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THE PICTUREBOOK:
A MIRROR OF SOCIAL CHANGES

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Cuteness and aggression in military picturebooks

Summary

As a subspecies of ideologically loaded picturebooks, this chapter focuses on military picturebooks. This term encompasses picturebooks dealing with war and the roles of soldiers. In the first part, a taxonomy of military picturebooks is created which is exemplified by telling examples. The second part focuses on a particular narrative problem of military picturebooks that is of interest to a cognitive theory of picturebooks (as pursued by Kümmerling-Meibauer & Meibauer 2013). On the one hand, it is not possible to represent war as a good thing across the board; on the other hand, war is depicted with respect to certain scenarios of self-defence. The narrative solution seems to be that "cute" characters (that is, anthropomorphic animals and vehicles) are introduced who serve as positive military protagonists that have to fight against aggressive characters representing the enemy. In military picturebooks, there is a contrast between cuteness and aggression that is astonishing when regarding the typical pedagogical demands on the accommodation of picturebooks to the child's cognitive abilities.

Key words: character, cognitive theory of picturebooks, cuteness, military picturebook, propaganda war in children's literature

Słowa klucze: postać literacka, poznawcza teoria książki obrazkowej, estetyka "cutness", militarna książka obrazkowa, wojenna propaganda w literaturze dla dzieci

Children's literature and propaganda

Since children are the targets of adult propaganda, children's literature is a place where propaganda can be exerted. By propaganda directed to children, we understand every attempt at influencing the attitudes of children in a nonrational way.[1] There are numerous kinds of propaganda, e.g. religious propaganda, advertising propaganda, and political propaganda.

[1] See also Abate (2010) and Mickenberg (2006) on the propagandistic effects of American children's literature written by authors who belong to right-wing or left-wing parties.

This chapter focuses on political propaganda in three picturebooks that exemplify what Stanley (2015) calls supporting propaganda: "a contribution to public discourse that is presented as an embodiment of certain ideals, yet is of a kind that tends to increase the realization of those very ideals by either emotional or other nonrational means" (53).[2] The ideals that are presented in the picturebooks in question are the ideals of liberal democracy. In particular, what is supported by propaganda is the fight of the Allied Forces against Nazi Germany in the context of the Second World War. The picturebooks were published in 1942, 1943, and 1944, that is, in a period of war when most children were directly or indirectly confronted with the war and its effects (cf. Gardiner 2005). Stanley (2015) also makes perfectly clear that propaganda is deceptive: "Insofar as a form of propaganda is a kind of manipulation of rational beings toward an end without engaging their rational will, it is a kind of deception" (58). Yet, contra Immanuel Kant and his moral absolutism, this deception may be directed to "worthy goals" (53), and "there is a kind of unproblematic and indeed necessary form of propaganda" (58).

Most people would agree that fighting against the Nazis was such a worthy goal. If this is accepted, the question is then which narrative and pictorial strategies were used in persuading children to accept the necessity of war? Since the picturebooks we investigated deal with war and the roles soldiers play in this war, we suggest calling this type 'military picturebooks.' These picturebooks prefer a narrative strategy that relies on characters which show traces of 'cuteness,' thus inviting the child reader to have empathy with them. The necessary violence that accompanies any war action is not the focus of these picturebooks, since it could undermine their overall propagandistic goals. Yet we find more or less explicit hints toward the violent aspects of war.

The outline of this chapter is as follows: In section 2, we define our concept of the military picturebook by presenting a taxonomy. In section 3, we show – based on our general cognitive-narratological approach to picturebooks (Kümmerling-Meibauer, Meibauer 2013) – how cuteness and aggression are balanced in the three picturebooks under investigation. Finally, we present some preliminary conclusions and ideas for further research.

Taxonomy of military picturebooks

In contrast to illustrated educational textbooks that inculcate military and political ideologies by means of instructional devices and are typically used within an institutional context, such as kindergarten and school (Johnson 2008: 60), military picturebooks are usually not bound to such institutional frames but are intended to be read by children and adult mediators in their leisure time.

[2] Supporting propaganda is opposed to undermining propaganda as "a contribution to public discourse that is presented as an embodiment to certain ideals, yet is of a kind that tends to erode those very ideals" (53). A case in point is the coloring book for children *We shall never forget 9/11. The Kid's Book of Freedom* (2011) by N. Wayne Bell that fuels hatred for Muslim people, since they are presented as supporters of Osama Bin Laden.

We distinguish between three types of military picturebooks: descriptive military picturebooks, autobiographical military picturebooks, and narrative military picturebooks. Descriptive (or non-fiction) military picturebooks contain information about war, e.g. about the weapons used or the roles of soldiers. They can also offer reasons for war or an explanation of war ethics. A case in point is *An Alphabet of the Army* (1943) by Edward Shenton. Its content is described as follows in the inside flap:

> The present Army of the United States is a vast and complex organization. Planned and trained for modern total warfare, its units are highly specialized, its weapons are the finest and most efficient that can be devised. AN ALPHABET OF THE ARMY shows this development in concise text and pictures. It describes each unit and tells how the various commands operate in battle and explains what their weapons can do. (n. pag.)

Hence, this book is engaged in knowledge transmission. Yet it is supporting propaganda since it aims at generating children's respect for the Army of the United States, by fostering admiration for its complex organization and high-tech weapons.

In autobiographical military picturebooks, an adult author remembers his or her war experiences, thus constructing a picture of war oscillating between subjective and more representative aspects of war. A case in point is Michael Foreman's *War Boy* (1989). The propagandistic aspect of this type of military picturebook is connected with the many emotional overtones integrated into the narrative. For instance, one picture displays a Morrison shelter. Morrison shelters were massive steel constructions to be placed inside houses or in gardens in order to protect the inhabitants from (German) bombs. The respective illustration shows a garden scene where the top of the shelter is used as a table for playing table tennis, while inside the shelter a young child is comfortably reading a book. Foreman's *War Boy* is a good example for supporting propaganda that typically works "indirectly by seeking to overload various affective capacities, such as nostalgia, sentiment, or fear" (Stanley 2015: 53). This does not exclude information about the war like those typically given in descriptive military picturebooks. In addition, narratives about the author's life as a "war boy" are integrated.

Finally, narrative military picturebooks are picturebooks that present a story whose main protagonists are usually children or animals. Surprisingly, even vehicles and toys assume the role of literary characters in these books, as in Helen Ferris' *"Watch me" said the Jeep* (1944) and Albert Friend's *War in Dollyland* (1915). In this regard it should be noted that there are picturebooks dealing with war that cannot be classified as military picturebooks, simply because war is not the central topic. For instance, in *Le voyage de Babar* (The Travels of Babar, 1932) by Jean de Brunhoff, a war breaks out between the elephants and the rhinos, but this episode does not dominate the picturebook story. More generally, we argue that narratives are a privileged means of propaganda because emotional and non-rational aspects can easily be integrated, as will be shown by an analysis of three narrative military picturebooks: *Kwik and Kwak* (1942) by Oscar Fabrés, *Yussuf the Ostrich* (1943) by Emery Kelen, and *Jenny the Jeep* (1944) by Jack Townend. Although the stories are

purely fictional, propagating the war of the American army and the Allied Forces against Nazi Germany, they refer to different war strategies and historical events. *Kwik and Kwak* interpolates the invasion of German troops in The Netherlands in 1940 with the topic of forced immigration to the USA as a safe country. *Jenny the Jeep* focuses on the entry of the Allied Forces into Italy. Interestingly, this picturebook refers to the end of the Second World War, although it was published in 1944. One explanation might be that the US army invaded Sicily in 1943, joined forces with the British army, occupied the South of Italy in the following months, and entered Rome in June 1944. Although the fighting with the German army in Northern Italy lasted until April 1945, the events of the war and the failures of the German armies in Europe in 1943 and 1944 obviously stimulated the author to anticipate the end of the war.

Finally, *Yussuf the Ostrich* refers to the British-American invasion of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria in 1942, known as "Operation Torch." Under the guidance of General Dwight Eisenhower, the American troops defeated the German army that had occupied major parts of this North African region. After suffering from very large losses, the Germans agreed to an armistice and left North Africa in spring 1943. The picturebook narrative singles out the fierce battles between the US army and the German army, complementing this factual event by the fantastic story of the fabulous fast-running ostrich. In order to connect the 'real' and the fictional level, the illustrator equipped the US general with the looks of Eisenhower. If one compares the illustrations of the general with contemporary photographs of Eisenhower, the resemblance is evident: the facial expression, the brown uniform jacket with the four stars on the shoulder, the innumerable decorations, the letters "US" embroidered on the reverse, and the peaked cap with the golden winged eagle badge are a close copy of the historical character. Moreover, the first image of the meeting between the general and Yussuf shows a map of North Africa with flags that indicate the positions of the Nazi army and the Allied forces, thus providing the child reader with certain knowledge about the geographical places and the military situation in 1942.

Literary characters in military picturebooks

Nikolajeva and Scott (2001: 81–115) and Nikolajeva (2002: 125–127) proposed a taxonomy of literary characters in picturebooks by distinguishing human and nonhuman characters. Concerning the nonhuman characters, Nikolajeva (2002) suggested a further distinction between animals, supernatural creatures, objects, such as toys and machines, and abstract entities, such as colors and letters. This raises the question about the specific narrative and aesthetic potential of these nonhuman characters. Nikolajeva claimed that "children's novels and especially picturebooks abound in clothed and humanized animals, living toys, supernatural creatures (witches, ghosts), as well as personified objects and machines, such as cars or trains" (125). It can be assumed that these narrative characters are related to the human reader in some way, for instance, reflecting the reader's social, emotional, and ecological situation (Jannidis 2009). However, one might also suspect that

these different characters have their own and very specific narrative and aesthetic capabilities. Nonhuman characters presuppose some concepts of the "normal" world in order to recognize in which way their world is different from the real world children usually experience, thus introducing the concept of fictional space. In this respect, it is noticeable that picturebooks apparently display more nonhuman characters than children's novels. One explanation has been given by Nikolajeva who maintains that "animals, toys, baby witches, and animated objects are always disguises for a child" (125). However, we argue that the characters in the picturebooks under consideration are not "disguises for the child" but cute characters that share traits of cuteness with young children.

Cuteness, as standardly defined, relates to the baby schema, that is, a well-defined proportion of human and animal faces and bodies that evoke certain emotions in adults, which propel them to protect human and animal babies and to take care of them. Consequently, the baby schema plays a significant role in evolution, as Konrad Lorenz famously speculated. Moreover, cuteness is associated with innocence. As a minor aesthetic concept, it is fundamentally associated with smallness, softness, and the infantile (Ngai 2012). This is the reason why cuteness is associated with children and products designed for children, including children's books (Cross 2004).

The notion of aggression relates to a violation of norms of politeness as well as aggressive behavior and violence. Aggression runs against the expectation that people should act in a polite and peaceful manner. Intuitively, we do not want cute characters to get involved in the atrocities of war. Cute characters that are involved in rude and aggressive situations certainly engage the reader in the story, all the more so when the child reader has first-hand experience of war.

In the following, we discuss the cuteness and aggressive behavior of the literary characters in the three picturebooks and the cute and aggressive scenes these characters are involved in.

Cuteness and aggressive behavior of literary characters

The main characters in the three picturebooks are either animals or vehicles. While *Kwik and Kwak* plays in a setting populated by ducks only, *Jenny the Jeep* presents jeeps as well as humans, mostly soldiers. *Yussuf the Ostrich* displays a broader range of characters, consisting of diverse animals, such as ostriches, donkeys, monkeys, cats, and dogs, and humans. It is not surprising that these people are mostly soldiers, but *Yussuf the Ostrich* also shows the inhabitants of Arab settlements in the Sahara desert. The only civilian in *Jenny the Jeep* is the Italian gentleman who buys Jenny. While the two picturebooks *Kwik and Kwak* and *Yussuf the Ostrich* show illustrations of the enemy soldiers whose aggression is distinctly marked by their brutal behavior, *Jenny the Jeep* does not have any illustrations of the enemies against whom the US soldiers have to fight in Europe. Here aggression determines the relationship between Jenny and the other jeeps.

The main characters, that is the duck couple Kwik and Kwak, the ostrich Yussuf, and the jeep Jenny, clearly display typical traits of cuteness. The illustrations rely on the baby

schema by stressing childlike bodily proportions, round faces, and huge eyes. This is particularly evident in the illustrations that depict Yussuf as a baby ostrich with a plump body and head, inflected legs, and thick feathers. As for Yussuf and the ducks in *Kwik and Kwak*, the huge eyes and the enlarged beaks that function as mouths emphasize the infantile nature of the characters. The headdresses of the ducks and the ostrich also underline the effects of cuteness. Yussuf wears either a fez or a military helmet, while Kwik always wears a white bonnet and Kwak a black hat. In contrast to Yussuf, the two ducks also wear clothes. In the case of *Jenny the Jeep*, the illustrator evokes the baby schema by softening the straight lines of the vehicle. The bulges of the hood, the slanted cartwheels, and the oblique car roof stress the childlike character of Jenny. The jeep is mostly shown in front view, with the headlights functioning as eyes, the radiator grill as a nose, and the bumper with the crank handle as a mouth.

Although these anthropomorphized characters are evidently depicted as cute, this cuteness does not imply that they should be interpreted as a "disguise for a child." Kwik and Kwak are adult ducks who later have six ducklings; Yussuf is an overgrown ostrich – even though the picturebook story briefly depicts his development from baby ostrich to an adult ostrich – and Jenny is the same size as the other jeeps in her military unit.

Besides these main characters, other characters also share the typical features of cuteness. The other ducks in *Kwik and Kwak* are depicted in the same manner as the main characters. Moreover, they wear headdresses and clothes that display their social status and professions, that is, the illustrations show ducks as sailors, soldiers, fishermen, market sellers, reporters, photographers, and so on.

An interesting case in point is the two dachshunds that belong to the Nazi general in *Yussuf the Ostrich*. Although they wear red bandages with a swastika fastened to their bodies and necklaces with another swastika around their necks, they are kindhearted and help Yussuf escape his imprisonment. While the dachshund's owner, the dogs' breed, and the swastika symbols tempt the reader to mistrust the dogs at first glance, the depiction of their body and facial expressions use typical features of cuteness.

In contrast to these cute characters some characters are depicted as rude or nasty, which happens on the textual and/or visual level. This is above all evident in *Yussuf the Ostrich* where the Nazi general, the Nazi soldiers, and some Arabs, like the boy Murzuk who mistreats the little ostrich and those people who call him names and suspect him of being a Nazi spy, are caricatures, which stresses their brutal and mindless behavior. Their postures, facial expressions, and bodily proportions also appear threatening, thus supporting the information given in the text.

The distinction between cute and aggressive characters is not as evident in *Kwik and Kwak*. On the pictorial level, all the ducks are depicted as cute, even the enemy ducks that invade the peaceful country. Their unique feature is their green uniform and helmet, and unfriendly facial expression, marked by black lines beside the beak that look like the corners of a turned down mouth. Therefore, the aggressive attitude of the enemy

ducks is less evident in their threatening appearance than in their damage-causing and destructive conduct.

As for *Jenny the Jeep*, the question arises whether the other jeeps can also be regarded as cute characters, since they show the same properties as Jenny. Nevertheless, there are some significant differences between Jenny and the other jeeps. From the beginning, Jenny is distinguished by her pink color, while the other jeeps are painted in a brownish green, which contribute to their gloomy and unfriendly character. The final image of Jenny additionally highlights her cuteness: a blue ribbon is attached onto her handle and a new rooftop is installed, whose form is reminiscent of a circus tent and – as the text states – "looked just like a crown" (n.pag.). Moreover, the other jeeps are nasty towards Jenny, making cross remarks about her unusual color, aggressively pushing her to the back, and not letting her into the hull of a ship they must enter. One doublespread particularly highlights the nastiness of the jeeps towards Jenny. Amidst an assembly of brown and grey jeeps, Jenny is standing in a fenced compound. All the jeeps have turned their eyes on Jenny, staring at her, while Jenny is feeling embarrassed, indicated by her downcast eyes. Although the jeeps share the same goal, envy and narrow-mindedness turn Jenny into an outsider.

The other characters in *Yussuf the Ostrich*, that is, the American soldiers, the US general, and some Arab inhabitants, cannot be described as cute or aggressive. On the contrary, they are portrayed as friendly and pleasant people who fight against injustice and the Nazis and defend the ostrich, which is falsely suspected of being a Nazi spy. The same applies to the American soldiers and lieutenant as well as the Italian gentleman in *Jenny the Jeep*.

Depiction of cuteness and aggression in literary scenes

Although the main characters are not depicted as children in disguise, their cuteness stimulates the child reader to sympathize with them, while simultaneously dissociating from the aggressive characters. Feeling empathy with cute literary characters increases when these are placed in different situations (see also Vermeule 2010). In this respect, we distinguish between cute and aggressive scenes. Cute scenes display (cute) characters in situations, which are characterized by cosiness, joy, and a peaceful and childlike atmosphere, often complemented by a feeling of nostalgia. Aggressive scenes, by contrast, show literary characters, whether cute or aggressive, in situations in which brutality, nastiness, and a feeling of unease is to the fore. Military picturebooks that focus on the depiction of war necessarily contain aggressive scenes, which could be complemented by cute scenes. One might ask, then, how the embedding of cute characters in cute and aggressive scenes affects the reader's empathy.

Kwik and Kwak abounds in cute scenes, which are interspersed with scenes dominated by aggression. The setting is in a small village on the coast of Holland, where Kwik and Kwak are living together. Kwik is knitting stockings, while Kwak is a fisherman and sells fish. The illustrations show nostalgic Holland with tulip fields, windmills, meadows with cows, cheese markets, ice-skating on the frozen sea, cities with canals and bridges, and

people buying herrings at street stands, dancing to the music of a barrel organ, and enjoying a country fair. This picture sequence introduces the reader to the jolly and peaceful atmosphere in Holland, which comes to an abrupt end when the green ducks suddenly descend using parachutes. Although this scene marks the beginning of the invasion, the accompanying text as well as the illustration are ambivalent and demonstrate the naivety of Kwik and Kwak. They ponder whether the green ducks belong to a circus or a fair.

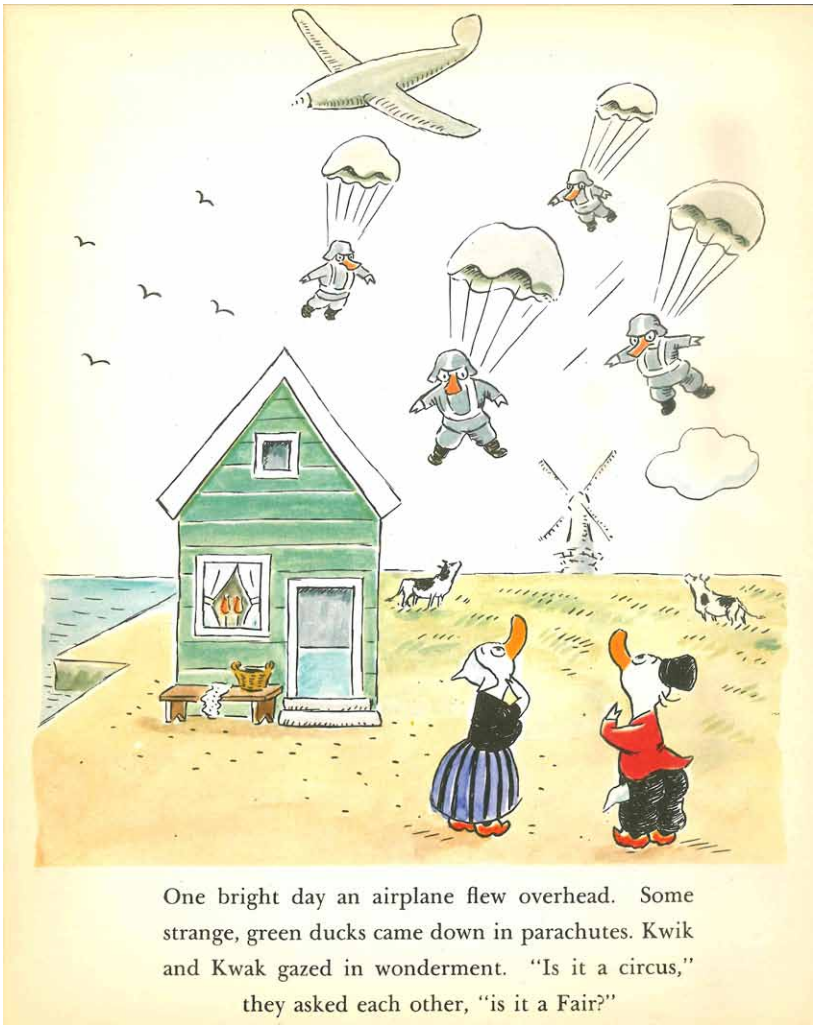

Fig. 1. The green ducks invade the country. Illustration in Kwik and Kwak by Oscar Fabrès. New York: Crown Publishers, 1942

The threat does not become evident until the next illustrations that clearly depict the destructive power of the green ducks, which burn houses, destroy the fields, and carry off the properties of the Dutch ducks. As a result Kwik and Kwak leave the country in their little fishing boat. The subsequent pictures focus on Kwik and Kwak's fate on the open sea, where their boat sinks during a storm. The shipwrecked ducks are on the verge of drowning when they are rescued by a big American ship. This picture sequence which is dominated by aggressive scenes smoothly turns into a cute scene on the ship where Kwik and Kwak are sitting on a bench, wrapped in blankets, while the sailors bring them hot soup and some brandy and hang up their soaked clothes on a clothesline. The peaceful atmosphere onboard is interrupted when Kwik and Kwak notice the appearance of a submarine that belongs to the green ducks. The alert Kwak fires the ship's big gun, which strikes the submarine. This episode presents the peak of the story and visualizes that fighting back against the enemy is morally correct, especially when the latter is an aggressor who threatens other people's lives.

The pictures that follow consist of a series of cute scenes, beginning with a dinner by the ship's crew in order to honor Kwak's courage and presence of mind. Sitting around a big table on which a giant cake with Kwak's initial "K" is placed, the captain, the crew members as well as Kwik and Kwak wave little flags (of Holland and the USA), wear funny hats, and raise their glasses. Two zealous waiters who bring food and drinks complement the symmetrical arrangement of the figures and items. They are the only black ducks in this book, although the setting of the subsequent illustrations is the USA. Celebrating an important event, such as a victory, a successful battle, a holiday, and a birthday, even under restricted circumstances, is an established topic in stories about the war.[3]

When Kwik and Kwak arrive in the harbor, they are welcomed by reporters and then cheered in a parade on Fifth Avenue. This welcome ceremony culminates in a celebration in Central Park where a general attaches a gold medal to Kwak's jacket in order to reward his courage. The final image is linked to the first one as it shows the happy family sitting in front of their new house beside the sea, while one of their little children pulls up the US flag on a flagpole. This picture mirrors the peaceful situation of the first illustration and demonstrates that the fugitives Kwik and Kwak could successfully settle in the USA. Although the text states "They are very happy and love America where the green ducks will not come," a slight objection follows, "But – they think with joy that someday they will return to another little green house, with tulips, in Volendam" (n.pag.).

Although *Yussuf the Ostrich* also intermingles cute and aggressive scenes, cuteness is not predominant in this picturebook. Yussuf as the cute character is only embedded in three cute scenes, which belong to his childhood, that is, Yussuf as an ostrich chicken inside his egg shell, Yussuf as a baby ostrich guided by his mother, and Yussuf as an eager student who learns to read and write, mocked by the other animals and some Arab

[3] It is no wonder, then, that such scenes also crop up in other children's books, as for instance, the birthday party in Michael Foreman's *War Boy* (1989), whose design is comparable to the illustration in Fabrès' picturebook.

boys. The aggressive scenes Yussuf is involved in as a child present the nasty behavior of the Arab boy Murzuk and his gang towards Yussuf. They capture him and chain him like a guard dog to a hut. This episode is a forecast of the war where Yussuf is captured and imprisoned by German soldiers. *Yussuf the Ostrich* definitely displays more aggressive scenes in comparison to *Kwik and Kwak* and *Jenny the Jeep*. Moreover, it depicts weapons, tanks, mine fields, and military camps in quite a realistic manner, and visualizes burning houses, gunfights, and bombings on the battlefield. Yussuf is always amongst these perilous situations, running errands for the US army. Meanwhile, Yussuf's imprisonment by two German soldiers who put him in chains convincingly illustrates the ostrich's helplessness, thus arousing the child reader's empathy.

Fig. 2. Yussuf captured by two German soldiers. Illustration in Yussuf the Ostrich by Emery Kelen. New York: Hyperion Press, 1943

After being sentenced to death, Yussuf is saved due to the intercession of the two dachshunds, which feel sympathy for the ostrich and persuade the general to take Yussuf as his personal aide. Despite his minor position, Yussuf keeps his ears wide open as is evident in an illustration that shows the general and four high-ranking soldiers sitting around a table and discussing a military strategy in order to overpower the Allied forces. Yussuf can be seen polishing boots in the background. When Yussuf finally outsmarts the hostile sentry and reaches the American lines, he is captured once again and suspected of being a traitor and deserter. A trial conducted by the general reveals that Yussuf has saved the US army by disclosing the secret plans of the German army. The last doublespread shows the happy ending: the left-hand image shows the general who shakes Yussuf's wings, while the Arab people cheer loudly. The right-hand image illustrates the reunion of Yussuf and his mother, observed by the general, some soldiers, and Arab people who wave small US flags. The final illustration of Yussuf and his mother leaving the Arab village in order to return to the desert mirrors the beginning of the picturebook when Yussuf is living happily together with his mother in the desert before he goes to the Arab settlement. Although it is evident that the war is still going on, Yussuf has played a major part in it but is now released from his job as a messenger.

Jenny the Jeep does not depict any aggressive scenes as the war is only mentioned in the text but not visualized in the illustrations. Apart from that, the other jeeps' nasty behavior towards Jenny is expressed multiple times in the text. The major efforts of warfare are only indirectly referred to, for instance, the long voyage aboard a ship from the USA to Italy and the tiring route on muddy roads. It is evident that the jeeps participate in the war but what they experience and in which way they are employed on the battlefield is never explained. The story focuses on the relationship between Jenny and her companions, whereby the situation of war proves Jenny's physical strength and reliability. Two events in this picturebook stand out as they depict cute scenes. The first one applies to the row of jeeps that plunge into a pond on their trip to the battlefield. While they cross the pond, a flock of ducks circle around them. The second image presents Jenny as an ice cart, polished and decorated with ribbons and a new canopy.

These three military picturebooks deal with the topic of war (in this case the Second World War) by addressing a younger audience. This might be one reason why the authors and illustrators decided to combine the violence of war with cute characters with whom the child reader might empathize. By the connection of cute and aggressive characters as well as cute and aggressive scenes these picturebooks become quite complex as they exemplify the clash between peaceful situations that evoke a feeling of nostalgia and situations that are distinguished by aggressiveness and violence. Albeit the picturebook stories present a happy ending for the main characters, which are even awarded with medals and decorations for their courage and commitment, the war still goes on (despite the anticipation of the end of the war in *Jenny the Jeep*).

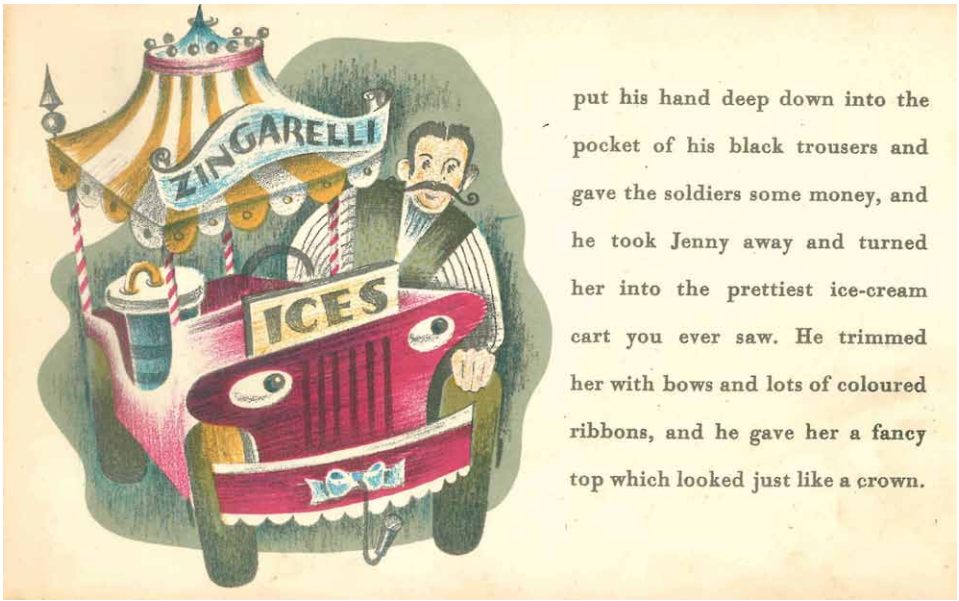

Fig. 3. Jenny the Jeep as an ice cart. Illustration from Jenny the Jeep by Jack Townend. London: Faber and Faber, 1944

What these picturebooks also have in common is that they connect historical facts – the invasion of the Allied Forces in Italy and North Africa as well as the occupation of The Netherlands by the Nazis – with propagandistic effects. Since the picturebook stories and the accompanying illustrations highlight the ideals of freedom, peace, and justice, the fight against the intruders is morally justified. Hence, these picturebooks exemplify what has been termed "supporting propaganda" at the beginning of this text. They focus on the idealistic aims that propel the US army and the American people to fight against the Nazis by stressing three different issues: *Kwik and Kwak* emphasizes that the USA is a safe country for all refugees from Europe, *Yussuf the Ostrich* underlines the moral duties of the Allied Forces to combat the Nazi army, and *Jenny the Jeep* requires respect for everybody, including outsiders, and expresses, by the anticipation of the end of the war, the hope for peace.

Conclusion

Our general assumption is that military picturebooks are a means of (adult) propaganda. Propaganda, as we conceive it, are actions aimed at influencing the attitudes of their addressees. The general question, then, is how picturebooks manage, by way of picture-text combinations, to shape these attitudes. Thus, while propaganda certainly is a socio-cultural mechanism, it is also a cognitive mechanism that influences the arrangement and rearrangement of cognitive attitudes.

Needless to say, a strict generalization about these processes on the basis of three military picturebooks is not possible, all the more so as we do not know anything about the reactions of children to their contents. Yet the authors of these picturebooks had certain narrative strategies at hand that can be systematically reconstructed. While we have focused on the dialectics of cuteness and aggression in three military picturebooks by analyzing the depiction of characters that are confronted with aggressive and even life threatening situations caused by war, we could mention at least three other factors that play an important role in the success of propaganda: the age of the child audience which is closely related to the concepts of simplicity and complexity, humor, and knowledge transmission.

It is obvious that *Jenny the Jeep* addresses young children aged 4–6 years, whereas *Kwik and Kwak* is targeted at children who are slightly older. The most complex story told is in *Yussuf the Ostrich* which aims at children aged 8 onwards.[4] Whereas *Jenny the Jeep* strikes us as a simple picturebook because of its plain pictures (wood engravings with a repetitive structure) and short text, the picture-text relation in *Kwik and Kwak* is more elaborate with a longer text and images that show more details. In contrast, the illustrations in *Yussuf the Ostrich* are quite complex, since they are more differentiated and even depict various events that happen at the same time in the same image. Moreover, this picturebook has an extended text, which demands a higher degree of linguistic and encyclopaedic knowledge. Simplicity and complexity are important notions in children's literature research because they are related to the accommodation of children's literature to the children's ecology. When reflecting on the possible audiences, therefore, we presuppose that complex picturebooks are directed to older children and simple picturebooks to younger children. This follows from general knowledge about the linguistic and cognitive development of children and has far-reaching consequences for the comprehension of the effects of propaganda in children's books.

An important and widely underrated property of picturebooks (and children's literature) is humor. Humor, in general, has to do with the incongruence of what is expected and what really is the case. Thus, it is humorous that a military jeep is painted pink and it is humorous that German swastika-marked dachshunds are the kind-hearted comrades of Yussuf. *Kwik and Kwak* abounds in humorous episodes, which build up a contrast to the aggressive war scenes. Since humor is a cognitive ability that develops over the years, it is a worthwhile enterprise asking how humor in military picturebooks is accommodated to children's abilities and supports propagandistic effects.[5]

While the three picturebooks we have studied here are narrative, they are nevertheless engaged in knowledge transmission (Siegal 2008). Studies have shown that children tend to trust in what they are told (Harris 2012). This is a mechanism propaganda exploits. The military picturebooks presented in this chapter give children different types of information about the war, for instance, that war forces people to leave their country, to engage in fight-

[4] Another important aspect is also the sex of the child audience. It is not quite clear whether these picturebooks target different sexes; maybe the character Jenny is aimed at girls.

[5] It should be noted here that military picturebooks must not include humorous characters and scenes per se.

ing the enemy, and so on. In *Yussuf the Ostrich*, the reader can even learn something about certain historical events and military leaders. Therefore, the question arises as to how military picturebooks provide information about war, thus shaping children's cognitive frames and scripts of the war. Finally, we would like to point out the need for fostering the 'epistemic vigilance' of children (Vanderbilt et al. 2011). Propaganda may be supportive in that it conveys the ideals of liberal democracy. Yet propaganda can also be used to suppress these ideals. Hence it remains an important task to teach children to be epistemically vigilant with respect to the knowledge adults try to transmit to them.

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ABC for Father and Mother and Me. Representations of children as consumers in the picturebook of the interwar period

Summary

This article examines how the child consumer is represented in a selection of branded picturebooks at the beginning of the 20th century. By analyzing children's books published by a commercial chain of stores, the Cooperation Union, the article discusses how depictions of children as consumers are connected to the development of the emerging mass market and consumer society. The new ideas and marketing strategies expressed in these books also coincide with fundamental social changes in society, resulting from modernity and new technologies. Although the Cooperation books were designed for children and used familiar narrative techniques and motifs within children's literature, I will argue that the books had a twofold audience. They were not only aimed at children but also at their parents. Representations of children as consumers in the studied material suggest that consumption is strongly connected to ideas of modernity and to representations of the modern child, but also that consumption is described as an inseparable part of the modern, urban experience.

Key words: modernity, consumerism, child consumer, advertising, picturebooks, children's literature

Słowa klucze: współczesność, konsumpcjonizm, dziecko jako konsument, reklama, książki obrazkowe, literatura dla dzieci

During the 1920s a range of Swedish companies started to publish picturebooks for children with embedded marketing, incorporating their products in the narratives. Product placement was implemented by including different commodities in the illustrations and by explicitly naming the brands in the text. There are several examples of companies publishing branded books or pamphlets with stories for children, for instance, the Swedish candy manufacturer Mazetti, the soap company Barnängen or the pharmaceutical company Ferrosan, which used Astrid Lindgren's popular character Pippi Longstocking to promote their fish oil supplements.[1] In this article, I will discuss publications by a specific chain of stores, the Cooperation Union, which was founded in Sweden in 1899 and was at the

[1] See for example: Bo Beskow, *Sagan om den snälla Björnen*, Barnängen (1921), *Stinas märkliga födelsedagsresa*, Mazetti (1928), Astrid Lindgren, Ingrid Vang Nyman, *Pippi Långstrump delar ut solkulor*, Ferrosan (undated, most likely 1949).

forefront of the Swedish retail trade by the middle of the 20th century. In the beginning of the 1920s they started to publish branded children's books featuring two children, Per and Lisa. The books were free of charge, printed in very large editions – up to 250 000 copies – and were usually written and illustrated by established authors and illustrators.

For several decades the Cooperation Union was a powerful and influential actor in the Swedish political landscape. It had a vast influence on marketing, architecture, design and consumer policies and became an important participant in the development of the Swedish welfare state (Mattsson 2012:65). Because of this children's books produced by the network offer interesting research material when discussing early representations of children as consumers. I have identified approximately 30 titles published by the Cooperation ranging from the early 1920s to the late 1950s. On the basis of a number of selected early examples from the interwar period, I am going to discuss the recurring motifs, narrative techniques and visual aesthetics used in the series of books published by the Cooperation. I have chosen a selection that includes both realistic stories, where children act as independent consumers in modern society, and fantastic ones, where the commodities or their trademarks are anthropomorphized and interact with the child characters.

The primary aim of the article is to examine how the child consumer is described and how the depictions are connected to the rapid development of the mass market and consumer society during the interwar period. In order to do this, I am going to consider the complex interaction between the commercial, the ideological and the artistic approaches expressed in the material. A secondary purpose is to discuss the marketing strategies used in the material and to raise questions concerning the implied audience of the publications. Although the series of books can be seen as an example of a larger trend in advertising, where children are now considered and approached as consumers, the books also coincide with extensive social and economical changes, resulting from modernity and new technologies. The books thus offer intriguing, early representations of children as both consumers and as members of a welfare society.

Children's literature as an advertising platform

How, then, is the developing idea of the child consumer, which emerges strongly during the 1920s, expressed in children's books by the Cooperation Union? The stories combine traditional rhymes, fairy tales and adventure stories with advertising slogans and embedded marketing. Most of the early titles in the series were written and illustrated by the painter and illustrator Marie Walle, but later, several other authors and artists contributed to the books as well. "Per and Lisa"-books were free of charge and printed in large editions, and were clearly aimed at a very wide audience and because of this the illustration style in the books is quite conventional. The two main characters, Per and Lisa, appear in the books over a time span of about forty years, and can be seen as representations of the collective child, but also, of the future welfare state consumer. Per and Lisa are sent grocery shopping, they visit toy stores, write wish lists and look at goods displayed in shop

windows. New environments, technologies and inventions are thus presented, like department stores with their elevators and escalators or the lively urban city with its traffic, store signs and window displays.

While the welfare project and the prevailing ideas about children and childhood are fundamental for the development of children's literature, the aim of the following analysis is to study representations of children in predominantly commercial material in order to discuss how ideas of modernity, welfare ideology and early consumerism are connected. The introduction of the first "Per and Lisa"-books coincides with new marketing strategies and platforms aimed at children. Previous researchers like Viviane Zelizer (1985) or Daniel Thomas Cook (2004) have shown that a general commercialization of children's daily life took place during the first four decades of the 20th century. In Sweden, by the 1920s and 1930s, advertisements frequently included representations of children as competent consumers who make decisions about their purchases and act in the commodity society (Berggren Torell & Brembeck 2001: 76–77). The appearance of commercialism took place during an era in which extensive welfare state programmes and the so-called "people's home idea" were being designed and implemented on a wide scale. The family as a unit and especially the child became central to the project and were considered the most important elements in the modern welfare state. Large resources were invested in raising the standards of housing, childcare and schools, children's culture, literature and music. This kind of public consumption can be seen as part of collective child consumption, since public spending on welfare reforms was intended to reach the general population (Sandin 2012: 68). The state also supported consumption to meet children's needs, for example through a special child-allowance (Sandin 2012:65).

The children in the "Per and Lisa"-series can be characterized as competent and independent and they are depicted as part of an urban environment. While the boys are portrayed as active and sturdy, the girls are often represented as caring and cautious. Traditional gender roles are evident in *Per and Lisa playing father and mother* (*Per och Lisa leka far och mor*, 1928), a story about two children who are playing house. While Lisa cooks, cleans and takes care of her dolls, Per is depicted carrying heavy products, lighting the fire and poisoning insects with pesticide. All items used in the story, whether scouring powder or insect repellent, are mentioned with their brand names. The conventional gender roles in the stories reflect their time, but they also indicate the broad market audience of the books, including all classes.

The book series also raise a number of questions. First of all, it is noteworthy that most of the commodities presented in the books are not aimed at children. The choice of merchandise – convenience goods like food items, cleaning products, shoes and even insurance – raises questions about the actual audience. The selection of items included in the "Per and Lisa"-books reflect the brands produced and sold by the Cooperation Union franchise, focusing mostly on convenience goods, and appear repeatedly in the books. The repetition of certain brands throughout the series of books thus leads to a sense of recognition and familiarity for the reader/consumer, an effective method from a marketing

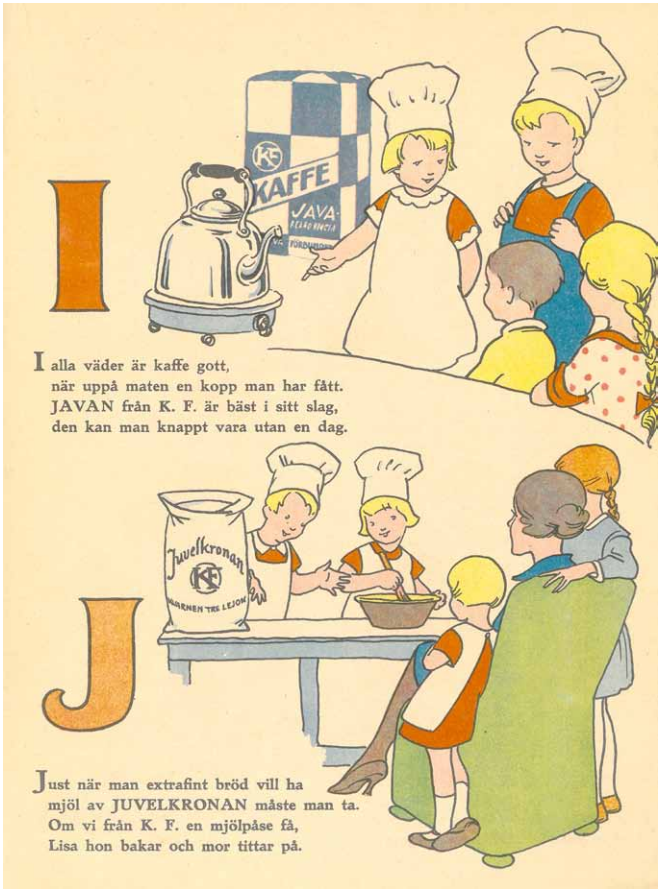

Fig. 1. © Marie Walle, *Per and Lisa teach financial housekeeping* (1929)

perspective. It is plausible that the Cooperation books were developed as a form of long term marketing and were used to familiarize children with Cooperation products in order to establish a credibility and brand familiarity through repetition.

The way the children are depicted in the books suggests that children as consumers are an important component of the emerging commercial, consumer culture. The general idea of educating individuals to become "modern" citizens, better functioning, healthier and happier members of society, was wide-ranging in the interwar and postwar era. These kinds of ambitions, meanwhile, were expressed in various program declarations, studies, evening classes and guidebooks – but also in different kinds of commercial materials (Druker 2014). However, while the "Per and Lisa"-books were clearly created for children, they were most likely not their only target audience. As the title implies in *Per and Lisa teach financial housekeeping* (*Per och Lisa undervisa i ekonomisk hushållning*, 1929), the main characters in the story demonstrate new products to other children – but

also to their parents. The children are depicted as well-informed and pioneering individuals who repeatedly instruct others about state-of-the-art products by pointing out convincing indicators like novelty, quality, health and nutrition.

Some of the texts also explicitly suggest that children should tell their parents about the products, as Marie Walle's *ABC for Father and Mother and Me* (*ABC för far och mor och mig*, 1923), an alphabet book that presents different products and trademarks in an alphabetical order. Therefore, I argue that that the Cooperation books had a twofold audience and that the books were not just aimed at children but also at their parents. By the 1920s and 1930s, advertisers had begun to see women as the main purchasing agents for their families, responsible for administrating the household economy and acquiring most of the household's food, clothing and appliances. In fact, several scholars have emphasized that women and mothers serve as keys to consumer life, both presently and historically (Cook 1995, Scanlon 2000). Considering the large amount of cooking and cleaning products included in the "Per and Lisa"-books, the secondary target group is most likely mothers, the books functioning as a way to persuade them to select certain products for the well-being and happiness of their families.

Consumption and urbanity

A trip to the grocery store provides the basis for the story in *Traffic book for Per and Lisa and all Swedish children* (*Trafikbok för Per och Lisa och alla svenska barn*, 1926) by Marie Walle. The story is particularly interesting in its depiction of the children and their modern surroundings and could be described as a primer on fast-paced urban living. The main characters are sent grocery shopping on their own and through this undertaking, the children are taught about the rules and dangers of traffic while different commodities are included in the story. The book presents a fascinating description of rapidly changing urban living in the mid 1920s, illustrating automobiles and motorcycles as well as horse-drawn vehicles on the streets. The children are assigned the position of self-sufficient consumers in this story, but the consumer role is also connected to competent behaviour in traffic and in the urban environment in general.

The general appeal of new technologies, with speed and movement, is expressed throughout the story, but also window displays and their commodities are described carefully. It is noteworthy that the depiction of the city in the illustrations is quite fragmentary, lacking any panoramic images, instead focusing on store signs, shop windows and the flow of the crowded, traffic-filled streets. Technological development plays a central role in many of the literary depictions of modern society during this time, a development that also raised concerns. At the beginning of the 20th century, several critics and philosophers described a sense of increased estrangement and instrumentalization in relation to the human environment, the urban environment often being described as machine-like and the individual as detached from their surroundings (Simmel 1903, Benjamin 1927–1940). An appeal to – but also apprehension – is often expressed in relation to the store-bought commodity and the machine.

Fig. 2. ©Marie Walle, *Traffic book for Per and Lisa and all Swedish children* (1926)

In the commercial material for children discussed in this article, this sense of detachment or distance is very seldom expressed. Instead, the books communicate a general fascination with new technologies and machines, modern transportation, and even the violent or dramatic sides of technology. For instance, in *Traffic book for Per and Lisa* the reader gets to witness several car accidents or dangerous traffic violations, scenes that are used on two occasions to promote the insurance company *Cooperation* (*Samarbete*).

These hazardous incidents are, however, described in an ambiguous way. While the text is continuously confident and optimistic, the illustrations express an awareness of the dangers of traffic and the urban environment. In the images, the children are depicted in dangerous situations several times and illustrated as particularly small against the lively city streets with grown-up pedestrians, lorries and motorcycles. A scene that expresses this twofold communication is when the reader is shown Per and Lisa sharing a box of "Läkerol Bon-Bons" on the sidewalk. While the text is focused on describing the product in question, a dramatic car accident is simultaneously taking place in the background. Although the text comments on the accident by reminding the reader of the importance of traffic insurance, the main characters take no notice of the incident. The dangers of traffic, meanwhile, are presented on the back cover of the book. It shows a chaotic image of a busy intersection in a city, with automobiles, bikers and horse-drawn carriages, carefully illustrating several examples of violations of traffic rules. The mistakes – 33 in total – are carefully indicated with red lines, arrows and numbers and are explained in a list beneath the image.

The final image in the story, where Per and Lisa return home and Per delivers the *Cooperative Consumer Magazine* to his father, is significant as well. The father is sitting by a large window that is facing a lively street with pedestrians, automobiles and horse-drawn vehicles. The boundaries between the interior and the exterior space, the private and the public experience – earlier so clearly separated when it comes to children (but also women) – seems to be dissolving in this illustration and the flow of the traffic is depicted as a natural part of the family's living environment. It is an image that shows how technology is changing domesticity and how the borders of domestic space are gradually being redrawn. Thus, *Traffic book for Per and Lisa*, designed to entertain but also to market and educate, familiarizes the young reader with new urban, commercial spaces and with human achievement in terms of new technologies and machines.

Technical innovations – conveying the modern experience

The fascination for new technology is also apparent in *Per and Lisa's journey with Lampe the radio vacuum tube* (*Per och Lisas luftfärd med Lampe Rör*, 1933) by Nils Jerring and Aina Stenberg-MasOlle. In the cover image we see the children travelling with a spaceship (the reader later finds out that it is constructed of radio tubes). Beneath them, we see the cloud covered earth and the factory where radio tubes are manufactured. The story is initiated by the two children listening to the radio. However, they are a little too careless with the knobs when tuning the radio, which causes a very irritated radio tube to climb out of the radio. He screams at the children until he almost loses his voice. The children then offer him throat pastilles, he calms down and he begins a journey with the children. The plot is simple and straightforward with short, rhyming advertising jingles included in the text.

In addition to the pure advertising slogans incorporated in the text, the author Nils Jerring, a well-known film director and actor, uses expressions and stylistic devices that relate to the tube radio's technical vocabulary. Words like vacuum tubes, regenerative circuits and feedback amplifiers are used in the text. But Jerring also uses genre expressions from contemporary sports journalism, which highlights the fascination with rapid transportation and technical innovations in the story (Hallberg 1996: 50).

Even in Ann Margret Dahlquist's *Olle's journey to Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway* (*Olles resa till Danmark, Finland, Island, Norge*, 1937) the radio becomes central to the story. This episodic story tells of Olle, who is travelling around the Nordic countries to see his "Nordic friends and relatives". The journey itself is an interesting expression of the precarious political situation just two years before the outbreak of the Second World War. Olle's expedition is however organized around a variety of commodities. In scene after scene the main character picks out carefully named and illustrated products like coffee, light bulbs, bicycles and canoes from his impressively well-equipped backpack.

Fig. 3. © Ann Margret Dahlquist, *Olle's journey to Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway* (1937)

Here, photographic reproductions of the products are included in the otherwise traditional illustrations, creating collages that seem to vacillate between popular culture, product catalogues and documentary ambitions. Using photographs of the products is, of course, a way to ensure that the products and brands are easily recognizable. A similar kind of concept can be found in department store catalogues and mail order catalogues, which quite early on included photographic illustrations of their products. The choice of the photographic image or use of photographic collage also signals novelty and modernity. And although the examples of collage in these branded books seem far from modernist collages, the photographic image is used to express innovation and modernity, to convey "a modern experience" that is closely connected to the consumer experience and identity.

One of the commodities promoted in *Olle's journey* is a radio, the "EIAHobby II" in a wooden cabinet. After his return home, Olle's father buys a radio from the Cooperation by mail order, and Olle gets to listen to news and music from all his new Nordic friends.

During the 1930s the radio reached its peak in popularity with general audiences, including children, and became the central piece of furniture in many homes. In advertising the radio was often illustrated surrounded by the entire family. In the illustration in *Olle's journey*, it is however only Olle who is sitting by the radio. Above him, we see portraits of his new friends from different countries on a smaller scale. In a manner similar to that of the final scene in *Traffic book for Per and Lisa*, the image expresses changes resulting from new technology, a changed sense of space, domesticity and place. Through the radio, Olle can now listen to the latest news, radio plays and music, not only broadcast in his own country but from other countries as well. In the years prior to and after the Second World War, a desire for solidarity and world peace was articulated in different ways in children's literature, and ideas of internationalism and communication across borders are expressed even here.

Anthropomorphized commodities

As the examples above demonstrate, the question of medium but also materiality is fundamental when analyzing this specific type of children's book. Since media like the radio, different transportation and communication systems, and window displays are constantly present in the stories, one might also ask: in what way do other media function as aesthetic technologies in the stories?

While the main characters in most of these books, Per and Lisa, are depicted as uncomplicated and conventional throughout the entire series, it is their engagement with the commodities – and in many cases the commodities themselves – that appears essential to the genre. The reader is introduced to a range of anthropomorphic consumer articles like talking shoes, singing coffee pots and smiling shoe polish jars. The animated objects – a frequent motif in the material under consideration – bring the advertising concept beyond product placement. Instead the items are included as characters. Trademarks used for marketing different brands are included in the stories as well. A yellow bear, a trademark for Helios cleaning products, is included in several stories (usually cleaning something) and the "Pix-boy", a figure marketing Pix-pastilles, is likewise included as a character in some stories.[2]

The place of materiality and material culture within modernist aesthetics has been discussed extensively in previous research. The emphasis on the material world and the commodities as well as the anthropomorphic items in these branded books have several counterparts in children's literature, for example numerous living toys. But there is also an increased interest in machines, mechanical toys and animated objects in children's literature at the beginning of the 20th century. Nathalie op de Beeck has noted that "independent-minded machines became a trendy topic in children's literature in the late 1920s and 1930s" (op de Beeck 2004: 79). The idea of the sentient machine is popular in different media during this time and is also present through many animated or mechanical toys. Susan Stewart

[2] See, for example, Marie Walle's *Per och Lisa undervisa i ekonomisk hushållning* (1929), where both trademarks are included as characters.

Fig. 4. © Atelier E.O. *Per and Lisa's Christmas Citchen* (1935)

proposes that "once the toy becomes animated, it initiates another world, the world of the daydream. The beginning of narrative time here is not an extension of the time of everyday life; it is the beginning of an entirely new temporal world, a fantasy world parallel to (and hence never intersecting) the world of everyday reality" (Stewart 1993: 57).

The idea of the animated object and the daydream points to an interesting connection between children's literature and other media. Products like chocolate, baking powder or bon-bons, that are frequently included in the picturebooks by the Cooperation Union are also included in contemporary animated advertisements. These short black-and-white 35 mm advertising films were shown in movie theatres during the 1920s and 1930s and were aimed at both children and adults. Through its advertising agency Svea, the Cooperation Union developed marketing techniques that combined advertising, design, art, film and different informational campaigns (Mattsson 2012:70). The short film can thus be seen as a way to expand the concept of advertising repetition used in the Cooperation children's

books. Instead of simply repeatedly introducing the same commodities in the picturebooks, the same items and brands also appear in the film advertisements.

In a manner similar to that in the commercial picturebooks, objects in the short films obtain a voice and an independent agency. To an even greater extent, they demonstrate a fascination with and a celebration of the machine-like items and movements. In short advertising films like the silent films "Living chocolate pralines" by the candy manufacturer Cloetta (1925) or a film advertising scouring powder by Barnängen (1930), and films with optical sound and music like Öhman Bread Factory's "Crispbread parade" (1933) or Marabou's "Pastille dance" (1938), just to mention a few examples, the items are depicted as extremely lively.[3] They are communicating, singing, dancing and whirling, even falling in love. While most of the films depict animated, anthropomorphized commodities, the early silent film "Living chocolate pralines" from 1925 actually depicts a group of actors, dressed as chocolate pralines and shown climbing out of a huge candy box. Thus, the binary of the human and the machine as well humanization of commodities and machines are frequently explored even in the advertising films.

Interest in the modernist fetishization of things, already introduced in avant-garde cinema and photography, is apparent in both these short advertising films and the branded picturebooks. At the same time, the implied audience of these advertising films is not explicit, and the motifs, music and narrative techniques, as well as the rapid advertising slogans used in the arrangements, show influences from different visual media. Furthermore, in several of these films, the music, and the visual and graphic features, with rotating images, repetitive movements, quick cuts and dramatic graphic forms, resemble the experimental Dadaist and Surrealist cinema.

How, then, should we evaluate the aesthetic experiments taking place in these commercial picturebooks and advertising shorts? At the beginning of the previous century both the magazine and advertising industries were quick to borrow visual mannerisms from modernist art movements such as Art Nouveau or Art Deco, and later, from avant-garde movements such as Surrealism. This kind of superficial stylistic innovation or stylistic imitation within marketing and graphic design could be described as market-driven trends. However, the mixed-media, collage-like aesthetics used in both images and text in some of the commercial books both introduce new motifs and broaden the expression and the narrative techniques used in children's literature during this time. As Nathalie op de Beeck writes in her study of the American picturebook of the interwar period, "The picture book developed at a time when avant-garde art movements, sociopolitical climates, and changing technologies called for shifts in perceptions" (op de Beeck 2010: xvi). The Swedish material demonstrates, both motif-wise and through its aesthetics, a confidence in urban consumer society and its new technologies and media, and not least, a strong opti-

[3] The short advertising films "Cloetta utställning i Karlstad" (1925), "Barnängen Tomtens skurpulver – Kökskonseljen" (1930), "Öhmans Spisbrödfabrik – Knäckebrödsparaden" (1933) and "Marabou pastilldansen" (1938) are available at the Film Archive of the Swedish Film Institute and National Library of Sweden, http://www.filmarkivet.se/sv/ (1.02.2016).

mism concerning the child's engagement with this modern society. Aesthetically, both the Cooperation books and the advertising short films show an interesting and dynamic meeting between commercial entertainment and artistic innovation, and between oppositional and marginalized strands of art and culture.

The mass media images in the series of children's books by the Cooperation Union are an early example of media cross-over with their blend of motifs, aesthetics and artistic styles. The marketing strategies used are clearly aimed towards both children and their parents which calls attention to connections between children's literature and other visual media, and between art and commercialism. When analyzing the aesthetics used in these branded books, the question of media becomes crucial, and other media forms like the shop window or the department store catalogue, as well as the commercial advertising short in movie theatres, become relevant.

Conclusion

In this article I have studied a selection of branded picturebooks for children that demonstrate some of the comprehensive socioeconomic and commercial changes taking place in the interwar period in Sweden. The books by the Cooperation Union can be seen as part of emerging advertising techniques, promotional campaigns and commercial platforms at the beginning of the 20th century, targeting children and adolescents. The books aimed at creating brand awareness, brand preference and loyalty among future consumers – children. However, as the title of one of the books *ABC for Father and Mother and Me* suggests, another goal of the books was advertising and marketing aimed at the entire family, and specifically at the housewife or mother as a consumer. The title *ABC for Father and Mother and me* also emphasizes that children and their parents should be guided and educated in consumption. The Cooperation book series could thus be described as primers on proper consumer choices and behavior.

Apart from their commercial objectives these books also depict commercialization and modern infrastructures and can be seen as ways of addressing urban children's increasing alienation from the means of production that enable their modern lifestyles. The abundance of friendly, dancing and singing anthropomorphic commodities in the studied material points at a shift in children's lives at the beginning of the 20th century. The fundamental changes taking place in society means that machines and commercially manufactured goods became an increasingly important part of the urban child's everyday environment. Thus, personifying the machines and commodities that transform the urban landscape can be seen as a way of establishing positive relationships between children and the changes shaped by such commodities and devices. Furthermore, the representations of commodities and consumerism in the studied children's books are predominantly positive and optimistic. Taking part in consumer information and advertisements is seen as part of preparing children for their future life in a consumer society. This is significant, considering that children and consumption in the presentday, modern context are often associated with value con-

flicts and critical overtones (Cook 2004). In fact, today, Sweden applies strict controls concerning advertising targeted at children. For example, in 1991 the Government instituted a ban on television and radio advertising aimed at children under the age of 12 and public opinion in Sweden concerning advertising for children can be described as concerned.[4]

Representations of children as consumers in the interwar period suggest that consumption is strongly connected to progressive and optimistic ideas of modernity and to representations of the modern child. The child consumer emerges here as a competent and educated consumer who creates his/her identity through consumption and in interaction with different commodities. Consumption in general is described as an essential part of the modern, urban experience. When discussing the role of the child in inter-war society in Scandinavia, the idea that children's books, and specifically picturebooks, bear ideological traces of the culture that produces them is possibly self-evident. However, discussing the specific genre of branded picturebooks in the context of children's literature, the advertising industry and new media forms, can lead to a wider and more complex interpretation of the role of children in early 20th century consumer and welfare society.

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Picturebooks and politics: Israeli children's picturebooks during the shift from pre-state to statehood

Summary

Cultures vary according to the level of political potency they attribute to their young readers. Some ascribe to their children the ability to experience political solidarity and are eager to offer them literature accordingly. Other cultures try to exempt children from taking any public interest and shield them within the home and family, distant from what is regarded as the aggressive public arena. In rare cultural and social conditions shifts from one attitude to another regarding children's political potency can be quite extreme. This article points to a dramatic change in the nature of politicization of Hebrew children's picturebooks, which took place in the decade following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. This period saw a rapid transition from the former overt politicization of children's literature to a striking and active avoidance of political content. During the first decade of Israeli statehood children's picturebooks decisively disencumbered the children of their former active political tasks, thus implementing a new politics of a civic society in a sovereign state.

Key words: Israeli picturebooks, Hebrew nation-building, political acts in children's literature, Fania Bergstein

Słowa klucze: izraelskie książki obrazkowe, budowa hebrajskiej tożsamości narodowej, polityka w literaturze dla dzieci, Fania Bergstein

The premise of this paper is that all modern children's literature has a political dimension, in its role as a mediator between the ever-tumultuous public sphere in which it is created and what is regarded as the "sheltered" private sphere in which it is consumed. This mediation between the public and the private is never trivial, even when the literature targets the youngest members of a given population. Children's books, as elementary as they may be, are therefore essentially political in the Bourdieusian sense, as they inherently represent larger cultural battles for recognition and power in various cultural fields. This political inter-generational discourse is regarded legitimate and even desirable, as it is an essential step in the child's cultural upbringing, instilling a cultural habitus which will later serve as a cultural compass.[1]

[1] The terms 'cultural field' and 'habitus' refer to Pierre Bourdieu's work on sociological theory, specifically to his *Questions de sociologie* [*Sociology in Question*] which was published in France in 1984. For discussion of the terms see "Some Properties of Fields" (Bourdieu 1993: 72–7).For more on the innate

When they grow up these children are destined to prove the justness of their parents' path, or force the former generation to recognize its mistakes. Therefore, even before joining the formal national education system, toddlers are recruited into "proper politics" in order to secure for adult society a certain cultural grasp of the future. To this end, various political acts are incorporated in the literature offered to young children: A "proper" worldview is dictated to the child reader along with a certain understanding of "normality" and "oddness." Moreover, a national "us" and a national "otherness" are designated, different and sometimes competing understandings of space are mapped, a sense of a national past is dictated, and national traditions and symbols are instilled. Thus, the given power relations within society, the generational and gender roles embedded in it and its structural blind spots are all marked.

These political actions take on different shapes and content depending on the genre in which they are set. In the case of picturebooks written for pre-school children, for example, the political action is in fact extremely complex. It does not only reside in the sum of the visual and verbal messages, but also in the various interactions between the two that usually act in accumulative and linear cooperation. But not exclusively: The readability of the picturebooks, the fact that the young reader does not always need an adult as a mediator to "read" them, enables repetitive and nonlinear reading as well. This adds a special potential to the political acts that may be practiced in picturebooks.[2] The nature of the politics in children's literature and its impact on young readers do not merely depend on the literary genre. It is first and foremost a matter of ever changing social-cultural norms. These norms change throughout history within a certain culture (diachronic), and are radically diverse in different cultures during one point in time (synchronic).

Different cultures apply different political approaches to children's literature: Some employ an overtly political message, whereas others apply more subtle tactics. What may be considered "proper education" in some cultures may be considered "gross indoctrination" in others. Some cultures attribute the greatest significance to "involving children in burning national issues," whereas others consider it "psychologically irresponsible," or simply bad taste.

Cultures thus also vary according to the level of political potency that they attribute to their young readers. Some ascribe to their children the ability to experience political solidarity and are eager to offer them literature accordingly. Other cultures try to exempt children from taking any public interest and shield them within the realms of home and family, distant from what is regarded as the aggressive (political) public arena.

In rare cultural and social conditions, shifts from one attitude to another regarding children's political potency can be quite extreme. I would like to discuss in this article precisely such a case – the dramatic turning point in the nature of politicization of Hebrew

power relations in any kind of discourse between adults and children see "power" (Robinson and Kellett 2004).

[2] For more about the unique poetic potential of picturebooks and their various possible emotional impacts on young children see Kumerling-Meibauer 2014.

children's literature, which took place in the decade following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

The period following the birth of the State saw a rapid transition from overt politicization of children's literature to a striking and active avoidance of formal political content. It is my contention that although the young protagonists and young readers were therefore dismantled of their former active political tasks, they were in fact recruited, albeit passively, to promoting a new sense of a civil society in a sovereign state. This new national sentiment was based on a strict dichotomy between the public and the private. For the first time in the history of Hebrew children's literature, children were to represent the latter. I will explain this phenomenon as it is encountered in some canonical picturebooks for pre-school children, focusing on what I regard as the two opposing arenas that symbolically uncover this dichotomy between the private and the public: the "home" and the "outdoors".

Blunt Politicization in Pre-State Israel

The period of Israeli nation-building refers primarily to the first four decades of the twentieth century. From its onset, the Zionist nation-building project attached cardinal importance to children, especially as language pioneers: Children were the first to use Hebrew, the language of the Bible, as a vernacular, a secular language of everyday life. The Hebrew language they acquired in kindergartens and schools was the new 'mother tongue' they were to bring home and teach their immigrant parents (Shavit 2010).

Children were perceived as effective cultural agents in public as well as in the home. Because they had no previous cultural 'habits', children were expected to precede adults (who were mostly immigrants) in the adoption of new national practices and acquisition of new cultural assets. These fresh carriers of the new culture were to subsequently function as effective cultural agents. They were also expected to continue to do so in the future, as adult members of society. It therefore comes as no surprise that prominent Zionist nation-builders were deeply involved in creating a new national children's culture (Even-Zohar 1990). A crucial part of this effort involved the formation of a Hebrew children's literature

During the 1930s and 40s, child culture in Jewish Palestine became overtly political – in the modern sense, as political movements and parties fought over power and control, e.g. through various "legitimate" textual means, and as a part of the political field's laws of the game. These were the years in which the Zionist Labor Movement, *Mapai*, gained momentum as a leading political force and cultural elite. As part of the attempt to secure its cultural hegemony, *Mapai* set out to create "suitable" Zionist-socialist children's books (Darr 2013). The plots of these children's books usually took place outdoors, in the socialist formats of the Zionist settlement, those of the *kibbutz* and the *moshav* (a collective agricultural settlement), and addressed collectivist and Zionist dilemmas involving children.

The young readers of this literature were viewed as a collective of eager pupils, who required guidance by authority figures outside the home, namely educators, political functionaries or professional writers – all of whom were openly identified with the Labor movement.

Parental authority, on the other hand, was regarded as ideologically "weak," because it bore "diasporic" characteristics (foreign languages and cultures), which were deemed unsuitable for molding the first native generation in Jewish Palestine. It was hoped that through an alternative source of authority, children would become indigenous to a new cultural world. Therefore, the creation, selection, reading and evaluation of children's literature were all left in the hands of adult authorities external to the home. In other words: children's books were viewed as utterly political, within the fictional world and without – through the reading experience.

Come to Me, Sweet Butterfly: Outside the Fictional Home

The child-protagonist's act of turning away from the home, facing exciting open expanses – the public sphere – is manifested in one of the first canonical picturebooks for toddlers: Bo Elai Parpar Nechmad [Come to Me, Sweet Butterfly] (Bergstein 1945). Hakibbutz Hameuchad, one of the two kibbutz-movement publishers that were very influential during the *Yishuv* period (pre-state Israel) published this book.

Bo Elai Parpar Nechmad was structured in accordance with the familiar pastoral model of poems for toddlers, still popular to this day, that is formally a collection of images from village life, usually focusing on farm animals, portrayed in pleasant, catchy rhymes that are easily pronounced and remembered. This literary model was enlisted to glorify the kibbutz communal upbringing, which during the 1930s and 1940s had been adopted in all the kibbutz movements (Dar 1999).

The book introduces the kibbutz surroundings by following a group of kibbutz children wandering around the kibbutz on their own, visiting emblematic kibbutz spaces: the chicken coop, cowshed, etc. The children are therefore portrayed as living a free-spirited childhood, meandering at will through the kibbutz's outdoors.

> Here is the hatching mother chicken, / Going around the coop and peckin', / And after her with little striding ticks, / Come all the little chicks (8).
>
> The red mother cow has a little brown heifer / She licked her head with bliss / And gave her a kiss (12).[3]

The majority of pictures are family-oriented scenes of barnyard animals. Elsa Kantor, the illustrator, added a fence to each of these scenes, to mark the boundaries of the home of each of the families: cowshed, pigsty, chicken coop, etc. On the other hand, the human "cubs," the kibbutz children, are left outside twice: once outside the animals' homes and once as they roam through the open spaces of the kibbutz without any adult supervision. The children, who look at the family scenes "from without", represent the collectivist political eye. In fact, their independent meandering through the kibbutz is a political act that flaunts to the young readers the pleasures and success of the Zionist collective village.

[3] All translations from Hebrew are the author's.

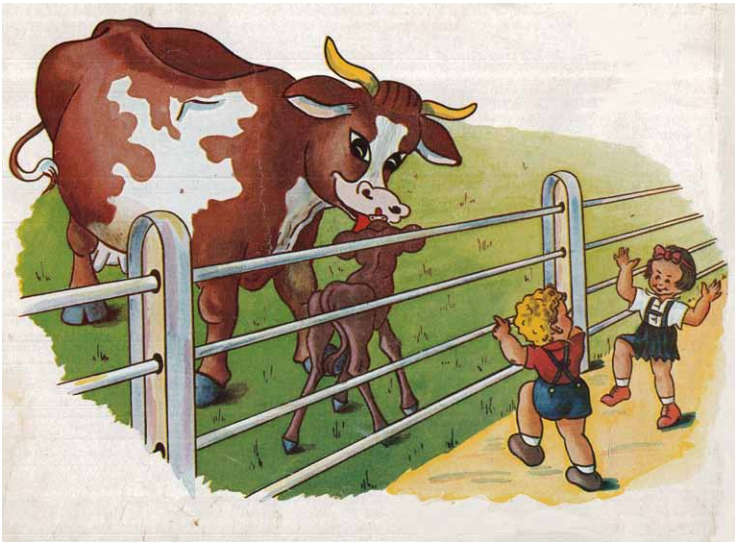

Fig. 1. Illustration by Elsa Kantor from Fania Bergstein's *Come to Me, Sweet Butterfly*. Tel-Aviv: HaKibbutz HaMeuchad, 1945, 13

The book's final scene is the only one that takes place indoors. It shows the child's peer group – the *kvutsa* – retiring to bed together, in the kibbutz' *beityeladim* (the "children's home"), again – with no adult in sight. Instead, the children are bidden good night by "our watchful dog,"(18) who is seen peering through the screened window.

Fig. 2. Illustration by Elsa Kantor from Fania Bergstein's *Come to Me, Sweet Butterfly*. Tel-Aviv: HaKibbutz HaMeuchad, 1945, 19

But even here, on the inside, the children do not lose their political role. As opposed to the Western literary version of this bedtime scene, which would involve a loving parent caring for his or her child, Bo Elai Parpar Nechmad reflects the opposite – the children's collective power and generational independence.

With One's Back Turned to the Non-Fictional Home

Like all books printed by kibbutz publishers, Bo Elai Parpar Nechmad primarily served the internal objectives of the kibbutz movement's communal educational/political dictates. As such, these books were mostly read by the *metapelet* (the kibbutz nanny) in the kindergarten or before the children were put to bed, collectively, in the children's house.

Where did this leave the parents? At the time, prominent kibbutz educators believed that literature not only served to teach and recruit children, but also to protect children from their parents' educational mistakes. The "parental instinct" was perceived as a threat to collective education, and parents were requested to curb their parental sentiments and cooperate with the principles of the system (Berman 1988).

For example, Bertha Hazan, a leading communal-education figure, believed that the two hours of parent-child time in the afternoon could "undo everything achieved by the kibbutz during the day and be a source of many educational mistakes" (Hazan 1947, 37). She argued that the child should be left to his or her own devices during the given parent-child time, but should he require special attention, a book could shield him from parental over-indulgence. In other words, books could serve as a protective barrier between parent and child.

The involvement of professional educators in the official parent-child time was further extended to the choice of books. The educators' preference was usually a local version of social realism manifested as short realistic texts focusing on the daily routines of kibbutz children:

> The child will only understand the contents of the stories and be affected by them if they draw from his nearest surroundings. There should not be a wide selection of stories. A single story should be repeated many times, without fear that the child would grow tired of it […] Suitable material should be distributed to the kibbutz members (Hazan 1947, 37).

Hazan's and other kibbutz educators' preference for stories representing the child's immediate surroundings, such as Bo Elai Parpar Nechmad, was explained by the need to heed the child's mental and cognitive needs. These stories, however, also served a clear political goal: they consistently hailed and touted the benefits of the kibbutz enterprise, and presented young children as active political agents.

And Evening Ascended: A Hesitant Legitimacy for the Home and the Family

Three years later, following the success of Bo Elai Parpar Nechmad, Bergstein and Kantor produced another children's picturebook: Vayehi Erev [And Evening Ascended]. This time, Bergstein imported non-Zionist material and converted it to Zionist-socialist politics.

She offered a local version of one of the short scenes from Hans Christian Andersen's What the Moon Saw (1840). In these scenes, all of which take place outdoors, the moon tells a poor artist, who lives in a dark attic, about the sites of the town, as seen from above, evening after evening. The "second evening" story – a romantic Christian tale about a little girl who unintentionally startles a hen and her eleven chicks when attempting to kiss them and beg their forgiveness for frightening them the day before. Her father is first very angry with her, but when hearing her innocent explanation kisses her with great love and forgiveness. This little tale was turned by Bergstein into a story that takes place in a Zionist-socialist village and celebrates its children.

Bergstein and Kantor completed the book by the end of 1948. Here too, Kantor visually magnified Zionist socialist politics: The book's cover, for example, depicts a girl with a red head scarf and puffy (Soviet-style) sleeves.

Like its predecessor, Bo Elai Parpar Nechmad, this book too begins with a visual of the child's back to the home. Nevertheless, the verbal introduction insinuates otherwise:

> In the navy blue evening sky,/In the clear night sky,/Floats a moon, bright and high./Silently he wandered/And silently he pondered/On a forest, an orchard and a meadow.//And there, down below, between vineyard and garden, he saw a nice little house.

Seemingly, the moon coming closer in the first two pages invites the readers to enter the house. But, the following double spread reveals that the plot unfolds outdoors, in the public domain: "In the yard, without a sibling or friend,/A lovely girl was taking a stroll./ And little chicks and their mom/Were walking around, pecking and chirping cheerfully." The moon's gaze officially directs that of the reader, who is called to identify with this external, political, public gaze. That is, at the beginning of the story a distinction is drawn between the political interpretation, as directed by the gaze of the moon, and the non-political, innocent actions of the protagonist.

As in Parpar Nechmad, in this story too the "family" is represented by barnyard animals, in this case the chicks. When the girl encounters the chicks and tries to play with them, the frightened mother hen warns her chicks: "Quickly return to the coops, my dears,/ The yard is dangerous now, it appears."

Thus, there is a reversal of roles: Whereas the traditional family gathers its offspring in the evening, here, in the rural Zionist setting, the child walks outside alone, threatening the mother hen's family and driving them home. Indeed, in the following double spread, she further disrupts the family gathering, as an invader: "The whole chicken coop is awakened,/The whole chicken coop is shaken//This child does not give us rest!/The chicks are jumping /The chicks are running and flying/chirping frightened".

Only now are the conditions ripe for a human family scene. When the girl's father hears the commotion, he runs to the coop, fearing that a fox or a jackal is attacking the chickens. When he finds his daughter there, he scolds her. Her explanation expresses her tender care for the farm animals: "I wanted to kiss/The chicken/Because I scared her in the yard/To say I was sorry/And to bid her good night/But her fear grew even worse."

The final scene depicts traditional family roles and warm familial emotions so rare in earlier Zionist writings for children. Unlike Parpar Nechmad, this book concludes with a dual parental point of view – of a private father and of a public, political one: "Then father showed grace/With a loving embrace/Lifting up his good little girl./In the navy blue sky/In the clear evening sky/The moon happily smiled./And when father kissed her, loving and forgiving,/ The moon kissed her too."

Fig. 3. Illustration by Elsa Kantor from Fania Bergstein's *And Evening Ascended.* Tel-Aviv: HaKibbutz HaMeuchad, 2011. Unpaged

This double kiss represents the twofold parental perspective: domestic (father) and public (moon) – both recognize the child's vulnerability and need for loving parental guidance.

The Publisher Enhances the "Home"

Bergstein and Kantor's work reflects a hesitant step toward the de-politicization of the nation's young subjects, at least in the fictional world. However, the book that was eventually published in 1949 marks a far more radical shift from the blatant politics of the pre-state era.

The manuscript with Kantor's illustrations was in fact shelved by the publisher and published only in 2011, in a limited edition, to mark a decade since the illustrator's passing and in celebration of the kibbutz movement's centennial. The 1949 version appeared with illustrations by Haim Hausman (1921–2006), an unknown illustrator at the time. Significantly, Hausman's illustrations produced a completely different politics.

Unlike Kantor, Hausman did not praise the local collectivist ethos. On the contrary, his drawings preserved a marked Western slant: The child is blond; the red Soviet head scarf is replaced with red ribbons; the father is dressed like a city dweller (see the fold in his trousers). Moreover, Hausman's personified stars and moon project an American, Disney-like "cuteness," so distant from Kantor's local realism.

Fig. 4. Illustration by Haim Hausman from Fania Bergstein's *And Evening Ascended*. Tel-Aviv: HaKibbutz HaMeuchad, 1949. Unpaged

Unfortunately, there are no records of the publisher's arguments for preferring Hausman's illustrations over Kantor's. However, it is clear, in hindsight, that the publisher's decision was in line with the nation's new inclination to define the realms of the private civic sphere, i.e. the home and family. The home, in which books were read and evaluated, embraced the book, and within several years it became one of the publisher›s biggest successes.

ShmulikPorcupine: Non-Political Politics in the 1950s

The changing perception of nationality received public expression in the 1950s, in public discourse in general and in the arts in particular: Literature, theater, cinema and the fine

arts – all gradually strove to undo the rule of pre-state collective idealism. Civic individualism was defined by different artistic means, as the language and contents of writers shaped themselves in relation to the previous generation. In the field of literature, two different generations asserted themselves in the 1950s: *Dor Ba'aretz* that viewed itself as veteran and traced its roots back to the Jewish settlement in Palestine, and *Dor Hamedina*, that had different biographical and ideological characteristics and called for new poetic beginnings with the establishment of Israel as a sovereign state (Holtzman 1997).[4]

The evolving Israeli civic discourse, which adopted the language of individual and family, quickly showed itself in the literary texts presented to children, the youngest subjects of the young country. By the end of the 1950s, the home and the family had become a central theme in Israel's canonical children's books. These subjects, therefore, and their four walls, were now not only considered welcome guests, but became major foci of interest.

Moreover, the very act of reading a book to a child was now delegated to parents, as a daily ritual that assured the centrality of the home and the family. In other words, the private sphere became the main arena in which books were read and in which their quality and importance were determined.

The speed and depth of this transformation are seen in a canonic picturebook, *Shmulikipod* [*ShmulikPorcupine*], published by the kibbutz publisher, *Sifriyat Poalim*, in 1956. Not only is the private home the sphere of action in this book, but it is also the space that gives birth to the actual story.

The book's authors adopted the penname "Kush," combining the initials of two well-known artists, then married to each another: Poet T. Karmi (Tsherni Karmi, 1926–1994) and sculptor/painter Shoshana Heiman (1923–2009). The combined initials identified the couple as the book's joint "parents." The name of the protagonist, Gadi, was, for insiders, another clue to its real-life parents, as it was also the name of the couple's child. The presence of the real Gadi was intentionally emphasized in the book's subtitle: "Happened to: Shmulik/ Seen by: Gadi /Written and Illustrated by: Kush /Published by: Sifriyat Poalim". In other words, the pseudonym disguised Karmi's and Heiman's identity as artists and replaced them with a parental title. This poetic device, which framed the story as a loving gift from a parent to a child, was a defiant innovation in Israeli children's literature.

The "home," on a thematic level, is introduced as "force majeure." Following the rules of the realistic kibbutz model, the story implies that Gadi lives in a kibbutz, or is at least used to the presence of many other children – and is now involuntarily isolated due to an illness: "I'm sick – I'm lying alone in bed. I don't have any friends, only the donkeys on my pajamas. But I can't talk to them. I'm so sad."

[4] Recent research has identified processes of individualization, the shedding of collectivist adherence, and resistance to the hegemonic official national ethos in the private sphere as well. Researchers of daily life and popular culture have pointed to gradual changes in the manner in which people worked, dressed, formed friendships, spent their leisure time, designed their homes and raised their children (Rozin 2011, Helman 2014).

In fact, Gadi's forced isolation allows the authors to elaborate on the wonders of the home. Thus, in absolute opposition to the kibbutz's collectivist perspective, the home is presented as a place in which a rewarding intimate adventure can take place.

The story draws a visual and verbal parallel between two porcupines, i.e., between two "unfriendly," prickly creatures, and binds them together in a wonderful friendship. It is a new kind friendship, that emerges from choice and from recognition of the privacy that each of them deserves. According to this model, after having played together, each friend returns to his home, his family: Goodbye ShmulikPorcupine – said Gadi. Say hi to your mother and father and come back to play with me." Shmulik's parents are even illustrated on the left inner cover at the end of the book, waiting for their young son to return.

The Politics behind the "Non-Political" – Conclusion

During the Israeli nation-building period, Hebrew children's picturebooks were overtly political. The young readers were included in the public domain in relation to the contents to which they were exposed, and by the active missions to which they were assigned as competent participants within the public sphere. After the establishment of the Israeli state, this blatant political position of the canonical children's picturebooks was swiftly set aside in favor of much more subtle, civic and domestic politics.

As a result, the politically-potent child, who participated in the public discourse, became a citizen to be. Enclosed in his or her own private space, the Israeli child no longer engaged in politics, neither on the fictional level nor as a reader. Moreover, the very act of reading a picturebook to one's child had now generated a civic consciousness within the home. In every reading, this young audience represented the shared interests of all Israeli citizens, regardless of political, ethnic or class division.

This new national child was perceived as a vulnerable and naïve reader, who required books that would expand his aesthetic horizons, develop his cognitive skills, and strengthen him mentally and emotionally. This new understanding of the "national child" took the key for determining literary politics from the political field and handed it over to the institution of the family. As a result, highly artistic, psychologically-oriented and "universal" picturebooks, stressing family roles and the child subject, have flourished in Israel since the 1960s. The ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the occupied territories, and the growing socio-economic gaps are all virtually absent from them. These acute social and political dilemmas have in fact become acceptable cultural blind spots. Israeli children's literature prefers to be global, translatable, psychologically responsible and politically passive.

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Good to love or good to eat? Ethical and ideological implications of hunting, killing and the consumption of anthropomorphic animals in popular picturebooks

Summary

This paper discusses the visual and narrative construction of species difference in a selection of *Little Golden Books*, as well as its ethical and ideological implications. I will focus on how certain picturebooks encourage thinking about species in terms of difference and hierarchy, while simultaneously blurring species boundaries through visual and/or verbal anthropomorphism. From an early age, children are taught that animals come in different categories, some of which are good to love, and should be treated with due respect (pets) and others that are good to eat, and, at least in Western cultures, less deserving of our compassion. Focusing on a selection of *Little Golden Books*, American merchandise books aimed at young readers, I investigate how children learn to distinguish between these two classes of animals.

Key words: anthropomorphism, anthropocentrism, commercial picturebooks, Little Golden Books, Literary Animal Studies, species difference

Słowa klucze: antropomorfizm, antropocentryzm, komercyjne książki obrazkowe, Little Golden Books, literackie studia nad zwierzętami, różnice międzygatunkowe

Introduction

> Today is the day I will slaughter my pet and eat her.
>
> I am a predator by nature, so it is perfectly alright for me to kill for fun.
>
> It is permissible to hunt and eat your friends if you are hungry.

To most of us, these statements sound quite absurd. And in a sense, they are, because they contradict our basic assumptions about moral behavior. We do not eat our pets. In fact, one of our core conceptions of pethood includes that a pet *cannot* be classified as a food item. Neither do we hunt and kill our friends, and consuming their flesh would qualify as cannibalism. Mentioning such things is borderline taboo. However, in many picturebooks with anthropomorphised protagonists belonging to different species, these dilemmas become very real, and they demand real answers.

In this article I focus on the moral questions and dilemmas that are raised by the representations of predation in picturebooks for a young readership (preschool age). To this end I have selected two examples from the *Little Golden Book* series and one illustrated short story by Richard Scarry. This material is interesting because they are merchandise books: popular, commercial writings that are marketed for a broad readership. The ideology mediated in and through these texts is likely to be uncontested and can therefore provide a fairly accurate idea of mainstream notions surrounding hunting, killing, and meat consumption. The books highlight various problematic aspects of the representation of predation in anthropomorphic animal characters and interrogate the validity of the human-animal binary.

The characters in my selection of stories, all apex predators, are expected to make a moral choice and act in accordance with it. For this reason these picturebooks can be considered arenas of ethical significance. They show how species membership can be used as an argument for denying or allowing certain animals access to the moral community of the dominant species. Identifying the narrative and visual strategies that allow the naturalisation of species difference and hierarchy is a first step towards a re-evaluation of the category of species and the function of anthropomorphism in popular picturebooks. This article is an attempt to deconstruct the nature-culture and human-animal dichotomies that are active within the stories in order to reveal the social hierarchies that are built on them.

Our habits and their underlying values surrounding the killing and eating of animals are to a large extent culturally determined, and the way any individual picturebook represents such events is therefore highly contextual. Who can eat what/whom and under which circumstances is dictated by tacit, but unbending cultural conventions. Yet there is a tendency to naturalise these conventions, and one of the ways this happens is through the use of visual and verbal anthropomorphism.

Picturebooks and speciesism

At the beginning of children's reading careers we commonly find primers or ABC books that construct a binary relationship between words and images. More often than not, these books include depictions of animals functioning first and foremost as specimens, representatives of their species. This indicates that one of the first things beginning readers learn about animals is how to categorise them into species, principally based on their visual characteristics. The socialisation process continues along these lines even as children progress to more advanced picturebooks. In a day and age where access to real animals is often limited (and if not limited, then at least highly regulated), animal representations inform the ideas entertained by young readers about the range and possibilities of human-animal interactions and relationships.

Amélie Björck (2013) argues that in contemporary children's literature, animals are predominantly depicted in an unreflective fashion: behaving, thinking and feeling as if they were human. This critique is valid for the picturebooks I discuss here, which encour-

age thinking about species in terms of difference and hierarchy. However, anthropomorphism simultaneously causes a blurring of species boundaries, and this can be a fruitful starting point for the exploration of the ethical and ideological content of these books. From an early age, children are taught that animals come in different categories, some of which are good to love, and should be treated with due respect. Pets are part of this group of animals. Others, like cattle, are good to eat, and, at least in Western cultures, considerably less deserving of our compassion. In this way, picturebooks contribute to children's conceptualisation of this division of animals into different classes, thus perpetuating speciesism rather than questioning or challenging it.

The representation of animals in children's literature has a long and rich history, yet in spite of this, there has been surprisingly little academic attention for the ideological and ethical implications behind their appearance. This is rapidly changing, however, with the advance of the fields of Human Animal Studies and Critical Animal Studies, in which my approach to the picturebooks in this article is rooted. At the core of these new research areas lies a critique of the anthropocentrism that maintains that the human species is essentially different from and superior to all other species. Kari Weil explains how

> for centuries nonhuman animals have been locked in representations authored by humans, representations that moreover have justified the use and abuse of nonhuman animals by humans (Weil 2012: 4).

We find that literary animals are now undergoing a process of emancipation, and this necessitates a reconsideration of the concept of species as being on a par with categories such as race, gender, and age. This project requires a radical rethinking of the binaries that, within Western thinking, appear to be fundamental and universal: nature-culture and human-animal. What research in the abovementioned fields has brought to light is that the discourse of species is fundamental to our conceptualisation of difference – both across and within species boundaries. Cary Wolfe explains how

> [t]he effective power of the discourse of species when applied to social others of whatever sort relies, then, on a prior taking for granted of the institution of speciesism – that is, of the ethical acceptability of the systematic "noncriminal putting to death" of animals based solely on their species (Wolfe 2003: 7).

If we accept that children's literature can never be ideologically neutral, picturebook animals become highly political creatures. Therefore, understanding how the discourse of species is activated, justified and perpetuated in picturebooks for a young readership will not only further our understanding of the way we understand nonhuman animals; indirectly, it also addresses human otherness. Animal-centered readings of picturebooks for young readers are therefore likely to provide insight into both children's marginalisation as well as into the way in which children are socialised into a tradition of thinking that systematically values humanity over animality and naturalises the domination of animals by humans.

This explains why looking at picturebook animals as mere metaphors for (certain aspects of) humanity is insufficient to comprehend their full significance. We are in need of reading strategies that will allow us to reevaluate the human-animal relationship altogether, and to a certain extent this entails a blurring of the boundaries between the fictional and the real. Although this paper presents an analysis of books, and therefore, fictional representations of animals, real animals and child readers are always implicated, either as (future) moral agents or as objects of moral consideration. The way these fictional creatures are presented to their readers does have material consequences – therefore the relationship between real and fictional animals is by necessity a messy one.

The significance of food events

> Food events are always significant, in reality as well as in fiction. They reveal the fundamental preoccupations, ideas and beliefs of society (Daniel 2006: 1).

In her discussion of eating practices in children's books, Carolyn Daniel emphasises the strong socialising function of mealtimes: it is at such times that young children learn what is expected of them if they want to qualify as full members of their culture. Because, to begin with, they are not: as if they were uncultured little savages, Western culture tends to put them alongside animals. The reason food can have this socialising function, according to Daniel, is because it is culturally specific: what is classified as 'good to eat' or taboo is culturally determined. There are rules that state *what* can be eaten and by *whom*, *when* and *how much*. And there are consequences for transgressing these rules (Daniel 2006: 12).

The adage 'You are what you eat' seems to be true in many children's books, where food is often used as a metaphor for human behaviour. In fiction, it is not unusual that we can recognise morally corrupt characters by their transgressive eating habits. This includes the eating of non-foods, such as, in Western culture: insects, dog meat, or contaminated foods. Consequently, otherness can be signaled through food choices. The coding of food can therefore promote racism, imperialism, as well as speciesism. (Daniel 2006) So how does this apply to anthropomorphic animals who eat other animals? In other words: what are the lessons children may learn from seeing animals eat, or attempting to eat, other animals in picturebooks? When we focus on anthropomorphised characters there appears to be a very fine line between norm and transgression, simply eating meat and cannibalism, and this reveals some fundamental societal tensions regarding the justification of meat eating.

Hunting, killing and meat consumption in *Pierre Bear*

In *Pierre Bear* (Scarry, Scarry 1954) hunting, killing, and eating other animals is a fairly unsentimental matter. On the contrary: it is described in positive, matter of fact terms. The answer to our question concerning which animals can be classified as food seems to be: any animal who is not a bear is a potential prey. The text does not call into question

whether these acts of violence against other animals are ethically justified. On the level of the images, however, we find limited room for the reader to develop empathy with the prey animals. And empathy, as we will see later on, can be a starting point for ethical consideration.

The story essentially revolves around the sequence of hunting, killing, and eating of other animals by protagonist Pierre Bear, whom we can see dressed in a trapper outfit, making a living on his own in the wilderness of the Northern United States or Canada. The text tells us that "when Pierre wanted a fish supper, he went fishing, all alone". When his cupboard is empty, he hunts for moose, and when he needs a new coat, he hunts for seals. The activity of hunting permeates the entire book and serves as a catalyser for the action.

On the level of the images, hunting is equally omnipresent. From the cover, where Pierre and his son are depicted sporting rifles, to the house's interior that is decorated with hunting trophies, to the furs that Pierre uses for a blanket, to the food he cooks. Hunting is at the very center of Pierre's existence, and throughout the book, this is described as a self-evident, honourable, even civilising, activity. For a picturebook aimed at a fairly young readership, this level of pervasiveness of acts of violence is relatively unusual. Yet the narrative makes it appear unproblematic. How does this happen, we may ask.

The way anthropomorphism is used to distinguish the bears from the other animals lies at the core of the answer. First of all, there is a sharp contrast in the way the bears and the animals they hunt are depicted visually, and the reader is implicitly invited to accept that this justifies the killing. We see that the bears are highly anthropomorphised, while the animals they hunt are not. The bears are bipedal, wear clothes, speak to each other in what can be understood to be human language, and they live in humanlike conditions. There is an aura of civilisation, homeliness, and order surrounding the bears' lifestyle.

The book motivates Pierre's actions by relying on the discourse of subsistence hunting: "Next morning, when Pierre looked in his cupboard he saw that he needed more food. So he took his big rifle and headed for the wild woods to hunt the Terrible Moose, the biggest, wildest animal of the North." Pierre hunts to fulfill his basic need for sustenance. This in itself may be justification enough, with Pierre being a bear, and a moose a natural prey. But there exists a confusion at the heart of this interaction. Pierre is *not* human, he has the body of a bear. Highly anthropomorphised, but still: a bear. The fact that he is a 'natural' predator serves as a justification for his acts. This confusion cannot be resolved by interpreting the bear as a metaphor, or a human in disguise.

The way Pierre handles his prey is human, and it is coded as civilised, which reinforces a positive reading. Unlike real bears, Pierre hunts with traps and a rifle. The activities surrounding the preparation of food are equally significant. We see that Pierre cooks and prepares his food, rather than eating it raw, as we might expect a bear to do. This confusion of human and animal, of hunting and predation, builds on a common misconception in the debate surrounding the practice of human hunting, as Garry Marvin explains:

> Hunting cannot simply be explained as being triggered by something in the genetic makeup of humans nor as being motivated by a mystical link to a putative past. Human hunting is a set of cultural rather than natural practices, and it is important here to emphasize that it differs from predation in the nonhuman animal world with which it is sometimes compared. Human hunting certainly involves predation, but predation is not the same as hunting (Marvin 2006: 13).

The text then takes the argument even further. The capitalisation of the words describing the moose makes the reader even more aware of the fact that one is expected to view Pierre and the moose as worthy opponents, but not opponents within the same category of being, or even the same moral community. Pierre's actions are rationally explained, the text speaks of the moose as irrational, wild, terrible and aggressive, and therefore killing him becomes not only a way to sustain himself, but also a courageous act in the defence of civilisation: "But the brave little bear was not afraid. He shot him. BANG! And the Moose fell dead. For Pierre was the bravest hunter of all the North." We notice how the language of civilisation is contrasted with a vocabulary of wildness and ferociousness.

Furthermore, he hunts to acquire fur. There is no obvious practical reason why he would need fur clothing, being a furry animal himself, and the narrative doesn't explain the motive for this. However, Pierre also sells some of the furs at a local trading post, which activates the discourse of capitalism. The profits allow him to literally buy himself into the middle class ideal of a nuclear family: he marries the female bear who works at the trading post, and they have a son together.

What we have seen so far is that the aspects that qualify some animals in this story as food rather than companions or equals – something the reader might expect if the main character is also an animal – is the *degree* of anthropomorphism. The narrative creates difference on the level of species by attributing subjectivity and agency to the bears, while withholding it from the fish, the moose, and the seal. And this subjectivity is essentially a humanlike subjectivity. This is supported by the fact that Pierre categorically refuses to see other animals as persons. He is described as a lonely bear, who is desperately longing for company, yet his actions and words betray that 'company' is strictly limited to other bears: "He dreamt that he was with a lot of other bears who were laughing and singing and never lonely". Perhaps the most striking example of this radical distinction can be found in the scene after Pierre has killed the moose: 'From the Moose antler he made a big hat rack to hang upon the wall. Pierre hung his hat on one of the antlers. "Someone else's hat should hang on the other antler", thought the lonely bear.'

One of the lessons a child reader might learn from her encounter with these anthropomorphic bears is that there is a clear and fundamental difference between certain categories of animals, and based on this difference we decide which ones can safely be consumed. Some are more like us than others, and deserve moral consideration. The ones that are less like us have bodies that are merely useful, either as commodities or as food.

Readers may infer that differentiation on the level of physical appearance forms the foundation of ethical decision-making. From there on, it is only a small step towards an ideology that considers human beings in similar terms of difference.

It is also significant that the hunter is an adult, and moreover, an adult male. The gendered nature of hunting and killing as a masculinely coded activity is presented to the reader as a natural state of affairs, again, by employing anthropomorphism. The assumption is that culture mirrors the natural world where males are responsible for acts of violence that are necessary for survival. To maintain the status quo, one has to accept killing and meat eating as unavoidable. Therefore, the choice to abstain from eating meat becomes an interesting one, a choice that can ultimately be equated with the acceptance of a more civilised lifestyle. This is the case in the next book I would like to discuss**:** *The Tawny Scrawny Lion* by Kathryn Jackson and Gustav Tenggren (1952).

Giving up hunting as a sign of civilisation: *The Tawny Scrawny Lion*

As opposed to *Pierre Bear*, this narrative does not approve of the initial lifestyle of the protagonist. In this story, we are met by a different degree of anthropomorphism, which also serves a different purpose. Here, transformation is central: the characters display a gradual metamorphosis from wildness to civilisation that is signaled by increasing degrees of humanisation of their appearance and behaviour. Initially, the animals are depicted as senseless slaves of their instincts: the predator hunts and the prey animals try to escape. In the next stage of the story, they try to reason their way out of their predicament and negotiate a solution, and eventually they end up as members of the same moral community.

The initial inter-animal relationships are comparable to those in *Pierre Bear*, and predation is a key element of their interactions. In this story, the protagonist is a lion, which makes it appropriate for him to eat meat. Yet the cover already reveals that something out of the ordinary is about to take place: it shows the lion holding a carrot in his mouth and four bunnies in his lap, two of which are also munching on carrots. From the onset, food choices and the reversal of predation is presented as the book's core concern.

The central conflict revolves around the predator's constant hunger, which, the story explains, stems from chasing prey every day of the week. In a humoristic circular argument the lion explains how in his opinion, the prey animals themselves are to blame for their unfortunate fate: "It's all your fault for running away," he grumbled. "If I didn't have to run, run, run for every single bite I get, I'd be fat as butter and sleek as satin. Then I wouldn't have to eat so much, and you'd last longer!" Humour in children's books can serve diverse purposes, and in this case it reveals that there may be an unease, a friction, even a taboo connected to hunting and eating animals that are anthropomorphised to roughly the same degree as the predator.

Another inappropriate aspect of the lion's eating habits is his particular behaviour when he catches his food: the wildness of the chase is presented as unhealthy and ultimately unsustainable. He transgresses society's food rules by displaying a ravenous appetite and preying on other anthropomorphised animals. If we follow the internal logic of the story, these other animals should, on account of their ability to speak, be members of the

same moral community. This brings the act of hunting and eating them alarmingly close to committing cannibalism.

The prey animals in this story are not passive food items: they have agency and use it to speak up in protest. They get organised, but since they are afraid to confront the lion themselves, they trick the rabbit into negotiating with him. The rabbit's solution, rather than reasoning with him, is to civilise him in another way: he wants to turn the solitary lion into a full member of their society by way of altering his eating habits. The rabbit presents him with an alternative to meat: carrot stew and fish. At this point the reader encounters an animal that is apparently good to eat, in the sense that eating fish does not constitute a moral dilemma. The motivation provided by the narrative hinges on species hierarchy: while the large exotic animals are all given agency, the fish remains a passive, voiceless victim. The fish is also the only animal that is actually caught and killed in the images.

The story illustrates how a wild, unruly animal can be brought under the control of culture through the regulation of his food choices. The lion displays childlike {unregulated?}boundless behaviour, which needs to be addressed in order for him to become civilised. The narrative values properties such as self-discipline, impulse control and social behaviour. This reflects common Western attitudes about the education and socialisation of human children, as well as other groups of people who are considered "savage" in the eyes of the dominant culture.

The visual transformation of the animals reveals how their relationships evolve. Both predator and prey undergo a process of visual humanisation. Clothing, for example, is presented as an indication of culture: the rabbit is the only one to wear clothing in the beginning of the story. Eventually, the other animals also wear clothes. Body posture is another sign of civilisation: initially, the lion walks on all fours, later he walks on his hind legs. Bipedalism, clothing, and tool use are all common visual indicators of culture and civilisation in picturebook animals. On an ideological level, the message embedded in this story seems to be that mutual respect follows from a shared identity. One earns moral consideration if, and only if, one resembles the dominant culture.

It is significant that the lion doesn't stop eating his fellow animals because he empathises with them – he rather feels sorry for himself for having to chase them. He stops eating them because the alternative is healthier and more satisfying for himself, and only after he realises this does he begin to look at the other animals as possible members of the same community. Empathy is entirely absent as a motivation for moral consideration. That empathy can indeed be a powerful driving force behind the inclusion of an animal of a different species in the moral community of the protagonists can be seen in the final story I discuss.

Conflicting starting points for moral consideration in *The Goose That Stuffed Herself*

Richard Scarry's illustrated Christmas story *The Goose That Stuffed Herself* (2005) describes how a goose transforms from food item to pet to family member. As in *The Tawny Scrawny Lion*, the humour behind the double meaning of the title indicates that this story touches on a sensitive subject. In this rather unsettling story, the question of meat eating is problematised from the start when Tobias Tiger brings home a goose, which he intends to fatten for Christmas. But almost immediately, the tiger family starts to develop empathy for the skinny little goose, and instead of fattening her, feeding her takes the form of caring: "The goose began to eat. She ate until she was happy. She ate until she was warm. She ate until she could not keep one eye open, let alone two. Then she flapped happily into Mrs. Tiger's lap, tucked her head under the red shawl, and snored loudly. Mrs. Tiger rocked her gently. The little boy tigers talked in whispers. And Tobias tiger (ready for bed in his striped pajamas) said good night in a sort of snort and went upstairs. Before many days had passed, that goose had made herself one of the family" (Jackson, Scarry 2005: 52).

Even though the goose does not have the ability to speak, she clearly has the same range of emotions as the tigers, and the realisation that she is an animal who can suffer, who can be hungry and cold, convinces the mother and children that eating her would be wrong. It takes the father, Tobias Tiger, significantly longer to respond empathetically to the goose. He initially actively resists his family's attempts to include the goose in their moral community and insists on her status as food. Only after she does him a favour – by being a comfortable pillow – is he willing to reconsider his attitude towards her.

In a final act of defiance, she actively appeals to the tigers' sense of justice and empathy: when Tabitha Tiger places her on a plate to see what she would look like stuffed, the goose turns around and licks the plate, actively resisting a classification as food and suggesting she should be eating instead of being eaten. In the final image, we see how the goose, who is at this point also wearing clothing, has at last secured her place at the dinner table. But, shockingly, a turkey has replaced her as the dinner's main course. The irony of this replacement is not lost on the reader.

This story clearly suggests that personhood can be granted to some animals, but refused to others. But the reasons for viewing them as members of the same moral community may vary and may have different consequences. Tobias represents a perspective in which one can sympathise with some animals, while their consumption remains a real possibility.

The approach to this moral dilemma appears to be related to the gender and age of the characters: there is a clear contrast between the children and the mother tiger on the one hand, and the father on the other. Although empathy is suggested as a foundation for ethical decision-making, it is not extended equally to all creatures. Apparently, the reader again has to learn the lesson of species difference and hierarchy: the goose is more 'like us' than the turkey at that point of the story, justifying why the tigers can safely eat the turkey.

Conclusion

We have seen how an analysis of anthropomorphism helps to unlock the ethical dimension of the picturebook, and it does so, mainly, by putting into question where the boundaries between the human and the nonhuman run. Precisely because the animal protagonists are anthropomorphised, they can provide us with insights regarding the very nature of the human-animal relationship, and the moral implications that follow from depicting species in terms of difference and hierarchy. The hybridity of these creatures confuses strict species boundaries, and this creates possibilities for the identification of fundamental frictions in our thinking about the human-nonhuman animal binary.

Visual and verbal anthropomorphism may uphold an anthropocentric worldview, while simultaneously blurring the boundaries between the human and the animal. What we have seen is how the representation of species difference in these texts is not purely a matter of biological classification. Nor is it a simple case of metaphorical imagery. In an intricate constellation of constantly shifting meaning, speciesist discourse informs the reader's possible interpretations of these narratives. Ideologically, species becomes the concept that motivates thinking in terms of difference and social hierarchies.

Anthropomorphic characters defy essentialist ideas about subjectivity, animal agency, and human superiority – while at the same time, their bodies are inscribed with attributes of speciesism. These animals become interesting because their very form challenge the nature-culture divide. Their bodies are meeting places of the natural and the cultural, and they cannot be considered separately without losing significant information.

Anthropomorphism, therefore, is not a straightforward projection of human properties onto fictional animals. It is complex, confuses boundaries, and cannot be resolved by solely relying on dichotomies.

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From occupation to independence: contemporary East Timorese history and identity in Portuguese picturebooks

Summary

In Portugal, the suffering and struggle of the East Timorese people for independence started a social movement of solidarity with strong repercussions in the arts, namely music and literature. Children's Literature depicted the theme of this period of oppression in East Timor, as well as the recognition of its independence and its right to freedom, in a picturebook selected for the White Ravens List in 2003 called *East Timor – Island of the Rising Sun* (2001), by João Pedro Mésseder and André Letria. This unusual picturebook, characterised by a very simple and sparse, almost poetic, text combined with large-format pictures, depicts this chapter of the contemporary history of East Timor in very specific way, resembling fairy tales or legends. The text and images are combined in order to promote symbolic readings, suggesting a magical/mystical environment that impresses readers. More than a decade later, recent struggles and stories from East Timor are still present in Portuguese picturebooks such as *Lya/Lia* (2014), by Margarida Botelho. The social change, path to democracy and educational development, as well as daily life and children's pastimes are now the centre of a narrative that establishes the similarities and differences between modern-day Portugal and East Timor. Our aim is to analyse both the political and ideological perspectives present in these picturebooks aimed at very young readers, offering a broad vision of different realities and contexts, even when they deal with war, death and suffering, as was the case of the East Timorese fight for independence.

Key words: picturebooks, ideology, political, contemporary history, East Timor

Słowa klucze: książki obrazkowe, ideologia, polityka, historia współczesna, Timor Wschodni

Introduction. East Timor: a special case in contemporary Portuguese History

When on 25th April, 1974, the popular military revolution in Portugal ended almost five decades of dictatorship, few events were able to unite a country around a cause as much as the struggle in East Timor. East Timor makes up half of a small island in South West Asia and was part of the Portuguese Colonial Empire for almost 500 years, with a brief period of occupation by the Japanese during World War II.

A result of the Carnation Revolution in 1974 and the process of democratisation of Portugal and its political organisation, was the decolonisation and independence of Portuguese Speaking African countries (ex-colonies or provinces overseas such as Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe and Guinea) as well as East Timor in 1975.

East Timor claimed its independence on 28th November, 1975 but was almost immediately invaded by the Indonesian military on 7th December of that same year. Although this occupation was never officially recognized by the UN, which maintained Portugal as the administrative power in East Timor, it lasted until 30th August, 1999, when a referendum, which drew high participation, voted for independence of the territory.

During the 24 years of Indonesian occupation, marked by massacres and genocide which exterminated over a quarter of the population, the Portuguese people were not always well informed or particularly attentive to the conflict occurring over 14,000 kilometres away. Despite the continued effort of small groups and sectors of Portuguese society, namely youth movements, it was only towards the end of the 1980s that the media took hold of the issue and started leaving its mark on Portuguese public opinion.

Before the visit of Pope John Paul II to East Timor in 1989, there were various student and resistant demonstrations which were harshly repressed and which drew international attention. However, the most significant event took place on 12th November 1991, when Indonesian troops attacked a group of Timorese people gathered at the Santa Cruz Cemetery to pay their last homage to a young man who had been killed by Indonesian soldiers. This massacre resulted in over 250 deaths and was recorded on film by the British journalist Max Stahl (previously known as Christopher Wenner) and the footage, which slipped through tight Indonesian control, made headlines all over the world. Its impact, particularly in Portugal, was colossal. Nobody was indifferent to the suffering of a people who were slaughtered in a cemetery while they prayed in Portuguese. Portugal immediately took notice of the strife of the Timorese cause, which it refused to abandon until East Timor's independence and to which it still has strong ties.

Important to note was the referendum of 30th August, 1999, which was followed by a wave of violence from pro-Indonesian militia groups, resulting in the destruction of all the existing infrastructures and the death of supporters for independence, the burning of all their belongings and the creation of thousands of refugees in the aftermath of the victory of the independence movement. The country lived days of terror after which UN military forces were sent in to try and restore peace and an interim government until East Timor's full independence on 20th May, 2002.

Portuguese support for the Timorese cause came in the form of multiple demonstrations and actions which brought together many sectors of society, including political parties. From a cultural point of view, East Timor gave rise to songs, transformed into anthems, and a wealth of publications, particularly from the 1990s onwards. The interventional nature of many of these texts, calling out to the resistance movement as well as to Portuguese solidarity, was extended to poetry and contemporary narratives, and was present in the works of such renowned authors as Sophia de Mello Breyner, Manuel Alegre, Teresa Rita Lopes and João Pedro Mésseder, as well as in books written by multiple authors such as *Um Grito por Timor* (A Cry for East Timor, 1999) and *Uma Rosa para Timor* (A Rose for East Timor, 2005).

The objective of this paper is to analyse two Portuguese children's picturebooks which deal with the issue of East Timor, giving readers information not only about its recent history and suffering on its road to independence, but also paving ways of hope, reconstruction and development, demonstrating the features which help create/reinforce the identity of the country and underpinned by an explicitly ideological connotation (Stephens 1992; Meek 2001). At the same time, they bring the Portuguese reader closer to a geographically distant setting, bound together by a common history, language and by the ideals of freedom and independence, highlighting a particular set of values and contributing to the construction of a national identity.

Representations of East Timor in children's literature

The construction of a national identity through children's literature and literature for young adults

The issue of national identity and its construction lies mainly in the sharing of common factors such as memory, culture and language, often based on the principle of "us" and "them", where "the other" is perceived as "different":

> A national identity involves a widely shared memory of a common past for people who have never seen or talked to one another in the flesh. This sense of belonging depends as much on forgetting as on remembering, the past being reconstructed as trajectory to the national present in order to guarantee a common future. (Agnew 1998: 215)

Identity, characterised as a "shifting, slithering concept" (Meek 2001: viii), is also constructed around more or less idealised representations of ancestral roots and values, often perceived as "original" or even "lost" to progress, development and globalisation. According to Meek "Identity also includes notions of the self that imply our historical-cultural being" (Meek 2001: viii). Children's books, and in particular picturebooks due to the inclusion of illustrations in their communicative intent, have the ability to reinforce, through words and images, a series of identity markers which should be preserved and disseminated. Carol Fox states that "literature is a major medium for nation-defining" (Fox 2001: 43), and maintains that national identity can be defined "as whatever cultural characteristics a society (or nation) feels its members share that distinguish it from other groups" (Fox 2001: 44).

Studies carried out in other contexts, some of which are geographically close to East Timor, such as Malaysia (Desai 2006), highlight the need to reflect upon the way in which children's literature represents and promotes national identity, particularly in multicultural and multilingual societies.

There are some stable elements in Timorese identity, such as the crocodile, which evokes strong symbolic and mythical feelings and is strongly associated with the legend of the country's origin, emulating the shape of the country itself as well as an ancestor; the

mountains, which are sacred places and symbols of safe havens from enemies and which protect the souls of their ancestors; the sunrise, linked to the geography of the country, present in the name of one of its official languages, Tetum (*lorosa'e*)[1]; and the home, which as well as being very symbolic is also perceived as an *uma lulik* (sacred house), having the ability to gather the whole community together, and is a strong identity marker in the various communities. The mixture between the animistic original culture and the religious thinking, as a result of the colonization and the Christianization process, is also present in these identity symbols, which were sometimes reinterpreted by the Catholic Church and incorporated in the local culture.

Margaret Meek reinforces this by stating that "local cultures are the strongest social bonds. (…) Language is an obvious cohesive factor everywhere" (Meek 2001: xi). The values which are intrinsically linked to Timorese identity are related to the spirit of resistance, closely associated with suffering and the desire for freedom and independence, as well as with armed combat and the fight between the occupants and the occupiers, a sort of utopia which both unites and differentiates. The various wars which took place in the country, and particularly the resistance's fight for independence and autonomy during the 24 years of occupation, are other factors which ensure the stability of the identity of the people and which are present in official symbols and in political and civilian discourse and actions.

Corpus Analysis

East Timor contemporary history isn't a common theme in Portuguese children's literature. In fact, only two picturebooks were written in the last years about this country, depicting not only its hard struggle for independence, but also the last years of reconstruction and normalization of the institutions and routines. We intend to analyse how these two picturebooks express, in text and pictures, East Timor identity in order to communicate it to both Portuguese and East-Timorese young readers, offering a different approach to challenging themes.

Timor Lorosa'e. A Ilha do Sol Nascente (2001) [East Timor – Island of the Rising Sun], text by João Pedro Mésseder and illustrations by André Letria

Timor Lorosa'e. A Ilha do Sol Nascente (Timor Lorosa'e. Land of the Rising Sun) was published in 2001 and written during the events which prompted the intervention of the UN, with the death of many people and the destruction of all the country's infrastructures. It is interventional in nature and defends the independence of East Timor and its right to self-government. The motivation behind the development of the book is connected to the political and civic actions of its creators, who like many others also took part in the demonstrations against Indonesian occupation. The book was, according to the author's personal accounts, a result of various conversations between its creators, who discussed

[1] The name of East Timor in Tetum is *Timor Lorosa'e*, which means *Timor, Rising Sun.*

the structure of the book, its format and layout, as well as the symbolic meaning behind the colours and shapes used, namely the circle, and the concepts which underpin the book, making it a clear example co-authorship and collaboration.

In much the same way as Beauvais' study (2013) revealed the revolution as being a strong factor in the construction of French identity, the war for independence also becomes a feature which ensures the existence of the territory as an autonomous and self-governing country: "Nation-building, going from repression to emergence, is naturalised, the child invited to envisage her growth and maturation in parallel with the development of the nation on its way to freedom" (Beauvais 2013: 116). The war and other conflicts are literally recreated in this picturebook as elements which help to construct identity, and unmistakeably belong to the world of children's literature in that they clearly and unequivocally present the juxtaposition between "us" and "them" (Meek 2001: ix) from a very patriotic perspective.

The book is organised in a dichotomous way and establishes a clear difference between two peoples, the Timorese, who are the natives of the island, and the invaders, who are the aggressive occupants of the territory. The definition of both communities is very relevant from an identity point of view, and specific Timorese characteristics connected to serenity and wisdom and the desire for independence are reinforced through the identification of the differences between the two peoples ("and where a small, serene and wise people / one day wanted to build a country" – my translation). In clear opposition to this, polysyndeton is used to represent the invaders as "foreigners" and "serving powerful leaders" (my translation) by taking on certain behaviours and actions that move gradually from occupation to theft, from death to massacre. "And once again they burnt / and killed and massacred" (my translation). This opposition reinforces national identity (Meek 2001), which has to be attained through struggle and the collaboration of external peacekeeping forces, which bring an end to the suffering of the small community. The adjective "small" brings to the fore another important factor of national Timorese identity, the ability to resist in the face of adversity and a clearly superior enemy. The frequent use of expressive adjectives, metaphors and comparison, polysyndeton and at times anaphora, are used together to build a text which uses the hope for independence and freedom, and more importantly reconstruction, to create a happy ending.

From a symbolic point of view, the iconotext is very strong and expressive, often allowing metaphoric interpretations of the most important events, which the readers may or may not know about, recreated in a fantastic or almost fable-like manner. Text and images identify features of Timorese identity, with reference to "the green island in the shape of a crocodile", "the rising sun" and "Mother Nature's mountains", visually recreating the landscape, the sun, the mountains and the traditional sacred houses (fig. 1).

The dichotomy between Good and Bad is also explicit in the two discourses used in the picturebook. The actions of the invaders correspond to the period of darkness: "a night which seemed long, as long as death itself" (my translation) and associated with massacre and genocide, ethically justifying the war for independence in the struggle to free the weak

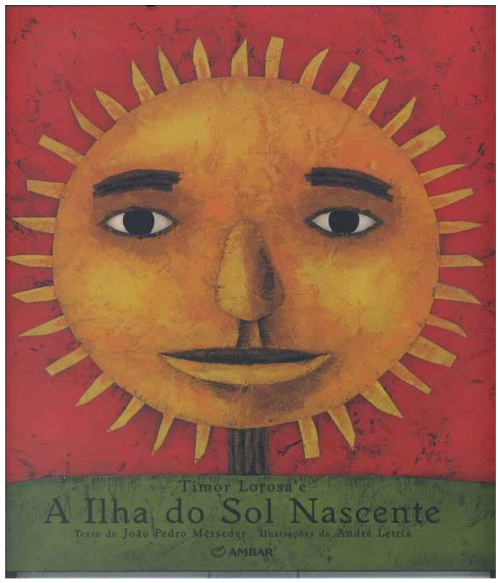

Fig. 1. Picturebook cover

and oppressed. The ousting of the invading soldiers by the freedom fighters results in the slow and progressive return to the light after years of darkness. To represent this, the use of antonymic concepts is clear both from a chromatic and an illustrative point of view, with the shadows, night and death portrayed during the period of invasion and occupation and the dawn, light and the (sun)rise of liberty metaphorically connected to freedom and self-government, all of which clearly overlap with national Timorese identity.

Fig. 2. Picturebook illustration

Taking centre-stage on all the odd-numbered pages, the illustrations stand out not only due to the scale of the book but also in stark comparison with the even-numbered pages, which have a white background and where the text is more peripheral. In this way, and in view of the violence of the facts which make up the story, the narrator does not play down the occupation, the suffering and the death, and the white space is used to highlight the dramatic impact of the lack of visual and textual input. The various possible interpretations, which are more factual and historic in nature, are clear, at least to the adult reader, alluding to political[2] events and facts in a more symbolic and metaphoric way, thus recreating a common desire for freedom and independence of peoples and nations. The references which help to situate the narrative in contemporary history are the name of the country in the title and the date of the arrival of the international troops. All the other references are only alluded to, and it is up to the adult mediator to decide upon factors such as the nationality of the invaders, the referendum of 1999, the intervention of the UN and the characterisation of the "men who rule the world" as Americans ("– some men who rule the world and give orders to generals finally decided to send soldiers to the land of the rising sun." – my translation).

Poetic and metaphoric, but also realistic and factual, this picturebook combines a very concise text with very large illustrations, which increase the reading possibilities of this volume, selected for the White Ravens List in 2003 for its particular qualities.

Fig. 3. Picturebook double spread

[2] To read more about the political nature of the issue in Portuguese children's literature and literature for young adults, see Balça 2008.

Lya/Lia (2014), text and illustrations by Margarida Botelho

Fig. 4. Picturebook cover

Lya/Lia includes two narratives which can be read in two directions, which clearly presents the differences and similarities between Portugal and East Timor, implicitly evoking reflection on the features which identify and differentiate them. The story lines clearly show the differences, in a somewhat stereotypical[3] way, between a rural and urban environment, building the daily routine of the two main characters who lend their names to the title of the book. For the objectives of this paper, the main focus is the first text, where the Timorese girl Lya living in a community in the small island of Atauro, is the protagonist. The text is marked by close contact with nature and Lya's daily routine is strongly linked with members of her close and extended family, friends and animals, and portrayed in an altruistic way within the community.

This book is the result of a project undertaken by the author to portray lifestyles in different countries and communities, establishing a parallel with Portuguese settings. The author's first book portrayed Mozambique (*Eva*, 2011), followed by the Amazon in Brazil (*Yara/Iara*, 2012) and East Timor (with *Lya/Lia*, 2014). Besides their narrative structure, the picturebooks focus on faraway communities which have some affinity with Portuguese/Lusophone culture, with an emphasis on rural settings, people's connection to nature and harsh living conditions.

This book is less metaphorical than the previous picturebook, and the realism of the actions, characters and scenes is more faithful to the community in which the author lived temporarily. In this way, the features which are present in the picturebook and which mark identity besides tetum, the official language of East Timor, the sacred home, a symbol of community, the memory of the struggle for independence and the mountains, which provide refuge for the resistance movement. The legend of the creation of the territory, with a boy and a crocodile, which transforms itself into an island, is also present in the game which unites both narratives in the middle of the book.

[3] The issue of stereotypes is discussed by Carol Fox, when she highlights the importance of adult intervention in the reading process, since "National identities are generalisations, and, inevitably, stereotypical characterisations of histories, people and settings. Some children's literature simplifies things, so that children can understand them" (Fox 2001: 50).

Fig. 5. Picturebook illustration technique

The technique chosen for the illustrations brings together three-dimensional elements using colouring and shading, cut-out and collage, creating scenes where the characters appear to move. These visual images help to create perspective with the use of greater definition and perceptions of depth and movement, as well as careful portrayal of lighting to show the shifting time of day. The use of vibrant colours and cutouts give particular emphasis to the local hues of the landscape, the flora and fauna, the architecture and the clothing and accessories, as well as the facial features of the characters.

Fig. 6. Picturebook illustration example

Conclusions

The two picturebooks analysed in this paper present two distinct visions of East Timor, separated by 13 years, and conceptualised from a Portuguese observational/targeted point of view and within the scope of recent Portuguese history. The first volume is clearly marked by the process of Indonesian occupation and the violence that occurred during their exit. The second book is more contemporary, recreating a context of peace and stability under a democratic regime of self-government and independence against the backdrop of the grandfather's memories of a past of suffering and plight, which has become a motive for celebration and a national holiday.

The interventional nature of the first book is mitigated in the second due to the fact that it has as its main objectives the dissemination of information and is more ludic in nature. It is possible to see that the development of the theme in these picturebooks and the values they defend are in line with the social and political backdrop which contextualises the narratives, spanning from the struggle for independence, freedom and peace to defending such values as education and accompanying the development of this young nation. Although to different effects and in very different contexts, both picturebooks contribute towards the construction of a national Timorese identity by differentiating it from Indonesian culture in the first book and Portuguese culture in the second.

In both books, the illustrations are particularly noteworthy, with features which are highly original, including a similar chromatic effect which takes full advantage of the variations in colour and hue. The structure of the picturebooks also deviates from the norm and the book by Margarida Botelho has two narratives which can be read in both directions and which meet in the middle, reinforcing the idea of intercultural dialogue through the establishment of points of juncture and differences between Portuguese and Timorese culture. The use of comparison, words in Tetum and the presentation of specific social and cultural practices bring readers, particularly Portuguese readers, closer to Timorese traditions, increasing their curiosity of another culture and highlighting the major differences in both lifestyles, although still centred on common values such as the home, family, school, friends, play and games.

Knowing that the country has yet to find an autonomous and authentic voice which is able to express the hopes and fears of the Timorese community in literary texts aimed at younger readers, these Portuguese authors appear to use their voices to express the identity of a recent country with age-old traditions.

In this way, the project of (re)building the Timorese culture is carried out by "foreign" authors who seek to identify the most relevant and specific aspects of national/local culture and disassociate them from the occupying power or colonising country. The landscape, flora and fauna, the cultural practices and routines, the architecture, the clothing and the language are some of the features of identity that the texts and illustrations highlight. Nature and culture are valued as elements which help to construct identity, reinforce common and identifiable values and have the ability to unite a people and disassociate them

from the others, namely the invaders/occupiers: "Nations at war and nations seeking Independence often have a strong need to build or rebuild their national identity, including in cultural terms" (Ommundsen 2013: 12).

The presence of various features and cultural values associated with Timorese identity, such as the crocodile, the mountains, the rising sun, the values and spirit of the resistance movement and rituals, be it through the texts or the illustrations, works to some extent as an explicit vindication of a national conscience, thus justifying the existence of this new fledgling country from southwest Asia from a political point of view. The development from one picturebook to the other shows the way which has been paved and the notion of nation state consolidated. However, both books still make reference to the struggle of the resistance to defend the country and claim freedom and democracy.

The two picturebooks analysed in this paper, which are true iconotexts (combining perfectly text and image), portray the events leading up to and after the independence of the country and this decisive moment in the construction of a national Timorese identity. They focus on the chronotope of independence, desired or achieved. The picturebooks also recreate a mythical, idealised place and time, manifold possibilities by portraying a pivotal moment in Timorese history shared by all.

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A door to the unknown: crossing boundaries through picturebook art

Summary

This paper engages with the question of the ethical implications of, and artistic imagination in picturebooks. The analysis relies on two visual narratives confronting the theme of cultural difference. The juxtaposition of the two books that share the themes of visiting and hosting, of confronting otherness, and of cultural prejudice indicates differences in their narrative and artistic potential. The analysis of formal strategies in *Jemmy Button* by Jennifer Uman and Valerio Vidali and in *Eric* by Shaun Tan serves to point out the role of artistic imagination and narrative wisdom in creating visual literature.

Key words: artistic imagination, encounter, ethically engaged narratives, hospitality, otherness

Słowa kluczowe: wyobraźnia artystyczna, spotkanie, etyczny wymiar dzieła, gościnność, inność

Introduction

In discussions on the diverse narrative functions and formal properties of picturebooks, there is one aspect that may, because of its elusiveness, escape the attention of many parents, educators, and other readers. A picturebook can mesmerise its readers with its stunning illustrations, or it can be remembered for its captivating storyline. There are also picturebooks that may not possess any of these qualities, yet their impact for some reason is more lasting and more visceral, so that some of them are likely to become our lifelong spiritual companions, even if encountered only once. What is arguably key here is the artistic sensibility of the authors and imaginative visions of life embedded in some literary works. It is well-known that literature has the power of transporting its readers into alternate worlds; some works, however, create an imaginary, hospitable space where the readers can, through their vicarious experience of the book's microcosm, move beyond the comfort of the expected and the familiar, and refine their ethical judgement. The fusion of artistic ingeniousness and the narrative power to challenge and bewilder can be a truly rewarding experience.

The same criteria that we apply to define good literature also distinguish some picturebooks as original and thought-provoking examples of visual literature. Such works induce the affective engagement of their readers through the density of the narrative style: the

artistry and vividness of (visual) language and the hidden meanders of sense that open up new horizons of thought for the reader. Mary Midgley writes about such literary works, that they "they supply the language in which our imaginative visions are most immediately articulated, the medium through which we usually get our first impression of them" (2006: 52). Such books have the power to immerse the reader in the unknown and offer the joy of the unpredictable. They "cultivate our ability to see and care about particulars, not as representatives of a law, but as what they themselves are: to respond vigorously with senses and emotions before the new; to care deeply about chance happenings in the world, rather than to fortify ourselves against them; to wait for the outcome, and to be bewildered – to wait and float and be actively passive" (Nussbaum 1990: 184).

How a story is told is inextricably bound up with what it says; the form, instead of merely affecting the content, in fact is an integral part of the message. It is through the organic connection between form and content, through the artists' ability to wisely choose the composition and other artistic means of expression, that these works of art refine understanding and affect readers lastingly. Martha Nussbaum calls for seeing literary works as indispensable sources of philosophical enquiry. In her view, fundamental truths about human existence cannot be fully grasped if uttered in a language that denies the meanings it communicates, if the writer's style is devoid of emotions and is not in itself evidence of the ethical approaches advocated by the author (Nussbaum 1990: 5–7). As literature addresses crucial existential concerns relying on particular means of expression that shape understanding in a unique way, its role extends beyond the intellectual realm and instead must be interwoven with the deepest senses of human lives. As Nussbaum puts it: "[o]ur actual relation to the books we love is already messy, complex, erotic. We do 'read for life', bringing to the literary texts we love (as to texts admittedly philosophical) our pressing questions and perplexities, searching for images of what we might do and be, and holding this up against the images we draw from our knowledge of other conceptions: literary, philosophical, and religious" (1990: 29).

Cross-cultural encounters in two contemporary picturebooks

The words "stranger", "outsider", "foreigner", and "other" often connote distance, although Ryszard Kapuściński reminds us of the Polish poet Cyprian Norwid's observation regarding human mentality in ancient Greece, where any vagabond and a poor passer-by was welcome as a potentially divine being (Kapuściński 2004: 32). The connotations of the word "guest", and "visitor" are indeed ambiguous, as they comprise curiosity, respect, but also suspicion of the unknown. The Greek word "xenos" means a visitor, and despite its equivocal connotations in ancient Greece "xenos", as a potential god in disguise, was to be welcome as a guest friend who deserved respect and kindness (Filek 2004: 44–45). The present study offers a discussion of the ethical potential of literature that deals with themes of migration, cross-cultural encounters and of crossing (emotional) boundaries. In both narratives, the underlying theme is the urge to respond with compassion to the experience of the Other. Such narratives undoubtedly are indispensable in the educational process;

in an increasingly multicultural world literature that embraces the unknown appears to be even more pertinent. Still, in their pursuit to "embrace the unknown" only some books transcend the plot formulae and through them foster imagination and unbiased curiosity.

The two narratives under discussion, *Eric* (2010) by Shaun Tan and *Jemmy Button: The Boy that Darwin Returned Home* (2012) by Jennifer Uman and Valerio Vidali, were created by artists whose work has been published and recognised worldwide. Shaun Tan is an Australian author of illustrated books that enjoy international fame. They have been widely translated and received numerous literary awards, including the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award in 2011. Tan is known not only as an author and illustrator, but notably also as a concept artist and director: in 2011 he won an Academy Award for the animated film adaptation of his book *The Lost Thing*. The art of the Italian illustrator Valerio Vidali received recognition in international competitions and exhibitions during the Children's Book Fair of Bologna, in Portugal and Korea. Jennifer Uman, who cooperated with Vidali in their work on *Jemmy Button*, made her debut in the role of picturebook artist. Their picturebook received a CJ Picture Book Award in 2012, and it won a New York Times Best Illustrated Book award in 2013.

The biographies of the artists also indicate that the theme of cultural difference chosen for the books is not coincidental, as the motifs of travelling, of intercultural encounters and their emotional and psychological aspects emerge from their personal experience. Shaun Tan admits that as a result of his background, themes of migration, alienation, and belonging have haunted him. He is part-Chinese, Malaysian, Irish and English, who grew up in Perth, in Western Australia (Tan d: par. 4). Tan has been known for exploring these themes in his other works, most notably in his distinguished wordless work *The Arrival.* The artistic tandem of Jennifer Uman and Valerio Vidali worked together on illustrating their book despite the geographical distance between them, and despite their inability to communicate in each other's native language.

In both narratives, the theme of otherness and an ambiguous visit is shared, and a sense of the indeterminacy of meaning palpable and intense. The close reading of both reveals, however, that the apparent thematic analogies make differences in the artistic approach more apparent. While the theme and form of a given artwork may be intriguing to the readers, it does not guarantee narrative and emotional depth. Stories that possess emotional and ethical strength combine the artistry of form with an imaginative story. The artists must be aware of the importance of the organic relation between all the elements of the work's structure. When employed skilfully, the form and the content, often deceptively simple, merge imperceptibly, leaving the readers in a state of awe. A patient and contemplative, thoughtful and rigorous reading can be a truly rewarding, ethically transformative experience.

The narrative structure in both picturebooks abounds in visual and verbal hints of the newcomers' vulnerability, the hosts' (unintended) prejudice and indifference, and the missed opportunities for a truly meaningful, transformative dialogue. The artists draw on aesthetic modes that disturbingly emphasise the visitors' sense of otherness and their childlike status in the new environment, even though the newcomer in each story is ap-

parently very much welcome. Although both stories evoke compassion for the visitors by means of the metaphorical rendering of the illustrations, and both rely on a sense of indeterminacy emanating from the form and content, the artistic and ethical implications of the indeterminacy remain very different in each case.

Jemmy Button

As the authors explain in the peritext, the story in *Jemmy Button*, a picturebook published by Templar, is based on historical sources. In fictionalised form, it reconstructs events that took place in the early nineteenth century, when a boy named Orundellico was abducted from the coast of Tierra del Fuego and came to Europe with an expedition of European scientists. On his arrival in England his life radically changed: the boy was expected to adopt a European way of living, he was given a new name: Jemmy Button, learned English manners and the English language. As Jemmy's "visit" was in fact part of an experiment, the ultimate goal of which was to "spread civilisation" in colonised lands, he was taken back to his homeland after a year. Among the people who accompanied Jemmy in his voyage from Europe was Charles Darwin, whose aim was to identify the effects of the experiment on the spot.

Both the verbal and visual text appear to effectively capture Jemmy's perspective on the events. When the "visitors" come, they are visualised as flat, cut-out figures resembling giant black insects. The verbal story, written by the illustrators' friend after the illustrations for the book had been created, takes the form of a tale told through a third-person omniscient narrator. The story starts with the words: "Once, long ago, on a faraway island there was a boy. Some nights he climbed to the tallest branch of the tallest tree to look at the stars. He listened to the lap of the waves and imagined what it would be like to live in the world on the other side of the ocean." The native boy's perspective is hinted at by the use of comparisons referring to nature, the only environment hitherto familiar to him, which makes the contrast between his home environment and the new surroundings even sharper.

Perhaps inspired by the classic children's picturebook, the visual narrative schema echoes Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, a visual story of a boy's (imaginative) journey into the wilderness. Scenery from the beginning of the story returns in the final double spreads; a linear visual story presents the boy's journey to the east (to the right) and his return to the west (to the left). The story starts and ends with an image of Jemmy portrayed from a distance, contemplating the world as he sits on top of a tree, surrounded by a starry night sky. The first illustration probably implies anticipation, with the boy gazing at the moon, the other suggestively captures the boy's farewell to England, as his head is turned towards the ship sailing back to Europe. The illustration that visualises the voyage metaphorically depicts his feelings by contrasting a minute white ship that hosts him with the mass of dark water that carries him to the unknown land. Jemmy's vulnerability is also accentuated by strategies of visual weight: in most illustrations Jemmy is situated on the left side of the double spread, which in Sendak's book also functions as an illustration of Max's psychic state and encourages the readers to empathise with the character (Nodelman 1988: 136).

This symbolic nature-culture dichotomy is made clear through the use of colour, texture, and visual metaphors. The contrasts between the two worlds become evident, e.g. owing to the technique of collage in visual depictions of England juxtaposed with the use of oil in the illustrations of the island and the sea. The cut-out elements used to represent English culture – masses of people, rows of buildings, or shop windows – symbolise an orderly, uniform, friendly yet somehow impoverished, indifferent "civilisation". In contrast, the "wilderness" is imagined through painterly, vivid colours. Jemmy's place of birth, his natural habitat, and the ocean – an extension of his natural surroundings – are marked with strokes of the artist's brush, having a more {sensual?}sensory appeal and thus connoting authenticity, spontaneity, and freedom (or lack of restraints).

The artists convey Jemmy's sense of isolation and vulnerability portraying him naked among the elegantly dressed English people, and making visual analogies between the bodies of Jemmy and those of pets of the English. The boy's status of stranger is consistently and explicitly marked by the difference of colour: the pinkiness of Jemmy's body, the fleshiness and beastliness of his hand and face, his somewhat empty facial expression are contrasted with an anonymous, undifferentiated, elegantly dressed yet often faceless and greyish mass of English people. The exception is a female companion, whose silhouette is painted with a different colour – a possible hint of empathy on her part. The reddish face of the indigenous boy dressed in elegant English outfits reminds the viewer of the unnaturalness of his situation, and emphasises that the process of "civilising" is in fact superficial, that it is only a masquarade.

Orundellico's story reconstructed in the picturebook is intriguing because of its theme, but conceptually it restates the familiar, both as a visual story and in the interplay between word and image. Because of their naivety, the visual means of expression can not compete with the *finesse* and perceptual depth of Sendak's use of visual detail and his masterful, nuanced play between the image and the text.[1] The other potential problem has to do with sensitivity to historical truth and with the question of whether this particular story can be told in the form of a tale devoid of its social and political situatedness. As the story progresses, the readers learn that Jemmy misses the island and one day realises that "he must return home". The narrative thus implies that Jemmy's stay in England was an innocuous visit, and that his homesickness made him go back where he really belonged. A moustache grown on Jemmy's face, a metonymic representation of his transformative experience, suggests that the experience has left a mark on the boy, but the story remains enigmatic about the nature of the emotional impact the experience had on Jemmy

Valerio Vidali and Jennifer Uman admit that they deliberately abstained from moral judgement when creating the narrative. However disconcerting this may sound, they were motivated by their desire to tell the story of Jemmy's experience, both in the context of cultural violence and adventure (Vidali b). As a consequence, the moments of evasion be-

[1] A comprehensive discussion on different narrative aspects of Sendak's work is offered by Perry Nodelman in the consecutive chapters of his book. See Nodelman P. (1988), *Words about Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children's Picture Books*. The University of Georgia Press.

come conspicuous, challenging the credibility of the account. There is a sense of a missed opportunity to tell a meaningful story about different incarnations of displacement and symbolic violence, disguised as the will to meet, teach, and enlighten. Instead, the story apparently encourages reductive judgements: in the final illustration Jemmy still looks like a child, although he has grown a moustache. On a symbolic level his indigenous identity has been left intact; the civilising mission has proved a failure. If we try to make sense of the story as a critique of colonialism, Jemmy's moustached and hairy head juxtaposed with the rest of his body, imagined as a somewhat plump, hairless and pink mass of flesh, through its grotesque effect undermines the reasonableness of such a reading.

In their attempt to universalise Orundellico's story, the authors seem to unconsciously perpetuate the colonisers' perspective on the events. By using the visual metaphor of the fleshy body signifying wildness, lack of civilisation, and lack of voice, by calling the Europeans "visitors" who "invite" the boy to Europe and become his "friends" without a hint of irony, the authors dangerously oscillate, if not trespass over the border between remaining neutral (which they intended to do) and inadvertently adhering to the rhetoric of the colonisers.

The reciprocal emotional distance between Jemmy and the English people is emphasised consistently throughout the book, which was intended as a tribute to Jemmy and as a narrative evoking compassion. The illustrators planned to "talk about the nostalgia and restlessness experienced by someone who has changed dramatically and is trapped between two worlds and two different ways of being" (Vidali b). Yet, even though the boy's homesickness is continuously emphasised, the rhetoric of both the image and text turns out to be emotionally and conceptually problematic. The front cover informs the readers that it is a story about "the boy that Darwin returned home". Curiously enough, Darwin is not featured in the narrative, while the illustrations imply that Jemmy returns to the island unaccompanied. More importantly, however, the use of syntax, which confers the role of Jemmy's benevolent patriarchal guardian on the absent Charles Darwin, as well as the belittling reference "boy" symbolically establishes a cultural hierarchy in the relation between Orundellico and his European hosts. The linguistic strategy in the title evokes the memory of England's colonial past without openly questioning it, and thus becomes, perhaps unintentionally, a racially charged statement. Similarly, it is somewhat doubtful where Jemmy's "home" is, after a year of life in Europe. The moral ambivalence of the experiment – curiously and regrettably – is not hinted at in the narrative.

The visual metaphors in the book may be admired for their explicitness, but their ethical implications are doubtful. Jemmy's body, likened through its pink nakedness to bodies of pets belonging to the English, effectively captures his vulnerability in the unknown environment, yet the metaphor is double-edged: it unproblematically fuses a visual declaration of criticism of the insensitivity of the host culture with a glaring spectacle of racial difference. In a similar vein, although Jemmy's face juxtaposed with the faceless figures of his hosts is meant to "humanise" him, the chosen visual conventions bestow upon his face the status of a blank slate. An implication of Jemmy's racial inferiority, perhaps in spite of the artists' intentions, lurks on the pages of the narrative.

Eric

Shaun Tan's picturebook *Eric* was first published in Australia as part of the collection *Tales from Outer Suburbia* in 2008, and then as a separate small size hardback in 2010 by Allen & Unwin. In the UK it was published in both formats by Templar.[2] Its plot features the visit of a guest from abroad, but despite the realistic and matter-of-fact tone of the text, the book instantly introduces fantastical elements in the illustrations. The very beginning makes the readers alert because the expectations fostered by reading the first lines of the text are by no means commensurate with what can be seen. The homodiegetic narrator, the host, introduces Eric as a foreign-exchange student with somewhat unconventional habits. The accompanying pictures reveal a mysterious reality in which an alien-like miniature leafy creature comes to the house carrying a peanut instead of a suitcase and chooses to sleep in a cup.

The seemingly simple storyline becomes a pretext to explore not only the relationship between the newcomer and his hosts, but also existential dilemmas of a more general character. *Eric* has a nuanced, undefinitive plotline, which provokes both an immediate response and contemplation that comes with re-readings. The pervasive sense of discomfort arising from the ironic incongruence between the text and the image is one of the strategies subtly signifying the underlying theme of the book. Visual humour is another crucial device that destabilises the text: for example, when the text tells us in a matter-of-fact tone that Eric is studying in the library, the picture portrays him deciphering the characters in a book that he has to stand on. Eric brings chaos and a sense of uncertainty into the life of his hosts, but this uncertainty, expressed metaphorically through the indefinable body and surprising behaviours of the eponymous character, is not threatening – what is more, the visual narrative implies that it can be easily embraced.

As Eric is portrayed as an indeterminate, delicate, two-eyed little creature without a mouth, perhaps an alien, perhaps a child, he connotes otherness in its many incarnations. His physical difference and unconventional interests – especially his appreciation for "small things" – might imply a subtle critique of consumer society and middle class values: an obsession with neatness, normalcy, and possessions as status indicators. The artist's defiance against social pressure to conform is a theme that haunts his other works, and in *Eric* it seems to be a central theme. Indicators of an implicit praise of nonconformity are embedded in the form of the narrative and the characterisation of the eponymous character. The choice of monochrome pencil drawings brings to mind a sense of gentleness and modesty, as opposed to the flashy opulence of western consumer societies.

This, however, would not exhaust the potential of the narrative, which, if read through the prism of ethics, reveals more narrative tropes. Just as the format of the picturebook is tellingly inconspicuous, so Eric himself is small yet somehow significant, so that his presence makes his hosts more attentive. The urge to learn attentiveness and, by extension, readiness to welcome the unfamiliar – is arguably one of the powerful implicit themes of

[2] While I am aware of the links between individual stories, my analysis focuses exclusively on *Eric*, first because a discussion on the collection as a whole deserves a separate analysis which would not lie within the scope of this paper, and second because *Eric* functions as an independent picturebook.

Eric. The formal features of the book also encourage attentive reading, as seemingly insignificant visual details add substantial meaning to the story. The dot above the "i" in Eric's name which is moved to the left and does not quite fit there implies, just as Eric himself, that the superficial order we try to impose on the world is an illusion. *Eric*'s plotline suggests that destabilising, non-definitive aspects of life are inevitable and natural.

The presence of multilayered metaphors, the indeterminacy of the plot, and the power of the understatement turn *Eric* into a fascinating, open-ended work.[3] The use of even apparently insignificant chunks of language and visual details is never accidental. The verbal text abounds in understatements, for example when the narrator recalls the family's problem with pronouncing the student's real name. The hosts address the guest as "Eric" at his request. The consent is mutual, but the awareness of both parties that the name is just a temporary arrangement of convenience signals the potential moment of tension and remains the unspoken other of the text, a telling sign of barriers in the mind. The narrator becomes the implied author's mouthpiece, highlighting the family's parochialism and complacency. The words repeated by the narrator's mother: "it must be a cultural thing" as a reaction to Eric's behaviour suggest distance, helplessness, and anxiety, as the Other destabilises the *status quo* of the hosts' so far orderly lives and, by his very presence, unintentionally questions values they hold dear.

The narrative perspective mediated through image and word is equally complex and ethically engaged. Whatever we learn from the text is filtered through the host's mind, yet in the illustrations the narrator is assigned the role of a follower of Eric's curious gaze at the hitherto familiar world. Paradoxically, it is Eric who becomes the narrator's guide in an environment that is explored by both of them like an alien territory. Although it is unacknowledged in the text, the way the narrator (and the reader) glances at Eric reveals an emotional closeness: seeing Eric through the lens of the narrator's eyes feels as if we crouched or leaned towards him. We see him through close-ups, in front of us, we maintain the eye-contact with him. The will to have a dialogue, to experience partnership and friendly intimacy, while not articulated in the text, reveals itself in the illustrations as a form of unacknowledged desire to cross boundaries. Similarly, Eric's delicate, leafy, shaky figure drawn in pencil may appear physically fragile, but his gestures are spontaneous and friendly, while his body language signifies curiosity, energy, and readiness to learn the unknown world around him. The choice of perspective makes his enthusiasm contagious.

Amazingly, the compact form of the narrative condenses meaning to an extent that within the narrative of hope it is able to accommodate space for darker emotions. Like Pandora's box, the encounter suddenly releases an avalanche of ambivalent feelings in the

[3] Making this remark I am indirectly indebted to the thought-provoking article on Shaun Tan's *The Red Tree* by Andrea Schwenke-Wyile, who analyses Tan's work in relation to Roland Barthes' concept of the writerly text. See "Perceiving *The Red Tree*: Narrative Repair, Writerly Metaphor, and Sensible Anarchy." *Telling Children's Stories: Narrative Theory and Children's Literature* (2011), Ed. Mike Cadden, University of Nebraska Press, pp. 120–139.

hosts. The narrative voice betrays itself: curiosity and the will to be a good host struggle with somewhat judgemental and prejudiced attitudes. *Eric* captures that sense of a crisis perfectly. Yet, by making the readers empathise with the visitor, the narrative encourages them to challenge those preconceived notions. Owing to the points of indeterminacy embedded in the narrative, the readers are offered an opportunity to question powerful cultural stereotypes. Eric's interest in things that go unnoticed by many adults does not automatically turn him into a child or a childish adult. As a metaphor of childhood, the narrative asserts that children's concerns may have more significance than many adults grant them. The narrator may not be as authoritative and objective as s/he sees herself; the emotional adult within her turns out to be very fragile. The declared concern over the guest is a thin disguise for aloofness, portrayed with ironic distance by the narrator's older self: "for once I would be a local expert, a fountain of interesting facts and opinions". The ironic clash of perspectives of the narrator and his self from the past is also visible in the way the host reports his past negative reaction to Eric's interest in things discovered on the ground: "I might have found this a little exasperating, but I kept thinking about what Mum had said, about the cultural thing. Then I didn't mind so much."

Fig. 1. Tan S. (2010), *Eric*. Crows Nest, N.S.W., Allen & Unwin

Eric perfectly illustrates Martha Nussbaum's point about literature's organic relation between the form and the content, whose uniqueness creates a meaningful imaginary space that could not be expressed in the same way in a different narrative form. In *Eric* the dialogism detected between the form and the content of the book expresses itself through the subtle, harmonious, symbiotic, ethical relationship between the verbal and visual text. Even if their juxtaposition reveals gaps and incongruencies, they are interwoven with meanings of the narrative as a whole.

The thoughtful interaction of the visual and verbal mode conveys meanings that have an exceptionally expressive power. For example, it may seem that the host's perspective on the events is the only one, yet there are two voices telling the story. On one of the spreads the pictures silently narrate Eric's questions, which puzzle the host to such an extent that he does not articulate them in words. Perhaps Eric has been symbolically silenced by the verbal narrator, or perhaps the pictures represent the host's memories, or moments when he pauses to relive the memory of the experience. Interestingly, the multifaceted relationship between text and image resembles a harmonious interchange: the illustrations appear when verbal descriptions would have to be too specific, or lengthy, or would spoil the fun of reading the visually narrated fantasy. They also have a dramatic function: the poignant sense of emptiness after Eric's sudden departure (on a leaf flying through the window) is represented by an isolated image on a white background of his plate with a peanut on it that constructs a pause in the narrative. The image, stylised into a still life, metaphorically speaks of a belated realisation of Eric's precious presence. The symbolic connotations of *nature morte* convention seem to be accurate, as the everyday objects acquire a special significance in the illustration, being a painful reminder of Eric's absence to those abandoned.

Eric's parting gift is a tangible sign of his physical presence, of his artistry to transform an environment unfamiliar (and potentially hostile) to him. It can be read as a kind of epiphany, perhaps even an intervention of a metaphysical force. Before the family discovers it, the narrator mentions the discomfort, a sense of "something unfinished, unresolved". The overflow of emotions is reflected in a sudden metafictive address to the reader; the narrator emotionally insists: "go and see for yourself". The final illustration in the form of a double spread, the only one in the story and the only one in colour, is a powerful wordless statement about the long-term reverberations of the encounter.[4] With the ending there comes an illumination, and, perhaps somewhat belated, sense of metaphysical and lasting connection between the visitor and the hosts. The gift that Eric leaves in the pantry can be read as a symbol of a bond that is represented as having a material, organic form. The Other regains the voice, as we finally have access to his own words and handwriting in the form of the sincere *thank you* note. The past reverberates in the present; encounters are permanently imprinted on our lives.

[4] There are subtle differences between the original story's layout design and artwork as it appeared in *Tales from Outer Suburbia* and its small-sized edition. The illustrations in this article come from: Shaun Tan (2010), *Eric,* Allen & Unwin Sydney.

Fig. 2. Tan S. (2010), *Eric*. Crows Nest, N.S.W., Allen & Unwin

The encounter with Eric on the spreads of the book feels genuinely and surprisingly physical. Perhaps it is so because "[t]he line of charcoal, pencil, and pen is an expressive and emotional line and so is a model crafted by human hand" (Pallasmaa 2009: 100). The appeal to the sense of touch, so striking in the illustrations, although never alluded to in the text, has a symbolic dimension, silently advocating the need for physical closeness and for crossing boundaries. It is visible through its associations with nature – leaves and flowers; through the choice of shapes and objects, such as the oblong shape and the pleasantly rough texture of the peanut which Eric brings as his suitcase; or through organic shapes of containers with radiant flower-like plants (it is noteworthy that the seemingly redundant objects have become vessels of new life). The frames of the delicately drawn images are almost non-existent; their nebulousness remains integrated with the whiteness of the background. The technique of cross-hatching and hatching evoke a pleasant sense of natural texture, whereas Eric's fantastical status is undermined by a sense of materiality denoted by the constant presence of his shadow in subsequent illustrations. Finally, we could perhaps also assume an intentionally created sense of intimacy between the readers and the artist; as every line is palpable evidence of the creative process, it can be argued that the works that make this process explicit "invite the viewer/user to touch the hand of the maker" (Pallasmaa 2009: 104).

The artist's choice to use pencil in order to depict the imaginary encounter, as well as his decisions concerning the visual characterisation of Eric have ethical implications. As contemporary consumer culture floods its viewers with images which are easily consumable and thus erase the memory of the labour involved in artistic traditions based on

craftsmanship, the cultivation of art that is grounded in the lived world appears even more crucial (Pallasmaa 2009: 20–21). *Eric*'s narrative strategies are inspired by the embodied experience of the world. They express the essence of Pallasmaa's call for "an educational change concerning the significance of the sensory realm (…) in order to enable us to re-discover ourselves as complete physical and mental beings, to fully utilise our capacities, and to make us less vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation" (2009: 21).

If the readers use their perceptive powers carefully, they will see the nostalgic subtext of Eric, the subtle, indefinite interplay of the narrator's younger and older selves. The readers never learn the narrator's age, gender, or name, or the time span between the visit and the moment of storytelling; they can only assume that the narrator is no longer a child. There are two clues in the text, which starts with the words: "some years ago…" and ends with "after all these years". The visual convention of the illustrations resembles sequences from a dream, or shots from an old movie. The narrator's memories imagined in the illustrations are thus confronted with the perspective of the person reconstructing the events verbally years later. What is striking is the contrast between a sense of an authentic emotional bond between the narrator and Eric palpable in the illustrations, and the older narrator's refusal to articulate that intimacy. The text censors the emotions expressed in the illustrations, as if the older narrator was trying to suppress these memories, or was not able to speak about them. Eric's gift was an impulse to change, but perhaps with time old habits would return. However, the unidentified longing for authenticity and beauty, no matter how fleeting, is reflected in the metaphor of the leaf, in the meticulous pencil drawings, and in the unexpectedly painful parting.

Shaun Tan's art challenges expectations and transforms seeing. It accentuates hospitality in its most humane incarnations; gestures of giving asylum and providing care pervade his works. His picturebook *The Lost Thing* is a case in point, but other stories in *Tales from Outer Suburbia* also allude to this ethical call through a story about the social usefulness of the mysterious water buffalo residing on a vacant lot or the hilarious instruction on how to make a pet for oneself, which between the lines voices concern for abandoned animals. It reverberates in its most dramatic form in the nightmarish short story about the rescue of the nine turtles. It also celebrates harmonious co-existence in the humorous finale, featuring a metafictive address to the reader in the form of a handwritten greeting from the "Tuesday Afternoon Reading Group" – a group of fantastical creatures of various shapes and sizes and a girl, sitting side by side and glancing at the reader from the accompanying illustration.

In his notes on the origins of *Tales from Outer Suburbia,* Tan remarks: "all of the stories in *Suburbia* are the products of 'homeless' sketchbook doodles and half-articulated ideas – those that I have found especially intriguing, or accidentally poetic in some way" (Tan a: par. 3). His book thus becomes a hospitable space, a haven for bizarre creatures that populate his illustrations and for seemingly disconnected ideas or sketches. Each is developed into a "tale" that can live its own independent life – in the way *Eric* does. When "invited" to form a volume, however, they become a polyphonic, evocative, artistic vision that speaks more forcefully through its cumulative affective power.

Discussion

The differences between the picturebooks' form, their implications, and the meaning-making potential of both the texts and illustrations situate them within a wider discussion of visual literature's aesthetic, emotional and ethical dimensions. From my perspective as a literary scholar, what can be decisive with respect to the educational value of each book is its emotional and ethical message, or lack of one. *Jemmy Button* reports the boy's voyage to the other side of the globe without offering an ethical reflection on the events. The picturebook's potential merit – the evocation of a real, intriguing story from a distant past – is conveyed in a way that is historically disputable. *Eric*, on the other hand, focuses on the psychological and emotional aspects of the encounter. It offers a dialogical vision, conveying the perspective of both the narrator and Eric through the intricate, imaginative play between the textual and the visual narration. The story's formal simplicity, which makes it perfectly accessible to very young readers, is deceptive, as the book develops an ethically engaged commentary whose many layers can be appreciated by readers at any age.

The authors of *Jemmy Button* have reduced historical context to the minimum, perhaps to make sure that the story has a universal appeal or in an effort to ennoble their work by evoking associations with fairy tales. Yet, because it is not an invented story, but a retelling of real events, a certain sense of the inaccuracy of representation is palpable to historically informed readers. The structure of both verbal and visual narration contains meaningful gaps which result in a sanitised and simplified version of history. Another potential problem is the credibility of the psychological portrayal of the Fuegian boy. The narration remains silent about Orundellico's real status and instead attributes agency to him, implying that it was his wish first to explore the world, and later to return to his homeland, which is a somewhat romanticised perspective.[5] The authors have clearly intended to abstain from judging past attitudes and actions by today's standards, but the attempt at neutrality cannot escape moral implications.

Although the picturebooks were inspired by real encounters and real experiences, both, rather strikingly, avoid providing the readers with factual or descriptive detail. In *Eric*, however, the scarcity of information allows the readers to focus on the complexity of the emotional dimension of the situation. The narration reflects the narrator's psychological condition and mirrors those emotions that (s)he is ready to articulate. Other emotions, most probably those which are more difficult to verbalise, as well as the implicitly expressed perspective of the guest, are conveyed in the illustrations.

As its aesthetic qualities are on a par with its ethical sensibility, *Eric* may function as a model picturebook in artistic education. Shaun Tan communicates the essence of his story through the refined relation between the text and the illustrations. As a whole, they poignantly speak about the plethora of the often contradictory emotions that accompany

[5] Information about the circumstances of the boy's voyage to England and the reasons for his return is available, for example, in Jonathan Duffy and Megan Lane. *The "hostages" that sailed with Darwin*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/4429006.stm (12.09.2016).

(human) encounters. Asked about the audience of his books, the artist answers: "perhaps the best answer I can give is this: anyone who reads and looks. That is, anyone who is curious, who enjoys strangeness, mystery, and oddity, who likes asking questions and using their imagination, and is prepared to devote time and attention accordingly" (Tan c: par. 20). *Eric*, although told by apparently simple means, can be appreciated by all kinds of readers for its subtle treatment of the universal theme and for the unity between aesthetics and ethics.

Whether read as part of a collection or as an independent work, *Eric* certainly is a story with transformative potential. The book invites many readings: the visitor can be a metaphor of any living creature whose presence is initially treated as an invasion of familiar order and secure space. It represents a force that introduces the element of the unknown, the unpredictable – and preciously refreshing – into a stabilised (or perhaps stagnated) existence. In a more esoteric sense, Eric may stand for the metaphysical space of the other within the self – perhaps an internal voice that urges one to refine one's ethical judgements, perhaps a divine element within the soul. The story of this unexpectedly affective encounter and the open, indeterminate structure of Tan's work imply that crucial truths about life may be unveiled gradually. His metaphors and understatements subtly, if effectively, communicate ethical imperatives: an attentive gaze which sees through appearances, harmonious coexistence with the surrounding material world, and readiness to invite others into our lives. Encounters can be risky; we are bound to change – but change, if accompanied by empathy, care and responsibility, can be promising and enriching.

Inspired by P.B. Shelley, Mary Midgley writes about poets as "the unacknowledged legislators of the world" who offer "forceful visions" to other people (2006: 51). Picturebooks which create such forceful visions have enormous power. The ingenious interaction of image and text in such books invites the reader to embark on a journey, to go where the artist has already been. In a genuinely hospitable gesture, the artist shares with readers the experience of "places and continents which one has never visited before, or whose existence was unknown prior to having been guided there by the work of one's own hand and imagination, and one's combined attitude of hesitation and curiosity" (Pallasmaa 2009: 112).

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Producing a popular image of the Amazon rainforest and indigenous peoples in picturebooks in English-speaking societies

Summary

For many years the media have presented the rainforest as a fascinating and exotic place, abundant in various species of plants and animals, the home of people decorated with feathers or holding spears. Picturebooks are no exception. This article presents the ways a popular image of the Amazon forest is produced in picturebooks for young readers in English-speaking industrialised societies. The analysis shows that shaping knowledge about the tropical forest is based on stereotypes about the "untouched pristine forest" populated by "wild indigenous people" – a notion that is spurious. Some of these books undertake the subject of indigenous knowledge or the loss of cultural identity. However the presentation of these issues often lacks deeper dimensions. The exoticisation of rainforest inhabitants as well as the forest itself may have a negative impact on young readers' understanding of the cultural diversity of the Amazon, as well as their understanding of the complexity of indigenous peoples' lives.

Key words: indigenous cultures, picturebooks, children's literature, Amazon Basin

Słowa kluczowe: kultury tubylcze, książka obrazkowa, literatura dla dzieci, Amazonia

Introduction

The role of picturebooks in educating young readers about the world is undeniable. Children learn about various peoples and places and the books familiarise them with things that would be otherwise strange or maybe even frightening. Although the role of books in the socialisation process is currently discussed, it has not been denied for a long time now (e.g. Betzner, Moore 1940; Weitzman et al. 1972).

The policies on multiculturalism as well as political correctness very often have to oppose popular stereotypic assumptions on "us" and "others". Taking into account recent events in Europe and other continents, the division into "the West and the Rest" (Hall 1992: 275–330) is maybe even more pronounced now than it was in previous years. The notion of differences between cultures and ways of life often veils elements that we all share, that are simply human. Notions of others being strange or even dangerous seem to grow stronger with distance and this could explain why the indigenous people of South

America are regarded as unfamiliar and eccentric. To some extent it seems that in a popular view they are also still understood in terms of a "noble savage" – a notion that has been long overturned in anthropology and other sciences. In this context the image of the indigenous peoples living in the Amazon Basin region that is created in picturebooks for children presents an interesting issue. Children are presented with an image that might influence their views on the indigenous peoples' lives and problems. What they learn from the books might also influence their understanding of cultural diversity, as reading the book allows the children, to some extent, to experience other ways of living that differ significantly from their own.

The influence of an image of "exotic" cultures produced by various media in the mainstream culture on the understanding of other people's ways of life has been discussed in anthropology several times (Shepard 2011, Conklin 1997; Sponsel 2010, Wierucka 2013: 129–135 and others). The popular image that is created can be crucial for the successful implementation of important health, environmental, or educational projects in indigenous communities as well as for politics and law. This was especially visible during the United Nation climate summit in Paris at the end of 2015: despite the demand to put indigenous rights back into the Climate Change Agreement, the agreement was signed without them (Collins 2016). To some extent this may be owing to the popular image of the indigenous people being "savages" living in "harmony with nature" in the forest despite the industrialisation process that the Amazonian countries are pursuing.

I will explore how the Amazon rainforest and people inhabiting it are presented in most popular picturebooks in English and what image in turn is created. The books that I chose for this study are considered the most popular ones about the rainforest. The selection of the books for this analysis was based on the bestselling children's books on the Amazon.com on-line store. The algorithm used in the search option in on-line store is based on the popularity of the book – the number of books sold is a key factor in this mechanism. Consequently, the most popular books, reaching a wider audience have the biggest influence in shaping children's image of the rainforest in English-speaking societies.

I limited my analysis to the four best-selling books on the Amazon.com on-line store (as of September 2015). Even the very first glance at these publications gives us significant insight into the way of creating an image of the rainforest and people living in it: these four books' covers, similarly to many other books on the topic, are coloured deep green. Colourful birds and flowers appear on three out of four covers. The image takes the viewer to a peaceful and beautiful place. The plants are almost growing out of the covers onto the hands of the reader. They give the feeling that it might be possible to hold them, bring them even closer and follow them into the wonderful world they promise to be present in the book. Nevertheless, despite their similar cover design the books differ significantly.

The forest

"The Forest Grew All Around" (Mitchell, MacLennan 2007) bears the form of a children's rhyme.

> On the ground,
> there fell a seed…
> the fluffiest seed
> that you ever did see.

The reader follows the rhyme and encounters different plants and animals, each one higher on the tree, surrounded by leaves, flowers, and vines. This travel up the tree leads to a pod with seeds, and the fluffy seed falls on the ground to complete the book's loop. The rhyme accumulates consecutive objects and becomes longer with every page (the reader goes back to the fluffy seed on every page as well as at the end of the book).

The book includes more than just the rhyme: on every page there is an explanation of plants or animals that are present on that page. Also, at the end of the book there are activities that can be done at home or during the class and they include quizzes and even a recipe for "rainforest cookies" – the name comes from the fact that some of the ingredients come from the rainforest.

The forest in the book is full of animals and a little mysterious. It focuses on nature and, while the interdependencies between the animals and plants are not stressed here, the forest is presented as a self-reliant, beautiful place.

The book won several prizes and is widely used in elementary schools in the United States of America.

The most widely known picturebook about the rainforest is the "The Great Kapok Tree" by Lynne Cherry (2000, first edition 1990). The story is about a man who goes to the forest to cut down a kapok tree, one of the most magnificent trees of the tropics. He falls asleep and animals come to him and whisper to him how important the tree is and how they need it to survive. The last one to come to the man is an indigenous boy who asks him to look at the animals and people of the forest in the new way. The man wakes up, looks around and walks out of the forest leaving the tree standing. Although the book tells the story of one tree, it has the power to change the minds of many people. With more people perceiving the importance of forests and the interdependencies between species within it, more rainforest could be spared from deforestation.

The books has no additions except for the author's note at the end.

Kapok trees (*Ceiba pentandra*) are one of the most remarkable trees in the Amazon rainforest. They grow up to 60 meters in height and 3 meters in diameter. Apart from the fact that it is the tallest tree in the rainforest and one of the first to colonise open areas in the forest (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2016) it is also home to numerous animals and plants. Indigenous groups living in the rainforest used the tree's seeds, leaves and resin to cure dysentery, fever, and asthma (Institute Icaria 2016) but also regarded it as the home

of a harpy eagle (*Harpia harpyja*), the largest bird of prey of the rainforest. What is more, the kapok tree was often spoken of in indigenous mythology as the dwelling of forest spirits (e.g. Ortiz 2007) so it played (and to some extend still plays) an important role in the spiritual life of the people of the rainforest.

As mentioned before "The Great kapok Tree" is one of the most popular books about the rainforest in the United States of America. It was incorporated into the elementary school curriculum and had great impact on the perception of the rainforest and deforestation. It allows young readers to understand the effects of deforestation as well as the need of the trees for survival of the rainforest peoples and animals. This book takes on only one topic and it does not explain all the intricacies of the growing industries, which may be the main reason for this book being one of the most popular. It conveys an important message and presents it in a simple manner, making it understandable for a wide audience of young readers.

It is also worth mentioning that the tree in the previously discussed book, "The Forest Grew All Around" also is a kapok tree (the characteristic pod with "fluffy" seeds is the kapok tree pod).

The people and the forest

"The Vanishing Rainforest" (Platt, van Wyck 2003) is an interesting book presenting the forest and the people living in it. Here, the forest becomes merely the background for the events that take place in an Indian group called the Yanomamo. Although the ethnonym does not appear in the text, many cultural traits leave no doubt that the group presented in the book is the Yanomamo: the characteristic common dwelling, the word "nabë" used for strangers, the hairdresses and the ornaments used by the people, and so on. At the end of the book there also are additional materials: a note about the importance of the forest and a glossary.

The Yanomamo culture was well researched in the last fifty years (Ramos 1995; Davis 1977; Chagnon 1968, Albert 1975; Sponsel 1997; Good 1991 and others). Yanomamo Indians live in Brazil and Venezuela. They are characterised as foraging horticulturalists: apart from hunting and gathering they cultivated crops such as bananas, manioc, or plantains. Internal trade was well developed and based mostly on a surplus of resources. It was also used for creating alliances between settlements. Like most indigenous groups, the Yanomamo were self-sufficient until they came into full contact with Western culture – since the seventies they have become dependent on goods delivered to them by outsiders – such as cooking pots, axes, and so on (Hames 1994: 375). Since that time the lives of the Yanomamo people have undergone many changes and, while today many of them still live in traditional dwellings, many have moved closer to the cities in search of work. Also, industrial development has influenced their lives as their land is rich in gold, cassiterite, and oil.

"The Vanishing Rainforest" presents a story about the forest that the Yanomamo live in and the destruction that it faces. The text covers many different topics, such as modern

tourism, deforestation, shamanism, the traditional way of life, epidemics, and scientists working in the area, but there is not much logic to the presented story. All of these very important matters are packed together into a relatively short text and leave the reader with the feeling of being lost. The topics are important, but all of them are very complicated issues that cannot be explained in a book of this sort.

This leads us to the educational aspects of the book. Despite the lack of consistency of the plot, the presented local people are acting as every one of us would in the given circumstances, and I think this is the right way to talk about people of different cultures to children. Young readers should be shown that people all over the world face the same problems, feel the same way, make mistakes, or succeed in their endeavours.

What is interesting is that the Yanomamo people are very well recognised in anthropology and the history of the group, as well as research conducted in their settlements since 1960, are a matter of much discussion and even controversy. Until the sixties of the twentieth century the group was one of the least known indigenous groups of the Amazon region. Today, the Yanomamo culture is the most researched one, the best known as well as the most misunderstood. The so called "Yanomamo controversy" is being taught at universities and discussed as a base for changes introduced to the anthropological code of ethics (Borofsky 2005; Albert, Ramos 1989; Turner 1991; Tierney 2000; Skurski 2011 and others). The first researchers described the Yanomamo as 'fierce people' (see Chagnon 1968) and soon this became a widespread stereotype. The events that took place while researching the Yanomamo culture initiated a debate not only about the manner of describing and presenting indigenous cultures, but also about research ethics as well as the consequences research might have on studied cultures (Walczak 2007: 3). One of the long-lasting outcomes of the conducted research was the label of "the most fierce indigenous group of the world" and it became a problem, not only because of the popular image of the Yanomamo people, but also because of the official interpretation of this image that lead to withholding educational help for the group (Martins 2001). The changes that the Yanomamo culture has undergone in the last fifty years are the outcome of many misunderstandings as well as the complex issues of development, economic growth, and politics of both Venezuela and Brazil. Yanomamo Indians are also often an example of the destructive influence of progress on indigenous groups as it often introduces epidemics, starvation, addiction, raises suicide rates, and shortens life expectancy (Survival International 2015: 10–21).

In light of the above, some solutions to the Indians' problems that the "Vanishing rainforest" book gives are too simple to be practical or true. Tourism is presented as the remedy to all troubles. Research into tourism in the Amazon showed how differently it can influence local cultures, having both positive and negative effects (Wallace 1990, deRios 1994, Stronza 2005, Stocker 2007, Hutchins 2007 and others). It is known that mass tourism, even in the form of so-called "cultural tourism" or "ecotourism" can disrupt cultural practices, loosen family ties, and undermine economic sustainability (Drumm 1991: 22). Tourism is not the answer to the indigenous people's problems, yet the message conveyed in the picturebook brings the reader to a different conclusion. It seems that according to

the authors, tourists coming to the settlement will bring the solution to deforestation, the loss of traditional ways of life, as well as economic problems.

One statement made in the book conveys an important message – "There doesn't have to be a fight between tradition and progress" but there is no explanation how this ideal should be achieved. In the final scene of the story a young girl observes her uncle who goes to build a lodge for tourists. As a proof that this is the best solution, the peccaries that were gone from the area are back and the Yanomamo can go hunting again.

The last book I want to analyse, "The Shaman's Apprentice" (Cherry, Plotkin 1998), tells the story of a young Tirio boy, who became the shaman's apprentice. The approach of the topic in this book is different and it may be a result of the story being a real one. It was first told in the book by Mark Plotkin under the same title "The Shaman's Apprentice" (Plotkin 1994) in which he describes his research as an ethnobotanist.

Tirio Indians number around 1200 people. It is believed that the modern Tirio are descendants of mixed groups that came to the area of the Brazil and Suriname border around the seventeenth century (Riviere 1994: 334). They are hunters and gatherers as well as slash-and-burn cultivators, manioc being their staple cultivation plant (Plotkin 1994: 106–107).

The Tirio Indians have extensive knowledge about the healing substances of various plants, and shamans can cure most physical discomforts. They also practiced more complex knowledge about the supernatural world and spirits that lived there. Similarly to other people of the region, Tirio Indians believed in the powers of shamans who could communicate with the supernatural beings in order to help their community. The shamans' help was required in the case of most serious illnesses that were believed to be caused by malevolent spirits that could harm or even steal peoples' souls. To mediate between the real and supernatural worlds the shamans went into a trance state and thus were able to fight or negotiate with the spirits (traditionally the spirits were ambivalent, but missionaries that came to the area convinced the Tirio people that all spirits were bad – Riviere 1994: 336). The power of the shamans came also from the belief that with the help of spirits they could not only cure people, but also harm them. These practices have been abandoned and today Tirio shamans use mostly herbal remedies to cure people in their communities (Riviere 1994: 336).

The Indians in the picturebook are portrayed as living in balance with the forest. They have extensive knowledge about it and, despite the efforts of the missionaries, they keep their traditions alive. The book focuses on shamanism and the knowledge of healing people using plants from the rainforest. The book however does not explore all the aspects of local shamanism. It may be so because the author is an ethnobotanist, therefore he focuses mostly on herbal medicine. Nevertheless the book stands apart from the others – it tells a true story as witnessed by the author, giving the story an additional dimension.

The story teaches the value of traditional medicine and the importance of forest herbs. The authors also mention the arrival of missionaries, the loss of faith in traditional healing and later the discovery that some Western medicine comes from indigenous knowledge about the forest. The main character is a young Tirio boy, who admires the old village

shaman. The old shaman, who still had traditional knowledge, had lost his position in the group – the missionaries were teaching the Indians that his skills are no longer needed. To prove this, they gave the Indians Western medicine that could cure disease like malaria. The indigenous people had not encountered these illnesses before, so the shamans did not have a remedy for them. The story takes a turn with the arrival of a female scientist (the figure representing the author himself), who wants to gather information about traditional shamanistic herbal remedies. The Tirio do not trust the woman at first, but she knows their language and persuades them to teach her. One of the surprising pieces of information which she gave them was that the remedy for malaria was a result of indigenous peoples' knowledge of the rainforest (meaning that it did not come from Western medicinal practices, as the Indians were taught by the missionaries). For the next five years, with the shamans' help, the scientist gathers information that enables her to prepare a book of medicinal plants used in Tirio medicinal practices. She points out: "Now you have two books in your language – the Bible and this, the wisdom of [the shaman] Nahtahlah. Now your people will never forget the shaman's wisdom" (Cherry, Plotkin 1998: 29). Of course, the role of the scientist might be discussed in various aspects. Anthropology knows many cases of interacting with indigenous peoples and the outsiders' abusing their power over the studied groups (see for example Borofsky 2005, Ramos, Albert 1989 and others), but in the case of this book the scientist's work resulted in restoring the shaman's power within the local group, finding him a new apprentice, and saving his knowledge from perishing. It is worth stressing that the story, as I mentioned before, is based on true events and the author indeed collected information about medicinal herbal practices of the Tirio and along with local shamans created the Tirio Plant Medicine Book (Plotkin 1994: 287).

The book takes up the discussion of the destructive role of the missionaries' work, the existence of honest and skillful scientists' practices as well as the influence of globalisation on the indigenous peoples.

Discussion

Nature as presented in the discussed books is abundant, full of plants and animals – and this to some degree reflects the truth, as the rainforest is the most biodiverse place on our planet. Nevertheless the books present a vision of the rainforest as a beautiful, peaceful place, where everything and everybody lives in harmony. It is also shown as a mysterious place, where amazing animals live and wonderful things happen. This is true only to some extent. Scientists and environmentalists envision the Amazon as a place for sustainable development – it includes the indigenous way of life and ecotourism as the only global disturbance of the area (Goulding et al. 2003: 11). This vision is impossible to accomplish as the Amazonian nations are pursuing industrial development and the need for resources that are present in the Amazon rainforest is constantly growing.

The books also present the notion that the rainforest is the "Earth's lungs". For quite some time we have known that this is not actually true: the forest produces oxygen, but

the decomposition of the leaf litter that occurs in the forest use the same or an even bigger amount of oxygen (Goulding et al. 2003: 19). Rainforests play a key role in regulating the Earth's climate, so the deforestation that takes place in the Amazon Basin impacts climate processes everywhere (Shukla et al. 1990; Werth, Avisar 2002, and others). These complex dependencies are not stressed in the discussed books – however it would be unreasonable to expect these topics to be included in children's books. The topics of forest destruction, missionaries' work or tourism appear in the analysed literature, however their causes are not explained.

It seems that people living in the rainforests are of much less interest than nature itself. Indians appear in the discussed books either as a part of the forest ("The Great Kapok Tree") or as people who see tourism as the solution to all their problems when faced with industrialisation ("The Vanishing Rainforest"). "The Shaman's Apprentice" represents a different approach to the topic, although it also is not free of flaws: the pictures in the book show Indians in loincloths made out of red fabric, and the same artifacts are present in "The Vanishing Rainforest". The Yanomamo Indians did not traditionally wear red loincloths, but in order to not appear naked to the Western people visiting the settlements they put on the cloths. This image created for tourists has found its way into children's books and this is how the Indians are now presented. What is interesting is that the Indians in the books do not wear modern clothes – the t-shirts or shorts that they use every day now ("The Shaman's Apprentice" being the exception) – and are drawn naked (except for the loincloth). This mirrors the Western stereotype of an "Indian", the "noble savage", that is close to nature, and lives peacefully somewhere "far away". Additionally, in "The Vanishing Rainforest" only the main antagonist wears a red t-shirt. He collaborates with Western people so his t-shirt along with the new machete symbolise the betrayal of traditional values. The antagonist is told by his family members that collaboration is not accepted, but he does not take the t-shirt off. It may be a sign of changing times and modern challenges that the Indians face.

The analysed books do not avoid either the exoticisation of the indigenous people of the rainforest or of the rainforest itself. The presented image builds on the common notion that Amazonian Indians still lead fully traditional lives and are, to some extent, "wild". What is more, the authors usually do not emphasise the cultural diversity of the Amazon Basin – the stories about one indigenous group are therefore considered representative for all others. The knowledge that children acquire from these stories is not very precise. Nevertheless the books might raise consciousness about problems connected with deforestation and the environmental interdependence of people and nature. The rainforest has a chance of survival as long as we understand its importance – creating and reading picturebooks about it is one of the measures contributing to this process.

The image of the indigenous inhabitants of the Amazon rainforest presented in the discussed picturebooks does not differ significantly from the images produced by the mass media. As an outcome, the children are presented with information that is not entirely true. It might be expected that literature as a medium more destined to reflect on the deeper

nature of cultural aspects of human life would present an image closer to reality. Instead, it feeds off the popular vision of Indians and what is more, with only few exceptions it strengthens it, leaving the young readers with a false representation of the indigenous contemporary way of life and worldview.

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"True fiction" – the memory and the postmemory of traumatic war events in a picturebook

Summary

The World War II has left an emotional wound, and its direct victims as well as new generations have to cope with it. The main subject of my presentation will be an analysis of methods for presenting World War II history in against the background of a theory of memory and postmemory of war's trauma through the example of picturebooks which were published in Poland during the first two decades of the XXI century. I would like to discuss the main trends in presenting the issues pertaining to the war. The transcription of the Second World War memory into picturebooks is especially interesting for me as a historian of art. I analyse the artistic styles adapted by the artists to express difficult topics, such as the holocaust, the horror of concentrations camps, hunger, fear, loss of family, death. Composition, artistic techniques, colour, vocabulary, typography – these are the tools in the hands of artists through which they can not only tell the story, but also stir up emotions and shape the personality. The picturebook, like other types of art, operates through the language of fiction to tell the truth. Art is one of the languages of historical narration.

Key words: memory, postmemory, Polish picturebook, Polish contemporary art

Słowa klucze: pamięć, postpamięć, polska książka obrazkowa, polska sztuka współczesna

World War II has left a wound that has to be faced, not only by its direct victims, but also by succeeding generations. My dissertation will constitute an analysis of ways of rendering stories happening during World War II in confrontation with the theory of memory and postmemory of traumatic war events, using examples of picturebooks available in Poland in the first decades of the 21st century. Therefore, it will be composed of two parts: a theoretical introduction will be followed by examples of specific artistic undertakings.

The term postmemory, which is of key importance for further deliberations, was coined by Marianne Hirsch (1997) and refers to inherited memories.[1] It was conceived

[1] "I use the term postmemory to describe the relationship of the children of survivors of cultural or collective trauma to the experiences of their parents, experiences that they "remember" only as the stories and images with which they grew up, but that are so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories in their own right. The term is meant to convey its temporal and qualitative difference from survivor memory, its secondary or second-generation memory quality, its basis in displacement, its belatedness. Postmemory is a powerful form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source I mediated not through recollection, but through projection, investment, and creation. That is not to say that survivor

for the purposes of discussing the aftermath of the Holocaust, that is the impact genocidal trauma had on the descendants of the victims. We are dealing here literally with inherited memories, that is memories belonging to the following generation. In her deliberations, Hirsch focused on victims of the Holocaust, thus building the area of research. And a photograph became the medium for carrying memories. Of course, Hirsch further argues that the certainty of direct representation is not ultimate. Therefore, her basic task is to show ways in which the actual life of a family clashes with the idealisation of its own image and to demonstrate that dynamic changes in this image may reveal or hide the "unaware optics" of individuals and the family group.[2] Therefore, a question should be asked about the significance of the visual medium in determining postmemory. In this section, I would like to analyse similarities and differences between a photograph, which for Hirsch served as the stimulant for analysing the postmemory phenomenon, and an illustration in a book, which is a medium of key significance for me.

There have been numerous theoretical publications devoted to photography (e.g. Walden ed. 2008; Benjamin 1996; Barthes 1995; Flusser 1984; Rouillé 2007). One of the most famous and significant books is "On photography" by Susan Sontag in which she pays attention to the role of this medium in teaching us a new visual code – a grammar and an ethics of seeing (Sontag, 1986: 7). Susan Sontag was a renowned and respected American intellectual. Her writings were appreciated by many academics and became highly popular around the world. In my opinion, her essays reveal the unique ability of the author to highlight, or rather pick up, the non-obvious aspects of the obvious. This is illustrated distinctly by the following quote:

> Photographs really are experience captured, and the camera is the ideal arm of consciousness in its acquisitive mood. To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed (Sontag 1986: 8).

The mental processes indicated here refer indirectly to the question of postmemory – by using imagination, not only are we offered a bit of time travel, but also our fondness for inquiring, learning history, not always realised, is being satisfied. Sontag gives readers another key to understanding photography. It is not a classic methodological set of tools (composition, light, subject), but an understanding of this art through analysis of attitudes towards photography.

Since Hirsch combines discussions about photography with deliberations about the traumatic events of the Holocaust, it induced me to analyse ways in which the Holocaust was rendered in photographs. This topic has been widely presented in academic literature, including publications related to the history of art. One of such texts, on the one hand

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memory itself is unmediated, but that it is more directly connected to the past. Postmemory characterises the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are displaced by the stories of the previous generation, shaped by traumatic events that they can neither understand nor re-create" (Hirsch 1999: 8).

[2] Postmemory theory by Hirsch was presented in an interesting manner by Dąbrowski (2011: 427–429).

touching upon memory, and on the other its artistic representation, is a paper by Patrycja Cembrzyńska *Dogasająca świeca. Shoah i pamięć konsumenta* [A Candle Burning Out. Shoah and Consumer Memory] (2014). It was based on publications by Janina Struk (2007) and Judith Keilbach (2009) highly important for the discussed topic.

Photography in the theory of cognition and the epistemological role of a photographic image were the subject of a recent publication by Aleksandra Łukaszewicz Alcazar (2014). The author draws attention to realism in photography, a thread well-represented in the literature, that prevailed since the day it was born and influenced beliefs in the 20th century. Does the view about the realistic formula of a photographic image however, apply also today?

Hirsch and her postmemory theory appear to go beyond this manner of thinking about photography, as postmemory is experienced by individuals who were growing up (or have grown up) in a world dominated by the narrative referring to the times before their birth. The very narrative, going towards attempted retrospection and interpretation, builds up the social and historical context and thus provides interpretation going beyond realism. For Hirsch argues that postmemory is in a sense false memory, as it pertains to events not directly experienced. This however, does not undermine the fact that events generating inherited memories, as this is how one may briefly describe the process of creating postmemory, grow into the awareness of subsequent generations, so that they are sensed by their representatives as their own.

The term "postmemory" primarily refers to the experiences of descendants of Holocaust victims. At times, it has been used in relation to societies touched by a group trauma at some historic moment. Therefore, inspired by the deliberations of Marianne Hirsch, and encouraged by Berger's thought that "Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognises before it can speak" (Berger 1997: 7), I would like to analyse picturebooks presenting stories about World War II in relation to postmemory.

The question underlying and becoming the thesis of these deliberations is the following: can we search for postmemory processes still further away from the memory-generating source, that is describing and depicting somebody else's memories in stories? According to Hirsch's theory, postmemory develops concentrically – the generation of witnesses of traumatic events is the source, whereas their descendants become subsequent spheres of impact. Therefore, there is a need of ponderable restrictions: there must exist family bonds and family keepsakes, such as e.g. photographs or any other items, which serve as the medium for transferring memories to the next generations, but at the same time they become the source of new memories for the new generation. By the means of the examples below I shall discuss how we will be dealing with a picturebook construed as a paperback publication in which written content is as important as the illustrative component, or even more broadly, with the visual one.

Further in the paper, I shall present books that to a various extent meet the demands of the *picturebook* genre. The range of dependencies between text and illustration will be quite extensive (for some scholars, perhaps too arbitrary), however my goal is not to

provide an analysis by type, but a thematic analysis, and my priority is to track ways of evoking various forms of postmemory.

Since a picturebook may be read by both adults and children, the impact of the book and its incorporated images on the young is a thing that should be considered. Researchers have drawn attention to the educational value of book illustrations and their impact on a child's emotions. Many years ago, Irena Słońska, an educator, noticed the fact that:

> The emotional aspect is fundamental for attractiveness of the book and its illustrations. A child as if 'immerses oneself in the picture' and has a very personal approach to its content. It becomes the centre around which all representations and feelings revolve. Reality blends with imagination, past experiences come to the fore (Słońska 1977: 167).

These beliefs are confirmed by a literary scholar, Elżbieta Kruszyńska:

> In books for the youngest readers, illustrations very often put the world presented by the words in some order, they build a "little world of a child"; pictures substantiate words present in the book (Kruszyńska 2012: 185).

According to modern opinions about the role of illustrations in a picturebook, they appear to become more and more autonomous, by directing the attention towards a symbiotic relationship between an illustration and the text. Such a view is shared by a literary scholar, Iwona Puchalska, who claims that nowadays, an illustration

> establishes […] the relationship between the text and the image in a different manner, not as a dependence or correspondence, but as a dialogue, nearly a separation and sometimes even dominance or discord, competition, polemics, provocation; it emphasises its role as a partner, but also its liberated role in the correspondence between the literary and fine art layer (Puchalska 2007: 198).

The opinion that picturebooks play a very important role in the development of children and young people appears to be very common indeed. An increasing trend of investigating the impact of a picturebook on adult readers is also a source of satisfaction. Those scholars will surely agree with John Berger that "Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognises before it can speak" (Berger 1997: 7).

Coming back however, to the major thesis formulated as a question: can we find postmemory in a picturebook? Before I attempt to provide an answer, I would like to analyse the research material, that is picturebooks addressing issues related to World War II which have been released in Poland in recent years.

The human tragedies that took place during World War II are by all means a serious topic not easily handled by a child. Although I do not write these words as a teacher, I strongly believe that such a topic should be dealt with in an extremely sensitive and thoughtful manner. A child too violently presented with the problem may react very rapidly, and this may be harmful to its further development. Therefore, considering this risk,

should we eliminate these issues from history or wait until the reader grows into an adult? These dilemmas are solved by some outstanding publications representing the picturebook genre that, despite addressing difficult issues, get through to children, enriching their understanding of the world and determining their moral stance. I would like to discuss major trends in presenting war in this category of books. As an art historian, I am interested in the formal aspect of transcribing memory of the World War II in a picturebook.

Outstanding examples of books introducing the difficult issue of concentration camps, undoubtedly include *Dym* [Smoke] by Antón Fortes with illustrations by Joanna Concejo (Fortes, Concejo 2011). A unique combination of images and text provides a highly powerful and emotional message. The unusual talent and outstanding intellect of Concejo help us "imagine the unimaginable",[3] as "in order to know something, one needs to imagine it" (Didi-Huberman 2008: 9). The artist amazes the reader with the simplicity of the applied technique – freehand drawings (used scarcely as they have been ousted by computer software). Sometimes she uses colour. The reader immerses himself/herself in the artist's visions – subtle, allusive, and piercingly accurate, which makes the reader reach the depth of "the unimaginable".

Another prominent book is the publication by Muzeum Okręgowe [District Museum] in Tarnów entitled *Mietek na wojnie* [Mietek at War] (Gancarz, Karpowicz 2013). Diana Karpowicz and Natalia Gancarz presented the story of a Gypsy boy who together with twenty-three thousand Romanies was transported to KL Auschwitz-Birkenau. The story is told by Mietek. The reader gets to know the story which is getting darker and darker with every subsequent page. The text is accompanied by very telling black-and-white illustrations produced using stencils, drip painting technique or drawn. Colour, which symbolises freedom, appears in the first and last page of the book.

In order to familiarise children with the horrors of war, Joanna Chmielewska used a perverse, yet not obvious procedure. In her book *Pamiętnik Blumki* [Blumka's Diary] (Chmielewska 2011), with illustrations made as collages, she presents the world as seen by a little girl – one of Janusz Korczak's wards; the author tells the story of a house at Krochmalna street in pre-war Warsaw. When war breaks out, her voice meaningfully fades away. We learn nothing about her moving to the ghetto and the horrific living conditions. Chmielewska ends this dark story with a page rendering a freight wagon explicitly remembering the day of 6 August 1942 when children from the orphanage together with their guardian were transported to Treblinka death camp. On an empty page, the reader's attention is riveted by a fountain pen transformed into a yad – a Jewish ritual pointer used to follow Torah text, thus offering an unequivocal interpretation of this illustration through Shoah. The last page is an excerpt from a closed diary, with an suggestion that "a diary is there in order not to forget" and tiny wildflowers called forget-me-nots. This message tells us that it is our duty to remember.

The heroic attitude of Janusz Korczak and similar people in the ghetto served as a source of inspiration for Adam Jaromir (text) and Gabriela Cichowska (illustration) to write the book entitled *Ostatnie przedstawienie panny Esterki* [The Last Show of Miss Esterka] (fig. 1) (Jaromir, Cichowska 2014).

[3] Here, I paraphrase the significant polemics of Gérard Wajcman and Georges Didi-Huberman.

Fig. 1. *Ostatnie przedstawienie panny Esterki* [The Last Show of Miss Esterka] by G. Cichowska (2014). Poznań, Media Rodzina

The main character, Estera Winogronówna, is a class tutor who helps children staying in the orphanage at Sienna street discover the amazing world of theatre in the final weeks of their lives, thus making them cherish happy moments which may be their last. Collage-based illustrations (a drawing and attached elements, frottage) recall the air of old photographs. The text, as if typewritten, imitates a document. This operation combines imagination with real historic events. The line between imagined events and their documentation is blurred. By entering this world, the reader is offered real fiction, and gets in touch with postmemory.

The book entitled *Po drugiej stronie okna. Opowieść o Januszu Korczaku* [The Other Side of the Window. The Janusz Korczak Story] (fig. 2) (Czerwińska-Rydel, Łoskot-Cichocka Poważne Studio, 2012) on the other hand, cannot be categorised as a classic picturebook, however owing to the addressed topic and the fact that it impacts the reader also visually, I decided to include it in the discussed collection.

Postmemory feeding on documentation and relativity is approximated by the colourisation of black-and-white photographs (e.g. of Janusz Korczak among other housemasters on a summer camp), or the combination of a drawing presenting the arrangement of rooms in the orphanage and an embedded photograph of beds filling in the rooms. The text, although traditionally arranged across two pages, is enriched with imitated children's notes, e.g. using arrows pointing to footnotes explaining difficult terms such as incendiary bombs. The visual layer is therefore highly significant here.

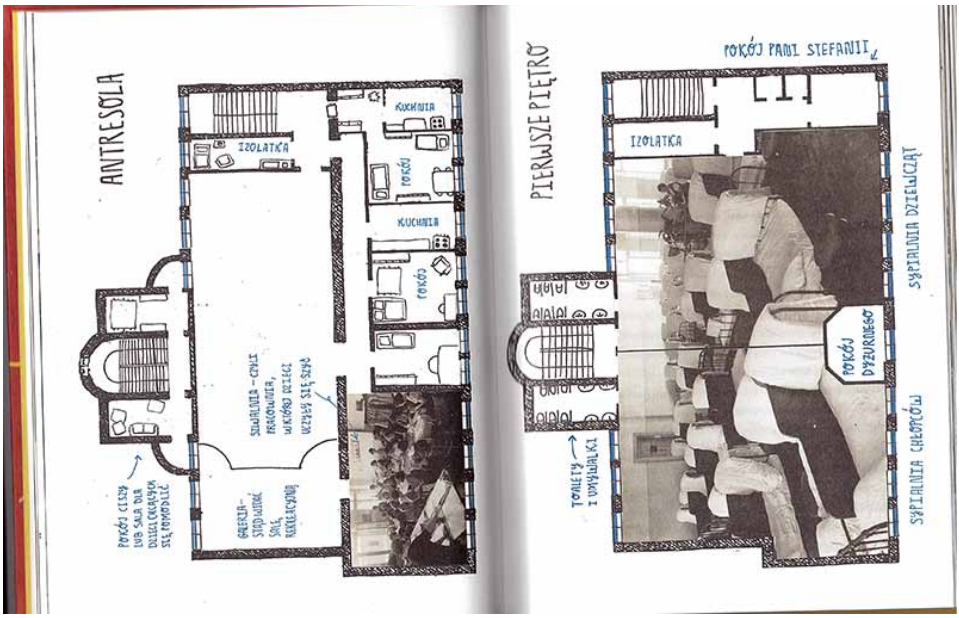

Fig. 2. *Po drugiej stronie okna. Opowieść o Januszu Korczaku* [The Other Side of the Window. The Janusz Korczak Story] by Poważne Studio, D. Łoskot-Cichocka (2012). Warszawa, Muchomor

Jest taka historia. Opowieść o Januszu Korczaku [There is a Story. The Janusz Korczak Story] (Richter-Magnuszewska, Ostrowicka 2012) is another book devoted to this outstanding educator. Perhaps the large number of publications devoted to his name resulted from the resolution adopted by the Sejm [House of Commons] of the Republic of Poland announcing the year 2012 as The Year of Janusz Korczak. The visual layer (although not sparkling with originality owing to references to Chmielewska's style) is based on drawings made using crayons, with added colourful paints and collages.

Bezsenność Jutki [Jutka's Insomnia] (fig. 3) (Combrzyńska-Nogala, Rusinek 2012) tells a story of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto, the second largest ghetto in occupied Poland. The main character in the book is a seven-year-old girl, whose childhood is tainted by the austere living conditions in the ghetto. Daily events happening in the ghetto provoke her to ask difficult questions. Although the book is packed up with text, the visual layer is also of high importance indeed. Handmade drawings, occasionally coloured, convey natural harshness, but also clarity of form; they explain the vision of the world forming in the girl's head.

Such form very subtly builds up the mood and highlights emotions. And this extends to the reader. The reader encounters associations hidden by the artist, e.g. The head of the girl's grandpa reading a book includes references to drawings by Bruno Schulz. Apart from drawings rendering events experienced by the girl, there are also photographs documenting human existence in the Litzmannstadt ghetto – collages using montage photography and secondary negative techniques. Thus, some kind of postmemory is generated in the reader.

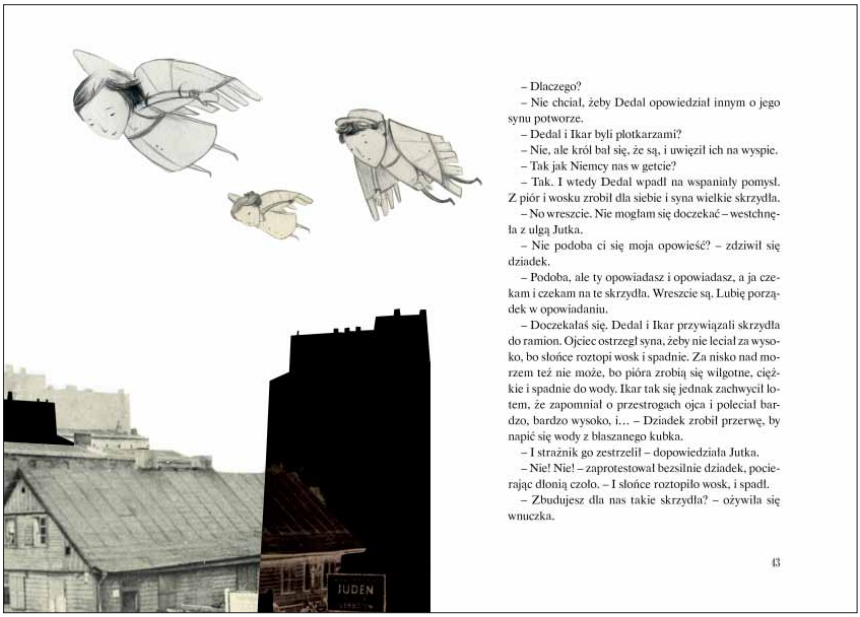

Fig. 3. *Bezsenność Jutki* [Jutka's Insomnia] by J. Rusinek (2012). Łódź, Literatura

Wojna na pięknym brzegu [War at Joli Bord] (fig. 4) (Grabowski, Rusinek 2014) takes us back to the times when Żoliborz (fr. *joli bord* – a "beautiful river bank"), a district in the city of Warsaw, was under German occupation. It is a family story. The main character in the book is the author's mother and this confirms the existence of memory bonds. The postmemory element is applied here. The first-person narrative allows readers to learn about the realities of the occupation from the perspective of an adolescent girl: treks for food, raids, hiding Jews, work as a messenger for the Armia Krajowa [Home Army]. An important component providing additional information is the illustrations. Joanna Rusinek trying to convey the atmosphere of Warsaw of that time uses collage combining graphics, drawing, watercolour, and montage photographs. The impact of Chmielewska's output may be observed in figure 4.

An illustration presenting beautiful flowering trees in the streets of Warsaw set against black smoke from the burning ghetto is particularly meaningful. In this case, the artist's vision was clear of para-documentary tricks. In other places however, this trend prevails such as e.g. in montages or on a page illustrating the album of family photos.

Books by Joanna Papuzińska and Maciej Szymonowicz, two writers working in tandem, such as *Asiunia* (a diminutive form of the name Joanna) (Papuzińska, Szymanowicz 2011) and *Mój tato szczęściarz* [My Dad the Lucky Chap] (Papuzińska, Szymanowicz 2013) are examples of publications describing the dramatic stories of people living in Nazi-occupied Warsaw. These books will surely suprise the reader with their illustrations – pure vivid colours and no signs of any para-documentary tricks. This discord between

Fig. 4. *Wojna na pięknym brzegu* [War at Joli Bord] by J. Rusinek (2014). Łódź, Literatura

the adopted visual convention and the content is by no means accidental. Szymanowicz decided to use the original and somewhat risky strategy of dispensing with with nostalgic sepia colours. While pondering over the reasons for this operation, two explanations come to my mind. The first one is narration from the point of view of a child – a participant and a witness, and the second is narration for a child, a contemporary reader. In the first case, we are dealing with repeatable relations between people who, despite having traumatic memories of the Warsaw Uprising 1944, treat it as the time of great pride as they fought taking up arms against the hateful occupier. When the story is told by a child, the reader should adopt a child's point of view where the world is often illusory and surreal, e.g. an illustration in which a boy uses a slingshot to attack German soldiers running away (*My Dad the Lucky Chap*). *Asiunia*, more visually nostalgic and reflective, presents the inner strength of a child who despite experiencing huge suffering is looking for bright moments in life. Therefore, we see the main character terrified and lonely after her house had been demolished, but soon the same girl has the strength to feel the joy arising from fun.

A similar operation was performed by Szymanowicz while producing the illustrations for *Syberyjskie przygody Chmurki* [Siberian Adventures of the Cloudlet] (Combrzyńska-Nogala, Szymanowicz 2014). This book reveals another painful page of Polish history. On September 17, 1939, that is seventeen days after Poland was invaded by the German army from the west, the Soviet Union attacked the country from the east to take over nearly half of Poland's territory. In February 1940, Soviet authorities began mass deportations of

Poles (mainly the intellectuals, servicemen, and their families) deep into Russia. In this manner, the heroine of this story, Ania, found herself in Siberia. She discovers this hostile land with the eyes of a child and she understands only selected things. Her point of view is conveyed through illustrations. Ania tells her story in no methodological way, failing to consider facts she could not know or understand at that time. The authors favours childish memories over the scientific point of view, incarnating the processes of postmemory which is by no means objective. Szymanowicz as an illustrator is very original and free from any borrowings. The form, most probably built up using IT tools, appears to be inspired by the 3D animations we can encounter in cinemas.

An example of a publication which through mediated narrative meets postmemory requirements is a book *Wojtek spod Monte Cassino* [Wojtek of Monte Cassino] (fig. 5) presenting the story of a bear who was adopted by Polish soldiers from the army of general Władysław Anders, and who accompanied them along the entire combat trail from Persia to Italy (Lasocki, Bajtlik 2012). Wiesław Lasocki collected the stories about this unique animal named Wojtek directly from his brothers-in-arms. Therefore, the feature-like content takes the form of a tale which is enjoyed not only by children, but by their parents as well. Illustrations perfectly complement the substance, and they also evoke highly satisfactory aesthetic impressions. Jan Bajtlik used the stencil-based technique. The book ends with chronicle notes and archive photographs.

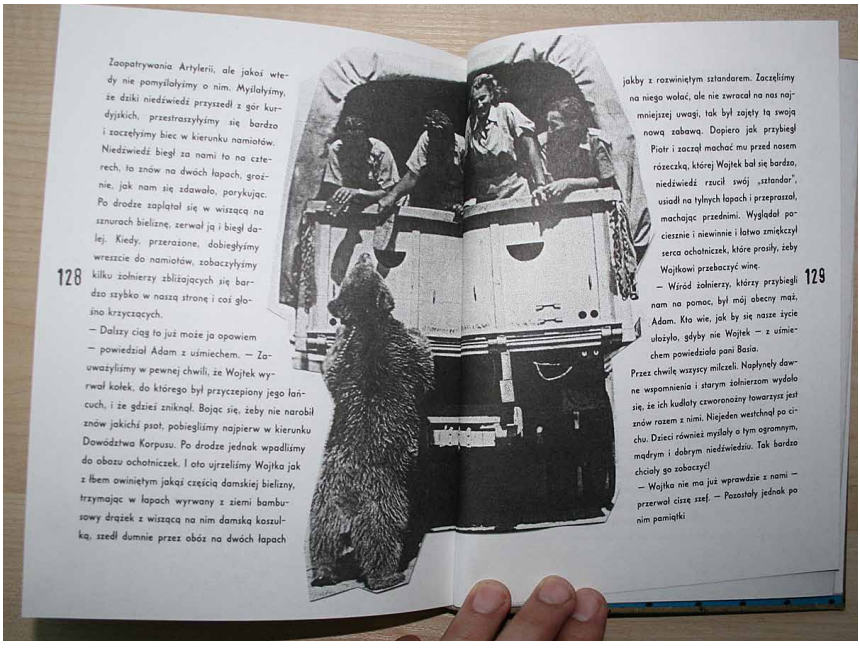

Fig. 5. *Wojtek spod Monte Casino* [Wojtek of Monte Cassino] by J. Bajtlik (2012). Warszawa, Muchomor

Summing up the above deliberations, I have come to the conclusion that the key determinant in solving the problem of the existence of postmemory in a picturebook medium is the decision as to whether we shall allow the expansion of the term 'postmemory' to include:

- postmemory of group traumas, not only the Holocaust, but also tragedies of other nations during World War II, other traumatic events (e.g. victims of other wars, such as e.g. the civil war in the former Yugoslavia (1991–1995) or terrorist attacks),
- expanding the medium – in this case, the picturebook. Illustration in a book, just as any other works of fine art conveys emotions, intentions, or even the interpretations of the author. Photography does this in a completely different way, with a different scope, and by using other means. Family keepsakes have a completely different significance. It should be noted as well, that the discussed picturebooks describe the experiences of people participating in specific historic events. However they do not constitute documents according to scholars. The stories presented in these books may be referred to as "real fiction".

Such changes will consequently lead to postmemory transferring the memory of traumatic experiences/memories to subsequent generations, without any limitations of family ties, however with their extension to communities – spiritual descendants, who are highly sensitive and emphatic, and who in preserving the memory see the chance for building a better future, since, as Cicero put it, *Historia vitae magistra est* [History is life's teacher].

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Attractive lives on attractive pages. Polish illustrated biographical books for young readers

Summary

This paper focuses on an exceptionally interesting kind of books dedicated to young readers, quite popular recently in Poland, namely picture biography books for children and teenagers. Polish publishing houses, especially Muchomor from Warsaw, for the last few years have been coming up with a number of intriguing titles, both in the matter of words, and also in their graphic contents, especially the series "Gdansk Trilogy". Brave ideas, young talents, novel artistic solutions, and original illustrations make the lives of famous people, not so very well-known figures and some unknown names – from both far and near, homeland and neighbourhood history – attractive reading matter. The author also looks back at the history of Polish illustrations included in biographies published in the second half of the 20th century. By combining the traditions of Polish applied graphic art with its up-to-date condition the author wants to trace the impact of the old and the novelty of contemporary books. She wants to stress the expressive power of an image turning illustrations into independent works of art. The number of illustrations and the graphic concept of an up-to-date language of visual forms make them genuine picture stories (especially in the designs by Ignerska). By means of comparative analyses of form and style, as well as a theory of image, she is going to focus on features of the visual side of the aforementioned books. The author would also like to stress the change in the way of perceiving the common history of places with such a complicated history as Gdańsk itself (in which Elisabeth and Johannes Hevelius, Fahrenheit, Schopenhauer, despite their German roots, are treated as part of the common heritage).

Key words: illustrated biographies, book graphic design, Marta Ignerska, Agata Dudek, Gdańsk

Słowa klucze: biografie ilustrowane, projektowanie graficzne książek, Agata Dudek, Marta Ignerska, Gdańsk

Attractive lives on attractive pages. Polish illustrated biographical books for young readers

In the second half of the 20th century the genre of biography books in the area of literature for young readers in Poland, all in all, was not very popular. Even if such titles were published, they were not richly illustrated, and in those rare cases when they became illustrated editions, the images were mainly black-and-white and rather small-sized,

reduced actually to decorative elements (like vignettes, initials, borders, etc.). Wiesław Majchrzak's drawings for Esther Meynell's *Andersen* (1960) and for Jo Manton's *A Portrait of Bach* (1960) may serve as good examples of this sort of "modest" graphic design. However, a few exceptions might be found among other biographies enriched with full-page, coloured illustrations, printed on inserts (usually eight in a volume), to accompany black-and-white "miniatures". These were characterised mostly by an old-fashioned, 19th century-like, realistic style. Perfect examples we may find looking at illustrations in ink and watercolour executed by Antoni Uniechowski to a book entitled *The Enchanted Violins* (1964), Eustachy Czekalski's story about Henryk Wieniawski, a famous Polish composer and an outstanding violin player. The main aim of the pictures in these books seems to be to deliver more knowledge, additional to the text itself, in which are included many details that build up the historic background of the tales. Hence from these illustrations we can acquire a decent amount of knowledge about the architecture, fashion, interiors, every-day items, etc. of the times that passed long ago and the way people used to live then.

After the period of capital transformation in Poland's political, economic, and social system, which began at the turn of the 1980s, and later on, after "the difficult decade" of the 1990s, Polish book design and illustration experienced a sort of revival, and year after year we began to come back to the world's most important competitions, exhibitions, and other events related to the visual side of children's books (Bologna Ragazzi, White Ravens List, Biennale of Illustration Bratislava, Ilustrarte in Lisbon, ED-Awards, Nami Concours, to name but a few). What seems to be interesting, especially in the context of the discussed topic, is that illustrated biographies also became challenging for Polish publishers, not only as a simple source of information, but also as a pretext to create alternative pictorial stories designed by young artists.

In the last ten years (since 2005) I have managed to count more than 30 biographies edited by Polish publishing houses, addressed at young readers, which describe the interesting life stories of protagonists, both world-famous or well-known solely in Poland, and also those completely unrecognised by a wider audience. The heroes are renowned scientists, humanists, musicians, inventors, travelers, and, last but not least, ordinary people from the not so distant past who, for instance, survived WW2. In one case, in the book entitled *Wojtek of Monte Cassino* by Wiesław A. Lasocki (2012), the main character is not even a person. He is a bear-soldier who fought with Polish soldiers during World War II. In the following paper I will focus on seven books only, still these examples I find the most interesting and of the highest artistic value.

In the contemporary Polish publishing market, the leading position is occupied undoubtedly by the Muchomor Publishing House from Warsaw, not only because of the number of already edited biography titles (12), but also for the highest artistic level of these books which also results in the most interesting, original, attractive, or even avant-garde graphic layouts and illustrations.

Not only because of the venue of our conference, I would like to focus in the first place on the so-called "Gdansk Trilogy" which has its two versions: a male one and a not yet accomplished female one as well. The "Gdansk Trilogy" is very important and valuable also thanks to its open approach to the city's complicated history, as Gdansk belonged to The Polish Kingdom, The Duchy of Pomerania, Prussia, The Weimar Republic, The Third Reich, and Poland again at different points on the time chart. As the series perceives Gdansk's history as a complex and rich heritage, it is very precious and it is also important for our better understanding of complicated issues. Calling the heroes of the Trilogy **the Gdansk citizens** in the first place, and not underlining their nationalities, seems to be crucial in this context.

The first set of the Gdansk Trilogy was initiated in 2011 with the first volume in the series devoted to Johannes Hevelius (1611–1687, who was born and died in the city), a famous astronomer of German and Czech origins, a skilled mathematician, an inventive constructor of astronomical instruments, but also a town councillor, juror and brewer. *Wandering Across the Sky with Johannes Hevelius* (2011) was written by Anna Czerwińska-Rydel, who is also the author of all the other titles from the Gdansk series. The second biography is entitled *Warm – Cold. Mystery of Fahrenheit* (2011), and it tells the life story of a Dutch physicist of German origins, Gabriel Daniel Fahrenheit (1686, Gdansk – 1736, The Hague) who is famous for inventing a mercury thermometer and a temperature scale. He also constructed a barometer and an instrument measuring altitude. The third book from the "Gdansk Trilogy" is a biography of a German philosopher, a representative of pessimism, Arthur Schopenhauer (1788, Gdansk – 1860, Frankfurt). Its title *A Dog's Life According to Schopenhauer* (2012) promises an intriguing and possibly not so very gloomy and hopeless story.

The three volumes of the "male" Gdansk Trilogy were illustrated by **Agata Dudek**,[1] and designed by Małgorzata Frąckiewicz, who represents the Poważne Studio, a graphic atelier from Warsaw.[2] The main graphic concept for the books concerning colour was based on choosing only two brightly contrasting colours to accompany the black and white spectrum – various in each of the books. In *Hevelius* the graphic layout introduces fluorescent orange and dark turquoise which appear throughout the whole volume, and also on the pages with no pictures at all. In such cases the two colours act as text markers – they indicate the chapter titles and accentuate words and phrases which are explained in footnotes. *Fahrenheit* has bright pink and blue which may be quickly and quite obviously associated with international symbols for cold and hot water. Eventually, the *Schopenhauer* tale is "served" in fluorescent green and noble claret (a dark purplish-red colour). In each case the two colours produce an elegant, expressive and very dynamic layout. They build a specific rhythm for the following spreads.

[1] Agata Dudek was born in 1984. She graduated from graphic design (Studio of Illustration) at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 2010. She was given awards in many national book competitions.

[2] Poważne Studio is an award-winning graphic atelier established in Warsaw in 2010 by three graduates from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw.

The whole of each volume is designed in detail from the front to the back endpaper, not to mention covers, obviously serving as the clearest advertisement for the books. The text is divided by full page illustrations, double spread pages, or even sequences of them, all composed in an extremely dynamic way. The mosaic character of Czerwińska-Rydel's text has been reflected in the use of various fonts. The narration comprises a main story, letters, newspaper announcements, and additional explanations which are printed in different styles. This is the part dependent on Małgorzata Frąckiewicz's / Poważne Studio spectacular job.

The compositions in all three of the discussed volumes are often arranged like collages. They pretend to be a sort of scrap books with photos, scribbles, maps, encyclopedia plates, postcards, playing cards, schemes, diagrams, portraits, funny drawings, and other pictures. This way they also reflect an intriguing mosaic of events which each of the life stories creates. As in a kaleidoscope, where memories of events, people, and scenes, seen as vast panoramas or blow-ups of tiny details, wander through our minds, we receive the double-page-spread collages which build up original pictorial diaries. The use of computers enables graphic artists to juggle with images, and this way of arranging separate pictures into one composition (Fig. 1) seems to be quite popular nowadays in a large number of book designs from around the world, not all of which are biographies. What is typical for Agata Dudek's illustrations, is undoubtedly a great deal of humour. A grain of caricature added to the portraits of the protagonists, presenting the events as in board games or computer games also brings specific dynamics and adds some light tones to serious lives. Dudek also seems to be totally unrestrained while mixing styles and conventions: old etchings (Fig. 2) or woodcuts go hand in hand with simple sketches that look as if they were drawn by children; the iconography of ancient maps perfectly suits scientific schemes; old photographs are arranged anew and decorated with doodles. The double page spreads bring wonderful, exotic-carpet-like patterns. We also have illustrations that pretend to look more traditional. By using old prints – as all these stories took place a long time ago – the artist puts some modern spirit into them by applying colour spots and drawings from a totally different style register – geometrical Abstract art, Constructivist, or Cubist. It also reflects the character of the very text, as it is a combination of documented facts and Czerwińska-Rydel's rich imagination.

In the set of volumes discussed here we can find a huge number of powerful graphic images that more or less literally attract our eyes: contrast colour arrangements, legible, simple and clear forms, captions interwoven in the substance of pictures, or even large-scale shapes of… eyes themselves. Such formal solutions remind us of the well-recognised aesthetics of poster art, so important in the history of Polish graphic design in the 20th century. One of these elements seems to derive directly from poster design, namely the use of letters. What is interesting is that the letters transfer some key messages, but more importantly, at the same time these pictures benefit from decorative aspects of letter shapes. The above mentioned qualities, humour, the use of metaphor, and widely understood attractiveness are common features of these designs and poster art.

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Each of the "Gdansk Trilogy" titles has its visual leitmotif, which is obviously connected with the stories of the main characters' lives. For Hevelius it is a star and astronomical instruments, for Fahrenheit – measuring instruments, scales, and numbers, for Schopenhauer it is… a dog, not so very surprisingly, as we learn from the book about dogs who always lived somewhere around the great philosopher, actually even before his birth, as his parents used to have their animal-friends, and for little Arthur actually the dogs were the essential part of his emotional life.

Dudek's design somehow pays respect to the old times when the main characters used to live (in the 17th until the turn of the 18th century), but she tries to breathe life into them

by adding vividly contrasting colours, using a modern, "energetic" line, juxtaposing neat, detailed engravings with hurried, "careless" sketches, and last, but not least, inflating the characters associated with very serious matters with humour and frivolousness.

Another set which builds up the second "Gdansk Trilogy" is a series of women's lives. Having the same author of the texts (Anna Czerwińska-Rydel), the books have a new illustrator, this time also responsible for their graphic layouts, namely, **Marta Ignerska**.[3] By now two of the cycle have been published: *Which Way to the Stars? The Story of Elisabeth Hevelius, the First Woman Astronomer* (2014), and *The Baltic Mermaid: The Story of Constantia Czirenberg* (both published in Warsaw in 2014). We will also meet the third intriguing female citizen of Gdansk, Johanna, born Trosiener, Schopenhauer (1766, Gdansk – 1838, Jena, Germany), the philosopher's mother, herself a writer, who used to run a famous artistic-and-literary salon in Weimar, where she had moved at the age of 40 and became Johann Wolfgang Goethe's good friend. The book will be entitled *Johanna's Mirrors*. A *Tale of Johanna Schopenhauer* (Warsaw, 2015). In this "female" series Ignerska has introduced yet another graphic concept for all the three books. They are actually more like graphic novels or comics which are somehow parallel to the stories, although they do not follow the text narration. In the case of *Which Way to the Stars?* it may be justified by the character of the story which is rather a collection of memories which do not respect a chronological order.

The illustrated pages do not even divide the text pages, as they are placed in the blocks before the whole story (*The Baltic Mermaid*) or after it (*Which Way to the Stars?*). The artist composed 22 double page illustrations and the endpapers for all the titles. The endpapers in *Which Way to the Stars?* are interesting also because they act as mirror reflections and negative images for one another. Ignerska seems to be more restrained regarding colours as well, as she has applied one colour only for each of the three stories: yellow for Elisabeth, red for Constantia, and bright pink for Johanna. Three energetic colours, for which Ignerska has a strong predilection, judging from her other book graphic layout concepts, are spread on black and white backgrounds, or they create the background for the most primary graphic contrast of black and white.

In the book about Elisabeth Koopmann Hevelius (1647–1693, Gdansk), except for the colour itself – yellow, which imitates the gold of shining stars in the night sky, the iconographic leitmotif is the shape of a new moon. In some illustrations it is simply the image of a crescent moon, though it may serve as a seesaw for Elisabeth and her husband (Fig. 3), Johannes, in some others it stresses the edge of Elisabeth's skirt, her hat, or it becomes a pattern on her dress, it turns to be a frog's smile, the shape of female legs, flames, or the

[3] Marta Ignerska was born in 1978. She graduated from the Studio of Book Design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 2005. She won the Bologna Ragazzi Award in 2013, the silver prize at ED-Awards European Design Awards 2012, the Picture Book Award 2014 of the jury of young critics in Vienna, and was nominated for the Deutscher Jugendliteratur Preis in 2014 (not mentioning national distinctions and prizes) for the graphic design of *Wszystko gra* [*All Tuned Up*] by Anna Czerwińska-Rydel (2011), Warszawa, Wytwórnia.

body of a she-wolf feeding her 17 cubs. In the story of Constantia Czirenberg (or Zierenberg, 1605–1653, born and died in Gdansk) the repeating motif of the visual compositions is a multiplication of forms: a school of fish, a tangle of people's arms, girls' legs in synchronised swimming, sea waves, sandcastles, bones, teardrops, and many others, while in Johanna's tale the common motif is a mirror reflection used as main type of arrangement throughout the whole pictorial story. In a large number of illustrations, symmetry seems to be the most evident scheme (starting from the front cover of the book), and sometimes it takes humoristic tones as in the illustration depicting Johanna and her husband demonstrating bellies of the same size, but for different cause – she is pregnant while he is just fat.

Fig. 3

The three books are very expressive in their style of drawing. The artist uses a distinct line to describe the characters and their surroundings, applying white, black, and appropriately yellow, red, or pink as backgrounds. This narrow choice of colours also indicates the time of the story: day or night, and accentuates the most important or symbolic events. For instance, Constantia's mother's labour, or even the gossips wheeling around the mysterious birth, are depicted by a plain red surface and a small speech bubble in the bottom right corner. And the fire at the Hevelius's house is presented on the bright yellow background. The pink background depicts love surrounding Johanna and Heinrich.

Ignerska puts a lot of modern accessories into these historic stories. In *Which Way to the Stars?* our main heroine is turbo dynamic and flies up into the sky like a real cosmic rocket; she rides a scooter, observes planes, wears Converse All Stars sneakers, and has her hair dressed in two bunches which resemble a fashion of the 1960s. The story is universal considering the aspect of time, even if we go back to the 17th century, and we can notice some early modern era elements (Baroque dresses), the 19th century dolls, already mentioned contemporary items, and timeless tribal-like drawings. The similar mixture of time periods can also be spotted in *Mermaid.* The simplified figure of Constantia and her

plain, rather modern, dress also make her story timeless. The young woman who lived in the 17th century sings to a microphone, and plays the electric guitar. Johanna, a representative of the late 18th century and the first decades of the 19th century is very trendily represented in accordance with our times – she wears modern high heels or skinhead boots and fishnet stockings, and she uses a vacuum cleaner.

Ignerska has decided on a solution well known from a traditional approach to illustrations which accompanied novels, when a certain picture is underwritten by a line from the original text. It was often present in the 19th century editions and classical publications of fiction in the following decades of the next century as the illustrations used to be placed on inserts, in some cases far away from the depicted scene. As a result, in Ignerska's designs we have a double page spread even more resembling a comic because the majority of the lines are placed in speech bubbles (Fig. 4). Therefore we have a perfect match of word and image, sometimes clear and obvious, in other cases intriguing and not so straightforward. Short chapters of the stories have their separate "heroes" and they often appear in the pictorial part as media of the literary contents.

Fig. 4

The most characteristic feature of these three graphic layouts of the "female" Gdansk Trilogy is their own visual narration. The pictures function as a sort of memory flashbacks, the slides presenting various moments of the heroines of the biography – ranging from obvious crucial life scenes (birth, the first meeting with the future husband, disasters, turning points which decide the future), through every-day life situations (shopping in the market, feeding the baby, trying on clothing). Ignerska's original impressions considering the female characters' ambitions, dreams, fears, and reflections, to the most abstract visions, are sometimes difficult to read unambiguously.

It is worth mentioning that the books were noticed and appreciated in the Polish book market. Agata Dudek for *Wandering through Sky with Johannes Hevelius* gained the Book

of The Year Prize in 2011 (IBBY Polish national section's award). The same book and the one about Fahrenheit were given an honourable mention in the 52nd Competition of the Polish Association of Book Publishers (Polskie Towarzystwo Wydawców Książek – PTWK), whereas Marta Ignerska was given the Book of The Year 2014 Prize for *Which Way to the Stars?* The two sets of the Gdansk Trilogy are perfect examples of ambitious publishing projects, both in the sense of their editorial side itself, and in the fact of stressing the common heritage of one of the cities from the so called Recovered Territories with a complicated history and cultural landscape resembling a real mosaic of various national influences.

The same editor, Muchomor published in the meantime yet another interesting biography, this time about a Syrian brown bear called Wojtek who became famous after he had followed the combat trail with Polish soldiers from the II Corps of Andres's Army during WW2. The story follows him from Iran, where he was born (1941), found and adopted by Polish troops, through the Middle East and southern Europe – especially Italy, where at Monte Cassino he gained much of his fame, to Scotland where he ended his service in Glasgow, and eventually his life in the Edinburgh Zoo (1963). *Wojtek of Monte Cassino* (2012) is a book written by Wiesław A. Lasocki originally published in 1968. Right before the 50th anniversary of the brave bear's death it was re-released by Muchomor in 2012. The graphic artist responsible for the illustrations was **Jan Bajtlik**.[4] Together with Urszula Woźniak he also designed the graphic layout of the book.

The restrained use of colours is similar to the previously discussed examples. This time we have a very noble contrast of gold and intensive turquoise blue. Gold depicts the ubiquitous sands of the Middle East, while blue is for the sky and the water of the sea. The drawings are expressive and humorous. Bajtlik uses simplified shapes with their formal background in Polish posters of the 1950s and 1960s. A funny and at the same time visually attractive solution was applied by the artist at the beginning of the story, when on the next four pages the figure of Wojtek "is growing up" along the additional measure scale placed on the edges of these pages – the pictures act here as a flip book. Then we gain a similar effect of a little bear rolling around in the right bottom corner of the subsequent pages. This kind of pictorial narration, showing the following stages of action, is used by Bajtlik also on full pages, e.g. Wojtek climbing a palm tree. He uses yet another graphic trick when the pictures, or only small fragments of them appear on the turned-on pages as an obvious continuation of the whole composition.

Many of these illustrations are full of humour. Let it be the figure of the bear built of tiny spots resembling bees perfectly depicting Wojtek's escape from a bee swarm, the picture of the bear taking a sea bath, a monkey called Kaśka riding on a black-and-white dog as though on a horse, and others. Some of the illustrations are very decorative – compare patterns on jackals or hyenas' furs and snake bodies, or a tribal art-like drawing of Kaśka. A rhythm of line also seems to be very important, as in an excellent illustration showing

[4] Jan Bajtlik was born in 1989. He graduated from the Studio of Book Design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 2013. He was awarded the Bologna Ragazzi 2015 for his activity book *Typo-scrawler* [*Typogryzmol*] published by Dwie Siostry, Warsaw 2014.

Wojtek behind the zoo bars. Bajtlik often repeats some iconographic motifs. The topic of the story is already excellently introduced on the endpaper with regular rows of soldiers running with their guns. The heroes of the following scenes repeat their gestures exactly (compare the swimmers on pp. 76–77, or the saluting soldiers on pp. 104–105, Fig. 5).

Fig. 5

The graphic design for *Wojtek of Monte Cassino* is both somehow disciplined (army rigour?) and dynamic (character of the war story), it is also extremely funny thanks to its main protagonist being an animal acting like the men surrounding him. However, the colour of gold makes it significant and serious to some extent. This matt gold takes us back to old times when the events actually took place and honours the merits of the courageous bear. Still the artistic language used in this design is modern to the core and makes the book attractive for contemporary readers.

Conclusion

The discussed biographies are dazzling examples of the open approach of young Polish graphic artists to the very matter of book graphic design and their great ease in the creation of their own pictorial stories linked only to the written texts. Dudek, Ignerska and Bajtlik feel free to benefit from the heritage of fine arts and applied graphic arts. They mix style registers and genres of graphic art (especially poster art) on the one hand, and on the other they move from one historical period to another with lightness and extravagant imagination (they apply old paintings and prints, 19th century engravings, the first avant-garde achievements, as well as the aesthetics of the 1950s and 1960s), last, but not least, they use a contemporary visual language deriving from the use of modern technology tools. This flexible but very conscious approach results in intriguing, eye-catching, and high-quality artistic creations.

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Visual representations of war in Polish and Scandinavian picturebooks. A metaphorical perspective

Summary

The goal of the article is to show the potential of the war metaphor applied in the picturebook medium and reflect upon the cultural premises of its use. The analysed material includes three Polish and two Scandinavian books, published within four years, 2011–2014: *Pamiętnik Blumki*[1] (Blumka's Diary, 2011) by Iwona Chmielewska, *Powieki* (The Eyelids, 2012) by Michał Rusinek and Ola Cieślak, *Ostatnie przedstawienie panny Esterki* (Miss Esterka's Last Performance, 2014) by Adam Jaromir and Gabriela Cichowska, *Lejren* (The Camp, 2011) by Oscar K. and Dorte Karrebæk and *Krigen* (The War, 2013) by Gro Dahle and Kaia Dahle Nyhus.

Key words: war, picturebook, Holocaust, metaphor, symbol

Słowa klucze: wojna, książka obrazkowa, Holocaust, metafora, symbol

War in picturebooks

War is a frequent motif in children's fiction though theoretically it belongs to the domain of adulthood. In fact, adults start wars, adults are soldiers – at least in line with civilized standards – and adults kill deliberately and intelligently. But since we, adults, are unable to change it, we can at least try to make children aware of that dubious human quality, the capacity to fight and incapacity to stop, particularly as children often become victims of wars. No matter how many lives are lost and how many books are written, war can happen – this is a distressing conclusion while observing the eagerness to write about war for children and consequently a remarkable interest in this theme among researchers.[2]

Limiting these observations exclusively to picturebooks, a basic dichotomy with regard to the structuring of the war motif emerges. Picturebooks' authors employ:

- Explicit, definite wars presented in both words and images, with a varied use of reference to actual historical events; e.g. *Rose Blanche* by Roberto Innocenti (1985),

[1] The book was also published in Germany as *Blumkas Tagebuch* in 2011.

[2] For example a conference held in March 2015 in Norway *På flukt, på vent, på eventyr?Om krig i barne- och ungdomslitteratur*, a book *An allen Fronten. Kriege und politische Konflikte in Kinder- und Jugendmedien* edited by Ingrid Tomkowiak et al. (2013) or Lydia Kokkola's comprehensive study *Representing the Holocaust in Children's Literature* (2003).

Humo by Anton Fortes and Joanna Concejo (2008), *Otto: the Autobiography of a Teddy Bear* by Tomi Ungerer (2010), *Daddy's in Iraq. But I want him back* (2005) by Carmen R. Hoyt.

- Abstract wars, referring to timeless conflicts, without a specific location, but including two inherent war characteristics, extreme violence and destruction, pictured with the use of traditional attributes: tanks, weapons, fires, battlefields, barbed wire; e.g. *The Canine Kalevala* (1992) by Mauri Kunnas, *Warum* (1996) by Nikolai Popov, *The Rabbits* by John Marsden and Shaun Tan (1998), *Comme deux gouttes d'eau* (2007) by Vanessa Simon-Catelin and Francois Soutif, *The enemy: a book about peace* (2009) by Davide Cali and Serge Bloch.

These examples of picturebooks are not an attempt at a comprehensive coverage but show the presence of the theme in different languages and cultures. Moreover, these two fundamental categories intersect in multiple constellations with many other aspects, one of which involves characters that can be humans, animals, human/animal hybrids or indefinite fantastic creatures. The other two evident variables are endings, happy or hopeless, and the causes of war, which are sometimes excluded from the plot but when incorporated they range from simple greed to a sudden division of property or other issues. Of particular importance is the employment of the realistic or fantastic convention, which partly entails some of the above-mentioned categories, e.g. anthropomorphized animals are often the main characters in non-mimetic or fantastic stories. The visual representations of war, whose relationships to the verbal are in various proportions and modes, make use of a wide scope of artistic techniques and vary significantly – the illustrations range from minimalistic, even simplistic, to overflowing with details; from black and white to drowned in intense colours. Although all the stories represent a wide scope of interesting literary and artistic solutions, they seem to have one common dominator: all of them have a similar ethical message – to remind, to warn and to educate in the spirit of pacifism.

In relation to all of these concerns, however, what is of interest is that war is not only a theme which in dialogue with children is expressed by metaphors in order to avoid its cruelty and devastation, but it is also a metaphor employed to discuss other themes. It is, therefore, a powerful, symbolic image which expresses the deepest, the most painful human emotions and states.

The Holocaust and metaphoric pictures

I have limited my analyses to modern picturebooks employing the war motif, published in Poland and Scandinavia within four years of each other, 2011–2014. The analysis will be illustrated below with a selection of five thought-provoking examples but has no ambition at being exhaustive.[3]

[3] For example, Jan Hogne Christiansen's *Borgny: det er krig i Norge* (2014) is not representative of the study, whose main goal is analysing metaphors.

The first three Polish picturebooks[4] that I will discuss fall into the first category of the initial typology, i.e. explicitly referring to an historic event – the Holocaust. All of them were published around the year dedicated to Janusz Korczak, 2012, commemorating the 70th anniversary of his death and the 100th anniversary of the founding of the House of Orphans in Krochmalna Street in Warsaw. The celebrations comprised a series of events and publications in honour of this famous Polish-Jewish educator, writer and paediatrician including a popularisation of his works among a young audience. *Pamiętnik Blumki*[5] (Blumka's Diary) by Iwona Chmielewska came out in 2011, *Powieki* (The Eyelids) by Michał Rusinek and Ola Cieślak in 2012 and the third one, *Ostatnie przedstawienie panny Esterki*[6] (Miss Esterka's Last Performance) by Adam Jaromir and Gabriela Cichowska two years later, in 2014. It is noteworthy that although these picturebooks contain clear references to time, space and facts, they are still fictional, distort reality and contain ideology. As Maria Nikolajeva points out, after Bernard Harris, "in addressing the Holocaust, the purpose of fiction is not so much conveying the knowledge-*about* as it is conveying the knowledge-*of* – that is, *experience*, refracted through an individual consciousness." (Nikolajeva 2014b: 40)

Blumka's Diary is a first-person account of a girl from the House of Orphans in Krochmalna Street. Although she is fictional, her naïve narration enhances the fact that the book conveys historical events. Blumka's story is framed by an omniscient narrator in the third person, who on the first page states that the girl kept a diary where she pasted photographs, which additionally amplifies the account's credibility. One of the photographs, depicting the doctor and a group of 12 children, including Blumka herself, serves in the girl's diary as a starting point to tell sorrowful stories of the portrayed, parentless boys and girls, often collected by Korczak from the streets in pre-war Warsaw. The children are individualized through short everyday episodes: their hobbies, illnesses, good and bad deeds. The last, most detailed description is dedicated to Korczak and his pedagogical programme including joint responsibility, self-government, gender equality and freedom of religion. The doctor, viewed through Blumkas' eyes, appears as a sensitive, fair, engaged, sometimes concerned adult who is wholly devoted to his orphans – indeed, he is almost glorified like a saint.

The verbal account does not touch upon the approaching war, which seems to be beyond the grasp of the innocent child narrator. This is a generally mimetic visual representation that anticipates the war intensely, employing a wide range of imagery. The pale colour scheme, with predominant sepia tones, evokes the atmosphere of the past, which is amplified by the use of collage elements denoting the pre-war Polish chronotope. The re-

[4] Two of them were co-published with the German publishing house Gimpel Verlag and also came out in Germany.

[5] The book was also published in Germany as *Blumkas Tagebuch* in 2011.

[6] It came out first in 2013 in Germany, with the title *Fräulein Esthers letzte Vorstellung*, but the Polish version is not a translation since the author, Adam Jaromir, is a native Polish speaker.

current symbol is the star of David conveyed in numerous pictorial representations, often with a suggestion of destruction, for instance broken glass.

The pictorial leitmotif is lined paper referring to the pages from Blumka's diary, along with the construction of different elements of the created world: clothes, toys and furniture. The colour blue on every spread corresponds both to the ink the girl uses to write and the colour of forget-me-nots, which function as another powerful symbol and message. When Blumka's diary stops suddenly with the entry "I will tell about the rest tomorrow", a voice in the third person takes over to end the story with a clear closure: "Then the war came and took Blumka's diary away too. How do we know what was written in it? Because the diary exists so as not to forget." The last spread and the final endpapers are covered with forget-me-nots, which also appeared a few pages before, growing out of the lined pages in the diary, as the anticipation of the book's last words.

Fig. 1

Blumka's Diary doesn't tell the story of moving to the ghetto or the Great Action in 1942, but the next to last double spread represents part of a cattle car, a clear indication of transports to the death camps.

At first glance, *Miss Esterka's Last Performance* seems similar to *Blumka's Diary* both aesthetically and thematically, but on closer consideration the books differ to a large extent. *Miss Esterka* tells a story from the Warsaw ghetto, which is longer, much gloomier, more complex and apparently intended for older children. The multi-layered text consists of the authentic diary of Korczak, interweaved with rich paratexts and again a first-person

voice, this time of a twelve-year-old orphan, Genia. Korczak's notes, which appear in a typewritten style font, present his distressing observations of ghetto life, and his dreams and concerns about the future. The doctor's verbal picture portrays a very tired, disillusioned man, more human than holy.

Fig. 2

Genia's story revolves around everyday episodes until the climax: the spectacle of Rabindranath Tagore's play *The Post Office*, which the children perform under their guardian, Miss Esterka's supervision three weeks before the so-called 'liquidation' of the orphanage within the Great Action. Korczak was inspired with the idea of the performance by Esterka, and thus the children experience moments of temporary oblivion and happiness; for instance, Genia impersonates the princess character and fulfils her great dream of being a ballerina.

The spreads in this book are covered with realistic pictures in sepia tones applied in collage and erasures, which anticipate the disappearance of the human silhouettes either

during the ghetto uprising in 1943 or in the gas chambers. The illustrator, Gabriela Cichowska, made many of them on the grounds of authentic old ghetto photographs. Different visual modes of representation are employed: children's drawings, real photographs, posters, official announcements of the Judenrat (the Council of the Jews), ration cards, scraps of newspapers, the doctor's handmade prescriptions and notes, and the calendar pages which indicate the passing of time. The last calendar page plays a particularly significant role on the final double spread when the story seems to be over and the reader has already been provided with documentary, authentic information about both the orphans' and Miss Esterka's fate. Surprisingly, the story continues: the single, old calendar card with the tragic date, the 6th of August 1942, Thursday, the day of deportation to the Treblinka extermination camp, stands alone against a dark, brown background with some lighter, erased patches. No words and no images are required to express the continuation of this story in Polish culture. Reticence through a verbal and visual gap is clear enough for the expert reader and can make a novice reader ask for support to gain new knowledge.

After the elaborate colophon, the back endpapers still continue the wordless story: the verso informs about the orphanage bombed in 1943 with children's pictures from Korczak's collection, the so-called Art Academy, hovering sadly in the air, while the recto, also referring to the flying motif, includes Miss Esterka's posthumous image supplied with butterfly[7] wings. Butterflies symbolize spirit in many cultures, but here they additionally evoke associations to Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's discovery, described in her book *The Wheel of Life, A Memoir of Living and Dying*. When she visited the Majdanek concentration camp in 1946 the walls in the children's barracks were covered with hundreds of butterflies scratched with fingernails and pebbles, which Kübler-Ross interprets as a symbolic expression of their belief in the soul's immortality.

Esterka employs an additional resource of picturebook making when one of the spreads suddenly offers a double opening. The pages depicting the orphanage building with cut-out windows can be turned aside to reveal a new scene inside the building. This opening not only contributes to the attractiveness and deeper experiencing of this book but also formally indicates the performativity of picturebooks, situating this medium in a close relation to the theatre. After the opening we are given an opportunity to stand on a stage behind Lutek, a boy playing the violin, and facing his audience – a group of sorrowful children. Moreover, this double perspective illustrates symbolically the outer and inner view of the orphans' situation, their prison-like life when they were forbidden to leave their house for safety reasons and were merely allowed to glimpse the world through its windows. The prison gains here an amplified meaning, because the children were already imprisoned in the ghetto. In this way, as distressful shadow faces in the windows, the children are potentially viewed by the outside as helpless viewers, whereas after the second opening, we are given a chance to look inside and see how "Mr Doctor" tried to make life bearable in such an unbearable reality.

[7] It may not be a coincidence that Genia is thinking of drawing a butterfly while reflecting on her contribution to the 'Art Academy' that Korczak set up on the top floor.

The metaphor of the Holocaust

The third Polish picturebook, *The Eyelids*, is part of an educational project carried out during Korczak Year by the Podlasie Opera and Philharmonic, which accompanied a spectacle entitled *Korczak*. This book is remarkably distinct from the two previous examples – in its plot, nonhuman characters, imagery and colour scheme. The simplistic text tells a story of mice which spend their boring life in a field when unexpectedly a huge fire surrounds their habitat from all directions. The disaster is incomprehensible, unavoidable, all-embracing and overwhelms the characters, who, as we read, were used to spending life with their noses close to the ground. There seems to be no solution, no way out, when one of them, undistinguishable from the others, appears brave and enterprising enough to climb a tree so as to recognize the danger. The sight of the damaging fire, meanwhile, makes her fall down and discover the sky. She decides to share this astonishing revelation with her friends, who soon – as the text informs us on a pictureless double spread – enchanted by the view, admire a view of the clouds. On the next page the mouse-leader tells her friends to close their eyelids and remember that heavenly sight forever while the red background implies the fire. All the mice lie calmly in the last wordless double spread, hovering against a blue background, with blue-greenish half-moon shapes covering their faces.

Fig. 3

The symbol of eyelids is employed three times in the pictorial representation of the book: first on the front cover, embracing the title like brackets, next on the face of the mouse-leader illustrating the climactic moment when she gives advice to her friends, and finally in the collective scene finishing the story. Surprisingly, the narrative continues on the back cover, providing the reader with extra verbal information: “And before the sky

was covered with smoke, all the field mice were lying with closed eyelids and smiling, imagining more and more beautiful clouds". The verbal account complements the visual, depicting not mice but curls of dense smoke and finally an explicit sign of the war, two military planes flying above.

The book contains two elements implying war, both within paratexts: one visual, the above-mentioned representation of two planes; and a verbal one included on the front cover – a short text printed vertically in small letters on the right "eyelid": "Dedicated to the memory of Janusz Korczak". The other war signifiers, more implicit and presumably meant for more experienced readers, are expressed in the layout. The text in full is printed in black-letter type, associated in Poland with the German language and culture, and some background ornaments also refer to Gothic imagery. The most illustrative example is a page composed exclusively of a red and black Gothic pattern with a hidden star of David against which the mouse-leader's desperate observation from the tree top is written in white Gothic script: "There was nowhere to run".

The colour scheme in the book comprises many intense colours referring mimetically to the rendered items: the field representing the mice's habitat at the beginning is yellow, red accompanies the fire, blue is strictly linked to the sky, whereas the final clouds of smoke are grey. There are not many pictures in this short story and the majority of them stand in symmetrical relation to the verbal content. Only a few provide viewers with some extra information, such as the discussed double spread depicting the mice against the blue sky. However, the visual potential in the book is predominantly employed by the eyelid symbol, which verbally appears only once, i.e. in the title. On the metaphorical level the eyelids, spanning this concise story like brackets, enable the mice to cut themselves off from reality and transfer to the domain of fantasy, which constitutes a reference to Korczak's pedagogical efforts while stimulating his orphans to use their fantasy in escapist activities in the face of the approaching Holocaust.

This is a highly metaphorical story with covert references to Janusz Korczak, but epistemically it invites interesting observations. As Maria Nikolajeva states, anthropomorphization creates a cognitive challenge to novice readers since they have to develop scepticism and bridge the gap between empirical and aesthetic knowledge. However, it may finally result in achieving a higher degree of cognitive competence (Nikolajeva 2014b: 41–42). It is also noteworthy that although the situation of the mice in this book is unequivocally related to humans, not necessarily children, these animals also have their own symbolic potential. Mice are traditionally perceived as fearful, but the story overcomes the risk of stereotyping and shows that in confrontation with an inevitable danger, it is possible to develop new capacities.

All three picturebooks received a great deal of acclaim both in the Polish media and in single academic studies. They have been unanimously praised as suggestive, touching, informative and symbolical.[8] The Polish scholars Magdalena Sikorska and Katarzyna

[8] Kruszyńska Elżbieta, *O świecie wartości doktora Korczaka:* http://ryms.pl/ksiazka_szczegoly/806/index.html; *Ewangelia według Korczaka. Pamiętnik Blumki Iwony Chmielewskiej*. W: *Wyczytać świat.*

Smyczyńska, in their study entitled "The Gospel of Korczak", call *Blumka's Diary* "philosophical, spiritual, even mystical travel" (Sikorska, Smyczyńska 2014: 159). Moreover, Chmielewska's book was awarded both in Germany and Poland, e.g. with the first literary prize of the Polish section of IBBY in 2011.

The Holocaust as a metaphor

Another title, *Lejren* (The Camp) by Oscar K. and Dorte Karrebæk, a much-acclaimed Danish picturebook from 2011, does not fit fully into the initial typology. The story is a hybrid of the first category and a further one in which war denotes an abstract concept and becomes rather a symbol of hostility, violence, fighting and abuse. *The Camp* is a surrealistic play of meaning, shifting between a summer camp, childhood, and a concentration camp. At the beginning a group of children arrive by bus and train at a place similar to a summer camp situated everywhere and nowhere. Soon they have to give away their luggage, their clothes, hair and names, and their surroundings are quickly transformed into an extermination camp, though still preserving clear indications of school rules and family relations. Above the camp gateway that the children pass through, there is a sign stating "Love conquers everyone",[9] which in the picture is explicitly styled like the sign "Arbeit macht frei". They starve, get sick, are forced to work, are punished, take their own lives, and those who survive leave the camp when new transports arrive. The end of their childhood is verbally expressed as the end of their school education: "Out on the grounds the other children stand in slightly oversized coats and black caps. The head congratulates them on their graduation."

The gruesome atmosphere in *The Camp* is visually constructed by numerous agents, of which the strongest one is the bodily characterization of the figures, pictured in their facial expressions, postures and the imagery of colours. Bright, intense colours express emotions in keeping with widely recognizable conventions: the predominant red is traditionally associated with aggression, grey and black with distress, and it is not a coincidence that the book is lacking green – the colour of joy and hope. The children's faces are lifeless, their mouths, perceived as the most expressive feature to indicate a state of mind (Nikolajeva 2014a: 131), are rendered by thin lines. Their eyes are empty and the skin bluish and grey. Their emaciated, skeletal bodies, often bent and with hanging arms, amplify a feeling of hunger, fatigue and hopelessness. The pictures would be an explicit portrait of Auschwitz if they did not exploit one surrealistic element: the guards, representing adults symbolically on a metaphoric level, are depicted as obese clowns who dominate the small, skinny children. The clown figures, whose primary function is entertaining, ironically turn into oppressors in *The Camp*. Therefore, the visual representation reverses this symbol of fun into a degenerated version that does not amuse but instead abuses, just as the adults' verbal statements of love and devotion transform into oppression and violence.

Międzykulturowość w literaturze dla dzieci i młodzieży. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2014.

[9] The citations come from Oscar K.'s website: http://www.oscar-k.dk/textdetail.php?id=23 (20.06.2015).

Fig. 4

Oscar K.'s life philosophy, conveyed in his picturebooks, is influenced by Heisenberg's theory of relativity and takes the form of literary irony. The writer argues that children do understand irony, which is proved by the abstract thinking manifest in their games and language. In his opinion, if adults state that children do not comprehend irony, they may mean that they themselves do not, or perhaps they confuse irony with sarcasm (K. Oscar 2012: 105–106). The writer does not touch on the question of children's age, since generally modern complex Nordic picturebooks are nowadays viewed as *allålderslitteratur* – literature for all ages.

There is no consensus among researchers with regard to access to irony comprehension. Limiting the observation merely to picturebook research, Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer and Jörg Meibauer assert: "Until six years of age, many children mistake irony for lying, and even nine- to thirteen-year-olds have difficulties understanding the concept of irony" (Kümmerling-Meibauer/Meibauer 2013: 153), whereas Maria Nikolajeva is more general and points out: "[…] it is contested at what age children are capable of understanding irony" (Nikolajeva 2014a: 125).[10] What is interesting, Oscar K. emphasizes in his statements that it is not important what adults write about for children but it is important how they do it. The writer does not confine children's literature with any content boundaries, puts a lot of trust in children's capacities and perceives adults as the only endangering instance. Oscar K. is not original in these statements, which have been made before by e.g.

[10] Nikolajeva refers to Ellen Winner's (1988) and Susan Walsh' (2011) research.

Maurice Sendak or Wolf Erlbruch (Evans 2014: 91), but despite similar assumptions he still transgresses the borderline between the acceptable and taboo.

Oscar K. is famous for his controversial, taboo-breaking books, and the use of the Holocaust in *The Camp* is not coincidental. It is a preconceived answer to critical remarks about his previous books from a reviewer, Steffan Larsen, who posed the question as to what worse themes Oscar K. and Karrebaek could take up, and provocatively suggested that it might be the Holocaust. (Oscar K. 2012: 113)

Lejren has generally received applause in the Scandinavian media and was awarded with the prize for the best-illustrated book by the State Culture Fund in Denmark in 2010.[11] The book was read as intentionally anti-pedagogical and as a contentious social critique, inscribed in Oscar K. and Dorte Karrebæk's literary programme, whose primary goal is to change the way we perceive both children and children's literature. Opinions were even more positive in Sweden, where the picturebook production of the Danes is considered as an artistic revolution, although there have been isolated sceptical voices concerning the age of the readers, including opinions that the book is about children but exclusively for adults.

Epistemically the book provides complex, multi-faceted information which a young reader may find extremely bewildering – a summer camp converging in the text with school reality, illustrated in terms of extreme violence and abuse. Young Scandinavian readers presumably lack the historical knowledge necessary to comprehend the pictorial representation, but when informed by an adult mediator about the explicit Holocaust references they still get a distorted image of Auschwitz inhabited by clowns. Although the book's purpose is doubtless not to delineate historical knowledge about the Holocaust, it is still a dubious means of representing a general image of childhood that – as the initial motto puts it – "happens to everyone".

The war metaphor of a divorce

Another Scandinavian picturebook, *Krigen* (The War) from 2013 written by Gro Dahle and illustrated by Kaia Dahle Nyhus, falls into the second category, i.e. an unspecified war whose imagery is employed to portray a divorce from the perspective of a girl called Inga. War, with its cruel and incomprehensible attributes – tanks, weapons and fire – known so far exclusively from TV, suddenly enters the girl's home.

The fighting parents finally decide to get divorced, and Inga transforms into a soldier, who sometimes fights on her mother's, sometimes on her father's side. She is torn between the two people closest to her, two homes and two lives, and is forced to keep bottling up her own emotions while dragging her younger siblings behind her. Nobody pays attention to her and nobody is interested in her severe mental condition. To make others notice her, therefore, Inga stops eating and self-harms, but it does not have the desired impact.

[11] Information from: http://www.dortekarrebaek.dk/priser.php (29.10.2015).

Fig. 5

The story is presented without sentimentalism, with a ruthless honesty, which Gro Dahle managed to achieve by applying real testimonies of children who are victims of their parents' wars. Though the book takes up an issue which is not questioned in Norway, it is "controversial and may be considered provocative, as it touches upon divorce as a main challenge in Norwegian society, in a non politically correct way" (Ommundsen 2015: 174).

The verbal impression is enhanced by Kaia Dahle Nyhus' illustrations, which following a naive convention imitate the child's perspective and depict simplified figures in a surrounding painted mainly in two contrasting, intense colours. The double spreads are covered with orange and violet, yellow and blue, red and black, in a symbolic play contributing to the dramaturgy of the scenes. *Krigen* is a book which has received a lot of acclaim in the Scandinavian media, among other things because of a nomination for the Nordic Council of Children and Young People's Literature Prize in 2014.

Discussion

To sum up, Polish artists have often taken up the theme of war in recent years, which can be partly explained by the celebration of Korczak Year in 2012, and partly by the popularity of the second world war theme. On the one hand, they want to educate children about the Holocaust, but on the other, they suppress both its explicit verbal and visual representations. They eagerly employ a strategy of reticence in line with Lydia Kokkola's observation:

Picturebooks have great potential for drawing readers' attention to silence, not least because the words are only a part of the total communication in a picturebook. While

pictures cannot be construed as silence, the dynamics of picture-text interaction open up possibilities for the kind of dialogue with silence by drawing attention to what remains unsaid. (Kokkola 2003: 36)

In Polish culture the Holocaust is a delicate, painful, and still present part of history, and adults seem to want to protect children from its harsh reality for fear they will not cope with it. Though the two Polish picturebooks – *Pamiętniki Blumki* and *Ostatnie przedstawienie panny Esterki* – narrate the pre-war period and the war itself quite literally, they still put the focus on more positive sides of the reality. They are purified of overt cruelty and violence which is present in similar literature for adults. It is characteristic that they exclude the depiction of the historic finale – the children's fate in the death camps is merely implied. Here the visual takes over and a flying calendar card or a cattle car tells what happened later. The metaphoric iconographic message embodies the Polish strategy of reticence. The inquisitive child who is the target audience of the book can ask questions to an adult mediator or acquire extra knowledge from the paratext or external sources. *Powieki* is a totally metaphorical story which tells about the Holocaust by means of anthropomorphization with slight references to the war. It constitutes excellent material to discuss in a classroom with young children.[12] It not only introduces historical knowledge in a balanced way but also teaches about the use of metaphors and symbols. However, all these picturebooks need an adult to share the reading because they present a high degree of complexity and symbolism when encountered by an inexperienced reader alone. They interweave factionality with fictionality, which creates a significant challenge for the child. Furthermore, they deliberately leave verbal gaps with slight visual implications about the extermination, which are accessible only to an expert reader with background knowledge who can mediate the facts to a child according to his own convictions and feelings.

The Danish *Lejren* employs the war as a metaphor of general childhood, portrayed in terms of a death camp. Its iconotext is highly complex and epistemically bewildering. It demands both some historical pre-knowledge and comprehension of such concepts as allegory and irony. It is impossible to define its audience as Scandinavian picturebooks are today regarded as all-age literature. Nevertheless, this sophisticated book with its heterogeneous, multi-level narration seems to be more appropriate for young adults than children. *Krigen* makes use again of the war as a metaphor to discuss the ruthlessness of the divorce perceived by a teenage protagonist. To emphasize the divorce's devastating impact on children, the artists – Gro Dahle and Kaia Dahle Nyhus – refer to war imagery in a deeply suggestive way. Gro Dahle is an eager supporter of all-age literature, so the book lacks a clear age recommendation, but it – like the author's previous texts – can be used in therapeutic contexts.

[12] The book does not have an age recommendation, but its mild, symbolic aesthetics makes it possible to read it together with children from about six years old.

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PROBLEMY WCZESNEJ EDUKACJI / ISSUES IN EARLY EDUCATION ISSN 1734-1582
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Social issues in children picturebook apps and their reception by the parents of children in early education

Summary

The aim of the paper was to assess the growing interest – among both the general public and academia – in the phenomenon of picturebook apps, i.e. products for children dedicated to mobile devices with touchscreens. As the object of interest 4 picturebook apps were chosen, which in different ways present topics connected with social issues (exclusion, sexuality, "otherness"). A selected sample of pre-school children parents were presented with the apps and then interviewed (qualitative research) in order to collect their opinions regarding both the apps and the topics raised in their content. The acquired data documents different attitudes towards the apps – ranging from very open to close minded.

Key words: app picturebooks, parents, children, social issues, iPad

Słowa klucze: aplikacje książkowe, rodzice, dzieci, problemy społeczne, iPad

Introduction

The aim of the article is twofold: first it is to present and describe what is still a new cultural phenomenon – a sample of chosen children picturebook apps, whose contents deal with different social issues, such as 'otherness', exclusion, homosexuality, and different family models. These apps are not very popular among adults – as in case of many contemporary picturebooks – because of their challenging, controversial and unconventional subject (Janet, 2015). The apps were found and selected mainly through an analysis of the lists of either awarded (with special attention given to the results of the Bologna Digital Ragazzi Award) or recommended ("Circus Review") picturebook apps. The result of our research – however modest – offers an interesting sample in terms of presenting a variety of different approaches to the idea of picturebook apps. It should be stressed, however, that the presented apps are not very popular in Poland yet – not only because of their price (or

the price of the hardware – tablets, smartphones), but also due to the controversial topics they address (though the same might be said about printed picturebooks).

The second aim of the article is to present the results of a limited empirical research project, designed and executed in order to collect knowledge on the reception of previously selected apps among a group of parents of children between 5 and 11 years of age. This research was conducted in May 2015, as a part of the project NCN 2013/09/B/HS6/03091, called "M-parents and m-kids. Wireless socialization and learning in digital culture". The sample of responses was acquired through qualitative interviews – which included a presentation of the apps – with 4 married couples. The main attention was given to the role of the adult intermediary between these applications and children, specifically in the context of the differentiated approach to children's usage of new technologies, and – in what the research contributes – the role of a divided approach to including or excluding social and also political issues in the children's developmental environment.

Contexts of importance of digital picturebooks

In May 2010 the publisher Winged Chariot released *Emma loves Pink*, generally considered to be the first picturebook for the iPad (Schons 2011: 2). As another important product, which shaped the history of picturebooks apps, *The heart and a bottle* by Oliver Jeffers, published later in the same year (December) should be mentioned. This product achieved the status of a bestseller very quickly (Zając, 2013). The next (perhaps indirect!) cornerstone of establishing picturebook apps as a recognisable medium was the launching of The Bologna Ragazzi Digital Award, which is "dedicated to apps inspired by children's books, otherwise known as narrative driven interactive media". And despite the fact that picturebook apps are not openly mentioned, the lists of winning apps always includes outstanding examples of the genre in question (two of them will be presented below). In this glimpse at the history of children's book apps one must not omit also the product that cannot be described as a picturebook app, but which contributed greatly to spreading the idea of publishing literature as an iPad app, i.e. *Alice in Wonderland* issued in 2010, still very popular today, and considered as a pattern for future apps of this kind (Alice in Wonderland 2010).

Nowadays e-reading has definitely ceased to be a unique phenomenon, only associated with small populations of more affluent and/or tech savvy individuals. Specifically in the United States or Western European countries the percentage of persons using different devices (e-readers, tablets, smartphones, laptops, etc.) for educational, professional or leisure-related contact with literature is very high. And children are no exception. A survey carried out in the US by one of the world's leading publishers (Scholastic) in 2014 confirms this opinion. As the survey shows "…*the percentage of children who have read an ebook has increased across all age groups since 2010 (25% vs. 61%* [2014 MC and MZ])" Moreover in the group of younger kids (6–8) the growth is even more impressive, i.e. 28 vs. 68% (Scholastic 2014: 7). But what makes the discussed issue even more important is not the

quantitative factor, but rather that more and more often e-reading creates the first, and therefore the most formative contacts between the child and the text. For a significant number of the youngest kids "… digital picturebooks are often the first literature young children engage with" (Al-Yaqout, Nikolajeva 2015: 1). It should be mentioned that in Poland children's (as well as adult's) e-reading is growing significantly more slowly. The last national children's reading survey conducted by Zofia Zasacka and her team even completely ignored the phenomenon of digital reading (Zasacka 2014). It is believed however that in the near future the rate of e-reading in Poland will follow the pattern of western countries.

In line with Al-Yaqout's and Nikolajeva's opinions that digital picturebooks and their reception are of major importance, they shall be the main focus of this article. According to some researchers, these modern e-versions of their highly successful printed predecessors are responsible for the upcoming revolution in children's reading. Junko Yokota maintains that the "typical e-book read on a dedicated e-reader (Kindle, Nook) has not hit the children's literature world for elementary school child readers in a particularly big way but e-books and apps that incorporate text, illustration and interactive features […] often thought of as the e-equivalent to picture books – have become a major force" (Yokota, Teale 2014). Indeed, these products, which connect features absorbed from print, audio, video, and gaming are definitely more appealing to the youngest generation than digital copies of printed books in the .pdf or .epub formats. In addition, as Lisa Margarete Schons maintains (in her essay provocatively titled "Is the picture book dead? The rise of the iPad as a turning point in children's literature") that iPads and their picturebook apps had a specifically tremendous impact on the world of literature for the kids (Schons L.M. 2011). As such, book apps deserve to be analysed and discussed in many different aspects of their existence. Therefore it is definitely necessary to take this medium into account when social and political issues in kids' literature are considered.

Picturebook apps are a relatively new phenomenon and, as such, await to be analysed deeper and in a more detailed way. So far the scholarly literature devoted to this topic is rather modest, however some interesting articles have already been delivered (several examples were cited above), as well as a collection of articles (Digtal literature 2015). There are also trials of theorising the field and the phenomenon of picturebook apps (Yokota 2015; Al-Yaqout, Nikolajeva 2013). In Poland this topic has been left almost untouched except for a small number of texts by Małgorzata Cackowska (Cackowska 2013a, 2013b) and Michał Zając (Zając 2013).

Justification for the selected picturebook apps and their presentation

The picturebook, along with its subsequent electronic counterpart – the book app, has always fulfilled certain socially important functions. Since the 1970s, picturebooks have been a significant medium very broadly used for the communication of various problems in contemporary Western society, becoming a vital channel of transmission of culture, and of content involved in social change (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2015). Modern mobile

technology has created even more extensive possibilities for reaching a young audience with this content, mainly owing to the intuitive navigation involved and an the attractive form of becoming acquainted with it (Yokota 2015). The app *Clementine wants to know* (discussed below) is an excellent example as, while being one of the most technologically advanced examples discussed here, it gives the child an opportunity to extensively learn, experience, and analyse the process of human conception, and as a consequence, to develop appropriate ideas, such as the role of sex in this context. The problem which will be highlighted here is related to the importance of an adult intermediary (in this case parents) between the apps and the children. Our analysis will involve an exemplification of the formative discourses displayed in the parental practice of the power to either allow the children access to knowledge about the social world and the changes taking place within it, or to deny them such access.

The discussed nature of the content – social issues – of children's book apps is still not often raised. The range available is quite limited and does not offer much selection. In preparing the empirical research, as our subject we decided to use the following picturebook apps, which are available in English, since there are no such apps in Polish. The selected apps are purposefully presented below in the sequence dictated by the logic of the introduction of knowledge on otherness, distinctness, and the ways of solving related social problems.

Firstly parents were confronted with ***Four little corners*****,** a product developed by the DADA Company in 2012, winner of many awards (including the Bologna Ragazzi Digital Award 2013) This app is dedicated to a younger audience (3–5), and through the most simple means of expression deals with the very fragile and complicated issue of "otherness". As the producer declares, it's "…an interactive story that teaches values such as friendship, integration and equality through geometric forms that arouse sympathy and emotion. Ideal to start a conversation about equality with children" (Four little corners 2012). The app transmits universal educational values (tolerance, equality, solidarity, etc.) in an entertaining way.

The message is offered here in a very simple way – 8 Circles and a Square (sub-children figures) are playing together in a field. But when it is time to enter a house (their home) the Square is not able to follow its round friends, despite all its efforts to re-shape! What can be done? Brutally cut off the corners of the Square with a saw? Then there is an idea – the door may be accommodated to the Square's capabilities. A change in schematic thinking, i.e. the rebuilding of the door to the playroom rather than the adjustment of "the other" to the conditions created by the group turns out to be the lucky solution. The app is not particularly interactive however – which is somehow typical for products that have originated from printed books (in this case *Four little corners* by Jérôme Ruillier).

The parents were subsequently shown ***Love, the app*** by Niño Studio (2014), the Bologna Digital Ragazzi Award recipient in 2014. The app is also based on a printed storybook (by Italian artist Gian Berto Vanni, first published in 1964). A little girl, who has lost her parents and all of a sudden has to start her life in an orphanage, is not a nice, cute, sweet

girl. Nobody understands her, and due to her – at first glance – vicious behaviour the small community of the shelter literally rejects her. She is left all alone with her pain. This app gives many interpretative opportunities, and – because of its narration and interactive navigation – is addressed to slightly older children. It requires concentration on a longer, more slowly flowing story, as well as patience in moving through it. The problem highlighted here also concerns being different, experiencing lack of social acceptance, and alienation. *Love, the app* is not an easy read (it is meant for readers between 9 and 11 years old); it offers sad feelings, and quite a grim mood, but provokes compassion and sympathy, raising understanding.

The third app presented to parents was ***Geoff and his two dads – Tomato Trouble***, which could be described as an attempt at creating a LGBT friendly narrative, with a specific focus given to the very sensitive issue of gay parenting. The story in the app is based on actual events and a real situation. Geoff is a cute but handicapped Jack Russell Terrier. He lives a happy life with the two men who love him in a cosy neighbourhood in Australia. "On a warm summer's day, Geoff and his best friend Sam decide to have a game of catch while staying cool under a neighbour's sprinkler. But things go wrong when some prize tomato plants get trampled and clean sheets get dragged through the mud. Fortunately, Geoff's two dads are on hand to save the day" (Geoff and his two dads 2013). The discussed app is moderately interactive, with colourful illustrations provided in a rather traditional way. The story itself is very simple, not focused either on the homosexuality of Geoff's "dads", or Geoff's disability. The app's crucial message on tolerance is implied by depicting just the regular, normal, decent life of a gay family/handicapped person. The authors of the application aimed at showing the normality of the situation, in which the protagonist requiring care (in this case a dog) has two fathers.

The last app which the interviewed parents were confronted with was ***Clementine Wants to Know: Where Do Babies Come From?,*** developed by Puddle Tap Publishing Ltd., in 2014. This product is meant to be used by children aged 5 to 12 and their parents. The main purpose of this quasi narrative (but as a matter of fact educational/information) app is on the one hand to offer an explanation of the so called facts of life to children and endow them – on the other hand – with "instruction" on how to welcome home a new sibling. The story is presented from the point of view of a girl named Clementine, who is expecting a new sibling and who has lots of questions she wishes to ask.

In terms of delivery, this app is extremely polished, with some very well-designed graphics and animation. The sound effects and narration are also very clear and professional. The interactive elements are easy to navigate and the flow through the story and different activities is simply structured and well-paced.

The application *Clementine…* goes far in its openness, presenting various types of families to children. In the last part, the protagonist, who was born and brought up in a family composed of herself, her mother and father, and her newly and conventionally conceived brother, presents her friends. However, the app also includes representations of various types of families, into which children are born, or which they join in some other

way. There is an adoptive family (and it is openly said that homosexual pairs may also adopt children), there is a family in which the child was born via a surrogate mother, and there is a family in which the child was conceived through insemination, owing to a sperm donor (this family type was shown as heterosexual, but also as comprising two mothers). This type of reliable education on human sexuality, appropriate for a children's audience in terms of both form and language, is not available in Poland in any book for children or in any picturebook.

Concluding the presentation of the apps it should be noted that their content (specifically the social and political issues) may also be discussed on the "meta" level – they contribute to the discussion on the way children might/should be introduced to the most subtle and fragile – emotionally and culturally – aspects of adult life. This problem is widely discussed in the field of picturebook research, e.g. Sandra Beckett suggests, that artists of so-called challenging picturebooks 'respect children's ability to deal with controversial subjects that often alarm adult mediators' (Beckett 2015: 49).

Empirical research

The use of mobile devices and apps in the family context, as well as parental approaches are increasingly and frequently studied from different points of view by scholars, who are interested in e.g. the types of strategies adopted by parents with regard to the mobile technologies used by their children (Wartella 2013; Bougsiaa et al. 2015), parent-child interactions as they read print and digital books together (Chiong et al. 2013), or in parents' perceptions of the mobile technology use by preschool aged children (Genc 2014; Bąk 2015). There is also research still in progress on emergent literacy and shared reading picturebook apps in families (Aligas, Margallo 2015; Real, Correro 2015).

In our article the types of social reception of selected apps with contents concerning social and cultural change (socially sensitive issues) are illustrated with the results of a study performed on four pairs of parents. Interviews with each of the pairs were carried out separately. They lasted up to two hours. The first pair had two daughters aged 8 and 11, the second one had two sons aged 6 and 7, the third, a daughter aged 10 and a son aged 7, and the fourth a son aged 8. All the parents had higher education backgrounds, lived in cities, were employed, and their financial situation was good. At home, they used a variety of technologies, making tablets available to their children mainly for entertainment apps. The interviews were preceded with an introduction to the educational potential of the content of several applications available for various systems – mostly numerous picturebook apps. Despite the generally techno-enthusiastic rather than technophobic attitude of the subjects, none of them analysed the quality of the content of the apps before they installed them on their tablets for the children. They were aware of the existence of a large number of very high quality picturebook apps – even those available in Polish. One of the pairs has never logged-in to the shop run by their tablet system, which means that their children only used the applications installed by the system (usually the very popular Angry Birds,

Lego Ninja, or some other apps with rather primitive content). All the parents were highly interested in the presented apps, which were new to them, and were astonished by the wealth of available educational applications, and in particular the picturebook apps.

The logic behind the manner of presentation of the picturebook apps to the parents was also to show them the possibility of a gradual introduction to knowledge on difference and various models to their children: from fictitious geometrical figures to the real world of the children's life in social diversity. The questions which initiated the discussion on the apps focused on the importance of the values of the content presented to both the parents and their children. However the most important aspect was the attempt at a formulation of conditions for the possibility of an introduction of the selected apps so that their children might experience them.

In reaction to the content and form of the picturebook apps, all the interviewed parents expressed acceptance of the attempts to discuss the topics in the works for children (in all the technologically different versions), as well as an appreciation for the possibility to learn about such a form of education. The above can be found for example in the following statement:

> *...This interactive form adds attractiveness, because children like tablets!* [dad, interview 3]

However, when the parents were asked to determine the conditions for making the selected applications available to children, the group markedly polarised: the parents presented two approaches.

The first group included those (although the pairs did not always speak in one voice) for whom none of the content presented in the apps (even that concerning various forms of fertilisation or types of families) was taboo. They thought the material presented was as an original aid (also owing to the innovative and advanced technology such as that used in *Clementine…*) allowing them to let their children experience content of this kind. The parents from this group appreciated the logic behind the presentation of the apps to themselves, considering the steps taken to be appropriate and consistent for the introduction of the content in question. There are a number of comments that illustrate this approach:

> *...It is really cool* [about *Clementine…*], *as it takes the burden of explanation off parents who do not have the basic knowledge or abilities. Because it is very difficult to provide such information, especially here, in Poland, where there are no words, as things are always either vulgar or incomprehensible…* [dad, interview 4]

> *...Good, it is better for me not to have to tell the girls all these things!* [dad, interview 1]

> *...Showing the children adoptions by homosexual pairs can be controversial to many people (...), but I do not think that an application shown at this age could make my child want to start a homosexual family, ha-ha* [dad, interview 4]

and the mum's response:

> *…this story of conception and various families is told so very nicely, delicately, with such subtlety …while at the same time so concretely!* [mum, interview 4]

Conversations with the parents who represented such an approach also tended to develop towards general reflections on the social consequences of rejection, or the postponement of educating children about human sexuality with its different types and varieties. There were also some general remarks on the changing world and difficulties with following the process, and in particular the necessity to prepare children to understand the changes.

In the second group, although the first two applications presented raised no objections before being offered to their children, reviews of the subsequent ones showed primarily the parents' conservative attitude to otherness in the context of new family models and configurations. There are a number of examples:

> *…It is a very pretty book* [the one about Geoff]*, but I don't really like it as a model. Do you know why? Because I do not accept such a model. There is such a trend somewhere out there in the world, but I don't want to show it to the boys (…) Nothing wrong was shown, but there is a dad and a dad, and it is not the way it is in the daily life (…) I like the traditional model and I want to show only this model to my children…*[mum, interview 2]

This statement was supplemented by the husband:

> *…It is a pity that this story does not talk about a mum and a dad…* [dad, interview 2]
>
> *…We do not initiate such conversations* [the ones addressing homosexual pairs – M.C. and MZ' remark], *but when this topic springs up, we try to explain that such situations happen* [mum, interview 3].

and the dad's response:

> *…But you know what? The problem is that* ***I am not very tolerant as far as two dads are concerned*** *(…) My moral order is rather sceptical here…* [dad, interview 3]

As a result of their attitude, the parents from this group stress that they would not make such picturebook apps available to children because of the fear that they could inspire unwanted interests. We also think that this concern is also determined by the fear of a frank conversation with the child, disclosing the motives behind one's attitude. There is a trace of a characteristic disruption in this discourse, which stems from conservative ideology. This disruption, meanwhile, discloses a lack of cohesion between the parents' declarations on the need to educate children about otherness (and the acceptance of such picturebook apps, which concern the fictitious world – *Four little corners*), and their authentic confession of non-acceptance of realistically shown homosexual parents, or non-conventional methods of human conception. Taking into account what some studies have shown, i.e.

that children acquire a "repository of cultural knowledge" (Harris 2012: 60) and trust what they learn from their parents (significant others), and that they are also sensitive to information about social norms and conventions gained in the family context, it seems that the attitude described above blocks the children's comprehensive understanding of the idea of respect towards otherness, and the acceptance of cultural and social changes taking place in modern societies.

Conclusions

Liberation discourses connected with liberal or radical ideology aiming at social change, in particular preparing children to be open to a diversity of visions of lifestyle, sexuality, and types of families are not popular in Poland. Indeed, we may even say that such discourses challenge the conservatism that dominates the political scene. The quoted parents' statements show – as Norman Fairclough put it – in what way the language, understood as a social practice of power, is reflected in social identities, in systems of power and beliefs, and social relations (Fairclough 2001). Depending on the type of family model, the parents, who in fact usurp the right to be the primary recipients of culture-based texts for children, have the authority to include their children in the broader culture or exclude them from it (Ostrouch-Kamińska 2011). On the other hand, the technology of modern democratic information society evokes social change owing to such phenomena as the inclusive and emancipatory potential of the so-called 'touch revolution'. Children's access to new technologies (and the children function in this environment much better than adults) as well as the contents they may bring is unavoidable, and often formally releases the children from the authority of their "all-knowing" parents (Bougsiaa et al. 2015). Therefore, social and political problems appear to be a challenge for all ideological practices and require further research.

The results of the presented limited research should be considered as an introduction to the assessment of the potential of picturebook apps as a useful tool for parents' activities aimed at their children's social education and personal development. It is obvious, however, that the discussed type of medial product is still at the very beginning of its history and will surely undergo many substantial changes and improvements in the future. Therefore it seems advisable that both premature enthusiasm and scepticism towards picturebook apps be suspended for several years to come.

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RECENZJE I SPRAWOZDANIA

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Picturebook, Democracy and Social Change – a report. Among books and science

The conference *Picturebook, Democracy and Social Change*, took place at Gdańsk University, Faculty of Social Sciences and lasted three days (16th–18th September 2015) was organised by Małgorzata Cackowska. The participants not only gave lectures, discussed session topics and exchanged opinions but also saw an exhibition of Polish picturebooks in the Baltic Sea Culture Centre and visited an exhibition in the European Solidarity Centre.

The first day was devoted to PhD Students, their research and ideas. The meeting was held in the form of workshops and was divided into two parts. Evelyn Arizpe chaired the first session and Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer was chairwoman of the second part. Young, talented researchers from many countries presented their research projects, shared their ideas, thoughts struggles and doubts about their research. Other participants asked questions, shared their own thoughts, and gave feedback. All the presented topics, meanwhile, focused on the potential of picturebooks and their contribution to social change.

Each topic showed how picturebooks could influence culture and education. Among the topics we could find: an overview of the 21st century's children's literature published in Spain; the interplay of word and image in picturebooks, illustrated books and applications; decolonization of images in contemporary Brazilian picturebooks; the issue of constructing meaning by preschoolers reading picturebook apps; exploration of children's approaches to translating the picturebook. Other presentations touched on the picturebook's potential for developing creativity and social awareness, as well as the topic of "meta" reading in Emily Gravett's selected picturebooks. Obviously many more topics were mentioned, many new questions were asked and thoughts were given voice, which made the workshop even more fruitful.

The workshop not only let the participants share their thoughts, but was also a unique chance to hear academic feedback, discuss important matters and think how to make one's research even richer and more coherent. This was a significant opportunity as many young scientists conduct their research in quite a closed environment. In the meantime, happenings like the workshop gave them the possibility of enhancing their work and – in some situations – uncover new, previously unasked questions of no lesser significance.

On September 17th the main part of the conference started. It was opened by prof. Tomasz Szkudlarek and his speech *Social Change as Semiotic Change*. All the other presentations were divided into four sessions:

- *Political and Ideological Issues in Picturebooks*;
- *Transformational Consequences of Picturebooks about Social and Political Issues*;
- *The Representation of War in Military Picturebooks*;
- *Visual Discourses and their Work in Picturebooks*.

The first session (moderator: Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer) started with Yael Darr's (Tel Aviv University, Israel) presentation titled *Politicizing and De-Politicizing Childhood: Israeli Children's Picturebooks During the Shift from Pre-State to Statehood*. Yael talked about the changes in concept of the "national child", during the transition from the Yishuv[1] to a sovereign state, as depicted in picturebooks, published in Palestine and in Israel, during the 1940's and 1950's. This presentation was followed by one concerning a political / ideological issue – *Children as Consumers: Modernity, Consumerism and Picturebooks* by a researcher from Stockholm University: Elina Druker. In her speech she discussed the matter of modernity and the "modern child". Ana Margarida Ramos (University of Aveiro, Portugal) – the third speaker of the first session – presented material about *Contemporary East Timorese History in Portuguese Picturebooks* and talked about its occupation and independence in the context of selected picturebooks. All the speakers, therefore, dealt with difficult material of great importance: the political and ideological aspects of picturebooks.

The second session – The Transformational Consequences of Picturebooks about Social and Political Issues (moderator: Hanna Dymel-Trzebiatowska) included four presentations, given by five researchers. The first one was Fanuel Diaz (Independent Scholar, Colombia), who talked about *The Construction of Symbolic Spaces Through Visual Discourse in Latin American Realistic Picturebooks*. The second one – Evelyn Arizpe (University of Glasgow, Scotland), chairwoman of one of the PhD workshops – gave her presentation titled *A Fine Balance between Dreams and Reality: How Picturebooks Can Invite Awareness and Transformation of Precarious Contexts.* The third presentation was given by a pair of researchers – Małgorzata Cackowska (University of Gdańsk, Poland) and Michał Zając (University of Warsaw, Poland). The topic of their analysis was *Social and Political Issues in Digital Picturebooks and its Social Reception*. Last but not least was Kelly Hübben (Stockholm University, Sweden) and her submission *Good To Love Or Good To Eat? Ethical and Ideological Implications of the Construction of Species Difference in a Selection of Little Golden Books*.

Even though Kelly Hübben's presentation was that day's last presentation, it was not the end of conference's second day. All the participants moved to Baltic Sea Culture Centre to partake in the *Look! Polish Picturebook!* presentation and discussion. The meeting concerned how Polish picturebooks have changed and the problems they have touched upon, and showed the impact of Polish history and culture on this important medium.

[1] Jewish settlement in Palestine.

The last day of the conference started with the third session – The Representation of War in Military Picturebooks, moderated by Elina Druker. That session's first presentation was given by another chairwoman of the PhD workshops Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (University of Tübingen, Germany), as well as Jörg Meibauer (Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany), who spoke of *Cuteness and Rudeness in Military Picturebooks.* The next presentation – *The Metaphor of War as a Culture-bound Phenomenon: a Comparison of Polish and Scandinavian Picturebooks* by Hanna Dymel-Trzebiatowska (University of Gdańsk, Poland) – focused on how symbols of war may be used in books. The other two presentations in this section were: Janet Evans' (Independent Scholar, Liverpool United Kingdom) presentation titled *Who's Challenging Who? The Challenge of Peace in Picturebooks Dealing with War, Conflict and Peace*; and Magdalena Howorus-Czajka's (University of Gdańsk, Poland) *"The True Fiction" – The Memory and the Post-Memory of the War's Trauma in the Picturebook.*

The closing session – Visual Discourses and their Work in Picturebooks (moderator: Evelyn Arizpe) – included five presentations: Katarzyna Smyczyńska's (Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland) – Welcome, Stranger: Embracing Difference in and Between Picturebooks; Junko Yokota's (National Louis University Chicago, US) Intentionality in Picturebooks. Conveying Sociopolitical Goals; Aleksandra Wierucka's (University of Gdańsk, Poland) Producing a Popular Image of the Amazon Rainforest in Picturebooks; Anita Wincencjusz-Patyna's (Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław, Poland) Attractive Lives on Attractive Pages. Polish Illustrated Biography Books for Young Readers; and last but – again – not least, Ase Marie Ommundsen's and Gunnar Haaland's (Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Norway) The depiction of Heaven in Stian Hole's Picturebooks.

The last session included time for discussion and the future plans of the researches. This was an important moment for the conference, as it allowed thoughts concerning the whole conference to be voiced: new ideas, opinions, initiatives and – what is also more than significant – new questions that are yet to be answered. The day closed with a visit to the exhibition 'Roads to Freedom' in the European Solidarity Centre.

Conferences such as the *Picturebook, Democracy and Social Change* have become an important event for picturebook researchers from many different parts of the world. It gives them a chance to share ideas and enhance thinking about picturebooks, reading, visual culture and art, which are becoming ever more important in the social sciences, including sociology, philosophy, cultural and library studies, as well as pedagogy. This is because children's literature is not just dynamic in its development, but of great importance in terms of the symbols it uses and its potential in contact with recipients (both young readers and adults).

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Review of *Literature for Children: Texts, Readers and Educational Practices*, P.I.E Peter Lang, Brussels 2015

This well written book describes the results of a research project devoted to the problem of digital literary education. I would recommend it to anyone who is interested in digital children's literature or children's literature in general. It seems especially valuable for parents and teachers with the task of putting the child in the world of literature in a dual form. Adults face the challenge of showing kids digital readings, while appreciating traditional works in printed form.

This Volume of Digital Literature for Children was instigated on the initiative of UAB and contains research into the impact of digitization on teaching literature and literary education. The aim of the publication is to act as a guide in relation to changes in schools and the creation of an inclusive strategy for multimedia and interactive texts and products to market fictional works and products. Respected researchers from around the world, such as Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer and Junko Yokota (a member of the research group GRETEL) were invited to cooperate. The group was established in 2004 and has been researching children's literature in compulsory education, including its digital form. The publication itself is divided into five parts, within which each of the authors describe relevant issues.

The first part, entitled Contextualisation and Theoretical Framework, opens with a text answering Laura Borràs question about what reading on screen means from the point of view of social and cultural change. The author focuses mainly on child readers and gives a brief outline of new and complex media and refers to the spread of forms of digital literature. Another text by Lucas Ramada Prieto *"Common Places in Children's E-Lit". A Journey through the Defining Spaces of Electronic Literature* introduces a large number of areas of knowledge of children's literature, and gives the terminology necessary to present the concept of electronic literature used for children's literature. This chapter is definitely worth reading because it is clearly written and gives basic information.

The second part is devoted to digital literature for children and young adults. However, this is not a dry analysis of digital products, but first and foremost a reflection on the potential for literary education. Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer describes the impact of new digital media on literature for children and young people, focusing at the same time on the relationship between the production of the targeted market of children's literature and electronic media. In this section their mutual influence is described, exemplified by phenomenon of fan fiction. Junko Yokota, meanwhile, takes the reader on a journey through

time describing the past, present and future of digital picturebooks aimed at children. The emphasis here is on the role of parents and teachers in the selection and assessment of digital readings. The author describes the current state of electronic publishing with regard to stories for children in order to compare them with paper picturebooks and describe differences in the ways the child reader is influenced. In addition to this, Celia Turrión Penelas gives an exact outline of the characteristics of narrative apps, thereby creating an accurate model analysis. In doing so, the potential that electronic literature possesses to encourage reading and literary education is described. In many examples, tendencies prevailing in market applications, as well as the designing of narrative apps are exhaustively described. The author comments upon the market-value of applications, while also noting that a lot of poor, simple works can still be found, which do not make use of the potential arising from a combination of the narrative complexity of multimodality and interactive applications.

The third part of the book focuses on digital readers and literature. Mireia Manresa describes analysis of the experience of readers of five digital works aiming to test the level of understanding of electronic literature and ways of interpreting digital content of three groups of children. The author draws attention to the two focal points affecting the reactions of young readers and their introduction to interactive literary works, which require different skills than reading printed books. Lucas Ramada Prieto and Lara Reyes López create the profiles of four young readers who are not familiar with the touch screen and digital readings. Children rated as more gifted readers, also performed better in reading digital versions of books. Despite the small number of respondents, during interviews the authors noted the children's willingness to explore and their ludic attitude while reading digital versions. Studies have shown the need for help in identifying the elements of digital literature, that is, music or movement and elimination of decorative elements that disturb the understanding of the story. Martina Fittipaldi, Anna Juan and Mireia Manresa conclude this section by comparing the experiences of teenagers reading the same work on paper and its digital version, which show differences in the interpretation of the text which is read. Meanwhile, these differences in interpretation are thoroughly analyzed and described in detail by the authors.

The fourth part of the book is devoted to educational practices, both in schools and those applied by parents in the home. Cristina Aligas and Anna M. Margallo describe interesting results from long-term ethnographic research in the section entitled iPads, beginner readers and family. They tested four middle-class families using the iPad for shared reading with a child. In the studies, particular attention was paid to the time and place of the common reading, its configuration and the use of the iPad, the process of learning to read and the interaction between the child, parent and device, as well as the impact of interactive content applications on the reading experience. Neus Real and Cristina Correro consider the debate over the use of touch devices by small children. In connection with this, the authors describe differences in the preferences of young readers in contact with devices in the home and in nursery school, depending in which space they are located. The authors emphasize the importance of allowing children under the age of seven new types

of reading experience that complement the traditional teaching of reading. This chapter ends with a description of the research carried out by Teresa Colomer and Karla Fernández de Gamboa Vázquez on the effect of the introduction of digital works to the school library. The authors ask themselves how it will affect the habits of reading, what the preferences of children will be and how they assess these works. Studies have shown the real possibility of integration of digital literature in the class library and the beneficial effects of its introduction, not diminishing the importance of printed literature.

The last part of the book is in the form of a summary of the publication as a whole and presents a reflection on the creation of digital texts. Kate Pullinger describes how, with Chris Joseph, she developed a series of interactive stories, Inanimate Alice, one of the most popular digital stories in the world. In the last section *Change of Direction* Arnal Ballester considers the profound social and cultural change, and takes into account the relationship between children's print and digital literature, video games and illustrations. This section suggests a new look at the changing relationship between knowledge and literary creation.

To sum up, through a combination of theoretical and more practical oriented chapters, this publication is a rich source of knowledge for anyone interested in the phenomenon of digitization of children's literature, including those unfamiliar with the subject.

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