Filoteknos

Filoteknos

LITERATURA DZIECIĘCA – MEDIACJA KULTUROWA – ANTROPOLOGIA DZIECIŃSTWA

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE – CULTURAL MEDIATION – ANTHROPOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD

Vol. 8

Russian and Eastern European war childhood

EDITED BY
LARISSA RUDOVA AND DOROTA MICHUŁKA

VARIA – PREPARED BY RYSZARD WAKSMUND

Wrocław 2018

Wersją podstawową pisma jest wersja drukowana

Publikacja ukazuje się dzięki wsparciu finansowemu
Wydziału Filologicznego UWr

ISSN 2082–9310
ISBN 978-83-7977-371-8

Nakład 300 egz.

Redakcja „Filoteknos”
IFP UWr, pl. Nankiera 15, 50-140 Wrocław
dorota.michulka@uwr.edu.pl, www.ifp.uni.wroc.pl/czasopismo/26.filoteknos
kamila.kowalczyk@uwr.edu.pl

Oficyna Wydawnicza ATUT – Wrocławskie Wydawnictwo Oświatowe
50-011 Wrocław, ul. Kościuszki 51a, tel. +48 71 342 20 56, faks 71 341 32 04
http://www.atut.ig.pl; e-mail: oficyna@atut.ig.pl

Contents

LARISSA RUDOVA (*Pomona College, USA*)
Introduction "Fictional and Historical Remembering of the Great Patriotic War and War Childhood: Events and Heroes Great and Small" 7

OLGA VORONINA (*Bard College, USA*)
Sons and Daughters of the Regiment: The Representation of the WWII Child Hero in the Soviet Media and Children's Literature of the 1940s 13

MARINA BALINA (*Illinois Wesleyan University, USA*)
Writing Usable Futures: Narratives of War Childhood 34

ANASTASIA KOSTETSKAYA (*University of Hawaii, Manoa, USA*)
On the Run and from Below the Ground: A Child-Survivor Perspective on the Battle of Stalingrad 47

LARISSA RUDOVA (*Pomona College, USA*)
Storying War Childhood in Al'bert Likhanov's *Russian Boys*. *63*

ANASTASIA ULANOWICZ (*University of Florida, USA*)
From Feed *to Famine: M.T. Anderson's* Symphony for the City of the Dead as a "Dystopian Novel That Happens to be True" 75

DOROTA MICHUŁKA (*Wrocław University, Poland*)
Introduction Perspectives on Eastern European War Childhood 97

JEANETTE HOFFMANN (*Technische Universität Dresden, Germany*)
The Historical Youth Novel *Malka* by Mirjam Pressler and its Reception by Students in Germany and in Poland 101

MATEUSZ ŚWIETLICKI (*Wrocław University, Poland)*
"Oh, What a Waste of Army Dreamers…": The Revolution of Dignity and War in Contemporary Ukrainian Picturebooks 119

DOROTA MICHUŁKA (*Wrocław University, Poland*)
Heterotopia and the Structure of Time in Marcin Szczygielski's Fantasy Novel *Arka czasu, czyli wielka ucieczka Rafała od kiedyś przez wtedy do teraz i wstecz* (trans. *The Ark of Time, or Rafał's Great Escape from Once, Through Then, to Now and Back Again*) (2013) 131

Varia

ŁUKASZ GREGOROWICZ
(*Szkoła Podstawowa nr 108 (Wrocław), Poland*)
Aleksander Świętochowski – beletrysta zapomniany 149

RYSZARD WAKSMUND, DOROTA MICHUŁKA
(*Wrocław University, Poland*)
Cinderella in Polish Drama and Theatre 162

Recenzje | Reviews

KRZYSZTOF RYBAK (*University of Warsaw, Poland*)
Sparing Them the Trauma: Postmemory Practices in Contemporary Polish Children's Literature about the Holocaust 169

Rozprawy – streszczenia | Dissertations – summaries

KAROLINA JĘDRYCH (*University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland*)
Summary of the Book Entitled *Image of a Little Girl, an Adolescent and a Woman in the Novels of Maria Krüger* 184

Filoteknos, vol. 8 • 2018 • DOI: 10.23817/filotek.8-1

LARISSA RUDOVA • Pomona College, USA

Introduction "Fictional and Historical Remembering of the Great Patriotic War and War Childhood: Events and Heroes Great and Small"

In the USSR, the child was a "symbol for the Soviet nation" and during the Great War against the Nazis, known in Russia as the Great Patriotic War, children became "significant actors in wartime propaganda" (Kelly 2007: 115). In the media, fiction, and film, they were routinely cast in roles of heroes, victims, spies, partisans, or soldiers, in full compliance with the official culture of collective war commemoration. It was not until Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost' in the late 1980s, that personal narratives of the war generation child-survivors entered the public frameworks of memory.

After the demise of the Soviet state, WWII childhood began to attract the attention of Russian and Western scholars whose research was motivated by the desire to "give children of the past a voice" (Winkler 2017: 630). While Russian scholars produced numerous article-length studies about war childhood, the most significant monographs on the subject appeared most recently in the West. Among them are Julie K. deGraffenried's *Sacrificing Childhood: Children and the Soviet State in the Great Patriotic War* (2014), Olga Kucherenko's two books, *Little Soldiers: How Soviet Children Went to War, 1941–1945* (2011) and *Soviet Street Children and the Second World War: Welfare and Social Control under Stalin* (2016), and Cathy A. Frierson, *Silence Was Salvation: Child Survivors of Stalin's Terror and World War II in the Soviet Union* (2015). DeGraffenried's and Kucherenko's studies are based on research in the Russian archives while Frierson's focuses on interviews with WWII survivors. Another – more broadly conceived – monograph by Oxane Leingang, yet to be translated from German into English, *Sowjetische Kindheit im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Generationsentwürfe im Kontext nationaler Erinnerungskultur* (Soviet Childhood During WWII: Sketches of a Generation in the Context of the National Culture of Remembrance, 2014), constructs a profile of the generation whose wartime experiences were excluded from the Soviet commemoration culture using personal war accounts, autobiographical, and literary texts. Taken together, these ambitious scholarly projects have made significant steps in illuminating different aspects of Soviet war childhood as well as the underlying cultural and generational attitudes toward war experience.

As Alexander Etkind pointedly observes, "Uncomfortably for the historian, postcatastrophic memory often entails allegories rather than facts and imaginative fiction rather than archival documentation" (Etkind 2013: 244). In line with this statement, our present cluster moves away from historiographic research and explores the complexities of Soviet war childhood by focusing on diverse cultural products, fictional and non-fictional narratives, war poetry, printed media publications and witness testimonies that emerged within the framework of official Soviet culture during and after the war. These different sources, however, construct a reality in which voices of real and fictional children are caught in the liminal space of war survival and in confrontation with the official myth of happy Soviet childhood. The cultural production of the wartime proper had two prominent currents. The first one was executed in the grand official style, ideological, heroic, pompous, glorious, nationalistic, "unnervingly unemotional", and fixated on the collective effort to crush the Nazi enemy as well as on fearless self-sacrifice for the sake of the Soviet Motherland (Stites 1995: 4). But within and outside this official model, a different cultural current gradually emerged and carried the emotional, spontaneous, and personal moods and responses to the war trauma. This "unofficial" current reflected the complex and nuanced nature of wartime culture, and children's literature became one of the conduits of its conflicting representations.

The cluster opens with Olga Voronina's essay, "Sons and Daughters of the Regiment: The Representation of the WWII Child Hero in the Soviet Media and Children's Literature of the 1940s", which draws on the author's examination of war-time *Pravda* issues and children's books to point out the inconsistencies and lack of subtlety in the portrayal of childhood in Soviet-occupied territories. Voronina convincingly argues that although the representation of war childhood both in *Pravda* and in children's literature converged in fulfilling their ideological goals, the latter tended to upend the prevailing official media discourse of outrageous brutality and murder suffered by children. Children's literature in fact created an occasional dissonance with the horrific *Pravda* reports aimed at inciting hatred against the Nazis, and instead of endorsing the narrative of suffering, on occasion, published laudatory stories about young pioneers' heroic exploits. Yet, this upbeat narrative trajectory did not develop into a prominent strand, and children's literature of the war period remained firmly grounded in the socialist realist prototypical plot of collective suffering and "ritual sacrifice."[1]

Contrary to the prevailing scholarly view that the canon of Soviet wartime childhood took shape in post-war years, Marina Balina argues that the foundational structure of this canon emerged already during the war, in Soviet poetry for adults. In her essay, "Writing Usable Futures: Narratives of War Childhood", she traces how three main types of war children, "the young victim of

[1] See Clark, 1981, chapters 7 and 8.

the horrors of war; the full-fledged participant in combat; and … the child restored to his/her happy Soviet childhood", became prominent in Soviet wartime poetry as a result of "amalgamation", or an artistic strategy that combined officially sanctioned representation of war memory and trauma with personal memory and emotions (Kukulin, 2014: 328–35). Balina's analysis tangentially touches on Marietta Chudakova's findings that intimate lyrical poetry expressing individual emotions returned to Soviet literature during the war, with Konstantin Simonov's famous war poem, "Zhdi menia…" (Wait for me, 1941), being the first one that dared to express personal feelings while still staying within the framework of social realism (Chudakova 2002a: 223–259; Chudakova 2002b: 15–42). In light of this phenomenon within the Soviet literary process, Balina's hypothesis about the origin of the "wartime childhood" canon in lyrical poetry for adult readers is highly plausible. Backed up with numerous examples, Balina's argument provokes us to rethink the sources of the "wartime childhood" canon.

In his seminal book, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoir* (On Collective Memory, 1925), Maurice Halbwachs elaborates on the manner in which collective memory depends on and is connected with memories of specific groups that acquire, recognize, and recall a common experience. Each of these groups has "its own set of codes and customs", and "its own particular collective memory, which serves as a reference to define what is important and meaningful" for its own history (Apfelbaum 2010: 85). It is within these groups that certain localized experiences are shared and then become a part of collective memory. One of these special collective groups, elderly child-survivors of one of the fiercest battles of WWII, is the focus of Anastasia Kostetskaya's essay, "On the Run and from Below the Ground: A Child-Survivor Perspective on the Battle of Stalingrad." Being very young at the time, her informants could not conceptualize or properly articulate their experiences, and their autobiographical testimonies heavily rely on visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, olfactory, kinetic, thermal, gravitational, and other nonverbal "readings of the world" (Ruthrof 2007: 23). Kostetskaia argues that these experiential narratives form a special genre in which children appear not as passive victims of war but as chroniclers and creators of the "multi-D memory" that allows them to project a full range of their emotional, corporeal, and psychological trauma through sensory perception. Ultimately, these narratives erode the official portrayal of the heroic battle of Stalingrad by propelling their own traumatic group experience into the sphere of national memory.

Well before *glasnost'* was launched by Mikhail Gorbachev's liberal reforms, the theme of individual war memory began to appear in Soviet children's literature. The atmosphere of post-Stalinist liberalization, known as the Thaw, allowed authors to transcend patriotic nationalism and heroism in the representation of war childhood and focus on its non-heroic aspects. Larissa Rudova's essay, "Storying War Childhood in Al'bert Likhanov's *Russian Boys*", discusses

how a number of authors of the war generation (e.g., Bulat Okudzhava, Anatolii Pristavkin, Fridrikh Gorenshtein and Al'bert Likhanov) began to deviate from the official representation of war experience by creating narratives in which "the identity of the author as author is inseparable from the identity of the author as trauma survivor" (Tal quoted in Bosmajian 2009: 296). Her analysis of Likhanov's autobiographical novel about his childhood in the Soviet hinterlands during WWII focuses on "cross-writing", a narrative technique that blurs the boundary between child and adult experiences. While the child struggles to make sense of the abruptly changed world, the adult narrator reflects on the states of trauma to which his young "self" was subjected. Rudova's essay reminds us that it was through children's literature during the Thaw that first non-heroic images of war childhood, with death, disease, hunger, loss of parents, orphanages, abjection, and other evils of war, were delivered to the Soviet reader.

In the final essay of the cluster, "From *Feed* to Famine: M.T. Anderson's *Symphony for the City of the Dead* as a 'Dystopian Novel That Happens to be True'", Anastasia Ulanowicz grapples with the challenging question how to convey WWII Soviet experience to the current generation of American teenagers. The focus of her investigation is the award-winning nonfiction young adult (YA) novel, *Symphony for the City of the Dead: Dmitri Shostakovich and the Siege of Leningrad* (2015). Although the novel is not specifically about war childhood, it effectively communicates to teenage readers the nightmarish atmosphere of Leningrad during the Nazi blockade, in which thousands of people, including children, died every day. In his interview with the 2015 National Book Foundation, M.F. Anderson commented on how different Russians see their war experience from the West:

> "[Russians] talk not about the Second World War, but about the "Great Patriotic War", and it starts for them not in 1939, but in 1941. Around half the total casualties in what we call WWII were Soviet citizens. The death toll in the defense of Leningrad alone was higher than the number of all Americans who've died in all wars fought since the Revolution. Seventy thousand Soviet cities, towns, and villages were wiped completely off the map. We need to understand the depth of that historic sacrifice if we're ever going to understand modern Russia and its people" (Anderson 2015).[2]

Ulanowicz argues that the success of *Symphony for the City of the Dead* lies in Anderson's ingenious choice of narrative structure, which plays into the millennials' cultural sensibility. By mixing generic features of the popular YA dys-

[2] The National Book Foundation conducted micro-interviews with the 2015 National Book Award Longlist honorees, asking, "In the process of writing your book, what did you discover, what, if anything, surprised you?" http://www.nationalbook.org/nba2015_ypl_anderson.html#.WqTatmbMwRE (Last accessed March 10, 2018).

topian novel with documentary material and historical facts, Anderson takes the young reader into the narrative of the turbulent events of the Russian Revolution, Stalinism, the Nazi siege of Leningrad, and Dmitri Shostakovich's work on his powerful Seventh ["Leningrad"] Symphony in the besieged city in 1941. Ulanowicz's analysis of Anderson's novel points out that in our current historical moment, his resurrection of Soviet WWII history is important not only because he educates teen readers about the traumatic past but also because he allows them to gain "the critical acumen necessary to reimagining the present and the future." Ulanowicz's conclusion that Anderson's work tries "to thwart a moment in which current dystopian nightmares might well happen to become true" acutely resonates with the present-day political situation in which the world is beset by a raging Cold War and the threat of a new major warfare.

Focusing on the gripping narratives of war childhood from different disciplinary and methodological perspectives, we hope to raise issues that are eternally poignant: the fragility and vulnerability of childhood and the adults' responsibility to protect it; we also want to illuminate children's pain and trauma in war time. Overall, we should not forget that "the child in the shadow of war is the survivor for whom the war will always be the subtext to everything termed normal" (Bosmajian 2009: 299).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Apfelbaum, E. 2010. "Halbwachs and the Social Properties of Memory." *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*. S. Radstone and B. Schwarz, eds. New York: Fordham University Press.

Bosmajian, H. 2009. "The Tropes of Trauma." *Children's Literature*, 37, 293–299.

Chudakova, M. 2002a. "Voennoe stikhotvorenie Simonova "Zhdi menia … (iiul' 1941 g.) v literaturnom protsesse sovetskogo vremeni." *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 6, 223–259.

Chudakova, M. 2002b. "Vozvrashenie liriki." *Voprosy literatury*, 3, 15–42.

deGraffenried, J. 2014. *Sacrificing Childhood: Children and the Soviet State in the Great Patriotic War*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Clark, K. 1981. *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Etkind, A. 2013. *Cultural Memory in the Present: Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Frierson, C.A. 2015. *Silence Was Salvation: Child Survivors of Stalin's Terror and World War II in the Soviet Union*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Gudkov, L. 2005. "Pamiat' o voine i massovaia identichnost' rossiian." *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*, 2–3. http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2005/2/gu5.html.

Gudkov, L. 2005. "The Fetters of Victory: How the War Provides Russia with Its Identity." *Eurozine*. http://www.eurozine.com/the-fetters-of-victory/ (Last accessed January 14, 2018).

Kelly, C. 2007. *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890–1991*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Kucherenko, O. 2011. *Little Soldiers: How Soviet Children Went to War, 1941–1945*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kucherenko, O. 2016. *Soviet Street Children and the Second World War: Welfare and Social Control under Stalin*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Kukulin, I. 2014. Sovetskaia poeziia o Vtoroi mirovoi voine: ritorika skrytoi amal'gamy. – O. V. Budnitskii, L. G. Novikova, eds., *SSSR vo Vtoroi mirovoi voine: Okkupatsiia. Kholokost. Stalinizm*. Moscow: Politicheskaia entsiklopediia (ROSSPEN), 328–351.

Leingang, O. 2015. *Sowjetische Kindheit im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Generationsentwürfe im Kontextnationaler Errinnerungskultur.* Heidelberg: Heidelberg Universitätsverlag Winter.

Ruthrof, H. 2007. "Principles of Corporeal Pragmatics." *The Public Journal of Semiotics* I, 2, 12–30.

Stites, R., ed. 1995. "Introduction." *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Tal, K. 1991. "Speaking the Language of Pain: Vietnam War Literature in the Context of the Literature of Trauma." *Fourteen Landing Zones: Approaches to Vietnam Literature*. Ed. Philip K. Jason. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 217–250.

Winkler, M. 2017. "Children, Childhood, and Stalinism." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 18:3, 628–637.

Filoteknos, vol. 8 • 2018 • DOI: 10.23817/filotek.8-2

OLGA VORONINA • Bard College, USA

Sons and Daughters of the Regiment: The Representation of the WWII Child Hero in the Soviet Media and Children's Literature of the 1940s

Abstract: The image of the child hero as an emblem of the Soviet people's unfailing dedication to the communist cause dominated Soviet media discourse years before the beginning of WWII. And yet, shortly after the war commenced on Soviet territory, reports on children's valor nearly disappeared from the pages of *Pravda*, the country's leading daily of the time. In contrast, the wartime journalistic portrayal of child fatalities of the Great Patriotic War prevailed over heroic representations of children. Overall, the newspaper graphically and insistently depicted the Soviet young as murdered, maimed, and brutally tortured victims, thus helping to launch and sustain the "hate-and-revenge" campaign which lasted until the allied victory appeared irreversible. In the 1940s, Soviet children's literature inverted the central rhetorical tropes of the wartime propaganda discourse by representing children as heroes, rather than victims, it offered its readers a more nuanced portrayal of a deeply traumatized, psychologically vulnerable, and often bereaved child. That said, the inconsistencies of tone, voice, and characterization children's fiction inherited from the media accounts of war childhood occurred in even such celebrated children's novels as *Syn polka (The Son of the Regiment*, 1944) by Valentin Kataev and *Vasek Trubachev i ego tovarishchi (Vasek Trubachev and His Comrades,*1947–1951) by Valentina Oseeva.

Keywords: war childhood, Soviet children's literature, *Pravda*, Soviet mass media, propaganda, hero discourse, victimization of children

1.
SOVIET MARTYRS: HEROIC VS. VICTIMIZED CHILDREN IN POSTWAR CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND THE WARTIME MEDIA DISCOURSE

Miriam Morton, whose 1967 *Harvest of Russian Children's Literature* captivated Western readers with the variety and richness of literary works it anthologized, lingered in her introduction on the Soviet children's authors' unflinching attitude towards portraying WWII and its atrocities:

> An omnipresent aspect of unexpurgated realism in contemporary Soviet children's literature is the political and social theme, the truth about war. When

> I asked Leo Kassil, a prominent Soviet children's author, how Soviet educators and cultural leaders justify exposing children to these realities, he repeated to me his reply to a similar question put by him to a group of American educators: 'How is it that in the West you expose children from practically nursery school age to the complexities of religion and the tragic story of Christ and the Christian Martyrs?' (Morton 1967: 8)

Kassil's response, and Morton's citing it in the book that *Kirkus Review* would soon praise for its "insight into the cultural conditioning of the Russian child,"[1] provide a rare opportunity for viewing Soviet war narratives for young readers both in sharp profile and from an unusual angle. The American anthologist saw in the "truth" about war as told by Soviet children's literature a facet of its "unexpurgated realism", or, to be more precise, its ability to document the political and social realities of Russian history. For Kassil, however, the essence of war fiction was, first and foremost, tragic– to the point of its justifying a comparison between children's books about WWII (possibly including his own) and stories of Christian martyrdom. There is a lot to be derived from this vision, especially in view of the fact that, while Soviet children's literature of the 1940s and the subsequent decades was saturated with narratives about valiant little soldiers fighting the enemy at the front as well as about youngsters helping adults back at home, the wartime journalistic accounts of war childhood represented children as the enemy's brutalized victims. In this essay, I suggest that the authors of Soviet children's books about WWII inverted rather than endorsed the central rhetorical tropes of the war-time media discourse. I read fictional accounts of Soviet youths' participation in combat, life in the guerilla regiments, and survival during the mass exodus from the city under the threat of military occupation against descriptions of children's suffering that proliferated in *Pravda*, the leading Soviet newspaper of the time. This approach allows me not only to explore the similarities and divergences in the media and literary presentation of Soviet children at war, but also to point out narrative inconsistencies and lack of psychological subtlety in both types of narratives.

In *Little Soldiers: How Soviet Children Went to War, 1941–1945,* Olga Kucherenko asserts that Stalin's government was counting on children's participation in combat neither in the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, nor at its end; she says that the authorities "never planned to conscript adolescents for regular frontline duty" (Kucherenko 2011: 8). The prohibition on military duty did not mean, however, that the Soviet young were to be shielded from experiences of war. According to Julie K. deGraffenried, another scholar of wartime childhood, "the state demanded children's participation in war work, much of it far beyond the scope of labor expected of children prior to the war, […]

---

[1] *Kirkus Review*. 1967. – https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/miriam-ed-morton/a-harvest-of-russian-childrens-literature/ (12.01.207).

exhorting children to make sacrificial contributions to the war in the absence of parents or adult direction" (DeGraffenried 2014: 48). This requirement for the youngest of Soviet citizens to be fully supportive of the war effort corresponded to the image of a heroic Soviet child that Arkady Gaidar projected in his famous speech "V dobryi put'" ("Bon Voyage") broadcast by the radio on August 30, 1941, and also published in *Pionerskaia pravda* (*Pioneers' Truth*) that same day. In that address, the celebrated children's author encouraged his audience to study well, maintain strict discipline at school, acquire military expertise, and assist soldiers' and officers' families. "Your country has always taken care of you, she brought you up, she taught you, she indulged and often even pampered you. Now it is time for you, not by word, but by deed, to show how you value, care for, and love her", Gaidar intoned (Gaidar 1972: 296).[2]

After the war, Soviet children's authors embraced both the state-endorsed involvement of children in homefront labor and Gaidar's vision of well-organized pioneers remunerating their country's care with active wartime duty. By focusing on the role of the country's young citizens in advancing the victory over Nazism, they presented children's heroism as an emblem of the Soviet people's unfailing dedication to the communist cause. Child-hero, and, more specifically, pioneer-hero discourse began to proliferate in the mid-1920s, when the first adventure narratives about young revolutionaries, Civil War combatants, and fighters against saboteurs and other adversaries of the new regime gained popularity in mass media, children's journals, and other fiction and non-fiction for young readers (See Maslinskaya 2005; Balina 2008; Dzyadevich 2012; Starkova-Vindman 2013). In 1932 journalists and children's writers seized upon the story of a teenager from the Ekaterinburg province, Pavlik Morozov, who died at the hands of his relatives after reporting to the GPU on his father, allegedly a document forger and accomplice of "enemies of the state." Morozov's story quickly acquired epic proportions. Not only his image, but also images of those children who replicated his act, became emblems of pioneers' readiness for self-sacrifice for the well-being of their people and country (Kelly 2005: 26–72). In February 1942 the feats of Morozov and other Soviet youths who had followed his example were, however, eclipsed by the exploit of Zoia Kosmodemianskaia, an eighteen-year-old partisan and Komsomol member whom Germans tortured and then hanged for arson. Journalist Petr Lidov, who initially knew only Zoia's assumed name, published his first account of Zoia's heroic death in the essay "Tania" in *Pravda* on January 27, 1942, following it up with "Kto byla Tania" ("Who Was Tania?") on February 18. In Lidov's article, the fragile-looking, beautiful Zoia appeared both as a martyr and a staunch hero who, with her exploit, had "forged the road to the West" for the Red Army (Lidov 1942: 3).

Several landmark works of children's literature that celebrated the heroic behavior of Soviet children in the time of war appeared as early as 1942. They

[2] Here and below, translation from Soviet children's books are mine – OV.

included Liubov' Kosmodemianskaia's book about her daughter, *Moia Zoia* (*My Zoia,* 1942) and Valentin Kataev's novella *Syn polka* (*The Son of the Regiment,* 1944). Shortly after the war's end, Alexander Fadeev's *Molodaia gvardiia* (*The Young Guard,* 1946) appeared, followed by Kassil's novel about the adolescent Kerch hero Volodia Dubinin, *Ulitsa mladshego syna* (*The Street of the Youngest Son,* 1949). Over the course of four years, Valentina Oseeva published a three-volume novel *Vasek Trubachev i ego tovarishchi* (*Vasek Trubachev and His Comrades,* 1947–1951) about pioneers' struggle against the enemy in the occupied territories and, later, on the home front. The main characteristic of all of these books is children's agency in resisting the enemy and advancing the Soviet victory. Certainly corroborating Kassil's statement about Soviet children's war literature's proximity to hagiographic Christian narratives, Fadeev, Oseeva, Kataev and their followers recognized and even celebrated Soviet youth's readiness to perish for their country. In the second part of the Vasek Trubachev trilogy, for example, a group of twelve- and thirteen-year old students from a town near Moscow vacation in a Ukrainian village in the beginning of the war. Cut off from the mainland by the advancing enemy troops, they begin to assist partisans in gathering information about activities at the German headquarters and serve as liaisons between the guerilla group and the villagers. In one of the episodes, Oseeva portrays her main hero as a fearless young man ready for self-sacrifice:

> Solemnly, as if keeping a mournful vigil, tall poplars are lined up along the road. Pioneer Vasek Trubachev is walking along it. And not simply walking – he is holding his head high, as if he had grown overnight, gained extra strength, matured. He is walking bravely. This pioneer is carrying his first important assignment in his heart. Valiant and desperate plans are swarming in his boyish head. From now on, he will firmly and inviolably keep the military secrets, entrusted to him by the older party members. <…> His native land! The youngest of her loyal sons, Vasek Trubachev, is now committed to do anything for it (Oseeva 1961: 342–343).

Although Trubachev does not perish in battle, one of his friends, Valia Stepanova, gets shot by the Germans when shielding the body of her teacher before the teacher's execution. In Kassil's novel, based on real-life events, Volodia Dubinin dies when de-mining approaches to the Kerch caves where his partisan brigade used to hide at the end of the war. The representation of Vasek's valor and Volodia's and Valia's heroic acts – and especially of their complete devotion to the motherland at the moment of danger – served as a model for other children's narratives about the war, of which hundreds if not thousands were published between the 1940s and 1980s (Brooks 2000: 195–232; Fateev 2007: 119–131; DeGraffenried 2014: 77–104).

It is only natural to expect that similar stories – perhaps, even prototypes of the fictional accounts, – would appear on the pages of *Pravda*. The party's Ideological Committee, which at the height of Soviet totalitarianism report-

ed directly to Stalin, strictly and cautiously controlled its every headline, image, exposé, or a series of articles (Johnston 2011: xvii-3). But although the newspaper generally aimed to reflect the Soviet government's political agenda, its language of indoctrination may have changed in the time of crisis. According to Jeffrey Brooks, during the war, the Communist Party's central media outlet, indeed, continued to shape the Soviet collective imagination by strewing ideological clichés over its pages, carefully rationing information about the wartime losses, and promoting the Stalin cult. And yet, seditious meaning also began to lurk behind its previously unshakeable bureaucratic "newspeak." "*Pravda*'s treatment during the war of patriotism, citizenship, motivation, and what it means to be human was fundamentally subversive of the Stalinist ethos", Brooks wrote (Brooks 1995: 24). This means that the portrayal of children in *Pravda* could have changed at that time as well. A careful perusal of the editorials, correspondents' reports, and topical pieces that appeared in the newspaper from June 1941 (the beginning of World War II on Soviet territory) to August 1944 (the Soviet army's crossing of the Polish border) reveals just that. There is not only a noticeable lack of narratives about children's wartime heroism, but also plenty of stories that either invalidate the familiar image of the strong Soviet child or manipulate it for propaganda purposes.

Pravda journalists' writing about the war while the combat was still going on focused, first and foremost, on the vulnerability and innocence of children as victims of the Nazi invasion, thus substantiating Catriona Kelly's statement that, "the most assiduously promoted 'military' [child] heroes […] were those who had been martyred by the Germans, rather than those who had successfully carried out feats of 'unchildish' bravery"(Kelly 2007: 117). Their wartime accounts were dramatic, full of gory details, and, in tone and structure, drastically at variance with Gaidar's appeal or the soon-to-appear fictionalized narratives about young people competently fighting at the front or bravely enduring the occupation. If Soviet children's writers embraced the theme of war to create stories about strong and intelligent little fighters endowed with amazing survival skills and thus emphasize the cross-generational nature of the declared Soviet endurance in the face of mortal peril,[3] *Pravda*'s preoccupation with the figure of a victimized child strived to achieve a dissimilar goal. Its mission was to evoke hatred of the enemy and instill a powerful desire to avenge the war casualties in adult readers. According to my count, from May 1942 to May 1944, the newspaper published more than one hundred essays, editorials, and reports about the wartime

[3] As early as in 1942, Kornei Chukovskii wrote about children who helped adults in his *Deti i voina* (*Children and War*): "These, I repeat, are not random Katias and Vovas, they are definitely an army, which has mobilized itself in an efficient way in the war's first weeks. This army consists of many battalions, and each battalion has its exploits and military achievements" (Chukovskii 1942: 8).

suffering of children, but only eight pieces that featured children who combatted the enemy. Out of those eight, only three included stories of children performing a heroic act that in point of fact harmed the German soldiers or occupants.

In view of the proportional distribution of the texts about child victims and heroes in the war-time *Pravda*, Kelly's assertion of the "propaganda value of victimized children for the patriotic case" seems authoritative and well-founded (Kelly 2007: 117). And yet, it does not fully recognize – or elucidate – all the nuances of turning real-life suffering of the young into a story for mass consumption. Textual and historical analysis, however, reveals journalistic ploys that connect *Pravda*'s portrayals of victimized children to a well-orchestrated "hate-and-revenge" campaign that coincided with the time of severe Soviet losses on the Eastern and Western fronts.

2. "FOR EVERY DROP OF CHILDREN'S BLOOD…": PRAVDA'S REPRESENTATION OF CHILDREN AND THE 1942 "HATE-AND-REVENGE" CAMPAIGN

In the words of Karel C. Berkhoff, at the beginning of the war, Stalin's government was not willing to alert the population to the Nazi violence. Instead, the authorities allowed the mass media to reveal facts of the enemy's atrocities selectively: "[T]he goal was less to expose crimes than to mobilize", Berkhoff suggests (Berkhoff 2012: 119). Gradually, however, this policy began to change. Later in the fall of 1941, Stalin ordered Viacheslav Molotov, then People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, to start reporting on Nazi atrocities to the public. At first, Molotov's reports, published in central newspapers, focused on the Nazi-occupied territories beyond the Soviet border. In November 1941, for example, he outlined the horrendous fate of Soviet war prisoners. But in April 1942, Molotov finally spoke of crimes on the occupied territories of the Soviet Union, citing the Nazi's goals of "extermination of the Soviet population, prisoners of war, and partisans by bloody violence, torture, executions, and mass murders of Soviet citizens, irrespective of their nationality, social standing, sex or age" (Ibid.) In my estimate, the appearance of this report roughly coincides with the beginning of *Pravda*'s two-year-long series of graphic essays on children as victims of the Nazi atrocities.

The campaign began with Ilia Ehrenburg's editorial, "Opravdanie nenavisti" ("The Justification of Hatred"), which appeared in *Pravda* on May 26, 1942, more than a month after Molotov's report. Although Ehrenburg spoke of his witnessing the Nazi atrocities in Novgorod and Kiev, he wrote about the Germans' policy of extermination of the peaceful population in nation-wide terms, calling the occupants "not humans, but evil and disgusting creatures, savages

equipped with all technical achievements, […] who turn the slaughter of babies into a declaration of state political wisdom" (Ehrenburg 1942: 4). Among the very few specific examples he gave in his essay were the Red Army soldiers' finding "a child's breeches smeared with blood on the corpse of a German [officer] as well as a photograph of his own children." Ehrenburg also cited a Hitlerite who wrote, "having killed thousands of children in Kiev: 'We will annihilate the little representatives of this terrible tribe'" (Ibid.).

On May 29, *Pravda* published a story under the ambiguous title "Zmei" by Alexander Isbakh. The word "zmei" could denote either a "snake", by then a standard derogatory term used by Soviet journalists, or a "kite", which is the case here. In the story, an adolescent boy Mitia Tolkunov is helping a nameless Commissar to make a kite for distributing Soviet propaganda flyers to people in an occupied village. Mitia is shot by a sniper when flying this bizarre device; to revenge his death, the army brigade led by the Commissar takes over the village, killing and capturing many enemy soldiers (Isbakh 1942: 3).

Isbakh's sketch is clumsily, hopelessly non-documentary: its setting is vague, its adult hero remains unnamed, and its key motif, the kite, is an obvious invention that allows the author to introduce the child protagonist and make his contribution to the war effort if not plausible, then symbolically acceptable. The publication of such a story, however, is significant. Mitia's demise – which the anguished Commissar fails to recognize as a reality of life ("Just not death, not death", – he pleads, bending over the little body) – marks a transition from children's near-absence from journalistic accounts of the war to the frequent and increasingly gory representation of the war's child fatalities (Ibid.). From that moment on, stories of German brutalities directed against children begin to appear in *Pravda* regularly: in June, at the rate of one publication a week, in July, August, September, and October, twice or three times a week, and sometimes, more often.[4]

Stories of the deaths of Soviet children and youth at the hands of the Germans were indisputably linked to demands for revenge and entreaties, always direct, for the Red Army servicemen, partisans, and even civilians to kill the enemy. Every time *Pravda* published a horrendous description of tortures and murders of children as well as of mutilations of their dead bodies, either that very essay ended with an incendiary appeal, or a separate article appeared on the same page, summoning soldiers to arms and workers to harder labor on the home front. For example, on July 14, 1942, *Pravda* publishes a 600-word report from the Stalin District of what is now the Donetsk Region. It includes depictions of such atrocities as a mutilation of several children's bodies in front of their parents in the village of Iama, the execution by firing squad of a group

[4] Brooks also notices *Pravda's* emphasis shifting towards portraying murdered and tortured brutalized children, but he connects it to the newspaper's focus on "independent self-motivated citizens fighting in defense of families, friends, and the native land" (Brooks 1995: 19).

of kolkhoz farmers in the village of Ocheretino (including a 12-year-old Grisha Stroshko and an 8-year-old Lenia Kushchik), a murder and a subsequent mutilation of an 8-year-old boy in the hamlet of Novo-Bakhmetievka, and the shooting of a mother of four, Marfa Poltoretskaia, when she was breastfeeding her youngest child (Anachenko 1942: 3). The mutilated peasants had their "limbs twisted out, their bodies cut, their fingers and toes squashed" (Ibid.). The article ends in a short paragraph: "It is hard to list all the crimes carried out by the Hitlerites on our land. The corpses of martyred women and children, the ruins of burned and destroyed towns and villages summon us to merciless revenge" (Ibid.). On July 28, 1942, *Pravda* publishes a letter from the soldier D. Biriukov under the title "I Saw This. I Take Revenge." It contains a graphic description of the slaughtering of a large group of women and children whom a German tank brigade hoarded and sent ahead of the tanks towards the Soviet cannons as a live shield. Biriukov, who called the women and children "martyrs" and who referred to the Germans as "scum", "beasts", and "snakes", included in his letter an account of Soviet tank troopers smashing the enemy in the name of vengeance. "Hatred itself directed us at that moment", he wrote (Biriukov 1942: 2).

Journalists did not spare words to describe torture, executions, and mutilations of dead bodies. Usually, children's names, ages, and locations were given.[5] To authenticate the descriptions, they were often cited as servicemen's first-person accounts or as excerpts from survivors' letters. For example, on August 14, 1942, the first-page editorial quotes from a letter of Zina and Vera Sidorova to their brother Nikolai, serving in the army:

> Kolia, it is hard to describe everything we have lived through. You know well the secretary of the Village Soviet Valia Ivanova, her daughter Nina and son Grisha. The Hitler officers, wishing to extract from her information about our partisans, decided to pressure her by torturing her children. Having tied Valia's hands, these savage beasts made her see how they cut off Nina's and Grisha's right ears, then poked out the boy's left eye, then cut off all five fingers on the girl's right hand. Valia could not bear these horrendous tortures and died of

[5] For example, "Novye sledy nemetskikh zverstv" ("New Traces of German Atrocities", June 2, 1942), 1; S. Marshak, "Rodnye deti" ("Our Own Children", June 18, 1942), 3; Nikolai Tikhonov, "Leningradskie rasskazy" ("Leningrad Tales", June 27, 1942), 2; Elena Kononenko, "Devochka v besedke"("The Girl in the Garden Pavilion", July 8, 1942), 2; "Zverstva nemetskikh zakhvatchikov" ("Beastly Atrocities of German Occupants", July 8, 1942), 2; "Nenavist' k vragu" ("Hatred towards the Enemy", July 11, 1942), 1; "Tam, gde stupil nemetskii sapog" ("Where the German Boot Trodded", July 24, 1942), 3; D. Biriukov, "Ia videl eto. Ia mschu!" ("I Saw This. I Avenge!" July 28, 1942), 2; "Tovarishchi pionery" ("Comrades Pioneers", July 29, 1942), 3; "Gitlerovskii zver' na Donu" ("The Hitler's Beast on the Don", August 8, 1942), 3; "Chudovishchnye izdevatel'stva fashistkikh merzavtsev nad sovetskimi liud'mi", ("Monstrous Abuse of Soviet People by Fascist Scum", August 9, 1942), 3; Al. Isbakh, "Syn partizana" ("A Partisan's Son", August 11, 1942), 2; and so on.

> a heart attack. The fascists then took the [bodies of] children they had tortured to death into the woods and disposed of them there. We buried their corpses together with Valia's, in the same grave (Anon. 1942: 1).

This is a beginning of a long citation which includes descriptions of two other cases of torture and an account of a group burning of eighty children and the elderly whom the enemy did not choose to transport to Germany for slave labor. The article ends with an appeal to Red Army soldiers: "Avenge Germans for the destroyed children's lives, for every drop of children's blood, for every scar on a little body. Kill Germans, kill the beasts who devour babies. Not a step backwards! The enemy bands are threatening the life of the Soviet Union. The drive of the enemy bands is great, but we must and we can hold it for the sake of our children's happiness" (Ibid.).

It is in July of 1942 that the image of a tortured, slaughtered child also begins to appear in *Pravda* cartoons and on posters above or below incendiary slogans, such as "Avenge them!" or "Protect them!" Especially notable in that respect are the two cartoons by the famous three-artist team Kukryniksy, published in *Pravda* in quick succession in July and August, 1942, along with a poster by Victor Koretskii.

Fig. 1: Samuil Marshak, Kukryniksy, "Avenge!" in *Pravda,* July 19, 1942, 4.

In the first cartoon, Kukryniksy portrayed a Nazi officer who sadistically admires the splayed corpse of a little girl, while two German soldiers, half-obscured by the cartoon's left margin, are dragging away the child's mother. The caption, by the renowned children's poet Samuil Marshak, reads:

Avenge!

Just recently, there was smoke over the chimney:
The mistress of the house baked some bread, her kids running around…
For the children's corpse on the grass in front of you,
Any execution would be a meager redemption (Marshak, Kukryniksy 1942: 4).

Fig. 2: Kukryniksy, "Kill the German Monster!" in *Pravda*, August 6, 1942, p. 4.

Another work by Kukryniksy features an apelike monster dressed in the Nazi uniform who, carrying a corpse of a beautiful naked woman under his arm, tramples upon other corpses of women and children. At least one child is clearly visible in the foreground. It is a toddler or a large baby whose shirt is drawn up exposing his naked body. The caption says: "Unichtozhit' nemetskoe chudovishche" ("Kill the German monster!" Kukryniksy 1942: 4). The appearance of this image on a bulletin board in the besieged Leningrad was captured by the photographer Nikolai Khandogin. The cartoon's uncanny proximity to a little girl, who stopped to look at it while traversing the desolate city on her skis, serves as a chilly reminder of the Soviet children's constant awareness of their perilous state – and the tragic fate of others.

Fig. 3: Nikolai Khandogin, "Poster 'Kill the German Monster!' displayed on Nevsky Prospect, Winter 1941/42", in *Blockade Leningrads 1941–1944: Dossiers* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2004), p. 55.

3.
"I AM LYING IN A DITCH…": NARRATIVE INCONSISTENCIES IN PRAVDA'S PORTRAYALS OF CHILDREN'S SUFFERING

On August 5, *Pravda* published a poster by the famous propaganda artist Victor Koretskii, "The Red Army Soldier, Save [Us]!" (Koretskii 1942: 3). It portrays a mother and a little boy who, although a visual rendering of the Madonna and Christ archetype, are looking not straight at the viewer, but at the bayonet bearing the sign of a swastika which is pointed at the child's face. The bayonet is already dripping blood, which makes the catastrophic outcome of the confrontation very clear. Paradoxically, neither the woman nor her son appear to be pleading for mercy. Their expressions are defiant,

angry. The child does not avert his eyes from the attacker, but stares directly into his eyes.[6]

Fig. 4: Victor Koretskii, "The Red Army Solider, Save [Us]!" in *Pravda*, August 5, 1942, p. 3.

The ambiguity of this image is emblematic of the difficulty Soviet propagandists and newsmakers had to deal with on many levels. Although their primary goal was to depict the brutality of Germany's "Russian" agenda and thus present the invasion and consequent occupation of Soviet territories as an endless and unbearable torture, they also had to continue emphasizing the resilience of the Soviet people, children included, stress their courage in the face of danger, and praise their resourcefulness in resisting the enemy. *Pravda* revealed this agenda in an editorial published on July 11, 1942:

[6] DeGraffenried compares this image to the upbeat pictures of Soviet children, armed with rifles, that appeared around the same time in *Koster* (*Campfire*), the journal published by the Pioneer Organization for its young members. In her opinion, the contrast between the two types of portrayals (the vulnerable child vs. the child "capable of inflicting great damage") clearly indicates the discrepancy in messages the authorities sent to its two audiences: adults (who were incited to fight the enemy) and the Soviet youth (who needed reassurance in their safety as well as a confirmation of their agency) (DeGraffenried 2014: 105–107).

"For the entire Soviet people there is only one way to preserve their life – by destroying the enemy. […] Our children understand this. They know that they are in mortal peril" (Anon. 1942–1: 1). For this reason, in a number of *Pravda*'s articles victimized children directly appeal to adults, asking them to "kill a German [soldier]" (Kuprin, Akul'shin 1942: 3). In other essays, a more experienced soldier or officer speaks to his younger comrades of a suffering child, in the child's presence, to emphasize the Red Army's moral obligation to fight the enemy without mercy. For example, in a story by A. Serafimovich, an older trooper makes new recruits contemplate the fate of a five-year-old girl just rescued from a burning village: "If you have enough anger in you, you will shoot down [the enemy's airplane]. This little girl should teach you how" (Serafimovich 1942: 3). Needless to say, the children featured in stories of this kind are not only abused, maimed, or starving, but also attractive, even lovable. The behavior of these girls and boys reveals their innocence, integrity, modesty, and noble aspirations.

Since the trope of a victimized child dominated the "hate-and-revenge" discourse, pioneer or child heroes seldom appeared on *Pravda*'s pages at that time. And yet, snippets of stories about heroic children made it into print. Thus, a story of a Nazi officer breaking a baby's spine over his knee, and then throwing the baby into the fire in front of her mother is prefaced by a description of the exploit of the family's elder child, Grisha, who rescues his sister from a burning house only to witness her execution minutes later. Enraged, Grisha (who is introduced in the article as "a partisan's son") kills the officer with a knife and escapes, while the village women, his mother included, shield him from a crowd of blood-thirsty German soldiers (Isbakh 1942–2: 2).

The ambiguity of the Soviet government's propaganda message during the war's most difficult stage is the reason why *Pravda*'s wartime essays about victimized children reveal insecurity of tone and contradictory storytelling and rhetorical choices, as well as fragmented structure and the multiplicity of voices narrating the stories. Struggling with the gory content of their reports, journalists also seem to be constantly struggling with literary form, looking for devices that would help them reframe the evidence of the enemy's murdering and torturing Soviet civilians for propaganda purposes. It is interesting to note that Biriukov's letter, cited above, is full of figures of speech and rhetorical shifts that belong to a realm of fiction and thus do not agree with the genre of his piece, which is a wartime correspondence from the front. Suddenly, at the end of the essay, in its very last paragraph, a first-person narrator appears to continue Biriukov's story in his own voice:

> I am lying in a ditch. I am watching the fascists – they are not far, behind that little hill. They are sticking their heads out of their snake holes. I am shooting at them. I take revenge! (Biriukov 1942: 2).

The author's use of present continuous tense emphasizes the fact that the narrator and the soldier engaged in combat are not one and the same person. One of them fights, another, conveys his actions, thoughts and feelings to the reader. This slight deviation makes it harder for us to perceive Biriukov's letter as a first-hand account of the battle. The authenticity of authorial voice thus becomes suspect, for it is undermined by the purely literary, and therefore foreign, narrative device.

One of the more striking examples of narrative dissonance typical of *Pravda's* essays about child fatalities of WWII is Elena Kononenko's "Devochka v besedke" ("The Girl in the Garden Pavilion") written in a number of voices and published on July 8, 1942. Kononenko begins her piece by introducing the victim, a 15-year-old Liuda Petrova, as "a good girl: sincere, simple, and just." She continues by reporting a dialogue between Liuda and her mother who is leaving for the front. Then Kononenko cites Liuda's words. Speaking in second person plural, she is calling her classmates to pledge allegiance to the Red Army. Right after that comes a story of Liuda's torture and hanging by the Germans:

> Germans gathered students in the school yard and, in front of their eyes, they brutalized and raped Liuda… They burned her body. She kept silent. They suffocated her. The half-drunk Hitlerites hanged the girl's corpse in the garden pavilion where she used to solve math problems, studied geography, read Pushkin […]… And these scoundrels, these villains, having killed the child, laughed dumbly, staring at her school uniform dress blown into a bubble by the wind. After having had their full of this 'spectacle,' the Germans departed (Kononenko 1942: 2).

Kononenko's omnipotent narrator – the one who witnesses Liuda's torture and death – comes straight from the world of fiction, where an author's "representative" does the work of observing protagonists' actions and documenting their tragic fate. But this is *Pravda*, and the truth of the narrator's account requires validation. This is why the second half of Kononenko's essay is written from the perspective of a "real" witness of Liuda's plight, a 21-year-old nurse Nina Iarosh who, after seeing Liuda's execution, decided to avenge the child by setting the German headquarters on fire. Kononenko cites Nina's letter, written from the hospital where the nurse is recovering from the monstrous torture by the enemy who had captured her:

> I, nurse Nina Iarosh, have spent 21 days in German captivity. I have no power to convey to you all the horrors that have been endured there. I am now only half human. Germans have disfigured me: I have no breasts – they have burned them out, I have no hair – they have set it on fire, and no fingers – they have chopped them off. But this is all right: I am an adult… But there was one pioneer girl, Liuda Petrova, I want, I need to tell about her, how the beasts have tortured her to death… (Ibid.)

Kononenko cites Nina Iarosh not only to authenticate the story of Liuda's martyrdom, but also to give the other victim of German brutality a chance to appeal to *Pravda*'s readers for revenge as well as to ask them for letters of indignation and support. The correspondence should be sent to Nina at the hospital, the publication states. In a strange gesture of avoidance of fact, however, Kononenko removes the address of the hospital from Nina's appeal. But she does pose a question to the reader right before ending her jarring, oddly narrated, piece: "Comrade, ask yourself, what have you done for the girl in the garden pavilion? What have you done so that tomorrow the German-Fascist bandits would not hang your child?" (Ibid.)

The journalists who wrote about war crimes for *Pravda* could not represent Soviet children as staunch defenders of their motherland capable of fighting along with adults because the heroic children's agency would have undermined the propaganda potential of the victimized child trope. Unlike post-war accounts of children's heroism, *Pravda*'s narratives seldom described the direct, fearless, and imminently tragic confrontation between young people and the enemy. Although a few narratives about pioneer and Komsomol heroes did appear in the central Soviet newspaper, including the stories of Grisha who stabbed the German officer, the "girl in the garden pavilion" Liuda Petrova who refused to divulge her partisan mother's whereabouts, and the guerilla arsonist Zoia Kosmodemianskaia, they did not form a coherent body of texts. Children's periodicals, including the already mentioned *Pionerskaia pravda* and *Koster* (*The Campfire*) were, contrariwise, preoccupied not only with the young pioneer's exploits, but also with the "publicizing [of] suffering and dying children for motivational purposes" (DeGraffenried 2014, 102). Meanwhile, the few works of children's poetry and fiction that were published during the war, such as Leonid Panteleev's "Na ialike" ("On the Skiff", 1943), Sergei Mikhalkov's "Danila Kuzmich" ("Danila Kuzmich", 1944), and Kassil's "Dorogie moi mal'chishki" ("My Dear Boys", 1944), depicted hard-working, loyal, and ardently patriotic little citizens whose resilience and passionate faith in Soviet victory allowed the children's authors to inspire their readers without making explicit references to young protagonists' dying of torture, deprivations, or combat-inflicted wounds.

This is why when scholars suggest that narratives about child heroes of WWII as a new literary form came into being not during, but after the war, their thesis seems plausible and well-justified (Maslinskaya 2005, Kucherenko 2011, DeGraffenried 2014: Hellman 2013). Soviet children's literature about WWII, with its particular set of mythological and narrative features, owed its hagiographic and adventure-story character to two prototypes: the pre-war accounts of pioneer heroes' exploits, such as that of Pavlik Morozov, and the wartime publications in children's periodicals that did not have to contribute to the "hate-and-revenge" propaganda campaign to which *Pravda* was committed. And yet, certain features of *Pravda*'s narratives about victimized children,

such as their depiction of child martyrs as destitute but innocent, their emphasis on the beautiful, almost angelic appearance of young protagonists, and the inconsistency of their narrative structure, tone, and voice, penetrated the poetic texture of children's books about the war written during the war's last two years and right after its end.

4. "ARMY COMMANDERS DO NOT CRY": VALOR AND VULNERABILITY IN SOVIET CHILDREN'S LITERATURE ABOUT WWII

Just as the language of the 1930s newspapers reporting on the Soviet people's "heroic struggle" against "enemies of the state" was influential in shaping prewar pioneer hero narratives (Maslinskaya 2005: 111), journalistic accounts of children's plight during WWII, including those published in *Pravda*, made a rhetorical and thematic impact on Soviet children's literature about young heroes of war. Although the war stories for children were to inspire patriotism and readiness to defend the country in the future, if such a need presented itself, their emphasis on deprivations and misery of war victims also performed an important pedagogical role. Thus, Olga Kucherenko noticed a correlation between the wartime suffering of Soviet youth as portrayed in children's books and the postwar ideological requirement to use this traumatic experience for the purposes of political and moral indoctrination:

> In the fast-growing war-myth, child-soldiers (presented to the Soviet public under the generic term *pionery-geroi* (Pioneer-heroes)) occupied an important, albeit secondary, position to adult heroes. Together, they served as 'means of reaching' the post-war generation, smitten with ideas of modernization and rapprochement with the West, and 'shaming' them into feeling respect for those who fought for a happy and peaceful life on behalf of future generations (Kucherenko 2011: 251).

When compared to Kassil's response to Miriam Morton, Kucherenko's observation reveals yet another function of the martyrdom motif in Soviet children's war fiction. While the goal of *Pravda*'s gory publications was to instigate Soviet soldiers and partisans in their struggle against the enemy, postwar children's books which featured victimized children not only warned young readers against appropriating Western cultural values, but also constantly reminded them of the blood price of their "happiness", earned by the suffering and self-sacrifice of their peers.

Kataev's novella *Syn polka* (*The Son of the Regiment*), first published in 1944, exemplifies several aspects of the relationship between media and fictional portrayals of children's wartime suffering. It tells the story of Vania Solntsev, a peasant boy of twelve who, after his family had perished, trudged through the woods for two years before a Soviet regiment adopted him as their "son." Vania

is smart, nimble, loyal, polite, and a quick study. But his appearance and behavior, especially in the beginning of Kataev's novella, is also that of a child victim: he is traumatized, starved, dirty, and wearing tattered clothes. When Vania is having his first meal with his army rescuers, he keeps thinking how "just recently – yesterday – he was making his way through the terrifying, cold forest, alone in the entire world, at night, hungry, sick and haunted, as a little wolf cub, seeing nothing ahead of him except his own death" (Kataev 1965: 141). He eats politely, as his peasant family taught him to behave at mealtimes, but when he is given tea with sugar, he forgets about propriety and gets lost in the joy of sipping the sweet hot liquid with abandon. Vasilii Bidenko who feeds Vania, delights in his childishness, but he is also deeply affected by the boy's suffering, sighing over him "pitifully and subtly" (Ibid.: 146).The intelligence officer's fondness for the boy is laced with guilt and a sense of unfulfilled duty, which are also the underlining sentiments in *Pravda*'s narratives that feature encounters between the seemingly content, well-dressed, and confident Red Army men and the starved, scantily clad, terrified children who have just escaped the enemy.

Thus, *Syn polka* replicates the main ideological paradigm of *Pravda*'s "hate-and-revenge" campaign of 1942–44 ignited by stories of murdered, abused, or lost children. In the novella, soldiers and officers consider Vania a quintessential Soviet child who has retained his moral purity, good manners, and quick wit in spite of his having survived the loss of his family, two years of vagrancy, and harsh treatment by the Germans (at some point, Vania gets caught spying and is threatened with torture (Kataev 1965: 196–203). Kataev's adult protagonists, who see something wholesome and holy in Vania, are inspired to feel more manly and capable of better fighting by his innocent looks and occasionally childish behavior.

Another child fatality of war in *Syn polka* is the little son of the regiment commander, captain Enakiev, who is killed on the road by a German bomb, during the mass evacuation from Moscow in the summer of 1941. By telling the story of Kostia's demise, Kataev is able to use the victimized child trope as a story-building device: Enakiev's mourning of Kostia's death becomes one of the reasons of Vania's adoption by the captain and his regiment (Kataev 1965: 221–2; 227–8; 254). Moreover, the pervasive waif motif also contributes to the fairy-tale ambiance of this novella. After all, *Syn polka* documents an almost magical transformation of an abused and abandoned sufferer of war's brutalities into a competent young soldier whose new family now consists not of just one man (Enakiev, who officially adopts him), but of several military units. The partisans and the artillery brigade, in their turn, represent the entire army and, in a broader sense, all Soviet people.

Vasek Trubachev i ego tovarishchi (*Vasek Trubachev and His Comrades*) also explores the relationship between the Soviet motherland and its children, including the paradigm of a lost, parentless child acquiring a new family and

home in a war-torn, but morally unwavering community. Upon first glance, however, the majority of child protagonists in Oseeva's trilogy appear strong and capable of assisting adults in fighting the enemy. Urban dwellers, pioneers, they are already indoctrinated into the Soviet model of fearless behavior in the face of danger. Unlike Vania Solntsev, the "noble savage" of Soviet children's war literature, most of Oseeva's heroes react to the horrors of war in a grown-up manner: during a bombardment of an evacuation convoy, for example, three teenage girls, Valia, Niura and Lida, rescue two kindergarteners and keep them safe until help arrives, while boys adapt to dangerous life in a German-occupied village and quickly find a way to help partisans (Oseeva 1961: 416–418; 340–342, 360–363; 388–397). These young fighters also differ from Vania in their ability to stay clean, orderly and capable of self-restraint even while terrible things happen. When Vasek leads his small group of comrades in an escape from the SS police raid, he insists on their maintaining discipline and personal hygiene even in the makeshift forest camp. Watching over the sleeping adolescents at night, uncertain of what awaits them, he gets the detachment's pioneer banner out of his knapsack and forces himself to carry on like a military commander:

> Vasek does not allow himself to think of anything that could bring tears to his eyes. He should not cry. Army commanders do not cry! Vasek pulls the banner onto its shaft and stands up. Drawing the shaft to his shoulder and stretching out to his full height, he is standing still under the red banner, with the moonlight pouring down on him. Tomorrow he will lead his brigade in full military order! And whatever awaits them ahead, they will not besmirch the pioneer honor! (Oseeva 1961: 485)

Vasek's determination, however, is always challenged by the ruthless conditions of war, so that his forcing himself to stay in control appears to be the key element of the novel's moral trajectory. More importantly, Oseeva emphasizes Vasek's staunchness by using other child protagonists as a foil to her main character, demonstrating how the loss of loved ones, public executions, and enemy's viciousness can traumatize the young, making them anxious, fearful and depressed. Thus, the little boy Pavlik rescued by Valia Stepanova begins to "wiggle uncomfortably" on his bench when the bombardment is mentioned (Oseeva 1961: 416–419). After Valia's death, the other two girls come to her grave and spend days there, distraught, hunched in the cold under one shawl (Oseeva 1961: 490–492). Vasek's friend Genka, a local boy whose grandfather is tortured and hanged, cannot initially cope with his grief and becomes reconciled with his loss only after recovering his beloved horse at a partisan encampment (Oseeva 1961: 497–504). These episodes demonstrate that Oseeva's resolute main characters are closer to adult protagonists in their resilience to trauma. By including descriptions of victimized children in the novel about heroic pioneers, she creates a psychologically fragmented narrative in which

only some protagonists act in an age-appropriate, mentally and emotionally plausible manner. Although the author obviously expects her audience to accept Vasek's and his closest friends' unwavering resolve because of their being already conditioned by the political imperative of stalwart behavior, the ambiguities of Oseeva's storytelling become apparent in a different ideological context. Similarly to *Pravda*'s WWII accounts of children's suffering, *Vasek Trubachev i ego tovarishchi* strives to inspire patriotism and hatred of the enemy, a strong sense of duty and a desire to be useful in its readers. The book's emphasis on valor, however, is strongly undermined by its references to children's vulnerability in the time of war. And, unlike in Kataev's *Syn polka*, there are not many adults around to be stirred by this defenselessness and exposure to danger.

World War II was a grievous time for all Soviet people. Children who survived it ended up not only remembering the atrocities longer, but also bearing a deeper trauma. As Svetlana Alexievich demonstrated in *Poslednie svideteli: kniga nedetskikh rasskazov* (*The Last Witnesses: A Book of Unchildish Stories,* 1985), their recollections often differed from the documentary, semi-documentary, or fictionalized reports in the Soviet mass media, including *Pravda*. What was missing from those texts were the actual children's psychological, emotional reactions to brutality, death, danger, and loss. If, in Alexievich's collection, child survivors who remember the execution of partisans by hanging reminisce about their fear of looking up ("Mama, our people are hanging in the sky!") or recall that they expected to die shortly after their parents ("<M>ama has died, papa has died, and I will die soon") (Alexievich 1985: 235, 228), the war-time accounts in *Pravda* erased any mention of such feelings. For the Soviet media, regulated by the party's leadership, the suffering of a child was, first and foremost, an accusatory fact, a striking image that served as a kindle for revenge.

Children's authors often presented a more nuanced account of war childhood. With the beginning of the Thaw, postwar children's literature's heroic, varnished or mythologized accounts of the war as experienced by the young gradually gave way to in-depth portrayal of individual suffering. Such authors as Vladimir Bogomolov (*Ivan*, 1957), Fridrikh Gorenshtein ("Dom s bashenkoi" ["The House with a Tower"], 1964), Viktor Goliavkin (*Moi dobryi papa* [*My Kind Father*], 1964), Aleksei Ochkin (*Ivan – ia, Fyodorovy – my* [*I am Ivan, We are the Fedorovs*], 1971), Iurii Iakovlev ("Balerina Politotdela" ["Ballerina from the Political Department"], 1977), and others, chose to forego the schematic models of presenting war childhood as either victimized or heroic and, instead, focused on their protagonists' perception of the war, including children's emotional and behavioral responses to death, starvation, occupation, loss of loved ones, and their own valiant – or mundane – actions. Although works of fiction that either demonstrated children's conversion from victims to fighters or emphasized the steadfastness and bravery of the more "politically

conscious" young protagonists continued to be published through the mid-1980s, they were gradually superseded by such meticulously reconstructed memory narratives as Alexievich's book, Il'ia Mikson's *Zhila, byla: Istoricheskoe povestvovanie o Tane Savichevoi* (*Once Upon a Time There Lived…: A Historical Novella about Tania Savicheva*, 1991); Liudmila Nilkol'skaia's *Dolzhna ostat'sia zhivoi* (*[I] Must Stay Alive*, 2003); *Deti i Blokada: Vospominaniia* (*Children and the Seige: Memoirs*, 2000); *Deti Leningrada na Urale* (*Children of Leningrad in the Urals*, 2000); *Deti blokadnogo Leningrada* (*Children of Leningrad under the Seige*, 2014); *Deti voiny: Narodnaia kniga pamiati* (*Children of the War: The National Book of Memory*, 2015); and *My – deti voiny* (*We are the Children of the War*, 2015). These publications finally provide factual data that expands, augments, or contradicts the journalistic reports in *Pravda*, full of omissions and narrative ambiguities, thus making sure that the real Soviet war childhood no longer remains hidden from sight.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alexievich, S. 1985. *Poslednie svideteli: kniga nedetskikh rasskazov.* Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia.

Anachenko, F. 1942. Tam, gde stupil nemetskii sapog. – *Pravda*, July 24, 3.

Anon. 1942–1. Nenavist' k vragu. – *Pravda*, July 11, 1.

Anon. 1942–2. Smert' detoubiitsam! – *Pravda*, August 14. 1.

Balina, M., 2008. Creativity through Restraint: The Beginnings of Soviet Children's Literature. – M. Balina, L. Rudova, eds. *Russian Children's Literature and Culture.* New York and London: Routledge, 3–17.

Berkhoff, K. 2012. *Motherland in Danger: Soviet Propaganda during World War II*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Biriukov, D. 1942. Ia videl eto. Ia mshchu! – *Pravda*, July 28, 2.

Brooks, J. 1995. Pravda Goes to War. – R. Stites, ed. *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*. Indiannapolis: Indiana University Press, 9–27.

Brooks, J. 2000. *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Chukovskii, K. 1942. *Deti i voina*. Tashkent: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo UzSSR.

DeGraffenried, J. 2014. *Sacrificing Childhood: Children and the Soviet State in the Great Patriotic War*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Dzyadevich, T. 2012. Child's Death as a Tool: Pioneer-Heroes in the Soviet Education System. – *Dystopia: Journal of Totalitarian Ideologies and Regimes*, vol. 1, no. 1–2, 316–323.

Ehrenburg, I. 1942. Opravdanie nenavisti. – *Pravda*, May 26, 4.

Fadeev, A. 1945. *Molodaia gvardiia.* Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia.

Fateev, A. 2007. *Stalinizm i detskaia literatura v politike nomenklatyry SSSR (1930–1950-e gg.).* Moscow: Maks Press.

Gaidar, A. 1972. V dobryi put'! – A. Gaidar, *Sobranie sochinenii v chetyrekh tomakh*, vol. 3. Moscow: Detskaia literatura.

Hellman, Ben. 2013. *Fairy Tales and True Stories: The History of Russian Literature for Children and Young People (1754–2010)*. Leiden: Brill.

Isbakh, A. 1942–1. Zmei. – *Pravda*, May 29, 3.

Isbakh, A. 1942–2. Syn partisan (Byl'). – *Pravda*, August 11, 2.

Johnston, T. 2011. *Being Soviet: Identity, Rumour, and Everyday Life Under Stalin, 1939–1953.* London and New York: Oxford University Press.

Kassil, L. 1949. *Ulitsa mladshego syna.* Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo i fabrika detskoi knigi Detgiza.

Kassil, L. 1944. *Dorogie moi mal'chishki.* Moscow and Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo detskoi literatury Narkomprosa RSFSR.

Kataev, V. 1965. Syn polka. – V. Kataev, *Izbrannoe,* vol. 3. Moscow: Detskaia literatura.

Kelly, C. 2005. *Comrade Pavlik*: *The Rise and Fall of a Soviet Boy Hero*. London: Granta.

Kelly, C. 2007. *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890–1991*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Kononenko, E. 1942. Devochka v besedke. – *Pravda*, July 8, 2.

Kosmodemianskaia, L. 1942. *Moia Zoia.* Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia.

Kucherenko, O. 2011. *Little Soldiers: How Soviet Children Went to War, 1941–1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kuprin, V., Akul'shin, D. 1942. Gitlerovskii zver' na Donu. – *Pravda*, August 8, 3.

Kukryniksy, 1942. Unichtozhit' nemetskoe chudovishche! – *Pravda*, August 6, 4.

Koretskii, V. 1942. Voin Krasnoi Armii, spasi nas! – *Pravda*, August 5, 3.

Lidov, P. 1942. Tania. – *Pravda*, January 27, 3.

Maslinskaya, S. 2005. Zhizneopisanie pionera-geroia: tekstovaia traditsiia i ritual'nyi kontekst. – *Sovremennaia rossiiskaia mifologiia*. Moscow: RGGU, 89–123.

Marshak, S., Kukryniksy. 1942. Otomsti! – *Pravda,* July 19, 4.

Morton, M., ed. 1967. *A Harvest of Russian Children's Literature*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Oseeva, V. 1961.*Vasek Trubachev i ego tovarishchi,* Book 2. Moscow: Detgiz.

Serafimovich, A. 1942. Rebenok. – *Pravda*, September 17, 3.

Starkova-Vindman, M. 2013. Fighting for a Utopian Childhood: Militarism in Children's Periodicals of the Early Soviet Union. – C. Lodder, M. Kokkori, M. Mileeva. *Utopian Reality: Reconstructing Culture in Revolutionary Russia and Beyond*. Leiden: Brill, 79–97.

Filoteknos, vol. 8 • 2018 • DOI: 10.23817/filotek.8-3

MARINA BALINA ❧ Illinois Wesleyan University, USA

Writing Usable Futures: Narratives of War Childhood

Abstract: In descriptions of wartime childhood, the predominant features of a heroic narrative took shape already during the war itself, and were consolidated in so-called "pioneer heroics", in tales of the exploits of bold young scouts popular in the immediate postwar period. These narratives are commonly viewed as comprising the state-approved and ideologically charged canon adopted in literature for Soviet children.

I would like to propose a somewhat different interpretation of how the "wartime childhood" canon came to be, an explanation that foregrounds the influence not so much of war prose or children's exploits, but rather of wartime poetry for "grownups", which in this period was conceptualizing a narrative model of wartime childhood that would be successfully adapted to children's literature. My primary investigation deals with the "wartime childhood" discourse that developed synchronically with the conflict itself.

As a working hypothesis, I would propose that three major pieces of wartime literature, aimed primarily at an adult audience, put forth three models of wartime childhood, or descriptions of three types of children: the young victim of the horrors of war; the full-fledged combat assistant or even participant; and, lastly, the child restored to his/her happy Soviet childhood, *ipso facto* perceived as a triumph of the political order. My considerations here are based on three particular literary works: Konstantin Simonov's poem "Maior privez mal'chishku na lafete" (The Major Brought the Little Boy on a Gun-Carriage, 1941); Aleksandr Tvardovskii's poem "Rasskaz tankista" (The Story of a Tank Crewman, 1942); and Valentin Kataev's novella *Syn polka* (The Son of the Regiment, 1944). The theoretical model for my argument will be the concept, developed by Il'ia Kukulin, of the hidden (or "tectal", from the Latin *tectus*, concealed) amalgam.

Keywords: wartime childhood, pioneer-heroic narrative, *Book of Honor*, sacrifice, hidden amalgam, restored childhood

The Russian sociologist Boris Dubin has remarked (2004) that "the valorization of the war, the monumentalization of its collective image, is a testament not to memory, but rather to a place of oblivion – a trace of amnesia, or the scar it has left." Monuments raised ostensibly to *commemorate* the Great Patriotic War, he says, are actually "cenotaphs, gravestones" marking "the absence, in

this place, of consciousness", the failure to make sense of the trauma wrought by the war. And indeed, the concept of the "wartime childhood", the fate of the children of war, and the attempt to understand their traumatic experience, can be categorized under such "gravestones." The American scholar Julie K. deGraffenried has written of the complex attitude toward the problem of the wartime childhood, and the lack of research on this issue, observing: "The war era stands out as a great rupture in the usual narrative of a progressively sentimentalized Soviet childhood in the Stalinist era. The war shaped children's lives, affecting everything from diet to leisure to language to … games….[T]he war also altered the state's definition of childhood" (2014: 3). The war, moreover, saw to the creation of its own narrative of Soviet childhood; now one was supposed to move on from the myth of the happy childhood to a new mythology deGraffenried defines as "sacrificed childhood" (ibid., 3).[1]In this article, I propose to trace the stages of the formation of a new canon of Soviet childhood that existed relatively briefly, but nevertheless demonstrated a serious "rupture" in the seemingly established and "petrified" formula of Soviet-style childhood happiness. This new canon took shape beyond the bounds of children's literature proper, but was rather quickly adopted by the children's authors writing in wartime. In the postwar period, which saw a return to the Stalinist model of the happy childhood for all, the discursive practices developed during the war evolved into different hybrid models that, albeit in a quite attenuated form, made their way into peacetime children's literature. The three dominant models of the literary image of the child in war are: the child-victim/sacrifice; the child as "combat support personnel", that is, as a full-fledged assistant in military operations; and, finally, the child restored to its "happy childhood." Many contemporary researchers of the phenomenon of the Soviet wartime childhood maintain that the canon thereof took shape in postwar literature[2]; but this statement is only partly true, and pertains more to the sphere of pioneer heroics. As I will try to show here, the three basic models that make up the "wartime childhood" canon in literature in fact arose during the war itself, and took shape in direct response to the very course of military events: the fear and uncertainty that reigned as the war broke out; the full mobilization of the whole country during the military operations of 1942–43; and, finally, the nearness of victory in late 1944 and early 1945.

"CHILDREN'S" TEXTS OF THE "GROWNUP" WAR

The theme of wartime childhood in Soviet-era children's literature was represented in a catalogue of constantly reprinted texts bearing a definite educational function. In the 2015 collection *Ostrova utopii: Pedagogicheskoe i sotsial'noe*

[1] For a discussion of the "happy childhood" model, see Balina 2009.

[2] See the works of such researchers as deGraffenried, Kucherenko, and Maslinskaia, as well as Ol'ga Voronina's article in this special issue.

proektirovanie posle voennoi shkoly (1940–1980e) (Islands of Utopia: The Pedagogic and Social Projection of the Postwar School [1940s–80s]), Mariia Maiofis and Il'ia Kukulin describe the postwar renaissance of psychology as a science of education. The war hero becomes a behavioral template for the postwar generation, and the pedagogy of social modeling relies, according to the inveterate Russian tradition, on examples from literature. Such young-adult texts on the heroic struggle against fascism as Boris Polevoi's *Povest' o nastoiashchem cheloveke* (Tale of a Real Man) and Aleksandr Fadeev's *Molodaia gvardiia* (Young Guard) became instantly canonical, and were considered indispensable for educating the next generation. Any departure from the heroic canon in children's literature was sharply criticized, as occurred for instance in the case of Lev Kassil's story "Dorogie moi mal'chishki" (My Dear Boys), published in 1944. In this work, the author, a war correspondent, had sought to describe, albeit in romantically veiled form, an altogether concrete event, the resistance shown by teenaged pupils of the Valaam island naval academy to the German troop landing attempting to advance on Leningrad. Naturally, a "grown-ups' war" should not have been waged by boy-soldiers, and even during the Thaw, children's literature critics saw this work as a threat to the proverbial "happy Soviet childhood." Kassil' here had strayed from the type of hero preferred in Soviet children's literature, a role model developed specifically within the parameters of pioneer heroics.

Pioneer texts stand apart from children's literature generally, featuring their own genre repertoire, their own narrative structures and style, in many cases adapted from extant literary types and adjusted accordingly to serve pioneer ideological purposes. The pioneer genre list is an impressive one, encompassing musical compositions (including *rechevki* [team-building fight songs]), poems, and theatrical sketches, but perhaps most significantly – the heroic narrative widely applied to the exploits of young citizens during the Great Patriotic War. By resolution of the Twelfth Congress of the Komsomol (Communist Union of Youth), this heroism was commemorated in a *Kniga pocheta* (Book of Honor) in 1954, a literary event that furthermore encouraged numerous works of fiction devoted to the life or rather death of young fighters in the struggle to defeat the German invaders. Elsewhere I have argued (Balina 2003) that during the Soviet period, personal life-reminiscences evinced a particular etiquette (following Dmitrii Likhachev's definition of this phenomenon).[3] A similar approach is seen in the creation of fictionalized biographies of young-pioneer heroes, whose lives and deeds the new generation of Soviet children was exhorted to emulate, resulting in a specific canon, contributed to by numerous Soviet literati, of propagandistic texts for the young.[4]

[3] By "etiquette", Likhachev meant the existence of particular signposts meant to guide writers in search of an appropriate literary form.

[4] The first hero inscribed in the pioneer organization's *Book of Honor* in 1954 was none other than Pioneer No. 1, Pavlik Morozov. V. Gubarev's 1932 biography of Morozov set

The Russian researcher Svetlana Maslinskaia has most fully described the main elements of this canon, which, as we see, arose as a result of ideological manipulations with sometimes specific but often mythological material. Thus for instance, Pioneer No. 1, PavlikMorozov, and Pioneer No. 2, Kolia Miagotin, were real people, although their biographies clearly constitute a compilation of fact and fiction. The Armenian pioneer Grisha Akopian was said to be, like Kolia Miagotin, obsessed with protecting communal property. And although this last fallen pioneer-hero is inscribed in the *Book of Honor*, he was entirely fictitious, invented on the initiative of the Azerbaidzhan Komsomol. The pioneer pantheon is full of such "surprises", although this is perhaps not in fact so surprising, given the obvious power of a child's death as an emotional trigger for public opinion.[5] I would like to expand this list by adding another important element of the narrative – a pronounced (albeit metaphorical) faith in the hero's "life after death." This is connected to the pioneer ritual of *pochita nie podviga*, "revering (or paying homage to) the exploit", which begins, as after the self-sacrifice of a religious martyr, with finding the body (or rather, its remains or relics) and burying it with honor. All these elements of the new canon were superimposed upon documentary accounts, and included in works of fiction about the war.[6]

In descriptions of wartime childhood in literature, the predominant features of a heroic narrative took shape already during the war itself, and were consolidated in so-called "pioneer heroics", in tales of the exploits of bold young scouts popular in the immediate postwar period (first and foremost, for instance, Lev Kassil' and Mark Polianovskii's 1949 tale of the pioneer hero Vo-

---

the paradigm for future texts, especially those devoted to young heroes of the Great Patriotic War. Other texts on the same subject include: Lev Kassil' and Mark Polianskii, *Ulitsa mladshego syna* (The Younger Son's Street, 1955); Iurii Korol'kov, *Partizan Lionia Golikov* (The Partisan Lionia Golikov, 1959); Vladimir Morozov, *V razvedku shel malchishka* (An Urchin Went into the Intelligence Service), 1959; Elena Suvorina, *U gory Mitridat* (At Mitridat Mountain, 1959); as well as texts written before the outbreak of the Soviet-German war: Semen Sukhochevskii, *Kolia Myagotin* (1937); Evgenii Smirnov, *Slavnyi pioner Gena Shchukin* (The Glorious Pioneer Gena Shchukin, 1938); Grigorii Pushkarev, *Pioner Pavlik Gnezdilov* (The Pioneer Pavlik Gnezdilov, 1940); and also several biographies from the collection *Pionery-geroi* (Pioneer Heroes) (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1967–69). This context is discussed by Kelly (2005), and, in the literature's most interesting and detailed investigation of this subject, by Leont'eva (2006); my thanks to Dr. Leont'eva (Maslinskaia) for sharing her research with me.

[5] Leont'eva has suggested (2006) that this phenomenon amounts to a sort of "necrophilia", meant to satisfy children's eagerness for *strashilki*, sadistic scary stories; an example of such pioneer-"inspired" folklore popular among Soviet children in the 1970s–80s: *Na polu lezhit mal'chishka/Ves' ot krovi rozovyi/ Eto papa s nim igral/ V Pavlika Morozova.* (On the floor lies a boy / All rosy with blood. / His father was playing / Pavlik Morozov with him.)

[6] On the modern reading of pioneer heroics and the interpretation thereof in post-Soviet culture, see Maslinskaia 2011.

lodia Dubinin, *Ulitsa mladshego syna* (The Younger Son's Street).[7] But however convenient it would be to ascribe the ideologizing of children's literature and the traditional "state order" (*zakaz*) to the tried-and-true Soviet practice of educating the "new Soviet man" according to heroic examples, I would like to propose a somewhat different interpretation of how the "wartime childhood" canon came to be – an explanation that foregrounds the influence not so much of war prose or children's exploits, but rather of wartime poetry for "grown-ups", which in this period was conceptualizing a narrative model of wartime childhood that would be successfully adapted to children's literature.[8]

THE CHILD AS VICTIM/SACRIFICE: AMALGAMATING ADULT PAIN

As a working hypothesis, we might propose that three major pieces of wartime literature, aimed primarily at an adult audience, put forth three models of wartime childhood, or descriptions of three types of children: the young victim of the horrors of war; the full-fledged combat assistant or even participant; and, lastly, the child restored to his/her happy Soviet childhood, *ipso facto* perceived as a triumph of the political order. My considerations here are based on three particular literary works: Konstantin Simonov's poem "Maior privez mal'chishku na lafete" (The Major Brought the Little Boy on a Gun-Carriage, 1941); Aleksandr Tvardovskii's poem "Rasskaz tankista" (The Story of a Tank Crewman, 1942); and Valentin Kataev's novella *Syn polka* (The Son of the Regiment, 1944), for which the author was awarded the Stalin Prize (second class) in 1946. The theoretical model for my argument will be the concept, developed by Il'ia Kukulin, of the hidden (or "tectal", from the Latin *tectus*, concealed) amalgam.

In texts constructed by "hidden amalgamation", Kukulin argues, "emotions and thematic associations that were taboo under Soviet censorship were 'grafted onto' the permissible emotions of grief for the fallen and appeals to vengeance" (2014: 329). The hidden amalgam is thus an artistically combinational strategy by which the authorized memory of a collectively experienced trauma implicitly – metonymically, metaphorically, or by way of similar imagery – is associated with memories of other traumas, and coded therewith. Works formed via hidden amalgamation involve a particular refashioning of individual memory – in part voluntary, in part as dictated by the authorities and censorship (ibid., 342). This is how the principle operates, for instance, in

[7] Later, to be sure, soberer treatments of wartime childhood appeared – for instance, Vitalii Semin's memoiristic novel *Nagrudnyi znak OST* (The OST Badge), on the fate of an *ostarbeiter*, the Nazi term for an inhabitant of Eastern Europe deported to serve as a forced laborer.

[8] My primary interest here is the "wartime childhood" discourse that developed synchronically with the conflict itself; works written significantly later, for instance Vladimir Bogomolov's *Ivan*(1957), fall outside the scope of this discussion.

Simonov's poem (dated to coincide with the beginning of the war, September 1941), which involves the image of a child lying in cruciform on a gun-carriage with a toy in his hand.

Maior privez mal'chishku na lafete.
Pogibla mat'. Syn ne prostilsia s nei.
Za desiat' let na tom i etom svete
Emu zachtutsia eti desiat' dnei.

[The major brought the little boy on a gun-carriage. / The mother had perished. She and her son had not said goodbye. / These ten days shall be accounted to him / For ten years in this world and the next.]

The first four stanzas present the tragic image of a child who has lost his mother. The sorrow is intensified by its setting, Brest, specifically, the Brest fortress, a location closely associated with the Nazi invasion.[9] The ten days (fewer, in fact: 22–30 June) of the defense of Brest are inscribed in the child's age. A scuffed old cannon turns out to be the safest place to save a life; its shielding serves as a bed on which the child remains sleeping with a toy in his hand. Evoked for the reader is the Christian model of the crucifixion; the war victim – the context emphasizes the indistinguishability in Russian of *victim* and *sacrifice* (*zhertva*) – is an innocent child whose hair has turned gray from the horrors he's seen.

Ego vezli iz kreposti, iz Bresta.
Byl istsarapan puliami lafet.
Otsu kazalos', chto nadezhne i mesta
Otnyne v mire dlia rebenka net.
Otets byl ranen, i razbita pushka.
Priviazannyi k shchitu, chtob ne upal,
Prizhav k grudi zasnuvshuiu igrushku,
Sedoi mal'chishka na lafete spal.

[He'd been brought from the fortress, from Brest. / The gun-carriage was covered in bullet-scratches. / It seemed to the father that there was / No safer place on earth now for his child. / The father was wounded, and the cannon smashed. / Secured to the gun-shield, lest he fall, / And clutching a sleeping toy to his chest, / The gray-haired little boy on the gun-carriage slept.]

The German historian Aleida Assmann writes that "the value of the figure of the passive victim, which should be clearly distinguished from the sacrifice of the heroic martyr, consists in its absolute passivity, which has the connotation of innocence and purity" (2006: 49). This is why the poet selects, as his hero – the catalyst for adult feelings – a small child. The poem does not have a title, as if imitating a quick sketch or episode; but this imagery amalgamates the victimization of a child with the entirely adult feeling of being aghast regarding the country's un-

[9] For more detail on the history of Brest, see Smirnov 2000.

preparedness for war, the chaos of the retreat and rout of its army. It is this *adult* trepidation that Simonov, a war correspondent for *Krasnaia Zvezda*, couches in the permissible emotion of concern for a child, at a time when a "grownup" appalled by the war's first few days would never express such impressions aloud.[10] The existence of a "gray-haired" boy in cruciform on a gun-carriage thus becomes a marker of the shattered "happy childhood" of the very soldiers now in retreat and called upon to defend that ostensible idyll. The child-as-victim, or as *sacrifice*, was one of the war's first images, but it took hold especially in literature for adult readers, and precisely in the amalgamated form of an expression of generalized trauma wrapped in the specific concern for a child. This image would not last long in children's literature, and found a home instead in the field of documentary narrative or *ocherk* (see for instance "Portret ognem" [A Portrait in Fire] in Kassil' 1960: 3, 593–639).

THE CHILD AS COMBAT SUPPORT PERSONNEL: AMALGAMATING ADULT CONFUSION

It has been proposed in works by such historians of Soviet childhood as Lisa Kirschenbaum (2000, 2002), Olga Kucherenko (2011), Julie K. deGraffenried (2014), and in works by the Russian historians Aleksandr Rozhkov (2010) and Vitalii Bezrogov (2010), that we look in this context to a different model of childhood, namely, that of active wartime cooperation with adults. This model has deeper literary roots, harking back to the children's literature of the First World War era (even Lidiia Charskaia had a novella, *Dikar'* [The Savage, 1916], about a child who takes an active part in combat), and especially children's books of the Civil War period and thereafter, for example, Petr Bliakhin's *Krasnye d'iavoliata* (Little Red Devils, 1923), Sergei Auslender's *Dni boevye* (Combat Days, 1925), and Lev Ostroumov's *Makar-Sledopyt* (Makar the Pathfinder, 1925).[11] The most significant text in this regard is Arkadii Gaidar's "Skazka o voennoi taine, Mal'chishe-Kibal'chishe i ego tverdom slove" (Tale of the Military Secret, Mal'chish-Kibal'chish, and his Solemn Word, 1935), which Olga Kucherenko calls "[t]he story that both encapsulated Gaidar's objective [of rallying children to the nation's defense – MB] and reflected the atmosphere of the 1930s", in that it "celebrated children's substituting their fallen elders on the battlefield, thereby buying time for the approaching Red Army" (2011: 9). The emotional charge of this tale, and its effect on a young reader, is attested by the contemporary (and hardly Soviet) writer Mikhail Elizarov:

> I cried, but the tears were not tears of the sticky sort, like a runny nose. These were solemn tears, tears that were honest and bitter like aviation gasoline. [A play on words; the *goriuchie* used to convey tears' "bitterness" in Russian can

[10] On Simonov and his literary biography, see Balina 2005.

[11] See on this subject Litovskaia 2010.

> also mean "combustible." – MB] With such tears, you could have fueled a plane to soar high in the air and crash down upon a column of enemy tanks. By the end of that evening, I had aged a whole child's lifetime. My former self was gone. When I jumped down from the windowsill, I was a little suicide bomber and conspiracy theorist. From now on, there was Mystery, Death, and the Solemn Word. (2013: 31)

Even before 1941, then, Gaidar's text had united the child-as-sacrifice and the child-warrior, but in children's literature of the Great Patriotic War, the watershed in this regard was Aleksandr Tvardovskii's 1942 poem "The Story of a Tank Crewman." A war correspondent for *Krasnoarmeiskaia pravda*, Tvardovskii bases his amalgamated plot on the notion, or even broad consensus, that it is acceptable to include a child in active combat. In Tvardovskii's poem, the "kid" (*mal'chonka*) is a fighter essential to the cause; without him – awkward as it is to admit – there would be no victory, no "happy childhood." Amid his heroic assistance, he remains (as is typical in a wartime narrative) anonymous.

> Byl trudnyi boi. Vse nynche, kak sprosonku,
> I tol'ko ne mogu sebe prostit':
> Iz tysiach lits uznal by ia mal'chonku,
> A kak zovut, zabyl ego sprosit'.
>
> [It was a hard battle. I see it all now as if in a dream, / And I just can't forgive myself: I'd pick the kid's face out of a thousand, / But I forgot to ask him his name.]

For Tvardovskii, children in wartime are conscious aid-givers, ready to do anything for victory: they surround Soviet tanks like a NASCAR pit crew; they lug buckets of water, deliver soap and towels, and in their childish way try to feed the fighters, "shoving unripe plums" at them. But this children's contribution quickly crosses over into "grownup" territory, when the young hero guides a tank right up to a German artillery nest, single-handedly changing the course of the battle:

> Ia znaiu, gde ikh pushka. Ia razvedal…
> Ia podpolzal, oni von tam v sadu…
> Stoit mal'chishka – miny, pulisvish chut,
> I tol'ko rubashonka puzyrem.
>
> ["I know where their artillery is. I did reconnaissance… / I crept up to them; they're over there, in the orchard…" / There stands the little boy – there are mines, bullets are whistling, / His little shirt billowing.]

This is not just a child in wartime, this is a child *at* war, a comrade-in-arms:

> I, pomniu, ia skazal: –Spasibo, khlopets! –
> I ruku, kak tovarishchu, pozhal.
>
> [And, I remember, I said: Thanks, kid! / And shook his hand as I would a comrade.]

Tvardovskii uses his amalgamated form to mask implicit discomfort over the very need to resort to the aid of children in combat. (Did not the old slogan promise that everyone can "rest easy because we [the army, the *grownups*] are always on guard"?) But for other authors, there are no such qualms; the active child of war here is an outright death-dealer. For example, in Ivan Vasilenko (1895–1966)'s story "Plan zhizni" (A Life Plan, 1943), the young Kabardian Akhmat, who prior to the war had dreamt mainly of being the best *dzhigit* (horseman) in Kabardia, and who would have been horrified at the sight of blood, ends up simply slitting the throat of a hated fascist officer with a razor; and in the same author's "Povest' o zelenom sunduke" (Tale of the Green Chest, 1944), a young multiethnic crew (Vania, the son of a Don Cossack; Saur, a Kabardian; and Eteri, a young Georgian girl) joins the partisans to punish and wreak vengeance upon the enemy.[12] The model of the child-combat supporter is widely used in war narratives in journals of the 1940s. Thus for instance, in the 1942 story collection *V ogne Otechestvennoi voiny* (In the Fire of the Fatherland War), Soviet writers write about children who assist at the front. The heroine of Viktor Fin's narrative "Natashen'ka" manages to deliver a whole munitions train; in Ruvim Fraerman's piece "Malen'kii geroi" (The Little Hero), the boy Vania Dlusskii, a real-life "son of the regiment", helps soldiers, and is directly involved in combat operations. But this model is replaced rather quickly with the image of youngsters doing their part in the rear: children's magazines that continued to be published during the war (*Pioner*, *Murzilka*, *Kolkhoznye rebiata*) told of the labor exploits of kids taking the place of their fathers (serving at the front) in the fields and at the factory lathe (see de-Graffenried 2014: 48–75).

RESUMING THE STATUS QUO: FROM SACRIFICED TO HAPPY CHILDHOOD

In the depiction of the wartime childhood, the culminating moment in the creation of its tactile amalgam is the narrative of the "restoration" of prewar norms of the mythic happy childhood, with all the requisite attributes thereof: the care of one's elders, protection from the horrors of war, and, that centerpiece of "happiness Soviet style", the promise of a bright future. As we have seen, there is a distinct transition from child-as-silent-victim or sacrifice, to full-fledged partner in victory, to the restoration of "the norm." Consider how this final element, the return to the space of the happy childhood, is performed in Valentin Kataev's *The Son of the Regiment* (1944). Like Simonov and Tvardovskii, Kataev was a war correspondent, in this case for *Krasnaia zvezda*; his narrative, about a boy being cared for at first by reconnaissance agents, then artillery gunners, develops along the now-familiar progression from child-vic-

[12] Curiously, just such a model of a child-fighter and saboteur is featured in the first Russian example of anime, *Pervyi otriad ili moment istiny* (The First Squad: The Moment of Truth, 2007).

tim to child as comrade-in-arms: Red Army intelligence men scouting wooded ravines on the front discover little Vania Solntsev hiding there and take him back to their headquarters, where they collectively take care of him, even competing for the child's attention. The boy has been found embittered, hungry, and alone, but in his canvas bag he has a reading primer, from which he stubbornly pronounces the same sentence over and over again: "We are not slaves; slaves we are not" (Kataev 1947: 11). Vania soon proves himself an invaluable scout, and (after escaping would-be Nazi captors) also receives artillery training. But the main thing is not so much Vania's military exploits as Kataev's persistent thematization of family.[13]

The grownups take care of the child, feed and teach him, constituting his surrogate family. This is a motherless milieu; the reconnaissance and artillery personnel here are, to cite Eliot Borenstein's term, *Men without Women*, but even so, their guiding principle is to return the orphan to the space of the happy childhood.[14] As Irina Sandomirskaia emphasizes, Soviet literature always featured a "masculinist tradition of the mythology of childhood. The metaphorical family in which Soviet childhood itself grew up and developed was single-sex, namely, male: grandfathers, fathers, uncles, brothers" (2001: 109). Thus for instance Captain Enukiev, who has lost his own son, sees Vania as a potential replacement. But Kataev deprives this "son of the regiment" of such literal family happiness. Enukiev perishes, but in doing so he does something perfectly justifiable in the case of an adult faced with a child in danger: he invents a fake mission for Vania, sending him to take a report to the regiment commander, and thus saving the child from certain death. This is the essence, in amalgamated form, of the trauma experienced by an adult confronted with the phenomenon of a child in wartime, the inescapable sense that you can't sacrifice a child for the sake of victory – you have to save him, not send him to his preprogrammed doom.

Kataev remains faithful to numerous ideological aspects of children's war literature: thus, for instance, Vania remains a son to *all* the fighters, for whom this particular child, and the possibility of restoring him to his childhood, comes to symbolize victory itself. But restoring him to normal life, getting him away from the front, in this case, to the military school he is enrolled in after the death of Enukiev, is a restoration of the norms of the "happy childhood" as

[13] In her analysis of the story, Maria Maiofis (2017) emphasizes precisely the family theme, which returns the story of "the child in war" to the customary discourse of the happy childhood.

[14] The theme of returning to a happy childhood in the war prose of this period is related to the theme of family. This may be the "big family" identified by Katerina Clark, i.e., the collective and country (the particular model chosen by Kataev). It may also be the "small" family – the foster parents and brothers and sisters who take in an orphaned child. Texts of both types begin to appear precisely in 1943 – the turning point in the war. Liubov' Voronkova's popular story of that year, "Devochka iz goroda" (The Little Girl from the City), may serve as an apt illustration of such a model of "return" to childhood.

conceived *in the adult world*. Interestingly, in arranging things thus, Kataev has deprived Vania of the care of people he knows and loves, especially Corporal Biden'ko, who personally delivers Vania to the school.[15] But as with numerous children's writers of the war years, Kataev is concerned mainly with a return to the life-norm by which children and war do not mix.

The story of Vania Solntsev's life concludes with one more idyllic cliché, when the school's headmaster, an old general who has of course himself seen combat, "a courageous, strict man with a gray balding head, a cragged face, and bright fearless eyes", leans over the bed of the sleeping Vania and, smoothing his moustache while gazing upon his charge, tenderly smiles. The reader understands that the child's life is now in good hands; and final confirmation of the "happy Soviet childhood" comes as, just before waking, Vania has a dream that he is being led up a stairway to the future by "an old man with a gray cape over his shoulders, a man in spurred Hessian boots, with a diamond star on his chest and a gray tuft of hair atop his splendid dry forehead" (Kataev 1947: 235). This is Suvorov, who upon escorting the orphan Vania to the threshold of the future enjoins him to "step boldly" into it. Of course, in a work published in the USSR in 1945, Generalissimo Suvorov cannot but be associated with another generalissimo, Stalin (who received that title on 26 June 1945); but what is important here is not such ideological shenanigans, but the restoration of the paradigm of the happy childhood, which necessarily also ensures a happy future.[16]

CONCLUSION

I have proposed models of how the "wartime childhood" canon took shape that, while conventional, may nevertheless help us to go beyond the generally accepted reference to the "heroic-pioneer" narrative as the basic model for describing the whole experience of children in the war. The boundaries between the images of the *child as victim* and the *child as combat support* are quite mobile. Thus, in the "heroic pioneer" narrative, children-helpers often become victims – but specifically self-sacrificial ones, consciously going to their deaths. In this case, the texts leave no room to amalgamate adult feelings, to assuage the torment of being unable to protect a child. Such texts are, no doubt, ideological constructs. The reading I have proposed of the war literature of and about childhood points to another, a deeper emotional layer of the war experi-

[15] What is referred to in the story is a special military school known as a "Suvorov academy." Established in the autumn of 1943, these were meant to train, first and foremost, children orphaned by the war. Nine such schools were organized in 1943. This fact also attests to a change in the discourse of the wartime childhood.

[16] Maiofis (2017) discusses the story's two different endings. The first version (1945) ends with Vania's dream of Suvorov leading him up the stairs directly to another generalissimo, Stalin. In the redaction of 1955, after the revelations of the Twentieth Congress, Stalin is already absent, and only Suvorov remains.

ence, enabling us to trace how literature for "grownups" sought, through narratives about children, to help adults cope with the complex feelings of their own insecurity and dismay in the face of the war's tribulations. Going beyond the usual interpretation of this literature as propagandistic would greatly expand our understanding of the culture of the war, its complex and contradictory nature, taking us away from the usual obtrusive binarity and toward an understanding of the foundations of traumatic writing.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Assman, A. 2006. *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik*. München: C. H. Beck.

Balina, M. 2003. The Tale of Bygone Years: Reconstructing Past in the Contemporary Russian Memoir. – Beth Holmgren, ed., *Russian Memoir: History and Literature*. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 186–211.

___. 2005. Konstantin Mikhailovich Simonov. – Christine Rydel, ed., *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 302. Detroit: Thomson and Gale, 280–96.

___. 2009. "It's Grand To Be an Orphan!" Crafting Happy Citizens in Soviet Children's Literature of the 1920s. – M. Balina, E. Dobrenko, eds., *Petrified Utopia: Happiness Soviet Style*. London: Anthem Press, 97–115.

Bezrogov, V. 2010. "Pomnit' nel'zia zabyt'": kollektivnaia pamiat', vospominaniia o detstve i tema voiny v uchebnikakh dlia nachal'noi shkoly kontsa 1940-kh–2000. – A. Rozhkov, ed., *Vtoraia mirovaia voina v detskikh "ramkakh pamiati"*. Krasnodar: Ekoinvest, 19–31.

Dubin, B. 2004. "Krovavaia" voina i "velikaia" pobeda. – *Otechestvennye zapiski*, 5. – http://www.strana-oz.ru/2004/5/krovavaya-voyna-i-velikaya-pobeda.

deGraffenried, J. 2014. *Sacrificing Childhood: Children and the Soviet State in the Great Patriotic War*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press.

Elizarov, M. 2013. Na strazhe detskoi dushi (A. P. Gaidar) – V. Levental', P. Krusanov, eds., *Literaturnaia matritsa: sovetskaia Atlantida*. St. Petersburg: Limbus Press, 28–60.

Kassil', L. 1960. *Sobranie sochinenii*. Moscow: Detskaia literatura.

Kataev, V. 1947. *Syn polka*. Kirov: OGIZ.

Kelly, Catriona. *Comrade Pavlik: The Rise and Fall of a Soviet Boy Hero*. London, 2005.

Kirschenbaum, L. 2000. Our City, Our Hearths, Our Families: Local Loyalties and Private Life in Soviet World War II Propaganda – *Slavic Review* 51, no. 4, 825–848.

___. 2002. Innocent Victims and Heroic Defenders. Children and the Siege of Leningrad. – J. Marten, ed., *Children and War: A Historical Anthology*. New York: New York University Press, 297–90.

Kucherenko, O. 2011. *Little Soldiers: How Soviet Children Went to War, 1941–1945*. Oxford, Oxford UP.

Kukulin, I. 2014. Sovetskaia poeziia o Vtoroi mirovoi voine: ritorika skrytoi amal'gamy. – O. V. Budnitskii, L. G. Novikova, eds., *SSSR vo Vtoroi mirovoi voine: Okkupatsiia. Kholokost. Stalinizm*. Moscow: Politicheskaia entsiklopediia (ROSSPEN), 328–51.

Leont'eva, S. 2006. *Literatura pionerskoi organizatsii: Ideologiia i poetika*. PhD dissertation, Tver' State University.

Litovskaia, M. 2010. Voiuiushchie deti v russkoi literature pervoi poloviny XX veka. *Homo Militaris: Literatura voiny i o voine. Istoriia, mifologiia, poetika*. Kaluga: KGU im. K. E. Tsiolkovskogo, 93–99.

Maiofis, M. 2017. Kak chitat' "Syna polka." – *Arzamas* – https://arzamas.academy/mag/445-syn_polka.

Maiofis, M., Kukulin I., and Safonov, P. 2015. *Ostrova utopii: Pedagogicheskoe i sotsial'noe proektirovanie poslevoennoi shkoly (1940–1980e)*. Moscow: Neprikosnovennyi zapas.

Maslinskaia, S. 2011. "Zhizn' posle smerti": pionery-geroi v sovremennoi mul'tiplikatsii. – M. Balina, V. Bezrogov, S. Maslinskaia, K. Maslinskii, M. Tendriakova, S. Sheridan, eds., *Konstruiruia detskoe: filologiia, istoriia, antropologiia*. St. Petersburg: Azimut, Nestor-Istoriia, 254–65.

Rozhkov, A., ed. 2010. *Vtoraia mirovaia voina v detskikh "ramkakh pamiati"*. Krasnodar: Ekoinvest.

Sandomirskaia, I. 2001. *Kniga o Rodine. Opyt analiza diskursivnykh praktik*. Wien: Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, Sonderband 50.

Simonov, K. 1941. Maior privez mal'chishku na lafete. – http://militera.lib.ru/poetry/russian/simonov/08.html.

Smirnov, S. 2000. *Brestskaia krepost'*. Moscow: Raritet.

Tvardovskii, A. 1942. Rasskaz tankista. – http://philosofiya.ru/rasskaz_tankista.html.

Filoteknos, vol. 8 • 2018 • DOI: 10.23817/filotek.8-4

ANASTASIA KOSTETSKAYA ⁓ University of Hawaii, Manoa

On the Run and from Below the Ground: A Child-Survivor Perspective on the Battle of Stalingrad

Abstract: The autobiographic narratives of embattled Stalingrad, written by elderly child-survivors, transform the city from the site of an unprecedented military operation into one of unspeakable childhood trauma. In my essay, I claim that, narratively, this trauma mainly reveals itself through the accounts of the "damaged world"– destruction of the city and bodily trauma, although their authors rarely speak about their minds as damaged. Though delayed by at least 50 years, and thus impoverished, children's voices in the narratives acquire meaningful expression through their older selves thanks to the embodiment of memory. They reconstruct the "lived" urban space through the changes in "tactile apprehension", "kinesthetic appropriation", and the overall multi-sensory experience of the city shaken by explosions, burning and rapidly turning into ruins.

The narratives shape a complex collective perspective of a child-target – bombed, surrounded by explosions, and aimed at by activating multiple sensory channels – visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, etc., which makes "the pain of others", to use Susan Sontag's expression, very tangible. I thus view autobiographic testimonies as a specific genre, which allows for the transformation of children from objects of imagery into its creators, living carriers and transmitters. My goal is to demonstrate that whether on the run or hiding below ground, this child nevertheless continues to be a powerful observer and a chronicler, and not just an innocent and damaged victim, which gives her the narrative power to shape space and, hence, history through her own perspective.

Key words: Stalingrad, children, embodied memory, emotional geography, autobiographic narratives of trauma

> Sometimes [they] ask [me] a question,
> "Are there any witnesses of what [you] had to live through?"
> Isn't child memory the main witness of those years?
> Yes, it is the main witness, and the memories
> will never disappear from this memory.[1]
>
> Deti Stalingrada: Vospominaniia
> (Children of Stalingrad: Reminiscences 1998: 143).[2]

In her autobiographic testimony of embattled Stalingrad, an elderly child-survivor unfolds a terse yet strikingly multidimensional narrative of Stalingrad civilian plight, which is characteristic of all child-survivor stories:

> We had just entered the basement [shelter] when the air-raid siren started to howl and either whiz-bangs or bombs poured down on our house. And we found ourselves buried [under the rubble], there was not enough air to breathe, we suffocated, fumes were getting into our throats, it was impossible to move one's hand or foot, it felt like our death had arrived. But suddenly we saw a narrow strip of light – men came from the factory and saw the destroyed house. They rushed to dig us out, we could hear them talking above. They started to pull us up one by one. But the fascists probably thought that they had not completed their job, and a new bomb attack began. Our rescuers did not give up. With the skin on their hands torn and bleeding, they kept clearing the rubble and helping us out. We all ran in different directions. I found myself in a well. […] We all felt somehow indifferent; we were stupefied (ibid.140).

Although the author describes her mind as "stupefied" and sums up her emotional reaction as "complete indifference" in the thick of the bombings, the impassive record of her physical sensations allows her readers to *discern* the child's mental-emotional "reality that in its raw form defies description" (Sebald 2004: 48) as it creates a multi-sensory account of the Stalingrad inferno experienced by a young child. In my article, I claim that whether on the run or drawn under ground the child-survivor continues to be a powerful observer and a chronicler, not only a "silent spectator"[3] or an "innocent and damaged victim."[4] This aptness for observation and resilience allows for the child to be transformed from an object of imagery[5] into its creator, living carrier,

[1] All translations from Russian are mine.

[2] Throughout the text, I use the shorter version of the title in Russian–Deti Stalingrada.

[3] Allison James. 2007. Giving Voice to Children's Voices: Practices and Problems, Pitfalls and Potentials. -*American Anthropologist*, 109(2), 261–72 (in Gleason 2016: 449).

[4] Lisa Kirschenbaum argues that recent extensive studies of children in diverse war zones open "the possibility of understanding children not only as innocent and damaged victims but also as historical actors" (2017: 523).

[5] Patricia Holland suggests that children largely "remain the objects of imagery, almost never its makers. Their voices are missing, defined as incapable of meaningful expression. […] Like all groups without power they suffer the indignity of being unable to

and transmitter. It gives her the narrative power to shape Stalingrad space as a place[6] of unspeakable childhood trauma through her own embodied perspective, which persists through time, and, hence, to shape history.

The author of the testimony mediates her lived experience of place via what I term multi-D memory – the memory created by and sustained through lived embodied sensations pertaining to the emotional experience of her destroyed home. We become exposed to the child's sense of place through a description of her auditory perceptions – the howling air-raid sirens and the narratively absent but invoked sounds produced by the bombs falling with terrible noise (described in other testimonies). She proceeds with the account of arrested kinesthesis as she recounts herself becoming buried alive under heaps of debris. The situation evokes possible tactile sensations – of the skin in its contact with broken metal, brick, glass, and earth. It also suggests proprioceptive imagery pertaining to the position of the small body trapped under rubble. The author records her olfactory sensations – smelling smoke and a horrible stench, which caused respiratory arrest. Her reference to the "strip of light" indicates that her eyesight was failing her before she was dug out, that she had limited vision from below the ground, as well as the blinding contrast between the outside light and the complete darkness her world had temporarily sunk into. The narrative evokes the sensations of the child's body stretching its limbs as it is lifted from under the rubble by strong hands before the girl is sent on a new flight in search of an underground shelter…

The throbbing rhythm of the narrative rendering the affective dynamism of the child's collapsed place-world may translate into the elevated heartbeat and empathetic-instinctive bodily movements and sensations on the part of the reader. Driven by compassion, we transcend to an understanding of what it was *like* to be the child of besieged Stalingrad through the references to different "modes of experience" – sensorimotor, tactile, proprioceptive, visual, auditory, olfactory, and conceptual, which remain with their experiencers throughout their lives. They constitute the extreme narrative force of the testimonies and allow us to interpret embattled Stalingrad as a series of embodied "images of complex […] feelings" (Tuan1977: 6–7) experienced by a child and related to enduring childhood trauma. Caught up within the *memory field*, the child-survivors propel their own childhood images from cameo appearances in extant Stalingrad historiography, literature, and film into the leading roles in the virtual, embodied *multi-D* documentary, which has been vividly reenacted in

present themselves as they would want to be seen – or indeed, of even considering how they might want to be seen. They are not in a position to manufacture a public image for themselves and have no control over the image others make of them. In consequence, as they become adults, individuals have only impoverished ways of expressing their own remembered childhoods" (2004: 19).

[6] According to the influential geographer Yi-FuTuan, "space becomes place as we […] endow it with value" (1977: 6–7) through emotional experiences thereof.

their mind-bodily systems throughout their lives due to the multi-D character of the embodied memory. The analysis of the child survivor narratives reveals the increased significance of the body as "the specific medium for experiencing" Stalingrad as "the place-world" (Casey 1996: 24), which does not allow for comprehension with one's mind. The physical destruction of the city inscribed through the complete sensorium unfolds then as a metaphor of the child's inner world profoundly shattered and overturned. The "e-motive thrust"[7] (ibid. 23) of these narratives emerges from the "operative intentionality" of bombed Stalingrad integrated with the "corporeal intentionality"(ibid. 22) of its young citizen's heavily impacted body.

In my article, I explore how Stalingrad child survivors narratively mediate the wartime history of Stalingrad by registering changes in the urban environment via their remembered physical sensations. Their testimonies create a unique *lieu de memoire*, or a virtual place of memory, "where a sense of historical continuity persists" through the embodiment of [childhood] memory (Nora1989: 7), and the child's body becomes "essential to the process of emplacement": lived injured child "bodies belong to" Stalingrad[8], ravaged by air raids, "and help to constitute" it (Casey 1996: 24). In other words, the "lived space" of Stalingrad becomes reconstructed as a barely livable yet dynamic place through the child's remembered changes in "tactile apprehension, kinesthetic appropriation" (DeCerteau 1988: 97), and the overall multi-sensory experience of the city, which is rapidly turning into ashes.

TRAGEDY MADE SECRET[9]

Stalingrad child-survivor testimonies shape a complex collective perspective of the Stalingrad war child as they demonstrate the child's acute sense of place, deeply rooted in the physical-emotional experiences of her embattled environment. The narratives thus form a body of authentic living memory, which contests the official history of the Soviet state taking care of its children. Hostages to Stalin's reported opinion (accepted as an order) that "soldiers do not defend empty cities" (Argastseva),[10] due to which the evacuation of Stalingrad civilians was not carried out, children of besieged Stalingrad come to represent its

[7] Casey uses this form of the word "emotive" to emphasize the intrinsic connection between "the dynamism of place" and the emotionally colored movement it encourages "in its midst" (1996: 23).

[8] "It was typical for all orphanages [after the war], there were blind, deaf, armless, all in all, all kinds of [injured children]" (Deti Stalingrada 1998: 121).

[9] Reference to the title of Tatiana Pavlova's book, *Zasekrechennaia tragediia: grazhdanskoe naselenie v Stalingradskoi bitve* (Tragedy Made Secret: Civilian Population in the Battle of Stalingrad). Volgograd: Peremena, 2005.

[10] Argastseva, Svetlana (Panorama-Museum *Battle of Stalingrad*, Volgograd, Russia). Personal interview. 20 June 2011. The evacuation of women and children did not start until after the first air raids began on August 23, 1942.

living flesh – deafened, blinded, suffocated, and profoundly shocked. Due to the power of embodiment, the first-hand experiences of a child-target mediated through her older self defy the viewpoint that distant "remembered childhoods" can only be expressed in incomplete, distorted and overall "impoverished ways" (Holland 2004: 19).[11] Moreover, they transform Stalingrad from the "city that defeated the Third Reich"[12] into the city that sacrificed its own children to Stalin's dictatorial will and exposed them to the Nazi war machine, which has never been fully officially acknowledged up to this date.

Although Russia tops the list of nations with the most frequent and diverse commemorative practices (Strekalova 2010: 340), Russian society has never attempted to overcome the negative, repressed and incriminating, mental injuries and guilt in relation to Stalingrad civilians exposed to full-scale warfare. Soviet historiography presented the besieged city as a fortress whose every inhabitant (supposedly including little children) became its defender (Pavlova 2005: 8), while the plight of the civilian population, in reality decimated by bombings, trapped in the crossfire, and bludgeoned into forced labor (ibid.) due to an evacuation ban, remained unrecognized. Furthermore, even very young child-survivors were potentially incriminated as collaborators with the enemy simply for living on the territory occupied by the Third Reich. This situation resulted in the exclusion of childhood memories of Stalingrad from the public sphere because their dissemination could be potentially dangerous and harmful for the post-war wellbeing of their carriers. The unspeakable childhood trauma of Stalingrad had thus remained largely unarticulated and unacknowledged until the youngest child survivors reached their retirement age around the time the Soviet Union collapsed.

Living in the shadow of the heroic Stalingrad myth, the child survivors were practically forced to internalize an attitude to their own traumatic experiences as virtually non-existent. While the official media was developing complex narrative strategies for relaying front-line soldiers' exploits (Kukulin 2005: 329), memories of child-survivors belonged almost exclusively to the private domain of family history until the early 1990s (Strekalova 2010: 340). On the other hand, in the absence of psychological support, the inconceivability of the wartime traumatic experiences which "resist[ed] ready communication" suggested that children themselves "suppress[ed][what] they [could not] express" (Tuan 1977: 6). Thus, "a common response" among child survivors, for both ideological and psychological reasons, was "to deem [their experiences of Stalingrad] private – even idiosyncratic – and hence unimportant" (ibid.). As a result, the silence imposed on and surrounding children of Stalingrad obstructed the creation of cultural linguistic templates for relaying their wartime memories (Strekalova 2010: 341), viewed as insignificant from both "above"

[11] See footnote 5.

[12] Reference to the title of Jochen Hellbeck's book, *Stalingrad: The City That Defeated the Third Reich*. New York: Public Affairs, 2015.

and consequently from "within." An 80-year-old child survivor summarizes this attitude of self-negation in the following way:

> Before, some 20–30 years ago, you would not have become interested in me, because [then] there were [war] veterans, heroes, who went into battle, got wounded, fell dead, killed Germans, [and] defended their motherland. But why, in the name of God, would you write about such [people] as myself? Well, [we] were hiding in the basements, peeped out, saw something. And who needs all that? (Krinko et. al. 2014: 11).

Although the arts, most prominently cinema about Stalingrad, both Soviet and German, have featured a few child images, those images just "designated but often further problematized representational gaps" in the Stalingrad narrative and "silences" surrounding the lot of the city's children (Kostetskaya 2015). While in some of the films Stalingrad appeared as no place for children, with hostilities happening inside the depopulated city or outside of it[13], a few marginal cinematic child characters in other films served the purposes of creating the national Stalingrad mythologies – of the triumphant Soviet victory and the tragic German defeat.[14] Since Stalingrad was largely memorialized either as the site of Soviet glory or German catastrophe, these myths mainly incorporated the combat memories of the adult males: the heroic narratives of Soviet defenders of the city and the self-exonerative accounts of surviving Wehrmacht soldiers. Consequently, the cinema on both sides of the frontlines politically instrumentalised children in order to emphasize positive aspects of the military men's involvement with them as protectors and benefactors but entirely disregarded the child perspective itself.

Child-survivor written narratives, which started to emerge after the collapse of the Soviet Union on the wave of openness toward the previously hushed up facts, became the first Stalingrad narratives foregrounding the perspective of the child. Testimonies analyzed in this article present a body of raw memory and open up the possibility of their interpretation as a collective autobiography of Stalingrad childhood. Most of them belong to a collection of narratives Deti Stalingrada: Vospominaniia (Children of Stalingrad: Reminis-

---

[13] Films *Velikii perelom* (The Great Turning Point 1945) by Fridrikh Ermler, *Soldaty* (Soldiers 1956) by Aleksandr Ivanov, *Goriachii sneg* (The Hot Snow 1972) by Gavriil Egiazarov, and Russian TV series *Zhizn' i sud'ba* (Life and Fate 2012) by Sergei Ursuliak do not include children as part of Stalingrad chronotope.

[14] This group of films includes *Dni i nochi* (Days and Nights 1945) by Aleksander Stolper, *Velikii perelom* (The Great Turning Point 1945) by Fridrikh Ermler, *Stalingradskaia bitva* (The Battle of Stalingrad 1949) by Vladimir Petrov, *Vozmezdie* (The Retribution 1967) by Aleksander Stolper and *Stalingrad* (1989) by Iurii Ozerov. Post-Soviet films are *Angely smerti* (Angels of Death 1993), Ozerov's remake of his own Stalingrad and Fedor Bondarchuk's *Stalingrad* (2013). German films are *Hunde, wohlt ihr ewig leben?* (Dogs, Do You Want to Live Forever? 1959) by Frank Wisbar and *Stalingrad* (1993) by Joseph Vielsmeier.

cences 1998) published by the enthusiasts of the society for "Children of Wartime Stalingrad." This volume presents a "choral" narrative: the authors' names are only given as a list in the end of the book, not alphabetical, and not in the order in which their stories appear in the collection. The manner in which the contributors' names appear makes one think of lists of victims published in a newspaper or of fallen soldiers chiseled on the walls of war memorials. It reflects the tradition to "subsume" civilian victims "among the universal war suffering" (Gershenson 2013: 40). The "unsettling form" and anonymity of the "choral" narration, which deemphasizes "naming and the retrieval of individual identity"(Vice 2004: 29),[15] seems to iconically represent the neglect of the problem of civilian Stalingrad in official history.[16]

THE CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW VIA MULTI-D MEMORY

Denied a voice of historical significance, children of Stalingrad put their bodies forth as the medium through which they define and redefine the space of embattled Stalingrad. In the narratives recording the environ(mental) shock through the bodily one, the least empowered city-dwellers use the vocabulary of the young body which actively processes the world through the physical senses. Transplanted into a wartime setting, the lexicon of children's active games – the one of running, jumping, and hiding as well as the one of immanent bodily dimensionalities of up/down, front/back, right/left that children acquire early in their life – transforms the urban space into something of their own.

Recalled visual, aural, olfactory, and gustatory perceptions concerning impaired or lost hearing, the outraged sense of smell, and abnormal taste, blended with motor/kinesthetic, proprioceptive and tactile imagery pertaining to hurried and chaotic movement, unnatural bodily position, and the changed haptic geography respectively, create a staggering image of the child's overturned and confused universe. The spectacle of fires engulfing the city, not necessarily perceived as horrific by a young child, becomes superimposed with deafening effects of explosions, shouts and moans of people, the stench of burned bricks, and the taste of dirt. All these sensations get to be automatically recorded by the child who is jumping, running, or crawling in search of shelter, buries herself into any available underground hole, and folds herself into a fetal position, simultaneously realizing that her skin is bruised, broken, or burnt and her hair is on fire.

> After the air raid, we washed ourselves with water: in our mouths, in our ears, there was dirt, our faces were smeared with it. We were all covered with earth, we were dug out again and again (Deti Stalingrada 19).

[15] It is characteristic, for instance, of Holocaust memory and its preservation (Vice 2004: 29).

[16] For example, the first memorial service for the victims of the August 1942 air raids was first held only in 1992.

> Everything was burning, rattling, and crumbling. What I dreamt about then was a minute of silence. I was ready to dig myself down deeper and deeper, just not to hear anything (ibid. 23).

> …the whole street was burning, firebrands were flying, sparks rained down, people were running. We jumped out of the flames, my hair was burning (ibid. 32).

In an attempt to understand what constitutes the unique child's point of view, this part of the article breaks down the blended images of horror experienced by the narrators as young children at Stalingrad. It analyzes individual bodily sensations from the perspective of the child's "corporeal intentionality" interacting with the "operative intentionality" of the city. The testimonies demonstrate how the embodied cognition of the bombed city is determined by the size and weight of the child's body, which is easily thrown about by a blast wave; by the flexibility of a child's limbs, which allows her to fold herself into a fetal position in a ground hole; by the perspective from which the child observes the events – either from her own small height or from an extremely low angle, or a worm-eye view perspective in cinematic terms, as her house is destroyed and she is drawn underground. These and other aspects constituting the child's point of view will be explained below.

It is due to embodiment that the memory of childhood remains with the experiencer through time. The time transfer between *now* and *then* in the narratives, the "adult" and the "child" self becomes possible, due to the most intimate connection of memory with broken skin, flesh, and bones, for example, scars from metal shards stuck in the body. As follows from the second excerpt below, the memory of the war has been *incorporated* in the survivor's body in the form of metal pieces, and she has been carrying the physical evidence of the long-gone environment in herself throughout her life:

> Once a shell fell into our trench […], the part of my back next to my spine was badly wounded with a shard; it was sticking out and someone extracted it. […] I remember how blood was gushing out, and I was crying, "Hot water is flowing down my back." The memory of the war remains [with the scar] (ibid. 83).

> I was wounded in the head, on the right side of my face, shards, which I have been carrying in myself up to now, got stuck in my left shoulder and third rib (ibid. 84).

Many narratives testify to the memory of Stalingrad persisting via acquired deafness or in the fear of sounds associated with air raids and bombings:

> On one such day, our shelter was shaken so [terribly] that the entrance got blocked, it was good there was another entrance to which we were thrown by the blast wave. [We] got away with light concussions. […] I became [temporarily] deaf, but I could only hear with my right ear afterwards (ibid. 85).

> Something was making such a horrible screeching noise: either planes or bombs – I don't know – but since then I have not been able to stand any whistles and noises (ibid. 47).

> All my life I have been shuddering when I heard the sound of the flying planes (ibid. 131).

The childhood trauma of Stalingrad becomes embodied in the loss of voice:

> I was crying so hard that I overstrained my throat and, ever since then, my voice disappears from time to time and I speak in a whisper (ibid. 78).

The horror of Stalingrad persists via nightmares reenacting certain embodied routines, such as digging hideouts and burying oneself in them:

> I got married, had children [of my own], but, in my nightmares, I kept hiding now my own children in the balka's slope […]. [In my dreams] we would dig holes and I would push my children there in an attempt to hide them deeper and deeper (ibid. 22).

The above excerpt testifies to the child's changing perception of safety dictated by the environment: the bombings and the fighting draw children underground, leaving no place for them above it, or making them run literally for their lives. It also demonstrates adjustment strategies and the ability to create a safe place in an extremely unsafe environment that children managed to acquire. Below, I look at particular instances of children's resilience and creativity in managing the unimaginable, which allowed them to live to tell the tale.

CREATING A SAFE PLACE WITHIN SHRINKING SPACE

Just like the previous excerpt, the testimony below records changing perceptions of "up" and "down", which become turned upside down. As the danger comes from the air and the space above the ground becomes unlivable, "up" ceases to retain positive associations, whereas "down", which is normally perceived as negative (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 5), acquires the connotations of safety. The narratives also register the changing proxemics patterns within the lived space, which shrinks to the size of a dugout hole in the ground, or an underground bomb shelter during air raids. Safety thus becomes associated with collapsing spatial barriers that people set between themselves and others under the normal circumstances:

> But we managed to reach the big shelter - it was jam packed with people (Deti Stalingrada 63).

> We were lucky, we […] encountered a manhole […] scores of people down there sitting shoulder to shoulder (ibid. 143).

The narratives testify to the increased sensory awareness of the dangerous environment – visual, auditory, and bodily dimensional (above/below, front/back, right/left) – and simultaneously reveal strategies of apprehending of and coping with the now defamiliarized space:

> Sometimes it was impossible to leave the shelter for two or three days, but when you are hungry you are not even afraid of the devil himself. I was no longer afraid to die. I had learned how to discern where the fighting was going on, in what direction bullets or shards were flying; by their howl, I could guess whether they would land close to me or not, when I had to lie down and when to go to the shelter (ibid. 17).

The narratives delineate the child's perception of a safe place through the safety of familial ties, which, broken by death, continue to serve the child psychologically. Mother represents "the child's primary place" and is "recognized by the child as his essential shelter and dependable source of physical and psychological comfort […], stands for stability and permanence" (Tuan 1977: 29). The dead mother from the following testimony continues to signify place for her child as "a focus of value, of nurture and support" (ibid.). The mere fact of mother's body's presence thus creates a safety bubble for her child:

> I saw how mum was killed, just in between our dugout and the water spring. Within two days, she had entirely frozen into the ice. Then I had to go get water myself. I would crawl up to [where] my mum [was], and would always rest next to her and would not be afraid. I was sure that no shell splinter would touch me (Deti Stalingrada 8).

Another child of Stalingrad recalls that in the absence of her mother she attempted to create a minimal safe place, which to her was limited to the size of an open umbrella. For her and her little brother, it becomes if not a real physical shelter, then at least a psychological refuge. It may be assumed that for this child, the umbrella not only creates an imaginary barrier between herself and the bombs falling from above, but also draws a magic safety circle *around* her and her brother:

> …we lost each other [mother and uncle Vasia] during the air raid […]. I had a black umbrella, which I found here on the [Volga] bank. Scared, I opened it in order to hide my little brother and myself under it. I thought that now we would not be killed (ibid. 52).

MOVEMENT

The narratives communicate extreme kinetic intensity within the bombed space as they describe running for one's life in search of a safe spot during air raids. The "running" narrative communicates the heartbeat of a child scurrying from shelter to shelter ("my heart trembled and beat faster" (ibid. 101)),

stumbling and falling during the run (ibid. 63, 76–77), crawling (ibid. 82) or literally flying, thrown by an explosion (ibid. 8)):

> Our entire family ran into the shelter we made underneath our window. But it was already impossible to be there: the earth was shaking, [it seemed to be] shrinking [at one moment] and expanding [the next]. Father grabbed my hand, we jumped out of our trench, and ran away from the courtyard. A bomb exploded right behind us and we were thrown onto the ground by the blast wave. We jumped to our feet, ran again, and a fascist peppered us with machine gun fire (ibid. 63).

> …And then we ran to the shelter. The earth was heaving in huge lumps. Metal barrels were falling down from the air with a howl. It was dark from smoke through which fire was bursting through. People ran, fell down, sprang to their feet, tried to hide wherever they could (ibid. 76–77).

> [I] remember we were crawling for two days [down] to the Volga under fire (ibid. 82).

> …and then I lost consciousness for the second time because a bomb exploded next to the building entrance and I was thrown down into the basement with a blast wave (ibid. 8).

The downward movement involving tactile contact with the earth in search of shelter or food predominates in the narratives. They describe the process of hiding as an attempt to merge with the earth as the only constant in the urban environment that is crumbling and turning into nothing:

> You would lie down on the ground and try to get into the earth with your head, to hell with your legs and butt […] (Krinko et. al. 2014: 148).

HAPTIC GEOGRAPHY

The outraged sense of touch appears to be inalienable from movement across the bombed and now extremely hostile environment. Children apprehend the destroyed city through the sense of touch, which involves the entire surface of their bodies – burnt by fire or boiling water (Deti Stalingrada 128), wounded, scarred, and not properly healing in the absence of medical treatment (ibid. 43). Navigating the ruins, children experience the city with their uncovered feet as they walk on broken bricks and glass (ibid. 132).

> …here I am standing in line for boiled water with a bowler. […] and all of a sudden, an explosion. A shard slashed across the barrel, and by the barrel with boiling water, – [there is] me, and I got scalded all over. People got up and ran to the trench, I fell down and [as I was] lying down, the boiling water [was] pouring over me. […] I was unconscious for two weeks (ibid. 128).

> The wounds […] were festering, lice crawled on the bloody bandages (ibid. 43).

The author of the following narrative recounts the sensation of cold or even frost on his barely clad skin and the inescapability of tactile contact with death. He remembers how he had to move the corpses, densely covering the riverbank, during his routine trips to the Volga for water. Climbing up the ladder on his way back was no less repulsive in haptic terms – the ladder was made of corpses, which supported the upward movement when frozen in the wintertime but obstructed it during the thaw, when the snow melted and the ladder, i.e. the corpses, became slimy:

> Swollen from hunger, only half-dressed (all clothes had been exchanged for food), under artillery fire, every day, I had to go down to the Volga to get water. In order to scoop some water, one had to move the corpses the riverbank was covered with. The Volga bank was very steep there, some twelve meters, and our soldiers made a five-meter wide ladder from corpses. [They] covered it with snow. It was very convenient to climb up the ladder in the winter, but when the snow melted, the corpses started to decay and the ladder became very slippery (ibid. 21).

VISUAL IMAGERY

Several testimonies paradoxically refer to the visual medium of cinema and photography as both inadequate and indispensable in representing the battle-zone experiences in all their authenticity:

> No movie can render what was happening back then (ibid. 45).

versus

> It is a shame no one had a camera back then (ibid. 14).

Completely disempowered or kept away from horrible scenes by adults trying to protect them, children retain their gaze or, rather, stare, through which their memory dispassionately records the imagery their minds do not quite comprehend:

> I remember how dead soldiers were loaded onto green military trucks and we were standing nearby […]. One man [working on it] lifted his head and saw our eyes. He came to us […], big tears were streaming down his face, and said, "Dear children, for Christ's sake, I beg you, never look at this, go away!" We made several steps backwards, but we had nowhere to go, the bomb shelter was cold and damp, [so] we kept on looking at the dead soldiers being loaded onto trucks (ibid. 13).

> Everything around was burning, it was very frightening. Mother covered us with tarpaulin, but I kept looking anyway (ibid. 75).

The visual imagery created by the narratives invites discussion in terms of cinematic shots, angles, and *mise-en-scène,* as well as color and light perceptions,

which frame the child's peculiar awareness of the suddenly de-familiarized space that the child's mind attempts to explain in familiar terms. Testimonies of the then very young children are particularly valuable in rendering the innocent child's peculiar apprehension of the unknown and dangerous in terms of the known and thus harmless and even enjoyable. The perception of a six-year old girl, for example, blends the images of white parachutes and dandelions:

> The first thing that I remembered as a six-year old was paratroopers landing. Once I saw them, I thought they were dandelions floating down from the sky (ibid. 27).

The following testimonies recount children's visual imagery of the air war and the hellish fires engulfing the city in terms of utmost sensory excitement:

> At the very bank of the Volga there was a vitriolic factory, it was burning *beautifully*[17] and we went to watch it burn *(*ibid. 16).

> At night, the sky was lit up by projectors, I *loved* looking at it and became *euphoric* when the planes were bombing during the evening and at night, fire bursting out of the tail of the jet. It was a captivating sight for me (ibid. 83).[18]

The narratives testify that looking in any direction in inalienable from the imagery of death, starvation, and thirst. The downward look is associated with the search for food and water, e.g. "digging ice for frozen potato peels" (ibid. 13) or with the already mentioned "moving the corpses which covered the bank of the Volga in order to be able to scoop some water" (ibid. 21). A worm-eye perspective from below the ground renders horror and extreme powerlessness in the face of circumstances – the danger of airstrikes and the fear of being buried alive, as civilians caught in the crossfire had to hide in trenches and were in constant danger of being shot or run over by tanks:

> The entire day, we were hiding in trenches dug out in our courtyard. Once, our [Soviet] tank drove over our trench (there were two families sitting there) and stopped. One of its caterpillar tracks was hanging over our heads, and the whole hideout was crumbling [under its weight]; the tank opened fire on the German fortifications. As the trench was very narrow and the tank only covered one of its corners, all of us survived but everyone became deaf from horror in this pandemonium. Beside me, there were my mum, my 6-year-old brother and my aunt with her newborn baby in the trench (ibid. 119).

The testimonies render a sense of confusion and powerlessness within the action of a scene. This effect is produced by the child's point of view from her height, which yields a low angle shot. In the following excerpt, an elderly per-

[17] Here and in the example below, emphasis is added.
[18] Emphasis added.

son recounts her childhood state of being overwhelmed as she was looking up at the afternoon sky, which became rapidly populated with bomber jets:

> There appeared the planes. They were flying in groups of five. I started counting them but [very soon] lost count: the whole sky was covered with bomber jets (ibid. 50).

The sense of terror and insecurity in the narrative increases immensely when the mind's eye suddenly switches from the panorama of the sky covered with military planes to the close ups of bomber pilots' faces, as seen through children's eyes. They fly their planes close to the ground in order to shoot their child targets from the minimal distance, in the other narrative. It renders the uncanny sensations of human prey coming in close contact with a human predator:

> I personally saw their faces, because they were flying [so low], they were trying almost to touch [the ground] with their wings and laughed at us. We saw his [pilot's] face, he was smiling at us and shooting us (Liutenkov 2003).

The narrative invites the reader to visualize the scene in terms of shot-reverse-shot in an attempt to comprehend the conflicting frames – the actions of the pilot and the emotion he was projecting, the experiences of the two participants of the episode (the child and the pilot), and, above all, a habitual image of the adult as the protector of the young and that of the destroyer thereof.

CONCLUSION

"Mediating the confrontational transmission of personal narratives into public life and socio-cultural history" (Douglas 2010: 108), the child-survivors of Stalingrad legitimize their childhood experiences via their embodied memory of the urban environment, whose trauma of destruction they shared, within which they survived, matured, and aged. As such, their experiential narratives come forth not only as a historical document but also "a source of authority and a means of attack" (Lambek and Antze 1996: vii) due to the embodiment central to the narratives of childhood plight. It is the embodiment of memory that "increases […] the reader's sense of calamity" (Vice 2004: 29) and thus makes "the pain of others", to use Susan Sontag's expression,[19] so tangible. It is thanks to the embodiment of memory that the suffering of Stalingrad children acquires and retains a meaningful expression through their older selves, albeit "impoverished" by at least a 50-year-long delay.

The narratives written by the once-children of Stalingrad reshape the city space from the site of a victorious military operation in Soviet historical dis-

[19] Reference to the title of Susan Sontag's book *Regarding the Pain of Others*. London: Penguin, 2004.

course into a site of childhood war trauma. Their ultimate authority, however, lies in re-populating the urban landscape with new actors, whose agency is in transforming their own images as passive damaged victims into the ones endowed with a power to encapsulate, retain and share the history of Stalingrad from the most vulnerable perspective. The living "children" of war-torn Stalingrad embody the living flesh of the city, which, exposed to dire circumstances, nevertheless survived thanks to its mobility, adaptability, and resilience. The narratives demonstrate that embattled Stalingrad, which simultaneously restricts or, to the contrary, accelerates all modes of movement and allows for a minimal living space above the ground, becomes re-analyzed and re-purposed by children put on the brink of survival. The "uprooted" childhood of Stalingrad "grows" underground in search of refuge; looked down upon as moving targets by the enemy or neglected as collateral damage by the Soviet authorities, former children of the war regain their agency by using their embodied memory to mend the rupture in the history of their Stalingrad childhood.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Deti Stalingrada: Vospominaniia. 1998. Volgograd: Komitet po pechati i informatsii.

Campbell, Courtney J. 2017. Space, Place and Scale: Human Geography and Spatial History In Past and Present. – *Past & Present*. http//:past.oxfordjournals.org (24.01.17).

Casey, Edward S. 1996. How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena. – *Senses of Place*, 13–52.

Certeau, Michel, and Steven Rendall. 1988. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Douglas, Kate. 2010. *Contesting Childhood: Autobiography, Trauma, and Memory.* New Brunswick, NJ, USA: Rutgers University Press.

Gershenson, Olga. 2013. *The Phantom Holocaust: Soviet Cinema and Jewish Catastrophe.* New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Gleason, Mona. 2016. Avoiding the Agency Trap: Caveats for Historians of Children, Youth, and Education. – *History of Education*,45.4, 446–459.

Hellbeck, Jochen. 2015. *Stalingrad: The City That Defeated the Third Reich*. New York: Public Affairs.

Holland, Patricia. 2004. *Picturing Childhood: The Myth of the Child in Popular Imagery.* London: I.B. Tauris.

Hutchison, Ray. 2000. *Constructions of Urban Space*. Stamford, Conn: JAI Press.

Kirschenbaum, Lisa. 2017. The Meaning of Resilience: Soviet Children in World War II. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XLVII: 4 (Spring), 521–535.

Kostetskaya, Anastasia. 2015. Unfilmed Stalingrad: "Child-Actors" of the Great Battle in Russian and German film. – *The Proceedings Volume of the Third International Conference "Beyond Camps and Forced Labour."*

Krinko, E.F., Kurilla I.I, Ryblova, M.A. and T.P. Khlynina. 2014. Detstvo Velikoi Otechestvennoi: Istoriografiia, pamiat', problemy polia. – M. Ryblova, ed. *Deti i voina: Stalingradskaia bitva i zhizn' v voennom Stalingrade v vospominaniiakh zhitelei goroda.* Volgograd: Izdatel'stvo RANKhiGS, 6–17.

Kukulin, I. 2005. Regulirovanie boli (Predvaritel'nye zametki o transformatsii travmaticheskogo opyta Velikoi Otechestvennoi/Vtoroi mirovoi voiny v russkoi literature 1940–1970-kh). – *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*, 2–3, 324–336.

Lakoff, G., and M. Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lambek, M., and P. Antze. 1996. Introduction: Forecasting Memory. – *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, Eds. Paul Antze and Michael Lambek. New York: Routledge, xi– xxxviii.

Liutenkov, A. and T. Donskaia. 2003. *Nepobezhdennye* (Engl. The Stalingrad Apocalypse. No-win situation.; Germ. Apocalypse Stalingrad – Die Hölle des Krieges).

Nora, Pierre. 1989. Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Memoire. – *Representations*, 26.1, 7–24.

Pavlova, T. 2005. *Zasekrehennaia tragediia: Grazhdanskoe naselenie v Stalingradskoi bitve.* Volgograd: Peremena.

Sebald, W.G. 2004. *On the Natural History of Destruction*. New York: The Modern Library.

Strekalova, E.N. 2010. Lakuny istoricheskoi pamiati: Detstvo voennogo vremeni 1941–1945 godov po ustnym vospominaniiam. – A. Sal'nikova, ed.,*Vtoraia mirovaia voina v detskikh "ramkakh pamiati": Sbornik nauchnykh statei*. Krasnodar: Ekoinvest, 339–363.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1977. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Vice, Sue. 2004. *Children Writing the Holocaust.* Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Filoteknos, vol. 8 • 2018 • DOI: 10.23817/filotek.8-5

LARISSA RUDOVA ❧ Pomona College, USA

Storying War Childhood in Al'bert Likhanov's *Russian Boys*

Abstract: This article examines the role of "cross-writing" in Al'bert Likhanov's novel, *Russian Boys* (Russkie mal'chiki, 1960s-1990s), in which the author recasts his WWII childhood in autofictional form. As is frequently the case in autobiographical war fiction, the novel redefines the boundaries of childhood by calling attention to two narrative perspectives: the child's perception of the changed surrounding world and the adult narrator's perception of the states of abjection and trauma to which his young heroes are subjected. Likhanov's novel is deeply personal and moving, yet it also tests the myth of protected Soviet childhood. In my analysis, I demonstrate how "cross-writing" helps the author not only to bring specific historical circumstances into the picture, but also to draw attention to the conditions of abjection and marginalization of Soviet children during the war. Ultimately, in *Russian Boys*, Likhanov shapes a narrative of hope and extraordinary personal psychological and moral growth "*outside* of the history of the experienced trauma."

Keywords: autobiographical fiction, Soviet children's literature, Great Patriotic War, culture of memory, cross-writing

> Memory installs remembrance within the sacred; history, always prosaic, releases it again. Memory is blind to all but the group it binds – which is to say, as Maurice Halbwachs has said, that there are as many memories as there are groups, that memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual. History, on the other hand, belongs to everyone and to no one, whence its claim to universal authority.
>
> Pierre Nora. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire"

Al'bert Likhanov (b. 1935)[1] made his debut in Soviet children's literature during the period of cultural liberalization in the early 1960s and immediately es-

[1] Likhanov is a prominent public figure, laureate of the State Prize of Russia, President of the International Children's Fund, a humanitarian organization that he established in 1987.

tablished himself as a talented author of psychological prose for children, adolescents, and adults.[2] Since 1966, after Likhanov published his novella "Zvezdy v oktiabre" (Stars in October), war childhood became a central theme of his work. Indeed, Soviet authors of the older generation born in the 1920s did not neglect the theme of WWII childhood and created memorable images of heroic children and adolescents,[3] but in the 1960s and 1970s authors born in the 1930s began to approach this topic differently, through autobiographical fiction based on their personal experiences. Their narratives presented a non-heroic side of war and were usually set in the distant rear, where children suffered along with adults, often neglected, lost, or abandoned by their families or social institutions. The emphasis of this new perspective on war childhood shifted away from the official heroic war narrative to the personal account of individual trauma.

In this article, I will explore how Likhanov redefines the boundaries of childhood in his autobiographical war fiction by calling attention to two narrative perspectives: the child's perception of the surrounding world and the adult narrator's perception of the states of abjection, trauma, and neglect to which his young "self" is subjected. I will also discuss how Likhanov's writing offers an image of war childhood different from the official Soviet culture of war remembrance and how the author presents childhood as a "territory or drama and tragedy" where children are "orphans regardless of whether they have parents or not" (Fediaeva 2015: 8). Frequently, his young heroes appear as "outsiders", or "borderlanders", whom most of society and certain institutional structures "render invisible" (Wilkie-Stibbs 2008: 10).[4]

---

[2] For the analysis of psychological prose in children's literature and Likhanov's place in it, see A. Akimova and V. Akimov, the chapter "Koordinaty psikhologicheskoi prozy", pp. 88–104. Irina Arzamastseva and Sofia Nikolaeva also associate Likhanov's works with the tradition of Russian psychological prose (2005: 401).

[3] War and postwar Soviet literature produced an impressive gallery of young heroic characters in such works as *Molodaia gvardiia* (Young Guards, 1946) by Aleksandr Fadeev, "Syn polka" (Son of the Regiment, 1945) by Valentin Kataev, "Ivan" (1956) by Vladimir Bogomolov, Lev Kassil's "Dorogie moi mal'chishki" (My Dear Boys, 1944), and Arkadii Gaidar's "Kliatva Timura" (Timur's Oath, 1941). In the 1960s and 1970s images of children and young people during the war continued to appear in literature for adult readers. A significant number of these books, known as "lieutenant prose", were written by junior officers who served in the Red Army in wartime. The most popular authors in this group were Grigorii Baklanov, Vasil' Bykov, Yurii Bondarev, and Boris Vasil'ev, internationally honored for his novella, "A zori zdes' tikhie…" (The Dawns Here are Quiet, 1969). Children's and young adult authors – Viktor Goliavkin, Vladimir Amlinskii, Igor Zolotusskii, Aleksei Aleksin, Radii Pogodin, Al'bert Likhanov, among them, were primarily writing about the experience of children in the war's rear and were associated with a variety of "war prose."

[4] In her book, *The Outside Child In and Out of the Book*, Christine Wilkie-Stibbs formulates a model of childhood as "an alterity inscribed into narratives about children located at the margins" of society, ideology, or a system of values" (9).

The Great Patriotic War (1941–1945) was "neither consistently great, nor consistently patriotic" (Tumarkin 1995: 204). Like any other war, it revealed "the banality of evil" and massive human suffering and sacrifice. Yet, the Soviet propaganda machine presented victory over fascism as a proof of superiority of communist ideas and the exceptional genius of Joseph Stalin as the leader of the multicultural nation. Despite the tremendous suffering of Soviet people and the desire of war survivors to tell their stories, memories were strictly regulated by the government who censored individual expression and self-reflection and discouraged narratives of personal suffering and trauma (Leingang 2014: 3). It was not until the late 1980s under Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost' that the official memory of the Great Patriotic War began to crumble. Along with prominent writers, journalists, historians, and dissidents, ordinary people whose voices were not heard before began to recall their war experiences. War memorialization entered "a stage of dispute" between the embittered war survivors and the government that treated any deviation from the official myth of the Great Victory as a sacrilege (Leingang 2014: 6). While the official Soviet discourse about the Great Patriotic War privileged heroism, sacrifice, and collective effort in fighting the Nazis, the need for sharing personal, non-heroic war stories in late Soviet Russia was so enormous that when Svetlana Alexievich's book, *The Last Witnesses: A Hundred of Unchildlike Lullabies* (1985), based on the narratives of people about their war childhood, was published, it promptly sold millions of copies.[5]

Before perestroika the culture of remembrance was a product of "ideologically produced" and reconstructed history that heavily relied on "mass memory" (Gudkov 2005).[6] "Corporate" in essence, mass memory originates in political solidarity and myths that cater to certain ideologies and institutions of power. As a rule, mass memory is indifferent to individual circumstances and experiences while its "sacred status" vehemently resists any rational analysis (Gudkov 2005). In Soviet schools, mass memory was aggressively promoted through the humanities curriculum, ideological discourse, and public rituals, and this educational strategy was so effective that patriotic literature became "deeply rooted in the taste of young people, even among girls" (Hellman 2013: 537). As expected, this kind of popular reading abounded in images of war heroes and heroic military exploits in the name of the Soviet Motherland.[7] The rich stock of literary war heroes included real-life military commanders (Se-

[5] On the changing culture of remembrance in the last years of the USSR, see Leingang's book.

[6] Gudkov's article was originally published in *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 2–3 (2005). http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2005/2/gu5.html (Last accessed March 4, 2018).

[7] In her book, *Little Soldiers: How Soviet Children Went to War, 1941–1945*, Olga Kucherenko writes that "the universal consciousness of war" began to develop already during the war, and popular culture and military and partisan folklore played a significant role in it. See especially pp. 124–225.

mion Timoshenko, Konstantin Rokossovskii, or Georgii Zhukov), courageous military pilots (Aleksei Mares'ev, Aleksandr Pokryshkin and Ivan Kozhedub), simple soldiers (e.g., Aleksandr Matrosov who covered a German pillbox with his body), or underground anti-fascist groups on the occupied territory (e.g., "The Young Guard" of Krasnodon), or famous Soviet partisans, like the legendary Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia (Sartorti 1995: 176–193). Larger-than-life war heroes were immortalized in Soviet literature and cinema and became iconic figures in the collective culture of Soviet war commemoration. While stressing heroism and sacrifice for the Victory, official Soviet culture filtered out from the representation of the Great Patriotic War many uncomfortable and messy aspects, its dreary day-to-day routine, individual trauma, hunger, disease, death, Stalinist repressions, extreme deprivation, poverty, massive and senseless loss of human lives, incompetence of the military elite at the beginning of the war, and many other disturbing facts. As the prominent scholar and literary critic Miron Petrovsky pointed out, it was a time when children's literature displayed some "anti-humanist tendencies" and was saturated with war heroism, obsession with "children-heroes", encouragement of children's "heroic suicide", and "apologia of underage kamikazes."[8]

While the official culture continued to strongly elevate "extraordinariness" of war events (e.g., "exploits, self-sacrifice, salvation") and repudiated a focus on prosaic/non-heroic life (Gudkov), the Thaw of the late 1950s and early 1960s created an opportunity for authors to move away from the collective to individual experience of war. Especially effective in this endeavor was literature for children and young people. By the 1960s government censors were more favorably inclined toward children's literature than toward literature for adult readers and allowed it more freedom of expression, despite the fact that both categories displayed similar thematic and aesthetic tendencies. It is in this context that young talented authors such as Bulat Okudzhava (1924–1997), Anatolii Pristavkin (1931–2008), Fridrikh Gorenshtein (1932–2002),[9] and Likhanov, among others, quietly began to deviate from the "general line"[10] and

[8] For this sacrilegious statement about war literature for children, Petrovsky fell from grace with the literary establishment and was unable to publish for the next twenty years. Petrovsky's 1966 book, *Detskaia literatura bol'shaia i malen'kaia*, was eventually published under the title, *Knigi nashego detstva* (Books of Our Childhood), in 1986, but without the "Afterword" quoted in this article. However, Petrovsky's interview, "Otkuda i pochemu "Knigi nashego detstva", "Zaochnoe interv'iu s S.A. Lur'e", is available online: http://prochtenie.ru/passage/24356. (Last accessed September 25, 2017).

[9] Okudzhava offered a child's perspective on the war in his *Front prikhodit k nam* (The Front is Coming to Us, 1967). See, for instance, Hellman, pp. 537–538. On Pristavkin, see Leingang, pp. 30–43. On Gorenshtein, see Rudova, "'Cross-Writing' and War Memory: Fridrikh Gorenshtein's Autobiographical Story, 'The House with a Turret.'" *AvtobiografiЯ: Journal on Life Writing and the Representation of the Self in Russian Culture* 4 (2015): 29–46.

[10] Soviet children's war literature written after WWII focused primarily on the heroism

created riveting autobiographical narratives of their WWII experiences (Akimova and Akimov 1989: 95–104). It is noteworthy that their narratives began to appear almost two decades before perestroika and well before serious research about the condition of Soviet childhood during the war emerged at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Petrova 2010: 210–228). According to I.I. Burova, a specialist on Likhanov's work, the author was the first in Soviet literature to demonstrate how young children gained an understanding of war (Burova 2015: 8). Likhanov's critically acclaimed autofictional novel, *Russkie mal'chiki* (Russian Boys, 1971–1984), consisting of seven novellas, describes his war childhood in the provincial Russian town of Kirov.[11] Although not as existentially dark as Gorenshtein's or Pristavkin's portrayal of their war experiences, it is nevertheless marked by "the erosion of the heroic semantics" (Leingang 2014: 42) and challenges the myth of protected Soviet childhood during WWII. In his presentation of *Russian Boys* to young readers, the author states, "In the novellas you are about to read, there are no battle scenes with the enemies. At the same time, … the characters do fight with enemies that do not wear helmets or carry guns. These enemies are faceless, just like approaching death can be faceless" (Likhanov 2004).

In *Russian Boys*, Likhanov combines fictional textuality and realist representation in which he uses his real "self" as a character. This type of autobiographical fiction, or autofiction (Levina-Parker 2010: 12–40; Hughes 2000: 566–567), like no other genre, embodies the technique of "cross-writing" that erases the borderline between "fiction" and "reality/history" while simultaneously blurring the boundaries between children and adult experiences.[12] War stories in general address the effect of trauma on the formation of human identity and greatly expand the definition of childhood. The circumstances of war, regardless of the place (battlefield, home front, orphanage, ghetto, or concentration camp), make authors create situations in which the opposition of child

of children at the front line or in occupied territories. E.g., Lev Kassil's and Maks Polianovsky's *Ulitsa mladshego syna* (1949), based on the real-life events of the Young Pioneer Volodia Dubinin; or Valentin Kataev's *Syn polka* (Son of the Regiment, 1945) about the young scout Vania Solntsev.

[11] *Russkie mal'chiki* consists of seven novellas spanning the time from 1941–1945, "Krutye gory" (Steep Hills, 1971; published in *Iunost'*), "Muzyka" (Music, 1971), "Dereviannye koni" (Wooden Horses, 1971), "Magazin nenagliadnykh posobii" (A Store of Nonvisual Aids, 1983; published in *Pioner*), "Kikimora" (1983), "Detskaia biblioteka" (Children's Library, 1985), "Poslednie kholoda" (The Last Cold Days, 1984).

[12] A number of Soviet and post-Soviet critics commented on "cross-writing" in Likhanov's fiction and emphasized that his memories of war childhood attracted both child and adult readers. See, for example, S. Baruzdin. "Ob Al'berte Likhanove." *Zametki o detskoi literature*. Moscow: Detskaia literatura, 1975, pp. 323–325. Also, Elena Viacheslavovna Fedotova. *Geroi i vremia v povestiakh A. Likhanova*. PhD dissertation. Tver', 2006. http://www.dslib.net/russkaja-literatura/geroj-i-vremja-v-povestjah-a-lihanova.html. (Last accessed September 17, 2017).

and adult, as well as the adult moral authority and values, are constantly interrogated.

Russian Boys provides a personalized account of psychological, moral, and emotional growth of the young narrator Kolia, a mere six-year old at the beginning of the novel, during the four years of the Great Patriotic War. The conflation of Likhanov's fictional identity as a character with his authorial identity as a war child intensifies for the reader the objectivity and truthfulness of the described historical events while simultaneously revealing the ethical dimension of the novel. While *Russian Boys* was intended for young and adolescent readers, Likhanov's cross-writing made the book also appealing to adult readers who could grasp the narrator's elaboration of his childhood experience.

The term "cross-writing" was coined by Uli Knoepflmacher and Mitzi Myers in order to reconceptualize children's literary studies, calling attention to the "colloquy between past and present selves" in "texts too often read as univocal" (Knoepflmacher and Myers 1997: vii; Myers 2008: 19–27). Knoepflmacher and Myers argue that the concept of cross-writing does not solely apply to children's literature but is equally found in works for adult audiences. Rather than creating an authoritative, finalizing voice in the narrative, "cross-writing" authors engage the child's and adult's voices in "creative cooperation" and activate "a traffic between phases of life" (Knoepflmacher and Myers 1997: viii). This interaction of voices in the vein of Mikhail Bakhtin's *heteroglossia* is meant to intensify the reader's perceptions of existential realities the child character is affected by in the narrative. In essence, cross-writing enables the author to "re-experience childhood and continually reactivate her own child self" (Knoepflmacher and Myers 1997: vii).

Autobiographical fiction lends itself to cross-writing because on the one hand, it "inhabits the referential space" of the author's autobiography and on the other hand, it provides a "patently enriched and treated, hence fictionalized, and metamorphotic, version of [the author's – L.R.] life-story." In autobiographical fiction, the structure of the "self" is permeable as the author does not "assume responsibility for his articulation of the 'real'/'true'" nature of events by constantly switching perspectives from "it's me" to "it's not me" (Hughes 2000: 567–568). However, despite this fluidity of the authorial self, autobiographical fiction does not falsify real-life experience but rather "communicates the data of 'real life' without adequately admitting to doing so" (Hughes 2000: 569). As Richard N. Coe demonstrates in his study of autobiography and the experience of childhood, the autobiographer often fictionalizes his/her identity to show that the child character is "a being alien to [the author's] present self" (Coe 1984: 4). Cross-writing in the autobiographical text is then an organic mechanism that serves the purpose of crystallizing the author's/character's experience of childhood from two temporal perspectives of his/her life, and – by combining the child's and the adult's perspectives – it also has the power to dismantle the Romantic picture of childhood as happy

and oblivious. Thus, in *Russian Boys*, cross-writing helps unveil the narrator's and other young characters' condition of otherness, which is only subtly apprehended by him but obvious to his adult self.

Likhanov's novel has a solid ground in reality and resonates with autobiographical writing by many people who survived the war as children. Like many other youngsters, he saw hunger, disease, despair, death, was malnourished, and spent the war years fatherless. The legacy of his war experience was enduring and in one of his interviews, the author confessed that it haunted him his entire life (Luk'ianova).

No Soviet child was left unscarred by the war – although the experience varied considerably, from psychological trauma to physical injuries and disease. Overall, millions of children died during the Great Patriotic War (deGraffenried 2014: 157–158). At the beginning of the war the unprepared government had a challenging task of helping millions of children, especially those who were orphaned or abandoned. Although many children were evacuated, especially from orphanages, the process was chaotic, stressful and, in some cases, inhuman and marked by negligence, inattentiveness, and lack of communication between the families and authorities. Autobiographical accounts of people who survived evacuation in their childhood frequently convey memories of separation from or loss of parents, disorientation and fear of getting lost, hunger, cold, and witnessing death and destruction. The conditions of life in unoccupied territories were harsh for children and adults alike. Many of them – as young six years of age – had to work in order to provide extra food for the family; life in orphanages was intolerable because of physical abuse and starvation and caused many orphans to escape and become homeless. Some of them became child soldiers or scouts for the partisans, others committed despicable acts in order to survive. Juvenile crime was rampant and uncontrollable. It is not difficult to assume that in this situation, the most vulnerable were young children who did not understand the state of war and suffered from physical and psychological deprivations (Potemkina 2010: 229–247; Petrova 2010: 210–228).

Russian Boys is concerned with many aspects of war childhood as perceived by the young narrator Kolia. Likhanov portrays the subjectivity of the boy's vision through the effect of estrangement, when familiar things suddenly become unfamiliar and trigger a range of negative associations with extraordinary, shocking, ghastly, sinister, disturbing, gruesome, discomforting, uneasy, eerie, hidden, or dangerous experiences, in the vein of Sigmund Freud's formulation of the uncanny. Freud explains that the uncanny lies within the person's individual perceptions – not in the external world and suggests that "the better oriented . . . [a person – L.R.] is in the world around him, the less likely he would be to find the objects and occurrences in it uncanny" (Freud 2003: 125). But young children, who are only beginning to make sense of the world at peace, can barely make sense of a world transformed by war; and trying to rationalize dramatic events is considerably more stressful for them than

for adults. Thus, the opening line of "Steep Hills", "I didn't understand that war had begun" (Likhanov 1995: 7),[13] introduces the reader to the drastically changed world in which Kolia loses his sense of orientation. When friends and relatives get together for a farewell dinner before his father's departure for the front, Kolia naively perceives it as a happy holiday. Indeed, everybody is dressed up, eats, drinks, and sings songs while the father gives the boy a Soviet pin as a present, as is the custom on some holidays. Only much later in the novel is the somber meaning of that party revealed as the narrator (Kolia's older self) reflects on the tense silence at the party and the guests' attempt to restrain little Kolia from running around and making noise.

Estrangement becomes a permanent aspect of the boy's world and a vehicle of introducing him to the uncanny realities of war. The uncanny is closely connected with cross-writing. Lee A. Tally theorizes that the uncanny contains the intermingling of "past and present selves: the earlier self learns about X and represses that knowledge; its return reminds the present self of his/her former knowledge." Revisiting the uncanny past signifies the belief that one "had outgrown a more primitive state." This mechanism of "negotiating of past and present selves that defines cross-writing" is strikingly similar to the cross-writing technique of autobiographical fiction (Talley 213: 240).

Likhanov's fiction is a vivid illustration of Talley's theorizing about the ability of the present authorial self to process the physical and psychological reaction of his younger self to the uncanny. In *Russian Boys*, the narrator recalls how shocking it was for him to encounter death for the first time in his life and how gradually he learned to recognize and accept it. In "Steep Hills", he describes how on the way to a sanitary train, Kolia and his friend encounter small groups of women dressed in dark clothes. The boys instantly notice the alienating strangeness of the group as all the women seem to have identical faces, with their eyes either covered by tears or staring silently at the train in the distance. In a strikingly expressionist manner, Likhanov presents a close-up of a woman with "transparent" and empty eyes, on the brink of despair. Her actions and appearance terrify the boys and they immediately begin to worry about a fatal scenario: "One step ahead and she'll throw herself down into the ravine" (17). Seized by uncontrollable fear, Kolia wants to run toward her but freezes in his tracks, not knowing what to do next, whether to pull her away from the ravine, or to scream or to talk to her. Significantly, this episode marks a threshold of maturation for the two boys since they are no longer protected from the brutal realities of war but rather begin to see them in their stark materiality. The events that follow their first encounter with grief further intensify the sudden ubiquitous presence of the uncanny. As the boys approach the sanitary train, their anxiety continues to grow. Likhanov describes how in their imagination, the estranged surrounding world transforms into an "ant-

[13] All translations are mine.

hill" (17) filled with terrifying sounds (screaming people, skidding cars, neighing horses) and unceasing motion. Kolia stops recognizing the familiar altogether as panic grips him: his mother's face looks like a "white" mask and her unusually hysterical and rude voice – as she orders him to stay away from the train – is also distressingly unnatural. The uncanny reaches its peak when the boy sees the first dead soldier: "…and we saw the uncanny. He who was on the stretcher was covered completely, but the grey blanket was too short, and from under its edge, two yellow, wax-like legs stuck out" (18). Likhanov skillfully cross-writes this epiphanic moment for little Kolia. While the boy is nearly unconscious from the shock of seeing a dead soldier, the intruding voice of the adult narrator comments on his younger self's erroneous feeling of happiness upon his father's departure for the front, "What a little fool I was when I smiled and joyfully waived my hand as he was leaving for the war" (19). As the new dramatic experience renders his cozy childhood vulnerable, it also illuminates his growing understanding of the world changed by war.

Cross-writing and estrangement continue to shape the readers' view of Kolia's changing perceptions of people and situations throughout the novel. Making sense of who is a friend and who is an enemy is perhaps the most challenging task for the young boy. Although at school such concepts as "friends"/"we"/"Soviet people" and "enemies"/"they"/"fascists" are routinely juxtaposed, Kolia repeatedly finds himself in situations in which the borderline between this binary becomes ambiguous. Likhanov structures the narrative around the child's realization that "friends" can also be "enemies" and they live among "us", the Soviet people. When thieves steal his family's ration cards, his mother's dresses that she sells one by one to buy extra food, and his father's last suit from their apartment, Kolia cannot initially understand that they have been robbed. He naively assumes that somebody played a joke on them: "I thought it was a joke. Well, it happens that one's neighbors play pranks on you" (24). But as he sees his mother's tears, her sudden weakness, and the vandalized door lock, he becomes simultaneously angry and terrified. Though he remembers that they cannot survive without the ration cards, the fact that his father's suit has also been stolen is particularly devastating to him as he feels small and helpless before the thieves' "cruel and ruthless force" (24). While little Kolia dreams of confronting the thieves and hopes to throw a grenade at them, he trusts the police to find them. Yet the adult narrator interjects that the policeman who comes to Kolia's apartment to file a crime protocol is tired, indifferent, and preoccupied with his own departure for the front the following day. As Kolia continues to misread the situation and is upset about his father's stolen suit his mother is devastated by the thought of the missing ration cards and the family's imminent hunger.

In the "The Last Cold Days", Kolia's ability to understand people and situations is tested once again. Now in fourth grade, he receives a food card for an additional meal in a special children's cafeteria. What he initially imagined as

a comforting and nurturing place turns out to be a dangerous territory, dominated by the "vultures", older and stronger children who usually come from the outside and steal food from the weakest and the youngest: "When you have a small height life is difficult. Everybody can push you to the side, hit you on the head, trip you when you are in a hurry, and then cruelly laugh at you" (364). Although Kolia is alienated from the "vultures" and fears them he gradually begins to understand that they are simply hungry kids, and he makes friends with one of them. The narrator's language is key in conveying how it happens. Thus, the first "vulture" who approaches Kolia is portrayed through the uncanny, exaggerated use of color and sound: "He had a yellow, almost corpse-like face. Right above his nose was a noticeable blue vein. His eyes were also yellow" (363). The "vulture" appears as a "ghost" with "mad eyes" that "flared a frightening light" (362). As terrified Kolia expects the worst from the approaching "ghost", the "vulture" abruptly stops and "whispers" a question that sounds "louder than the loudest scream" (362). Kolia is so baffled by this whisper that he "shrinks, stiffens, and experiences shock" (362). This moment is dramatized through the long pauses as he struggles to find the right words to respond to the "vulture's" question: "May I eat what you don't want?" (362). The narrative moment expands as the intervening voice of the adult narrator describes how tasteless the soup was, how tensely the "vulture" waited for an answer, and how Kolia struggled with his decision-making before realizing that he would be a "swine" if he said "no" to the boy. This heavily cross-written scene is significant because Kolia begins to experience adult emotions and sees "bad" children in a different light. While he processes his complex feelings ("How hungry should one be in order to eat other people's leftovers?" 363), the older narrator contemplates the realities of abject war childhood. Mistreated or neglected by adults or institutions of power "that have, or should have, responsibility of care", these children become victims of "numerous forms of neglect, deprecation, or condemnation" (Likhanov 2006: 316). Of the entire novel, the narrative of abjection is especially pronounced in "The Last Cold Days." When Kolia befriends the "vulture" Vadim and his little sister Maria, he gradually learns about the loss of their parents, their struggle to survive, and their life of hiding out of fear of being sent to an orphanage. These and other heartbreaking experiences are richly cross-written and provide details that enable young and adult readers to reflect on the trauma of war childhood, especially in the case of abject children.

It is not uncommon that children's books simplify the war experience and reduce it to platitudes. They feature "adult preoccupations with human evil" and "comfortably familiar conventions" of escape, perseverance, and survival regardless of the geographical area or time (Myers 2008: 328). In the USSR, these narrative trends were filtered through the official culture of war commemoration and significantly politicized. The rhetoric of heroism, mass suffering, and rigid binaries (friend/enemy, victim/aggressor, victory/defeat,

etc.) was inevitably inculcated into the young readers' minds and informed their perception of the Great Patriotic War. In this context, it is fair to say that Likhanov's autofictional novel frustrated the literary conventions of war representation and complicated the picture of war childhood by using two levels of narrating consciousness. His message was clear: the many uncanny aspects of war made it non-heroic and uncomfortable for everyone. He writes, "What is important to know is that war took everyone, even us, little people." (Likhanov 2004, 8).

In his article on trauma and memory, Sergei Ushakin divides trauma into two categories: trauma as a loss and trauma as a plot. In the latter case, when trauma is narrated through the facts of individual biography, it "acquires the status of authorial position from which [the author(s) – L.R.] represent(s) the past and perceive(s) the present" (Ushakin 2009: 9). In a sense, what Ushakin describes is similar to cross-writing in autobiographical fiction in which trauma is projected through a dialogic interaction of the older and younger selves of the narrator. In *Russian Boys*, the mix of these voices accomplishes a dual task: it draws attention to the traumatic conditions of war childhood; and it brings specific historical circumstances into the picture. Finally, Likhanov's writing reaches out to "a community of listeners" (Bosmajian 2009: 93–99)[14] to whom he could convey the ordeal of war childhood as it "really" was – well before the culture of individual remembrance emerged during glasnost'.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

---. *Russkie mal'chiki*. Moscow: Dom, 1995.

Akimova, A., V. Akimov. *Semidesiatye, vos'midesiatye… Problemy i iskaniia sovremennoi detskoi prozy*. Moscow: Detskaia literatura, 1989.

Arzamastseva, I. N. and S. A. Nikolaeva. *Detskaia literatura*. 3rd ed. Moscow: Akademiia, 2005.

Bosmajian, Hamida. "The Tropes of Trauma." *Children's Literature* 37 (2009): 293–299.

Burova, I. I. "Etud o voennoi proze A. A. Likhanova." *Vestnik detskoi literatury* 10 (2015): 42–45.

Coe, R.N. *When the Grass Was Taller: Autobiography and the Experience of Childhood*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale UP, 1984.

deGraffenried, Julie K. *Sacrificing Childhood: Children and the Soviet State in the Great Patriotic War*. Lawrence: U Press of Kansas, 2014.

Fediaeva, T. A. "Detstvo kak territoriia shast'ia i tragedii", *Vestnik detskoi literatury* 10 (2015): 6–10.

Freud, Z. *The Uncanny*. Trans. David McLintock. London: Penguin, 2003.

Gudkov, Lev. "The Fetters of Victory: How the War Provides Russia with Its Identity." *Eurozine* (March 5, 2005). http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2005–05–03-gudkov-en.html.

[14] Like Bosmajian, Sergei Ushakin in his study of trauma, also points to the importance of the "understanding audience" for trauma narratives. He calls this audience a "community of loss" (soobshestvo utraty) that plays a role both of the "author" and the "addressee" of trauma narratives (10).

(Accessed Sept. 15, 2017). Originally published in *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 2–3 (2005). http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2005/2/gu5.html (Accessed Sept. 15, 2017).

Hellman, Ben. *Fairy Tales and True Stories: The History of Russian Literature for Children and Young People (1574–2010)*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Hughes, Alex. "Recycling and Repetition in Recent French 'Autofiction': Mac Weizmann's Doubrovskian Borrowings", *The Modern Language Review* 97:3 (2000): 566–567.

Knoepflmacher, U.C., and Mitzi Myers, eds. "From the Editors: 'Cross-Writing' and the Reconceptualizing of 'Children's Literary Studies.'" *Children's Literature* 25 (1997): vii-xvii.

Kucherenko, Olga. *Little Soldiers: How Soviet Children Went to War, 1941*–1945. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011.

Leingang, Oxane. *Sowjetische Kindheit im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Generationsentwürfe im Kontext nationaler Erinnerungskultur*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2014.

Levina-Parker, Masha. "Vvedenie v samosochinenie: Autofiction", *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 3 (2010): 12–40.

Likhanov, Al'bert. "Lezhachikh ne b'iut." *Nash sovremennik* 11 (2004): 7–40.

Likhanov, Al'bert. Presentation of the book, *Russkie mal'chiki*. Rossiiskii detskii fond. *Putevodnaia zvezda* 6 (2004). http://www.detfond.org/ru/articles/putevodnaya-zvezda/putevodnaya-zvezda-za-2004-god/putevodnaya-zvezda-62004/?preview. (Accessed Sept. 15, 2017)

Luk'ianova, L. V. "Likhanov Al'bert Anatol'evich." Informational Portal Az-libr.ru. http://az-libr.ru/Persons/000/Src/0010/bf3bd477.shtml. (Accessed September 17, 2017).

Myers, Mitzi."Storying War: An Overview." *Under Fire: Childhood in the Shadow of War*. Ed. Elizabeth Goodenough and Andrea Immel. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2008.

Petrova, N. K. "Deti Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny." *Vtoraia mirovaia voina v detskikh "ramkakh pamiati." Sbornik nauchnykh statei*. Krasnodar: Ekoinvest, 2010.

Petrovsky, Miron. "Otkuda i pochemu 'Knigi nashego detstva.'" "Zaochnoe interv'iu s S. Lur'e, A." http://prochtenie.ru/passage/24356. (Accessed Sept. 15, 2017).

Potemkina, M. N. "Otrazhenie voiny v pamiati evakuirovannykh detei." *Vtoraia mirovaia voina v detskikh 'ramkakh pamiati': sbornik nauchnykh statei.* Krasnodar: Ekoinvest, 2010.

Sartorti, Rosalinde. "On the Making of Heroes, Heroines, and Saints", *Culture and Entertanment in Wartime Russia*. Ed. Richard Stites. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995.

Talley, L. A. "*Susan Cooper's Dawn of Fear: Cross-writing, the Uncanny, and a Childhood in Wartime*." *The Lion and the Unicorn* 37:3 (2013): 238–256.

Tumarkin, Nina. "The War of Remembrance." *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*. Ed. Richard Stites. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995.

Ushakin, Sergei. "'Nam etoi bol'iu dyshat?' O travme, pamiati i soobshestvakh." Ed. Sergei Ushakin and Elena Trubina. Travma:Punkty. Moscow: NLO, 2009.

Wilkie-Stibbs, Christine. *The Outside Child In and Out of the Book*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Filoteknos, vol. 8 • 2018 • DOI: 10.23817/filotek.8-6

ANASTASIA ULANOWICZ • University of Florida, USA

From *Feed* to *Famine: M.T. Anderson's* Symphony for the City of the Dead as a *"Dystopian Novel That Happens to be True"*

Abstract: In his critically acclaimed work of non-fiction, *Symphony for the City of the Dead: Dmitri Shostakovich and the Siege of Leningrad* (2015), American children's author M.T. Anderson uses the conventions of YA dystopian fiction in order to demonstrate how both the Stalinist Terror and the Nazi Siege of Leningrad profoundly affected the life and work of the renowned Soviet composer, Dmitri Shostakovich. By offering his young audience what he has called a "dystopian novel that happens to be true", Anderson not only challenges readers to consider the relationship between history and dystopia, but also prompts them to think critically about utopian ideals and their potentially dystopic consequences as well as about the vexed relationship between the individual and the collective. Ultimately, *Symphony for the City of the Dead* places into new relief the central concerns of Anderson's earlier, and much celebrated, YA dystopian novel, *Feed* (2002), insofar as it calls millennial readers – named the "historical generation" by historian and activist Timothy Snyder – to be mindful of the culturally- and historically-contingent character of contemporary political crises.

Keywords: dystopia, utopia, history, fiction, Stalinism, Nazism, Second World War, Leningrad

If, in the past two decades, the American children's author M.T. Anderson has enjoyed both popular and critical acclaim, this is in part because he has proven to be a remarkably versatile writer. His oeuvre includes, for example, picture books for young readers (e.g., *Handel, Who Knew What He Liked,* 2001), adventure stories for middle-grade readers (e.g. *The Game of Sunken Places*, 2004), works of horror and fantasy (e.g., *Thirsty,* 1997), realistic fiction that depicts the suburban American high school experience (e.g., *Burger Wuss*, 1999), dystopian science fiction (*Feed*, 2002), and historical fiction (the two volume *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation*, 2006/2008). Given Anderson's prodigious experimentation with story, form, and genre, it is not entirely surprising that he would test entirely new ground with his subse-

quent publication, *Symphony for the City of the Dead: Dmitri Shostakovich and the Siege of Leningrad* (2015), which accounts for how the composer Dmitri Shostakovich drew on his experiences of the Stalinist Terror and the Nazi siege of Leningrad in order to produce one of the most iconic musical pieces of the twentieth century: his Seventh ["Leningrad"] Symphony. Like many of Anderson's previous works for young adults, notably *Feed* and *Octavian Nothing, Symphony* depicts the process through which a young person becomes increasingly conscious of the social and historical forces that shape his development and constrain his individual agency. Moreover, much like these earlier books, this one demonstrates how an individual's recourse to music inspires him to test the fraught boundaries between freedom and determinism, innocence and experience, and individual and collective identity.[1] Unlike these earlier publications, however, *Symphony* is a work of non-fiction. Indeed, as Anderson takes pains to demonstrate through his inclusion of various paratextual elements – for instance, photographs extracted from archival sources, an author's note that documents his research trips to Russia, an extensive set of footnotes, and a final index – this text is intended as a credible account of the complex historical, cultural, and material circumstances that not only influenced Shostakovich's development as an artist but also the production of his most iconic musical composition. Additionally, as Anderson makes clear throughout the course of his narrative, *Symphony* is designed as a testament to the twin totalitarian regimes of Stalinism and Nazism, and in turn, to the ways in which tyrannical regimes and the wars in which they become enmeshed simultaneously quash and unwittingly inspire radical acts of artistic expression.

It is significant to note, however, that Anderson's depiction of his subject, no matter how scrupulously researched and faithful to historical record it might be, is ultimately mediated by the narrative strategies he employs as well as by his communication of this narrative to a specific (young adult) audience. Indeed, as literary theorists such as Hayden White have argued, it is practically impossible for any historian, despite her or his best intentions, to offer an objective or otherwise transparent account of the past.[2] That is, since modern his-

[1] Certainly, music serves as a leitmotif in *Feed* and *Octavian Nothing*. In the former novel, corporate conglomerates strategically obstruct the intellectual development and political awareness of young people in part by keeping them on a steady diet of banal, mass-produced pop tunes. The eponymous protagonist of the latter novel, Octavian, is an African slave whose ambivalent relationship with music complements his conflicted position in colonial America: he perceives his classical training as a violinist at once as evidence of his forced internalization of Anglo-European culture and as an outlet for free and politically subversive creative expression.

[2] In his narratological studies, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (1973) and *The Content of the Form* (1987), historian Hayden White identifies the ways in which modern historical accounts draw on rhetorical and literary tropes even as rely on the fantasy that events naturally "tell" or "speak for" themselves. Certainly, other twentieth-century philosophers of history such as Walter Benjamin and Michel

torical accounts are conventionally delivered through narrative, the historian is impelled to emplot her research within a narrative structure that is already familiar to her audience – a structure that, by virtue of its very contemporaneousness and accessibility, necessarily translates the past into the language, logic, and cultural sensibilities of the present. To be sure, Anderson himself has suggested that he drew on his experience as a novelist, as well as on his appreciation of music, in order to arrange a plot that effectively conveys his key themes of history, power, and artistic innovation to young readers for whom these ideas may be entirely new. In a February 2016 interview with the author and illustrator Steve Sheinkin, for example, Anderson admitted that although his primary intention in the production of each section of *Symphony* involved "transmitting [an] important piece of information", he was equally invested in depicting "important nodal scenes, and not just scenes but movements beneath scenes, [as well as] larger rhythms of crisis and resolution." Such nodal scenes, he maintains, work toward "hurling the audience forward to the next chapter" just as much as scenes in a suspenseful novel might do.[3]

Certainly, one might expect that Anderson drew on his previous experience as the author of an award-winning historical novel to emplot a rich and intriguing set of events through the focalized perspective of a well-developed central personage. As is evident in his use of such musical terms as "movements" and "rhythms", he is attentive to the relationship between literary and musical composition – a critical association he explicitly addresses in his meditations on the testimonial potential of music. And yet, as Anderson suggests in his interview with Sheinkin, his production of *Symphony* was just as influenced by the conventions of YA dystopian fiction as it was by those of historical fiction and musical composition. In fact, he admits that he initially pitched the book to his editors as a "dystopian novel that happens to be true." This statement may seem problematic, not least because readers may well associate dystopian fiction with fantastical settings, escapist tales of adventure, and occasional doses of didacticism. To be sure, Anderson's biography can in no way be read as a mere adventure story set against the backdrop of early Soviet history. It is avowedly a work of non-fiction, and thus it is substantially different from dystopian fantasies such as Ann Halam's *Siberia* (2005), which stages its protagonist's quest to thwart species extinction within the Soviet gulag ar-

Foucault – both of whose interventions White carefully studies – have theorized and enacted ways of approaching history that resist and critique literary (master) narratives; even so, conventional scholarly historical accounts, as well as popular histories such as Anderson's, demonstrate the dependence on literary tropes that White identifies in his work.

[3] Sheinkin's "Walking and Talking" interview series, presented in the medium of comics, is anthologized by Elizabeth Bird, who publishes them in a blog sponsored by the School Library Journal. Bird posted Sheinkin's interview with Anderson on 4 February, 2016. http://blogs.slj.com/afuse8production/2016/02/04/walking-and-talking-with-m-t-anderson/

chipelago. Nor does it indulge in either escapist fantasy or heavy-handed didacticism: unlike some YA dystopian novels, it does not resemble a "training manual on how to reverse the dilemma, reverse the damage, and start anew" (Basu, et. al. 2013: 6). Quite to the contrary, it presents the Stalinist Terror and the Nazi occupation of Leningrad – two events that, according to Anderson, effectively held Soviet citizens in a state of siege – as historical traumas whose responsible depiction permits neither romantic fantasy about a heroic past nor any attempts at pragmatic explanation or moral lesson-giving. Even so, Anderson's quip that his text is a "dystopian novel that happens to be true", coupled with his reputation as the author of the cult classic novel, *Feed*, may prompt his readers to detect certain generic hallmarks of YA dystopian fiction in his stylized account of Shostakovich's experience of two traumatic moments of Soviet history. There are some uncanny correspondences between Anderson's emplotment of Shostakovich's biography and the tropes that Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz, in the introduction to their critical study, *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers* (2013), identify as characteristic of YA dystopian fiction: namely, the exposition of a nightmarish or otherwise undesirable society through the focalized perspective of a sympathetic hero; the development of a plot that requires the protagonist's negotiation of state-enforced conformity and complicit silence; and a reflection on how emerging and often exciting forms of technology, including those that mediate information, may be used to proscribe individual agency and sustain collective paranoia (5).

To a certain extent, one might interpret Anderson's broad hint about implicit dystopian conventions in his newest publication as a mere marketing ploy: a strategic effort to tempt YA readers, and particularly fans of *Feed*, to purchase his biography of an early twentieth-century Russian composer. Such a suspicion is not unfounded, especially given the increasingly competitive character of the YA market and the concomitant pressure on authors to publicize their works on ever-multiplying media platforms. Nevertheless, the blending of genres to which Anderson gestures in his succinct and admittedly market-savvy description of a "true" dystopian narrative is not at all new. As Basu, Broad, and Hintz observe in their introduction, YA dystopian narratives have traditionally drawn on a "mixture" of literary genres, including the *Bildungsroman*, the adventure story, and the romance, to present harrowing visions of future societies. Although, as these scholars state, some YA authors may very well decide to place a "story of whatever genre into a dystopian setting" in order to obtain the "lucrative rewards" of the currently popular "dystopian label", there may nevertheless be "some aesthetic value to this mixture: if readers are already primed to respond to conventions they receive from other works, they might find the new genre more resonant and accessible" (6). Just so, Anderson's suggestion that his biography of Shostakovich involves dystopian conventions that audiences "receive from other works" might well offer readers with

little interest in either classical music or Soviet history an equally accessible entry-point into his narrative of the composer's experience of Stalinism and the Nazi siege of Leningrad.

By establishing such an entry point, Anderson's biography in turn prompts readers to think critically and reflexively about the origins, uses, limitations, and political potential of more familiar, and fictional, dystopian narratives. That is, by offering his audience a "dystopian novel that happens to be true", Anderson not only insists that dystopian societies have developed *within history*, rather than in fantastical settings beyond it, but also intimates that many of the dystopian texts that young readers consider merely fictional or speculative are in fact influenced by very "real" historical traumas such as those he exposits within *Symphony*. Moreover, by documenting the complex and historically- and culturally-contingent circumstances in which Shostakovich lived, as well as the composer's own equally complex and contingent responses to them, Anderson effectively critiques the easy binaries that structure many popular works of YA fiction: namely, utopia versus dystopia; good intentions and actions versus harmful or ill-willed ones; and the youthful individual versus a reactionary older generation. Finally, Anderson's exposition of the causes and consequences of an earlier, "true", dystopic society challenges young readers to reflect critically on the immanent conditions of their own historical present – notably, an act whose significance the privileged hero of his earlier dystopian novel, *Feed*, only belatedly learns.

"THE LENINGRAD THAT STALIN DESTROYED…"

Although the "true" dystopian narrative that Anderson ostensibly sets out to unfold is the Nazi siege of Leningrad, *Symphony* begins not with the initial German attempts to blockade the city in 1941, nor even with the commencement of the Second World War, but rather with the first revolutionary stirrings in early twentieth-century Russia. The first half of his book provides a scrupulous account of the events that led to the transformation of the tsarist Russian empire into a revolutionary communist experiment and, shortly thereafter, into a totalitarian state. Certainly, this historical exposition is well warranted, not least because some of Anderson's intended American readers may be unacquainted with twentieth-century Eastern European history and thus might require a detailed introduction to the events that preceded the Soviet Union's entrance into the Second World War. Additionally, this extended primer allows Anderson to provide an account of the cultural and material circumstances that initially shaped Shostakovich's artistic development and political consciousness. It is not insignificant, for example, that the composer's birth in 1906 occurred a year after peacefully demonstrating peasants and workers were fired upon by tsarist guards on "Bloody Sunday" and a little over a decade before the collapse of the Romanov dynasty and the ultimate ascent of the

Bolshevik Party. Since his earliest and most formative childhood years were bracketed by two moments of revolutionary upheaval, it is perhaps unsurprising that Shostakovich's later works and professional career would be indelibly marked by these initial conflicts between tradition and innovation. To this end, Anderson devotes the first part of his narrative to documenting how the "gentle" and "birdlike" composer would eventually collaborate with such titans of revolutionary experimental art as Vladimir Mayakovsky and Vsevolod Meyerhold (7). Additionally, he demonstrates how Shostakovich drew on both his classical training and the "musical vocabulary of ultramodernity" in his 1927 Second Symphony written in honor of the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution (57). Moreover, Anderson's accounts of Shostakovich's subsequent survival of the Stalinist purges, during which was denounced as an "enemy of the people" charged with composing "a mess instead of music" (90), effectively demonstrates how the composer's initial confrontation with the internal threat of Stalinism prepared him to confront the later, external, threat of the Nazi occupation.

Even so, some readers might find it surprising that Anderson dedicates such a substantial portion of his narrative to the social and political upheavals in the pre-war Soviet Union when his ostensible objective is to exposit how the Nazi siege of Leningrad specifically inspired Shostakovich's *pièce de resistance* After all, this siege was carried out after the Stalinist purges had largely subsided, and after Soviet Russian citizens had at least temporarily suspended their memories of the revolution and its nightmarish aftermath in order to defend the Fatherland against fascism. And yet, as Anderson intimates in the first half of his book, the "siege of Leningrad" he intends to document is not limited to the infamous Nazi blockade of 1941–1944, but rather more generally to the ways in which Soviet citizens, and especially the residents of Leningrad, lived in a practical state of siege since at least the accession of Stalin. That is, if the term "siege" connotes the strategic cutting off of, and consequent demand of surrender, enacted by an armed power on a vulnerable population, then the systematic purges and psychic terror that citizens of Leningrad experienced under Stalinist rule throughout the 1930's and up to the commencement of the Second World War might effectively be described as such. Indeed, according to Anderson, Shostakovich himself "supposedly"[4] once said that his Seventh

[4] Anderson attributes this quote to Solomon Volkov's *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich* (1976). As Anderson states in his narrative, Volkov was a Soviet scholar who, upon emigration to the United States, composed *Testimony* based on his extensive interviews with the composer. "The problem is", Anderson continues, "it is not clear that these are Shostakovich's memoirs at all. Solomon Volkov was never able to produce the notes from which he wrote down these stories. The most likely scenario is that Volkov just wrote things down largely from memory, trying to capture Shostakovich's style of speech and way of telling stories. That means that we never know if any particular detail from *Testimony* is accurate or not, if Shostakovich ever truly said it or not" (140). Certainly, this is not the only qualification Anderson offers regarding his sources; in fact,

Symphony was dedicated to "the Leningrad that Stalin destroyed and that Hitler merely finished off" (7).

Anderson's looser interpretation of the siege of Leningrad thus permits him to explore in greater detail how historical accounts of Stalinism and Nazism respectively might place pressure on YA fictional representations of dystopian society. For example, in his second chapter, appropriately entitled "The Birth of Tomorrow", he is particularly invested in establishing how key developments in late-1920's-era Soviet Russia effectively disrupt the binary opposition between "utopia" and "dystopia" that structures many popular YA novels. As Basu et. al. note, a "dystopia" initially "seems like it ought to be the reverse of a utopia, the non-existent society 'considerably better' than the current world" (2). And yet, they maintain, "the dystopia often functions as a rhetorical *reductio ad absurdum* of a utopian philosophy, extending utopia to its most extreme ends in order to caution against the destructive politics and culture of the author's present"[5] (2). In the course of this chapter, then, Anderson demonstrates precisely how the utopian vision of the Bolshevik Revolution, once codified into official state policy and practice, was taken to its "most extreme ends" in such a way that the society it produced came to resemble its "reverse" image. In the first half of this chapter, Anderson enumerates Leninist-era aesthetic innovations in quick succession, as though to communicate the sheer breathlessness of the era. He describes, for instance, the public and often spontaneous performances inspired by Lenin's insistence that "art belongs to the people" (35) and Mayakovsky's call to "drag the pianos out onto the streets" (36); the emergence of such new art movements as the "Cubo-Futurists and Neo-Primitivists, Constructivists and Suprematists, Rayonists and Productivists" (37); and the production of science fiction-themed novels, plays, and ballets that hailed the advent of a technologically advanced and equitable society. He is careful, moreover, to document how Shostakovich, like many young Russian artists

throughout his narrative, he is careful to explain how the atmosphere of fear and paranoia in Stalinist-era Soviet Russia prompted individuals to make guarded statements that require interpretation, if not speculation. In this way, Anderson's practice of questioning the context in which each of his source's statements were made further places into relief the dystopic historical circumstances he attempts to represent.

[5] In her essay, "Dire Cartographies: The Roads to Ustopia", author Margaret Atwood coins the term "ustopia" – a combination of "utopia" and "dystopia" – to maintain that "each contains a latent version of the other" (Atwood 2001: 66). Utopian visions, she argues, often appear as such only until they are considered "sideways" from the perspectives of those or what they necessarily exclude – or until they are regarded in retrospect, in relation to the often violent means that justify their ends. Likewise, dystopias often emerge from the utopian impulses of their founders. Thus, "within each utopia, a concealed dystopia; within each dystopia, a hidden utopia" (85). Significantly, Atwood notes that she composed her landmark dystopian (or "ustopian") novel, *The Handmaid's Tale* in Cold War-era Berlin and rural Alabama – two specific socio-political locations that demonstrate the ambiguous relationship between utopian visions (communism and democracy, respectively) and the unjust practices they nevertheless permitted (86–87).

of his time, was caught up in the ebullience of the age. He traces, for instance, Shostakovich's passage from a Conservatory student whose commitment to revolutionary principles led him to play in "fields and dining halls" (35) to a young master whose second symphony "included a part […] for a factory whistle to announce the opening of the new workers' utopia" (58).

And yet, within these very passages that document the heady days of Leninist-era innovations, Anderson scatters discordant notes that signal the dangerous potential of early Soviet revolutionary aspirations. For instance, he immediately follows his introduction to Futurism, and his account of Shostakovich's initial enthusiasm for the Futurist poet Mayakovsky, the "brash bard of the Revolution" (40), with a more sobering reflection on the political instrumentalization of the ideals espoused by such radical artists. He notes, for example, how Mayakovsky's insistence that artists "spit on the rhymes and arias" of the bourgeoisie was literalized by Lenin, whose desire to "organize violence in the name of the interest of our workers" (40) informed his belief that the arts become an instrument of ideological coercion (42). Likewise, Anderson follows his account of Shostakovich's near-meteoric rise – signaled, for example, by his collaboration with Mayakovsky and Meyerhold, his completion of his Second and Third symphonies, and his popularly and critically acclaimed operatic adaptation of Nikolai Gogol's *The Nose* – with a description of the increasingly stringent limitations placed on musical compositions deemed (un)fit for "the people" by an increasingly vigilant state (68). By the end of the chapter, Anderson's depictions of impassioned revolutionary aesthetic interventions gradually taper off and are replaced by narratives of frustrated, if not aborted, ideals. It concludes not only with the state censure of Mayakovsky's politically critical and now-canonical play, *The Bedbug* (1929), and the author's subsequent suicide in 1930, but also with a litany of abuses of state power enacted in the name of revolution: for instance, the forced collectivization of peasants and the liquidation of small-land-holders branded as "anti-people" (69); the equally forced resettlement of Kazakh nomads (70); and the uncompromising quotas demanded by the First Five Year Plan of 1928 on both factories and newly-collectivized farms (70). The final three sentences of his chapter signal a final death knell over a decade-long utopian project: "After Lenin's death, Stalin quietly moved to take power. By 1930, Stalin's foes seemed to melt away. His name meant 'Man of Steel,' and his fist began to close" (72).

If this chapter is particularly remarkable, it is because it effectively traces those crucial moments in which the initial blooms of utopian conviction begin, at first imperceptivity, to rust. By staggering his chapter with intermittent accounts of revolutionary aspirations and subsequent failures in such a way that reveal a punctualized but nevertheless steady decline, Anderson is able to demonstrate the intimate entanglement between utopia and dystopia. That is, rather than positing dystopian societies as the categorical and isolated "reverse" of utopian societies, he instead suggests that dystopian societies may be

the consequence of utopian hopes that, once accepted as hard and inevitable facts, can be easily co-opted and calcified by state policy. Moreover, and perhaps more crucially, Anderson's chapter calls attention to the ways in which the transition between utopian ideals and an ultimate dystopian reality is more likely to involve a *process* rather than a sudden rupture.

In this way, Anderson's non-fictional account of Soviet Russia's slouch toward a dystopian totalitarian state places pressure on contemporary YA fictional depictions of dystopia. First, Anderson's scrupulous documentation of Soviet Russia's slow and initially unanticipated turn toward a totalitarian state implicitly challenges a general trend in dystopian YA fiction to emplot protagonists within terrifying social structures that emerge only after a mysterious and scarcely documented cataclysmic event, and that bear little resemblance at all to the societies that preceded them. Suzanne Collins' phenomenally popular *The Hunger Games* (2008), for instance, provides only a terse explanation for how the tyrannical Capitol achieved power over its subsidiary districts, just as Veronica Roth's *Divergent* (2011) offers scant account for how, exactly, its post-apocalyptic Chicago setting eventually became fractured into competing "factions." Such texts thus forgo expositing the potentially rich and complex circumstances and chain of events that produced their dreadful settings and in turn the specific desires and motivations of the heroes who live within them. Rather, by regarding these prior phenomena as *faits accomplis*, they not only privilege forward-driven plots over sustained meditation on the gradual emergence of unjust power dynamics, but they also suggest that the formation of dystopian societies occurs outside of, or otherwise apart from, history.

Certainly, there is an element of wish-fulfillment delivered by these tales of sudden and generally unexplained moments of cataclysm. As the YA author Scott Westerfeld compellingly argues, these (post-) apocalyptic narratives may be "so beloved" by teenagers precisely because they envision the total obliteration of a "system" young people find intolerable and in turn offer the promise of an entirely new beginning (Basu, et.al. 2013: 6). ("What is the apocalypse", Westerfeld quips, "but an everlasting snow day?" [6]). Although this fantasy of a proverbial clean slate is surely seductive, it is ultimately dangerous, not least because its presentation of an unpredictable catastrophe inevitably followed by a radically new "system" effectively excuses readers from thinking about, and actively responding to, the complex socio-political dynamics and portent warnings immanent within their own contemporary moment. Additionally, such future-oriented, post-historical narratives obstruct the recognition that dystopian societies not only have existed, and continue to exist, within history, but also that they have identifiable causes and consequences. To this end, then, Anderson's chapter disrupts the fantasy offered by some of his fellow YA authors by challenging readers to scour his dense account of 1920s-era Soviet Russian history for evidence of how various utopian innovations and social

programs may nevertheless have given way to a totalitarian, and utterly dystopic, state commanded by a self-professed "Man of Steel."

To the extent that Anderson's chapter suggests, counter-intuitively, that the very causes of Soviet Russia's lapse into a totalitarian state were intimately bound up with its initial liberating vision, it also in turn disrupts the easy binaries that structure many popular YA dystopian novels: for example, good versus evil; clear-minded youths versus corrupted adults; or the single brave individual versus an omnipotent state shrouded in mystery. Certainly, such binaries are consoling, not least because they reaffirm traditionally Western Romantic credence in the paradoxical wisdom of childhood innocence and the primacy of individual agency over the collective imagination. And yet, as Anderson suggests throughout his chapter, such idealistic bifurcations rarely, if ever, bear out in the unfolding of actual, historical traumatic events. Surely, the most noble of intentions may be harnessed toward inhumane ends; youthful zeal can harden into orthodoxy; and the most principled individual might become complicit, if only unwittingly or unintentionally, in the injustices structured within the social order in which she is enmeshed. This is not to say, of course, that Anderson's chapter resorts to cynicism or otherwise celebrates moral relativism. In fact, his subsequent narrative makes very clear how Shostakovich and other residents of Leningrad made good faith efforts to negotiate the moral and ethical dilemmas they faced during the height of the Stalinist Terror and the following Nazi siege, and therefore to preserve their credence in a shared sense of humanity. Even so, Anderson insists that such ethical decisions, or such commitments to the best interests of humanity, occur within a complex network of historically-, culturally-, and materially-contingent conditions rather than within an easily taxonomized social structure in which well-intended actions are guaranteed desired, and in fact determined, outcomes.

Indeed, Anderson's subsequent chapter, ironically entitled "Life is Getting Merrier", demonstrates how, following the accession of Stalin, beliefs in necessary or otherwise determined utopian desires might be taken "to their most extreme ends." That is, if the previous chapter documents how liberating visions initially articulated by "the people" gradually became co-opted by an increasingly regimented state charged with determining not only "the people's" best interests but also who, in fact, did or did not comprise "the people" at all, this one describes the total seizure of power by a state entitled to engineer revolutionary objectives by any means necessary. It begins, for example, with an account of the forced starvation of "more than four million" newly-collectivized Ukrainian peasants whose deaths were justified by Soviet officials as heralding a "more glorious future" (74). Shortly thereafter, it depicts the arrest of the great Russian poet Osip Mandelstam, whose eye-witness of the artificial famine impelled him to pen a toxic "squib" (74) against its architect, the "broad-chested Stalin" (73). In the pages that follow, Anderson offers numer-

ous other examples of measures taken by the Stalinist state against both individuals and entire populations in the name of the revolution. Like his earlier chapter, his heaping of details evokes a sense breathlessness – although this time, it suggests choking rather than panting enthusiasm. He describes, for instance, how Stalin's paranoid desire to cleanse the Soviet state of "enemies of the people" charged with "wrecking" its institutionalized objectives included not only mass deportations, assassinations, and artificially-created famines but also the torture of pregnant women (113) and the legal execution of children as young as twelve (86). Additionally, he documents how the practice of constant street-side and wire-tapped surveillance (97), as well as the extraction of (usually false) testimonies under torture, prompted Soviet citizens not only to "mask" their private suspicions with public performances of fidelity to the state but also to withdraw from their neighbors and even their own children (112).

To the extent that Anderson's chapter offers readers a stark portrait of a totalitarian society that rivals anything they may have encountered in YA dystopian novels such as Collins' or Roth's, it also provides them with a central character, Shostakovich, whose experience of tyranny at once resembles and substantially departs from those of his fictional counterparts. Initially, Anderson's characterization of Shostakovich, as well as his emplotment of the composer within the events of the Stalinist Terror, appears to correspond neatly with the conventions that typify popular dystopian texts. First, the author takes pains to characterize his central figure as a rather ordinary person – a "bookish" young man who nevertheless overcame his shyness to establish a circle of friends and youthful love affairs – whose coming-of-age was not entirely different from that of most middle-class Leningraders who came to espouse revolutionary principles. However, once he has established his hero as a credible "everyman" with whom the reader might identify and trust to follow throughout the subsequent narrative, Anderson in turn reveals his possession of an exceptional gift. Not unlike the expert archer Katniss Everdeen of Collins' *The Hunger Games* or the visionary Jonas of Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993), Shostakovich's rare talent, musical composition, ultimately distinguishes him from his peers. In turn, Anderson demonstrates how, much like these fictional protagonists, Shostakovich's exercise of his prodigious faculty eventually brings him into conflict with an established power and earns him persecution. He describes, for example, how, in January of 1936 the long-anticipated premiere of the composer's opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District,* was overshadowed by the appearance of Comrade Stalin, who cracked hard-boiled eggs throughout the first act and casually quipped that the performance was a "mess, not music" (90). As a result of this pronouncement, Shostakovich was variously branded by the Soviet press and his own colleagues as an "enemy of the people" (94), "anti-People" (96), and a "saboteur" (115). Near the end of the chapter, however, Anderson offers his protagonist a triumphant and symbolic redemption: the overwhelmingly passionate response of Leningraders who perceived a rep-

resentation of their own private suffering in the 1937 premiere of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony.

And yet, even as Anderson's account of Shostakovich's survival of the Stalinist Terror generally follows the narrative arc of a conventional YA dystopian novel or series, it nevertheless introduces key details and strategically inserted editorial remarks that critique, if not deconstruct, the myth of individual heroism on which YA dystopian novels tend to rely. Although Anderson certainly does not dispute Shostakovich's prodigious musical talents – after all, his entire book is a tribute to the multiple ways the composer drew on his remarkable capacities to confront two tyrannical regimes and memorialize their victims – he nevertheless makes it explicitly clear that Shostakovich, unlike his fictional counterparts, did not survivemerely on account of his individual interventions or personal merits. In fact, the author takes pains to demonstrate how Shostakovich's survival, much like that of many Soviet citizens who weathered 1930's-era persecutions, was ultimately due to the whims of his oppressors and to the fickle workings of chance. In one memorable moment of his chapter, for example, he reports how Shostakovich narrowly avoided interrogation – during which he most likely would have been tortured into offering false witness, just as his own denouncers had done – only because his scheduled investigator had already been condemned and arrested (127). To be sure, a scene such as this one might constitute a convenient *deus ex machina* in a work of fiction: an unexpected reprieve that constitutes an exception to an otherwise efficient set of legal protocols. However, as Anderson makes evident within the course of his chapter, this scene, dramatic as it might be, is instead indicative of an overarching system regulated by paranoia and radical contingency rather than by the scientific rationalism the state appeared to profess. To this end, Anderson cites the poet Anna Akhmatova, who responded to those who sought rational explanations for arrests by proclaiming "it's time you understood that people are arrested *for nothing*!" (100). Lest the reader believe that individuals might survive within a totalitarian society simply on the merits of their genius or bravery, Anderson offers an extended account of the arrest, torture, and execution of Meyerhold, the great stage-director who openly defended himself and Shostakovich against charges of "formalism" and who publicly accused the state of "eliminat[ing] art" (114). At the end of this scrupulously detailed narrative, the author offers a cautionary note to readers who might be tempted to indulge in wish-fulfilling fantasies about dystopian societies, past or future:

> "When we read tales of atrocity, we all want to be the one who stood firm, who would not bend, who shouted the truth in the face of the dictator.
>
> Vsevolod Meyerhold came as close as anyone to achieving this. It is important to know the full horror of his sacrifice.
>
> It is easy for us all to imagine we are heroes when we are sitting in our kitchens, dreaming of distant suffering." (117)

The author's use of the first-person plural in this passage suggests that he does not exclude himself from those who might be inclined to romanticize a traumatic past or naively fantasize about acting in ways that victims could not: this is a danger in which "we", as mere spectators of the past, may be complicit. There may also be another, implicit and additionally self-reflexive, caveat in this statement that regards the ultimate structure of the narrative. That is, although Anderson's narrative arrangement of key events of the Great Terror might resemble certain conventions of the YA dystopic novel, it nevertheless forbids the titillation that readers might experience in over-identifying with fictional characters whose exceptionalism guarantees their survival, or at least their posthumous glory. Certainly, to cite Westerfeld's critique once more, it does not permit the belief that social upheaval grants young people an "everlasting snow day."

"… AND THAT HITLER MERELY FINISHED OFF"

If the first half of *Symphony* addresses the immense mortal and psychic toll of the Stalinist Terror, the second half documents the equally nightmarish outcome of the Nazi siege of Leningrad: a three year blockade that resulted not only in the deaths of more than a million Soviet citizens but also the near-starvation and ruthless dehumanization of practically all the residents of the "Venice of the North." In the beginning of this second section, however, Anderson takes pains to demonstrate how these two events or "sieges" – the first that consisted of Stalin's internal strangulation of the Soviet populace, and the second that involved Hitler's externally imposed attempt – were not at all unrelated. For example, he documents how, on the eve of the Second World War, the purges left the army "decimated" and the state economy "gutted"(153). In turn, he reports how the Soviet Union's consequent vulnerability led to Stalin's unanticipated but self-preserving alliance with Hitler through the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 (153). Since, presumably, the news of such an alliance might come as a surprise to readers whose instruction in Second World War history may have led them to believe that Stalin and Hitler were mortal enemies from the start,[6] Anderson provides additional evidence to the contrary: he notes, for

[6] In *No Simple Victory: World War II in Europe, 1939–1945* (2007), historian Norman Davies literally re-orients the narrative of the Second World War to address key events in Eastern European history – including the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 – that have long been neglected in Anglo-American historiography and collective memory. Likewise, one of the objectives of Timothy Snyder's Second World War history, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (2010) is to document the collusion between the Nazi and Stalinist regimes and thus to place into relief the complex role played by the Eastern European territories they divided and contested. Notably, both studies challenge the conventional belief – still expressed in world history curricula in North America and Europe – that Nazism and Stalinism were diametrically opposed regimes and their leaders mortal enemies. Not insignificantly, both scholars cite Hannah Arendt, whose post-war

instance, Stalin's approbation of Hitler's own internal purge, the "Night of Long Knives" of 1934 (152) as well as his ironic refusal to trust no source save Hitler alone (163). In a move that subtly alludes to Hannah Arendt's classic work of political philosophy, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), the author states that, "despite their ideological differences, […] Hitler and Stalin had one thing in common: despotic totalitarianism. […] Communism, moving to the left, and Fascism, on the other hand, moving to the right, met like fists behind the back and clutched each other there, where none could see" (152).

Anderson goes on to demonstrate how, following the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 – an event that Stalin evidently perceived as such a betrayal that he sequestered himself for days (186) – a substantial majority of Soviet citizens put aside their memories of the Terror in order to rally behind the Red Army and "protect their cities, their towns, their families" (175). In the subsequent chapters, he documents the swift and brutal German penetration of Soviet territory, as well as measures taken by the military and civilian groups to thwart it; the initial Nazi encirclement and bombing of Leningrad, including the destruction of the city's centrally-located reserve of emergency food supplies (214); the evacuation of children and other vulnerable citizens from the city; and the eventual rendering of Leningrad as shell-pocked "Cubist landscape" (229) in which citizens alternately hoarded and traded ration-cards (dubbed, ironically, "*smertniks*") for increasingly scant supplies (222). Throughout the narrative, Anderson makes it clear that the German blockade of Leningrad and starvation of its citizens was not a mere military tactic, but rather a continuation of Hitler's genocidal project. Like Jews, Gypsies, and other minorities, Slavs were regarded as "subhumans" whose elimination would enable the settlement of Aryan colonists of the fertile and mineral-rich territories of the Soviet Union (159). To emphasize this point, he notes that Hitler "spoke warmly of the way the United States government had exterminated so many of the Native Americans in the nineteenth century, seizing and settling their land" and consequently "hoped to do the same in Russia" (159). Likewise, Hitler's propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, stated that he was less interested in Leningrad's "capitulation" than in its total destruction "by a virtually scientific method" (219). Significantly, such a "method", which involved sparing German troops the trouble of directly shooting their victims, uncannily resembled the technically-coordinated and impersonal methods of extermination that Nazis were coterminously perfecting in western concentration camps such as Auschwitz.

To be sure, Anderson's arguably most memorable and haunting chapter, "The City of the Dead", rivals descriptions of Nazi concentration camps in its graphic and uncompromising account of the conditions faced by Leningraders

mediations on the origins of totalitarianism offered one of the first comparative studies of Nazism and Stalinism.

during the blockade. The chapter begins with a description of the eerie silence that descended upon a once-vibrant city now deprived of electricity and enshrouded by the darkness of long northern nights. The absence of both trams and foot-traffic, as well as the disappearance of street animals increasingly hunted for food, made Leningrad appear, according to one of its youngest citizens, "like a frozen realm of some sea king" (283). And yet, this scene was not entirely frozen or static: as the siege continued, the sidewalks began to be littered with corpses that, given the extreme winter conditions and the flagging energy of survivors, were simply abandoned and left unburied (284). Those Leningraders who dared to leave "broken rooms" warmed by burned furniture soon learned to step over these frozen and looted corpses or otherwise impassively load them into trucks destined for mass graves "excavated with explosives" (287). Years later, survivors of the siege "similarly described" the "emotional emptiness" they experienced during their interactions with dead bodies as "the heart 'switching off'" (287). Such a practice of "switching off" otherwise normal sentimental responses and attachments soon became a necessary method of survival, as starving people slaughtered their beloved household pets for food and even consumed the mortal remains of their dead family members (291). At the height of the forced famine, necrophagie ("corpse eating" or "*trupoyedstvo*") gave way to instances of cannibalism ("*lyudoyedstvo*") often carried out by roving gangs of men who would prey on isolated individuals in darkened alleyways, consume their choicest parts to satiate their hunger, and sell or barter the rest for profit (291). Indeed, in a passage that rivals the most nightmarish scenes from post-apocalyptic novels such as Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006),[7] Anderson offers the narrative of a grandmother, "pushed over the edge into insanity by hunger" who attempted to cook her infant grandchild in an "aluminum bathtub over a flame" (291) only to follow it with an account of a young man who barely escaped butchery in a make-shift abattoir in a Leningrad flat (293).

It is not surprising that this chapter is most often cited in the initial critical reviews of *Symphony*: to be sure, the instances of human suffering and depravity that Anderson describes cannot be easily forgotten. Nor is it surprising, for that matter, that readers and reviewers of this book have referred directly to historical evidence that Anderson documents in this chapter in order to pronounce his book a veritably dystopian narrative. For example, in a September 2015 interview with Anderson on National Public Radio's syndicated program,

[7] Set in the wake of an unnamed disaster, McCarthy's novel features a father-son pair who travel south on a long-abandoned American highway in an attempt to find safe haven from roving bands of cannibals and other post-apocalyptic threats. The novel, which was later adapted as a critically-acclaimed film in 2009, is perhaps particularly memorable because it so poignantly depicts the bond between a protective father and his innocent child—an archetypal relationship that is dramatically disrupted by Anderson's frank accounts of (attempted) filicide in siege-era Leningrad.

Here and Now, journalist and radio host Robin Young immediately remarked that the "very popular zombie films" that young people currently enjoy ultimately "pale" in comparison to Anderson's descriptions of "people eating wallpaper" and starving individuals resorting to necrophagie and cannibalism. In response to Young's observation, Anderson stated that, "as a joke, I said to my editor when I presented [the manuscript of *Symphony*] to her: 'Think of it as a dystopian novel that happens to be entirely true." Save for his admission that he made this pitch "as a joke" – perhaps a performance of self-deprecation on behalf of his nation-wide listening audience – Anderson statement nearly replicates the one he made in his interview with Sheinkin: "I pitched it to my editors as a dystopian novel that happens to be true." In his interview with Sheinkin, however, Anderson offers a more detailed explanation for why he decided to present the siege of Leningrad within a non-fictional account rather than in a historical novel or a work of dystopian fiction: "I realized", he states, that "the material was so extreme, so bizarre, that if you turned it into fiction, no one would believe it […] It retains its power, its strangeness, more if it's non-fiction."

Anderson's decision to offer his readers a work of non-fiction rather than an historical novel surely corroborates the adage that "the truth is stranger than fiction." However, it may also place into relief the ways that young adult audiences' expectations and reading practices have been influenced by the swelling popularity of YA dystopian novels. As Laura Miller argues in a 2014 essay for *The New Yorker,* for example, the rising demand for dystopian or [post-] apocalyptic narratives has prompted YA authors to produce increasingly extravagant scenarios that, despite their lack of credulity or presentation of "ideological coherence", nevertheless offer "harrowing" stories that "thrill" their young readers (Miller 2010: 6). As Miller states, there are, "or will soon be, books about teenagers slotted into governmentally arranged professions and marriages or harvested for spare parts or genetically engineered for particular skills or brainwashed by subliminal messages embedded in music or outfitted with Internet connections in their brains";[8] likewise, "there are the post-apocalyptic scenarios in which humanity is reduced to subsistence farming or neo-feudalism, stuck in villages ruled by religious fanatics or surrounded by toxic wastelands, predatory warlords, or flesh-eating zombie hordes" (3). Although Miller's laundry list of successively inventive YA plots is intended to support her thesis that they speak to the desires of over-protected teenagers who crave both adventure and an allegorical reflection of their "adolescent disaffection" (7), it also suggests that young readers have been primed to expect strange and implausible narratives as a matter of course. To be sure, as Basu, Broad, and Hintz maintain, there is a possibility that the "wildly fantastic premises" of YA dystopian novels "may provide young people with an entry point into real-world problems, encouraging them

[8] The last reference is, of course, to Anderson's *Feed*.

to think about social and political issues in new ways, or even for the first time" (Basu et al. 2013: 4–5). And yet, it may be just as likely that the "far-fetched concepts" employed by such texts might not only render them mere "flights of fancy rather than as prognoses of a possible future" (4) but also picque more experienced readers' suspicion that dystopian formulas may indeed exploit a desire for novelty and titillation.

In this way, Anderson's deliberate choice to present the truly harrowing events of the Nazi siege of Leningrad within a work of non-fiction, rather than a novel, serves as a corrective to the potentially cynical expectation that any literary depiction of harrowing or otherwise "strange" events that occur within a collapsing social system necessarily belongs to the increasingly lucrative domain of YA dystopian fiction. Just as Anderson's earlier chapters on the origins and consequences of Stalinism remind readers that utopian impulses and dystopic claims to power are just as likely to emerge within history as they are within imagined and futuristic universes, so too does his later narrative of the Nazi siege demonstrate how extreme circumstances – e.g. physical privation and psychic isolation, the collapse of normative practices, and improvised and often extreme methods of survival – constituted the everyday reality of actual human subjects long before they became fodder for "wildly fantastical" stories.

This does not mean, however, that Anderson's book should be read as a categorical rejection of dystopian fiction, YA or otherwise. On the contrary, it may be appreciated as an attempt to restore the allegorical resonance and political implications of fictional works that otherwise be dismissed as mere wish-fulfilling pablum. That is, *Symphony's* most graphic and memorable passages place into relief the historical origins and significance of well-worn tropes. For instance, his depiction of hunger-crazed Leningraders who resorted to necrophagie and cannibalism suggests, as Young intuited in her interview, a possible source for dystopian and/or [post-] apocalyptic novels that feature mindless zombies in pursuit of human prey. Likewise, his reports of a city gutted by Nazi shelling, as well as the archival photographs he includes to supplement these descriptions, remind readers of the iconic World War-era scenes that may well have inspired the barren and smoky backdrops against which YA heroes arise. Indeed, in a caption that accompanies a photograph of two women seated in their living room – a samovar and tasseled lamp to their left and a blasted wall to their right – Anderson likens the scene to a "stage set" (221). In this way, he nods to how instances of war-era suffering gave way to, and were ultimately occluded by, their fictional representations. Finally, the book's moving account of the ultimate performance of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony by literally starving artists, some of whom toppled over from hunger during rehearsal, reminds readers that the brave acts of resistance demonstrated by beloved YA heroes may in fact have been modeled on individuals whose names and stories have since been lost to history.

FEED, *SYMPHONY*, AND THE "HISTORICAL GENERATION"

If Anderson's account of Shostakovich's specific experience of the Stalinist Terror and the Nazi siege of Leningrad is particularly invested in demonstrating how contemporary dystopian narratives are inspired, if only indirectly, by actual historical events, this may be in part because he is best known for authoring *Feed* (2002) – arguably the most popular and critically-acclaimed YA dystopian novel to date. Published in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September, 2001 and set in a not-too-distant future, *Feed* traces the gradual and ultimately belated awakening to political consciousness experienced by an American teenager raised within a corporate kleptocracy.[9] As the narrative unfolds, its narrator/protagonist, Titus, becomes increasingly aware of how the privileges and ostensible freedoms he enjoys are not only reserved for an exceptional minority of the greater global community, but are also intentionally constructed by a corporate oligarchy to keep him and his upper-middle-class fellows in a state of suspended naïveté. Specifically, Titus realizes how his voluntary election of a wireless chip implanted into his brain has thwarted his capacity for independent and critical thought. Although the eponymous "feed" offers him access to social media platforms and permits him instant and unregulated purchasing power on the on-line market, it also reduces him to a mere consumer whose preoccupation with the newest retail and entertainment trends distracts him from the cataclysmic geo-political events that transpire, quite literally, at his feet.[10] It is only belatedly, when Titus' girlfriend brazenly identifies the producers of implanted wireless transmitters as corporate oligarchs who are concerned with keeping young citizens in thrall – and is subsequently punished by the corporation for her attempt to decathect from the "feed" – that the protagonist finally recognizes the extent

[9] As Sara L. Schwebel argues in her comparative study of *Feed* and Anderson's later, two-volume historical novel, *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing* – discussed in detail below – the post-9/11 publication of *Feed* is not insignificant. First, as she demonstrates, *Feed*'s depiction of its protagonist's initial indifference to historical catastrophe was in part inspired by Anderson's overhearing of insouciant remarks made by privileged adolescent New Yorkers in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks. Moreover, Schwebel maintains that *Feed*'s publication in 2002 inaugurated a veritable flood of YA dystopian narratives in the first decade of the twenty-first century – a trend she identifies as intimately bound up with anxieties regarding discourses of American exceptionalism and neo-imperialism in an increasingly tense period of global ideological and economic crisis.

[10] As the careful reader learns long before Titus himself does, the protagonist resides in a climate-controlled community designed to hover above neighborhoods devastated by pollution and internecine warfare. In this way, the novel implicitly gestures to how U.S. (sub)urban planning has involved the erection of "gated communities" that segregate middle class and primarily white citizens from their immediate working-class and Black/Hispanic neighbors in such a way that keeps their residents in a veritable "state of suspension" regarding inequities of class, race, and environmental sustainability.

to which his own actions and desires have been in effect mediated by ruling media conglomerates. By this point, however, Titus has little power left to intervene. The most he can do is to lament "America in its final days" (297) as he witnesses his country, as well as the bodies of his friends, literally turn to rot as the very manufacturers of the feed continue to profit from unilateral wars and environmental plunder.

This brief synopsis of *Feed* should make clear how much Anderson's *Symphony for the City of the Dead* constitutes a dramatic departure from his earlier work. After all, *Feed* is an explicit example of contemporary YA dystopic narratives characterized by futuristic settings and speculative scenarios. By contrast, *Symphony* only alludes to the conventions that this earlier text directly utilizes – and does so, moreover, within the form of non-fiction rather than in that of speculative fiction or science fiction. Additionally, and perhaps more significantly, *Feed*'s vision of dystopian society dominated by media oligarchs is clearly informed by a critique of late capitalism, whereas *Symphony*'s trencheant exposition of Stalinist terror renders it an unmistakably harsh evaluation of state-sponsored communism. And yet, despite these apparent formal and ideological differences, both texts are ultimately concerned with the crucial relationship between historical consciousness (or, rather, the lack thereof) and the gradual and unmitigated development of material and political conditions that culminate in dystopia.

As Sara L. Schwebel argues in a particularly astute evaluation of Anderson's ouevre, *Feed*'s major intervention may not be so much its critique of youth-focused consumer culture[11] but rather its interrogation of turn-of-the-century American historical pedagogy. If, for instance, Titus does not initially recognize the dramatic geo-political events unfolding in his midst, and is woefully unequipped to perceive how they are substantially informed by such on-going conflicts brought about by, say, US imperialism and neo-colonialism, this is in part because he has been educated in a school system ("School™") which trains students to access information through readily available media platforms but nevertheless does not offer them a larger "cognitive framework" through which to contextualize and think critically about the discrete facts they have absorbed (Schwebel 2014: 213). Consequently, the impoverished historical curriculum of Titus's alma mater, School™ – arguably an analogue for corporate-sponsored "charter schools" currently receiving increased government funding in the U.S. – not only denies pupils the "historical schema" they require to orient themselves within the present, but also creates an epistemological "void easily

[11] Other scholars have suspected Anderson's critique of such youth-focused consumer culture as a latent expression of technophobia. See, for example, Kristi McDuffie's essay, "Technology and Models of Literacy in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction" – published in Basu, Broad, and Hintz's collection – which argues that novels such as *Feed* demonstrate an older generation's anxieties about, and desire to control, emerging forms of electronic literacy.

filled by political rhetoric and product pitches" (213). Crucially, however, Anderson's strategic use of dramatic irony throughout the narrative impels readers to perceive what Titus does not, or cannot, do. Thus, it reminds them of the necessity of their own, gradually developing, "cognitive frameworks." For instance, *Feed* calls readers to be skeptical of Titus's claim that instant access to Internet search engines have rendered him "supersmart" once the narrator/protagonist glibly proclaims that the Revolutionary War-hero George Washington was in fact a Civil War-era general (Anderson 2002: 47). Moreover, and perhaps more significantly, *Feed* challenges readers to comb carefully through Titus's narrative in order to decipher details whose historical implications are lost on the narrator/protagonist. For example, although Titus is acquainted with late-twentieth-century civil rights, anti-war, and anti-globalization protest movements only through the nostalgically-commodified "riot gear" fashion lines advertised to him on his "feed", the more discerning reader might recognize how the heirs to these radical movements continually appear in his midst as they valiantly attempt to thwart the "final days" of a flailing nation. Consequently, as Schwebel maintains, although *Feed*'s "characters *cannot* use their understanding of the historical disconnection between national ideals and citizens' practice to advance a historically informed social critique, […] Anderson insists that his teenage readers *must*. Politicized by their reading, they are positioned to urge those in power to enact change" (198, italics in original).

Symphony, for its part, continues and indeed amplifies the challenge offered by *Feed* to counteract the "historical amnesia" that effectively facilitates a "willed oblivion" to both past and present moments of social and political crisis (Schwebel 212, 205). Cognizant of the fact that most American high school curricula do not adequately address Soviet history or even the role of the Soviet Union in the Second World War, *Symphony* presents such key events as the Russian Revolution, the Stalinist Terror, and the Nazi occupation of Leningrad within a narrative that is immediately accessible to young American audiences. Additionally, Anderson's reputation as the author of the phenomenally popular dystopian novel *Feed* might well draw otherwise reticent readers to his "dystopian novel that happens to be true." Of course, as I have demonstrated above, *Symphony*'s deployment of familiar conventions of YA dystopian literature by no means simplifies the content of its narrative or otherwise imagines its readers as passive and unsophisticated consumers. Rather just as *Feed* prompts its audience to decipher the nuances and implications of its narrator's limited perspective, *Symphony* is constructed in such a way that readers are impelled to engage actively with the rich and complex historical information it presents. Namely, it bids them to discern vexed relationships between such categories as utopia and dystopia, the individual and the collective, and the historical record and its literary and ideological representation. Thus, if, as Schwebel argues, the narrative strategies employed by *Feed* demand read-

ers' development of an "historical schema" that is necessary to their practice of informed national citizenship, then those utilized by Anderson's depiction of Soviet history challenge young people to cultivate an even broader "cognitive framework" required of citizenship within an increasingly globalized community.

To be sure, the kind of global historical consciousness promulgated by *Symphony* may be more necessary now than at the relatively recent moment that this book was published. For instance, in his manifesto, *On Tyranny* (2017), Yale historian Timothy Snyder – best known for his monograph, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (2010 – insists that Americans become intimately acquainted with Second World War-era Central and Eastern European history in order to respond critically and actively to the swift abridgement of their rights under the newly-inaugurated U.S. presidential administration. "Americans today", he states, "are no wiser than Europeans who saw democracy yield to fascism, Nazism, and communism in the twentieth century. Our one advantage is that we might learn from their experience" (Snyder 2017: 13). To this end, Snyder offers twenty chapters that each deliver succinct recommendations derived from events in Second World War-era Central and Eastern Europe. For example, in his fourth chapter, "Take responsibility for the rest of the world", he describes Stalinist and Nazi efforts to dehumanize peasants and Jews, respectively, in order to caution American readers against the consequences of "othering" language, symbols, and slogans. Likewise, in his eighteenth chapter, "Be calm when the unthinkable arrives", he cites the 1933 Reichstag fire in order to warn his audience of how political parties might coopt (or otherwise orchestrate) moments of crisis in order to seize "emergency" control of the state.

Not insignificantly, Snyder maintains that the necessary work of active resistance required by the current American political moment might be best accomplished by what he calls the "historical generation" comprised of young people whose studied acquaintance with a contingent and unromantic past might allow them to make informed and critical decisions regarding their present and future (126). Members of such an "historical generation", he suggests, possess the potential to think beyond both the deterministic notions of history espoused by communism and the nostalgic or otherwise mythical visions of the past celebrated by fascism. They are especially equipped to do so, he contends, not only because they are considerably more fluent in contemporary world history, but also because their access to continually developing social media platforms makes them aware of complex and contingent political formations and thus renders them particularly adept at thinking critically about immanent social and material conditions and the historical circumstances that radically influenced them. "One thing is certain:" Snyder proclaims in his epilogue, "If young people do not begin to make history, politicians of eternity and inevitability will destroy it. And to make history, young

Americans will have to know some. This is not the end, but a beginning" (126). To be sure, Snyder's manifesto places a significant burden on such a rising "historical generation" which, after all, has inherited the political and diplomatic blunders of its elders, as well as the immense costs of earlier and profligate expenditures of human labor and natural resources. And yet, if Snyder identifies a final and perhaps even desperate hope in such a "historical generation", then at least works of YA literature such as Anderson's *Feed* and *Symphony for City of the Dead* do their best to ensure that young possess the critical acumen necessary to reimagining the present and the future in relation to a carefully studied traumatic past. To this end, Anderson's texts attempt to thwart a moment in which current dystopian nightmares might well happen to become true.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, M.T. 2015. Interview with Robin Young. *Here and Now*. NPR. WBUR. <http://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2015/09/21/shostakovich>.

Anderson, M.T. 2015. *Symphony for the City of the Dead: Dmitri Shostakovich and the Seigeof Leningrad*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Anderson, M.T. 2002. *Feed.* Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Arendt, H. 1951. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt.

Atwood, M. *In Other Worlds: SF and the Human Imagination*. 2001. New York: Doubleday.

Basu, B, Broad, K.R., Hintz, C. 2013. *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*. New York: Routledge.

Bird, E. and Sheinkin, S. 2016. "Walking and Talking with… M.T. Anderson!" Weblog. School LibraryJournal. <http://blogs.slj.com/afuse8production/2016/02/04/walking-and-talking-with-m-t-anderson/>.

Collins, S. 2008. *The Hunger Games*. New York: Scholastic.

Davies, N. 2007. *No Simple Victory: World War II in Europe, 1939–1945*. New York: Viking.

Halam, A. 2005. *Siberia*. New York: Wendy Lamb Books.

Lowry, L. *The Giver*. 1993. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

McCarthy, C. *The Road*. 2006. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Miller, L. 2010. "Fresh Hell." *The New Yorker* <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/06/14/fresh-hell-2>.

Roth, V. *Divergent.* 2011. New York: Harper Collins.

Schwebel, S.L. 2014. Reading 9/11 From the American Revolution to US Annexation of the Moon: M.T. Anderson's *Feed* and *Octavian Nothing. Children's Literature,* 42, 197–223.

Snyder, T. 2010. *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*. New York: Basic.

Snyder, T. 2017. *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*. New York: Tim DugganBooks.

White, H. 1987. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore, MD: the Johns Hopkins University Press.

Filoteknos, vol. 8 • 2018 • DOI: 10.23817/filotek.8-7

DOROTA MICHUŁKA • Wrocław University, Poland

Introduction
Perspectives on Eastern European War Childhood

War childhood is a complex subject that compels researchers from different disciplines to approach it from multiple perspectives. Drawing a picture of war childhood in Eastern Europe is particularly challenging because of geopolitical location, the intensification of tensions among multi-ethnic populations, and the historical roles played by national, religious, and ethnic minorities living there. Eastern European literature has long been preoccupied with the difficult heritage of its Polish-Jewish relations, the Holocaust, and the trauma associated with the experiences of WWII. Most concentration and death camps were established there but much of the brutal activities characteristic of the "war in the east" occurred primarily on the territories of Poland, Russia, Ukraine, and Belorussia. But warfare affected also other areas of Central and Eastern Europe, especially those that were densely populated by Jews. The space of Eastern Europe was also infected with the ideologies of totalitarian regimes (Nazism and Stalinism) and has been working through the legacy of communism that brought forth the recent dramatic and bloody revolutions (e.g., Euromaidan in Kiev, the war in Ukraine).

Memory of WWII – as well as of contemporary wars – filters into children's literature as authors try to reconstruct and reinterpret the past. Their mnemonical recollections present a wide range of individual practices of imagination. As the following cluster of essyas shows, a significant role in scholarly studies of the texts about war childhood is played by the cultural chronotope, or time-space, a concept developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, that can be successfully used for the critical analysis of political ideologies and cultural views[1].

As shown in the essays by Jeanette Hoffmann ("The Historical Youth Novel *Malka* by Mirjam Pressler and Its Reception by Students in Germany

[1] "The representation of time and space in such a kind of novels can also take on the role of chronotope in accordance with the theory of Mikhail Bakhtin, who claims that "time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic Chronotope". L. Kokkola, 2003, *Representing Holocaust in Children's Literature*, Routledge, p. 68.

and in Poland"), Mateusz Świetlicki ("The Revolution of Dignity and War in Contemporary Ukrainian Picturebooks"), and Dorota Michułka ("Heterotopia and the Structure of Time in the Contemporary Polish Novel of Marcin Szczygielski"), the analysis of war childhood draws on many research disciplines, including history, sociology, literary studies, anthropology, philosophy of ethics, psychology, and education[2].

As its own research field, however, war childhood is rooted in considerations related to the issues of trauma and cultural memory. The articles in this cluster explore some aspects of the artistic representation of memory: individual and collective memory; memory of direct and "late" witnesses; the phenomena of post-memory and second-generation memory; artificial and affective memory; memory of whole stories and memory of scenes and events; partial, selective, fragmentary, and sketchy memory; memory of mental images; memory of time and space; memory of gestures and images; and memory of people and objects. Given such a variety of memory representations, images of war childhood inscribed in literary texts appear as multi-layered, palimpsestic phenomena. Above all, in order to relate memory of the past to contemporary young readers, authors use genres easily accessible to them (e.g., fantasy, magic realism, picture books) and thus encourage these readers to participate in intergenerational dialogues about such issues, as for example, wartime extermination, the Holocaust, and the legacy of communism. "Reconstruction of the past from the perspective of contemporary times and representations of the past made through returns to historical places, historical time and people who lived "at one time" – is filtered through collective memory stored not only in the consciousness of entire societies, but also in the small social groups and families"[3].

Although time distances contemporary literary scholars from the difficult past and their research increasingly gravitates toward the present, we see how their selection of texts, analysis, and interpretation reflect a continuing relevance of history, variability of its representation, and the dominance of certain figures of memory. For example, Pierre Nora noticed that memory as a "remnant in permanent evolution", is a long-term experience that "only accommodates those facts that suit it; it nourishes recollections that may be out

[2] According to Juri Lotman, spatial representations form "the content level of a universal cultural model," with spatial relations constituting "an expressive design" of this model, whereas spatial categories point to notions of scientific metadiscourse used in the description of cultures. As Lotman explains, "in all cultures the image of the world inevitably acquires properties of spatial characteristics. The very construction of the natural order is invariably developed on the basis of a certain spatial structure organising all the remaining levels of this construction, e.g. the protagonist's ethical-spatial sphere or the moral sphere". J. Lotman, 1969, "O metajazykie tipołogiczeskich opisanij kultury", Trudy po znakowym sistiemam, vol. 4, 1969, p. 463.

[3] Halbwasch, M., 1992, *On collective memory*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

of focus, or telescopic, global or detached, particular or symbolic – responsive to each and every censorship or projection"[4].

Mateusz Świetlicki's essay addresses a representation of history in recent picture books published in Ukraine. He draws a broad historical and political context of contemporary Ukraine embroiled in difficult relations with Russia and internal divisions and conflicts. The dominant feature of Świetlicki's research is the issue of historical, cultural, individual and collective memory as well as the notion of trauma. He is especially concerned with the narrative modes of trauma representations. Świetlicki concisely and accurately outlines major historical events of the past years, analyzes their geopolitical context, and comes to the conclusion that "nine years after the Orange Revolution (2004–2005), the Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti) in Kiev once again became a place where ideological and geo-political matters split Ukraine into two opposing and "utopian factions": "Europe vs. Russia", or "forward to the West vs. back to the USSR." Świetlicki maintains that this polarization has its roots in the current geopolitical thinking of the West, the European Union, Russia, and the United States. Drawing on the research by Mikhail Minakov, he believes that Ukraine is viewed as a geographical unit capable of drifting across the surface of the earth either "into Europe" or "into Russia", or "breaking up into parts." This "utopian thinking" brings hope of social transformation, "without taking into account exactly how this is supposed to happen." (Minakov 2015, 71-72). Świetlicki analyzes how the recent events and thinking about them play into the political awareness of the young generation. He comes to the conclusion that the historical and political consciousness of the young generation of Ukrainians is connected not only with Euromaidan, but also with the trauma of World War II and the painful legacy of communism.His essay also makes a strong point that a state educational reform as well as new children's and young adult literature should play a crucial role in raising a new post-Soviet generation with a different historical consciousness.

In her contribution, Jeanette Hoffmann discusses a didactic approach to the concept of "communicative memory." She emphasizes the importance of the empirical exploration of Mirjam Pressler's novel *Malka* (2002) for secondary school students in Germany and in Poland and discusses how intercul-

[4] "Memory and history are not synonyms, we are aware that everything divides them. Memory is life, constantly sustained by groups of the living and is therefore subject to constant evolution, open to the dialectic of fulfillment, not caring about further deformations, susceptibility, instrumentalized expression or manipulation. History, on the other hand, is a reconstruction always problematic and incomplete of what is no longer there" (translation D.M.). See. P. Nora, *Les Lieux de mémoire*, sous la direction de Pierre Nora, 1984, Gallimard, Paris, V. 1, p. 25.

tural literary texts are vitally important for introducing students to national history and memory as well as for developing their cultural sensitivity. In the conclusion, Hoffmann considers that students should be encouraged to perceive, imagine and experience literature historically. Books like *Malka* bring children closer to different models of childhood and enrich their cultural and humanistic development.

How does one discuss the distressing subject of the Holocaust with children? In his critically acclaimed book *Arka czasu* (*The Ark of Time, 2014*), Marcin Szczygielski does just that by taking the young reader to the daily existence of a nine-year-old Jewish boy Rafał who lives in the Warsaw ghetto. In her article, Dorota Michułka argues that the popularity and effectiveness of the novel lies in its contemporary poetics that combines elements of fantasy, adventure, and historical reality. She reads the novel through the Foucauldian concept of heterotopia, or a space of "otherness", as which the ghetto can be understood. Heterotopia informs the entire narrative which the children and adults view as a surrealist, phantasmagorical world in the midst of which Jews are being saved from death by a couple that runs the Warsaw Zoo. Their home is nicknamed "Noah's Ark", and Jewish children in the ghetto plan an escape by building a fictional Ark. Michułka shows how Szczygielski's novel not only personifies the spirit of freedom and solidarity in the face of death but also brings to the fore the traumatic cultural memory of Polish Jewish war childhood for the generation of young readers who live in the peaceful and prosperous world of Eastern Europe.

Overall this cluster tries to show that contemporary Polish, German, and Ukrainian children's literature pays close attention to serious political and historical issues and brings them to the young audience in a variety of artistic forms. It teaches young readers to face their past history, respect their cultural memory, understand other cultures, seek an intergenerational and intercultural dialogue, and grow up as responsible, socially conscious, and politically aware citizens of the modern world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Minakov, M. 2015. Utopian Images of the West and Russia Among Supporters and Opponents of the Euromaidan. – *Russian Politics & Law*, 53 (3): 68–85.

Bosmajian, H., *Sparing the Child: Grief and the Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust*, New York and London: Routledge 2002.

Halbwasch, M., 1992, On collective memory, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Kokkola, L., 2003, *Representing Holocaust in Children's Literature*, Routledge, p. 68.

Lotman, J., 1969, "O metajazykie tipołogiczeskich opisanij kultury", Trudy po znakowym sistiemam, vol. 4, 1969, p. 463.

Nora, P., *Les Lieux de mémoire*, sous la direction de Pierre Nora, 1984, Gallimard, Paris, V. 1, p. 25.

Filoteknos, vol. 8 • 2018 • DOI: 10.23817/filotek.8-8

JEANETTE HOFFMANN • Technische Universität Dresden, Germany

The Historical Youth Novel *Malka* by Mirjam Pressler and its Reception by Students in Germany and in Poland

Abstract: At the beginning of the 21st century, the topics of refugees and expulsion in conjunction with National Socialism and the Holocaust play an important role in contemporary children's literature. Literary portrayals of Jewish childhood during the Second World War are mostly based on authentic experiences of eyewitnesses who are still alive. Against the setting of the approaching transition from the "communicative memory" to the "cultural memory" (Assmann 2008, Welzer 2008), literary texts are vitally important for social memorialization. However, so far there has been little empirical exploration into how these texts are read by adolescents and how they find their way into the cultural memory of literature classes. Furthermore, the didactic theory that children's literature should contribute to intercultural understanding requires an empirical foundation. This was the basis for my study, *Literarische Gespräche im interkulturellen Kontext - Discussions about Literature in an Intercultural Context* – (Hoffmann 2011). In a qualitative-empirical study, I explored the reception of Mirjam Pressler's novel *Malka Mai – Malka* (2002) – by secondary school students in German language classes in Germany and Poland. The aim of my research project was to reconstruct learning potentials in discussions about literature within an intercultural context. Given the novel's potential meanings and the demands it places upon its readers, I would like to demonstrate in this article the different ways in which it is received, as well as to show which areas of tension lie behind the subjective receptions.

Keywords: Reception Research, Reading Experiences, Historical Youth Literature, Germany and Poland, Jewish Childhood during WWII, Cultural and Communicative Memory, Intercultural Context, Reading Engagement

At the beginning of the 21st century, the topics of refugees and expulsion in conjunction with National Socialism and the Holocaust play an important role in contemporary children's literature and in the didactic discussion (Birkmeyer 2008, Ballis 2012). Literary portrayals of Jewish childhood during WWII are mostly based on authentic experiences of eye witnesses who are still alive. Against the setting of the approaching transition from the "communicative

memory" to the "cultural memory" (Assmann 2008, Welzer 2008), literary texts are vitally important for social memorialization. However, so far there has been little empirical exploration into how these texts are read by adolescents and how they find their way into the cultural memory of literature classes. Furthermore, the didactic theory that children's literature should contribute to intercultural understanding requires an empirical foundation. This was the basis for my study *Literarische Gespräche im interkulturellen Kontext – Discussions about Literature in an Intercultural Context* – (Hoffmann 2011). Within the scope of a qualitative-empirical study, I explored the reception of Mirjam Pressler's novel *Malka Mai – Malka* (2002) – by secondary school students in German language classes in Germany and in Poland. The present research question reads as follows: How do students from different countries read a historical novel for young adults? The aim of my research project was to reconstruct learning potentials in discussions about literature within an intercultural context.

Given the novel's significance and the demands it places upon its readers, I would like to demonstrate in this article the different ways in which it is received, as well as to show which areas of tension lie behind the subjective receptions. First, I will outline the plot, its literary form, and its reading demands. Following this, I will sketch my theoretical and methodological approach and explain the research design. After that I will focus on selected results from one part of the study: *the students' subjective receptions*. Finally, I will triangulate these results with those of other parts of my study to demonstrate potentials of literary and intercultural learning.

MIRJAM PRESSLER'S *MALKA*

The historical young adult novel *Malka* (2002) was first published in Germany in 2001, entitled *Malka Mai*. Since then, it has been translated into 13 languages. It was nominated for the German Youth Literature Award, among other awards. In choosing this novel, I also assumed it would have a historical-political meaning for students in Germany as well as in Poland, because it takes place in occupied Poland during the time of WWII, and the persecution of Jews is its main topic.

The story is about an escape narrated alternately from the perspectives of a mother and her daughter. The Jewish Pole Hanna Mai is working as a medical doctor in a rural Polish border area. She lives alone with her two daughters: seven-year-old Malka and 16-year-old Minna. In the autumn of 1943, the family is forced to flee the German deportations unprepared, going on foot over the Carpathian Mountains to Hungary. Just on the other side of the Hungarian border, Malka falls ill. Hanna leaves her in the care of an orthodox Jewish family, while she herself continues the escape, joining an organized group of refugees together with her older daughter. Hanna is superficially reassured by

the promise that her younger daughter will be sent on to her later, but Malka is abandoned. After passing through different places, she finally ends up in a Jewish ghetto back in Poland. There, she lives on her own and develops strategies for surviving. In applying these strategies, she manages to save herself from the "actions" by the Germans as well as from hunger and the cold. Only seven years old, Malka becomes a grown-up. She chooses to think of her mother only as a distant "Doctor Mai": "Doctor Mai was a stranger, a woman in whose house she had lived once, a long time ago." (Pressler 2002: 121). Hanna, on the other hand, reproaches herself highly. Toward the end of the story, she returns to Poland to search for Malka. When they meet again, Malka acts reserved and keeps her distance from her mother. This encounter between mother and daughter is the unresolved ending of the novel.

In her novel, Pressler brings up for discussion decisions, actions, and social manners of people in the extreme situation of pursuit and escape. She designs a psychologically differentiated picture of the central characters, their developments, and their estrangements. Additionally, among the various minor characters, the author portrays perpetrators as well as victims as diverse and ambivalent. A key scene in the novel is the decision by Hanna to leave Malka behind, and the mother's approach towards this moral dilemma runs throughout the length of the novel.

> "She should not have left Malka behind; surely somehow they could have managed to get there themselves without the group, and after all she had made it from Lawoczne to Pilipiec. Perhaps she has just misread the situation, as so often before. And time and again she asked herself whether she had done it for fear of the difficulties, for fear of the problems, the police or the danger. Or whether she had maybe left the child behind just to make things easier for herself." (Pressler 2002: 157f.)

The story is told chronologically by a third-person narrator, alternately from the perspectives of the mother and the daughter. Thus, the text gains a certain tension in the 'landscape of action' (Bruner 1986). This tension becomes intensified by the restlessness and uncertainty of the characters on the run. In the 'landscape of consciousness' (ibid.), Hanna's perspective contains a high degree of reflexivity and analytical thinking. However, Malka's inner thoughts express themselves more on the level of action: in the pictures and stories in her mind, in her behavior with people and animals, and in her sensory perception and corporeality, like the perception of the pervasive hunger:

> "The days went past but Malka didn't count them. She divided her days into 'food days' and 'no-food-days'. The food days had names, and were like rays of light in the grey of the flowing days of hunger, which she just called 'other days'. One day, a day she particularly liked to remember, was called 'loaf-of-bread-day'. A woman had given her a whole loaf of bread when she had stood in front of her and said, 'I'm hungry.' When the woman asked, 'Where is your mother?' Malka had started to cry because she didn't want to hear that word, and because the hunger hurt so

> much and because despair just flooded over her. Without a word the woman had pressed the loaf of bread she had just bought into Malka's hand and gone back into the bakery. Malka had hidden the bread under her coat and had run away before the woman could change her mind. Another day – it must have been two or three days after she had come back from ciotka – she had named 'turnip day'. […] There was also an 'egg day', and Malka was a little bit uneasy when she remembered that one. […] Now Malka felt her legs trembling, and her stomach hurt because of her hunger. But that was her own fault; she had been thinking about food again. And by now it was dark. This was one of 'the other days'. Before she set off home she went to the pump and got a drink. On the way, she found an earth-closet and pissed. Luckily she didn't have to crap." (Pressler 2002: 162ff.)

With its dense symbolical language, the text conveys a second level of meaning. Therefore, Malka's perspective additionally gains a literary depth.

POTENTIALS OF MEANING AND READING DEMANDS

The novel *Malka* presents various potentials of meaning and reading demands, both in a historical-political way and in a literary-anthropological way.

1) HISTORICAL-POLITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE NOVEL

The novel, including its paratexts, is not conceptualized as a didactic instrument of information about contemporary history. Rather it tells an individual story of a family under particular historical circumstances. The readers are forced to rely upon their own knowledge of contemporary history. Against this background, they have to interpret the perspectives and representations of experiences of an escape in a bygone era in a faraway place.

2) DEALING WITH THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VARIOUS HISTORICAL HORIZONS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The perspectives of the novel's characters are confined to their period of time. Nowadays, children and young adults already know about the persecution and genocide of European Jews during WWII. While reading the novel, they are challenged to tackle the limited perspectives of the characters. The young must comprehend the scope of actions under particular historical-political circumstances. At the same time, they must endure the differences between the horizons of consciousness.

3) POSITIONING WITHIN A POLYVALENT STYLE OF NARRATING

Because of the personal narrative style, the story is not told in an judgmental or commented way – like it would be with an omniscient narrator – but rather according to the respective perspectives of the two main characters (mother

and daughter) and with their restricted views. Thus, the readers can and must find their own point of view during the reception process. The interplay of the different, hence, conflicting perspectives of the characters further creates a polyvalent contemplation of the same occurrences and experiences. Because of the missing 'objective' interpretation of the events in the narrative, it is the readers' responsibility to interpret the story on their own.

4) ROLE-TAKING AND UNDERSTANDING THE FOREIGN

Adolescent characters are predominantly chosen in young-adult fiction as protagonists. In Malka an adolescent character of identification is missing. In this way, young readers are challenged to understand other perspectives: in the case of seven-year-old child Malka to a phase of life that is already behind them, and the seven-year-old Malka and her mother Hanna. Their own themes of development are left out in the novel. This choice of protagonists requires the ability to take over someone's perspective in a particular way.

THEORETICAL AND METHODICAL APPROACH

The theory of the social constitution of memory forms the theoretical basis of my study. It differentiates between the 'cultural memory' (Assmann 1992, 2008) – in schools, for example – and the 'communicative memory' (Welzer 2005, 2008) – in the family, for example. In literary discussions, these two frames of memory can be connected (Hoffmann 2012: 261f.).

My study takes place in the intercultural context in German and Polish schools. It encompasses three classes: one ninth-grade class at a German school in Warsaw, one ninth-grade class at a German grammar school in Berlin, and a first-grade group at a Polish lyceum in Warsaw (which can be compared with the tenth grade of a German grammar school). The students are from 14 to 17 years old. The German language teachers all come from Germany. At the lyceum in Warsaw, Polish colleagues additionally taught Geography and History lessons in Polish language.

The interdisciplinary orientation of my research demands a methodical approach of multiple perspectives. As the reception of a literary text consists of both the individual reading and the social context (Wieler 2002), I have chosen two ways of data collection: I interviewed selected students in groups in focused interviews (Hopf 2003). These interviews offer insight particularly into the students' subjective processes of sense-making. I also videotaped and made participant observations in classroom interactions during literature lessons (Krummheuer, Naujok 1999). These lessons give information about interactive learning processes. Afterwards, I transcribed the data of the interviews and the classroom interactions using a linguistic instrument of transcription (GAT 2) (Selting et al. 2009). This form of transcription allows me to shed

light on the content as well as on the structure of constructions of meaning and negotiation processes. Against the background of the ethnographic principle, I interpreted selected 'key incidents' in the ethnographic tradition (Kroon, Sturm 2007).

RESEARCH DESIGN

The initial point of my research was to answer the question, how a historical novel for young adults is read by German and Polish students. The data – in the interviews as well as in classroom discussions – points to two different ways of reading the novel: on the one hand, from a historical-political view, on the other hand, from a literary-anthropological view. Based on the intercultural research field, the two methods of the data collection, and the two ways of reading the novel, I created various horizons of comparison, as can be seen in the following table (table 1):

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Approaches</td><td colspan="2">Data Types</td><td rowspan="2">Cultural Context</td></tr>
<tr><td>Student interviews</td><td>Classroom discussion</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">historical--political</td><td rowspan="2">1) narrated (hi)stories</td><td rowspan="2">2) historical-political contextualization</td><td>in Germany</td></tr>
<tr><td>in Poland</td></tr>
<tr><td>literary--anthropological</td><td>3) subjective reception</td><td>4) communication about the novel</td><td>in an intercultural context</td></tr>
</table>

Table 1: Research Design and Research Results

From these moments of comparison, I divided my study into four parts:

1. ***Narrated (hi)stories*** *in Germany and in Poland,*
2. ***Historical-political contextualization*** *of the reading of the novel in the classroom,*
3. ***Subjective reception*** *of the novel on the part of the students,*
4. ***Communication about the novel*** *in the classroom.*

In combining these four parts, I empirically reconstructed potentials of literary learning. In the following, I would like to present the third part of my study, the *subjective reception*. These reception analyses are not made out of a primarily cultural comparative perspective. Based on the heterogeneity of students in multicultural classrooms (Krüger-Potratz 2005), the analyses rather take the individual cultural background of each student into consideration according to their family, literature, and school socialization.

In the analyses of the subjective receptions, I asked the following questions:

- How do the students read the novel *Malka* individually?
- What kind of common structures lay beneath their reading processes?

SUBJECTIVE RECEPTION OF THE NOVEL ON THE PART OF THE STUDENTS

The interviews with the students about their subjective processes of reading reveal common fields of themes such as "unexpected brutality in experiencing war from an inner perspective or Being (not) able to grasp the cruelty in a children's book." Within these thematic fields, individual acquirements of the fictional story can be reconstructed. Their basic structures, though, are characterized by common areas of tension: The students move within their receptions of the historical novel between

1. *fiction and reality,*
2. *'landscape of action' and 'landscape of consciousness',*
3. *content and language,*
4. *perspectives (mother and daughter),*
5. *children's book and school book,*
6. *past and present,*
7. *closeness and distance.*

Young people approach these areas of tension in different ways, depending on their literature socialization in school and in their families. In the following section, I would like to illustrate different approaches to making sense of the novel concerning various areas of tension.

1) *FICTION AND REALITY*

The interview analyses show that the connection between *fiction* and *reality* plays a central role in young adults' reception of contemporary youth literature. Many students allow the fictional story to challenge them to go beyond visualizing their ideas of historical reality, such as about Jewish childhood during WWII, and possibly restructure these ideas:

German original (for transcription conventions, see "Note on Transcription")

```
1  Karolina   also em- (2.0) ich hab mir gedacht dass es
              vielleicht em dass diese
2             malka=also ich hab auf gar keinen fall geglaubt
              dass es so- (-)
3             wie soll ich ausdrücken so=so- (-) bruTAL, (-)
              war also für
4             dieses kind, (--) wobei es sich ja um eine- (-)
              ziemlich em- (-)
5             reelle geschichte gehandelt hat manche sachen
              waren fiktiv weil
6             sich dieses diese frau ja nich mehr an alles
              erinnern konnte weil
7             sie klein war,(-) aber ich hab nich ge ich hab
              nich erwartet dass
```

```
8            dieses mädchen wirklich diese brutale realität
             so äh- (-) dass
9            ihr das so NAHEgehen würde, ((...))
```

English translation

```
1  Karolina  well uhm- (2.0) i thought that it maybe uhm that
             this
2            malka=so i did_nt believe in any case that it
             would be so- (-)
3            how do i say this so=so- (-) BRUtal, (-)
4            for this kid, (--) in which it was an (-) almost
             uhm- (-)
5            realistic story some things were fictitious
             because
6            this this woman could_nt remember everthing
             exactly since
7            she was a little girl at this time, (-) but i
             did_nt expect that
8            this girl really (-) that this brutal reality
             uhm- (-)
9            would afFECT her so much, ((...))
```

Others measure their own ideas (a linguistic portrayal) of reality against the literary text and thereby close themselves to new literary experiences:

German original

```
1  Michał    man hat es so schnell gelesen [und so weiter und-
             (-) für mich war
2  I          [hm=hm;
3  Michał    die grausamkeit nicht antastbar; es war zu wenig
             ä::h über das
4            geschrieben- (1.0) und man kann sagen dass es auch
             ein happy END
5            hatte aber- (1.0) na ich weiß nicht ob die leute
             dort- (-) in:
6            diesen jahren soviel glück äh glück hä, ha,
             hatten ja; ((lacht))
```

English translation

```
1  Michał    i read it pretty quickly [and so on and- (-) for
             me
2  I          [hm=hm;
3  Michał    the cruelty was_nt so tangible; there was_nt
             enough u::hm
4            written about it- (1.0) and one could say that
             it had a happy END
5            but- (1.0) i do_nt know if that people there-
             (-) in
6            these times ha, ha, had so much happiness;
             ((laughs))
```

2) *'LANDSCAPE OF ACTION' AND 'LANDSCAPE OF CONSCIOUSNESS'*

The interviews demonstrate that the students are challenged by the combination of the *'landscape of action'* and the *'landscape of consciousness'* (Bruner 1986). In particular, Malka's thoughts (landscape of consciousness) often evoke irritation in the students' receptions. A student compares the expected "survival" against the unexpected "experience":

German original

```
1  Karolina   ((...)) ich hab nich ge ich hab nich erwartet
              dass
2             dieses mädchen wirklich diese brutale realität
              so äh- (-) dass
3             ihr das so NAHEgehen würde, (-) und dass sie em;
              (-) so viele
4             schlimme sachen em; (-) erleben würde. (--) ja
              und em- (-) ich
5             hätt mir schon geglaub also gedacht dass es em
              um ein überleben
6             eines kindes geht, ((...))
```

English translation

```
1  Karolina   ((...)) i did_nt expect that
2             this girl really (-) that this brutal reality
              uhm- (-)
3             would afFECT her so much, (-) or that she uhm;
              (-)
4             would experience so many terrible things. (--)
              yeah and uhm- (-) i
5             had thought that it would_ve been about the sur-
              vival
6             of a child, ((...))
```

The girls in particular reach a deeper understanding through the combination of the two landscapes. This could be explained by their remarks that they read often, particularly historical novels, even in their free time.

3) *CONTENT AND LANGUAGE*

The students' confronting the tension between *content* and *language* can be shown by the example of corporeality. Concerning the presence of corporeality in the novel's content and language, the boys in particular reach their limits of understanding:

German original

```
1  Jacek      ((...)) abge(-)neigt hat mich dieses dieses
2             ekelhafte dieses detaillierte;
3  I          =hm=hm-
```

```
 4  Jacek     =also seite zweihundertvierundfünfzig und
               fünfundfünfzig- (-) das
 5             war auch wirklich schlimm, (-) und ja- ((lacht))
               (1.5)
 6  Jessica   das fand ich sogar gut wie gesagt aus der sicht
               von dem kleinen
 7             mädchen. ((...))
 8  Jacek     =ja ich dachte (mir dann) dass wenn das ein
               siebenjähriges
 9             mädchen daran daran nur denkt <<lachend> also
               (--) pischen und
10             kacken> ((lacht))
```

English translation

```
 1  Jacek     ((...)) i didn_t (-) enjoy the the
 2             disgusting and the details;
 3  I         =hm=hm-
 4  Jacek     =well page two hundred and fifty-four and
               fifty-five- (-) that
 5             was really terrible, (-) and yeah- ((laugh))
               (1.5)
 6  Jessica   i really liked that (-) as i said that they
               showed it from the
 7             little girl_s perspective. ((...))
 8  Jacek     =yeah i thought then that if a seven-year-old
 9             girl would even think about that stuff
               <<laughing> well (--)
10             pissing and crapping> ((laughs))
```

However, the girls are more able to create plausible interpretations, as a student wrote in her reading diary:

German original

> "Es gefällt mir die offene Art und Weise in der die Geschichte erzählt wird. ~~Es~~ Situationen und Erlebnisse werden nicht mit schönen Wörtern geschmückt und verziert, die ~~den~~ die bittere Wirklichkeit womöglich verändern würden. Alles wird (so erzählt, wie) es passiert. Eine Sache, die meiner Meinung nach, die Geschichte, wie soll ich sagen, noch lebhafter bzw. realistischer darstellt, ist die Sache mit dem Klo. In nur sehr wenigen Büchern wird diese Tatsache erwähnt, vom Beschreiben ist garnicht die Rede. Nahrungssuche, Nahrungsaufnahme, und das Ausscheiden der Nahrung ~~waren die die~~ bereiteten den Betroffenen die größten Probleme, wobei das Letztere das unangenehmste davon ~~war~~ gewesen ist. Damit hängt natürlich auch die Hygiene zusammen, Krankheiten aller Art u. andere Sachen. ~~Diese~~ Das Beschreiben von diesem Ereignis macht vielleicht man´chen das Lesen unangenehmer, auch vielleicht deswegen, weil dies etwas Ungewöhnliches für Geschichten ist, bringt uns aber den schrecklichen Umständen in denend die Menschen leben mußten, ein deutliches Stück näher."

English translation

> "I enjoyed the open style in which the story is told. Situations and experiences weren't dressed up with pretty words or decorated, which could possible change the bitter reality. Everything was told as it happened. One thing, in my opinion, that the story, how should I say it, more realistically depicts, is the thing with the toilet. Very few books would even mention this, let alone describe it. Searching for food, consuming it, and expelling it are the biggest problems to the suffering, while the last part is the most uncomfortable to hear about. Of course, hygiene is also a part of this, sicknesses of various kinds and other things. The describing of this event makes reading a bit unpleasant for some people, maybe because this is somewhat unusual for stories, but it forces us so bring closer the terrible circumstances in which the people had to live."

These gender-specific differences can, on one hand be explained by the girls' higher reading experiences, and on the other hand by the kind of books they have chosen to read in their free time.

4) *PERSPECTIVES (MOTHER AND DAUGHTER)*

In the novel, an area of tension between the *perspectives* of the *mother* and her *daughter* exists. As the analyses demonstrate, the adolescent students read the novel primarily as a story about the young girl Malka.

German original

1		((...)) die HAUPTfigur ist die malka,
2	I	hm=hm,
3	Michał	ja und alles alles dreht sich äh sich um das kind; (-) kann man
4		sagen und auch ihre erLEBnisse und die sprache ist auch für so wie
5		für SIE ((...))

English translation

1		((...)) the MAIN character is malka,
2	I	hm=hm,
3	Michał	well and everything revolves uhm around the kid; (-) you could
4		say and also her exPEriences and the language is for someone
5		like HER ((...))

However, the students hardly pay attention to the perspective of Hanna's mother when remembering their reading processes. The mother's view doesn't seem to express the same interest to them as the child's view; it did not evoke the same emotions in the students' reception.

5) *CHILDREN'S BOOK AND SCHOOL BOOK*

According to the analyses, the knowledge about the genre of the text – *children's book or school book* – offers a frame of orientation to the students during their reading processes.

German original

```
1  Hugo     ja und ich hab eher gedacht nach dem- (-) BILD auf
            dem BUCH dass
2           es halt ein KINderbuch ist; (---) ich weiß jetzt
            nich ob es ein
3           kinderbuch ist? ((...))
```

English translation

```
1  Hugo     yeah and i thought that the- (-) PICture on the
            front of the BOOK
2           meant it was a CHILdren_s book; (---) i now do_nt
            know if it is
3           a childrens_s book? ((...))
```

The students' unfulfilled expectations with regard to the framing of the novel become plausible through the background of their different literary socialization in school (less so from the family). In German and Polish schools, teachers do not only read different kinds of literature, but they also talk about them in a different way. While international historical youth literature is a common constituent of German classrooms, literature classes in Poland are more likely to focus on national historical classics. Therefore, two ways of dealing with literature unfold – a pedagogical-democratic approach to historic events in Germany, and a pedagogical-commemorating approach to history which also focuses more on narrative features in Poland. Considering this, German students do not question the integration of the historical youth novel *Malka* into the German classroom as school literature, while Polish students were initially uncertain and tried to define its place in the educational context.

6) *PAST AND PRESENT*

As my analyses also show, requesting the students to read the chosen contemporary novel requires a combination of the (narrated) *past* with the (experienced) *present*. The students realize this task in two different ways: either they engage in the fruitful linking of past and present through the chronological and generalizing mutual communication of new, historical, and anthropological experiences offered by literature, or they apply their own concepts to a historical reality as a background of meaning to the novel and close themselves to new historical perspectives.

German original

1	Karolina	((...)) ich hätte mir jetzt gedacht wenn wir in unseren
2		vielleicht heutigen zeiten obwohl es ja wahrscheinlich würde
3		dieses kind ja nich so abgestoßen werden sondern ins kinderheim
4		oder so was- (-) aber wenn wir ein- (-) kind in unseren ä:h
5		heutigen zeiten ein siebenjähriges kind irgend-wo aussetzen
6		würden, (--) ich weiß nicht ob es überleben könnte [also wenn es
7	I	[hm=hm-
8	Karolina	nich aufgenommen worden wäre, (-) [und dieses mädchen hat=s ja
9	I	[hm=hm-
10	Karolina	geschafft ohne essen ohne haus- (-) im krieg im winter und hat
11		überLEBT, (-) [alLEIne. (-) dass es so solche strategien
12	I	[hm=hm-
13	Karolina	entwickelt hat in seinem alter find ich schon- (2.0) gut.

English translation

1	Karolina	((...)) i had thought to myself if we in our
2		present days (-) well (-) though this kid would probably
3		this kid would probably not be shuffled around but she_d be in a children_s home
4		or something- (-) but if we abandoned a- (-) kid in our u:hm
5		if we abandoned a seven-year-old kid nowadays,
6		(--) i do_nt know if it could survive [you know if
7	I	[hm=hm-
8	Karolina	it was_nt taken in, (-) [and this girl did it
9	I	[hm=hm-
10	Karolina	without food without shelter- (-) during a war in winter and she
11		surVIVED, (-) [aLONE. (-) that someone her age could develop such
12	I	[hm=hm-
13	Karolina	strategies i- (2.0) liked that.

7) CLOSENESS AND DISTANCE

It became obvious during the analyses, that, during the reception process, the students took to the narrated story in different ways: The most different forms in the field of *closeness* and *distance* range from a distanced literary contemplation through an analytic adoption of perspectives to the sympathetic suffering with the characters of the novel.

German original

1	Jessica	((...)) das ende fand ich SEHR spannend.
2		(-) ich fand das war- (-) em super und- (-) wie das kind dann
3		reagiert hat und wie=s weggelaufen [ist das fand ich war- (-) wie
4	I	[hm=hm,
5	Jessica	ein richtiges- (-) siebenjähriges kind [auch reagieren würde. (-)
6	I	[hm=hm,
7	Jessica	und das war auch sehr spannend- (-) geschrieben und erzählt und
8		das hat einen richtig emotional auch mitge[rissen; (-) und die
9	I	[hm=hm;
10	Jessica	enttäuschung am ende war genau DA:, (1.0) ((...))

English translation

1	Jessica	((...)) i thought the ending was VERY exciting.
2		(-) i thought it was- (-) uhm great- (-) how the child
3		reacted and [ran away (-) that_s something-
4	I	[hm=hm,
5	Jessica	a real- (-) seven-year-old kid [would do. (-)
6	I	[hm=hm,
7	Jessica	and it was written and told in an exciting way and
8		it was very [emotional; (-) and the
9	I	[hm=hm;
10	Jessica	disppointment at the end was REAL, (1.0) ((...))

German original

1	Korinna	und das ENde fand ich voll traurig, (-) dass hätt ich auch nich
2		gedacht dass das so wäre- (--)
3	I	was fandest du am ende traurig,
4	Korinna	ja dass die mutter eigentlich, (-) das kind ja so verloren hat,
5		(-) weil die nichts mehr mit ihr zu tun haben wollte, (2.0)

English translation

1	Korinna	i thought the END was so sad, (-) which i did _nt
2		expect that way- (--)
3	I	what did you find sad,
4	Korinna	well that the mother really, (-) lost her child,
5		(-) because she did_nt want anything to do with her mother, (2.0)

German original

1	Kamil	((...)) an manchen
2		stellen war es mir wirklich übel zum zum beispiel beim toten
3		jungen auf der straße wo sie da um ihn stehen und reden, (2.0)
4		muss nich unbedingt sein glaub ich.

English translation

1	Kamil	((...))at some
2		moments I really felt sick like like with the dead
3		boy on the street where they stay around him and talk, (2.0)
4		i do_nt think that this should be.

This shows that in order to generate literary experiences it is crucial to superiorly master and successfully balance out the tension between closeness and distance. Based on this observation, reception research's interpretation of the capability for sympathy and adoption of perspectives for the building of identity through literature must be differentiated to the effect that a state of "too much" of empathy can also block understanding.

SUMMARY, TRIANGULATION AND CONCLUSION

These areas of tension in the students' individual receptions overlap with each other in various ways. The precondition for a fruitful reception of the literary potentials of meaning is that the students get involved with the text and that an interactive exchange of interpretations takes place. The empirically shown possibility for experiencing literature decisively depends on the child's previous literary experience in the family as well as at school. The realization of this possibility differs, on the whole, more in a gender-specific than in a cultural respect.

Finally, I'd like to connect the analyses of the *subjective reception of the novel on the part of the students* summarized in this article (*second* part of my study) with the analyses of other parts of my study: with the *narrated (hi)stories* in the student interviews and with the *communication about the novel* in the classroom discussion (see the section "Perspectives"). This triangulation opens further possibilities of a deeper insight.

At first, I combine the *subjective reception* with the *narrated (hi)stories,* passed on in Germany and Poland, as I reconstructed them in the *first* part of my study (Hoffmann 2012). This triangulation shows the elementary meaning of literature as an addition, differentiation, and corrective to the stories passed on, especially in the communicative memory *in the families* and *'on the road'*. Young people know various stories about the time of WWII from different sources. These stories have partly national one-dimensional perspectives and, now and then, anti-Semitic and National Socialist tendencies (Hoffmann 2012). School can create an important counterbalance with fictional stories in the cultural memory. The reception of *Malka* offers an opportunity for students to tackle anthropological experiences such as corporeality in an intensive way. Stories of the communicative memory narrated *in the families* as well as stories of the cultural memory narrated *in history lessons* can't achieve this in the same way.

Finally, I connect the *subjective reception* and the *communication about the novel*, which I analyzed in the *fourth* part of my study. This triangulation has particularly demonstrated the meaning of the communicative framing of historical young adult fiction in classroom interactions. The students' limits of literary understanding become visible: for instance, their one-sided focus on the perspective of the child's character or also their unfulfilled expectations concerning the 'landscape of consciousness'. In the communication about the novel in the classroom, all the teachers challenge the students to concentrate also on the mother's perspective, which precedes the students' own life experience (s. Hoffmann 2011: 287ff.). Furthermore, the didactic practices require a connection of the two 'landscapes' from the students.

On the whole, the students' steps in the "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky 1987) become obvious, particularly through the exchange with the teacher as a 'more knowledgeable other' (ibid.) and in a narrative structure of talking (Hoffmann 2011: 301ff.). By selecting texts as well as prioritizing certain aspects and structuring conversations, teachers provide a fruitful conversational and commemorating frame, thus, offering the next generation a cultural scaffold for interpreting the past in a literary structured way. In doing so, the students are encouraged to perceive, imagine and experience different models of childhood and life experience in the "zone of proximal development."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Assmann, A. 2003. *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses.* Munich: C. H. Beck.

Assmann, J. 1992. *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen.* Munich: C. H. Beck.

Assmann, J. 2008. Communicative and Cultural Memory. – A. Erll, A. Nünning, eds., *Cultural Memory Studies. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook.* Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 109–118.

Ballis, A., eds., 2012. *Holocaust – Literatur – Didaktik. Koordinaten für interdisziplinäres Lernen.* Würzburg: Ergon.

Birkmeyer, J., eds, 2008. *Holocaust-Literatur und Deutschunterricht. Perspektiven schulischer Erinnerungsarbeit.* Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Hohengehren.

Bruner, J. S. 1986. *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds.* Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: The Jerusalem-Harvard Lectures.

Hoffmann, J. 2011. *Literarische Gespräche im interkulturellen Kontext. Eine qualitativ-empirische Studie zur Rezeption eines zeitgeschichtlichen Jugendromans von Schülerinnen und Schülern in Deutschland und in Polen.* Münster: Waxmann.

Hoffmann, J. 2012. Narrated (hi)stories in an intercultural context. How young people in Germany and Poland deal with tensions between communicative and cultural memory. – E. Boesen, F. Lentz, M. Margue, D. Scuto, R. Wagener, eds., *Peripheral Memories: Public and Private Forms of Experiencing and Narrating the Past.* Bielefeld: transcript, 259–281.

Hopf, C. 2003. Qualitative Interviews – ein Überblick. – U. Flick, E. von Kardorff, I. Steinke, eds., *Qualitative Forschung. Ein Handbuch.* Reinbek: Rowohlt, 349–360.

Kroon, S., Sturm, J. 2007. International comparative case study research in education: Key incident analysis and international triangulation. – W. Herrlitz, S. Ongstad, P.-H. van de Ven, eds., *Research on mother tongue education in a comparative international perspective. Theoretical and methodological issues.* Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 99–118.

Krüger-Potratz, M. 2005. *Interkulturelle Bildung. Eine Einführung.* Münster: Waxmann.

Krummheuer, G., Naujok, N. 1999. *Grundlagen und Beispiele Interpretativer Unterrichtsforschung.* Opladen: Leske + Budrich.

Pressler, M. 2002. *Malka.* – translated from the German by B. Murdoch. London: Pan Macmillan.

Selting, M. et al. 2009. Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem 2 (GAT 2). – *Gesprächsforschung – Online-Zeitschrift zur verbalen Interaktion*, 10, 353–402, www.gespraechsforschung-osz.de (13.06.2018).

Vygotsky, L. S. 1987. Thinking and speech. – R. W. Rieber, A. S. Carton, eds., *The Collected Works of L. S. Vygotsky. Volume 1: Problems of General Psychology.* New York: Plenum Press, 39–285. (Original work published 1934)

Welzer, H. 2005. *Das kommunikative Gedächtnis. Eine Theorie der Erinnerung.* Munich: C. H. Beck.

Welzer, H. 2008. Communicative Memory. – A. Erll, A. Nünning, eds., *Cultural Memory Studies. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook.* Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 285–300.

Wieler, P. 2002. Das Literatur-Gespräch in der Schule: Ansatzpunkt für eine sprachlerntheoretisch fundierte didaktische Konzeption. – C. Kammler, W. Knapp, eds., *Empirische Unterrichtsforschung und Deutschdidaktik.* Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Hohengehren, 128–140.

NOTE ON TRANSCRIPTION

The transcription of the interviews is based on the linguistic Transcription System of Conversation Analysis (Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem GAT 2, Selting et al. 2009).

[	overlapping
(-) / (--) / (---)	short breaks up to one second
(1.0)	breaks indicated in seconds
that_s	contracted words
: / :: / :::	prolongation
surVIVED	emphasis
? /- / .	pitch raising, constant, falling
((laughs))	(non-verbal) actions
<<laughing> >	para-linguistic actions, interpretative annotations
(sad)	assumed wording
( )	incomprehensible wording
((…))	ellipsis

Filoteknos, vol. 8 • 2018 • DOI: 10.23817/filotek.8-9

MATEUSZ ŚWIETLICKI • Wrocław University, Poland

"Oh, What a Waste of Army Dreamers…": The Revolution of Dignity and War in Contemporary Ukrainian Picturebooks

Abstract: The collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent political transformations almost overnight changed the lives of Ukrainians. Surprisingly, until the early 2010s there had been no contemporary Ukrainian picturebooks devoted to the traumatic experiences of WWII, totalitarianism, as well as the political and cultural changes of the 1980s-1990s. The Euromaidan revolution, the annexation of Crimea, and the subsequent war with Russia have left the first post-Soviet generations with new traumas. Although it is believed that trauma in its distinctiveness cannot be communicated, the attempts to work through it provide a rich discursive repository for theoretical reflection. The proposed paper involves an examination of the discourses on war, trauma, and revolution in three contemporary Ukrainian picturebooks: Khrystyna Lukashchuk's *Kazka pro Maidan* [2014], Romana Romanyshyn's and Andriy Lesiv's *Viyna shcho zminyla Rondo* [2015], and Halyna Kyrpa's *Miy tato stav zirkoyu* [2015 – illustrated by Oksana Bula]. Focusing on the relationship between text and illustrations, I identify three possible approaches towards the depiction of war and revolution in these picture books and the production of second-generation memory.

Keywords: Ukraine, Russia, Picturebooks, Trauma, War

"What could he do?
Should have been a father"
But he never even made it to his twenties
What a waste of
Army dreamers

Kate Bush[1]

Nine years after the Orange revolution (2004–2005), the Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti) in Kiev once again became a place where ideological and geo-political matters split Ukraine into two opposing, and

[1] The title of this article was inspired by Kate Bush's 1980 single *Army Dreamers.*

utopian[2] factions: "Europe vs. Russia" or "forward to the West vs. back to the USSR." (Ryabchuk 2014, Minakov 2015) The Euromaidan revolution, also known as Revolution of Dignity (2013–1014), caused a series of violent events, the ousting of president Viktor Yanukovych, and subsequent political reforms. The revolution spread all over the country and outside its eastern borders, provoking a separatist movement of those who were against it, and leading to Russian military intervention, the annexation of Crimea, and the consequent, and still ongoing, war in Donbass. The Euromaidan revolution was also a powerful, traumatic experience, in both collective and individual sense, the first one for the youngest generation of Ukrainians, whose parents and grandparents had already experienced other traumatic events such as World War II and the collapse of communism.

According to Cathy Caruth, trauma is directly connected to narration: "It is always the story of a wound that *cries out*, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is otherwise not available." (4) Consistent with this understanding of trauma, it is possible to treat the Euromaidan revolution as national trauma experienced by a substantial part of the population and later shared in various narrative formats. Ukrainian authors, such as Serhiy Zhadan, Serhiy Hrydin, Anastassia Afanasyeva, and Vladimir Rafeenko, began to publish various works devoted to war and the recent revolution, both in Ukrainian and in Russian. Interestingly, during the revolution, the Internet became the most widespread platform allowing people in Ukraine – a country with no nationwide press in Ukrainian or Russian – to exchange news, opinions, and share poetry and short stories devoted to it. Inspired by *Litopys samovydtsya* (*Chronicle of an Eyewitness*), an anonymous Cossack chronicle and one of the most important sources for the history of Ukraine during the years 1648–1702, Oksana Zabuzhko and TetyanaTeren came up with the idea of preserving the valuable information for future generations in form of *Litopys Samovydtsiv: devyat misyaciv ukraiinskogo sprotyvu* (*The chronicle of the eyewitnesses: nine months of Ukrainian rebellion*), a modern day chronicle made with social media entries written in Ukrainian, Russian and Surzhyk[3] by intellectuals, common Internet users, and anonymous authors.

---

[2] According to Mikhail Minakov these two contradictory factions are based on utopian imagery: "A current example of such imagery is geopolitics as a set of beliefs in the West, the European Union, Russia, and the United States. Ukraine is viewed as a geographical unit that is capable of drifting across the surface of the earth "into Europe" or "into Russia", breaking up into parts, and so on. […] Utopian thinking embodies optimism with regard to the possibility of social transformation; it manifests the will to act and bring about social change, without taking into account exactly how this is supposed to happen." (2015, pp. 71–72)

[3] Surzhyk is a non-standard language that incorporates elements of Ukrainian and Russian. See L. Bilaniuk, *Speaking of Surzhyk: Ideologies and Mixed Languages*, "Harvard Ukrainian Studies", vol. 21, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1998, pp. 93–117.; M. Flier, *Surzyk: The Rules of Engagement,* "Harvard Ukrainian Studies", vol. 22, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1998, pp.113–135.

The Euromaidan revolution also became a turning point for children's literature. Until 2014 problematic issues, such as the numerous traumatic experiences of the older generations, virtually did not appear in Ukrainian literature post 1991. The lack of publications devoted to the collapse of the USSR or new books about the horrific experience of WWII is not explicitly a Ukrainian issue, since a similar problem could be traced in other countries of the former Eastern Bloc, such as Poland and Russia (Rudova, 20; Deszcz-Tryhubczak, 103). After almost 25 years Ukrainian authors for children finally started to write books about the political transformation of 1991. First, Zirka Menzatiuk published *Yak yaruinovala imperium* (*How I Ruined the Empire*), the first children's novel representing the traumatic experience of totalitarianism and the collapse of USSR. Other similar books followed, including *Khutir* (*Hamlet*, 2015) by Olena Zakharchenko and *Vitrolomy* (*Wind-Breakers*, 2015) by Stepan Protsiuk. The events of the Euromaidan also led to the emergence of a completely new tendency in Ukrainian children's literature – picturebooks about the recent revolution and war for children aged 5–10. Depictions of traumatic events in children's literature can be labeled problematic because of the inclusion of violence and disturbing imagery, however, as rightly stated by American author Jennifer Armstrong, "if we don't encounter war in the safe way, by experiencing it through literature and art, how will we be moved to avoid the real thing?" (2002) The choice of picturebook as the narrative format is particularly important because it allows adults to introduce difficult subjects to young readers in a safe environment and help children develop critical and visual thinking.[4] Moreover, picturebooks let young readers and their guardians interact while reading aloud, consequently bringing closer generations and encouraging conversations between them. Ukrainian picturebooks about war and the revolution are particularly thought-provoking, because they do not represent second-generation memory about traumatic events but produce it. Focusing on the generational relationality of memory and post-memory Anastasia Ulanowicz introduces the term second-generation memory, "a form of collective memory that involves an individual's conscious incorporation of her elders' memories of a traumatic past within her own mnemonic repertoire. […] Such memory involves an individual's affirmation of, and sense of participation in, a given demographic's shared narrative of its past." (4) Ulanowicz uses this term "not only to refer to the vicarious memories of the children of Holocaust survivors – Jewish and non-Jewish alike – but also to those formulated by children of other historical trauma". (10) Analyzing children's books written in the aftermath of 9/11, Ulanowicz observes that

[4] Kenneth B. Kidd rightly claims that "Of all contemporary genres of children's literature, the picturebook offers the most dramatic and/or ironic testimony to trauma, precisely because the genre is usually presumed innocent." (137)

> "…texts that seek to produce second-generation memory are significantly different from those that attempt to represent it, insofar as the former imply that an individual's affective relationship to the past might be achieved just as much through lateral acts of empathy and analogy as they are through the maintenance of vertical or family-structured genealogies". (157)

In this article, I would like to focus on three picturebooks published in 2014 and 2015 and show how Ukrainian authors create different discourses on coping with these traumatic experiences while maintaining collective memory and encouraging the youngest readers to consider in what way these experiences have influenced their own lives. I chose these books, which were written for children of similar age, not only because they push the thematic and expressive boundaries of the acceptable standards of Ukrainian children's literature, but also due to their cultural importance – Khrystyna Lukashchuk's *Kazka pro Maidan* was the first Ukrainian picturebook about the revolution, Romana Romanyshyn's and Andriy Lesiv's *Viyna shcho zminyla Rondo* was commercially and critically acclaimed in Ukraine and abroad, and Halyna Kyrpa's *Miy tato stav zirkoyu* [illustrated by Oksana Bula] was given new life in 2017 when it was adapted for the stage by Nataliya Zhuravliova and performed by her theater group. Even though the authors of all of these books address Ukraine's contemporary political situation, Lukashchuk and Kyrpa do it directly, while Romanyshyn and Lesiv introduce a universal and less ideological approach towards the war.

DOVES OF GOD AND EVIL EAGLES

The first Ukrainian picturebook unequivocally devoted to the recent sociopolitical situation was Khrystyna Lukashchuk's *Kazka pro Maidan* (*Fairytale about Maidan*, 2014). Dedicated to "the heroes of Maidan", it was written in the aftermath of the Euromaidan revolution. In an interview with Bara Booka-Lukashchuk, who is a professional artist and illustrator, explained why she decided to write a book for children:

> "From the first time I went to Maidan in early December, I realized that this is not a rally for the EU membership, it is not a revolution for the idea and not even for the nation ... It is so much more. This is a war between good and evil […] I felt it at some other level than the mind because I had already understood the emotions of the previous two revolutions […] Actually, it was this understanding of Maidan as a breakthrough experience, which today is difficult to be fully assessed, that I wanted to tell the children. I remember that when I was a child I wanted to be sure that everything that was happening was fair and that every fairytale that parents read to me at night had a happy ending […] The main idea that I wanted to convey is that good always triumphs over evil." (PobachitSvit)[5]

[5] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Ukrainian are mine.

Kazka tells the story of the origin of Ukrainians and their constant struggles with evil rulers and neighbors until the 2014 revolution. In Lukashchuk's story, Ukraine emerges as a perfect place created by doves of God living in a sycamore maple. Hard-working Ukrainians inhabit the fertile country surrounded by high mountains, where hundred-year-old Hutsul women make the clouds and protect the land, and deep waters, where fish and mythical creatures such as *vodianyks* and *poterchats*[6] live. In this fairytale narrative, Ukrainians emerge as the chosen people who love God, live in perfect, white houses, are all equally noble, as well as superior to their neighbors – the jealous and evil wolves who "often attacked Ukraine in order to steal some parts of its territory." (10) Ukraine has had many rulers who were godless individuals caring only about the money, "[…] instead of a heart they had a black hole." (12) The current greedy ruler (an allusion to president Victor Yanukovych) appears as the worst one, because of him people have to live in terrible conditions and the Ukrainian sky becomes filled with black clouds of evil birds. Tired of the growing number of black clouds, Ukrainians finally decide to rebel against their ruler and organize the Maidan revolution because "they wanted to get rid of the injustice […] day and night they stood together and their armor consisted of prayers, songs, and words […] Maidan became an open-air church." (14) After being attacked by evil eagles (Berkut), Ukrainians win the battle thanks to their strong faith. Doves of God take the casualties directly to heaven and on their blood a tree grows – representing new Ukraine.

Even though *Kazka pro Maidan* is a picturebook, there is no real storytelling linking the visual and textual elements. Nevertheless, the illustrations make the plot much more problematic. They do not resemble vibrant and multicolored pictures known from other Ukrainian children's books. Lukashchuk combines dark and gloomy drawings with old photographs which give the impression of palimpsestic "ghost images", when "images of the past" are superimposed on "the immediately experienced present." (Ulanowicz, 5) Moreover, she uses many shades of sepia and gray, black, white, and deep red. The latter symbolizes blood and death, sometimes quite literally – for instance, after the main battle between Ukrainians (men and women in white) and the Berkut forces (faceless men in black), two fractions are divided by a puddle of red blood. The images contain countless references to folklore, the popular image of Ukraine as a young woman wearing a viburnum berries wreath, religion, Cossacks, Victor Yanukovych and Euromaidan, which are not present in the text.[7]

---

[6] In Ukrainian demonology *vodianyks* are water dwellers living in lakes and rivers, known for marring drowned virgins. *Poterchats* are dead and unbaptized children who can transform into birds.

[7] Even the cover of the book is challenging – instead of choosing one of her own illustrations Lukashchuk decided to use Roman Zilonko's icon *Pokrova* (*Protection*) depicting Virgin Mary. She explained her choice: "Romko [Roman Zilonko] was inspired by folk

Lukashchuk builds her narrative on simple contrasts – all of her characters are either good or bad. She juxtaposes evil eagles (called Berkut in Ukrainian and symbolizing the special police force responsible for the nearly 100 civilian deaths) with God's doves (representing Ukraine and its inhabitants). Religion plays a crucial role in *Kazka* as the vicious rulers and jealous neighbors are described as godless, while Ukrainians appear as God-loving chosen people. Interestingly, Lukashchuk manages to combine the conservative Christian discourse with Slavic folklore, something characteristic of Ukrainian culture. (Ursulenko 2013)

According to one of the reviewers, "This little book with very little text is about goodness, faith, and truth. In addition, this way of describing the event [Maidan] shows children that they are protected by people and "angels" who shed blood for their motherland and justice." (Biletska) However, I would like to argue that the author promotes infantile citizenship and presents Ukrainians as pure and faultless victims of their unequivocally evil neighbors. She simplifies the complicated political situation by showing explicit antagonisms: Ukrainians have always been the powerless victims, and Russians the evil victimizers. Moreover, one may find it problematic that the author constantly refers to religion and depicts her country not only as a martyr but also as a place with an ethnically homogeneous population. In Lukashchuk's Ukraine, there is no place for other possibilities – everyone is either good (Ukrainian) or bad (the Other). In a country as divided as Ukraine, *Kazka pro Maidan* appears as a book for a limited group of readers: very religious Ukrainian speakers. Lukashchuk's narrative presents a type of patriotic discourse typical of books written within a specific political and ideological climate. Her readers are not supposed to be independent agents, they are provided with ideologically closed story that appears to strengthen the antagonisms between Ukraine and Russia. The book is clearly divisive in its nationalistic way, and may be psychologically harmful for children because it supports such xenophobic ideas. Maybe for this reason, it is out of print as of 2017.

SINGING FLOWERS AND BLACK WEEDS

Published a year after *Kazka*, Romana Romanyshyn's and Andriy Lesiv's *Viyna shcho zminyla Rondo* (*The War That Changed Rondo*) represents a completely different approach towards the representation of war and revolution. The crucial difference is that it is a universal tale, not specifically one devoted to the Ukrainian-Russian conflict. Moreover, unlike *Kazka*, it is a book where the text and illustrations correspond with and enrich one another, as there is no textual narrative without the illustrations. The book was met with critical ac-

icons. And *Pokrova* is very symbolic. Especially now, especially because of Maidan." (PobachitSvit)

claim, receiving positive feedback from professional and popular press, including reviews in "Ukraina Moloda", "Cultprostir" and "Chytomo", as well as a recommendation in "Krytyka". In 2015 it appeared in the White Ravens list and in the winners' list of Bologna Ragazzi Award. Interestingly, in his review of *Miy tato stav zirkoyu* Kostyantyn Rodyk dismissed *Kazka* and referred to *Viyna* as the first Ukrainian children's book about the war.(Rodyk 2016)

The book tells the story of a peculiar town called Rondo (roundabout in Ukrainian) that is inhabited by numerous lively characters and is known for beautifully-scented, colorful and singing flowers. The protagonists are three best friends: Fabian (a pink balloon dog who loves to look for hidden treasures), Danko (a light bulb who has a bright heart, loves taking care of flowers, riding a bike, and singing), and Zirka (a paper plane who can fly, loves to travel and then share stories with her friends). Together they have to face the sudden appearance of war. Even though the protagonists try to fight it, Rondo is destroyed. It turns out that the only way to win the war is to stick together and keep on singing despite the difficulties. Danko, Fabian, and Zirka use their uncanny talents to construct a special light machine which could get rid of war. They succeed thanks to working together with other inhabitants of their town. Rondo has to be rebuilt, but it is never the same: the illustrations show the town as a circle which had been torn and patched together. The only flowers which grow there after the war are red poppies – a clear reference to remembrance poppies used to commemorate soldiers who have died in war. Still, the wounded protagonists survive, learn to accept their traumatic experience and appreciate the new, symbolic flowers.

The authors indicate that war hurts everyone and comes unexpected, it can happen anywhere, anytime, even in a utopic place like *Rondo,* whose name refers to a circle, the symbol of timelessness and wholeness. No one is directly antagonized in the story, war is visually represented by a large, black hand, and black tanks that plant weeds with thorns that are not scented, cannot sing, and their presence makes the sun disappear. Every protagonist is injured by bullets and thorns, and even the odd flowers lose their peculiar ability to sing. War is depicted as cruel; it takes away sunlight and happiness from everyone. The story's chronotope is not exclusively Ukrainian, it is universal and can be comprehended by boys and girls all over the world. Moreover, by using vulnerable non-human protagonists, the authors remove the focus from human tragedy connected to Euromaidan, but provide readers with a means of emotional identification. Children learn that war is heartless and it is possible to win it only by sticking together. Every character manages to use their own talent, and no one is superior or useless in Rondo. Even though there is no blood, no real fighting, readers are provided with some apparent symbols: red poppies, black weeds, or war-themed newspapers and maps which unexpectedly appear on Zirka's body.

Unlike *Kazka*, the story about Rondo has not only stayed in print, but it also won many awards and has been translated into several languages and success-

fully published abroad, maybe because, as rightly pointed by Kathleen Dale Colarusso, this type of narrative "can bring individuals, both young and old, to the realization that everyone contributes to the problems and the solutions through action and inaction." (1986, 70) Moreover, it can challenge the simplifications of war in mass media, where it is often a recurring theme in popular, violent movies and computer games which focus on entertainment, not representing the pointlessness of war. (Sawyer 1991) Even though war comes and damages Rondo, the authors omit any clear references to death. Despite the fact that war is cruel and vicious in itself, in this narrative, there are no evil neighbors and no references to any religion. Neither is it ideologically closed, but one may argue that this narrative of hope conceals the atrocities of war with its happy ending and condemnation of violence.

POPLARS AND MATURATION

Published at the end of 2015, Halyna Kyrpa's *Miy tato stav zirkoyu* (*My Dad Became a Star*) with illustrations by Oksana Bula represents yet another discourse. Unlike in the previously discussed books, here the author deals not only with the collective involvement in war but also with the individual experience of a traumatic loss.

During a talk with Valeriya Chernenko Kyrpa explained that she decided to write *Miy tato stav zirkoyu* because Maidan would never stop haunting her soul and memory (Knyzhka pro svitlo). It took her more than a year to finish the book which she had started writing in the summer of 2014. Even though her biggest inspiration came from Maidan, the story shares some similarities with her own life experience:

> "When we were saying goodbye to our Maidan heroes there were young mothers with children. Among them was a girl whose eyes I will never forget... and the heroine of my book is like that girl. I tried to imagine what happens in the soul of a child whose father did not return home safe and is lying in the casket. Maybe because I quite often feel like a child, I felt the tears of that little girl. […] The images in the book are largely related to my life. My mother is there, and poplars, which I love. When I started writing the book, I went to my father's house and found my mother's bag with war letters, dated 1942–1943. These triangular letters from the front, all of these words that were there – checkpoints, transfers, warm socks – seemed close to our life now." (Knyzhka pro svitlo)

While writing *Miy tato stav zirkoyu* Kyrpa, who was born in 1950, recalled her own post-war childhood and her second-generation memory of WWII.

The protagonist of *Miy tato stav zirkoyu* is a nameless girl whose father dies during the Euromaidan revolution. Her mother tells her that he became a star who will always guide and protect her. The first-person narrative is accompanied by illustrations which remind readers of children's drawings. Consequently, the whole story can be read as a child's diary. We are introduced to the

protagonist as she tries to understand why her 28-year-old father is at Maidan and not at home with her: "At home I also need him", she says. (5) The man promises his daughter that after the revolution he will help her draw poplars reaching the beautiful Ukrainian sky. Poplars, which in Slavic folklore symbolize pain, war, wisdom, as well as the connection with the afterlife, recurrently appear in the story. The girl does not understand why trees lose leaves in winter and wonders if it is painful. When her father comes home less and less frequently, her mother says that Maidan also needs him. When he disappears for a long time, the protagonist asks her crying mother what happened. Even though at first the woman hesitates to tell her daughter the truth, the protagonist insists that she is no longer a little child and promises not to cry. Then she is told: "He will not come, my daughter. He went… […] far away […] your dad… became… a star. […] he was killed." (14) The girl does not understand why anyone wanted to kill him and she struggles with understanding his death. She is aware of her mother's sadness and tries to deal with her loss by screaming on the inside: "I scream inside, in my thoughts." (14) She understands that her father passed away and wonders whether he really became a star that can guide and protect her: "If my dad became a star, why is my mom constantly crying?" (19), she asks herself. The mother, who turns out to be pregnant, struggles not only with the loss of her husband but also with single parenthood. Together they look at the starry sky and believe he is there shining at them. The protagonist uses the crayons that her father had given her to continue drawing family portraits, poplars, and the sky.

The girl understands that her baby sister Jordana, named after the river where John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ, will never know her father. For the infant, the revolution will be an experience of post-memory told by her older sister, yet one that can probably become "so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories on their own right." (Hirsch 1999, 8) Thus, the protagonist has to keep the memory of him alive by talking about him and drawing his pictures, hence passing her legacy onto the next generation. When she goes to the countryside to spend some time with her grandparents, she meets her cousin named Pavlus (diminutive form of Pavlo) and together they try to apprehend war: "[…] it is good to be a dove. They do not know what the word *war* means" (29), she says. Like a stereotypical boy he likes to play with toy soldiers because his father is a soldier, but he hates war and does not like to glorify it: "When I grow up, I will make all of the world's tanks and grenades disappear" (30), he says. Pavlus tells the protagonist the story of Julia, an orphan girl who moved there from Donbass with her grandmother after surviving the atrocities of war, such as losing both of her parents, home, and the beloved cat. Unlike the protagonist, who finds comfort in looking at the sky, Julia directly witnessed the war and is still afraid of the sky because "once she saw a falling aircraft. It was on fire. Since then she has been afraid to look at the sky. She believes that every single plane will fall down and burn." (31) Moreover, she is

mourning the loss of her beloved red cat. Pavlus, whose father is in Donbass, tries to help her not to think about the atrocities of war and comforts her by saying that her pet must have survived because cats are flexible and can feed on mice. The protagonist strongly believes that Pavlus will soon teach Julia not to be afraid of the sky. When they talk about the war she tells him that her father became a star, he answers that his father is still in Donbass where people get killed. For the first time she notices his maturation: "I look at Pavlus and it seems that he's no longer Pavlus, he is Pavlo. Only adults talk like that." (33) She wants to say that soon his father will also become a star, but she bites her tongue and remembers that being a star means being dead. The protagonist knows that by believing that her dad is a star he will always be there with her. Unlike Julia, she finds comfort looking at the sky. She understands that even though physically he is gone, his soul will remain with her forever.

Kyrpa manages to portray children who mature in their struggles to deal with war. The protagonist and Pavlus struggle with the loss of their fathers (one is dead, the other one in at war). Moreover, they feel the necessity to help others process traumatic experiences. The first-person narrative and the child-like drawings make the story especially poignant for young readers who can identify with them. The protagonist is not infantilized, moreover, readers can see her maturation after accepting that her father passed away and deciding to believe that he did become a star. Her growth, contrasted with her mother's melancholy, is significant not only for child readers but also for adults. Both the protagonist and Pavlus mature and help one another. Moreover, Pavlus comforts Julia and his cousin is able to help her own mother deal with the loss and single parenthood. Even though the book contains many references to God and Catholicism and can be described as patriotic, the individual treatment of loss makes it more universal than *Kazka pro Maidan*. The narrative is not as universal as the one found in *Viyna shsho zminyla Rondo*, it is more comprehensible and provides child and adult readers with a realistic story of dealing with individual loss and consequent maturation. The book is still in print, moreover, in 2017 it gained further recognition when it was successfully adapted as a stage play by Nataliya Zhuravliova and performed by her children's theater group, getting extensive nationwide media coverage.

CONCLUSIONS

After 1991 Ukrainians had to face the difficult task of working through their own traumas and raising new generations of post-Soviet children. Subsequently, they began the process of re-ukrainianization of the state education system and literature. Even though it was not successful and almost three decades after gaining independence the Ukrainian publishing market is still dominated by Russian-language publications, most books written in Ukrainian are those for children. (Świetlicki 2014) Moreover, the demand for quality books

for children is constantly increasing, and independent publishers offer fiction, poetry and picturebooks for different age groups. However, until 2014 most Ukrainian authors had rejected traumatogenic stories, such as the experience of hunger, World War II, totalitarianism, and the collapse of the USSR.

The Euromaidan revolution became a turning point for the children's book market. The first picturebook about these events was published in 2014 and the next year two more appeared. After analyzing three picturebooks published in 2014 and 2015, we can say that there are several ways of talking about war and revolution in contemporary Ukrainian children's literature. First, Khrystyna Lukashchuk in her gloomy *Kazka pro Maidan* depicts war and revolution in a nationalistic and stereotypical way. Second, Romana Romanyshyn and Andriy Lesiv in *Viyna shcho zminyla Rondo* show a universal, yet somewhat airbrushed, approach towards the theme of war. Finally, Halyna Kyrpa in *Miy tato stav zirkoyu* provides readers with an individual approach towards the traumatic experience of loss and maturation.

The theme of war and revolution is beginning to appear in other narrative forms for children. The first children's novel partly devoted to Euromaidan, Dzvinka Matiyash's *Marta z vulytsi Svyatoho Mykolya* (*Marta from St. Nicholas Street*), was published in late 2015. Even though it represents a conservative discourse, similar to the one found in *Kazka pro Maidan*, the variety of approaches towards the depiction of war and trauma found in picturebooks carries the hope for the development of Ukrainian children's book market and the appearance of different discourses and other textual forms for children and young adults producing second-generation memory, as well as those devoted to other problematic issues like war refugees and immigration.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Armstrong, J. 2002. On Reading about War and Peace. – *Five Owls* 16, 2–4: 29, 31.

Biletska, N. 2014. Dityam pro Maidan. (01.06.2017) - https://starylev.com.ua/club/article/dityam-pro-maydan [Web link.]

Caruth, C. 1996. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press.

Colarusso, K. D. 1986. World War II and Its Relevance to Today's Adolescents. – *ALAN Review* 13, 2 (winter): 12–14, 70.

Deszcz-Tryhubczak, J. 2011. Jak "zrobić" stanwojenny? Opowiadanie o najnowszej historii Polski we Wrońcu Jacka Dukaja. – Z. Wąsik, M. Oziewicz, J. Deszcz-Tryhubczak, eds. *Exploring the Benefits of the Alternate History Genre/W poszukiwaniu pożyteczności gatunku historii alternatywnych*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Filologicznej we Wrocławiu, 103–112.

Hirsch, M. 1999. Projected Memory: Holocaust Photographs in Personal and Public Phantasy. – M. Bal, J.V. Crewe, and L. Spitzer, eds., *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present.* Hanover and London: University Press of New England. 3–23

Hirsch, M. 2008. The Generation of Postmemory. – *Poetics Today,* 29:1, 103–128.

Kidd, Kenneth B. 2005. "A" is for Auschwitz: Psychoanalysis, Trauma Theory, and the "Children's Literature of Atrocity". - Children's Literature, Volume 33: 120–149.

Kyrpa, H. 2015. *Miy tato stav zirkoyu* (*My Dad Became a Star*). Lviv: Vydavnytstvo Staroho Leva.

Lukashchuk, K. 2014. *Kazka pro Maidan* (*Fairytale about Maidan*). Lviv: Vydavnytstvob-Staroho Leva.

Minakov, M. 2015. Utopian Images of the West and Russia Among Supporters and Opponents of the Euromaidan. – *Russian Politics & Law*, 53 (3): 68–85, DOI: 10.1080/10611940.2015.1053785

Miy tato stav zirkoyu – knyzhka pro svitlo y nadiiu vid Halyny Kyrpy. (01.06.2017) – https://starylev.com.ua/news/miy-tato-stav-zirkoyu-knyzhka-pro-svitlo-y-nadiyu-vid-galyny-kyrpy [Web link.]

Pobachyt' svit "Kazka pro Maidan". (01.06.2017) – http://www.barabooka.com.ua/pobachit-svit-kazka-pro-majdan/ [Web link.]

Rodyk, K. 2015. Rondo, prostirlyubovi y morokiya. (01.06.2017) - http://www.umoloda.kiev.ua/number/2729/164/95482/ [Web link.]

Rodyk, K. 2016. "Miy tato – tseya". (01.06.2017) – http://www.umoloda.kiev.ua/number/2779/164/96993/ [Web link.]

Romanyshyn, R. and Lesiv, A. 2015. *Viyna shcho zminyla Rondo* (*War Which Changed Rondo*). Lviv: Vydavnytstvo Staroho Leva.

Rudova, L. 2008. *From Character-Building to Criminal Pursuits: Russian Children's Literature in Transition*. – M. Balina, L. Rudova, eds. *Russian Children's Literature and Culture,* New York – London: Routledge, 19–40.

Ryabchuk, A. 2014. Right Revolution? Hopes and Perils of the Euromaidan Protests in Ukraine. – *Debatte: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, DOI: 10.1080/0965156X.2013.877268

Sawyer, K. K. 1991. Experiencing War. – *Five Owls* 5, 4 (March-April): 86–7.

Schwab, G. 2010. *Haunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Świetlicki, M. 2014. "Dzieci imperium..." – postkolonialny wymiar ukraińskiego rynku książki i prasy dla dzieci i młodzieży". – *Porównania* 15: 233–244.

Trubunella, E. L. 2010. *Melancholia and Maturation: The Use of Trauma in American Children's Literature*, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Ulanowicz, A. 2013. *Second-Generation Memory and Contemporary Children's Literature: Ghost Images*. New York, London: Routledge.

Ursulenko, A. 2013. *Folklor a kształtowanie się ukraińskiej tożsamości narodowo-kulturowej: na materiale publicystyki społeczno-kulturalnej z lat 199*1–*2004*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.

Filoteknos, vol. 8 • 2018 • DOI: 10.23817/filotek.8-10

DOROTA MICHUŁKA • Wrocław University, Poland

Heterotopia and the Structure of Time in Marcin Szczygielski's Fantasy Novel *Arka czasu, czyli wielka ucieczka Rafała od kiedyś przez wtedy do teraz i wstecz* (trans. *The Ark of Time, or Rafał's Great Escape from Once, Through Then, to Now and Back Again*) (2013)

Abstract: Marcin Szczygielski in his novel *Arka czasu, czyli wielka ucieczka Rafała od kiedyś przez wtedy do teraz i wstecz* (trans. *The Ark of Time, or Rafał's Great Escape from Once, Through Then, to Now and Back Again*) (2013) exposes the young reader to the ethical complexity of the world by presenting both positive and negative attitudes of Poles towards Jews. The novel is primarily rooted in the poetics of fantasy, although it is based on facts and recalls the true story of a Jewish boy whose grandfather was a violinist. The story of Rafał's escape from the Warsaw Ghetto can also be generically traced back to the adventure story and manners-cum-family story and is narrated with humour. The novel is clearly inspired by Janusz Korczak's *Diary* (written in the ghetto in 1942, full ed. 1978) and a collection of poems, *The Children of the Ghetto* (1949), by Stefania Grodzieńska. It exudes authenticity, symbolised by both the topography of the actual ghetto space (*heterotopia*) and present motif time – travel. The rich, vivid narrative of the book seems to be a story of memories – filtered through successive generations – of events, places, people, values, ideas, images, and symbols. Its special significance in the literature for young readers and in speculative fiction may be explained by the power and function of literary imagination well adapted to the perceptual capabilities of the young reader.

Keywords: Heterotopia, structure of time, poetic of fantasy, time travel motif, culture remembrance, chronotope of Holocaust, representation of the past, figures of memory

> "They say that ONCE it didn't really matter what nationality you were, what mattered was what kind of person you were. Everyone lived where they wanted, regardless of their surname, belief, or colour of their skin, hair, and eyes"
>
> (M. Szczygielski**,** *Arka czasu, czyli wielka ucieczka Rafała od kiedyś przez wtedy do teraz i wstecz*, 2013)

Arka czasu (*The Ark of Time, 2014*) by Marcin Szczygielski occupies a special place among contemporary Polish literary works about World War II, which include a large number of memoirs, recollections, autobiographies, and biographies published over the last 30 years, interpreted in the context of both collective and private/individual culture of remembrance. There have also been many books published recently whose narratives are set in fantastic realities, talking about WWII indirectly with the use of poetic, allegorical, and metaphorical language, e.g. *If I should die before I wake* (1994) by Han Nolan[1] or *Brian Rose* (1992)[2] and *The Devil's Arithmetic* (1988)[3], both by Jane Yolen. Some of the works also use the strategy of magic realism.

The novel by Szczygielski is primarily rooted in the poetics of fantasy, although it is based on facts and recalls the true story of a Jewish boy whose grandfather was a violinist. The story of Rafał's escape from the Warsaw Ghetto can also be generically traced back to the adventure story and manners-cum-family story and is narrated with humour. The novel is clearly inspired by Janusz Korczak's *Diary* (written in the ghetto in 1942, full ed. 1978) and a collection of poems, *The Children of the Ghetto* (1949), by Stefania Grodzieńska. It exudes authenticity, symbolised by both the topography of the actual ghetto space, such as specific shops, really existing tenement houses, street names, a restaurant, a library, but also the wall and a hideout, symbolising the wartime space, and an assortment of various real characters, such as residents of the building, beggars sitting in front of luxury restaurants, blackmailers called shmaltsovniks, and food smugglers. The novel also talks about a true historical event, the so-called *Great Action* (*Großaktion Warschau*), following which the ghetto became depopulated. (Sakowska, 1993; Engelking, Leociak, 2013; Szarota, 2010)[4]

---

[1] "As Hilary, a Neo-Nazi initiate, lies in a coma, she is transported to Poland at the onset of World War II into the life of a Jewish teenager" – a summary comes from the cover of the book (Nolan, 1994).

[2] The story is based on the fairy tale *Sleeping Beauty*. According to Jack Zipes, "there are few writers capable of using the fairy-tale form to write about *all* the ramifications of the Holocaust and Jane Yolen is one of them. Her novel is not only a superb accomplishment but also an important social statement", J. Zipes, *Christian – Jewish Relationship through the Centuries*, ed. by S. Porter and B. Pearson, Sheffield Academic Press, 2000, p. 326.

[3] Jane Yolen presents in her book the story of a Jewish girl, Hannah Stern. Hanna lives in New York City. She is bored with her relatives' stories about the past but suddenly, during the Passover Seder, she is transported back in time to the year 1942. She finds herself in Poland during World War II. She is also sent to a concentration camp where she witnesses numerous atrocities and learns about her bad heritage and the importance of knowing about the past.

[4] Grossaktion Warsaw, which was the liquidation of the ghetto together with mass extermination of its inhabitants, lasted from 22 July to 21 September 1942. It affected 300,000 people. At that time, the Warsaw Ghetto, a closed district of Warsaw, was inhabited by about 370,000 Jews. Jews were gathered at Umschlagplatz (at the corner of Stawki Street and Dzika Street) and transported by rail to the concentration camp in Treblinka, where they were murdered in gas chambers. About 100 people were driven into each cattle car. Daily shipments to

Szczygielski exposes the young reader to the ethical complexity of the world by presenting both positive and negative attitudes of Poles towards Jews. On the one hand, we have examples of selfless help with organizing escape of children from the ghetto and setting them up with new Polish IDs; on the other hand, there are cases where Jews are blackmailed and kept in hiding for money. The author also describes anxiety, fear, and other emotions associated with the daily struggle for survival, consisting of such acts as finding food and keeping contact with Jewish friends, which was either restricted or forbidden during the Nazi occupation and punishable by death. (Sakowska, 1993; Engelking, Leociak, 2013)

The narrative of the story avoids brutality as the author spares the young reader graphic details of the wartime horrors. Instead, he familiarizes them with the reality of living in the ghetto, including scenes of children at play. The illustrations by Daniel de Latour are also adapted to the cognitive level of the young reader, supporting the text and illuminating significant moments of the narrative. These are black and white sketches of a caricature and humorous nature.

1. OTHER SPACES – EMPLACEMENTS

The subject of the Holocaust is presented in the book primarily in the context of the notion of space (Foucault, 1984; Bieber 2015)[5], where – behind the wall – a ghastly normality takes place, a peculiar ritual of everyday ghetto life, with the running theme of survival and "the great escape".

The novel by Szczygielski incorporates not only the real space/geography of the ghetto but also historical characters, e.g. Janusz Korczak (writer, educator, director of the Warsaw Jewish orphanage) and Stefania Grodzieńska, called Stella in the book – the girl who helps Rafał to escape from the ghetto[6].

Treblinka consisted of about five to six thousand people. Among them, there were patients taken from hospital and the children from the orphanage run by the well-known educator and writer Janusz Korczak. Korczak might have avoided the deportation but decided to stay with his young charges until the end and also perished in a gas chamber in Treblinka. *Grossaktion Warschau* was part of Operation Reinhard carried out by SS and police leader (*SS-und Polizeiführer*) Odilo Globocnik. The ghetto was later confined to the area of workshops (so-called *szopy*) in the northern part of the district. See Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak: *Getto warszawskie. Przewodnik po nieistniejącym mieście*, Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2013 (here e.g. the map *Getto warszawskie. Granice przed wielką akcją likwidacyjną*, cartography by Paweł E. Weszpiński).

[5] Closed space of *otherness* – a heterotopia described by Michel Foucault; a similar literary device was also used, among others, in *Pamiętnik Blumki* (2012) by I. Chmielewska or *Ostatnie przedstawienie panny Esterki* (2013) by A. Jaromir.

[6] Stella is the heroine of the book who takes Rafał from the ghetto and escapes with him struggling through the streets of the occupied Warsaw. The girl is based on a real person, Stefania Grodzieńska. The escape route is real and represents in the book the authentic topography of the city. Stella and Rafał come out at dawn through the Arbeitsamt building and walk through the city from Towarowa Street, through Nowogrodzka St, Bracka

The novel shows a state of spiritual limbo of the protagonist between two realities, in the non-hegemonic world between closure and freedom. This literary image is confirmed in the narrative not only by the physical rooting of the main character in the ghetto space but also by his spiritual presence, e.g. Rafał loves reading literature, which helps him to discover his inner feelings and survive.

In my reading of the novel, the structure of the space presented by the author is important as it plays a significant role in the reader's understanding of the fictional events. The child "lost in the reality" of the nightmare of the ghetto is desperately looking for a new space for himself in order to feel safe. In this context, the cultural phenomenon of heterotopia seems to be key for analysis of the child's needs.

Heterotopia, a phenomenon from the field of humanistic geography, horizontally intersects "emplacements" with " placeless places" and overlaps "other spaces". As such, it refers directly to the concept of mirror reflections, literary alternative worlds, and simultaneous and parallel realities. We can clearly see its presence in such literary genres as utopia and dystopia, or in literary conventions based on magical realism in the area of speculative literature (including fantasy and science-fiction). In the case of science-fiction, heterotopia (like utopia) will often be an unreal image, a specific reflection of social life.

As Walter Russell Mead has written, "Utopia is a place where everything is good; dystopia is a place where everything is bad; heterotopia is where things are different – that is, a collection whose members have few or no intelligible connections with one another" (Mead, 1996).

Such spaces will include the ghetto where Rafał lives. It is a space of life that, despite the real geography of a specific region/district existing on the map of Warsaw, refers to tangled meeting points, complex networks of relations that define those places. It also shows the development of new social practices of survival in such space (a kind of "experience of space") and presents a reconstruction of the rules of these practices. It also means an escape (real and spiritual) by Rafał from the atrocities, cruelty, and repression of the war. The boy compensates by creating another real space – a space that is other. Here, we are dealing with a departure from the continuous space and the experience of its extent towards "simultaneous places", the space experienced as defined by Lefebvre and, as Ewa Rewers writes, the inclusion of "the space of mediation and transition" (Rewers, 1996: 48).

St, Castle Square and Kierbedź Bridge to the Praga district.

Stefania Grodzieńska was an actress, dancer, and writer. In the Warsaw Ghetto, she performed in the Femina Theatre. She wrote poetry under the pseudonym of Stefania Ney. After the war, she was the author of popular satirical features published, among others, in the periodical *Szpilki*. She worked for the Polish Radio and Polish Television; she also produced skits and monologues that were acted out by well-known actors.

The novel also introduces or mentions other real persons, such as the librarian Barbara Temkin-Bermanowa or the ZOO director Antonina Żabińska.

Foucault observes that:

> we do not live in a homogeneous and empty space, but on the contrary in a space thoroughly imbued with quantities and perhaps thoroughly phantasmatic as well. The space of our primary perception, the space of our dreams and that of our passions hold within themselves qualities that seem intrinsic: there is a light, ethereal, transparent space, or again a dark, rough, encumbered space; a space from above, of summits, or on the contrary a space from below of mud; or again a space that can be flowing like sparkling water, or space that is fixed, congealed, like stone or crystal (Faucault 1984: 12).

It seems that the boy's dreams to go "outside the wall" and his desire to live in a free space become the most important catalyst for the events in the story.

2. REPRESENTATION OF TIME AND SPACE: A CHRONOTOPE OF THE HOLOCAUST

A significant role in the novel is also played by the motif of time used as a pretext to juxtapose the period of war with the present day; the "inhabitants"/protagonists living in the latter period do not know (or no longer remember) wartime nightmares – consider Lydia Kokkola (Kokkola, 2003). The representation of time and space in the novel can also take on the role of *chronotope* in accordance with the theory of Mikhail Bakhtin, who claims that "time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic Chronotope" (Kokkola, 2003:68).

The escape comes to fruition thanks to the theme of time travel used in the novel, where Rafał is transported to modern times. The boy, immersed in literature, is inspired by H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895). Thus, the story by Wells becomes a catalyst for events, a "ritual of transition" from the reality of war to modern space – a sphere of freedom and happiness. The second part of the story, in sharp contrasts with the past, takes place in the carefree and prosperous modern times (including the space of a funfair).

The power of the narrative stems here from juxtaposition of two radically different worlds: the ghetto world of poverty, hunger, and death and the modern city world of joy, satiety, and consumption. The device of surprise becomes an artistic feature among many categories of emotions presented in the book (e.g. anxiety, fear, and longing). The girl from the future has no knowledge of the Jewish Quarter and the chronically hungry Rafał is surprised by the fact that one can intentionally not finish a hot dog and he does not know what the word *blog* means. A similar use of surprise can be found in the novel by Szczygielski in the space of the Warsaw ZOO, which is a hiding place for Jewish children seeking refuge (Miller, 2015).

Consequently, we are dealing here with a clear merging/overlapping of a narrative based on historical truth with fiction enhanced by memory of the past (Vice, 2004), which is pointed out by, among others, Lydia Kokkola in her discussion of the *chronotope of the Holocaust* (see the chapter "Writing History: Creating Fiction"). The Finnish researcher refers to the observations made by Sue Vice related to concept of chronograph as defined by Bakhtin and draws attention to three levels of its literary realization:

> "first as the means by which a text represents history; second, as the relation between images of time and space in the novel, out of which any representation of history must be reconstructed; and third, as a way of discussing the formal properties of the text itself, its plot, narrator, and relation to other texts" of which the first two have the most relevance (Vice, 2004:12)[7]

As another example of the use of real events in the story of Rafał's ghetto escape and walks in search of hiding places, the author introduces real characters from the Warsaw ZOO. In the novel, the phantasmagoric wartime reality of the zoo, with hiding people and roaming animals, also becomes a heterotopia. However, the manager of the zoo is not a phantasmagoria. She is a real person, named Antonina Żabińska, who during the war, along with her husband, saved over three hundred Jews, and their villa was indeed referred to with the whimsically beautiful metaphor of Noah's Ark. The ark constructed by the children in the book also has a clear biblical context, it is a dream of freedom and a symbol of faith in human solidarity. However, it seems that the structure of the story is consolidated by the running theme of human existence and the fight for survival, which is associated here with the structure of time through the juxtaposition of the notions *once* and *then* with the term *now*.

The dominant perspective on the literary wartime reality may also be broadly associated with the culture of remembrance (Assmann, 2012; Troebst, 2015). In addition to the phenomena of *reading of space* and *experience of the place* that are consistently visible in the narrative, the concept of the mechanism of memory in Szczygielski's book also concerns the notion of identity, including the ability to find balance between *remembering* one's Jewish identity and forgetting that it can lead you to death (Kertzer, 2002; Boas 1995; Tatelbaum 1985).

---

[7] Sue Vice writes, "many texts written from the viewpoint of child survivors of the Holocaust are structured in what is apparently the same temporally split manner. Sections about the traumatic past alternate with sections describing the present: either that of the post-war era, or the time of writing. In Saul Friedländer's memoir *When Memory Comes*, for instance, the past is the product of retrospection while the present is written as it unfolds in the form of a diary; while in both Shlomo Breznitz's *Memory Fields* and Georges Perec's *W or the Memory of Childhood*, the moment of writing is a third moment, distinct from the wartime and post-war times discussed. Such texts are also divided between a child's and an adult's perspective; the past of the Holocaust is the time of childhood, its effects that of adulthood". See chapter "Split Narration", p. 12.

In this article, *reading of space* and *experience of place* are based on the concept of construction of space in a literary work developed by Janusz Sławiński, who contends that the setting is constructed on three levels of morphological units: 1. description – here we refer to stylistic and semantic categories, e.g. semantics of proper names and territories (especially in narratives) and their role as focal points (e.g. a real names of the streets in Warsaw); 2. scenery – the setting does not constitute an autonomous entity but serves as a background for phenomena of another order (events, people, and emotions): a/ it delineates (differentiates, divides, and classifies) the framework for the network of characters; b/ it constitutes a set of locations – events, scenes, and situations from the plot in which the characters take part; it accentuates the time aspect in the development of the presented world; c/ it serves as a material expression of the communication strategy adopted in the work (e.g. Warsaw during World War II). This category also includes points of view, establishing "the centre of spatial orientation"; 3. figurative meanings – the setting is symbolic or allegorical and acts like a great metaphor; it is treated as an equivalent of emotional states or a juxtaposition between the real and fantasy worlds (Sławiński 1978).

In the novel by Szczygielski, the setting is rooted in all three levels of morphological units but the figurative meaning of the setting seems to be dominant. The story of Rafał is a metaphor of the "great escape" and "travel" through the city space but also of travel between different time periods – PAST and PRESENT – with special meanings of the words: *once, then, now*, and *back again*. Those different times are linked by the category of memory (Tuan, 1987; Kowalski, 2001; Bachelard 1957).[8]

The novel belongs to the group of literary works known as *children's literature of atrocity*, in which memory of the past, or as Anastasia Ulanowicz calls

[8] According to Lotman, spatial representations form "the content level of a universal cultural model", with spatial relations constituting "an expressive design" of this model, whereas spatial categories point to notions of scientific metadiscourse used in the description of cultures. As Lotman explains, "in all cultures the image of the world inevitably acquires properties of spatial characteristics. The very construction of the natural order is invariably developed on the basis of a certain spatial structure organising all the remaining levels of this construction, e.g. the protagonist's ethical-spatial sphere or the moral sphere". J. Lotman, "O metajazykie tipołogiczeskich opisanij kultury", *Trudy po znakowym sistiemam,* vol. 4, Tartu 1969, p. 463. For example, during his escape from the ghetto, Rafał is frightened by the new unknown setting but he is fighting for his survival. An analysis of the setting in the book by Szczygielski should include another, equally important work, namely *Space and Place* by Yi-Fu Tuan, in which space is described as "significant places whose meanings accumulate; it displays a simple but exceptionally capacious model, constituting an implementation of the model of cultural space", outlined mainly by the central point, the peripheral area, the border, medial points, significant places, and the way. Reconnaissance of the surroundings involves identification of the main points while objects and places become centres of cultural, sociological, philosophical, and ethical values. Y.F. Tuan, *Space and place*, Warsaw 1987, pp. 28, 30, 122.

it, *second-generation memory* – ghost images,[9] is evident primarily in the juxtaposition of the images of cruel ghetto space with the scenes of dialogue of the family from the present with Rafał, who remembers the ghetto past. In both cases memory has the character of a palimpsest and refers to the concept of a generation.

As Ulanowicz observes:

> second-generation memory ... is a form of collective memory that involves an individual's conscious incorporation of her elder's memories of a traumatic past within her own mnemonic repertoire ... [it] involves an individual's internalization and subsequent narrative reinterpretation of her elder's remembered past ... "the memory of the family"... it is produced not solely by "personal feelings but by rules and customs" that traditionally characterize pre-existing kinship relations ...it is characterized by a profound self-awareness ... and sense of participation in, a given demographic's shared narrative of its past ... recognition of the ways in which her present circumstances have been mediated and shaped by past events that she herself did not directly experience. (Ulanowicz, 2013: 4)

And although second generation memory has a great impact on figures and the representation of the past – works convincingly using images – it is always fragmentary and incomplete.

This *selectivity* or *sketchiness* of the view of past events in literary narratives and its function of imagination has also been confirmed by studies conducted by Maurice Halbwachs:

> Formulated in the aftermath of an unrepeatable past, memory can only reconstruct, or re-imagine, what can never be fully present again. Existing at a necessary remove from its referent, memory is – to rehearse a tired academic phrase – "always already" belated. Moreover, because memories become coherent (and, in effect, memorable) only once they are placed into narrative form, their narrative structures attest to the discourses and values that are dominant within the society of which their bearer is a part. (Halbwachs, 1992: 40)

Here is an example of fleeting memories from Rafał's past, the images changing in his consciousness due to constant relocation of the family during the wartime turmoil:

> If truth be told, I rarely played with other kids. ONCE, when I moved in with my Grandpa, there was a young lady taking care of me, her name was Mari-

[9] The literature also uses such terms as "postmemory"(see M. Hirsch, Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory, Cambridge, Harvard 1997), "prosthetic/artificial memory" (see A. Lansberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture*, New York: Columbia UP, 2004), and "belated witness" (see M. G. Levine, The Belated Witness: Literature, Testimony, and the Question of Holocaust Survival (Cultural Memory in the Present), Stanford University Press, 2006).

> anna. I have a dim memory that she sometimes took me to the Saxon Garden- where there were many children, we were running on the lawns, playing hide-and-seek in the bushes. It was a very long time ago – just like with my other memories from those times, I'm not even sure all this took place. Maybe I only dreamt about it? Then the war began and they set up the Quarter. People were moving in and out, there was always someone new, some other children – I saw them from time to time but before we got to know each other, they disappeared. So, I usually spent time alone or with my Grandpa. (Szczygielski 2015:48)

The story by Szczygielski, with the child/children as the main character(s) and written for young readers, also takes into account the perspective of the older generation, which expresses in the narrative its views of the past *by way of* juxtaposition of the different temporal periods. For example, a significant character in this story is Rafał's grandfather, a musician-violinist sensitive to the world around him, who tells the boy of the happy past before the war – *once* and *now* – and teaches him everyday survival skills. Also, there is a family from the year 2013 that lives in affluence and already does not remember the war. As Ulanowicz demonstrates, "The term *generation* applies not only to a specific demographic but also to the delimited period of time in which this demographic arises and develops. Moreover, the term *generation* implies a certain succession or genealogy". (Ulanowicz, 2013:9)

In the novel, the phenomenon of the continuity of generations takes on particular significance in the context of reflections on the private history of the family, as seen in the following fragment:

> Grandpa sits down on a chair and looks at the window. Lately, he's been always tired, he doesn't laugh anymore and we don't talk much about books. He sometimes still teaches me history and Polish but those lessons don't last as long as ONCE. I watch him when he doesn't see. He looks very old (Szczygielski, pp. 55–56).

3.SPACE AS A SAFE AND SACRED PLACE – PAST AND PRESENT

Chronotope of the Holocaust as a "creation of a sense of specific time in which the events take place as well as a sense of the place" (Kokkola 2003:8)[10] is also visible in the Warsaw Ghetto as a so-called *sacred place/sacred landscape.* Al-

[10] When writing, among others, about depictions of the world and visual narration, Kokkola uses the example of a picture book inspired by the Grimm brothers tale *Dear Mili: An Old Tale,* illustrated by Maurice Sendak (1988). This is a story of loss, separation, and love, a story whose girl heroine, isolated from her family, hides in the forest during the war; her carer is Saint Josep. Time stops for the young protagonist (three days turn into thirty years) but she finally returns home to her already old mother. See Hamida Bosmajian, "Memory and Desire in the Landscapes of Sendak's Dear Mili", *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 1995. See also H. Bosmajian, *Sparing the Child: Grief and the Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust,* New York and London: Routledge 2002.

though the characters of *The Ark of Time* live in specific places in the narrative of the story, they are simultaneously *retained* in *a sacred place*. (Halbwachs, 2002). Sacralisation of the landscape takes place thanks to the symbols and collective fantasies about the past that are anchored in it. (Halbwachs, 2002). Therefore, *geography of the past* of Warsaw and *practising* the ghetto space by the young characters take on a special meaning here. (Rymkiewicz, 1992)[11]

Małgorzata Wójcik-Dudek says that a description of such experience of space evokes the metaphors of forest and clearing as well as categories of "beings" and "being" as defined by Martin Heidegger. The ghetto space seems to be closed like densely planted trees that form a forest wall. However, the forest has its "clearings" providing glimpses of another world. Those clearings, like holes in the wall, provoke to get to the other side – to escape. Getting behind the wall is an escape to freedom – to a normal world, which despite the war seems beautiful on the Aryan site; it becomes a symbolic escape from biblical bondage and gives a chance of survival (Heidegger 2002). Małgorzata Wójcik-Dudek notes that "The young hero, excluded because of his Jewishness and additionally abandoning the ghetto, puts himself in the position of Heidegger's "ek-sistence", which the philosopher defines as standing outside oneself, stepping forth towards the truth of being" (Wójcik--Dudek, 2016: 316).[12]

The ghetto space is familiar to the protagonist, it has become for him a real home (for example, the boy recalls the pre-war *good address* in the Warsaw district of Saska Kępa) but it also has its significant, symbolic spots, marks, nooks and crannies. The most important and central place for the young hero is the library – a symbol of spiritual life – where he arrives by building in his mind a map to navigate the city, even with his eyes closed. Metaphorically, the love of literature and reading of books carries on to the *reading of the space* of the ghetto, which is treated here as a *real-life text*: "bookshelves correspond to rows of houses, titles on the spines of books resemble shop and workshop signboards, while literary stories are mirrored in the narratives provided by the city" (Wójcik-Dudek, 2016:321)

---

[11] Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz in his famous book *Umschlagplatz* assigns an unusual meaning to the title place: "Umschlagplatz is not only the name of a specific place at Stawki Street in Warsaw. It is also the name of the first spiritual territory or the name of fate: Umschlagplatz, in other words limbo, antechamber of death, entrance to the underworld". See J.M. Rymkiewicz, *Umschlagplatz*, Gdańsk 1992, p. 39.

[12] The oppressiveness of the ghetto experience consisted, among other things, of limited space occupied by resettled Jews. Adults tried to explain to children the concept of free space and the appearance of the forest and animals: "In the ghetto, a mother is trying to explain to her child the concept of distance. Distance, she says, 'is more than our Leszno Street. It is an open field, and a field is a large area where the grass grows, or ears of corn, and when one is standing in the midst, one does not see its beginning or its end'". See D. Ackerman: *The Zookeeper's Wife*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2007, p. 159.

The route of daily walks by Rafał was as follows:

> In order to reach the library, one must go like this: first cross our backyard, then the street, and the next backyard on the other side. Here, there is a beauty parlour and the laboratory of Adam Duchowiczny, in which he makes different creams and other cosmetics. . . . Right next to the laboratory, there is the shop of the tailor, who constantly argues with Mr Duchowiczny about those smells because he says they cause him headaches. . . . Once I go past the backyard, I enter the street, go left, cross the street, and turn into Twarda Street. . . .[There are] lots of small shops, a small clothes market, and sometimes they even sell flowers here. I run up the wooden stairs onto the footbridge and I quickly go over the street because you are not allowed to stop there and it is always very crowded. . . . Now you only need to go past the jeweller's and you are there – Leszno 67. Here, you need to enter the yard surrounded by houses, run up the stairs and that's it. You are in the library. This is my favourite place in the whole Quarter. (Szczygielski, pp. 8–10).

The juxtaposition of spatial and temporal relationships (memories of the good past) also highlights the status of the luxurious *once* and the *ruined now*. For example, Rafał lived in the most beautiful street of the ghetto which, according to historical accounts, was the only one with trees, and there was "a nice room with a balcony" (Rymkiewicz, 1992:232)[13] while "in the house on the corner there is Café Hirschfeld – the most luxurious café in the whole Quarter and everything inside it is very expensive, even ordinary cereal coffee" (Szczygielski, p. 21). But *now*, "further along, behind the tailor's shop, located at a slight angle from us, there is also a demolished tenement house. Almost none of it remained, just a big heap of rubble – this house was hit by a bomb and I remember this". (Szczygielski, p. 23).

The time of *now* is cruel – it destroys the happy past – and the view from the boy's balcony shows a kind of *house-icide*: the safe lodgings shrink down and the grandfather with his grandson are looking for a new shelter. The boy's imagination is also stimulated by the book he is reading: *The Time Machine* becomes a symbolic and cruel comment on the wartime period. The philosophy of the story illustrates the repeatability of the events – in the novel by Wells, the world in the year 802,701 is divided into the Morlocks and the Eloi, which very closely resembles the current, actual *system* of nations; the similarly arranged reality of the wartime nightmare points to Germans as the Morlocks and their slaves as the Eloi. There is another book in *The Ark of Time* that is compared to modern times, namely a science-fiction novel for young readers called *Profesor Przedpotopowicz,* written by Erazm Majewski in 1898. Its story, like one of the novels by Jules Verne, is based on an expedition *into the depths of the Earth*.

[13] Rymkiewicz writes that according to witness accounts, the trees grew in two places in the Warsaw ghetto – on Sienna Street and at the cemetery.

The adventures of Professor Przedpotopowicz, read with excitement by Rafał, in a way anticipate the course of events – the boy, *strengthened* compensatorily by his great literary imagination, *constructs* in his mind a new "fairy tale for the Morlocks" (Szczygielski, p. 87) – a new world – a new biography, and with the help of his grandfather and friends he indeed escapes from the ghetto, provided with a new Polish name (Mortyś), a new address (from now on, he lives in the town of Grójec), and a new family (new auntie Hania).

The decision to leave the ghetto is not easy and evokes many unpleasant emotions. Family memories return, e.g. before abandoning the flat, the boy watches intently a photo of his parents and Grandpa and his musings on getting outside the wall are deliberate and mature:

> I know that many children from the Quarter are sent outside to Polish families that hide them or pretend they are relatives. It's true I don't know any child who would come back from there but outside the wall is just like here, only better. They say it is safer, there is food, and there are no beggars in the streets. There is more space outside.
>
> But my grandpa will not be there. What will become of him? Who will cook and clean for him? (Szczygielski, p. 58–59)

However, the boy's imagination helps him survive; he builds his own, spiritual, inner survival space:

> I imagined that I was the Traveller in the Land of Time. I have just arrived in my machine to a mysterious, extraordinary future. No one must realize that I'm not from here and now, so I have to pretend that I am one of the natives (Szczygielski, p. 77).

During the hero's escape, the space changes. The boy discovers a new, gloomy place – a hideaway (Cobel-Tokarska , 2012:226) – a dark cavity under the stage of a theatre, which is just staging a glitzy show, and then a cellar under zebra stables in the Warsaw Zoo that has been bombarded by the Germans[14]. These sites become places of refuge for the protagonist, a chance to survive, while the feelings of anxiety and fear entail specific attitudes and actions. Rafał gets in touch – in a way "*touches* the one who experiences"(Rybicka, 2014:184) – he is initially a witness, not a doer, and in this sense we could say that *the spirit of the place* moves a person from the level of *ownership* to the level of *testimony* (Sławek, 2007: 15)[15] and then, when the place "becomes an event" (Rybicka, 2014: 184) it forces the protagonist to behave in a particular way.

---

[14] Kelman Kalonimus Szapiro, the last rabbi of the Warsaw ghetto, advised to focus on beauty in the face of the Holocaust. This call could mean fascination with literature and art. See D. Ackerman, *The Zookeeper's Wife*…, p. 185.

[15] We refer, among others, to studies by T. Sławek and E. Rybicka. T. Sławek, *Genius loci jako doświadczenie. Prolegomena* in *Genius loci. Studia o człowieku w przestrzeni*, ed. Z. Kadłubek, Katowice 2007, p. 15.

The Warsaw ZOO is a hiding place for many children fleeing the Jewish ghetto. Here, they strike up friendships. A situation of danger and fear coupled with a great will to survive gives rise to a special bond, much stronger than in times of freedom. Rafał becomes friends with Lidka and Emek; the children try to play light-heartedly, creating their own, spiritual space of survival (heterotopia of isolation); they forget for a while about the war nightmare and death, trying to recover their lost childhood.

Finally, the children build the symbolic Ark, a raft that gives a chance for rebirth and creates the illusion of reaching a new, better world. Admittedly the expedition fails, but the vehicle (or perhaps Rafał's imagination?) transports the boy to the year 2013 and there – at that time – he sees himself in adult life and married to Lidka.

Thus, the story has a happy ending. Rafał manages to survive, the boy invents a space of comfort for himself, which is the space of his imagination. But there is also an imaginary space of the future that the author invents and it provides some comfort for the boy.

Thanks to the device of time travel and stoppage of time, the author is able to create simultaneously existing spaces/worlds – the boy gets to our times, so the space of wartime Warsaw and the memory of the city – *lieux de mémoire* (Nora, 1998)[16] – begin to coexist in the story with the present reality, becoming "the presence of the past" (Krips, 2000).

The rich, vivid narrative of the book seems to be a story of memories – filtered through successive generations – of events, places, people, values, ideas, images, and symbols. Its special significance in the literature for young readers and in speculative fiction may be explained by the power and function of literary imagination well adapted to the perceptual capabilities of the young reader. It reconstructs and portrays an incomplete truth about that world; nevertheless, these fragments of reality, excerpts, pieces, and scenes reminiscent of mental images are particularly good at helping the young reader to create convincing, emotionally intense, expressive mental representations of the cruel past.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ackerman, D., 2007, *The Zookeeper's Wife*, New York: W.W. Norton&Company

Assmann, A., 2012, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives,* Cambridge University Press.

Bachelard, G., 1957, "Poetique de l'espace", 1957, trans. A. Tatarkiewicz in *Wyobraźnia poetycka. Wybór pism* (Warsaw 1975).

Bakhtin, M., 1981, The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays, trans. by Caryl Emerson and M. Holquist, University of Texas Press.

[16] The term *les lieux de mémoire* comes from Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French past,* University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Bieber, A., 2015, *Mentoring in an Heterotopic Space – Janusz Korczak's Orphanage in Contemporary Picture Books,* "Filoteknos", 5/2015.
Blair, E., 2009, "A Further Education College as a Heterotopia", *Research in Post-Compulsory Education* 14 (1).
Boas, J., 1995, *We are Witnesses. Five Diaries of Teenagers who Died in the Holocaust,* Scholastic Inc.
Bosmajian, H., 1995, "Memory and Desire in the Landscapes of Sendak's Dear Mili", *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 19/2.
Bosmajian, H., 2002, *Sparing the Child: Grief and the Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust,* New York and London: Routledge.
Bunting, E., 1989, *Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust*, illust. by S. Gammell, The Jewish Publication Society.
Chmielewska, I., 2012, *Pamiętnik Blumki.* Media Rodzina.
Cobel-Tokarska, M., 2012, *Bezludna wyspa, nora, grób. Wojenne kryjówki Żydów w okupowanej Polsce,* Warszawa.
Combrzyńska-Nogala, B., 2012, *Bezsenność Jutki*, Wydawnictwo Literatura.
Cornelißen, Ch., 2012, *Erinnerunskulturen*. Docupedia-Zeitgeschicht [access date: 2014–09–02].
Czas i przestrzeń w prozie polskiej XIX i XX wieku, 1990, ed. C. Niedzielski, J. Speina, Toruń UMK.
Delany, S.R., 1990, "On Triton and Other Matters: An Interview with Samuel R. Delany", Science Fiction Studies 17 (3), DePauw University.
Engelking, B., Leociak, J., 2013, *Getto warszawskie. Przewodnik po nieistniejącym mieście*, Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów.
Fabicka, J., 2016, *Rutka,* 2016.
Foucault, M., 1985, "Des Espace Autres", Architecture/Mouvement/Continuite, October
Gordon, J., 2003, "Hybridity, Heterotopia, and Mateship in China Miéville's Perdido Street Station", *Science Fiction Studies* 30 (3), DePauw University.
Grabowski, A.M., 2014, *Wojna na Pięknym Brzegu*, illust. by Joanna Rusinek, Łódź.
Grimm, W. And J., 1988, *Dear Mili: An Old Tale,* illustrated by Maurice Sendak.
Halbwasch, M., 1992, *On collective memory*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
Han, N., 1994, *If I should die before I wake,* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
Heidegger, M., 2002, *Off the Beaten Track,* Cambridge University Press.
Heidegger, M., 1971, *Building Dweling* Thinking, New York: Harper Colophon Books.
Hirsch, M., 1997, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*, Cambridge, Harvard.
Holocaust in Literary and Cultural Studies, *Teksty Drugie* 2013/2.
M. Foucault, 1984, "Des Espace Autres", *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité*, October.
Jane Yolen, 1988, *The Devil's Arithmetic*, Puffin.
Jaromir, A., 2013, *Ostatnie przedstawienie panny Esterki*, Media Rodzina.
Johnson, P. 2006, "Unravelling Foucault's 'Different Spaces", *History of the Human Sciences,* SAGE, 19 (4).
Johnston, R. Ross, 2002, "Childhood. A Narrative Chronotope", *Children's Literature as Communication*, ed. R. D. Sell, John Benjamins Publishing Company Amsterdam/Philadelphia.
Kertzer, A., 2002, *My Mother's Voice. Children, Literature, Holocaust,* Broadview Press.
Kokkola, L., 2002, "The unspeakable: Children's fiction and the Holocaust", *Children's Literature as Communication*, ed. R. D. Sell, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
Kokkola, L., 2003, *Representing Holocaust in Children's Literature*, Routledge.

Kokkola, L., 2003, *Representing the Holocaust in Children's Literature*, New York and London: Routledge.
Korczak, J. 2012, *Pamiętnik i inne pisma z getta*, W.A.G.
Krips, V., 2000, *The Presence of the Past. Memory, Heritage and Childhood in Postwar Britain*, Garland Publishing: New York and London.
Landau, I., 2015, *Ostatnie piętro,* Signum Temporis.
Lansberg, A., 2004, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture*, New York: Columbia UP.
Levine, M.G., 2006, *The Belated Witness: Literature, Testimony, and the Question of Holocaust Survival (Cultural Memory in the Present)*, Stanford University Press.
Ligocka R., 2001, *Dziewczynka w czerwonym płaszczyku.* Znak.
Lobel, A. 2008, *No pretty picture. A child of war.* Greenwillow Books**.**
Lotman, J., 1969, "O metajazykie tipołogiczeskich opisanij kultury", Trudy po znakowym sistiemam, vol. 4, Tartu.
Martel, Y., 2010, *Beatrice and Virgil,* Alfred A. Knopf Canada.
Meyer, H. 1970, "Kształtowanie przestrzeni i symbolika przestrzenna w sztuce narracyjnej", *Pamiętnik Literacki*, Issue 3.
Miejsce rzeczywiste i wyobrażone. Studia nad kategorią miejsca w przestrzeni kultury, 1999, ed. M. Kitowska-Łysiak, E. Wolicka, Lublin: KUL.
Miller, Ch.R., 2015, *Surprise. The Poetic of the Unexpected from Milton to Austen*, Cornell University.
Nora, P., 1998, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French past,* University of Chicago Press.
Olszewska, M., 2010, "O przestrzeni: na progu doświadczania", *Anthropos* nr 14–15.
Poulet, G., 1977, "Pisarze i przestrzeń", *Metamorfozy czasu*, Warsaw.
Przestrzeń w kulturze i literaturze, 2006, ed. E. Borkowska, Katowice.
Przestrzenie, miejsca, wędrówki. Kategoria przestrzeni w badaniach kulturowych iliterackich, 2001, ed. P. Kowalski, Opole.
Rewers, E., 1996, *Język i przestrzeń w poststrukturalistycznej filozofii kultury*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
Rudniańska, J., 2012, *XY*. Muchomor.
Rudniańska, J. 2007, *Kotka Brygidy.* Pierwsze.
Russell, M. W, 1996, "Trains, Planes, and Automobiles: The End of the Postmodern Moment", *World Policy Journal.* 12 (4).
Rybicka, E., 2014, *Geopoetyka. Przestrzeń i miejsce we współczesnych teoriach i praktykach literackich*, Kraków.
Rymkiewicz, J.M., 1992, *Umschlagplatz*, Gdańsk.
Sakowska, R., 1993, *Ludzie z dzielnicy zamkniętej*. Warsaw: PWN.
Sławek, T., 2007, *Genius loci jako doświadczenie. Prolegomena* in: *Genius loci. Studia o człowieku w przestrzeni*, ed. Z. Kadłubek, Katowice.
Sławiński, J., 1978, *Przestrzeń w literaturze. Elementarne rozróżnienia i wstępne oczywistości*, in *Przestrzeń i literatura* (in seria: *Z dziejów form artystycznych*), Vol. 51, ed. M. Głowiński, A. Okopień-Sławińska, Wrocław – Warsaw.
Szarota, T., 2010, *Okupowanej Warszawy dzień powszedni*, Warsaw: Czytelnik.
Tatelbaum I., 1985, *Through Our Eyes. Children Witness The Holocaust*, Yad Vashem Bookshop.
Troebst, S., 2015, *West-östliche Europastudien. Rechtskultur, Kulturgeschichte, Geschichtspolitik/West-Eastern European Studies. Legal Culture, Cultural History, Politics of History.* Leipzig.
Tuan, Y.T, 1987, *Space and place*, Warsaw.

Ulanowicz, A., 2013, *Second-Generation Memory and Contemporary Children's Literature. Ghost Image,* Routledge.
Vice, S., 1997, *Introducing Bakhtin*, Manchester University Press.
Vice, S., 2004, *Children Writing the Holocaust*, Palgrave 2004.
Wójcik-Dudek, M., 2016, *(Wy)czytać Zagładę. Praktyki postpamięci w polskiej literaturze XXI wieku dla dzieci i młodzieży*, UŚ Katowice.
Zusak, M., 2005, *Book Thief*, illustr. Trudy White, Picador.

Varia

Filoteknos, vol. 8 • 2018 • DOI: 10.23817/filotek.8-11

ŁUKASZ GREGOROWICZ • Szkoła Podstawowa nr 108 (Wrocław), Poland

Aleksander Świętochowski – beletrysta zapomniany

Summary: Aleksander Świętochowski – forgotten writer
Artistic work of one of the leading ideologues of Polish positivism did not stand the test of time. It is now vain to look for works by Aleksander Świętochowski in school textbooks and the canons of reading, along with Orzeszkowa, Konopnicka, Prus and Sienkiewicz. In addition to the popular journalism "MEP of Truth" – there is little talk about the Polish language about the creator and his fiction. The article shows that it is worth looking at artistic creativity – mainly the novelism – of Świętochowski and think about its marginal position in literature. This is more so because the forgotten dramas, novels and stories of this author are interesting material, thanks to which it is easier to look synthetically at the interest we are interested in an epoch of positivism – both from a literary and historical perspective. It is also worth noting the image of a tireless philistine emerging from this work, maturing literally alongside the inevitable decline of the epochal ages.

Streszczenie: Utwory zapomnianego beletrysty – Aleksandra Świętochowskiego są ciekawym materiałem badawczym, dzięki któremu można w sposób syntetyczny spojrzeć na epokę pozytywizmu. Warto przyjrzeć się tej twórczości i zastanowić nad jej marginalną pozycją w literaturze (także w kanonach lektur). W artykule przedmiotem analizy stały się przede wszystkim nowele i opowiadania Świętochowskiego, który – startując z utworami tendencyjnymi- z czasem dochodzi do coraz ciekawszych rozwiązań literackich. Proces ten zachodzi równolegle z wizją nieuchronnego schyłku epoki.

Słowa kluczowe: Świętochowski beletrysta; twórczość artystyczna Świętochowskiego, Świętochowski w szkole; nowele i opowiadania Świętochowskiego; pozytywizm; kształcenie literackie; nowele tendencyjne; doktryna pozytywizmu.

Twórczość artystyczna jednego z czołowych ideologów pozytywizmu polskiego nie wytrzymała próby czasu. Próżno obecnie szukać utworów Świętochowskiego w podręcznikach szkolnych oraz kanonach lektur, obok Orzeszkowej, Konopnickiej, Prusa czy Sienkiewicza. Poza popularną publicystyką Posła Prawdy – na lekcjach języka polskiego o samym twórcy i jego beletrystyce mówi się niewiele. Dlatego warto przyjrzeć się twórczości artystycznej Świętochowskiego i zastanowić nad jej marginalną pozycją w literaturze. Tym bardziej, że zapomniane dziś dramaty, nowele i opowiadania tego autora stanowią ciekawy materiał, dzięki któremu łatwiej w sposób syntetyczny spojrzeć na interesującą nas epokę – za-

równo z perspektywy literackiej, jak i historycznej. Warto również dostrzec wyłaniający się z tej twórczości obraz niezmordowanego pozytywisty, dojrzewającego literacko równolegle z nieuniknionym schyłkiem ideałów epoki.

DRAMATOPISARZ

Twórczość literacką, zamkniętą w określonych ramach czasowych, Świętochowski uprawiał równolegle z niezmordowaną działalnością publicystyczną. Zaczął od prób dramatycznych. Utwory te, ze względu na podejmowaną tematykę, budziły często emocjonalne reakcje i stawały się nierzadko przedmiotem ogólnopolskich polemik[1].

Świętochowski był niewątpliwie tym dramatopisarzem, który starał się przezwyciężać tematyczną i myślową ciasnotę ówczesnej produkcji teatralnej, traktującej o sprawach familijno-finansowych, problemach mieszczańskiego trójkąta małżeńskiego. Chciał w swoich dramatach ukazać najważniejsze problemy ideowe i społeczne swojej epoki[2].

Wspólnym elementem większości dramatów Świętochowskiego jest konflikt wartościowej, często szlachetnej jednostki z gnębiącą ją niesprawiedliwą strukturą społeczną.

Pierwsze tego typu utwory to *Niewinni* (1875) i *Ojciec Makary* (1876)[3]. Powstały one jeszcze w czasie pobytu pisarza na studiach w Lipsku[4]. Na uwagę zasługuje tu ten drugi dramat, w którym Świętochowski, na przykładzie księdza – biologicznego ojca dwojga dzieci, krytykuje społeczne funkcjonowanie kościelnych doktryn, dogmatów i norm moralnych. Utwór ten stał się później pierwszą częścią trylogii pt. *Dusze nieśmiertelne*.

W dramacie *Piękna* (1878) Świętochowski przedstawia arystokrację jako zwyrodniałych konsumentów. Natomiast w wydanym rok później *Błaźnie* występuje przeciwko systemowi społecznego ucisku[5]. W *Poddance* wytyka szlachetczyźnie krzywdy, których szary obywatel doznawał ze strony swojego pana. Tytułowa bohaterka to Karolina Wrzostek „chłopska sierota dla dworskiej przyjemności po pańsku wychowana"[6], a następnie już jako kobieta – pozbawiona pozycji społecznej, praw i godności ludzkiej.

Świętochowski – dramatopisarz stworzył jeszcze m.in. takie utwory, jak: *Aureli Wiszar* (1888) i *Regina* (1889). W tym pierwszym ukazał bezwzględny

[1] S. Sandler, *Wstęp* [w:] Aleksander Świętochowski, *Nowele i opowiadania*, Wrocław 1965, s. IV.

[2] J. Kulczycka-Saloni, *Papież warszawskiego postępu – Aleksander Świętochowski* [w:] J. Z. Jakubowski, *Literatura polska od średniowiecza do pozytywizmu*, Warszawa 1974, s. 589.

[3] M. Łoboz, T. Żabski, rozdz. *Pozytywizm* [w:] *Wielki Leksykon Literatury Polskiej*, Wrocław 2006, s. 607.

[4] S. Sandler, *Wstęp* [w:] A. Świętochowski, *Dusze nieśmiertelne*, Wrocław 1957. s. XXV.

[5] W. Kubacki, *Wstęp* [w:] A. Świętochowski, *Pisma wybrane. Utwory dramatyczne*: *Piękna, Błazen, Aspazja*, t. II, Kraków 1951, s. 5.

[6] W. Okoński, *Dramata*, Warszawa 1879, s. 85.

świat rodzącego się kapitalizmu, zaś w *Reginie* – bezinteresownych działaczy postępu w starciu z reprezentantami ekonomicznego podboju Afryki[7].

Ciekawym zjawiskiem, przede wszystkim we wczesnych utworach dramatycznych Świętochowskiego, jest odwołanie do antyku. Chcąc ominąć cenzurę, jednocześnie pisząc o ważnych problemach politycznych, głównie zagrożeniach władzy dyktatorskiej, Świętochowski dokonuje mistyfikacji, stosując świadomy zabieg – kostium antyczny[8].

Do takich „antycznych" obrazków dramatycznych należą *Antea* (1876), *Na targu* (1876) oraz *Helvia* (1876)[9].

„Zarówno tendencyjne obrazki dramatyczne, jak i kostiumowe obrazki oparte na motywach antycznych, są swoistymi wprawkami do najwybitniejszego dramatu Świętochowskiego – *Aspazji*"[10] – pisał Samuel Sandler, jeden ze znawców i interpretatorów twórczości artystycznej tego autora. Podobny sąd przyjął Tadeusz Sinko, pisząc o zbiorze antycznych obrazków dramatycznych wyraźnie szczytującym w *Aspazji*[11].

Aspazja (1885) jest tym utworem Świętochowskiego, który potraktować można jako syntezę ideowej, intelektualnej i społecznej problematyki pozytywizmu polskiego. W epoce starożytnej Świętochowski szuka analogii dziejowej. Ateny zarządzane przez Peryklesa przy pomocy jego żony i wybitnego grona intelektualistów odczytać można jako idealny model państwa polskiego, o którym autor *Aspazji* i inni jego koledzy po piórze marzyli jako celu najwyższym. Ateny to państwo, które podnosi się z kryzysu i zaczyna funkcjonować jak zdrowy ludzki organizm. Żaden spośród pozostałych utworów Świętochowskiego nie pomieścił tak olbrzymiego ładunku ideologicznego epoki, ukrytego pod antycznym kostiumem.

Najobszerniejszym i najambitniejszym dziełem dramatycznym Świętochowskiego, podejmującym tematykę religijno-filozoficzo-historyczną są *Duchy*, utwór, nad którym autor pracował kilkanaście lat: cz. I-III, 1895; cz. IV, 1900; cz. V, 1906; cz. VI, 1909[12].

OD *KARLA KRUGA* DO *PUSTELNIKA* – „DOJRZEWAJĄCY" NOWELISTA

Nowele i opowiadania Świętochowskiego pod względem ilościowym i chronologicznym są fragmentem wyodrębniającym się na tle pozostałej: drama-

---

[7] S. Sandler, *Wstęp* [w:] A. Świętochowski, *Dusze nieśmiertelne*, Wrocław 1957, s. CX.

[8] A. Zalewska, *Kostium antyczny we wczesnych dramatach Aleksandra Świętochowskiego* [w:] *Pozytywizm. Języki epoki,* pod red. G. Borkowskiej i J. Maciejewskiej, Warszawa 2001, s. 329.

[9] M. Łoboz, T. Żabski, rozdz. *Pozytywizm* [w:] *Wielki Leksykon Literatury Polskiej*, Wrocław 2006, s. 607.

[10] S. Sandler, *Wstęp* [w:] A. Świętochowski, *Dusze nieśmiertelne*, s. XXXI.

[11] T. Sinko *Hellada i Roma w Polsce. Przegląd utworów na tematy klasyczne w literaturze polskiej ostatniego stulecia,* Lwów 1933, s. 185.

[12] S. Sandler, *Wstęp* [w:] A. Świętochowski, *Dusze nieśmiertelne*, s. XXXI.

tycznej, powieściowej i publicystycznej twórczości autora. Powstało kilkanaście tego typu utworów w zamkniętych ramach czasowych dwudziestu pięciu lat. Ogłoszenie pierwszej noweli *Karl Krug* nastąpiło w 1878 roku, zaś jako nowelista Świętochowski zamilkł w roku 1904, nie wracając już do tego gatunku przez resztę pisarskiego życia[13]. W większości swoich nowel i opowiadań występował pod pseudonimem Władysław Okoński[14].

Tak więc z nowelami Świętochowski wystartował późno (Jego koledzy po piórze od tego właśnie gatunku zaczynali swoją powieściopisarską drogę). Świętochowski – początkujący nowelista ma za sobą już spore sukcesy jako dramaturg. Jego utwory *Niewinni, Ojciec Makary, Piękna, Poddanka, Błazen, Za maską, Helvia* stały się w momencie ich publikacji i wystawienia na scenach Warszawy, Krakowa, Lwowa i Poznania przedmiotem ogólnopolskich, burzliwych dyskusji o dużym napięciu ideowym[15]. A wydarzenia te poprzedziło ogłoszenie pierwszej noweli – *Karl Krug* (1878), która stała się później elementem składowym cyklu *O życie* (1879), zawierającym łącznie utwory: *Damian Capenko, Chawa Rubin, Karl Krug*[16]. Ze zbiorem *O życie* łatwo też można utożsamić *Klemensa Borutę* – utwór bardzo zbliżony pod względem gatunkowym i tematycznym.

W kontekście politycznym początek nowelistyczny Okońskiego zbiega się w czasie z okresem, kiedy w jego publicystyce słabnie napięcie polemiczne, tak widoczne jeszcze w latach 1870–1875[17].W okresie nowelistycznego startu, w publicystyce autora wyczuwalny jest w tej kwestii pesymizm. Okazuje się, że hasła ucywilizowania kraju w praktyce nie są tak łatwe do zrealizowania wśród podzielonego, skłóconego i nietolerancyjnego społeczeństwa, czemu wyraz Świętochowski daje właśnie w cyklu *O życie.* W tych utworach piętnuje wynikające z przesądów oraz nietolerancji konflikty społeczne, podejmuje kwestie żydowską i kobiecą, przeciwstawia się samolubstwu jednostkowemu i społecznemu, broni praw ludzi ze społecznych nizin oraz innych narodowości. Ilustruje to tragizm Rusina, Żydówki, Niemca i Ślązaka, którzy na co dzień gnębieni brakiem pracy i pożywienia, muszą stykać się z brutalnością i niechęcią ze strony polskiego otoczenia.

Tytułowym bohaterem pierwszej noweli ze zbioru jest Damian Capenko, zdrowy chłopski charakter, jeszcze niedawno „gefrejter pogranicznej straży"[18], który po przejściu na emeryturę pragnie ułożyć sobie życie z panną Hortensją Motylińską. Capenko nie zazna szczęścia, zginie z rąk zawistnego przemytnika, Edwarda Tabora. Konflikt między tytułowym bohaterem

---

[13] S. Sandler, *Wstęp* [w:] A. Świętochowski, *Nowele i opowiadania*, Wrocław 1965, s. IV..
[14] Ibidem, s. III.
[15] Ibidem, s. IV.
[16] S. Kołaczkowski, *Artystyczna i publicystyczna działalność Aleksandra Świętochowskiego* [w:] *Portrety literackie*, tom I, PIW, Warszawa 1968, s. 412.
[17] S. Sandler, *Wstęp* [w:] A. Świętochowski , *Nowele i opowiadania*, Wrocław 1965, s. IX, X.
[18] *Damian Capenko*, s. 4.

a późniejszym oprawcą Świętochowski bezpośrednio prezentuje już na początku utworu:

> „[…] wszystkiemu temu, cośmy o naszym bohaterze na podstawie różnych źródeł powiedzieli, przeczył stanowczo niejaki Edward Tabor, handlarz zbożem, a – jak mówiono – herszt kontrabandzistów w Przesmyku, który twierdził, że Capenko jest kałmukiem [dzikusem], że żadnego porządnego języka nie zna, […] że do panny Motylińskiej zaleca się dlatego tylko, ażeby dostać w podarku od jej ojca piękną, ze srebrnym cybuszkiem fajkę".[19]

Podobnie dzieje się w *Chawie Rubin*. Główna bohaterka tego utworu to biedna, sterana życiem i ciężką walką o byt Żydówka, która od rana do zmroku sprzedaje ryby w okolicznych domach, by zarobić na utrzymanie schorowanego męża i czworo głodnych dzieci. Szczęście do Chawy uśmiecha się tylko na chwilę. Gdy sytuacja finansowa kobiety nieco się poprawia, ginie z rąk zawistnika, Franka.

> „Gdyby Chawa urodziła się katoliczką, zarabiałaby dziennie kilka złotych i żyła dostatnio; jako Żydówka znajdująca zbyt wiele rodzajów trefnej pracy, musiała trudzić się wyłącznie pośrednictwem w nabywaniu niezbędnych środków do życia"[20] – objaśnia sam autor.

Tragicznie kończące się losy Chawy – podobnie jak pozostałych głównych bohaterów w *O życie* – autor komentuje jednakową, zabarwioną sarkazmem puentą:

> „Biedna Chawo, ja ci to, żeś w moim kraju pracować i jego chlebem dzieci swoje żywić chciała – przebaczam"[21].

W *Karlu Krugu*, ostatniej noweli z cyklu *O życie*, taką tragiczną postacią jest również tytułowy bohater, który jako Polak urodzony na ziemiach przywłaszczonych przez Niemców, teraz prześladowany jest przez swoich rodaków za niemieckie pochodzenie. W życiu zmęczonego głodem oraz brakiem pracy Kruga pojawia się na moment nadzieja – zarobek na warszawskiej budowie, z dala od domu. Szczęśliwy Krug usiłuje nawet zbliżyć się do niechętnych mu polskich murarzy, mówiąc: „Przecież ja także Polak, my bracia"[22]. Zgubi go nieznajomość ojczystego języka. Karl Krug zginie z rąk Rafała Czapli, polskiego buntownika, pałającego nienawiścią do narodu niemieckiego. I samemu Krugowi pośmiertnie Świętochowski przebacza, za to, że chciał u nas pracować i jego bratem być[23].

We wszystkich nowelach *O życie* po partiach fabularnych, zmierzających do uwieńczenia zmagań bohaterów sukcesem, pojawia się tragedia. Chawa

---

[19] *Damian Capenko*, s. 5
[20] *Chawa Rubin*, s. 32.
[21] *Ibidem*, s. 55.
[22] *Karl Krug*, s. 75.
[23] Ibidem, s.77.

Rubin i Karl Krug po wielu trudach nareszcie znajdują stałe zatrudnienie, które zapewnia im zarobek i życiową stabilizację. Krug myśli o tym, by i jego rodzina dołączyła do niego w Warszawie. Capenko poważnie myśli o osiedleniu się w Przesmyku, dokąd chce nawet ściągnąć swą owdowiałą matkę. Zatem w tych trzech utworach Świętochowski buduje fabułę na zasadzie analogii; chce łudzić czytelnika możliwością pozytywnego rozwiązania konfliktu, co sprzyja spotęgowaniu dramatyzmu rzeczywistej tragedii, która w końcu spotyka każdego z bohaterów[24]. Dodając jeszcze, że w każdej z tych nowel autor nie szczędził własnych komentarzy i kończył je bardzo osobistym, ale ciągle tym samym morałem, można stwierdzić, że konstrukcja tych pierwszych form prozatorskich ma charakter paralelny. Warto również dodać, że cały zbiór *O życie* autor poprzedził następującą przedmową, bezpośrednio wprowadzającą w podejmowaną w utworach problematykę:

> „Gdy na pola nasze spadnie szarańcza, bolejemy tylko nad zrządzonym przez nią spustoszeniem lub radujemy się jej zgubą. Nie umiemy jednak odczuć ani jej radości, gdy nas niszczy, ani jej boleści, gdy sama ginie.
>
> W podobnym stosunku znajdujemy się często do ludzi. Jeżeli jakiś gatunek uznamy za obcy i szkodliwy, uwzględniamy w jego losach tylko nasze uczucia, nie dbając o to, że nasza boleść jest radością tych istot, a nasza radość ich boleścią"[25].

Aleksander Świętochowski wystartował z nowelami tendencyjnymi. W utworach tych przeważa próba jak najbardziej wyrazistej prezentacji programu ideowo-społecznego, na czym niestety traci wartość artystyczna. Świętochowski w utworach tych wprowadza typy dodatnie: Chawę Rubin, Karla Kruga – obdarzone społecznymi cnotami. Krytykuje zaś negatywne jednostki (Franek w *Chawie Rubin*, Rafał Czapla w *Karlu Krugu*). Cytując Stefana Kołaczkowskiego: „Świętochowski niemalże wkładał w tych utworach w usta bohaterów sentencje, a często sam wyrażał stosunek do wykreowanych postaci"[26]. Ponadto do zbioru *O życie* napisał przedmowę, która bezpośrednio wprowadza w wydarzenia, zaś każdy z utworów zakończył osobista puentą.

O tendencyjności świadczą też pogardliwe i mające budzić współczucie nazwiska, jakie Świętochowski nadaje swoim bohaterom: Karl Krug pogardliwie przez Niemców dzbankiem nazwany, Robert Tryncza, który już jako Niemiec zyska nazwisko Trinkbier. Zaś gdy autor nazywa już Chawę-Rubin, od razu tłumaczy, że to „nazwisko oznaczać mogło jedynie, czym Chawa i jej mąż Szymcha być chcieli, ale nie czym rzeczywiście byli. Byli bowiem tak biedni, że bez ubliżania swej zamożności mogliby się przezywać najzwyklejszymi Piaskowcami"[27].

---

[24] S. Sandler, *Wstęp* [w:] A. Świętochowski, *Nowele i opowiadania*, Wrocław 1965, s. XCVIII.
[25] S. Sandler, *Wstęp* [w:] A. Świętochowski, *Nowele i opowiadania*, Wrocław 1965, s. III.
[26] S. Kołaczkowski, *Artystyczna i publicystyczna działalność Aleksandra Świętochowskiego* [w:] *Portrety literackie*, tom I, Warszawa 1968, s. 412.
[27] *Chawa Rubin*, s. 30.

Henryk Galle w książce z 1902 r. *Aleksander Świętochowski jako beletrysta* pisze, że ze wszystkich utworów Świętochowskiego cykl *O życie* „wywołał najwięcej głośnych protestów i gromów obłudnego oburzenia”[28]. Przede wszystkim dlatego, że utwory z tego cyklu trafiały i zaspokajały gusta – powiedzielibyśmy dziś – odbiorcy masowego. Ze względu na swą przesadzoną tendencyjność zarabiały na tanią popularność. Według Gallego Świętochowski mógłby tego uniknąć, gdyby poprzestał na realistycznym przedstawianiu sylwetek bohaterów, bez niepotrzebnych komentarzy[29]. Nie pochwala także Galle *Przedmowy* oraz zakończeń, które nazywa etykietami, wywierającymi złe wrażenie na czytelniku. Z artystycznego punktu widzenia Galle uważa je za zbędne, ponieważ dzięki nim utwory są aż nadto jasne. A ponadto niewłaściwe, ponieważ z ich powodu tendencja zbyt natrętnie rzuca się w oczy i obniża wartość artystyczną, pozbawiając tym samym czytelnika własnej interpretacji. Według tego samego badacza na zbyt przesadną tendencyjność pierwszych nowel wpływ miała publicystyka Świętochowskiego i nieumiejętność wyzbycia się przez autora pewnych przyzwyczajeń dziennikarskich[30].

Spośród całego cyklu *O Życie* najwięcej pochlebnych komentarzy zyskał *Karl Krug*. Ten sam Galle sądzi, że nowela ta stoi najwyżej pod względem psychologicznym i artystycznym. „A dzieje się tak głównie dzięki postaciom Kruga i Klotza, którzy kilkoma rysami zostali scharakteryzowani doskonale”[31]. Zwłaszcza w życiu Kruga występują takie momenty. Jak chociażby ten, gdy przyjechawszy do Warszawy, marzy we śnie o swojej rodzinie, „że jego [syn, Ł.G.] Fritz spodnie szanował i do szkoły regularnie chodził, że August wypisał na parkanie wapnem całe abecadło, że Wilhelm nauczył się wprawnie *Vaterunser*, że Bruno wyciągał rączki do portiera [Klotza, Ł.G.] i wołał »tata«”. Nad ranem wreszcie ukazał się Krugowi we śnie anioł i objawił mu: »Oto zarobisz w Warszawie bardzo dużo pieniędzy, a żona twoja pocznie i porodzi syna, któremu dasz imię Franz«”[32].

Oprócz rzeczowej krytyki zbioru *O życie*, pierwsze nowele Świętochowskiego spotkały się z przesadzonym dowcipem na temat bohaterów jak i samego twórcy ze strony ówczesnego krytyka, Teodora Jeske-Choińskiego, który daje temu wyraz w książce *Pozytywizm warszawski i jego główni przedstawiciele*. W zabarwionym ironią rozdziale *Pan Aleksander Świętochowski jako artysta* tak podsumowuje zdolności pisarskie autora: „Drobny obrazek epiczny, nowelkę lub tym podobną odrośl powieści, napisze czasami i człowiek, który się artystą nie urodził. Poprawnego bowiem rysunku kilku charakterów i powiązania wypadków w logiczną, nierozległą czynność można się nauczyć”[33].

---

[28] H. Galle, *Aleksander Świętochowski jako beletrysta*, Warszawa 1902, s. 10–11.
[29] Ibidem, s.15.
[30] Ibidem, s.17.
[31] Ibidem, s.18.
[32] *Karl Krug*, s. 65.
[33] T. Jeske-Choiński, *Pan Aleksander Świętochowski jako artysta* [w:] *Pozytywizm warszaw-*

Nie omieszkał też Choiński powołać się na dość znany żart na temat *O życie*, autorstwa hr. Stanisława Tarnowskiego, który w 157. zeszycie *Niwy*, z r. 1881, tak wyśmiał sylwetkę Kruga:

> „Ten Krug, poczciwy mularz miał brata: ten brat, zdolniejszy i szczęśliwszy, wstąpił do urzędu, po różnych szczeblach dostał się do regencyi poznańskiej; za młodu przepisywał sławne raporta Barensprunga i Posta o mniemanym polskim spisku; doszedłszy do lat, został landratem, w powiecie swoim połowie wsi wymyślił i nadał nazwy niemieckie, połowę dzieci karał przykładnie, kiedy w szkole śmiały między sobą rozmawiać po polsku; połowę kościołów zamknął lub poobsadzał księżmi, którzy się religii swej wyparli; wreszcie został posłem i w sejmie berlińskim na skargi Polaków odpowiadał wymownie i filozoficznie, dowodził, że …biada zwyciężonym, a siła przed prawem"[34].

Od zbioru *O życie* nie sposób oddzielić zupełnie opowiadania *Klemens Boruta*. Z jednej strony jest to utwór bardzo zbliżony pod względem ideowym do *O życie,* ale patrząc na kreację postaci i fabułę, to dostrzegalne są tu pewne zalążki zmian pisarskich i rezygnacji z dotychczasowych przyzwyczajeń Świętochowskiego, widocznych jeszcze tak bardzo w utworach poprzednich.

Tekst ten przedstawia smutną historię mieszkańca górnośląskiej wsi o pogrążającej nazwie Nędza, której piętnastu mieszkańców – przodków głównego bohatera zmarło śmiercią głodową. Tym razem bez osobistego wstępu Świętochowski sięga bezpośrednio po dramatyczne opisy przeżyć Wawrzyńca Boruty, ojca tytułowego bohatera, który karmił syna mięsem wron, a sam zmarł zjadłszy mięso lisa zatrute strychniną, osierocając małego Klemensa. Od tego czasu rozpoczyna się tułaczka Boruty. Pasmo niepowodzeń gna go z miejsca na miejsce. To w kopalni kawał węgla przypłaszczył mu nos, to maszyna obcięła palce, a nogę przypaliło roztopione żelazo. W końcu wycieńczona chorobą zmarła mu żona, pozostawiając mężczyznę z upośledzoną córką. Boruta jako dojrzały mężczyzna powraca do Nędzy, w której z dzieckiem i starym Brzostem, niegdyś jego opiekunem, walczą o przeżycie. Pełno tu opisów głodu i cierpienia, chociażby tych, gdy Boruta karmi swoje dziecko obierzynami pochodzącymi ze śmietnika tutejszego plebana. Boruta, jego syn i stary Brzost zapadają na tyfus głodowy. Jedynie silna natura głównego bohatera zwalczyła chorobę. Gdy odzyskał przytomność, usłyszał od opiekującej się nim kobiety, że pomoc i ocalenie zawdzięcza licznym składkom od mieszkańców Niemiec, ale także i Królestwa. Wzruszył się wtedy Boruta i jeszcze długo potem zastanawiał się, co też miała na myśli ta kobieta.

Galle twierdzi, że w tym utworze jak nigdy Świętochowski pisał łzami i krwią[35], że postaci Boruty i Brzosta zostały tu zaprezentowane wybornie pod

ski i jego główni przedstawiciele, Warszawa 1885, s. 85–86.

[34] Cyt. za, T. Jeske-Choińskim, *Pan Aleksander Świętochowski jako artysta* [w:] *Pozytywizm warszawski i jego główni przedstawiciele*, Warszawa 1885, s. 87.

[35] H. Galle, *Aleksander Świętochowski jako beletrysta*, Warszawa 1902, s. 19.

względem psychologicznym. Dzieje się tak, gdy Klemens jeszcze jako niedoświadczony życiowo, beztroski siedemnastolatek drwił z losu, wracając do Nędzy. A później, gdy powraca do rodzinnej wioski jako czterdziestolatek, wdowiec obarczony opieką nad chorym dzieckiem, jest załamany i rozgoryczony. Według Gallego Boruta należy do postaci najlepiej i najwierniej pojętych nie tylko u Świętochowskiego, ale w całej pozytywistycznej beletrystyce. I śmiało – jak pisze badacz twórczości Świętochowskiego – może stanąć obok Bartka Słowika z noweli Sienkiewicza oraz Ślimaka z *Placówki* Prusa[36]. Można wysnuć wniosek, że w *Klemensie Borucie* Świętochowski prezentuje większą dojrzałość literacką. Równocześnie idzie za tym próba przełamywania dotychczasowych publicystycznych przyzwyczajeń, dzięki czemu akcentuje się silniej obecność prawdziwego narratora, w przeciwieństwie do komentatora-felietonisty.

Oddechy, *Bartłomiejkę*, *Na pogrzebie*, łącznie ze zbiorem *O życie* i opowiadaniem *Klemens Boruta* Samuel Sandler zalicza do jednego typu prozy nowelistycznej, najbardziej popularnej w okresie pozytywizmu[37]. Łatwo zgodzić się z tą opinią, jeśli weźmiemy pod uwagę przede wszystkim tematykę tych utworów. Wszystkie one zgodnie przedstawiają problemy ludzi ze społecznych nizin. Uwagę zwraca w tych utworach ciekawsza kreacja postaci oraz powstrzymywanie się od odautorskich komentarzy. Autor wyzbywa się też wspomnianych wcześniej etykiet w postaci przedmowy i puent. Ponadto rezygnuje (poza *Bartłomiejką*) z odimiennych tytułów.

Przykładem takiej noweli są *Oddechy*. Okoliczności powstania tego utworu wiążą się bezpośrednio z wydanym przez władze niemieckie zarządzeniem z dnia 26 marca 1885 roku[38], nakazującym opuszczenie Prus wszystkim Polakom niebędącym poddanymi pruskimi. Bohaterem utworu Świętochowski czyni Wawrzyńca Tryncze, zlęknionego Polaka, żyjącego na ziemiach przywłaszczonych przez Niemców. Bohater jako wzorowy pracownik ciężką próbuje zatrzeć swoje pochodzenie. Wciąż obawia się, że w końcu zostanie zdemaskowany i wypędzony. Gdy jego życie zawodowe i osobiste zaczyna się układać, nagle dowiaduje się, że ze względu na pochodzenie musi opuścić Prusy.

Podobnie jak w *O życie* – Świętochowski w *Oddechach* nie potrafi jeszcze wyzbyć się swojego chwytu nowelistycznego, polegającego na łudzeniu czytelnika tym, iż losy bohatera mogą zakończyć się pomyślnie. Ostateczne, diametralnie zmieniające się wydarzenia znów mają zaskoczyć odbiorcę i spotęgować dramatyzm. Taki zabieg, powtarzający się w kilku występujących po sobie nowelach, staje się przewidywalny. Jeśli chodzi jednak o samą kreację postaci Trynczy, to bardzo przychylnie wypowiada się na ten temat Henryk Galle, pisząc: „Tendencyjność treści tym razem nie stanęła w poprzek aforyzmowi formy. Postać Trynczy v. Trinkbiera jest świetna od początku do końca. Zwłaszcza sceny, w których Trinkbier staje przed swą władzą, albo scena na zebraniu

[36] Ibidem, s. 22.
[37] S. Sandler, *Wstęp* [w:] A. Świętochowski, *Nowele i opowiadania*, Wrocław 1965, s. LXXVII.
[38] H. Galle, *Aleksander Świętochowski jako beletrysta*, Warszawa 1902, s. 25.

demokratów, są pod względem psychologicznym niezrównane. Zdawałoby się, że Świętochowski wziął tu rozbrat z ideą, wypowiedzianą w cyklu *O życie*"[39].

W kolejnych krótkich formach prozatorskich Świętochowski dokonuje wyraźnych zmian w sposobie prowadzenia narracji. Dzieje się tak w nowelach: *Na pogrzebie*, *Woły*, *Złodzieje*, *Pustelnik*, w których uobecnia się pierwszoosobowy narrator – świadek i obserwator wydarzeń, którym często jest sam autor – pozytywista. Na ten temat ważny sąd wypowiedział Samuel Sandler, twierdząc, że taka forma narracji służyła Świętochowskiemu zwykle do stworzenia iluzji autentyzmu literackiego oraz stawiała narratora w roli naocznego komentatora wypadków[40].

Na pogrzebie to już nowela z tzw. *Kroniki młodości*. Utwór składa się z dwóch części. Świętochowski – narrator to student, który wraz z przyjacielem podczas podróży na uczelnię doświadcza tragicznego obrazu rodziny gnębionej nędzą i chorobą. Oprócz bardzo realistycznych opisów biedy i cierpienia, znanych już chociażby z *Klemensa Boruty*, Świętochowski bardzo umiejętnie zarysowuje przestrzeń budzącą niepokój i lęk:

> „Wszedłem. Niewielką izbę zalegał mrok, słabo rozjaśniony światłem drobnego i do połowy zaklejonego okienka. Przyjrzawszy się jednak uważniej spostrzegłem kilka zwykłych sprzętów, kilka sczerniałych obrazów, za którymi tkwiły pęki ziół i świeca woskowa, wreszcie łóżko, a na nim wychudłą, starym kożuchem okryta kobietę. Gdym się wpatrywał w jej trupią twarz, nagle coś poderwało się pod moimi nogami. Odskoczyłem strwożony…"[41].

W tym samym utworze Świętochowski wprowadza gwarę studencką, co przypomina najlepsze fragmenty u Żeromskiego i Prusa. W *Na pogrzebie* mamy także próbkę mazurzenia.

Woźnica, po naprawieniu bryczki, którą podróżują studenci, mówi: „Dziś już panie mamy oś jak mur. Wziąnem nowiusieńką, jesce nie smarowaną"[42]. Zabieg taki niewątpliwie świadczy o chęci indywidualizacji kreowanych postaci. Podobnie, a może nawet lepiej dzieje się pod tym względem w *Bartłomiejce*, gdzie najskuteczniej chyba u Świętochowskiego dochodzi do zgodności między pozycją społeczną a wyrazem językowym. Postać ta poprzez swoje wypowiedzi wydaje się być najbardziej realistyczna. Dlatego warto tu przytoczyć fragment rozmowy starej wyrobnicy folwarcznej z właścicielem ziemskim, Edwardem Storchem:

> „– Kto wy jesteście? – zapytał dziedzic.
> – Tutejsza, jaśnie panie, od dziecka tutejsza.
> – Żona parobka? – wtrąciła dziedziczka.

[39] H. Galle, *Aleksander Świętochowski jako beletrysta*, Warszawa 1902, s. 32.
[40] S. Sandler, *Wstęp* [w:] A. Świętochowski, *Nowele i opowiadania*, Wrocław 1965, s. XCIX.
[41] *Na pogrzebie*, s. 132.
[42] Ibidem, s. 137.

– A gdzieżby, jaśnie paniusiu, mógł żyć mąż takiej starej baby! Mój już tak dawno pomarł, że go na sądzie ostatecznym nie poznam. Toć ja jeszcze ojca pana Kąckiego karmiłam…

– A co wy tu robicie?

– Czego ja nie robiłam, mój jaśnie panie! Całe to pole własną ręką żęłam i kopałam, cały ten ogród pełłam. Tu nie ma ani grudki ziemi, ani kamienia, który by mnie nie znał. Ho, ho, kiedy jeszcze ojciec pana Kąckiego żył, to nieraz mówił: ta ziemia więcej twoja niż moja, bo ja ją tylko wydeptuję…"[43].

Utwór ten pełen jest „gawędziarskich" wypowiedzi, wspomnień, wzruszających próśb prostej kobiety z ludu, której ostatnim marzeniem jest pozostać na tej ziemi, na której się urodziła, i na której chce umrzeć. W tych kwestiach bohaterka Świętochowskiego jest bardzo przekonująca i świetnie scharakteryzowana poprzez język.

Istnieją dwie krótsze formy epickie, w których Świętochowski kreuje głównych bohaterów pochodzących ze świata inteligenckiego. Mowa o utworach *Sam w sobie* i *Ona*.W tym pierwszym autor tworzy postać ideowca, Jakuba Czarskiego, który twierdzi, że mógłby być „bezdzietny, bezżenny, bezimienny, bez rodowodu, paszportu, urzędu, metryki, bez żadnych związków, opinii, przyjaciół i wrogów"[44]. Czarski robi wrażenie człowieka nienormalnego, niebezpiecznego maniaka. Popełnia wiele czynów, które nie mają nic wspólnego z psychologią zdrowego człowieka. Reaguje nerwowo na słowa konduktora, który nazywa go pasażerem. Gdy nawiązuje romans z nieznajomą kobietą, spotkaną na ławce szeweningskiego bulwaru w Hadze, i gdy dowiaduje się w końcu, że jest ona Żydówką, odsuwa się od niej ze wstrętem. „Już wiedziałem, że jest Żydówką polską, pewnie warszawianką. Żydówką? Natychmiast obskoczyła mnie cała gromada przesądów, uprzedzeń, od dzieciństwa nabywanych wstrętów, ohydności postaci – wszystko to krzyczało, drwiło, szydziło ze mnie piekielnym chichotem. Uciekam – a ta kocia muzyka za mną[45]" – mówi Czarski. Jak pisze Sandler, ten bohater Świętochowskiego bardziej przypomina nerwowca, niż człowieka idei[46].

Jeszcze bardziej nieprawdopodobna psychologicznie wydaje się być postać bohatera szkicu *Ona*. Henryk Bukowski kocha nieznajomą, ale jednocześnie lęka się zbliżenia do niej, by nie dowiedzieć się, kim jest. On kocha ją w swych marzeniach, wyśnioną, by okrutna rzeczywistość nie zabrała mu tych przeżyć. Jako argument przed znajomym (czyni nim Świętochowski samego siebie) wypowiada słowa „Ja ją w samotnych marzeniach moich wypieściłem"[47]. Jak pisze Sandler: „Bohater opowiadania *Ona* nie wydaje się być żywym człowiekiem,

[43] *Bartłomiejka*, s. 277.
[44] *Sam w sobie*, s. 198.
[45] Ibidem, s. 209.
[46] S. Sandler, *Wstęp* [w:] A. Świętochowski, *Nowele i opowiadania*, Wrocław 1965, s. CII.
[47] *Ona*, s. 161.

funkcjonującym w społecznych stosunkach, lecz jakąś maszyną służącą do wygłaszania idei autora[48].

Na koniec warto krótko wspomnieć *Pustelnika*, utwór pochodzący – podobnie jak *Bartłomiejka* – z cyklu *Ostatnich opowiadań*. Geneza tego utworu prawdopodobnie związana jest z głośnym zaginięciem Józefa Potockiego (Mariana Bohusza), znanego publicysty, poety i tłumacza, który był bliskim współpracownikiem Świętochowskiego w *Prawdzie*[49].

Biorący udział w wydarzeniach autor, gdzieś na dzikim przylądku Półwyspu Chalcydyckiego poszukuje swojego dawnego przyjaciela, Marka Białoskóra, który teraz nie widzi innego wyjścia niż „ucieczka tam, gdzie ludzka nędza nikogo nie doścignie"[50]. Uproszczona fabuła, schematyzm postaci oraz ukryta prawda moralna zbliżają ten obrazek raczej do przypowieści niż tendencyjnej noweli.

Idąc tropem Gallego oraz Sandlera, nasuwa się wniosek, że na marginalne umiejscowienie beletrystyki Świętochowskiego złożyło się kilka przyczyn: wyraźna dominacja jego publicystyki nad twórczością nowelistyczną oraz późny start z nowelami tendencyjnymi w cieniu prężnie rozwijającej się prozy fabularnej innych autorów.

PODSUMOWANIE

Syntetyczne i chronologiczne spojrzenie na samą nowelistykę Świętochowskiego skłania do wniosku, że z czasem autor dojrzewa literacko i dochodzi do coraz bardziej interesujących osiągnięć artystycznych. Proces ten idzie w parze z zaciemniającą się wizją realizacji pozytywistycznych postulatów. W cyklu *O życie* nie ukrywa, że w walce o rozwój ludzi ze społecznych nizin największymi przeszkodami są kastowość, egoizm i przesądy społeczne, w tym antysemityzm. W *Karlu Krugu* oraz *Oddechach* piętnuje nietolerancję narodową. Do kolejnych pesymistycznych wniosków dochodzi w utworach *Na pogrzebie* i w *Bartłomiejce.* W tym drugim, na przykładzie prostej kobiety z ludu, pokazuje przegraną z kretesem walkę głównej bohaterki o prawa do ziemi, na której się urodziła.W obrazkach *Sam w sobie* i *Ona* konstatuje, że nawet inteligenci (Czarski, Bukowski) funkcjonujący w niewoli norm społecznych nie są w stanie walczyć ze stereotypami myślowymi i obyczajowymi.W *Pustelniku* prezentuje wyalienowanego, dawnego entuzjastę myśli pozytywistycznej, który teraz składa broń. „Nic nie mam i nic nie robię, aby niczego nie mieć i nie męczyć się z bezsilnością w walce z olbrzymim potworem nędzy"[51] – mówi bohater ostatniej noweli.

Wydaje się, iż Świętochowski jest tym pisarzem, który precyzyjnie – jak nikt inny – przedstawił w swoich utworach pozytywistyczną doktrynę. W kon-

[48] S. Sandler, *Wstęp* [w:] A. Świętochowski, *Nowele i opowiadania*, Wrocław 1965, s. XCIX.
[49] A. Świętochowski , *Nowele i opowiadania*, Wrocław 1965, s. 291.
[50] *Pustelnik*, s. 297.
[51] Ibidem, s. 297.

tekście szkolnej edukacji historyczno-literackiej warto jeszcze dziś zapytać o przyczynę nieobecności tego autora w szkolnych kanonach literatury.

BIBLIOGRAFIA

Baculewski Jan, *Zarys literatury polskiej po powstaniu styczniowym*, Warszawa 1959.
Galle Henryk, *Aleksander Świętochowski jako beletrysta*, Warszawa 1902.
Jeske-Choiński Teodor, *Pozytywizm warszawski i jego główni przedstawiciele*, Warszawa 1885.
Jeske-Choiński Teodor, *Żyd w powieści polskiej. Studium*, Warszawa 1914.
Kołaczkowski Stefan, *Artystyczna i publicystyczna działalność Aleksandra Świętochowskiego*, [w:] *Portrety i zarysy literackie*, Warszawa 1968.
Kulczycka-Saloni Janina, Nofer-Ładyka Alina, *Literatura polska okresu realizmu i naturalizmu,* PZWS, Warszawa 1968.
Kulczycka-Saloni Janina, Straszewska Maria, *Literatura polska. Romantyzm. Pozytywizm,* Warszawa 1990.
Kulczycka-Saloni Janina, *Pozytywizm* [w:] *Literatura polska od średniowiecza do pozytywizmu,* pod red. J.Z. Jakubowskiego, Warszawa 1974.
Kulczycka-Saloni Janina, *Pozytywizm*, Warszawa 1971.
Kulczycka-Saloni Janina, *Programy i dyskusje literackie okresu pozytywizmu*, Wrocław 1985.
Łoboz Małgorzata, Żabski Tadeusz, *Pozytywizm* [w:] *Wielki Leksykon Literatury Polskiej*, Wrocław 2006.
Okoński Władysław, *Dramata*, Warszawa 1879.
Polska Akademia Nauk, Instytut Badań Literackich, *Problemy literatury polskiej okresu pozytywizmu,* pod red. Edmunda Jankowskiego i Janiny Kulczyckiej-Saloni, Wrocław 1984.
Sinko Tadeusz, *Hellada i Roma w Polsce. Przegląd utworów na tematy klasyczne w literaturze polskiej ostatniego stulecia*, Lwów 1933.
Świętochowski Aleksander, *Dusze nieśmiertelne*, Wrocław 1957.
Świętochowski Aleksander, *Nowele i opowiadania,* Wrocław 1965.
Świętochowski Aleksander, *Utwory dramatyczne*, [w:] Pisma, t. VI, Kraków-Warszawa 1899.
Świętochowski Aleksander, *Utwory dramatyczne. Piękna, Błazen, Aspazja* [w:] *Pisma wybrane*, t. II, Kraków 1951.
Świętochowski Aleksander, *Wspomnienia,* Wrocław 1966.
Wroczyński Ryszard, *Ideje dramatów Aleksandra Świętochowskiego na tle pozytywizmu warszawskiego*, Kraków 1934.
Zalewska Agata, *Kostium antyczny we wczesnych dramatach Aleksandra Świętochowskiego* [w:] *Pozytywizm. Języki epoki*, pod red. G. Borkowskiej i J. Maciejewskiej, Warszawa 2001.

Filoteknos, vol. 8 • 2018 • DOI: 10.23817/filotek.8-12

RYSZARD WAKSMUND, DOROTA MICHUŁKA
Wrocław University, Poland

Cinderella in Polish Drama and Theatre

Abstract: The article introduces many version of dramatized *Cinderella* and it shows that the fairy tale in the version of Charles Perrault and brothers Grimm (includes Cinderella motif) in the Polish drama and theatre has been not particularly popular. One of the reasons may be that few writers (including authors for children) have related to this story. Cinderella has been overshadowed by the story of the Polish Faust – Twardowski – and adaptations of original fairy-tales. On the other hand, the conventional nature of the Cinderella motif provoked many fresh, satirical or metaphorical depictions. An uncharted territory remain amateur shows at homes, schools and kindergartens – these are intriguing extensions to the story that lets children examine the reality before they fully enter it with their natural energy and hope.

Keywords: Cinderella fairy tale, Cinderella motif, adaptation, Polish folklore,

Cinderella, like no other fairy-tale motif, is a theatrical story par excellence. It became such as a result of Charles Perrault's version with its highlighted ball scene. In this scene, the protagonist triumphs because of her extraordinary and unusual apparel, which she has to abandon when her role, imposed on her by the fairy godmother, has been fulfilled[1]. The plot's theatrical quality comes from the actual reality of the author, who participated in the life of Louis XIV of France's court. Balls, masquerades, ballets, hunts and other such activities not only constituted the rhythm of the day, but also were a means for social advancement – possible also for the more "enterprising" women who offered their barely grown-up daughters as company for prominent noblemen or even the king himself. In Poland, the Cinderella motif [known also under the name of Barani Kożuszek (T. 510B)[2], which can be translated as "The Sheepskin"] lost its carnivalesque dimension, instead becoming a story of an abused orphan who achieves the goal

[1] Article was published in Italian version. See R. Waksmund, D. Michułka, *Adattamenti teatrali polacchi di "Cenerentola"*. In: *Cenerentola come testo culturale: interpretazioni, indagini, itinerari critici,* a cura di Monika Woźniak e Mariarosa Rossitto. Roma: Lithos Editrice, 2016.

[2] See: J. Krzyżakowski, *Polska bajka ludowa w układzie systematycznym*, vol.1, Wrocław 1962, pp.162–164.

thanks to her persistence, not someone else's protection. Staging of the fairy-tale was facilitated by Rossini's opera *Cinderella, or Goodness Triumphant* (1817), which premiered in Poland as soon as in 1822 (although in German)[3]. However, it is difficult to establish when this motif was staged for the first time. As a drama for child audience, it was already present in Germany in 1824 thanks to Kitty Hoffmann (*Die kleine Aschenbrödel*), yet in renown it was exceeded by Franz Pocci's version (1871) for Munich Marionette Theatre, which included the character of Kasperl – a comic figure that appeared in numerous Pocci's plays[4].

The Polish literature for children of those times treated the fairy-tale fantasy as inferior, classifying it as "cheap readings", whence it found its way to the Polish folklore. The Poles had no institutional theatre for children at that time and its function was taken over by plays staged in the circle of relatives (mainly among the middle-class), home theatres. These performances usually had a form of so called "komedyjka" (similar to farce or German Posse) or realistic and moralistic one-act plays. To retain plausibility, the character of the fairy was completely omitted, while the metaphorical Cinderellas were saved from poverty or trouble by wealthy philanthropists with no supernatural intervention. This is also the case in Ludwik Niemojewski's comedy (1875), where Zosia (local Cinderella) is discriminated against by her better-off peers, but finds financial support from her mother's friend and her daughter. When these two women face poverty, Zosia pays off her debt inviting them to her mother's estate that she has eventually reclaimed after many years. Since this moment, all four women keep together and their mutual friendship give them happiness. The drama lacks the figures of father, which is arguably an aftermath of the January Uprising of 1863, in which many men were killed or exiled to Siberia.

Only during the literary Modernism the Polish literature for children accepted fantasy, which was, among other factors, caused by growing popularity of western versions of Cinderella's story (especially by Perrault and the Brothers Grimm). The farces were replaced with staged fables, such as Zofia Zacharkiewiczówna's work of 1907. In her fable, the setting is no longer of middle-class but with its old-fashioned chamber and royal palace it resembles rather the medieval reality. Beside Cinderella, her step-mother and step-sisters, there appear also a fairy, her helpers, and a prince with courtiers. The ball scene becomes an opportunity for the heroine to express her compassion for the poor and starving peasants, who have never experienced the delights of royal palace. Still, Anthony Jax's version (Chicago 1912) for the youth is even more developed. Titled *Kopciuszek, czyli sierotą Bóg się opiekuje. Melodram fantastyczny, ze śpiewami i tańcami w 4-ch aktach* [*Cinderella, or God Takes Care of an Orphan. A Fantasy Melodrama with Singing and Dancing in Four Acts* – trans.], it focuses on vocal parts, performed not only by complaining Cinderella (called therein Aniela), but also

[3] See: P. Kamiński, *Tysiąc i jedna opera*, Warszawa 2008, p. 299.

[4] See: H. Jurkowski, *Dzieje literatury dramatycznej dla teatru lalek. Suplement do "Dziejów teatru lalek",* Wrocław 1991, p. 132.

a Jewish merchant, the step-mother and her daughters. Additionally, Jax's play boats self-presentations of all seven step-sisters, who try to impress the prince. They play the guitar, paint, sing, dance, and rhyme, which is ridiculed by the humorous comments and puzzles of the court jester. Vengeful, the step-sisters accuse Aniela of witchcraft, but when the executioner arrives, Aniela is saved by the jester, who exposes their evil plot. This scene ends with a group couplet. The play balances on the verge of clownery or even kitsch, especially in the scene with the mother's ghost dressed in white, followed by a cherub carrying a golden gown for the orphan. In Jax's version, the fairy appears as late as in the royal court, as a friend of the king, whom she foretells to that he will find a beautiful pearl among rubbish, lose it and find again just to put it on the throne. The fairy also confirms that Cinderella's ball dress is a gift from her late mother. These scenes suggest that the Modernism established the motif of Cinderella as a theatrical fairy-tale aiming at enjoyment rather than moralising.

Also Jan Brzechwa, 20th-century author for children, preferred playful forms rich with songs. He would call his adaptations "fables-selfplays". As a master of children's poetry, he advances the plots with neat rhymes uttered by the narrator and the characters alike. The intense course of events is often interrupted, similarly to Jax's work, with songs sung by Cinderella, the stepmother, and her daughters. The ludic nature of the motif is highlighted by the fact that the ball takes place on June 1, that is Children's Day. The role of the fairy is taken over by an old neighbour, who lends Cinderella her dresses and perfumes, combs the hair, reminds the girl of the gloves, eventually lending also her carriage and urging Cinderella to be back before midnight. The neighbour also warns the girl: "There are no fairies." At the ball, except Cinderella and her step-sisters, there are also other ladies of noble birth, introduced to the prince by the equerry in a counting rhyme. Only Cinderella, as a beautiful and intriguing stranger, remains incognito. She wins the prince's heart not only with her beauty but also by singing a ballade about social inequalities between them. Her "matrimonial triumph" is accompanied by conforming to social rules when she asks the stepmother for her blessing, and her step-sisters for friendship in exchange for positions in the court. Brzechwa's *Cinderella* as a musical fable was recorded on a vinyl in 1963, starring prominent Warsaw actors: Elżbieta Barczewska, Edmund Fiedler, Tadeusz Ross, and others. The music was composed by Mieczysław Janicz, a famous originator of jazz in Poland. A few years ago this 14-minute long recording was republished in a CD format as a part of a collection titled "Bajki-Grajki". Brzechwa's version was popular mainly among school and preschool teachers, who used it to stage school plays. Professional theatres, both actor and marionette, preferred more dramaturgically developed version by Evgeny Shvarts, which actually was an adaptation of a screenplay from 1947.

However, in 2005 Brzechwa's *Cinderella* was adapted for television; in this production the characters were played by Polish most recognisable journalists. Monika Olejnik took the part of the protagonist, while her ballade at the well

was sung by a famous Polish singer, Kayah, whose face reflected in the water. Kamil Durczok, distinguished TV newsman, volunteered as the step-mother. The show was ordered by Fundacja Charytatywny Bal Dziennikarzy [Charitable Ball of Journalists – The Foundation – trans.] and all profits helped treating children with cancer in poorer regions of Poland. The show, 20 minute long, premiered on September 3, 2005 in the Bajka cinema-theatre, Warsaw, and was directed by another star, actress Krystyna Janda. As a result of the journalists' involvement, this adaptation saw enormous advertisement. As a downside, it only featured a simplified stage design (with added cartoon animations for television purposes) representing the old town interiors and exteriors. However, a later marionette staging (by the theatre Teatr Lalki i Aktora z Łomży) was strongly influenced by the reality of La Belle Époque and French impressionism.

Long forgotten are older adaptations and versions for children, both from the 19th century (by Michalina Zielińska, Maria Markowska, Seweryn Zaleski) and from before the WWII (by Elwira Korotyńska, Tymoteusz Ortyl) – we know about them only from entries in bibliographical registers. From Marek Waszkiel's chronicle of Polish puppetry we may learn that on December 18, 1936 Cracow was visited by the famous Teatro dei Piccoli of Rome. Beside Rossini's *The Barber of Seville,* Mozart's *Don Juan*, Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona*, and Respighi's *The Sleeping Beauty*, the theatre staged also a marionette version of *Cinderella*. On October 1, 1938, the Błękitny Pajac theatre in Poznan (of the Wielkopolska Rodzina Marionetkarzy marionette association) staged *Cinderella,* with Sunday and holiday shows still played long after the end of the season. Its author remains unknown, which is also the case with the Warsaw staging of December 1940, which opened the work of the underground marionette theatre Zorza, led by fourteen year old Wojciech Ruszczyc. The only certain fact is that Ruszczyc would use music from vinyl records. Similarly, little is known about *Cinderella* by a marionette theatre from Białystok, premiered in March 1945 and staged by Stanisław Giaro with a youth group[5].

Waszkiel in his following chronicle, dealing with the post-war period, mentions not a single staging of the fairy-tale discussed[6]. Other sources provide scarce information about Janina Kilian-Stanisławska's marionette travesty of the Cinderella story, staged on March 29, 1948 in the Teatr Rapsodyczny theatre, Cracow. In this version, the protagonist is helped by household gnomes, while Puss in Boots, as the king's minister, brings her lost slipper for fitting. A master of ceremonies is the court jester mounting a cow, while Puss claims to be a vegetarian and in the ball scene he dances with a mouse[7]. Jolanta

---

[5] M. Waszkiel, *Dzieje teatru lalek w Polsce (do 1945 roku)*, Warszawa 1990, pp. 164, 182, 192, 218.

[6] See: M. Waszkiel, *Dzieje teatru lalek w Polsce 1944–2000*, Warszawa 2012.

[7] K. Kostaszuk, *Teatr dziecięcy. Przewodnik repertuarowy*, Warszawa 1986, pp. 66–67. In the show by Petr Nosalek staged in Teatr Powszechny (Radom 2010), spiritus movens of the plot is the figure of Rat, who is the fairy's messenger and helper.

Wiśniewska categorised this type of adaptation as carnivalesque, as defined by Mikhail Bakhtin[8]. It is important to emphasise that the period of Stalinism banned *Cinderella* from Polish theatres, since the fairy-tale presents social advancement not through hard work but through marriage, which may be easily interpreted as an apologia of feudalism. Only negative and satirical depiction of the royal court allowed eventually the story to find its way to theatres. Also Evgeny Shvarts's version (based on the film directed by Szapiro, 1947) was a travesty: while dressing Cinderella, the fairy forgets the slippers, the king thoughtlessly announces his abdication every other minute, and the court wizard pretends to be deaf and ignores the guests' pleas. For theatrical purposes, this version was translated into Polish by Irena Lewandowska and Witold Dąbrowski, and may be found in repertoire of numerous marionette theatres (Wroclaw – 1973, 1978, 2006; Bielsko-Biała – 1974; Toruń – 1975; Wałbrzych – 1977, Cracow – 1979; Kielce – 1979; Warsaw – 1982; Szczecin – 1984, 2000).

Photographic evidence proves a gradual departure from a screen covering the puppeteers. Such "overt" animation, which may be interpreted as a visible transfer of energy between the puppet and its actual source of movement, became the emblem of modern puppetry[9]. Jan Polewka, the art director of a Wroclaw staging from 2006, decided to dress the puppeteers in old-fashioned costumes imitating the atmosphere of the fairy-tale[10]. Before him, a similar decision was made by Josef Krofta, a distinguished Czech director, who prepared for the Lalka theatre, Warsaw, a performance (2004) based on Jan Vladislav's *Popelka*. "On the stage there is a middle-class living room, long forsaken. Yet, soon enter maids and servants, who take out puppets from old chests and are about to improvise a fable that will enliven the whole house with its antique chairs, tables and wardrobes."[11] A merge of the actor and the puppet planes is present also in *Cinderella* (2009) by the marionette theatre of Białystok. The actors by playing with the puppets "present a story about a poor cleaning lady in a luxurious hotel, who happens to be at a splendid ball. The puppet plane is shown as the lady's dream [...], who falls asleep with a puppet in the hand, the puppet becoming Cinderella. There are two such moments during the play. At the beginning, after the guests have arrived, Cinderella/cleaning lady falls asleep, and at the end, when she wakes up holding the puppet. The concluding scene shows the protagonist dressed like a modern celebrity, dancing with a matching prince."[12] The role of the actor plane may, however, be predominant, as in the play *Ballada o Kopciuszku* [*The Ballad*

[8] J. E. Wiśniewska, *W poszukiwaniu "Złotego Klucza". Polska twórczość dramatyczna dla teatru lalek (1945–1970)*, Łódź 1999, p.38.

[9] See: H. Jurkowski, *Metamorfozy teatru lalek XX wieku*, Warszawa 2002, chapter: *Animacja, animizacja, synergia*.

[10] See: *Dla jednego gestu. Scenografia we Wrocławskim Teatrze Lalek*, Wrocław 2006, pp. 406–413.

[11] L. Bardijewska, *Bal mistrza*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" 2004.

[12] S. Grygorowicz, *Baśniowy taniec z gwiazdami*, "Teatralia" 8.03.2010.

of Cinderella – trans.] (2009, Teatr Animacji in Poznan) based on the Brothers Grimm's version and directed by Janusz Ryl-Krystianowski. The director introduced puppets only in the ball scene – in the traditional form with the screen – since the ball is actually a dream of an orphan who is deprived of other kinds of entertainment by her evil step-mother. The puppets in ball dresses appear on a flat, red screen, and dance to the music, moving faster and faster as the time passes. All other scenes, taking place in Cinderella's home, are directly performed by actors. Their realism – especially clothes, behaviour and language of the characters – presents the world of a modern family in crisis: a passive father, an aggressive and relentless step-mother, her opportunistic daughters[13]. Such a shift from a fairy-tale to social commentary seems to be oriented towards the audience of adolescents rather than children.

Malwina Janowska's play titled *Kopciuszek wiejski* [*Rural Cinderella* – trans.] (1937) was published as a part of a youth-oriented series Biblioteka Teatralna "Michalineum". This is a story about mayor's daughter, called Zosia, living in a mountain village. Zosia is pretty and hard-working, she prefers reading books to trips to the town, where her step-mother and step-sisters visit fair stalls. Zosia falls in love with a young highlander, which is against stepmother's matrimonial plans for her. However, Zosia does not marry the highlander but a heir's son, whom she met at the local wedding party. Instead of the fairy, the play has a grey-haired beggar, who gives wonderful dresses to the orphan and claims he was sent by the Lord Jesus himself in order to makes Zosia's life a happier one. Actually, he is a wealthy neighbour of the heir; he reprimands the step-mother and makes Zosia the heiress of all his fortune. As a "folk play", Janowska's version features rural occupations, songs, superstitions, customs, and nicknames (Zosia happens to be called a sloven or a duffer). However, there is no evidence that the play was ever staged in a theatre, be it a folk or professional one. In a sense, though, it was a predecessor to Ludwik Hieronim Morstin's post-war drama *Cinderella* (1960). Here, the main heroine is a daughter of a highlander from the Podhale, while her own sisters (who study in the town) are presented as antagonists. They all compete for a love of a young skier, who appears to be film director looking for a plain girl to star in his movie. Although Cinderella and the director become close, there is no happy end: after the film is finished and published (with much success), they have to part, as the director is seriously involved with another woman. Morstin's drama, despite its masterful composition and brilliant dialogues, was never staged. The reason was its message – suspicion towards accelerated industrialisation of the rural areas in Poland, – which was against official (governmental) and public expectations.

Many years had to pass (and the period of martial law in Poland had to occur) before the society understood how illusory was prosperity under the

[13] This show is analysed in a book by Alicja Morawska-Rubczak titled *Teatr animacji Janusza Ryla-Krystianowskiego*, Poznań 2011, pp. 71–79.

totalitarian regime. An expression of this recognition was Janusz Głowacki's *Cinders* (1979, 1981 in London) – a metaphorical drama set in a reform school for underage girls. *Cinders* might have been an inspiration for Andrzej Malicki's *Cinderella* (2011) – although based on Perrault's fairy-tale, it includes a prologue set in an orphanage, where pupils ruthlessly try to uncover all secrets of one of the girls. The play's subtitle *Historia możliwa* [*A Story Possible* – trans.] refers to the protagonist's dream of having her own home. Sadly, the home she is taken to resembles a feminised world of anti-bourgeois comedy by Gabriela Zapolska titled *The Morality of Mrs. Dulska* (1906): an authoritative step-mother, bored and aggressive step-sisters, an absent and weak-willed father. The orphan's triumph at the ball is accompanied by beautiful music from Prokofiev's ballets *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella*.

The above overview does not allow for the conclusion that the Cinderella motif has been particularly popular in Polish theatres. One of the reasons may be that few writers (including authors for children) have related to this story. Cinderella has been overshadowed by the story of the Polish Faust – Twardowski – and adaptations of original fairy-tales. On the other hand, the conventional nature of the Cinderella motif provoked many fresh, satirical or metaphorical depictions. An uncharted territory remain amateur shows at homes, schools and kindergartens – these are intriguing extensions to the story that lets children examine the reality before they fully enter it with their natural energy and hope.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Krzyżakowski J. 2008, *Polska bajka ludowa w układzie systematycznym*, vol.1, Wrocław 1962, pp.162–164.

Kamiński P., 2008, *Tysiąc i jedna opera*, Vol 1–2, Warszawa.

Jurkowski H., 1991, *Dzieje literatury dramatycznej dla teatru lalek. Suplement do "Dziejów teatru lalek",* Wrocław.

Waszkiel M., 1990, *Dzieje teatru lalek w Polsce (do 1945 roku)*, Warszawa.

Waszkiel M, 2012, *Dzieje teatru lalek w Polsce 1944–2000*, Warszawa.

Kostaszuk K., 1986, *Teatr dziecięcy. Przewodnik repertuarowy*, Warszawa. In the show by Petr Nosalek staged in Teatr Powszechny (Radom 2010), spiritus movens of the plot is the figure of Rat, who is the fairy's messenger and helper.

Wiśniewska, J.E., 1999, *W poszukiwaniu "Złotego Klucza". Polska twórczość dramatyczna dla teatru lalek (1945–1970)*, Łódź.

Jurkowski H., 2006, *Metamorfozy teatru lalek XX wieku*, Warszawa 2002, chapter: *Animacja, animizacja, synergia*.

Maksymiak, A., *Dla jednego gestu. Scenografia we Wrocławskim Teatrze Lalek*, Wrocław.

Bardijewska, L, 2004, *Bal mistrza*, "Gazeta Wyborcza".

Grygorowicz, S., 2010, *Baśniowy taniec z gwiazdami*, "Teatralia" 8.03.2010.

Morawska-Rubczak A., 2011, *Teatr animacji Janusza Ryla-Krystianowskiego*, Poznań 2011.

Filoteknos, vol. 8 • 2018 • DOI: 10.23817/filotek.8-13

KRZYSZTOF RYBAK • University of Warsaw, Poland

Sparing Them the Trauma: Postmemory Practices in Contemporary Polish Children's Literature about the Holocaust[1]

Review of Małgorzata Wójcik-Dudek's *To Read into the Holocaust: Post-memory practices in the Polish children's and adolescent literature of the 21st century (W(y)czytać Zagładę. Praktyki postpamięci w polskiej literaturze XXI wieku dla dzieci i młodzieży)*, published by Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2016, p. 332.[2]

In the last decade, the inclusion of Holocaust stories in Polish children's literature has become a trend not only in the book market, but also in the academia. Titles such as Joanna Rudniańska's *Kotka Brygidy*, Marcin Szczygielski's *Arka czasu*, or Iwona Chmielewska's *Pamiętnik Blumki* written by popular authors and given awards in many competitions have drawn the attention of some researchers. However, one had to wait for the very first book about the topic until 2016, when *W(y)czytać Zagładę. Praktyki postpamięci w polskiej literaturze XXI wieku dla dzieci i młodzieży* by Małgorzata Wójcik-Dudek was published. The author is a professor (dr hab.) at the Chair of Linguistic Didactics and Polish Literature at the Department of Philology of the University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland). She has become a renowned researcher of the Holocaust in Polish children's literature. Although *W(y)czytać Zagładę* is her only book on the subject, Wójcik-

[1] This paper was financed with state budget funds for science for 2016–2020, as a research project within the "Diamentowy Grant" programme of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education. The project is entitled *Oczami dziecka. Zagłada w polskiej literaturze dziecięcej i młodzieżowej po roku 1989* [Through the Eyes of a Child. The Holocaust in Polish Children's and Young Adult Literature after 1989] (2016–2020) and carried out under the supervision of prof. Grzegorz Leszczyński (Faculty of Polish Studies, University of Warsaw). The title of the review is a paraphrase of Hamida Bosmajian's *Sparing the Child: Grief and Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust* (Routledge, New York and London 2002). In the text, I use the word "postmemory" (following Marianne Hirsch's *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*), although there is also alternative spelling "post-memory" as used in the English title of the reviewed book (prepared by the publisher).

[2] The English title was prepared by the publisher.

Dudek has published several articles in journals and edited volumes (some of which are included in the book in their extended versions).

Considering the background of Wójcik-Dudek, it is not a surprise that her approach towards children's literature combines literary science with didactics and pedagogy. This makes the book attractive and useful not only to scholars, but also teachers, librarians, and parents who are interested in new trends in children's literature. The focus on a very recent literary phenomenon in Polish children's culture is an asset of the study, which may be considered as a milestone in children's literature research in Poland and a good starting point for researchers who follow, and not just the ones studying the Holocaust in literature for young readers, but also other related issues.

The book consists of eight chapters (divided into many – in my opinion too many – subsections) followed by a brief summary, a rich bibliography, a name index, and both English and German summaries, which may be useful for those who are not familiar with the Polish language. The chapters are devoted to: 1) a general introduction to postmemory and children's literature about the Holocaust; 2) an analysis of Jan Brzechwa's *Pan Kleks* trilogy; 3) children's biographies about Janusz Korczak; 4) the "micronarratives" of the Holocaust, such as the feminine perspective and fairytale patterns; 5) mother figures; 6) the creation of space and related issues; 7) play, understood as the act of reading and as different types of games; 8) case studies of two novels – Rudniańska's *Kotka Brygidy* and Paweł Beręsewicz's *Wszystkie lajki Marczuka*. All of the chapters will be described in detailed and commented on below.

At first glance, the division of the material seems unclear and confusing. Evidently, it appears to be a result of putting together past works and combining them into one volume. Unfortunately, Wójcik-Dudek has created a collection of disconnected studies. Her book can easily be read as a set of interesting and inspiring chapters, but the volume as a whole lacks consistency.

The first chapter, entitled *Wzgórze pamięci* (The Mount of Remembrance[3]) is a presentation of theories on memory and postmemory (by Marianne Hirsch among others) as well as these considering the historical writing and fiction (e.g. by Hayden White). The author specifies the aim of her work, which is "not only to catalogue images of the Holocaust, but also name the *topoi* and styles of narratives that shape the form of memory of the »fourth generation«"[4]. She is aware of

[3] All the translations of subsections are by the author of this review. Wójcik-Dudek recalls the Mount Herzl (לצרה רה, Mount of Remembrance), site of the Israel's national cemetery and, among others, Yad Vashem.

[4] "Warto więc przyjrzeć się bliżej postpamięciowym reprezentacjom Holokaustu, które kształtuje literatura skierowana do najmłodszych odbiorców, nie tylko po to, aby skatalogować obrazy Zagłady, lecz także aby wskazać toposy oraz sposoby narracji profilujące kształt pamięci »czwartego pokolenia«", M. Wójcik-Dudek, *W(y)czytać Zagładę. Praktyki postpamięci w polskiej literaturze XXI wieku dla dzieci i młodzieży [To Read into the Holocaust: Post-memory practices in the Polish children's and adolescent literature of the 21st century]*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2016, p. 8.

the "Holocaust industry" described by Norman Finkelstein as profiting from the memory of the Shoah and, quoting other authors, discusses the ethical problem of writing about the Holocaust[5]. This problem may be a considerable challenge for writers and teachers, as Wójcik-Dudek argues that school and education in general bears the responsibility for teaching young people about the past. In a valuable contribution, the author describes both Israeli and Polish educational practices. Briefly discussing school readings about the Holocaust, she shows that there is no such thing as the canon, and some changes in the manner of teaching about the Shoah should be made. Here, it is evident that she takes a stance against the traumatisation of the young reader[6], a viewpoint which she presents frequently in the book. Moreover, she puts emphasis on the responsibility of a children's book author, whose artistic freedom should be restricted by the idea of suitability ("stosowność"), a Polish term proposed by Michał Głowiński in place of *decorum*[7]. In a subsection cleverly entitled *DS804.34 and PZ,* the author diagnoses why the Holocaust became more popular than ever in contemporary Polish children's literature. Still, she argues that it is more accurate to call these texts non-fiction ("literatura faktu") rather than historical novel ("powieść historyczna")[8], because some of the victims and witnesses described are still alive. This viewpoint is highly contentious.

As the author states in the first chapter, she begins her analysis not with children's literature of the twenty-first century, but with Jan Brzechwa's *Akademia pana Kleksa*, published in 1946, because she "sees in it the founding myth of the stories about the Holocaust addressed to the young reader"[9]. Her second chapter entitled *Trylogia, która nie krzepi. Alternatywna lektura Pana Kleksa*

---

[5] Ibid., p. 9. These ethical problems in terms of the research on the Holocaust in children's literature described Lydia Kokkola, author of *Representing the Holocaust in Children's Literature* (Routledge, London and New York 2003), who after many years decided to change the subject of research, see L. Kokkola, Reflection from the Field: Why I No Longer Work with Holocaust Literature, *Religious Studies and Theology*, 35.1, 2016, p. 99–106.

[6] "[…] podejmowanie działań dydaktycznych zmierzających od emocji przez zrozumienie aż do osadzenia wydarzeń w kontekście historycznym gwarantują bezpieczne, nietraumatyzujące nauczanie o Zagładzie" [taking didactic activities moving from emotions through understanding and finally to setting the events in the historical context guarantee safe, non-traumatising teaching about the Holocaust], ibid., p. 18. "To wszakże tęsknota, a nie trauma wywołana obecnym w szkole tekstem, stanowi etyczny cel lekcji poświęconej Zagładzie" [It is longing – not trauma caused by a text presented in school – what is the ethical aim of a lesson about the Holocaust], Wójcik-Dudek, op.cit., p. 28.

[7] *Stosowność i forma: jak opowiadać o Zagładzie? [Suitability and Form: How to talk about the Holocaust?]*, edit. M. Głowiński et al., UNIVERSITAS, Kraków 2005.

[8] Ibid., p. 31 (footnote 75).

[9] "[…] na przekór tytułowi swoją narrację o Zagładzie rozpoczynam od tużpowojennej *Akademii pana Kleksa*. Nie mogłam inaczej, ponieważ w tej właśnie książce dostrzegam mit założycielski adresowanej do młodego odbiorcy opowieści o Zagładzie", Wójcik-Dudek, op.cit., p. 36.

Jana Brzechwy (A Trilogy That Does Not Strengthen: An Alternative Reading of Jan Brzechwa's *Pan Kleks*) is an analysis of one of the most popular Polish children's stories. As she states in the title, the author proposes an alternative reading of what is absent and unsaid in the narrative – which may confuse some readers:

> Instead of the oneiric interpretation, I propose a reading of pan Kleks' adventures in the postmodern manner "in spite of all". The idea is of course derived from George Didi-Huberman's *Images In Spite of All*. […] Placing *Akademia pana Kleksa* in the context of photographs form Auschwitz, which are specific documents of atrocity, may be received as a methodological scandal. Considering that, I put Brzechwa's fairytale on a margin of the Holocaust discourse, not forgetting about its child reader and literary characters, which obviously in no way match the ontology of the Holocaust testimony.[10]

In her risky analysis, the author also calls upon the Kabbalah and Jewish symbolism to show Pan Kleks' academy as a *Cheder* (Jewish school for boys), and reveals how the Holocaust – shown in the final scenes of the book as the destruction of the academy – could be seen by readers at the time. Although it has found its supporters[11], the multilevel interpretation presented in this chapter is difficult to accept. Wójcik-Dudek describes the *Pan Kleks* trilogy as a fairytale ("baśń")[12]. However, even if it is based on fairytale narrative schemes and motifs, it is clearly fantasy fiction (powieść fantastyczna). Thus, defining it as a fairytale is debatable, at least on the grounds of genre theory. Presenting how fairytale patterns are destroyed, Wójcik-Dudek alludes that Brzechwa presented the Holocaust without mentioning it and that this unspoken message was clear to his readers. Again, I see a misinterpretation in her analysis. *Akademia pana Kleksa* is known to have been Brzechwa's answer to the experience of World War II: he said that himself. Still, a conclusion that this may be seen particularly as a reflection of the Shoah needs a

---

[10] "Zamiast więc onirycznego rozwiązania w duchu postmodernizmu proponowałabym czytanie przygód pana Kleksa »mimo wszystko«. Idea takiej lektury jest oczywiście zapośredniczona, a jej czytelny adres stanowi przełomowa książka *Obrazy mimo wszystko* Georges'a Didi-Hubermana. […] Sytuowanie lektury *Akademii pana Kleksa* w kontekście fotografii z Auschwitz, które przecież pozostają swoistym dokumentem zbrodni, może uchodzić za metodologiczny skandal. Mając to na uwadze, umieszczam baśń Brzechwy na marginesie dyskursu o Holokauście, pamiętając jednocześnie o dziecięcym adresacie oraz jej literackości, która oczywiście w żaden sposób nie przystaje do ontologii świadectwa Zagłady", ibid., 48–49. Although it should be ona a margin of the Holocaust discourse it is the longest chapter in the book (54 pages).

[11] See S. J. Żurek, Zagłada w najnowszej polskiej literaturze dla dzieci i młodzieży, *Teksty Drugie*, 2, 2017, p. 184–194 and M. Ochwat, Postpamięciowy dyskurs w literaturze dla dzieci i młodzieży, *Postscriptum Polonistyczne*, 1 (19), 2017, p. 305–313.

[12] "[…] tradycyjny wzorzec baśni, za jaką uchodzi przecież *Akademia pana Kleksa*", Wójcik-Dudek, op.cit., p. 60.

more complex reasoning[13]. The author ends with a pessimistic conclusion – at least for her analysis – that Brzechwa's work is closed to new interpretations, because its potential young reader faces only classic school readings and an older reader, richer in cultural competence, is not likely to return to his/her childhood book to notice all the allusions and hidden meanings.

The next chapter, entitled *Architektura biografii – przypadek Korczak*a (The Architecture of a Biography – The Case of Korczak) is dedicated to the literary representations of Janusz Korczak (1878/9–1942), a Polish educator and children's author. His most famous novel and one of the best-known Polish children's literature titles is *King Matt the First* from 1923. Korczak was also a paediatrician, known as the Old Doctor, and the director of an orphanage in the Warsaw ghetto. When the Polish parliament announced Korczak as a patron of the year 2012, many children's biographies on his life were published, all including the most tragic moment (his agreeing to be sent from the Warsaw ghetto to the Treblinka death camp alongside his pupils). In this chapter, Wójcik-Dudek analyses four books: Chmielewska's *Pamiętnik Blumki*, Anna Czerwińska-Rydel's *Po drugiej stronie okna*, Beata Ostrowicka's *Jest taka historia* and, surprisingly, Katarzyna Zimmerer's *Zwyczajny dzień* Zimmerer's novel is set in contemporary Poland, completely unrelated to the Holocaust, and is linked to Korczak through the use of quotes from his writings on children's rights. It shows how the Old Doctor's legacy is still alive, but seems to be a topic marginal to Wójcik-Dudek's book. Interestingly, the researcher also presents non-literary examples of Korczak's remembrance (monuments, films etc.) which shaped the collective memory of him. She notes that writing any biography is a great challenge for a children's book author, but including the tragic final of Korczak's life makes it even more difficult. The author interprets his literary representation as a messianic figure (which is not explained enough and may be contested[14]). More interestingly, she defines Korczak's actions and decisions using Michel de Certeau's terms from his *Practice of Everyday Life* as tactics confronted with Nazi strategies. Showing Korczak as a rebel protesting against a totalitarian system and protecting his pupils is an interesting interpretation, which may help readers to understand Korczak's pedagogical statements as well. According to Wójcik-Dudek, all the novels (except for Zimmerer's) do not ignore the dramatic final, but show it in a "speculative"[15] or unclear manner, provoking questions from the young reader. Wójcik-Dudek argues that these are the only possible final scenes children's literature can of-

[13] Żurek makes a disclaimer that Wójcik-Dudek did not present Brzechwa's real attitude towards the Holocaust, which for me is a strong counterargument against her interpretation, see S. J. Żurek, op. cit. p. 188.

[14] See, ibid., p. 189.

[15] Commenting on Czerwińska-Rydel's *Po drugiej stronie okna*: "Opowieść kończy się w wagonie, finał jednak ma już tylko spekulatywny charakter" [The story ends in a train car but the final scene is of a speculative character], Wójcik-Dudek, op.cit., p. 121.

fer, because other kinds of presentation – as I understand, truthful ones – may traumatise the child reader. Here I strongly disagree with the author's understanding of kitsch, as she writes:

> Importantly, such a construction of the narrative avoided the effect of kitsch, so common in contemporary popular culture which tries to face the Holocaust, and very likely to be present in children's literature. Kitsch, as Lisa Saltzman argues, "transforms […] traumas into fictional melodramas, renders its catastrophes sites of catharsis, [making the Holocaust – M.W.D.] too assimilable, digestible, consumable". Books about Korczak for young readers have avoided this trend, not giving in to the temptation to simplify and close the story, at the same time searching for original ways of narrating, which can maintain the Holocaust and preserve the suitability of its representation considering the age of the reader.[16]

Contrary to Wójcik-Dudek, I do perceive the novels which avoid clear and true ending as "too assimilable, digestible, consumable", because they offer a blurred, unclear final consoling to the young reader. The "temptation to simplify and close the story" may seem controversial for some (including Wójcik-Dudek), but children should know the truth, especially if these texts will be used as educational tools. It is impossible to speak about the Holocaust without mentioning the victims and those who were murdered.

The fourth chapter entitled *Mikronarracje z obrzeży Zagłady* (Micronarratives From the Fringes of the Holocaust) is clearly divided in two parts. The first one pertains to women's diaries, both factual (Anne Frank) and fictional (Chmielewska's *Pamiętnik Blumki,* and Adam Jaromir's and Gabriela Cichowska's *Ostatnie przedstawienie panny Esterki*); the second one – to the relation between fairytale and the Holocaust (focusing on Rudniańska's *XY*). The author argues that there exists a "morphology of the Holocaust"[17], that is a set

---

[16] "Co ważne, taka konstrukcja narracji uniknęła efektu kiczu, tak częstego we współczesnej kulturze popularnej, która próbuje się zmierzyć z problematyką Zagłady i bardzo prawdopodobnego dla »literatury czwartej«. Kicz bowiem, jak twierdzi Lisa Saltzman, »transformuje […] traumatyczne doświadczenie w fikcyjne melodramaty, nadaje katastrofom wymiar katarktyczny, [czyniąc Zagładę – M.W.D] zbyt zrozumiałą, przyswajalną, łatwą dla konsumpcji«. Książki o Korczaku adresowane do młodych czytelników uniknęły tego zagrożenia, nie ulegając pokusie upraszczania i domykania opowieści, a jednocześnie poszukując oryginalnych sposobów narracji, które zarazem zdołały udźwignąć problematykę Zagłady i zachować stosowność jej reprezentacji uwzględniając wiek czytelnika zanurzonego w ich lekturze", ibid., p. 131–132. For the quote from Saltzman (Polish), see L. Saltzman, *Awangarda i kicz raz jeszcze. O etyce reprezentacji*, trans. K. Bojarska, *Literatura na Świecie*, 1–2, 2004, p. 204 . For original English, see L. Saltzman, *Avant-Garde and Kitsch Revisited*, [in:] *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imager / Recent Art*, edit. N. Kleeblatt, The Jewish Museum and Rutgers University Press, New York and New Brunswick 2001, p. 55.

[17] "[…] niejako na marginesie badań powstaje coś, co można by nazwać morfologią Zagłady", Wójcik-Dudek, op.cit., p. 135.

of narrative tactics, rooted both in factual accounts (diaries, memoirs) and fictional stories, which are "softened in such a way that they can fit the young reader's perception and sensibility"[18]. In the subsection focusing on Anne Frank's diary – which is an interesting one especially for the Polish reader (the famous *Diary of a Young Girl* is not as popular in Poland as in the USA and other countries) – the author shows how the diaries of Jewish children may influence contemporary popular culture and the memory of young generations:

> The narrative of the Amsterdam diary ruled contemporary imagination so much that it became a model child story about the Holocaust. Rutka Laskier from Będzin or Renia Knoll from the Kraków ghetto, authors of moving diaries, function as Polish Anne Frank.[19]

That is an accurate diagnose in case of Frank, but quite irrelevant to Polish diaries (by Rutka Laskier and Renia Knoll) which are neither school readings, nor known to a broad audience. In addition, they were published recently (Laskier's in 2006, Knoll's in 2012[20]). Thus, they are not as widely present in popular culture as Frank's diary is. Non-fictional feminine diaries are used as a form of introduction to the fictional diaries of Blumka (*Pamiętnik Blumki*) and Gena (*Ostatnie przedstawienie panny Esterki*), read by Wójcik-Dudek from the feminist perspective. According to the author, these texts present herstory instead of history, emphasising the role of Stefania Wilczyńska and Esterka Winogronówka, who worked with Korczak at the orphanage in the Warsaw ghetto. This is very interesting perspective, not touched earlier by scholars, and significant as a presentation of women living in the shadow of better-known figures such as Korczak.

In the second part of this chapter the author discusses relation between the classic fairytale pattern, elementary for children's literature, and the presentation of the Holocaust to young readers:

> On the one hand, a text written in that manner creates a narrative basis from fairytale morphemes well-known to the reader, but modifying them in a way that they do not show a strong similarity with its traditional type. On the other

[18] "[…] współczesna »literatura czwarta« […] posługuje się narracją, która jest wypadkową świadectwa oraz fikcyjnej opowieści złagodzonych w takim stopniu, aby odpowiadała wrażliwości i możliwościom percepcyjnym młodego odbiorcy", ibid., p. 135.

[19] "Narracja amsterdamskiego dziennika zawładnęła współczesną wyobraźnią tak bardzo, że zapiski stały się niejako wzorem dziecięcej opowieści o Zagładzie. Rutka Laskier z Będzina czy Renia Knollówna z krakowskiego getta – autorki przejmujących dzienników funkcjonują jako polskie Anny Frank", ibid., p. 139.

[20] Fragments of both diaries were published earlier by Justyna Kowalska-Leder, see J. Kowalska-Leder, *Doświadczenie Zagłady z perspektywy dziecka w polskiej literaturze dokumenty osobistego*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2009. For the English translation of the book, see J. Kowalska-Leder, *Their Childhood and the Holocaust: A Child's Perspective in Polish Documentary and Autobiographical Literature*, trans. Richard J. Reisner, Peter Lang Edition, Frankfurt am Main, 2015.

> hand, it tries to set the probable or real events in a fairy-tale sequence, although they are completely unfamiliar to the young generation. This creates a story that, even though at first seems familiar because it is a fairytale, remains unfamiliar or unidentified, because it talks about the Holocaust, which is not a subject for these ways of appropriation.[21]

Whatever the author understands as "these ways of appropriation", it is hard to believe that the Holocaust resists this type of procedures, because today it is exploited in many different contexts, manners, and to achieve ambivalent goals. Even in her analysis of Rudniańska's *XY* Wójcik-Dudek concludes that "the fairy-tale final scenes guarantee a happy ending and that is in some way the final of *XY*"[22]. Still, she argues that the story transcends the fairytale genre and becomes not even a postmodern fairytale (as defined by Weronika Kostecka), but a specific genre of writing about the Holocaust, one that is difficult to define. Therefore, it is a shame that the author does not risk any definite interpretation of the new genre to which she classifies *XY*, just points to its similarities with the works of Hanna Krall.

Chapter five is entitled *Macierzyństwo w stanie zagrożenia* (Motherhood in a State of Danger) and focuses on the broadly understood figure of mother and motherhood as well as on rites of hospitality, which are for Wójcik-Dudek a very important element in Polish children's literature about the Holocaust. She presents different types of "motherhood" resulting from the absence of a biological mother in an interesting way: grandparents, aunts, or even animals adopt this role. Wójcik-Dudek comments on very interesting example of Renata Piątkowska's *Wszystkie moje mamy*, based on the story of Irena Sendler who helped Jewish people in the Warsaw ghetto and assisted in hiding Jewish children on the "Aryan" side, as follows:

> […] first, the book was conceived to promote the memory of Irena Sendler […], second – the boy's mother did not survive the ghetto, and his older sister and father died in a camp. The author fulfilled the criterion of fidelity to the "biographical truth", but did not traumatise the reader with the loss of the mother by replacing her with subsequent caretakers.[23]

---

[21] "Z jednej strony tekst tego rodzaju buduje narrację, opierając się na znanych czytelnikowi morfemach baśni, ale przekształca je w taki sposób, aby nie wywoływały efektu zbyt dużej zażyłości z tradycyjną jej odmianą. Z drugiej – podejmuje próbę wpisania wydarzeń, które są prawdopodobne lub rzeczywiście miały miejsce, w baśniowy, uniwersalny porządek, choc one same są całkowicie obce doświadczeniom młodego pokolenia. W efekcie powstaje opowieść, która choć na pierwszy rzut oka wydaje się znajoma, ponieważ jest baśnią, to jednak pozostaje obca, a raczej nieoswojona, gdyż podejmuje temat Holokaustu, a ten z kolei nie podlega procedurom tego rodzaju zawłaszczania", Wójcik-Dudek, op.cit., p. 158.

[22] "Baśniowy finał jest gwarancją happy endu i poniekąd takie właśnie jest zakończenie *XY*", ibid., p. 163.

[23] "[…] po pierwsze, książka została pomyślana jako propagująca pamięć o Irenie Sendlerowej […], po drugie – matka chłopca nie przeżyła getta, a jego starsza siostra i ojciec

Again, the author proposes that children's literature should not traumatise the young reader. She demonstrates how authors try to achieve that by replacing the biological mother of a protagonist with different adults who help the child. Introducing the stories with animal protagonists, she notes:

> Moving the war experience from the sphere of a child to the sphere of animal causes no harm to the fictional consistency of the narrative, but benefits from protecting the young reader from the threat of trauma.[24]

Again, it is the most important for Wójcik-Dudek to spare the reader from trauma. However, I cannot agree with her statement that the story is not weakened when a human character is replaced by an animal one (called by the author a "subchild character"[25]). I think – contrary to the Silesian researcher – that this process distances young reader from the story of the Holocaust as perceived by a child victim himself/herself rather than by an animal witness. Despite my critical remarks, I must admit that Wójcik-Dudek's use of *animal studies* creates a fresh, inspiring interpretation of *Szlemiel* by Ryszard Marek Groński. The mother figure is deeply analysed by the author in the context of Polish women who took Jewish children taken from the ghetto under their roofs. Not only does Wójcik-Dudek present the process of acculturation and a set of rituals or play with a child's identity[26], but also comments on Polish-Jewish relations during World War II. According to her, these relations are not idealised. This is contentious, because the only novel in which the Poles help Jews not from their good hearts, but for money (and that is only suggested, not literally presented) is Rudniańska's *Kotka Brygidy*. Wójcik-Dudek comments on that only in a footnote[27], but I think her reaction is too conservative as this element of Rudniańska's novel was brutally criticised by Anna Maria Krajewska[28]. In addition, Polish antisemitism – "the difficult subject"[29] – represented in *Kotka Brygidy* by Stańcia is called by the author of *W(y)czytać Zagładę* a "light variant", explained by "poor education and a strong influence of the Roman Catholic faith"[30]. This is a naive statement, as it

---

zginęli w obozie. Autorka spełniła kryterium wierności wobec »prawdy biograficznej«, aby wszakże nie traumatyzować odbiorcy utratą matki, zastępuje ją kolejnymi opiekunkami chłopca", ibid., p. 183.

[24] "Przesunięcie doświadczenia wojny z przestrzeni dziecka w przestrzeń zwierząt powoduje, że narracja nie traci niczego ze swej fabularnej gęstości, lecz jedynie zyskuje, zabezpieczając młodego czytelnika przed niebezpieczeństwem traumy", ibid., p. 194.

[25] Ibid., p. 195.

[26] For more on the topic, see K. Rybak, Hide and Seek with Nazis: Playing with Child Identity in Polish Children's Literature about the Shoah, *Libri & Liberi*, 6.1, 2017, p. 11–24.

[27] Wójcik-Dudek, op.cit., p. 208 (footnote 96).

[28] A. M. Krajewska, *Przestrzeń nadziei. Debiuty po 1990 roku*, [in:] *Po potopie. Dziecko, książka i biblioteka w XXI wieku*, edit. D. Świerczyńska-Jelonek, G. Leszczyński, M. Zając, Wydawnictwo SBP, Warszawa 2008, p. 47–49.

[29] Wójcik-Dudek, op. cit., p. 245.

[30] "[…] Stańcia powraca jeszcze w kilku odsłonach, między innymi jako reprezentantka

is known that antisemitic attitudes was common during World War II and are strong in contemporary Poland.

The next chapter – entitled *Postpamięć i zarządzanie przestrzenią* (Postmemory and Management of Space) – is the most interesting and convincing part of the book. The author focuses on the creation of space (which in children's literature about the Holocaust is the ghetto) and time, clearly divided into pre-war and post-war periods:

> Holocaust stories are based on a contrast between a bright pre-war past and the darkness of the ghetto, a space of suffering and death. Basically every story juxtaposes an idyllic life before the catastrophe of war with the grim existence in the ghetto. The ghetto wall draws a demarcation line. It plays a significant role in the periodisation of time for the inhabitants of the ghetto.[31]

In this chapter Wójcik-Dudek presents many interesting, accurate analyses and interpretations not only considering the ghetto as a whole, but particular places (such as Piękna and Twarda Streets in Warsaw), changes in topography (German names instead of Polish ones), leaving the family house, and the attitude of the child character toward his or her surrounding space, to name a few. Notably, Wójcik-Dudek proposes that the term "Polish-Polish relations" should be used instead of "Polish-Jewish relations – not to reduce the role Nazi influence, but, as she states, because the child protagonists come from assimilated families and "discover" their Jewishness only when forced to move to the ghetto[32]. Here, the category of a witness is introduced, as those child characters who must observe the tragedy from the "Aryan" side of the ghetto wall and remember to pass this knowledge on to following generations.

In this chapter, the author also presents a confusing interpretation of Antón Fortes' and Joanna Concejo's *The Smoke*. First, she questions its addressed audience, but a moment later she agrees with one reviewer stating that the picturebook is dedicated to adults, not children. As a result, her critical approach to *The Smoke* (understood as children's text) is invalid, because its traumatising character seems to be more appropriate for adult reader. According to Wójcik-Dudek, decontextualisation, as in the case of *The Smoke*, may universalise the

---

polskiego antysemityzmu, choć wydawałoby się – w łagodnej wersji. Prawdopodobnie jej postawa jest wypadkową słabego wykształcenia i silnego wpływu katolicyzmu", ibid., p. 212.

[31] "Opowieści o Zagładzie oparte są na kontraście między jasną, przedwojenną przeszłością a ciemnością getta, będącą przestrzenią cierpienia i śmierci. W zasadzie każda z opowieści przeciwstawia sielskie życie przed wojenną katastrofą ponurej egzystencji w getcie. Linię demarkacyjną obu przestrzeni wyznacza mur. Odgrywa on istotną rolę w periodyzacji czasu mieszkańców getta", ibid., p. 220.

[32] More on Jewish identity in Polish children's literature about the Holocaust, see K. Rybak, op. cit. and M. Skowera, Polacy i Żydzi, dzieci i dorośli. Kto jest kim w *Kotce Brygidy* Joanny Rudniańskiej i *Bezsenności Jutki* Doroty Combrzyńskiej-Nogali, *Konteksty Kultury*, 11.1, 2014, p. 57–72.

Holocaust. Again, her interpretation is less than fortunate, because Fortes' and Concejo's book is one of only two stories included in her monograph that takes place in a concentration camp, along with John Boyne's *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas.* Although it may be traumatic for the reader, it shows the very nature of the "Final Solution" (at the end, the protagonist dies in a gas chamber). Of course for Wójcik-Dudek the final scene seems inappropriate, because "the reader is not pulled away from the trauma"[33], but that is precisely how many Jewish children died during the Holocaust. In this context, she introduces the category of kitsch, but does not state if *The Smoke* may be described in this manner. As a context, widely analysed by scholars from all around the world, she writes about Boyne's *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, but unfortunately bases her conclusions on a 2008 film by Mark Herman[34] and not the book itself (it is not listed in bibliography either).

In the next chapter, entitled Homo ludens*, czyli opresja zabawy* (Homo ludens *or the Oppression of Play*), the author focuses on the motif of play, common in children's literature about the Holocaust, understood as reading and participating in different types of games. Introducing play and games in children's folklore (Regina Lilientalowa, Jerzy Cieślikowski), she moves to reading something that does not only constitute childhood in general, but also is an important activity for child characters living in the time of the Holocaust. For that, she expands the term "Shoah Library" ("Biblioteka Shoah" created by Przemysław Czapliński) to define all the reading activities of children during the Holocaust. She analyses the titles, often randomly found in the ghetto or elsewhere, that young people read. It is a pity that Wójcik-Dudek did not reach for *The Warsaw Ghetto: a Guide to the Perished City* by Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, where authors describe cultural institutions of the Warsaw ghetto, including libraries and bookshops. In the quoted *Black Seasons* Michal Głowiński wrote that at some point there was a library collecting children's books in the Warsaw ghetto [35], which seems like perfect encouragement for deeper research.

The second part of the chapter focuses on different games which children played in the ghetto, a process that is presented as therapeutic activity which may draw attention away from the surrounding horror. Here strikes another serious oversight – the author ignored a classic work by George Eisen (*Children and Play in the Holocaust: Games among the Shadows*), where the issue is deeply analysed. According to Wójcik-Dudek, the rules of games are radically different than in the pre-war period, because the stake is to live (or die), and from that she concludes that they lose their ludic character as the free will to participate is absent.

The last chapter – *Dybuk kontra Facebook, czyli* Kotka Brygidy *i* Wszystkie lajki Marczuka (Dybbuk Versus Facebook or *Kotka Brygidy* and *Wszyst-*

[33] Wójcik-Dudek, op.cit., p. 255.
[34] Ibid., p. 256.
[35] Ibid., p. 270.

kie lajki Marczuka) – is an interesting confrontation between two examples of postmemory writing. Here, the author fully executes the task announced in the subtitle for *W(y)czytać Zagładę*. Rudniańska's *Kotka Brygidy* is presented as individual postwar trauma that the protagonist must bear. Even long after the Holocaust, as she walks Warsaw and Jerusalem streets, the images from the past return. Wójcik-Dudek argues that the main character Helena "is possessed by a Dybbuk of remembrance"[36]. On the other hand, Beręsewicz's *Wszystkie lajki Marczuka* presents a "rollercoaster"[37] of Holocaust motifs and images. The most interesting is a creation of a local hero, which is "an alternative and antidote for stories which are difficult to accept"[38], ones on Polish-Jewish relations. Marczuk, who was "invented" by the protagonist, becomes a product of postmemory.

Conclusions presented in the part *Bliscy nieznajomi. Próba podsumowania* (Close Strangers: An Attempt to Summarise) are briefly listed by the author on three pages and recapitulate her observations made throughout the whole book.

The most striking in reading *W(y)czytać Zagładę* is the author's attitude towards children's literature about the Holocaust, which according to her should not traumatise the young reader: "[…] a child library […] should be free from the Holocaust trauma"[39]; "one should tell, but in a way not to traumatise"[40]; "considering […] the young reader, fear transmitted through reading should be moderate"[41]; "[…] even though children's literature talks about the Holocaust, it still has to mind the young reader's sensibility and her/his need for faith – if not in the triumph of good over evil, at least in the good balancing the evil"[42]; "it is difficult to imagine that a character, in a similar age as the reader with whom he/she had time to identify, would be murdered or decide to return to the ghetto, which is the equivalent to a death sentence"[43]. As mentioned earlier, from this point of view she criticises Fortes' and Concejo's *The Smoke*. However, Marta Tomczok points out that this was the story of many Jewish children during World War II, and asks: how should the story end, if not that

[36] "Wydaje się, że Helena jest we władaniu dybuka pamięci", ibid., p. 283.
[37] Ibid., p. 286.
[38] Ibid., p. 287.
[39] "[…] bibliotecz[ka] dziecięc[a] […] powinna być wolna od holokaustowej traumy", ibid., p. 141.
[40] "Należy opowiadać, ale tak, aby nie traumatyzować", ibid., p. 159.
[41] "Ze względu […] na młodego odbiorcę tekstu lęk zapośredniczony przez lekturę powinien być umiarkowany", ibid., p. 186–187.
[42] "[…] »literatura czwarta« mimo że podejmuje temat Zagłady, wciąż musi mieć na uwadze wrażliwość młodego odbiorcy i jego potrzebę wiary – jeśli nie w zwycięstwo dobra nad złem, to już na pewno w istnienie dobra równoważącego zło", ibid., p. 228.
[43] "Trudno sobie przecież wyobrazić, aby postać wiekowo zbliżona do czytelnika, z którą ten zdążył się już utożsamić, została zamordowana lub sama decydowała o powrocie do getta, co byłoby jednoznaczne z wyrokiem śmierci", ibid., p. 242.

way?[44] It is hard not to agree with Tomczok's review: "a note of a false consolation dominates in Wójcik-Dudek's work[45] along with the notion that "the protagonist should survive only not to make the young reader miserable"[46]. What is more striking, the author herself concludes at one point:

> […] only an honest dialogue with the past, one based on truth, although naturally protecting young readers from trauma, may be a way to include them in an intergenerational debate. After all "The children should know the truth, they cannot be deceived. Adults writing books often think that they should stoop to the level of the child. In contrast, they can only jump up to the child"[47].

Unfortunately, Wójcik-Dudek seems deaf to the words she quotes, because she puts sparing the children the trauma above the truth, which seems to have roots in her private perspective "as a mother and a teacher"[48].

The second defect of the work are secondary literature choices which are difficult to understand. Although there are several foreign-language works cited in the book, the absence of many significant English studies about children's literature is striking. Works by Hamida Bosmajian[49] and Lydia Kokkola[50] about the Holocaust, or Anastasia Ulanowicz about postmemory[51], to name a few, are significant studies which should be presented to the Polish reader, especially since these authors focus on the same problems Wójcik-Dudek touches.

Apart from the remarks made above, there are some minor oversights. The author uses the terms "literatura holokaustowa"[52] (Holocaust literature)

---

[44] M. Tomczok, Anna Mach, Świadkowie świadectw. Postpamięć Zagłady w polskiej literaturze najnowszej; Małgorzata Wójcik-Dudek, W(y)czytać Zagładę. Praktyki postpamięci w polskiej literaturze XXI wieku dla dzieci i młodzieży, *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i materiały*, 13, 2017, p. 800.

[45] "W pracy Wójcik-Dudek dominuje ton fałszywego pocieszenia, w którym zatraca się nie tylko historyczność Zagłady, ale nade wszystko jej sens (czy raczej: bezsens)", ibid.

[46] "A jego [opisywania Holokaustu – K. R.] ideową postawą czyni przywiązanie młodego czytelnika do bohatera, który powinien przeżyć tylko dlatego, by nie unieszczęśliwić współczesnego odbiorcy", ibid.

[47] "[…] tylko uczciwy, oparty na prawdzie dialog z przeszłością, choć oczywiście chroniący prze traumą, może stanowić sposób na włączenie młodych czytelników w międzypokoleniową dyskusję, przecież »Dzieciom należy się prawda, nie można ich oszukiwać. Dorośli, często również piszący książki myślą, że do dziecka należy się zniżyć. Tymczasem do dziecka to oni mogą tylko podskoczyć«", Wójcik-Dudek, op.cit., p. 258. Quote from Do dziecka można tylko podskoczyć… Z Joanną Rudniańską rozmawia Katarzyna Kubisiowska, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 51, 2012, p. 5–7.

[48] Ibid., p. 284.

[49] H. Bosmajian, *Sparing the Child: Grief and Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust*, Routledge, New York and London 2002.

[50] L. Kokkola, *Representing the Holocaust in Children's Literature*, Routledge, New York and London, 2003.

[51] A. Ulanowicz, *Second-Generation Memory and Contemporary Children's Literature: Ghost Images*, Routledge London and New York 2013.

[52] Wójcik-Dudek, op.cit., p. 155, 178–179, 195.

and "literatura postholokaustowa"[53] (post-Holocaust literature) in the context of children's literature, not clarifying the difference, which may confuse the reader. There are also a few editing errors, for example repetitions of the same sentence in the main text and a footnote[54] or very similar footnotes[55]. A definition of postmemory is recalled without an apparent reason on page 227[56] and the theory of tactics and strategies is explained for the second time on page 229[57]. Moreover, the careful reader may see minor mistakes in the footnotes where Wójcik-Dudek uses the abbreviation "ibidem"[58]. The word "szpera" (derived from "wielka szpera", in German *Allgemeine Gehsperre*) is inconsistently written in regular typeface and italics.

Education about the Holocaust in schools or children's literature is an important issue especially in contemporary Poland, where debates on Jewish-Polish relations not only during World War II, but also pre- and postwar, strongly antagonise political and social groups alike. In these uneasy times, reading Wójcik-Dudek's work offers a broad view on writing for young readers. In spite of various contentious passages, it is a valuable study not only focusing on particular cases, but widely presenting postmemory mechanisms of contemporary literature and culture.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bosmajian, H. 2002. *Sparing the Child: Grief and Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust*. New York and London: Routledge.

Eisen, G. 1988. *Children and Play in the Holocaust: Games among the Shadows*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press.

Engelking, B. and Leociak, J. 2009. *The Warsaw Ghetto: a Guide to the Perished City*. Trans. E. Harris. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Głowiński, M. et al., eds. 2005. *Stosowność i forma: jak opowiadać o Zagładzie?*, Kraków: UNIVERSITAS.

Kokkola, L. 2003. *Representing the Holocaust in Children's Literature*. New York and London: Routledge.

Kokkola, L. 2016. Reflection from the Field: Why I No Longer Work with Holocaust Literature. – *Religious Studies and Theology*, 35.1, 99–106.

Kowalska-Leder, J. 2009. *Doświadczenie Zagłady z perspektywy dziecka w polskiej literaturze dokumenty osobistego*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.

Kowalska-Leder, J. 2015. *Their Childhood and the Holocaust: A Child's Perspective in Polish Documentary and Autobiographical Literature*. Trans. Richard J. Reisner. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition

[53] Ibid., p. 30, 35.

[54] Ibid., p.190 (footnote 49).

[55] Ibid., p. 237 (footnote 43) & 266 (footnote 23).

[56] Ibid., p. 227 (footnote 18).

[57] Ibid., p. 229 (footnote 21).

[58] Ibid., 249 (footnotes 69, 70 & 71); 265 (footnotes 17, 18 & 19); 286–287 (footnotes 19, 20 & 21).

Krajewska, A. M. 2008. Przestrzeń nadziei. Debiuty po 1990 roku. – D. Świerczyńska-Jelonek, G. Leszczyński, M. Zając, eds., *Po potopie. Dziecko, książka i biblioteka w XXI wieku*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo SBP, 43–57.

Ochwat, M. 2017. Postpamięciowy dyskurs w literaturze dla dzieci i młodzieży. – *Postscriptum Polonistyczne*, 1(19), 305–313.

Rybak, K. 2017. Hide and Seek with Nazis: Playing with Child Identity in Polish Children's Literature about the Shoah. – *Libri & Liberi*, 6.1, 11–24.

Skowera, M. 2014. Polacy i Żydzi, dzieci i dorośli. Kto jest kim w *Kotce Brygidy* Joanny Rudniańskiej i *Bezsenności Jutki* Doroty Combrzyńskiej-Nogali. – *Konteksty Kultury*, 11.1, 57–72.

Tomczok, M. 2017. Anna Mach, *Świadkowie świadectw. Postpamięć Zagłady w polskiej literaturze najnowszej*; Małgorzata Wójcik-Dudek, *W(y)czytać Zagładę. Praktyki postpamięci w polskiej literaturze XXI wieku dla dzieci i młodzieży – Zagłada Żydów. Studia i materiały*, 13, 795–801.

Ulanowicz, A. 2013. *Second-Generation Memory and Contemporary Children's Literature: Ghost Images*. London and New York: Routledge.

Żurek, S. J. 2017. Zagłada w najnowszej polskiej literaturze dla dzieci i młodzieży. – *Teksty Drugie*, 2, 184–194.

Słowa kluczowe: postpamięć, Zagłada, Holokaust, polska literatura dziecięca, Małgorzata Wójcik-Dudek, recenzja

Keywords: postmemory, Holocaust, Polish children's literature, Małgorzata Wójcik-Dudek, review

Filoteknos, vol. 8 • 2018 • DOI: 10.23817/filotek.8-14

KAROLINA JĘDRYCH • University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland

Image of a Little Girl, an Adolescent and a Woman in the Novels of Maria Krüger – Summary

In the book I analyze eight novels by Maria Krüger (1904– 1999) who was a Polish journalist, editor, and after World War II became an author of books for children and teenagers. I focus on her one novel for children aged 8 to 12 (*Klimek i Klementynka*, 1962), five novels for teenage girls (*Szkoła narzeczonych,* 1945; *Petra*, 1957; *Godzina pąsowej róży*, 1960; *Po prostu Lucynka P .*, 1980; *Odpowiednia dziewczyna*, 1988), and two novels for adult women (*Brygida*, 1970; *Gorzkie wino*, 1975).

Even though many studies concerning Polish novels for children and teenagers point out to the innovative nature of Krüger's writing, especially her most popular novels *Karolcia* and *Godzina pąsowej róży*, so far no one has written a detailed book on her literary output or her biography. My book, the first attempt to interpret Krüger's novels, is based on the literary output of feminist criticism and gender studies, such as Lissa Paul's texts concerning three strategies of gender reading of literature for young readers: *rereading, reclaiming, redirection*.

My book is divided into two parts. In the first one, titled *Image background. Girlhood novel as a safe place,* I write about what Krüger's protagonists say and think about the genre called "novels for girls", especially the "boarding school novels" type. Life depicted in such books is the dream of one of the protagonists (Brygida). Others perceive the world presented in the boarding school novel as haven and topophilia (I refer to Gaston Bachelard and Alicja Baluch). This is not surprising as *Szkoła narzeczonych* and *Petra* were written during World War II. Krüger spent that time in occupied Warsaw and her characters often mention the war, occupation, and the Warsaw Uprising. Moreover, they talk about the cruelty of the world, as well as their longing for peace and happiness after the war, one of the most important topics in *Brygida*. Brygida has a grudge against the world and her own life; she thinks that she has been deceived or fooled by her faith. Her life is far from the perfect one found in other novels for girls.

Afterwards, I focus on the references to films in Krüger's novels, the film adaptation of *Godzina pąsowej róży,* and the differences between the world

presented in that novel and in *Gorzkie wino* – a book for women set during the same times as *Godzina . . .* Interestingly, both novels supplement each other. Since *Godzina pąsowej róży* is a book for young girls, certain things, such as poverty, the cruelty of mothers towards daughters, violence, disease, and sex are taboo. In *Gorzkie wino* Krüger is able to mention these issues and show that *the Belle Époque* was not as beautiful as we think it was.

The second part of my book is divided into three chapters focusing on the images of Krüger's protagonists. In the first one, titled *Dressed,* I discuss the functions of clothes in Krüger's novels. Clothes are, among others, a way to express subjectivity and construct identity, also the sexual one. The two female protagonists, Petra and Klementynka, dress as boys to do forbidden things. Clothes are also used to take control over another person. This can be observed in *Brygida* and *Gorzkie wino*. Clothes are also a source of pleasure: buying clothes is entertaining for Adelajda (*Gorzkie wino*), Lucynka (*Po prostu Lucynka P .*). I was inspired to write this chapter by Krystyna Kłosińska's *Ciało, ubranie, pożądanie* and Grażyna Bokszańska's *Ubiór w teatrze życia codziennego.*

In the second chapter, called *Appropriate,* I try to retrace the characteristics of the protagonists which allow them to be perceived as girls appropriate for men they are about to marry or will marry in the future. I focus on the model of femininity described by Krüger. On the one hand, it is represented by an exemplary housewife (as Marianna in *Szkoła narzeczonych*), on the other hand, by an independent woman and an artist (Petra form *Petra*).

In the last chapter, titled *Mother*, I discuss the relations of the protagonists with their mothers and, despite the title, fathers. The center of my interest are two novels for women – *Gorzkie wino* and *Brygida*. The main characters, Adelajda and Brygida, were brought up by domineering mothers. Their fates show that relations with parents, especially with mothers, greatly influence one's life. In Krüger's books fathers are not as important as mothers. In fact, they are absent and have only minor influence on their children. Another interesting thing is that young protagonists, Lucynka (*Po prostu Lucynka P .*) and Marianna (*Szkołana rzeczonych*), have to perform the role of mothers against their will. They are both obligated to take care of abandoned baby boys.

In the conclusion I focus on the autobiographical motifs in Krüger's novels for children, teenagers, and adults. However, due to the lack of sources that could confirm my suspicions and conclusions, that part is not very long and extensive.