odmian pisania o dzieciństwie³ najwięcej pisarzy ukazuje dzieciństwo jako Arkadię „udrapowaną” w artystyczną formę gawędy szlacheckiej, pamiętnika lub powieści społeczno-obyczajowej. Jako przykład posłużyć może utwór Jana Parandowskiego *Zegar słoneczny*. Z pozostałymi odmianami autobiografii i powieści autobiograficznych łączy go postać narratora, jego swoiste „kryptoucześnieństwo” w zdarzeniach z przeszłości, dwutorowość opowieści wynikająca z rozdwojenia narratora (dziecko i dorosły), psychiczne kreowanie czasu⁴, autentyzm zdarzeń i postaci, uporządkowana przestrzeń przybierająca postać czterech koncentrycznie ułożonych kręgów: dom (lwowskie mieszkanie), obejście związane z domem (ulica, park), obszar miasta, ogromna nieskończona „reszta”, wszystko co otacza świat krainy dzieciństwa.

Zegar słoneczny to zbiór trzynastu opowiadań osnutych na tle wspomnień autora z czasów dzieciństwa i wczesnej młodości spędzonej we lwowskim gimnazjum. Napisane z gawędziarską swadą i humorem, okraszone nutką liryzmu przyjmują formę sentymentalnego wspomnienia z podróży w dalekie lata. Poetycka fraza, staranny dobór słowa i plastyczność obrazu zdradza artystyczną profesję bohatera – narratora. Dzięki niemu utwór zyskuje spójność semantyczną i kompozycyjną. Narrator porusza się bowiem po własnym życiu we wszelkich możliwych kierunkach, lekceważąc następstwo czasu⁵, by z przed-

² G. Gusdorf, *Warunki i ograniczenia autobiografii*, tł. Janusz Barczyński, „Pamiętnik Literacki”, 1979, R. LXX, z. 1, s. 269–270.

³ Maria Czerwińska wyróżnia trzy grupy utworów, w których dzieciństwo jawi się jako temat: 1) dzieciństwo jawi się jako Arkadia (Stanisław Grabski, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Jan Parandowski, Melchior Wańkowicz); 2) utwory kwestionujące tę tradycję (Stanisław Lem, Zbigniew Żaczekiewicz, Jadwiga Żylińska); 3) dom i najbliższa okolica stają się bardziej ilustracją losu człowieka niż przedmiotem opowieści o własnej biografii. Arkadyjski mit dzieciństwa jest negatywnym punktem wyjścia (Kazimierz Brandys, Andrzej Kijowski); por. M. Czerwińska, *Dom w autobiografii i powieści o dzieciństwie*, [w:] *Przestrzeń i literatura*, pod red. Michała Głowińskiego i Aleksandry Okopień-Sławińska, Warszawa 1978, s. 229–252.

⁴ A. Kot, *Wokół dzieciństwa w literaturze. Polskie wersje tematu. Studia o sztuce dla dziecka*, 1990, z. 4, s. 43.

⁵ Krąży on między przeszłością a teraźniejszością. Jej ciągłość opiera się nie na chronologicznym następstwie wydarzeń przeszłych, lecz zachodzących w umyśle w teraźniejszości; por. J. Sturrock, *Nowy wzorzec autobiografii*, tł. Grażyna Cendrowska, „Pamiętnik Literacki”, 1979, R. LXX, z. 1, s. 341 oraz A. Kot, dz. cyt., s. 43–44.

stawionych zdarzeń wydobyć klimat i atmosferę minionego czasu, obraz rodziny i siebie sprzed lat, a przez odwołania do teraźniejszości – ciągłość tradycji i egzystencjalną powtarzalność zarejestrowaną w geście, sytuacji...

„Wszystko się powtarza. Piotruś, zmęczony gonitwą, idzie teraz przy moim boku, trzymając się swoim zwyczajem kieszeni mego futra. Zaplątany w swoje myśli, mimowiednie zaczynam mówić o świętym Mikołaju. Piotruś milczy, ale chyba wzrok mnie nie myli – jego rumieńce wyraźnie pociemniały. Za chwilę bąka nieśmiało, że przestał wierzyć w świętego Mikołaja. Udaję zdumienie, zgorzzenie. Patrzy na mnie z ukosa, przebiegle. Nagle spoważniał, spuszcza oczy, rozbija końcem bucika grudkę śniegu. „Ale ja się bardzo zmartwiłem, kiedyś się dowiedział, że to nie święty Mikołaj przynosi...”⁶.

Czytelnik poznaje bohatera jako sześciolatka, gdy ten zgłębia technikę pisanania i czytania. Pisarz skupia uwagę odbiorcy na „zawężeniach kształtującej się świadomości”⁷: najpierw dziecka, potem chłopca rozpoczynającego naukę w gimnazjum, wreszcie młodzieńca opuszczającego szkolne mury. Zawsze jednak, w każdym wcieleniu, czy etapie rozwoju umieszcza bohatera, a więc siebie sprzed lat, na tle środowiska: rodzinnego, domowego, szkolnego, dzięki czemu wspomnienie zyskuje dodatkowo walor dokumentalny. Autor prezentuje strukturę ówczesnego społeczeństwa, przywołując postacie handlującego starzyzną Żyda, konsyliarza Zakreja, ubogiej handlarki, Lola – wynalazcy karabinu szybkostrzelnego, malarza, dziada, policjantów, radców, wojskowych, nauczycieli. Wyznacznikiem autentyczności postaci są ich imiona i nazwiska, fakty, zdarzenia, odtworzona topografia Lwowa. Pamięć miejsc, ludzi i sytuacji może czytelnika zaskakiwać. I choć prezentacja świata społecznego ma charakter znakowy, a nawet symboliczny w odniesieniu do osoby opowiadacza, to opowieści o ludziach związanych z rodziną Parandowskich ukonkretniają, wzbogacają i ubarwiają wspomnienia. Ilustrują nie tylko specyficzne cechy ich osobowości i charakteru, ale służą rekonstrukcji człowieczej egzystencji, wymuszając filozoficzną zadumę, a czasem wywołują dobrotliwy uśmiech. Ujawniają związki między ludźmi, potrzebę bycia z innymi, wzajemnej pomocy i solidarności. Relacje z bliskimi, przywołane słowa, epizody z przeszłości pozwalają lepiej pokazać sposób myślenia malca, chłopca, młodzieńca, proces intelektualnego dojrzewania, którego wyznacznikiem są też dawne lektury. Jan Parandowski wspomina książki dzieciństwa: *Kopciuszka*, *Królewnę Śnieżkę*, *Czerwonego Kapturka*, baśnie braci Grimmów i Hansa Christiana Andersena, powieści Karola Maya i Juliusza Verne’a oraz *Robinsona Crusoe*. Zwornikiem między tym kim (czym) był, a tym kim (czym) się stał jest Piotruś. Syn pisarza ewokuje zdarzenia z przeszłości, co ujawniają sygnały początku: „Musiałem się zamyślić...”; „Piotruś wzywa mnie...”; „Piotruś siedzi nad elementarzem, wpatrzony w trzy litery...” Ten mały chłopiec to bliźnia-

⁶ J. Parandowski, *Zegar słoneczny*, dz. cyt., s. 99.

⁷ Okr. A. Kot, dz. cyt., s. 45.

cze wcielenie pisarza, jego wierna kopia po latach. „Słuchając głosu Piotrusia, patrząc na jego zmrużone oczy, gdy podgląda oporne litery i triumfalny blask źrenic, gdy oto złożyły się nagle w żywe stworzenie – widzę siebie w jego wieku u brzegu wielkiego stołu w jadalni, widzę swój palec wbity w stronicę książki, skąd patrzą na mnie również trzy znaki”⁸.

Jan Parandowski opisuje sprawy drobne, małe, z historyzoficznego punktu widzenia nieistotne i błahe, ale oglądane z perspektywy terażniejszości – najważniejsze, intensywnie przeżywane, z mądrością wieku dojrzałego. Unaoczniają tę prawdę sceny z Piotrusiem, w których miłość ojcowska zostaje przefiltrowana przez pamięć pierwszych wzruszeń i doznań dziecka oraz życiową mądrość dorosłego. Świadomość bezpowrotnej utraty tamtych spraw, każe pisarzowi inaczej patrzeć na syna, wyznaczając wspomnieniu z dzieciństwa, wspomnieniu o domu inne miejsce, rangę i znaczenie.

Osią kompozycyjną powieści staje się więc przestrzeń domu. Według Gastona Bachelarda poetyka domu w literaturze autobiograficznej zajmuje miejsce szczególne. Rozpoznawalnym znakiem domu są przedmioty osobiste, bliskie, napełnione intymną czułością, a po latach pamięcią ludzi i zdarzeń, urastające do miana symbolu. „Bezradnym wzrokiem szukam pomocy we wszystkim, co mnie otacza. Krzesła, które mi służą do zabawy w pociąg, tak wierne i posłuszne we wszystkich podróżach, zdolne ruszyć w najdalszą drogę za samą myślą, stoją nieme i obojętne. Zegar szafkowy zgrzyta jak zawsze, zanim wybije godzinę, i po chwili dzwoni oderwanymi uderzeniami, które spadają w ciszę pokoju jak mosiężne kule”⁹.

One są miarą upływu czasu, materialnym znakiem przejścia w kolejny etap życia, znakiem przekraczanych granic, a często pretekstem do snucia opowieści, refleksji. „Wyrosłem już z łóżeczka, lecz jeszcze długo nie dawałem go ruszać i patrzyłem ze smutkiem, gdy w końcu je wynoszono. (...) Nie dałem sobie odebrać stoliczka i krzeselka, co dzień używałem ich trochę, porzucając mój dorosły stół i krzesło (...)”¹⁰. „Nie policzę was wszystkich, którzyście zatrzymywali moją dzieciinną wyobraźnię (...)”¹¹.

W przestrzeni domu miejsce szczególne zajmuje babka. Babka to „cudowna istota”, która zaważyła na wyobraźni dziecka, przede wszystkim słownictwem zaczerpniętym z odległej epoki. Ona pierwsza dała mu pióro do ręki w momencie, kiedy niewątpliwie cechy przyszłego pisarza już się w nim budzą. To właśnie babka dostarczyła mu wszystko co do pisania wydało mu się niezbędne. To ona, mając dużo wolnego czasu (o czym wspomina Irena Parandowska), wprowadzała małego Dunka w tajniki wiedzy, obyczaju, religii, kultury. To ona dbała o rozwój psychiczny i fizyczny chłopca, jego bezpieczeństwo. „Trzyma mnie mocno za rękę i pewnym krokiem idzie przez tłum, który

⁸ J. Parandowski, *Zegar słoneczny*, dz. cyt., s. 5.

⁹ Tamże, s. 6.

¹⁰ Tamże, s. 112.

¹¹ Tamże, s. 55.

się rozstępuje przed majestatem jej wieku. Jestem z niej dumny. Wiele osób ją zna, kłaniają się jej kupcy stojący u drzwi swoich sklepów, ona każdemu odpowiada krótkim skinieniem głowy¹².

W hierarchii domu, rodziny zajmowała ona miejsce najwyższe. Była arcykapłanką domowego ogniska, duszą domostwa, osobą mądrą życiowym doświadczeniem. „Babka, w białym fartuchu i zawoju na głowie, jak stary wódz wydaje rozkazy, czuwa nad dzieżą, makutrą, ogniem, oznacza porę wkładania i wyjmowania ciasta z „rury”, a matka zaś skrzętny porucznik, jej słowa powtarza Kasi o twarzy czerwonej jak piwonia albo je sama wypełnia¹³.

Poza tym „obecność babki zmusza towarzystwo do wyższych myśli...”¹⁴.

Postać babki wprowadza zadumę nad przemijaniem, kolejami losu i zmieniającą się perspektywą oglądanych wydarzeń. Jako nestorka rodu i kobieta wiekowa widzi i wie więcej: „(...) w starcach i staruszkach widzi dzieci, (...) pod jej spojrzeniem wysokie kamienice przysiadają u brzegu ulic małymi domkami, ciągną się wszędzie jakieś sztachety, pachną sady. Najpiękniej pachnie ten, który był kiedyś własnością dziadka, tu gdzie teraz wspina się w górę ulica Kalecza, aby zbiec w dół ulicą Chmielowskiego. Był to piękny sad, znam na pamięć wszystkie jego drzewa¹⁵.

Potrafi spojrzeć na siebie i własne przemijanie z humorem: „Dość spałam w swoim długim życiu a dziś – jutro czeka mnie sen wieczny. To przyjemnie w moim wieku oszukać czas bodaj na parę nocy¹⁶.

Wprowadza w obręb domu i życia społecznego ład i porządek moralny. Słowa babki, jej doświadczenie tworzą świat wartości, są wyposażeniem w przyszłe, dorosłe życie bohatera.

W strukturze powieści postać babki pozwala na poszerzenie ram czasowych, które wyznaczają daty 1900–1913. Wspominając babkę, sięga pisarz do epoki napoleońskiej. Pretekstem do snucia opowieści bywa zabawna anegdota związana z pierwszym zdaniem małego Dunka.

Apologia rodzinnego domu w *Zegarze słonecznym* ujęta zostaje w szeregu epizodów, w których sporo miejsca zajmuje dziecko i jego sposób oglądu osób, rzeczy, zjawisk. Postrzega ono świat od dołu, z nosem przy ziemi lub przez pryzmat uczuć, zwłaszcza gdy wspomnienie dotyczy matki: „(...) zamiast wędrować po tej żywej mapie, patrzyłem ku ścieżce w dole, gdzie moja matka przysiadła na ławce. Ogromna miłość i ogromna tęsknota zmioły mnie z góry jak wichur. Bez tchu rzuciłem się ku niej tak gwałtownie, że parasolka wypadła jej z ręki i zatoczyła się po trawie błękitnym kołem¹⁷,

¹² Tamże, s. 8.

¹³ Tamże, s. 17.

¹⁴ Tamże, s. 114.

¹⁵ Tamże, s. 7.

¹⁶ Tamże, s. 45.

¹⁷ Tamże, s. 39.

„(...) a naprawdę płakałem ze szczęścia, że matka jest taka piękna, jakby wyszła z majowej bajki, i że czuję jej ciepło w uścisku. Nic nie mówiła, słyszałem tylko bicie jej serca”¹⁸.

Pojawia się ona z tą samą częstotliwością co babka, gdyż powrót do domu jest zawsze powrotem do matki¹⁹, która kontynuuje rodzinną tradycję i model wychowania. Dzięki tym dwóm kobietom dzieciństwo pisarza było szczęśliwe i radosne. Nie zaciemnia go nawet nieobecność ojca, którego zastępuje w jakimś stopniu Stefan. Pisarz jest oczarowany magią dzieciństwa, domem, babką i matką. Przywołana w autobiografii przestrzeń wewnętrzna, własnego „ja” oraz domowa jak i ta zewnętrzna, tj. szkolna staje się przestrzenią prywatną, dostępną tylko jednostkowej pamięci. Lwowski świat dzieciństwa i młodości, o którym opowiada Parandowski, to świat miniony, skończony, utrwalony w pamięci, zaś w rzeczywistości – oddzielony geograficznym i politycznym kordonem. Narrator czuje się wyalienowany z tamtego czasu. Jego przekroczenie przybiera postać metaforycznego obrazu. Oto bowiem w jednej chwili cała „szkolna przeszłość” została za nim/nimi. Wejście w świat dorosłych oznacza koniec starych przyjaźni, a nierzadko zapowiedź osamotnienia. „Widzę nas, jak tą samą drogą, ulicami, skwerem i pod wysokim parkanem z gimnazjalnego boiska, w pogodę i słońce, między zwałami śniegu lub pod kwitnącymi kasztanami – idziemy przez osiem lat, podnosząc się coraz wyżej nad ziemię (...) wołamy do siebie – i rozdziela nas cisza”²⁰.

Czas zawsze fascynował pisarza. I może właśnie dlatego swym wspomnieniom z dzieciństwa i młodości nadał tytuł *Zegar słoneczny*. Oto zegar odmierzający czas, w którym nie ma miejsca na lata historii oddzielające dzieciństwo Piotrusia od własnego spędzonego we Lwowie. Przywołane w opowiadaniach lata swojego dzieciństwa i młodości spina klamrą z epoką własnej dojrzałości przypadającej na okres artystycznej działalności, czas stawania i bycia rodzicem. I dlatego uwaga pisarza koncentruje się na tym, co niepowtarzalne i co przemija, umyka w cień, przytłoczone teraźniejszością, bieżącą chwilą. Jan Prokop w szkicu poświęconym pisarzowi napisał: „Pisarz stoi jak gdyby na pograniczu dwóch światów, jak Charon – przewoźnik pośredniczący między tym, co podległe czasowi i tym co wyrasta ponad czas. Jest swoistym dawcą nieśmiertelności”²¹. A tę gwarantuje dzieło sztuki: pisane słowo, obraz lub ludzka pamięć przetworzona we wspomnienie przekazywane z pokolenia na pokolenie.

¹⁸ Tamże, s. 50.

¹⁹ Zob. G. Bachelard, *Dom rodzinny i dom oniryczny*, [w:] tegoż, *Wyobrażenia poetycka. Wybór pism*, wybór i tł. H. Chudak, A. Tatarkiewicz, przeł. J. Błoński, Warszawa 1975, s. 324.

²⁰ J. Parandowski, *Zegar słoneczny*, dz. cyt., s. 122.

²¹ J. Prokop, *W poszukiwaniu utraconego czasu – Jan Parandowski*, [w:] *Prozaicy dwudziestolecia międzywojennego*, Warszawa 1974, s. 284.

Z historii europejskich badań nad literaturą dziecięcą
From The History of Studies in Children's Literature in Europe

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Kopciuszek czy księżniczka? Teoretyczne modele badania literatury dziecięcej

Postać Kopciuszka, nieszczęsnej sierotki, którą dobra wróżka przeistacza w księżniczkę, jest często wykorzystywany jako metafora literatury dziecięcej, uwydatniając jej nierównorzędną sytuację wśród innych gatunków literackich. I nie dzieje się to przypadkiem. Literatura dziecięca, która już od swego zarania była estetycznie marginalizowana, ciągle podąża własną drogą ku artystycznej tożsamości.

W poszukiwaniu artystycznej tożsamości, częściej pod nadzorem czynników ideologicznych i instytucjonalnych, niż pod pieczę „dobrych wróżek”, literatura jako Kopciuszek ciągle ogląda siebie bądź to z uwagi na pierwiastki intertekstualne czy metatekstualne, bądź też szuka w „zwierciadle” nauki o literaturze. **Jakie są teoretyczne projekcje jej obrazu?** – o tym mówi niniejszy tekst. Konkretnie, chodzi o zdolność czy niezdolność literaturoznawstwa do odpowiedzi na pytanie: „co to jest literatura dziecięca?”, znalezienia jej parametrów i określenia jej immanentnych cech, jeśli takowe istnieją.

Na paradoks zakrawa fakt, że i teoretycznie (najczęściej) i praktycznie istnienie literatury dziecięcej jest uznawane *de facto*. Wątpliwości zaczynają się natychmiast, gdy tylko ktoś spróbuje zrozumieć to zjawisko i opisać je posługując się adekwatną terminologią. Z tego powodu, gdy chodzi o literaturę dziecięcą, zdarza się, że definitywnie neguje się jej istnienie i specyfikę – to opinia, którą zwykle podzielają pisarze (u nas, w Bułgarii, m.in. Dora Gabe, Angel Karalijczew, Atanas Dalczew), a rzadziej badacze. Chociaż podstawy dla podobnych opinii znaleźć można zarówno w praktyce artystycznej jak i percepcji czytelniczej (która nie uznaje arbitralnych parametrów i granic), ten punkt widzenia zwykle sytuuje się poza kontekstem refleksji teoretycznej.

Nieprzypadkowo ciągle jest dyskutowana książka Jackline Rose, prowokacyjnie zatytułowana *The Case of Peter Pan, Or The Impossibility of Childrens Fictiom* (1984). W tej książce autorka uzasadnia swój punkt widzenia tym, że dorosły tworzy „dziecięcą” prozę i ją ocenia nie pamiętając o dzieciach, a najczęściej mając na względzie własne wyobrażenie tego, czego właściwie dzieci powinny się uczyć i jakimi być. Obdarzone autorytetem osoby i instytucje

dorosłych stają się pośrednikami (bywa, że zainteresowanymi) czytelnictwem dziecięcym, które służy przeważnie socjalizacji najmłodszych. Z tego powodu książki dla dzieci i ich krytyka podlegają sankcji społecznej (władzy), a literatura dziecięca istnieje co najwyżej jako twórczość dzieci albo wybrana przez nie lektura. W taki sposób J. Rose widzi problematyczność pojęcia „literatura dziecięca” i jej definicji, twierdząc, że literatura taka w ogóle nie istnieje.

Przeważa jednak koncepcja przeciwstawna, która głosi, że literatura dziecięca stanowi osobny, specyficzny rodzaj literatury. Wszelako jej argumentacja stanowi nieusuwalną przeszkodę, która nie pozwala nauce znaleźć metodologicznego oparcia oraz terminologicznego instrumentarium służącego za budulec teorii literatury dziecięcej.

Przegląd dotychczasowego piśmiennictwa w tej dziedzinie świadczy wyraźnie o niepewności i szukaniu metodologicznego oparcia to w pedagogice, to w socjologii, to w psychologii, to w psychoanalizie albo w teorii informacji i semiotyce tudzież w estetyce odbioru i na gruncie kulturoznawstwa.

Perspektywa diachroniczna w traktowaniu literatury dziecięcej prowadzi do konstytutywnego dla jej istnienia i samoświadomości aspektu dydaktyczno-artystycznego, który ujmuje problematykę artystyczną poprzez pedagogiczny skrót perspektywiczny. „Zasadnicza różnica pomiędzy badaniami w zakresie literatury dziecięcej a ogólnym dyskursem literacko-krytycznym polega na tym, że o ile ‘dorosła’ literatura była badana pod kątem jej stosunku do filozofii, historii idei i estetyki, to literatura dziecięca zawsze była związana z edukacją”.¹

Orientacja pedagogiczna w badaniu literatury dziecięcej polega przeważnie na traktowaniu jej jako środka wspomagającego w nauczaniu i edukacji dzieci. Takie podejście jest charakterystyczne nie tylko dla początkowego stadium rozumienia konieczności pojawienia się wyspecjalizowanej literatury dla dzieci, ale i dla czasów późniejszych. Owo podejście negatywnie wpływa nie tylko na rozwój literatury dziecięcej, ale i na kształtowanie wyobrażeń co do charakteru lektur dziecięcych. Charakter ten jest określany głównie przez intencje wychowawcze dorosłych (wydawców, krytyków, nauczycieli, rodziców) i sprowadza się do preferowania książek „stosownych” dla rozwoju dziecka a ignorowania pozostałych. Pogląd zaprezentowany przez Jana Jakuba Rousseau w księdze *Emil, czyli o wychowaniu* wydał owoce dobre i złe, a wśród tych ostatnich – narodziny pedagogicznej cenzury w sprawie lektur dziecięcych.

I choć tak zwany „dydaktyzm literacki” uważany jest za miniony etap w rozwoju literatury dziecięcej, kryterium dydaktyczne, mające na względzie podkreślanie różnicy wieku między autorem i odbiorcą, do tej pory pretenduje do roli jednego z zasadniczych wyznaczników tej literatury.

Jeśli dzieciństwo jest i pozostaje okresem „nauki rzemiosła”, w co nie można wątpić, każdy komunikat adresowany do niego w tym okresie zawiera w sobie

¹ M. Nikolajeva M., *Introduction to Children's Literature*. Tallin. 1997, s. 7.

przesłanie pedagogiczne – pisze Marc Soriano. – Literatura dla młodzieży zawsze jest pedagogiczna w szerokim znaczeniu tego słowa.²

We współczesnej produkcji metaliterackiej dość często literatura dziecięca jest traktowana jako jeden ze sposobów socjalizacji dorastającego człowieka poprzez przekazywanie wiedzy i doświadczenia starszego pokolenia, pisarzowi dziecięcemu zaś wyznacza się rolę nauczyciela i wychowawcy. Z jednej strony jest on ograniczony „dyktatem” odbiorcy i zmuszony do konstruowania swojego przesłania na podstawie własnego wyobrażenia co do dziecięcych kompetencji odbiorczych i oczekiwań. Równocześnie ma obowiązek postawić czytelnikowi swoje warunki, na bazie własnej dojrzałości, doświadczenia życiowego, własnego długotrwałego obcowania z rzeczywistością. Toteż świadomie obmyślany komponent dydaktyczny stanowi wyróżnik literatury dziecięcej, który podnoszą pisarze, krytycy i teoretycy. Chodzi o dydaktyzm jako konstytutywny atrybut utworu adresowanego do dzieci, a nie wyłącznie dydaktykę, synonim moralizatorstwa, pouczenia, które stoją w sprzeczności z istotą literatury dziecięcej i od dawna zostały odrzucone przez teorię i krytykę.

Zdarza się, że aprobata dla kryterium dydaktycznego przeistacza się w dyktat, zwłaszcza gdy przyczynia się do tego określony klimat socjokulturowy, na przykład w czasach, kiedy czynniki dominującej ideologii i instytucji bezwzględnie reglamentują byt literatury dziecięcej, a dyskurs krytyczny staje się nośnikiem ich dydaktycznych imperatywów. Nie tak dawno byliśmy świadkami podobnej sytuacji.

Orientacja psychologiczna w przypadku literatury dziecięcej za kryteria jej specyfiki uznaje albo cechy odbiorcy, uwarunkowane jego wiekiem, albo charakter talentu autora.

Tradycyjnie uznaje się, że literatura dziecięca – to literatura przeznaczona dla specyficznego czytelnika (dziecka albo nastolatek), którego wiek wymaga określonych cech utworu oraz pisarskich predyspozycji. Ten punkt widzenia, który od początku był związany z nazwiskami Bielińskiego, Czernyszewskiego i Dobrolubowa, nie stracił swej aktualności i jest uznawany w większości do dzisiaj. Według opinii Jamesa Krüssa, znanego niemieckiego pisarza, swoistość literatury dziecięcej wyznacza specyficzna publiczność, która dysponuje własnym językowym systemem znaków i niedoskonałym w porównaniu z większością ludzi doświadczeniem historycznym i osobistym. Dlatego uważa, że na pytanie, czym różni się literatura dziecięca od innych literatur, odpowiedź jest tylko jedna: własną swoistą publicznością.³

Krótko i przejrzyście ten punkt widzenia został uogólniony w słowach Iriny Czerniawskiej, uczestniczki dyskusji o specyfice literatury dziecięcej, która miała miejsce trzy dziesięciolecia temu na łamach czasopisma „Dietskaja Lite-

² M. Soriano, *Définition du livre d'enfants // Guide de littérature pour la jeunesse*. Paris, 1975, s. 186.

³ J. Krüss, *Litieratura li dietskaja literatura?!/!* „Dietskaja Litieratura”, 1980, nr 4.

ratura”: „Estetyczne wyznaczniki literatury dziecięcej są dyktowane samą naturą dziecka”.⁴

Przeciwstawną opinię głosi inna uczestniczka dyskusji – Walentyna Bawina: „Kiedy bronimy prawa literatury dziecięcej do samodzielnego i równoprawnionego istnienia wśród innych literatur – pisze ona – mówimy nie o jej przeznaczeniu, lecz naturze talentu artystycznego jej twórców. Właśnie to odróżnia ją od innych rodzajów literatury i właśnie to czyni ją swoistą, odmienną od innych książek w oczach dziecka”.⁵

Dla uzasadnienia swej tezy, że wrodzony talent twórcy powinien być kryterium wyznaczającym specyfikę literatury dziecięcej, pisarka przytacza znane słowa Bielińskiego, że pisarz dla dzieci powinien się takim urodzić. Nawiasem mówiąc, prawie wszyscy zwolennicy tego punktu widzenia sięgają albo po słowa Bielińskiego, albo wypowiedzi pisarzy dla dzieci, którzy mówią, że zaspokajają potrzeby dziecka, które nadal żyje w nich samych. Astrid Lindgren powiedziała: „Dlaczego piszę dla dzieci? Pomimo swego wieku czuję, że w mojej piersi bije serce siedmioletniego dziecka”.

Niewątpliwie, charakter talentu, szczególnie predyspozycje konkretnego artysty, jego zdolność dostosowania się do oczekiwań dziecięcego odbiorcy i znajdowania z nim wspólnego języka są przesłankami, które mają duże znaczenie dla uprawiania owocnej twórczości na użytek dzieci. Ale nie mniej ważne jest dogłębne poznanie świata dziecięcego we wszystkich jego aspektach, z uwzględnieniem jego dynamiki i perspektywy rozwojowej.

Jak wykazano, obydwie przeciwstawne stanowiska co do zakresu podejścia psychologicznego mają swoich zwolenników i oponentów, a dyskusje między nimi toczą się po dziś dzień. Jednocześnie owe dwa wektory działalności badawczej, preferując pozaliterackie atrybuty literatury dziecięcej, nasuwają wątpliwości co do filologicznego traktowania owego przedmiotu badań.

Estetyka recepcji także nie lekceważy aspektu psychologicznego. Rozpatrując relację „tekst – odbiór” i ich wzajemne powiązania jak również fakt wpisywania weń kontekstu zewnętrznego oraz doświadczenia czytelniczego, prawdopodobnie dałoby się znaleźć więcej możliwości wyjaśnienia specyfiki literatury dziecięcej. Na tej podstawie zostały oparte prace teoretyczne niektórych badaczy czeskich i słowackich, którzy pod terminem „aspekt dziecięcy” rozumieją kategorię publiczności jako konstruktywnej siły w literaturze dla dzieci.

Na tej samej podstawie metodologicznej ugruntowana była w latach 80-tych i moja praca doktorska o problemach poetyki beletrystycznej literatury dziecięcej. Opierała się ona na założeniu, że kryterium wiekowe w literaturze dziecięcej modeluje osobliwy typ komunikacji estetycznej między pisarzem (dojrzały człowiek) i odbiorcą (dorastający człowiek), gdy dorosły aktualizuje

⁴ I. Czerniawska, *Kakich dokazatielstw triebujet aksjomat?* // „Dietskaja Litieratura” 1972, nr 7.

⁵ W. Bawina, *A wsie-taki ona wiertitsia...* // „Dietskaja Litieratura” 1972, nr 8.

w sobie dzieciństwo i dąży do realizacji twórczej wykorzystując kod dziecięcy, dziecko zaś staje się „współautorem” z decydującym głosem co do wyboru repertuaru i strategii tekstu, uwzględniających jego „potencjał odbiorczy”. Pozycja dziecka w tekście jest uwidoczniiona poprzez „fabularne gry” autora, a pozycja dorosłego polega na wykorzystaniu dziecięcego doświadczenia i konstruowaniu bohaterów w oparciu o wyobrażenia pisarza na temat dziecięcej wizji świata. W gruncie rzeczy to właśnie stanowi „aspekt dziecięcy”, o którym mówią tacy badacze, jak František Miko, Jan Kopal, Vladimír Neskušil i in., a który, ich zdaniem, determinuje protoestetyczna specyfika literatury dziecięcej.

Estetyka recepcji, metodologicznie skuteczniejsza, gdy idzie o stosunek literaturoznawstwa do literatury dziecięcej, zdaniem jej twórców pozostawiła ten typ literatury poza polem swego widzenia. U niektórych spośród nich (np. Wolfganga Isera), obserwuje się swoiste odejście od własnych stanowisk i zainteresowanie literacką antropologią.

Teoria literatury dziecięcej (ponieważ istnieje) również przyjmuje podobny kierunek i w ostatnim czasie aktywnie skłania się w stronę koncepcji dzieciństwa i jego subkultury, a literatura dziecięca jest rozpatrywana w kontekście takich przedmiotów jak „Cultural Studies”, „Childhood Studies”, „Child Culture Studies”.

W artykule *Na skrzyżowaniu literatury dziecięcej z badaniami nad dzieciństwem* Richard Flynn w taki sposób argumentuje sens podobnego współdziałania: „Chcemy, m.in. nadać nazwę temu, co już zaistniało i świadomie wesprzeć teoretyczne oraz historyczne badania nad konstruowaniem dzieciństwa, które choć nieuchwytnie, mają jeszcze ciągle wystarczająco siłę”. A jedno z wyzwania nowej dyscypliny widzi w tym, „żeby popierać krytykę, która bierze pod uwagę projekcję dzieci i dzieciństwa w całościowo rozumianej literaturze i kulturze”.⁶

Zresztą, podobne podejście znajdujemy już w latach 70. w encyklopedycznej pracy znanego francuskiego badacza **Marca Soriano**. Tutaj, poprzez syntezę antropologii kulturowej z psychoanalizą i teorią informacji próbuje się znaleźć odpowiedzi na podstawowe problemy teorii i historii literatury dziecięcej, określając je następująco; „Literatura dla młodzieży jest swego rodzaju komunikacją historyczną (to znaczy ograniczoną w czasie i przestrzeni) pomiędzy mówiącym albo piszącym (nadawcą) a adresatem-dzieckiem (odbiorcą), które do pewnego czasu nie dysponuje choćby częściowym doświadczeniem oraz predyspozycjami lingwistycznymi, intelektualnymi, emocjonalnymi i in., typowymi dla dojrzałego wieku”.⁷

Z kolei pragnąc: „otworzyć nowy i owocny kierunek w badaniach nad literaturą dziecięcą”, specjalistka z Izraela Zohar Shavit proponuje rozpatrywać

⁶ R. Flynn R., *The Intersection of Children's Literature and Childhood Studies*// „Children's Literature Association quarterly (Fall 1997)”, vol. 22, nr 3. ss. 143–145.

⁷ M. Soriano, *Définition du livre d'enfants*, op.cit. s. 185.

jako integralną część kultury mieszczący się w jej obrębie system poliliteracji oraz zadaje pytanie o relacje między konwencjami kulturowymi, zaliczając do nich zarówno wyobrażenia na temat dzieciństwa jak i teksty napisane dla dzieci. Z jednej strony zmierza do „przeanalizowania, w jaki sposób przeobrażenia społecznej idei dzieciństwa wpływają na różne teksty dla dzieci w różnych epokach, a z drugiej – przebadania, w jakim stopniu kulturowy wymiar literatury dziecięcej narzuca określony model zachowań...”.⁸ Jej praca, chociaż operuje głównie pojęciami semiotyki kultury, w rzeczywistości proponuje względem literatury dziecięcej podejście integracyjne i naprawdę poszerza perspektywy jej badania w latach 80-tych.

We współczesnym metajęzyku, opisującym literaturę dziecięcą, funkcjonują następujące kategorie socjokulturowe:

- ▶ „typ kultury i typ świadomości estetycznej”;
- ▶ „centrum – peryferie”;
- ▶ „kultura wysoka (elitarna) – masowa (popularna)”;
- ▶ „literatura – nie-literatura”;
- ▶ „sposób istnienia literatury – sposób istnienia książki”.

Do tego samego metajęzyka wprowadzone zostały następujące opozycje kulturowo-antropologiczne:

- ▶ „dorosły – dziecko”, z wariantem „rodzice – dzieci” (opozycja wertykalna);
- ▶ „mężczyzna (chłopczyk) – kobieta (dziewczynka)” (opozycja płciowa);
- ▶ „biały – kolorowy” (opozycja rasowa);
- ▶ „cywilizowany – nie cywilizowany” (właściwa opozycja kulturowa).

W ten sposób wraz ze zmianą statusu literatury dziecięcej jako przedmiotu badań (na uniwersytetach i specjalistycznych uczelniach wyższych, na akademickich forach i w czasopiśmie poziomu akademickiego) zmienia się i metajęzyk, z którego korzysta nauka mając na względzie to skomplikowane i trudno poddające się definicji zjawisko. W rzeczywistości ujawnia eklektyczność instrumentarium pojęciowego zaczerpniętego z wielu nauk na użytek badań literatury dziecięcej, to znaczy podejścia interdyscyplinarnego, które jest nie tylko absolutnie niezbędne, ale i optymalnie owocne.

W nauce istnieje również i węższa perspektywa kulturologiczna, tak zwanej **dydaktyki literackiej** nakierowanej ku literaturze „rodzajowej” (stereotypowej, trywialnej, dydaktycznej). To literatura, która bierze pod uwagę parametry publiczności czytelniczej i aby potwierdzić swe znaczenie, reprodukuje się na zasadzie matrycy, kliszy, stereotypu. Niewątpliwie literatura dziecięca stanowi taki typ literatury. Nieprzypadkowo jest rozpatrywana jako usytuowana między literaturą a folklorem, między literaturą „wysoką” a literaturą „popularną” i z tego powodu nosi cechy obydwu typów piśmiennictwa beletrystycznego.

⁸ Z. Shavit., *Poetics of Children's Literature*. Athens, 1986, s. Xi.

Z takiej perspektywy traktuje literaturę dziecięcą niemiecki badacz Hans-Heino Ewers (kiedy mówi o literaturze dziecięcej jako o „pisanym folklorze”⁹). Podobne podejście znajdujemy w pracach teoretycznych kanadyjskich specjalistów Perry’ego Nodelmana (gdy badacz rozpatruje „literaturę dziecięcą jako wariację”¹⁰), Lisy Paul, (kiedy wielokrotnie pisze o znaczeniu trzech R jako natury literatury dziecięcej, co ilustrują trzy podstawowe zasady – *Repetition*, *Recollection* i *Recognition*¹¹). Ale istnieje i inna, niemniej owocna perspektywa – rozpatrywanie literatury dziecięcej w porównaniu z literaturą „dorosłą”, wykorzystując ruchomy punkt widzenia, mający na uwadze dynamikę kulturowych inwencji i socjologiczne parametry sztuki.

W ramach niniejszego artykułu nie można odnotować wszystkich stanowisk, służących naukowemu wytłumaczeniu pojęcia „literatura dziecięca”, tym bardziej że już istnieją próby ich krytycznej analizy w specjalistycznych książkach – Petera Hunta¹², Roderica McGillisa¹³ i innych.

Dlatego artykuł ogranicza się do sformułowania tezy, że poglądy na literaturę dziecięcą oscylują pomiędzy pedagogicznym utylitaryzmem a filologicznym liberalizmem, jak również między biegunami aksjologicznymi, aż po stanowiska krańcowe, że taka literatura istnieje bądź nie istnieje.

Traktowanie owego przedmiotu badań jako metodologicznie frapującego pozostaje niedocieczonym problemem nauki akademickiej, wbrew wielokrotnym próbom jego stopniowego rozwiązywania w takich krajach jak USA, Kanada, Austria, Niemcy, Francja, Anglia, Szwecja i Finlandia.

Wyzwanie literatury dziecięcej polega na tym, że poznając samą siebie w „lustrze” nauki, może przeistoczyć się w „zaczarowane lustro”, które zaprezentuje zjawiska literackie z nieznanego i zaskakującego punktu widzenia. Oby tylko znalazł się ktoś, kto mógłby odpowiedzieć na to wyzwanie.

Pierwodruk: *Zaluszka ili princessa? Teoreticzeskije modeli dietskoj literatury*. W: Margarita Slavova, *Wolszebnoje zierkało dietstwa. Stati o dietskoj literaturie*. Kijew 2002, s. 5–14.

Przełożyli Nelly Staffa i Ryszard Waksmund

⁹ H.-H. Ewers, *Children’s Literature and the Traditional Art of Storytelling* // “Poetics Today” 13:1 (Spring 1992), ss. 169–178.

¹⁰ P. Nodelmann, *Children’s Literature as Variation: A Theory of the Genre*, “Stockholm Talk”, August 1995.

¹¹ L. Paul, *Intimations of Imitations: Mimesis, Fractal Geometry and Children’s Literature* // “Signal 59”, May 1989, ss. 128–137.

¹² P. Hunt, *Criticism, Theory and Children’s Literature*. London, 1991.

¹³ R. McGillis, *The Nimble Reader: Literary Theory and Children’s Literature*. New York, 1996.

Z historii polskich badań nad literaturą dziecięcą
From The History of Studies in Children's Literature in Poland

JERZY CIEŚLIKOWSKI

THE TOPOS OF THE CHILD AND CHILDHOOD (A SYNOPSIS)

We consider the topos of the child and childhood as a series of concretizations, most often figurative ones, within the semantics that stretches from the Renaissance painting to the beginning of the 20th century. The selection of works, meaningful as they are, is random to a considerable degree and, at large, these are paintings typical and characteristic of the subject. The literary associations will not be a continuous principle and it will not be closely observed.

By popularising such narrative motifs as *The Nativity*, *The Adoration* or *The Flight*, taken from the life of Baby Jesus, the Renaissance elevated baby infancy. Yet it stabilised even more the child motif in the social consciousness by the portrait *Mother and Child* and *Motherhood*. Let us bypass the prefigurations of the theme in antiquity and focus on some Renaissance examples. Already towards the end of the 15th century, in the Dutch painting as well as in the Italian one, there occurs a process of secularization of the God-Child through construing its portrait with reference to the model of the human child. This is not with reference to a child as such, but to a child of a specific latitude, and sometimes to a child of a particular social status. In Lucas Cranach, *The Elder*, for example, it would always be a reddish-haired baby. The national and thematic way of interpreting, especially in a “moved”, not hieratic portrait, is visible in such paintings, for instance, as Joos van Cleve's *Virgin and Child*, in which the Mother gives Jesus a glass of red wine, or in Gerard David's *Madonna and Child with the Milk Soup*. It is no use explaining here the symbolic sense of red wine signifying redemption, since, in a temporal perspective, the hidden sense becomes indecipherable, and in popular understanding, it is the denotative layer of the painting that takes on an emotional sense, moving in its human intimacy.

Let us limit our range of observation again and select only one attribute of the motif of the God-baby: nakedness. In this case, nakedness is an emblem of purity, poverty, and naturalness. All these meanings can be read separately or altogether since, to a considerable degree, they are complementary. “Poverty” though has a broad range of associations and is dialectic at the same time. In religious paintings, the nakedness of the Infant Baby is not a nakedness

which can be interpreted literally in the sense of the baby lying on hay or sitting in his Mother's lap, being cold or presumably cold. Yet such reading must have been present in a fresh and naïve view, especially in situations where all around adults were clothed, and often clothed warmly. It is no wonder then that in pastorals and Christmas carols, especially of colder geographic regions (we are thinking about Polish ones then), there appears a motif of presenting gifts of nappies, dresses, and booties. Moreover, nakedness means naturalness.. A child, especially a baby, is still close to nature, and only human civilization will clothe him. At the same time, one should remember that a baby's nakedness had its ancient prefiguration. The Renaissance art, and later, the Baroque art, popularised the image of a naked baby. Multiple denotative and decorative functions being ascribed to it, a universal *putto* would become such an image. A child's nakedness entered the field of religious-secular paintings, and, in general, secular ones. In Hans Holbein (The Younger), in his painting *The Madonna of the Burgermeister Meyer*, Jesus and the mayor's youngest son are naked. The adults and older children though wear heavy winter clothes. Similarly, in Jan von Scorel's *Family Portrait*, the parents and two young children wear dresses, and only the baby in the mother's lap is naked. The 'motherhood' topos in painting up to now, consciously or unconsciously, juxtaposes itself with the religious pre-pattern; even in the Victorian epoch, a baby's nakedness was tolerated. Nowadays, naked babies are still photographed, willingly lying on their bellies on a bear- or lamb-skin, whose texture repeats, as it were, the Bethlehem's hay.

The nakedness of a feeding mother's breast was also morally neutral. In the beautiful yet naïve painting of Bertram of Minden, the Madonna gives the Baby her breast, which is in a way separated from the rest of her body and constitutes a small, round "feeding utensil". But also a beautiful breast of the Madonna in the painting of Jean Fouquet is a breast for the baby.

Nakedness, and not only, is what the little angels are blessed with. Cupids, wingless putta, angels and birds as well as little animals, dogs and cats, fill up this reminder of the free space, closed or open, which is left uninhabited by gods and humans. In the painting of Albrecht Altdorfer *Rest on the Flight into Egypt at a Fountain*, on a large bowl, a beautifully and richly carved well, there rest little, frolicking and happy angels that resemble birds. Above them, and above like creatures, there bends the naked Baby, while his Mother takes in her free, left hand a portion of crumbled food from the plate held by Joseph, and will perhaps feed the angels and creatures with it. A similar motif in Cranach is shown in the Danube landscape. The Holy Family have sat by a green wood, and little angles play all around them. The bigger ones seem to be older, so they are clothed; they sing sheet music and blow flutes and pipes. The littler ones are naked, buzz about multiple tasks: they serve the Baby and keep him amused. One of them offers him hand-picked berries, another holds a fluttering bird by its wings, still another draws water from the well.

It is in this way that childhood could be emphasised by a little angel, a bird or a toy as well. It could be emphasised by objects put in the child's hand to play: an orange, an apple, an egg. In his *Wirydarz*, Stanislaw Grabowski refers to a painting when he writes that a painter, elegantly and without violating the godly seriousness, places in the Baby's hand "some flower...or else a bird, and a doggy by his legs on top of that, or other similar toys befitting the Baby's play".

¹ An apple, an egg, grapes had of course a symbolic sense, yet in this case, in time, the denotative sense became lost and toys became just toys again. In Baldung's painting *Death and the Maiden*, at its very bottom, on the left hand side, there lie abandoned in grass: a ball and a wooden horse's head stuck on a stick. The toys signify childhood. Death, an hourglass in its hand, a mirror in the girl's hand, however, denote passing: *vanitas vanitatis*.

The children in Diego Velázquez's paintings, though much royal, are very human; The Infanta Margaret in *Las Meninas*, a central figure in the painting, bright and intelligent, somehow aware of her charm, is much childish at the same time. Similarly, the Infante Baltazar Carlos, sitting on a reared-up horse, against the background of a deep landscape, leaned in the direction opposite to the horse's back, does not stop being a portrait of a child despite the heroic pose. How anemic and ill a child Philip Prosper is in his dress adorned with little bells. The bells are amulets which are to protect him against evil. Country children in Peter Breughel also wear bells. But the bells in Breughel are cheerful. They do not let a child lose its way.

The Renaissance "enclosed garden" (*hortus conclusus*) was a perfect enclave of safety. An anonymous Upper-Rheinish master imagines such a charming idyll in a painting of the beginning of the 15th century entitled *The Little Garden*. Here, in a small area, lavishly overgrown with herbs and flowers, surrounded by a wall, time has come to a halt. One needs to remember that the return of Saturn's time, that is, of the human paradise which is a reunion of friendship between one man and another, between a god and nature, with the triumph of justice, goodness, and fertile abundance, was associated with a little child, with Hercules and Dionysus, who in their boyhood assumed power over the world.

In Vergil, this is thus presented:

*Justice returns, returns old Saturn's reign
With a new breed of men sent down from heaven
Only do thou, at the boy's birth in whom
The iron shall cease, the golden race arise
Befriend him, chaste Lucina (...)
... the gadding ivy-spray
With foxglove and Egyptian bean-flower mixed*

¹ S. Grochowski: *Wirydarz albo Kwiatki Rymów Duchownych...* W: S. Grochowski: *Poezje*, t. 2. Kraków 1859, s. 30 [*Wirydarz. or The Flowers of Spiritual Verse...* in: S. Grabowski, *Poems*, vol.2. Kraków 1859. p. 30.]

*And laughing-eyed acanthus. Of themselves,
Untended, will the she-goats then bring home
Their udder swollen with milk, while flocks afield
Shall of the monstrous lion have no fear.
The very cradle shall pour forth for thee
Caressing flowers (...)*²

Memory's going back to the past, to childhood, is a myth of the lost paradise. This image lay at the foundations of many representations of the child and childhood in art and literature. Nonetheless, already in the Baroque, the figure of the child is given dichotomic functions. In Goltzius's steel engraving of the end of the 16th century, a naked putto blows soap bubbles from a straw, resting its other hand on a human skull: *Quis evadet?* – reads the written-in-stone inscription below.

Romanticism, not only as baroque did it, used the child allegory for various functions, but it mused on the very condition of childhood, using an idyllic picture of the child also as an antithesis. Slowacki's *The Father of the Plague-stricken et El Arish* opens with such an idyllic overture with a girl returning home from a spring with a jug and a child who

*(...) like a little angel in a picture
It fed sparrows, and they ate,
And almost the child's hands approached.*³

In the fragment, there is a conscious reference to a naïve and sweet colour drawing; in the miniature image, the whole semantics of "childishness" – a little angel, a child, a bird – becomes condensed. Yet, in a moment, disasters will strike the airy and fragile idyll, one by one... The 'angelness' will be put into question and shall become an ambivalent value in Krasinski's *Un-Divine Comedy*: "Why, do you not, oh little child, ride on a stick, play with dolls, murder flies, impale butterflies, roll in the grass (...) you Punchinello's friend, you little devil, why are you so much angel-like?" To resemble a little angel is *against* the child's nature: "Oh, unhappy you, the unhappiest of the angels, oh, you, my son".⁴ But this not a condition of all children, but only of those *chosen* ones – touched by God's finger already at their conception, scarred by their martyrdom of poetry. As Marta Piwinska writes, "There have not been such children so far. Later, there would appear literature exploiting these states in verse and prose. Children would be able to enter the other side of the mirror without being accused of being insane (...) A romantic child was indeed 'differently

² Wergilusz, *IV Ekloga*. Przekład: Z. Kubiak: Muza Rzymska. Warszawa 1963, s. 50-51. [Virgil, *IV Eclogue*. Translation: Z. Kubiak: *The Roman Muse*. Warsaw 1963, pp. 50-51., English trans. at: <http://classics.mit.edu/Virgil/eclogue.1.i.html>]

³ J. Słowacki, *The Father of the Plague-stricken at El Arish*, (transl. by the translator, RD).

⁴ Z. Krasinski, *Un-Divine Comedy*, (transl. by the translator, RD)

founded' than a normal adult. The child was on the side of madness, people, a fairy tale, romanticism, and poetry. It was paying a high price for the elevation: it was becoming pathological".⁵

This is how a child would be presented in literature and art for adults and in high art and literature. But in folk literature we can notice the topos of the tragic child; it would be an orphan: lyric pastorals, orphan songs and orphans in magic fairy tales. Maria Janion has named the orphan motherless idyll a "wounded idyll". Orphanhood can be thought of a different nature. Besides the literal one – devoid of a mother, less often of a father there exists also a spiritual orphanhood: that of loneliness, weirdness, incompatibility with the world. Such double orphanhood is found in Orcio from *Un-Divine Comedy*, in village "changelings", abandoned or enchanted by water nymphs or little dwarfs as well as in children that are "curious" ones. These are village idiots as well as little artists whose fate positivism explained in terms of a social accusation. There is one more tragical aspect revealed by romanticism: that of a child "born in slavery", "chained in its birth". Jan Białostocki thus formulates an iconological interpretation of Leonardo da Vinci's painting *The Virgin and Child with St Anne*: "Madonna wishes to prevent Jesus from mounting a lamb – a symbol of passion. Yet Anne – personifying the Church, by her cheerful disposition – accepts the inevitable fate of the Child, the Passion which will bring Redemption."⁶ The interpretation can also be applied to the fate of a Polish child: the Mother Pole from Mickiewicz's poem is tragically torn between the attitude of the Madonna and of Anne: "Your son called to a fight without glory/ And to martyrdom... without resurrection." A homeland becomes more and more frequently a mother. Hence, orphanhood becomes a fate of each individual Polish child. And it is the polyvalency of orphanhood that will be poetic self-awareness in Lenartowicz and Konopnicka. As Maria Janion writes, "The charisma of the child, originating from the myth of the "divine child", became for Lenartowicz the deepest obviousness, and this refers especially to the charisma of the child-orphan, God's beloved, a child endowed, because of its double distinction (through childhood and through orphanhood), with a unique anointment, the anointment of good, beauty, and truth. Such is a little orphan from *Picking berries* ("In the silent birch wood"), a Raphael-like "As a little golden angel"⁷. And in Konopnicka:

*A song of mine from the orphan tribe,
It knows no home...⁸*

⁵ M. Piwińska: *Dziecko, fragment romantycznej biografii*. "Twórczość" 1976, nr 8, s. 56-57. [M. Piwińska: *A Child: an excerpt from a romantic biography*. "Twórczość" 1976, no 8, pp. 56-57.]

⁶ J. Białostocki: *Sztuka cenniejsza niż złoto*. Warszawa 1969, t. 1, s. 358. [J. Białostocki *The art more precious than gold*. Warsaw 1969, vol. 1. p. 358.]

⁷ M. Janion: Wiersze sieroco Lenartowicza. "Pamiętnik Literacki" 1972, z. 4, s. 95. [M. Janion: *The orphan poems of Lenartowicz*. "Pamiętnik Literacki" 1972, vol. 4, p. 95.]

⁸ M. Konopnicka: *Pieśni tęsknoty*. W: *Poezje*. Warszawa 1967, s. 205. [M. Konopnicka:

Maria Kukulanka is an autosublimation in the fairy tale *Little Orphan Mary and the Gnomes*. In the epistolical convention of both poets the motif of orphanhood returns in various senses and meanings – both as a painful distinction at present and as a poet's Nemesis: “Sing, oh sing, until your soul is cloaked with undispersed fog of sorrow after all your losses and lost friends. May it never cloud your heart, *may you never think yourself to be an orphan* (TLs emphasis)⁹ .

One can find the painterly quintessence of the orphan-child coupled with the angel in Jacek Malczewski's paintings. Besides child-like angels and adult ones, the baroque iconography brought forth guardian angels. They have been assigned the task of protecting children. The 17th-century painting of Czarnowski, in a syncretic space, shows a few such angels, rescuing and protecting children against various misfortunes. The 19th century popularised especially the situation where a guardian angel leads a child along a footbridge hanging over a precipice. Beginning with romanticism, guardian angels especially looked after orphans. In Malczewski's painting *Walk with You Angel*, a little shepherd of geese, presumably an orphan, makes a suggestion to an angel that boasts art nouveau wings and holds a pilgrim's walking stick. The wandering, being a flight or a walking away from the unkind world in search of a mother, a real or symbolic one, and reintegrating the paradise lost, becomes a topos of orphanhood. In Malczewski's Tobias's cycle, “The wandering,” Kazimierz Wyka writes, “transforms itself into an old age's return to a childhood home. Childhood transforms itself into death in each individual. The path of imagination leads from the guardian angel from silent works of Wincenty Pol and Teofil Lenartowicz up to silent, merciful and mysterious Thanatos.”¹⁰ This is a signature of existential philosophy. One finds such reflection on childhood in Boleslaw Lesmian as well as in the period's painting, for example, in Wojtkiewicz, or, finally, in Tadeusz Makowski... His children – and they are the protagonists of almost all of his paintings – are utterly sad. The children are puppets, have wooden faces devoid of expression and of a smile. They put on masks, attach noses to their faces, put hoods over their heads, and cloaks over their shoulders. Do they wish to be scary... take after somebody... or just hide?... What kind of *incognito* is in question, if the children are so much alike? ... Putting on costumes is one of the most favourite activities of children. Putting on costumes and playing hide-and-seek, which is a game of burying oneself in darkness, seeking, discovering things and, finally, the resurrecting, belong to favourite children's games. Children well sense the ambivalence and are fascinated with it.

The songs of longing. In: *Poems*, Warsaw 1967, p. 205, trans. by the translator, RD.]

⁹ T. Lenartowicz, w liście do Konopnickiej, pisanym z Florencji 21 VII 1892. W: M. Konopnicka: *Korespondencja*. Wrocław 1971, vol. 1, s. 129. [T. Lenartowicz in a letter to Konopnicka written in Florence of 21 July 1892. In: M. Konopnicka: *Letters*. Wrocław 1971, vol. 1, p. 129.]

¹⁰ K. Wyka: *Thanatos i Polska*. Kraków 1971, s. 74. [K. Wyka: *Thanatos and Poland*. Cracow 1971, p. 94.]

Peter Bruegel's famous *Children's Games* constitutes a prefigurative annex to Makowski's children. Here, in a relatively small and closed space, in a closed garden, evoking again, as it were, *à rebours*, a closed garden, and anticipating a contemporary garden of children's play, are presented many children, playing several games. Yet let us look more closely at each individual child: how tenacious they are in what they do, cruel and vindictive, as it were, rather looking inside themselves than paying attention to their partners.

Childhood could be marked by something which was lacking: an empty cradle could stand for a childhood memory, awaiting a child, but also – *exitus*. Much as an empty chair in van Gogh did not signify a chair.

Such dichotomous presentation of the child and childhood, to which romanticism and modernism added a tragical value, is obviously absent in children's literature and iconography. Illustrations in books and magazines for children repeat and guard an innocent and virgin childish idyll, which is a family circle, a three-generation circle: the warmth of mutual affection and a moderate wealth, which means Christmas presents, a birthday cake, and pets at one's disposal. Such was the idyll called a 'Biedemeier', Victorian, petty bourgeois, or gentry one. One of the most favourite images of happiness and inner harmony was a *family portrait*. It was most eagerly set in a small room – around a table. Arthur Grottger – a painter of later national and romantic polyptychs – painted pictures *so gemütlich*, "acting out their anecdotes", as Bołoz Antoniewicz has written, "around a round drawing-room table and by the piano".¹¹ Mieczysław Porębski makes a very apt remark, saying that in Grottger's cycle *Polonia* one can find identical scenery: "the inside of a quiet mansion, a Christmas atmosphere of a quiet, snow-covered village".¹² The idyll in which children appear, will soon turn out to be illusive: "the window will be broken, the curtain torn, the window pane shattered by a bullet, the flower pot on the window sill knocked".¹³ It would be yet another wounded idyll of the Polish fate. Yet in the Biedemeier picture "for children", a dramatic vector has a different direction and a different dimension: the flower pot was knocked by an unruly cat, which jumped out the window into the garden. The whole family by the table, more often in a drawing room than in a small sitting room, repeats a *pose* for the painting. In time, more and more frequently, it is a vertical order, immobilised, with eyes turned to the outside observer – to a camera. The romantics in turn attempt to catch the naturalness of the portrait. In Fryderyk Overbeck's *Self-portrait with family*, a child holds a metal trumpet with the hand extended to the viewer, as if it were trying to hand it to him. In Johann Zoffany's *Family Portrait*, children and adults are captured

¹¹ J. Bołoz Antoniewicz: *Grottger*. Lwów (br), p. 88. [J. Bołoz Antoniewicz *Grottger*, Lvov, p. 88.]

¹² M. Porębski: *Interregnum. Studia z historii sztuki polskiej XIX i XX w.* Warszawa 1975, s. 137. [M. Porębski: *Interregnum. The Studies in the history of the Polish art of the 19th and 20th c.* Warsaw 1975, p. 137.]

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 137.

in a “natural” gesture. His portraits were middle-class, in a way - Michael Levy claims - “Even if they represent a royal family, they shed light on the then social custom, when whole families gathered together for tea or sat under trees and wanted to be painted in this way”.¹⁴ The wealthy and the great of the world more and more become interested in popularity, also in a popularity that moves. Napoleon I was imagined on horseback on many occasions, or sitting on a throne, or sitting on a drum, so there needed to be a commission for ‘Napoleon with children.’ He did not have his own children, so Ducis painted the picture *Portrait of Napoleon Bonaparte with his Nephews and Nieces on the terrace at Saint Cloud*. The painting’s title is quite long as an idyll invites a narrative, and there are as many as six children. The boys wear military uniforms; the oldest one wears a complete cavalry uniform, one of the younger boys plays with tin soldiers at the emperor’s feet, the other holds a shako with a crest. The girls have put away dolls and little baskets, while the oldest girl, maybe somewhat flirtatiously, looks in the eyes of the uncle-emperor. The youngest child sits of course in the emperor’s lap. The topos - “The rulers love children” - will repeat itself in photographs and film chronicles.

A family circle is a hearth; its semantic field is filled with such words as: ‘chicks’, ‘birdies’, ‘little beaks...’, ‘they have flown out of a hearth’, ‘returned to the hearth...’ A hearth is a space smaller than a garden, smaller and more intimate at the same time. A hearth is a room, an apartment, a small house, mansion, a hut, but it is already every circle, even the smallest one: round a table, by a fireplace, by an armchair, at a granny’s feet. The middle-class and gentry childish idyll is an idyll of storytelling and reading books. A woman, older or younger, with a book in her hand, surrounded by attentive children - this a picture stereotype. Who knows, if Renaissance madonnas, represented with a book in their hands or on a pulpit, are not an iconic anticipation of the picture. Let us use as an example Leonardo da Vinci’s *The Virgin of the Rocks*, who “speaks” to a “group” of the attentive children with a hand raised in a gesture of a storyteller. Or we can revoke Jan van Eyck’s *Madonna and Child* exhibited in The National Gallery in Melbourne - here, all “still life” objects, a candle holder, a jug, a bowl, a decanter with pure water standing on the window sill, and, eventually, a book - they all signify purity. But the book in the painting constitutes a focal point, and unifies the whole scene. It is the book that attracts the attention, gaze and gesture of Madonna and the Child, flipping through a beautiful and large illustrated book, it seems. In time, the book lost its previous symbolic meaning, yet it did not become a “still life” object; it was sanctioned anew and received a new signification. In scientism, the time of the book cult, the best and most useful child’s toy, Madonna with the Child, reading a book, could constitute a high patronage and an iconic model.

¹⁴ M. Levey: *Od Giotto do Cézanne’a*. Warszawa 1974, p. 250. [M. Levey: *From Giotto to Cézanne*. Warsaw 1974, p. 250.]

In the second half of the 19th century, the writing for children tended to order itself into an *picture*. The ‘picture-ness’ as a literary genre and a way of storytelling, became a syncretic category of children’s literature. Here is a passage taken from a book for young adults: “Two sitting women: the older one wearing a black dress, and a muslin cap, from under which, there slides hair, slickly combed, becoming white here and there, is busy, knitting; the younger one of a fair countenance brightened with a smile of blissful happiness, sits at the table and holds a little girl in his lap; next to her stands a six-year old boy busying himself with looking through an illustrated book; a younger boy frolics around on a wooden horse”.¹⁵

In the second half of the 19th century, the Pre-raphaelites resorted once again to the godly childish idyll, to the apocryphs, and copied themselves the apocryph about a hard-working, poor, and happy family. John Millais’s painting has a secular title: *The Carpenter’s Shop*, yet its biblical theme is easy to identify. The painting’s composition is theatrical and artificial, as if the individuals were made to pose for a “living picture”, but the very interior contains much truth, being a study of a craftsman’s workshop, as it were. The Pre-Raphaelites alluded to the earlier realistic Dutch painting, in a style of Merode’s *The Altar* in which Joseph is more of a carpenter than a saint. In preraphaelites Jesus works, and so do saints and angels. This recalls a fragment of Kaspar Twardowski’s baroque Christmas carol:

They enter a barn and see little
Angels planing a piece
Of golden willow
For Jesus as a pillow.

The working class children: a little sheperd, a chimney sweeper, a sand-man, a tinker, a cattle drover, and a trader – they become popular figures in the literature and in pictures in the magazines for children. All these *little working* ones are poor yet happy, their hands are dirty sometimes, but their hearts are pure. “Work and pray” and “learn” – these are the duties of children in the Victorian period. Yet only the injunction “pray” concerns all children, while “work” and “learn” depend on their social status. “Play!” is not a universal injunction. It can only be a reward – after learning, praying, and working.

Topos dziecka i dzieciństwa (Szkie konseptowy), Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis nr 457. „Prace Literackie” XX, Wrocław 1979

Transl. Rafał Dubaniowski

¹⁵ W. Izdebska: *Skarb niewidzialny*. W: *Wianek. Dziełko poświęcone dorastającej młodzieży*. Warszawa 1871, s. 17. [W. Izdebska: *The Invisible Treasure*. In: *A Garland. A work devoted to young adults*. Warsaw 1871, p. 17.]

Recenzje • Reviews

WERONIKA KOSTECKA, *The Postmodern Fairytale: The genre transformations. Intertextual games with the literary tradition (Baśń postmodernistyczna: przeobrażenia gatunku. Interekstualne gry z tradycją literacką)*, published by Wydawnictwo Stowarzyszenie Bibliotekarzy Polskich, Warsaw 2014, p. 288.

In the World of the Postmodern Fairytale

Those interested in the postmodern fairytales, which are filled with a number of new meanings and senses, will be delighted to read Weronika KostECKA's *The Postmodern Fairytale: the genre transformations. Intertextual games with the literary tradition*. The monograph appeared in 2014 as the second volume in the "Literature for Children and Youth. Studies" series, published by a Warsaw-based publishing house "Stowarzyszenie Bibliotekarzy Polskich". The main subject of the book is the postmodern fairytale, a genre characteristic of postmodernism which displays a wealth of intertextual strategies. The author introduces readers to the world of postmodern narrations which differ from adaptations in that they re-interpret and de-construct classical fairytales, offer new readings, and encourage readers to develop new interpretations. The subject selected by the author has been researched since 1970s, yet it is worth emphasizing that a work of this type appears to be a *novum* in the Polish context. The book enhances the Polish research on fairytale and literature, primarily by adding discussions of the Western works that are quite unknown in Poland. Moreover, an enormous value of the book lies in its description of the postmodern methodologies and their application in the performance of the original interpretations of numerous Polish and foreign re-tellings.

The book consists of an introduction and six chapters: 1) *Postmodernism – intertextuality – tradition. Theoretical contexts of postmodern fairytales*; 2) *The contemporary methodology concepts applied in the fairytale research*; 3) *The fairytale canon sources and the research problems (folk and literary fairytale – canonic fairytale – a genre versus convention)*; 4) *Anticipation of the postmodern fabulousness*; 5) *Intertextual games in fairytales at the turn of the 21st century*; 6) *From axiology to estheticism. Contemporary inspirations of the fairytale horror poetics*, followed by conclusions and bibliography. Two major parts can be distinguished in the general composition of the book. The first one is dedicated to the methodology and the theoretical considerations revolving around

the classical fairytale and its transformations up to its postmodern versions. The other part pertains to the operationalisation of the research material and includes a plethora of contemporary fairytale interpretations. Both parts are equally important, since the first one constitutes an abundant pool of insights into the field of contemporary fairytale, while the other presents a compendium of insights into the subject of the postmodern fairytales. The methodological binder between the two parts is the author's proposition of the intertextual nature of the fairytale which, in its written form, always exists as a variant, a version or a variation. The way that the Kostecka chooses to make a transition from theoretical issues to individual interpretations is quite interesting. Thus, she demonstrates that the fairytale has been subject to re-interpretations since the very beginnings of its existence.

The fundamental objective of Kostecka is to present her characterization of the postmodern fairytale and its determinants, as well as the intertextual strategies that become its compositional dominants. The problem matter is discussed in a reliable, precise and comprehensive manner. The very high substantive level of the book is the consequence of not only the extremely detailed presentation of theoretical issues, but also the abundant literary material, sourced from both Polish and foreign work. While investigating what the postmodern fairytale really is, the author evokes the positions of Polish experts (such as Ryszard Waksmund, Jolanta Ługowska, Violetta Wróblewska, Grzegorz Leszczyński, Anna Czabanowska-Wróbel, Małgorzata Wójcik-Dudek, Michał Zajac, Anna Maria Czernow and others), as well as foreign scholars (such as Vanessa Joosen, Jack Zipes, Maria Tatar, Cristina Bacchilega, Ruth B. Bottigheimer, Donald Haase and others). The author's argument is very consistent and, despite the vast research area, she manages to present the "essence" of the material. Therefore, she allows the reader to rejoice in following the development of the postmodernist fairytale, which forms itself in a hybrid reality accentuating its palimpsestic nature.

In the first chapter titled *The Concept of Postmodernism. Crisis as a Creative Stimulus* (*Pojęcie postmodernizmu. Kryzys jako bodziec twórczy*), Kostecka presents various academic interpretations of postmodernism and attempts to define the concept. She cites the standpoints of Jean-François Lyotard, Brian McHale, Linda Hutcheon, Mieczysław Dąbrowski, Terry Eagleton, Ryszard Nycz, Bogdan Baran and Frederic Jameson. She focuses on the theory of John Barth, who proclaimed the exhaustion of the literature, art and culture. The author refers to this diagnosis and states that although postmodernism reveals a conventionalization, imitative nature and a state of exhaustion of literature, it nevertheless compels writers to undertake a creative game with the established forms. Thus, the crisis of literature (caused by the lack of programmes and rules, as well as a compulsion to change merits and meanings into defined contents) becomes, as she claims, a creative stimulus for an artist. The author defines the determinants of postmodernism pluralism, plentitude of voices,

eclecticism, meta-textuality, hybridity of forms, as well inclination towards parody, pastiche, irony, ludity and intertextuality.

The issue of intertextuality will be covered in a separate study. Evoking the theories of Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco and Richard Rorty, Kostecka notes that “in the postmodernist vision of the world as a Great Library, the entire culture is a text, or rather a network of all and any kinds of texts mutually interrelated in a multitude of ways, speaking in different languages and using various codes, never assuming an instilled, frozen sense”¹. The author refers to a number of definitions of intertextuality, additionally presenting the history of the research the notion, starting Julia Kristeva and her research on Michaił Bachtin’s concept of dialogism, through the positions taken by Laurent Jenny, Michael Riffaterre, Jonathan Culler, Michał Głowiński, Manfred Pfister, Gérard Genette, Umberto Eco, Christine Wilkie-Stibbs, Gina M. Miele, and others. The scholars, Kostecka argues, distinguish between the global model of intertextuality and the model of limited intertextuality. What the author selects for her own explorations is the model of limited, as it “allows for an application in analytic activities that is easier than in the case of the global model; it constitutes a better instrument for investigation of the texts that are here termed postmodern – understood as a conscious reaction to the postmodernist literature crisis [...]”². Furthermore, she develops a problem matter that is relevant to her analyses – the autothematism she understands as “a commentary – taking various forms – to the pre-text embedded in the text [...]”³. From among numerous definitions of intertextuality, she selects an assumption of Ryszard Nycz who perceives it as “a category embracing the aspect of the text’s total properties and relationships that indicates a dependency of its creation and reception on the familiarity with other texts and «architexts» (rules of genres, stylistic-expressionist norms) by the participants of a communication process”⁴. In the final considerations, she discusses the postmodernist fairytale as a literary genre that could not exist without a reference to the fairytale canon. The author is creative in her approach to the subject of the “exhaustion of the fairytale”, and aims to present a whole range of inter-textual procedures that lead to and support a creative processing of tradition. She further claims that “the rebellious fairytales – the postmodern fairytales – argue with its own tradition and view their ‘fabulousness’ through the lens of a variety of inter-

¹ W. Kostecka, *Baśń postmodernistyczna: przeobrażenia gatunku. Intertekstualne gry z tradycją literacką* [*The Postmodern Fairy Tale: the genre transformation. Intertextual games with the literary tradition*], SBP, Warszawa 2014, p. 33.

² *Ibid.*, p. 44.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁴ R. Nycz, *Intertekstualność i jej zakresy: teksty, gatunki, światy* [*Intertextuality and its ranges: Texts, genres, worlds*], [in:] *Kulturowa teoria literatury. Główne pojęcia i problemy* [*Cultural Theory of Literature. Main Concepts and Problems*], edit. M. P. Markowski, R. Nycz, UNIVERSITAS, Kraków 2006, p. 62. Quoted after: W. Kostecka, quotes., p. 52.

textual and auto-thematic experiments”⁵. She evokes the standpoint of Vanessa Joosen, which she finds closest to her own, according to which the postmodern fairytales prolong the existence of the fairytale genre and, even if occasionally remote from the pre-texts, they all the same construct new systems of meanings and senses.

In the second chapter titled *The Methodology Concepts Contemporarily Applied in the Fairytale Research*, Kostecka discusses the methodologies of the fairytale research formed in the 20th century. She distinguishes: the folklore approach that consists of collecting, cataloging and analyzing the fairytale variants available in the written form, with the major representatives such as Antti Aarne, Stith Thompson and, as far as Polish writers are concerned, Julian Krzyżanowski. She discusses the structural approach of Vladimir Propp, researching the fairytale structure and presenting the fairytale from the perspective of the characters’ function, as well as the literary approach of Max Lüthie, whose objective was to determine the fundamental principles governing the genre of folklore fairytales, pertaining to the message, language and style, and to establish their stylistic uniformity. Further, she addresses the psychoanalytical approach initiated by Sigmund Freud, continued then by Bruno Bettelheim, and the analytical psychology developed by Carl Gustav Jung. The latter approach is focused on investigation of the fairytale symbols and archetypes as the elements reflecting the psychological processes in an adult and a child. Another approach distinguished is the historical-sociological approach, which views fairytales as a reflection of historical, social and cultural processes. The methodology can be found in the works of Cristina Bacchilega, Jack Zipes, Maria Tatar or Ruth B. Bottigheimer; the feminist and *gender studies*’ approach, researching sex-related stereotypes in fairytales, as well as the patriarchal models and social situation of women. The methodology, which has become extremely popular today, is represented by, e.g. Karen E. Rowe, Marina Warner, Donald Haase, and in Poland by Grażyna Lasoń-Kochańska. An important ascertainment of these deliberations is indicated by the methodological eclecticism in the research on the postmodernist fairytale. The methodologies, as the author claims, frequently become an object of intertextual games played in postmodern fairytales. The author writes: “[...] the postmodern fairytale is an expression of the postmodern psyche – fragmented, shaped by the same postmodernist tendencies”⁶. The methodological patchwork, as she concludes, allows readers for a variety of interpretations and accentuates the ambivalent attitude of the postmodern fairytale towards the literary tradition.

Chapter three titled *The Fairytale Canon Sources and the Research Problems (Folk and Literary Fairytale – Canonic Fairytale – a Genre Versus Conven-*

⁵ W. Kostecka, quotes, p.53.

⁶ Ibid., p. 85.

tion) raises the following issues: the origins of the magic fairytale; the primary reader of the folk fairytale; the beginnings of the fairytale research; a dispute on the precedence of myths over fairytales; the universality of the fairytale thematology; the first written versions of fairytales and their significance for contemporary authors; the differences between the folk fairytale and the literary fairytale; the fairytale canon and the fairytale topic. In view of the topics listed, it is important to note the proposition by Jack Zipes, as referenced by Kostecka, who suggests to use “applied memetics” in the fairytale research. According to Zipes, the fairytale is a mem, i.e. “it is created – the author claims – by a single, specific tale and its discursive tradition, containing both oral and literary, as well as other forms of the culture media: radio, a film, the Internet, etc.”⁷. The theory of the fairytale-mem explains the global recognizability of the fairytale topic, its canonicity and re-interpretative popularity. Owing to that, as emphasized by the fairytale expert, the reader of postmodern re-tellings does not necessarily need to belong to the readership elite to understand the simplest intertextual strategies. At the same time, she points out that there exists a group of interpretations so complex that they are to be read mostly by adults. The author also underlines that a contemporary child has no obligation to copy culture, but rather to interpret it. Therefore, her finding is accurate when she says: “A child reader, viewer or participant of a virtual game should not treat tradition as an untouchable sacrosanct, but as a field of creative actions, as a matter that can be freely formed and transformed”⁸.

In the fourth chapter titled *Anticipation of the Postmodern Fabulousness*, the author introduces the reader to the intertextual game with the fairytale tradition carried out by writers from the 18th through the 19th century, pointing out to the parodist endeavours she treats as a prelude to the postmodern variations on the fairytale topic. She cites numerous French and Anglo-Saxon parodies which bordered on a burlesque, a macabre or a grotesque. Kostecka analyses in detail William Thackeray’s fairytale *The Rose and the Ring*, where “the particular elements of the fairytale convention were [...] presented amiss”⁹. She also finds comism, seen as a principle organizing the represented world, in the short stories by Ludwig Teick, George MacDonald and Andrew Lang. In those stories, she observes two intertextual strategies: one, which she terms a call for “a true story”¹⁰, and the other – a creation of “continuations”¹¹. She presents the argument with fairytale axiology in the tales by Alphonse Daudet, Jan Lemański and Maryla Wolska, where it is “difficult [...] to speak of a deconstruction of the fairytale order; the elements of the convention are so worn out already, that they simply fail to withstand the trial by time and disintegrate

⁷ Ibid., p. 114.

⁸ Ibid., p. 257.

⁹ Ibid., p. 128.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 132.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 132.

before the reader's eyes"¹². Kostecka's analysis also embraces the grotesque *Opowieści niezwykłe* (*The Remarkable Stories*) by Włodzimierz Perzyński, where the clear division between right and wrong is replaced with, she claims, the larger-than-life absurdity. The fairytale autothematism is discussed in a separate study dedicated to Bolesław Leśmian's *Przygody Sindbada Żeglarsza* (*Sailor Sindband's Adventures*). The endeavours, consisting in the destruction of what readers are accustomed to, become fully developed by the author in the next chapter.

In the fifth chapter titled *Intertextual Games in the Fairytales at the Turn of the 21st Century*, the author presents the intertextual strategies that serve "a creative processing of culture – and not only its reproduction [...]"¹³, which means their continuous dialogue with the pre-text. What the author lists among the fairytale intertextual games include: inversion of the typical roles played by characters; deconstruction of the fairytale fiction scheme; taming of monsters, which she discusses based on the works by Zbigniew Brzozowski, Jacek Lelonkiewicz, Małgorzata Strzałkowska, Beata Krupska, Joanna Olech and Christina Björk. In Kostecka's opinion, a different intertextual potential is present in the fairytales written by Bohdan Butenko from the *Krulewna Snieżka* (which intentionally misspells the word "princess" in its Polish title of *Snow White*) collection, since they constitute, as she states, "an example of an intertextuality that is rebellious, if not «subversive»"¹⁴. She finds similar efforts in the *Niebaśnie* (*Non-Fables*) series, elaborated by Joanna Olech and Grażka Lange, and also in the fairytales of Roksana Jędrzejewska-Wróbel, Francesca Simon and in Alojzy Suchar's *Baśnie pokręcone* (*Twisted Fairytales*). In those texts she observes the concept involving introduction of modern props into the classical fairytale scheme and the cross-over between the well-known motifs. The scholar designates a special place for metatextual works, such as *Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf* by Roald Dahl and *The Girl and The Wolf* by James Thurber. Metatextuality – she explains – is the familiarity of the protagonists with the scenario and their explicit contestation of the same. Such a behavior of the characters is interpreted as a feminist manifesto and anticipation of the anti-pedagogy assumptions.

As a separate issue, she considers the strategy of re-contextualisation, which entails extraction of an element of a fairytale's structure, and its subsequent introduction into new contexts and de-contextualisation, thus depriving the element of its original meaning. She discusses the phenomena in Jerzy Niemczuk's *Bajki Pana Bałagana* (*Mr Mess's Fairytales*), where the intertextuality means creation of "completely new stories, their 'moulding' from intertextual associations, where references to tradition does not have to be obvious for a

¹² Ibid., p. 145.

¹³ Ibid., p. 161.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 169.

hypothetical reader, but they might be only signalized"¹⁵. The author perceives a strong intertextual tension in the collection by Andrzej Sapkowski *Ostatnie życzenie* (*The Last Wish*), designed for a well-read reader, with the fairytale topic "suffused with erotics, violence and graphic brutality"¹⁶. Sapkowski's intertextual game is considered multi-dimensional, as it embarks on a discussion with the elements of a fairytale, as well as with its psychoanalytical interpretations, which the author calls "a patchwork" or a literary collage¹⁷. Furthermore, Kostecka believes that the gender methodology appears as subject of parodistic games. As an example, she quotes James Finn Garner's *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*. In addition, she presents a gallery of texts that are "socially engaged"¹⁸, and she includes in this category the conceptualizations fairytales and stories by Andrzej Grabowski or Michał Rusinek, which are creative conceptualization of real problems. She uses these reflections to present a strategy that undermines the fairytale axiology and carries out an analysis of Hanna Krall's fairytale *Co się stało z naszą bajką?* (*What Happened to Our Fairytale?*). Based on that example, she discusses a phenomenon which she calls "an addressee shift"¹⁹. The term defines a situation of a postmodern fairytale reader, where a requirement is imposed on them to be knowledgeable of the fairytale tradition and postmodernist games. Kostecka notes that the reader also needs the knowledge when reading auto-thematic works, where the protagonists are locked in the fairytale scheme and they are well aware of the fact, and when reading architextual works which are based on a game with the fairytale structural dominants. She presents the autothematic awareness of the protagonists in the clear-sighted interpretations of the fairytale by H. Krall and Dorota Terakowska's *Jedna noc czarownicy* (*One Night of a Witch*). Further, her elaboration on architextuality is based on Neil Gaiman's *Stardust*, Kate DiCamillo's *The Tale of Despereaux* and Joanna Klara Teske's *Pies w Krainie Wędrującej Nocy* (*A Dog in the Land of the Wandering Night*). The analyses presented here show both the subtle and the exaggerated violations of the fairytale genre rules or their conscious sustainance.

In the sixth chapter, *From Axiology to Estheticism. Contemporary Inspirations of the Fairytale Horror Poetics*, the author refers to the research positions of Bruno Bettelheim, Pierre Péju and Maria Tatar, who claim that horror, cruelty, perversion and macabre are the fundamental characteristics of the original, primary nature of a fairytale. She points out to the revival of the fairytale's murky props-room on the grounds of contemporary re-tellings. The reinterpretations, she claims, argue with the Disneyan model and "aim to revert the

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 187.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 180.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 188.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 192.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 197.

fairytale plots and motifs back to their primary brutality²⁰. Kostecka also notes that in the postmodern re-tellings, horror becomes an esthetic, and not an axiological discriminant of the text, while the archetypes of horror build up the atmosphere of the tale, stimulate the readers' imagination and emotions. Kostecka finds that in the postmodern fairytales "horror and cruelty bond not only with brutal violence, but also with sensuality, poetic atmosphere; they are terrifying, but fascinating at the same time"²¹. She follows with an astute discussion of John Connolly's *The Book of Lost Things* and Tanith Lee's *Red as Blood Or Tales From the Sisters Grimm*, where she observes a strategy of supplementing the contents unprecedented in classical fairytales, as well as of expanding the macabre situations and sceneries. Continuously, she presents the catch of an understatement that works on the reader's imagination and feeds their own fears and fobias. The author also reaches out to the feminist re-interpretations of Angela Carter to derive from there the motif of werewolfism she considers also a symbol of the dormant female sexuality. She presents other fairytales by Carter, where horror envelopes the macabre – both in literal and symbolic terms – women's attempts to win a man (father, king, royal prince – the ruler), a representative of the patriarchal order, in whose name mothers become torturers for their own daughters, forcing them to undergo ritual mutilations. Postmodern games with the fairytale horror are also present in Neil Gaiman's stories from the collection *Smoke and Mirrors: Short Fictions and Illusions*, which includes a variation of the Snow White tale. Kostecka ascertains that the writer creates a horror story, and explains a discord between the macabre and sensual narration of Gaiman and the pre-text of the Grimm brothers. In addition, Kostecka refers the reader to popular literature, evoking Craig Russell's crime story *Brother Grimm*. The novel includes a re-interpreted motif of psychic werewolfiness, which the writer links with murders committed by a serial killer who refers to specific Grimm fairytales. The author notes that in narrations those a fairytale is understood in the spirit of psychoanalysis, as a symbol of the murky aspect of human nature. It is owing to the murky re-interpretations, she claims that "[...] the history of fairytales described a full circle; the authors return to the genre's original brutality, bring out to broad daylight the fairytale's cruelty which, until recently, was considered something to be best forgotten, remind readers of the world where a forest at night was genuinely horrible and full of dangers – and they return to the tradition of frightening their readers and listeners"²².

One should agree with the researcher's argument that the contemporary fairytales experience "a postmodernist renaissance"²³. A similar renaissance is being experienced by the Polish research methodology in the area of the chil-

²⁰ Ibid., p. 228.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p. 246.

²³ Ibid., p. 247.

dren's and youth's literature. It occurs because of Kostecka's fresh and modern. The author, who aimed to demonstrate how the postmodern fairytales re-interpret and de-construct the fairytale tradition, manages to present a full range of postmodern intertextual games with the fairytale thematics. The scholar refers to the canonic elaborations by Polish researchers, but – first and foremost – to the foreign research that is little known in the Polish literature studies, thus bridging them closer to the Western state-of-the-art research on the fairytale and its contemporary variants. Moreover, in the conclusion she shows how the postmodern fairytale permeates other realms of art and culture (e.g. the popular ones), which determines the next avenue of her research, one concerning manifestations of the fairytale topics in new forms and types of the culture messaging. It is exactly why the book becomes an indispensable item in the library of every children's and youth's literature expert. It is also an elaboration that can be absolutely recommended to all fairytale lovers, as neither its scholarly style nor the density of the presented theories constitute any material or communication barrier. The work of Kostecka enters the canon of the separate literature and, with its retention in the paradigm of the latest research, it becomes a source of knowledge and an inspiration for other scholars.

***Note that translations of the titles are author's for works that have not been published in Polish.

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DOROTA MICHUŁKA, *Ad usum Delphini. On school literary education – then and now*, Wrocław University Press, 2013

Summary

This book presents changes which have occurred in the Polish language education since the second half of the 19th century. The focus of these changes has been on the literary texts reception in schools, the strategies of adapting texts for school reading and wide political, historical and socio-cultural background for said adaptations. The dominant issues are:

1. The process of simplifying and abridging texts for students (especially in the second half of the 19th century), and “fragmentation” of literature, manifest in school textbooks in the past and at present;
2. The generic perspective (“school genres” in the second half of the 19th century and at the turn of the 20th century);
3. Transformations from clear socio-cultural models (the school of the second half of the 19th century – religion, folklore, history and the ideology of genders) towards the “paidocentrism” (the school of teaching, focused mainly on children’s needs), multiculturalism, tolerance, religious and regional education as well as fight against discrimination;
4. The evolution from clear moral and educational systems in Polish language education of the second half of the 19th century to axiological relativism and ethical complexity of the world;
5. The evolution from the biographical description of the world (clear types of characters – 19th century and socialist realism) to rich psychological portraits, full of ethical dilemmas (e.g. *Harry Potter*, *Córka Czarownicy* [The Daughter of Witches], *Panna Nikt* [Miss Nobody]);
6. The evolution of the process of creating school canons – from the obligatory, imposed texts to the free choice of school readings;
7. The evolution from rigid educational norms to literary play and ludicness;
8. The evolution from a written word to a picture (comics in textbooks published in 1999, media perspective).

Because of the complex socio-cultural and historical context of issues discussed here, only some sections of literary education are mentioned (e.g. 19th century Post-Partition education, post-war socialist realism; post-UE acces-

sion globalization and postulated after 1999 “freedom” in education). Changes which have been occurring in Polish language education for two centuries have been noticed to head towards: disposing of the concept of obligatory readings, flexibility and universality of themes of school readings, “decanonisation”, departure from historical themes and writing about the “good past of the Great Poland under Jagiellon Dynasty” and exhibiting the history of customs and everyday life. The transition from the 19th century “pedagogy of do’s and don’ts” towards the “pedagogy of freedom”, “paidocentrism” or “antipedagogy”; the exposition of difficult and taboo subjects (e.g. the case of obligatory school reading of *Panna Nikt* [Miss Nobody]) is also apparent.

The process of changes reflects – as it was noticed in the 19th century education – the evolution from postulated assumptions of Romantic images (especially concerning the motifs of the homeland and heroism) to the respect of knowledge, learning, work and science – a tendency, which could indicate the presence of the ideology of positivism in the mid 19th century education, in particular the image of homeland, but also survival.

It may be said that Poland after 1863 uprising, still occupied by its neighbors, fighting mainly for national identity, was given a shape as a historical community by the texts from the field of education, which had been a postulated as an imperative. It is worth mentioning that this cultural description of the world, headed towards the community model in textbooks, still presented mostly individualities, extraordinary and distinguishing types of heroes, models to aspire to (the concept of reality description based on biographies was examined from the Polish language and history education perspective during positivism), such as saints, depicted in hagiographies; legendary or historical heroes (kings, leaders, knights and those fighting and sacrificing themselves for their homeland in the Romantic understanding of the term (e.g. Stanisław Żółkiewski, prince Józef Poniatowski)), but also – during the democratization of the country – folk heroes who were educated and had commendable work ethic (e.g. Kazimierz Wielki and Tadeusz Kościuszko). “Great dames” were especially honored in textbooks – educated aristocrats, faithful and pious wives of great leaders, kind queens and, later, emancipated working women.

During the second half of the 19th century, on various levels of education there functioned a consistently executed “ideological and communal trinity”: family – church (God) – homeland, and an axiological perspective (upbringing with values). Providence fulfils the superior role as it educates on morality. However, although humanistic education was considered a long process, the educational mission of the family (especially in the first years of schooling) was not forgotten. In all three parts of divided Poland home schooling was widely spread throughout the whole 19th century. Qualified tutors made it possible for young children of aristocrats to finish further stages of education. Children coming from rural families, without outside help, relied on the specially prepared editions of textbooks, and received a universal, very practical (interdis-

ciplinary) preparation for life. Many school textbooks accepted this strategy of education, and texts adapted for an easier reading fit this model greatly. They promoted informational and pragmatic knowledge, which referred to many aspects of life and offered many ways of survival.

During the analysis of literary material adapted for school's needs, also genological issues were noted, e.g. the issue of adapting Polish literary masterpieces for easier reading – their summarizing, shortening and modifying so as to accommodate them to children's world, to their cultural, literary and language awareness, and what is important, exposing the educating role of literature and moralizing a young reader (it is worth noting that a simplified school reading, described masterfully by Mieczysław Ingłot, was not only supposed to educate about the world, but also to teach the proper manner in which to behave). Literary works created with an educational perception, in order to help a reader (or a student), took the form of simplified school readings, as well as parables, short stories, genre pictures and summaries (treated here as a “school genre”). Nowadays, other genres dominate in Polish language education, with the exception of constantly popular tales of family life, stories of relations between adults and children, descriptions of reality closest to child, adventure novels and travelogues. Grades 4–6, however, are dominated by speculative fiction (fairy tales, legends and fantasy), which was a genre discriminated against in the second half of the 19th century.

Another issue discussed here is the process of “fragmentation of literature” – selecting certain parts of longer literary works, which become autonomous and fulfill the role of school readings on their own, as a separate semantically-genological whole, often entitled differently.

The literary material about the Polish language education on the lower levels of schooling that I have studied supports the thesis that literature and culture promoted in Polish schools after the reform reflect two significant phenomena: first, the discussion on didacticism (which first adopted the literature model of ludic character, and later accepted the texts with elements of anti-pedagogy and antididacticism, e.g. *Matilda* by Roald Dahl) and second, promoting the tendency to decanonize literature in school (e.g. lists of obligatory readings in syllabuses expand, creating a situation of a flexibility of choice, suggesting at the same time different layers of cultural and axiological interpretation).

Both phenomena (both tendencies) influence the relativization of preferred value systems, introducing controversies of axiological nature and escalating the subject of conflicts between adult's world and child's world, obliterating the border between the adult and young reader. These phenomena suggest that texts ought to be interpreted both by children and adults. Such was the case with 19th century textbooks, where the texts inspired by folklore (e.g. poetry of meadows and pastures) would appear. The phenomenon of “dual addressee” – as proved by the research in the book – appears mainly in fairy tales and their

clear ethical world (they have been present in school canons for many years, e.g. original versions of Charles Perrault, or Grimm's brothers, not intended for a young reader). Another apt example would be modern school readings lists with texts belonging to the speculative fiction genre, especially fantasy novels by writers such as Tolkien or Terakowska. For the young reader there will appear a young hero to identify with and for the adult one – deeper, existential, figurative and mythical level of the text, such as references to Milton's *Paradise Lost* in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* or the inner ethical complexity of psychological portraits of characters as evidenced in *Córka Czarownic* [The Daughter of Witches] by Dorota Terakowska.

The contemporary literature for children and youth (especially speculative fiction), which is present on lists of school readings, more often allows morally ambiguous models and shows the ethical complexity of the world. Such literature does not formulate clear truths, but – what is important from the perspective of education – provokes thoughts and discussions. It takes into account bad examples and morally questionable behaviors and makes an impression that the world surrounding a young reader seems more real. These situations, in the school process of humanistic education and upbringing, create more opportunities to formulate conclusions concerning individual behaviors and controversial characters depicted in children's literature.

The popularity of this kind of speculative fiction may be explained in the broader cultural contexts. According to Ryszard Waksmund it is “a sign of symbolically-figurative (archetypical) thinking about the world. It may be an antidote to explicitness of television images”¹ [...] “it also helps with intercultural understanding, as some of the symbolical and figurative signs are rooted in various cultures. It also expresses the yearning of a young person for sacrum”². It may be that the texts from the fantasy genre – because of their “didactical uniqueness” or “didactical artistry” – should be present in school canons.

A separate function, final in the process of evolution of literary education, is fulfilled by media and “literary play” (see “rapped school readings” by Grzegorz Wasowski), as a brand new form of *communing with* the literary text. “Communing with the text” was the term used by Stefan Żółkiewski to describe the phenomenon of social literary communication (including the school one) and defined by the sociologist of literature in a following manner: “the reader is always communing with the text, and interprets it in a particular communicative situation – the repeating structure of relation between the act of reading, given culture and *social dynamics*”³ [emphasis mine]. The dy-

¹ R. Waksmund, “Literatura dziecka w ‘Stuleciu dziecka’. Próba podsumowania” [Children's Literature in a ‘Century of a Child’. Summary]. *Kultura literacka dzieci i młodzieży u progu XXI stulecia*. [Children's and Young Adults' Literary Culture at the Brink of the 21st Century]. 2002: 15–25.

² *Ibidem*, 2002: 41.

³ S. Żółkiewski, “Pomysły do odbioru dzieł literackich” [The Ideas on How to Interpret

namics of social transformations of current reality (postmodernism), present young people with attempts of reinterpreting literary works and “going outside the text”. That is why in the current Polish language education there is a tendency to use the media perspective (e.g. film adaptations of obligatory school readings) or musical form (e.g. *Romeo and Juliet* as a rock-opera, musical *The Wages of Sin* based on Żeromski’s novel, modernized fairy-tale *Wizard of Oz* by Baum, the rapped version of *Ordon’s Redoubt* – the recording from the CD entitled “Poets” – or rapped version of the *Book of Revelation*). Perhaps such propositions, along with the canon of obligatory school readings, should be adapted by a modern school to make literature more comprehensible for students.

AGNIESZKA KARCZEWSKA, *Polsko-żydowska republika marzeń. O „Chwilce Dzieci i Młodzieży” (1925-1927). [Polish-Jewish Republic of Dreams “Chwilka Dzieci i Młodzieży” (1925-1937)]* Wyd. Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego Jana Pawła II. Lublin 2015 ss. 395

Summary

The press is often called a record of social life as, citing Jerzy Jarowiecki, it is “a mirror in which events and situations are reflected and also people’s behaviour, their views, ideological and political ambitions. It participates in maintaining national identity, it plays a significant role in creating [...] culture and fostering tradition” (J. Jarowiecki, *Dzieje prasy polskiej*, p. 419). This trait of the press was of particular importance for the largest ethnic minority inhabiting the Second Polish Republic in the interwar period – the Jewish minority (A. Paczkowski, *Prasa polska*, p. 9). It is because, as Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikow wrote, in the Jewish community the press proved to be “the most certain and the most popular medium of communication between the most involved intelligentsia and the lower society strata”. (J. Nalewajko-Kulikow, *Prasa żydowska*, p. 7).

In the period 1918-1939 the Jewish press developed extremely dynamically in the Second Polish Republic. As many as 364 titles – in three languages: Yiddish, Hebrew and Polish – were published at that time, accounting for approximately 7% of the entire Polish press (W. Władyka, *Prasa*, p. 120). The periodicals were highly varied. Daily newspapers (e.g. “Der Hajnt” “Unzer Ekspress”, “Nasz Przegląd” [‘Our Review’], “Chwila” [‘A Moment’]) were launched, and also magazines of Jewish parties (e.g. “Folkscajtung”, “Dos Jidisze Togblat”). There were also socio-political periodicals (“Opinia” [‘Opinion’], “Ewa” [‘Eve’]) and scientific journals (e.g. “Miesięcznik Żydowski” [‘Jewish Monthly’], “JIWO Bleter”). Around that time the first Jewish magazines for children appeared (also published in Polish, Hebrew and Yiddish), which had a fundamental role in the process of defining and building identity. It was the first educational instrument and means of communication with the youngest members of the community via a foreign (non-Jewish) language system for forming the identity of young Jews in the spirit of Zionism. Despite the recent increase in research initiatives undertaken by representatives of various fields (press experts, literature historians, bibliographers, historians), they still remain a rather unpopular subject of scientific exploration. Magazines targeted

at such readers are rarely mentioned in research works in the field of children's and youth's magazines, or in analyses conducted by researchers specialising in Jewish subjects. There are no synthesising studies describing the issue of the press for Jewish children. In various research papers this type of publications is mentioned only as a reference, or only general information is provided (A. Bar-El, *Jewish Children's*).

Even though the publications and press designated for Jewish children constitute the periphery of research, I am of the opinion that they should not be omitted in studies in the field of history of literature. It is because scientific exploration of this sector of literary works might provide valuable information facilitating the understanding of other fields of literature, and even Polish culture. Polish-Jewish publications for the youngest readers used to be part of Jewish culture, while the latter was rooted in Polish culture at the same time functioned independently of it. As Moshe Rosman noted, an explanation of these complex interrelations requires first realising that “[...] a mutual cultural relationship is fluid and requires rather describing the various points of contact instead of an all-embracing characterisation” (ibidem).

The book consists of four fundamental units. In the first one I use reconstruction of history of “Moment of Children and Youth” to show how the magazine evolved under the influence of internal (for example type of recipient) and external factors (for example historical circumstances). It is also an attempt to describe, based on found materials, what happened to members of newspaper office, coworkers and readers: Runa Reitmanowa, Maurycy Szymel, Zwi Tomer, Lazar Schächner, Regina Gurfein, Irma Singer, Sulamit Karlówna, Benzion Zangen, Henryk Szrager, Karol Dresdner, Daniel Ihr, Zygmunt Sens-Taubes, Bronisław Mayer, Anda Eker, Minka Silberman, Filip Istner, Awrochem Cwi Fenster, Regina Schorrówna, Rimon Heller, Leon Rappel, Ludka Selinger, Kuba Lapter, Gerszon Günzberg, Gideon Hausner. That part of book presents also children magazine as an element of social life and its educational as well as pedagogical function, because newspaper office's members organized numerous public-spirited actions, which were described in the magazine. „Moment of Children and Youth” was being created in society of Lviv intelligentsia with Zionist beliefs. Ideology of redactors had a big influence on what was presented in the newspaper. Because of that, the second unit of the book gives attention to Zionist ideology, the most important inspiration for creating and maintaining the magazine. Main symptoms of Zionism presence – in Zionist characters presented to readers, picture of ideal Jewish homeland *Eretz Israel* and descriptions of activities of Zionist organisations – are analysed.

Continuation of the part about Zionism is third unit, which is about Jewish history and culture in “Moment of Children and Youth”. That is because Zionism redefined the meaning of traditional Jewish culture, reinterpreted it according to national categories. Jewish history and culture presented in talked-about magazine was subordinated according to that, in that time new, vi-

sion. National-Jewish optics had to fix the order and range of discussing Jewish culture, which included, apart from traditional proficiency in Jewish history, knowledge of religious tradition – history, holidays and rituals, also secular culture (science, art), which before Haskala was out of interest of Judaism, and new Hebrew, learning which was promoted by Zionists.

The last part of study is devoted to function and meaning of literature in “Moment of Children and Youth” – how literary texts were used to introduce readers into world of Jewish and universal culture, and also how through their own expression children gained ability of using the word, the most important material of literature.

The book has an index attached. It contains a part of materials documenting life of members of newspaper office. An integral element of presented thesis is also a bibliography of content of periodical “Moment of Children and Youth” developed on the grounds of all newspaper copies available in aforementioned libraries and selection of texts published in magazine.

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