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FROM THE EDITORS

The 21st issue of *Children's Readings* is not the first issue of our journal devoted to the links between Russian children's literature and other national children's literature. Studies on Scandinavian children's literature, on Russian-German contacts in the sphere of publishing and literature for children, on Chinese, and more broadly Eastern, literature for children and young people have been presented in the pages of *Children's Readings* in different years. The peculiarity of this issue is that it is entirely devoted to the Russian-Italian relations in children's literature and created jointly with our Italian colleagues. The focus of research interest is the range of works that have managed to cross the borders of national literature, factors influencing their success on a different national ground, processes of cultural transfer and reception of Italian children's literature in Russia and Russian children's literature in Italy.

In contrast to the study of English and German influences on Russian children's literature, Italian connections have rarely come into the focus of research in both Russia and Italy. Meanwhile, cultural contacts between Italy and Russia have developed and strengthened over the past three centuries. One of the most important examples is the success with Russian readers of Edmondo De Amicis' story *Serditse* (*The Heart*) (1886) at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Russian literature at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century entered the circle of books addressed by publishers to Italian young people with works written for adult readers, such as Ivan Krylov's fables, Russian folktales collected and arranged for children's reading by Alexander Afanasiev, and Alexander Pushkin's tales and novels.

Russian classical and Soviet literature gains a new impulse of popularity in Italy in the 1920s, when the first Slavonic chairs were opened at different universities and when Russian emigrants of the "first wave" began to actively cooperate with the Italian cultural figures. During this period the Soviet Union undertook a major translation of world classics into Russian, among which Italian literature featured prominently. One of the most significant phenomena in children's literature is the creation by Aleksey Tolstoy of *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, based on Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* — a telling example of the transfer of a children's book hero and his ideological domestication in Soviet culture.

The material presented in the column "Archive" shows exactly which Russian literature crossed the cultural border into Italy in the 1920s,

becoming the subject of reflection by the professional community — children’s writers, educators, translators and publishers. Fragments taken from books by Giuseppe Fanciulli (1881–1951), Olindo Giacobbe (1880–1950), Maria Tibaldi-Chiesa (1896–1968) and Olga Vicentini (1893–1961) provide a cross-section of Russian literature, partly translated and adapted for children by Italian popularizers, with the main focus on folktales and classic authors’ works not originally intended for children (Alexander Pushkin, Vasily Zhukovsky, Nikolai Gogol, Ivan Turgenev, Fedor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy, Pavel Melnikov-Pechersky, Anton Chekhov, Ivan Shmelev, Alexander Kuprin and others). Interestingly, this approach coincides with the practice of forming a circle of children’s reading in Russia, where the works of the same writers were actively adapted for children, sometimes to such an extent that the ‘adult’ addressee of the work was at some point lost, as was the case, for example, with Pushkin’s tales, which since the late 19th century publishers and teachers have classified as ‘children’s literature’. Children’s literature as such is introduced by a cursory description of popular Russian children’s writers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries: from the well-known Lidiya Charskaya and Dmitry Mamin-Sibiriyak to the now forgotten Mikhail Chistyakov, Aleksandra Yefimenko, Petr Krasnov, Tatiana Shchepkina-Kupernik, including authors who wrote for children in exile (Sasha Cherniy, Evgeny Elachich). The material in this section is interesting not only as evidence of the construction of a view on Russian children’s literature in the Italian pedagogical and popularizing discourse of the first half of the twentieth century, but also as a demonstration of the development of expert thought. In this way the authors of Italian textbooks on children’s literature and Russian pre-revolutionary pedagogical criticism conceptually coincide: experts expect children’s literature to have an educational effect, a focus on “moral education”, a narrative which would be written in “simple, lively, and truthful language” [Chiesa]. Giuseppe Fanciulli, one of the first to write about Russian children’s literature, tries to define its national originality, seeing it in the exceptional attention to the educational value of the literary word, in the “abundance of imagination, drama and subtlety of observations, colourful and fascinating style” [Fanciulli].

As we can see, familiarity with the literary process of other national children’s literature is always uneven, influenced by a variety of heterogeneous factors (not the least of which is the role of chance). For example, in Russia in the second half of the twentieth century, the work of Gianni Rodari was more popular, which was due not only to the artistic merits of his prose and poetry, but also to his political position. Cipollino, the

protagonist of the story of the same name, is today the only character of Italian children's literature integrated into the Russian reading culture, known to Russian readers of different generations. The authors whose books became the subjects of cultural transfer (Carlo Collodi, Aleksey Tolstoy, Rodari), the history of their texts ("The Adventures of Pinocchio", "Buratino", "Cipollino"), the history of cultural reception of little-known works (Wamba's story "The Little Tail"), translations, publishing and promotion of Russian books in Italy for children — the range of research questions addressed by this issue. Despite the importance of children's poetry in the literary space of twentieth-century Russia, in Italy this genre is poorly represented and even less well studied. In this context, the analysis devoted to translations of Russian poetry into Italian acquires greater relevance.

Contemporary world children's literature and its trends are described in an article about the Bologna Book Fair. The Bologna Book Fair is the largest international book forum specifically for the presentation of children's books from different countries. The attention of Russian publishers and experts in children's books is traditionally very high (Children's Reading has already published Bologna book fair reviews). The present review is about picture books and graphic novels, called 'silent books', which have gained popularity among the expert community at the Bologna Book Fair, because they show a new language of children's books, allowing to talk about taboo subjects (loss of loved ones, illness, loss of job, etc.) in the era of pandemics. An interview with the author of contemporary bestsellers for children and young people, Guido Sgardoli, conducted by the well-known Russian children's author Anastasia Strokina, complemented the presentation of contemporary Italian children's literature. The dialogue between the two children's writers is devoted to a discussion of the 'eternal questions' facing the creators and critics of children's literature: what exactly are books for children about and how to write them today?

By broadening our understanding of other cultures, in particular by familiarising ourselves with children's literature, we can see the world's culture in stereoscopic terms, as a chain of sustained links and a series of brief encounters. We are convinced that in order to know one's own history and culture, one must turn to the world's. Looking at a different national literature allows us to see features in our own close cultural space that provide new insights into the values of our own culture.

ARCHIVE

Dorena Caroli, Giulia De Florio

ITALIAN ANTHOLOGIES ABOUT RUSSIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE. AN OVERVIEW (1926–1944)

The “Archive” section publishes four fragments selected from studies of Italian authors who wrote about children’s literature — the writers and teachers Giuseppe Fanciulli (1881–1951) and Olindo Giacobbe (1880–1950), the children writer, translator and publisher Mary Tibaldi-Chiesa (1896–1968) and teacher Olga Visentini (1893–1961). These works, written between 1926 and 1943, are taken from textbooks and are interesting in that they present the view of Italian experts on Russian children’s literature. The authors build the history of Russian literature for children, give an overview of contemporary émigré children’s literature, and try to determine the national identity of children’s literature in Russia. Giuseppe Fanciulli turns to Russian folklore, to the fairy tale genre and brings the line of his research to the beginning of the 20th century. The work of Mary Tibaldi-Chiesa gives a detailed review of translations of Russian literature into Italian, made with a focus on children’s and youthful readers, and also presents a detailed biography of Alexander Pushkin. Olga Visentini’s essay is based on the previous experience of Olindo Giacobbe, supplementing and continuing his work up to the first attempts at Soviet children’s literature.

Keywords: history of textbooks, Russian children’s books, Giuseppe Fanciulli, Olga Visentini, Olindo Giacobbe, Mary Tibaldi Chiesa, Italy, 20th century

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This section of original documents collects four selected excerpts from some critical studies, which can also be considered textbooks of the history of children's literature written by important authors, such as Giuseppe Fanciulli (1881–1951), Olindo Giacobbe (1880–1950), Mary Tibaldi Chiesa (1896–1968) and Olga Visentini (1893–1961), writers and translators of famous children's books, published in Italy from the mid-1920s to the mid-1950s.

The period they belong to is relatively broad and includes fascism (1922–1943), since the first book by Giuseppe Fanciulli was published in 1926 and subsequently appeared in numerous revised editions during the 1930s, Olindo Giacobbe's book is published in 1934 and Olga Visentini's essay comes out in 1936 (the passage here presented is from the 3rd edition of 1940), whereas the first edition of Tibaldi Chiesa *Letteratura infantile (Children's literature)* is published in 1944 (the extract here presented is from the 4th edition of 1953). This timespan represents for Italy the different stages of fascism, a period of great political transformations, which influenced both the values transmitted in children's books and the approaches of literary criticism of children's books.

The excerpt of the first volume was written by one of the most important children's writers of the beginning of the twentieth century, Giuseppe Fanciulli [Montino 2009], who wrote many books before and after the rise of fascism. Fanciulli devoted himself to works of a psychological nature, before approaching children's literature. In fact, in 1906 he began to work under the pseudonym of Mastro sapone ("Master soap") for the "Sunday Magazine" ("Il Giornalino della Domenica"), directed by the well-known Italian writer Luigi Bertelli. He also wrote a lot of successful books including *The Little Blue Man (L'omino Turchino)*, 1911) and for example *Lis-Beth (Lisa-Betta)*, 1932) and later *Heart of Twentieth Century (Cuore del Novecento)*, 1938)¹, published during the fascist period. *Lis-Beth*, one of the best examples of Fanciulli's poetics, had a great success during fascism, which he supported, although the novel contained only a slight exaltation of its values (family and rural life).

It should be noticed that Fanciulli's critical volume accounted for a literary production for children which, in Italy, had experienced a particular development only in the last decades of the 19th century and in the early Twentieth century thanks to the work of Luigi Bertelli, founder of the "Giornalino della Domenica", who tried to promote the practice of reading among adolescents of middle-class origin [Barsotti 2020], since in general the reading activity for the popular classes was limited to the instrumental skill acquired at school. From the 1860s

onwards, some Italian and Russian publishers, on the other hand, tried to welcome new foreign authors in their catalogues in order to propose a more varied choice of genres and themes and published them both in children's magazines and separately [Bagicalupi, Fossati 1988, 22–48; Hellman 2013, 161–168]. At the end of the nineteenth century, thanks to greater access to reading, both Italy and Russia showed a particular interest in foreign authors. In Russia, the Tolstoyan publisher “Posrednik” promoted the translation of some Italian books, such as the novel by Edmondo De Amicis, *Cuore* (Heart), which is a real classic of the Italian literature for children [Caroli 2020, 101–135; Caroli 2021, 44–69].

Giuseppe Fanciulli published the study *Children's literature*, in collaboration with his cousin Enrichetta Monaci Guidotti. The volume includes children's literature authors from ancient times until the contemporary period, coming from France, England, Germany, Nordic countries and naturally Russia. Thus, this study presents books written by well-known Russian writers, next to less renowned authors of fables, fairy tales and tales about animals. Some chapters deal with Russian literature from its origins to contemporary authors. One of the most interesting aspects is the vision of literature as a mirror of a national soul, also defined as a result of “race” to explain the features and genres of books for children and young people [Fanciulli, Monaci 1926, 150–161].

In general, Fanciulli referred to works of famous Russian children's writers published in various versions that strive to integrate favorite genres such as fairy tales, animal stories, autobiographical stories and family memories that could be offered to young people and children.

One of the most interesting aspects of the analysis of the Russian authors and genres presented by Giuseppe Fanciulli is that he clearly considers children's literature as a national literature. Indeed, Russian children's books mirror the aesthetic features that characterized the culture of the Slavs, indicating the genres and themes also linked to the folkloristic tradition, as shown by the following excerpts from Fanciulli's book, here translated into English: “A great variety of aspects are reflected in these people, due to the immense extension of the territory — from the freeze of Siberia to the burning heat of Crimea, — the diversity of races and nationalities merged or gathered within such vast borders, and the long history marked by the choice between eastern and western life: resigned fatalism and active enthusiasm, creating contradictions that are often mysteries for Westerners” [Fanciulli, Monaci 1926, 150] and “Children's and youth literature is also rich in Russia.

This can be explained, in part, by the exuberance of imagination, in the 'race', we were just talking about. But there is also another reason. Almost all Russian writers, during the past regime, felt the duty to promote the liberation of their people through education, and therefore they often spontaneously addressed children and young people, hopes of the longed-for future" [Ibid].

The same idea of literature as a typical product of a national popular culture also emerged in Fanciulli's children's books, where the Italian people were seen as having their own characteristics in the context of the national ideals that fascism cultivated, forming the aesthetic canons of the fascist regime, which valued national identity in a more markedly patriotic key.

It is worth noting that Mariella Colin, one of the leading scholars of children's literature, states that in the second half of the 1930s Giuseppe Fanciulli and Olga Visentini integrate and complete their volumes on children's literature based on the work of Olindo Giacobbe. This section includes two excerpts of the works of Olga Visentini and Olindo Giacobbe on Russian books. In the edition of *Children's Literature* by Fanciulli reprinted in 1935, chapter VIII on "Contemporaries" is completely revised. In fact, Colin describes trends of genres to focus on the classification of the authors who bring innovation and states that "C'est dans la dernière partie du chapitre — une vingtaine de pages intitulées 'la Guerre et le Fascisme' — qu'il se penche enfin sur la littérature 'vraiment excellente pour l'éducation de l'âme nationale'" [Colin 2010, 235–237]¹. Fanciulli classifies literature by themes, the authors who wrote novels and short stories about the First World War, the authors who dealt with the post-war period and described the reactions of defense of the national spirit in literary fictions, the authors who wrote the biography of Mussolini and finally the literature on the Balilla. In conclusion, Colin states that "les livres les plus représentatifs de la littérature nouvelle sont ceux dans lesquels est pleinement mise en lumière la régénération réalisée par le Fascisme dans les âmes et dans les choses" [Colin 2010, 238]².

Olga Visentini, who follows the footsteps of Giacobbe and Fanciulli, in the 1936 edition of *Books and Children*, updates the "state of the art"

¹"It is in the last part of the chapter — about twenty pages entitled 'War and Fascism' — that he finally turns to the literature which is 'really excellent for the education of the national soul'" (translated by Dorena Caroli).

²"the most representative books of the new literature are those in which the regeneration brought about by Fascism in souls and things is fully brought to light" (translated by Dorena Caroli, edited by Federica Gubbi).

of recent publication status of fascism children's books. On the other hand, the National Congress for children's and Youth Literature held in Bologna in 1938, four years later the one of the Socialist Writers (1934) [Colin 2010, 306–310], to which Fanciulli himself took part, banned most of the books by authors of Jewish origin, highlighting how new books imposed the canons of fascist aesthetics. The need to describe children's book became more important in order to offer also tools to teachers, who should choose and collect books for the school Libraries. From the historical point of view, after the Second World War, it was necessary to break with the past and among the different authors, Gianni Rodari [see Roghi 2020] became the protagonist of an important renewal, proposing democratic educational models.

In 1933 Olga Visentini writes *Libri e ragazzi: storia della letteratura infantile e giovanile (Books and Young People: History of Children's and Youth Literature)* which we propose here in the third, extended edition. In 1931, Visentini had moved to Milan to teach at the technical institute "C. Cattaneo" and joined the Action Group for the People's Schools ("Gruppo d'azione per le scuole del popolo"). After the resignation of Adelaide Coari and other collaborators, between 1932 and 1940 she takes on the teaching of Children's Literature for the Group's teachers. Since 1943 she moves to the "G. Parini" secondary school in Milan, where she remains for eighteen years.

There is no doubt that her studies and teaching help shape her intense desire to express herself and write for young people, but the advantages of her kinship with the publisher Arnoldo Mondadori, her cousin, should not be underestimated.

Visentini's beginnings as a writer date back to the years immediately before the Great War, and in the 1920s she mainly focuses on fairy tales and short novels. In the 1930s a gradual adaptation to the climate and ideals of fascism takes place; fascism is perceived by Visentini as a continuation and enhancement of the Risorgimento, and therefore she does not seem to see any dark sides to this rise [see Gasparini 1968; Lollo 1996].

In her opinion, given the multi-ethnic territory which is neither Asia nor Europe, Russia has been influenced by both West and East and rapidly developed "a vibrant and imaginative oral tradition" in which "the written children's literature has no distinct character of its own like that of some other nations, but is part and parcel of the great literature of all Russia" [Visentini 1940, 414].

In her text Visentini divides Russian children's literature either by genre (such as legends and fairy tales) or by authors (Tolstoy or fabulists).

She usually offers a brief account of the story and does not disdain personal comments about the quality of the text. Great attention is paid to Tolstoy's books for children and his activity in schooling children of peasants' who do not have free access to education.

Visentini also includes other major classics of Russian literature, such as Gogol', Chekhov and Korolenko who wrote also for children. Referring to the books of the end of 19th — beginning of 20th century, she claims that the main protagonists are “the countryside, its rivers and the mountains of Russia, that seem to close off the boundless horizon... ..and from that immensity melancholy blooms like a flower” [Visentini 1940, 422]. Such atmosphere and topics fade into the background after the troubled years of First World War, Revolution and Civil war, and by the beginning of the Soviet Union “‘popular’ didactic works, whether geographical, scientific, literary or philosophical” [Visentini 1940, 423] are at the centre of the stage. Curiously enough, the successful children's poetry by Korney Chukovsky and Samuil Marshak, as well as Gaydar's or Panteleev's remarkable stories remain probably unknown to the author, who complains the lack of art in the new Soviet children's literature: “These works, though, are strangers to art. We no longer hear the soul of the people, their ‘song’, melancholy as may be, but song, nor the life and spirit with which her poets had imbued their homeland” [Ibid].

Giacobbe's fragment on Russian children's literature is very much in debt of Visentini's account. Published only one year after *Books and Young People: History of Children's and Youth Literature*, he accounts for many writers and works cited by Visentini.

Olindo Giacobbe (1889–1951) is as a teacher and school headmaster, but also works as a poet and writer. From his adolescence, he begins to express the turmoil of his feelings in verse, especially in *Emmaus*, a volume of sonnets, whose title is taken from the passage in Luke's Gospel about Jesus' encounter with the disciples who do not recognize him: Giacobbe's book also signifies an encounter, that of the poet with his readers.

In 1923 he publishes *Notes on Children's Literature*, in which he does not seem to embrace idealistic orientations [Lollo 2003], whereas in the 1925 edition the adherence to the thesis of art as a “subjective moment of the spirit” is already clearer. In 1934 Giacobbe gives his work on children's literature a broader and more systematic treatment, and publishes *La Letteratura Infantile (Children's Literature)*, which is further followed in 1947 by the *Manuale di Letteratura Infantile (Handbook of Children's Literature)*, where the vast subject matter treated previously is given its definitive structure.

It is very easy to spot the analogies between Visentini's and Giacobbe's view on Russian world of childhood; however, Giacobbe puts more emphasis on the longstanding relationship between art and education that has been already taking place in Russia, even during the Tsarist regime. His account is shorter and, unlike Visentini, less space is given to personal opinions and comments. It is nonetheless worth noting that at the beginning the author claims the importance of knowing this "apparently humbler and more modest side of Russian writers' activities" [Giacobbe 1934, 379], namely children's literature, in order "to get a handle on the complicated and obscure psychology of their mysterious and distant lineage, which today other peoples may well feel pressing at the doors of their history in the form of a dark threat of hegemony and empire" [Ibid]. A statement that even in completely different contexts and situations may be still hold true.

The most accurate account of Russian children's literature is offered to the Italian public by the writer and translator Mary Tibaldi Chiesa (1896–1968), who from the late 1930s is active in the Milanese area which becomes more and more important for the editorial market. Together with Milly Dandolo, she quickly becomes an active promoter of Russian literature in the Italian language. The two writers narrate and rewrite, often taking wide margins of freedom, popular fairy tales and legends from all over the world, including those of Slavic origin, but also the 'adult' tales of Turgenev and Tolstoy [Bandini Buti 1941–1942, 300–301; Gastaldi, Scano 1957, 191; Pellegrini Baiada 2000, 131–143]. Tibaldi Chiesa has also the merit of bringing several Italian publishers into contact with emigrant Russian artists such as Nikolai Benois, Boris and Inna Zuev, Lilia Slutskaya, Vsevolod Nikulin [Vassena 2012, Vassena 2015].

The author begins with a detailed account of Krylov's fable production, since she herself has translated (or rewritten) a lot of stories by the famous Russian fabulist and then dwells on those works of Alexandr Pushkin, both in verses and in prose, that soon became part of the compulsory children's reading in Russia. She includes all the authors already mentioned by Visentini and Giacobbe: Tolstoy's production is presented in great detail, other classics are briefly accounted for in their attempts to address children or at least put them as protagonists of their books.

Tibaldi Chiesa moves with great agility in the Russian literary panorama for children, which makes her one of the greatest experts of this genre in the first half of the 20th century, probably also thanks to her closeness to the circles of the first Russian emigration to Italy. She is, for instance, the only author to mention Lidia Charskaya's successful

books “for young ladies” some of which she has translated together with Adriana Lyanowa. The last part of her account is a long list of names and titles without any particular comment or description, probably because of the lack of first-hand acquaintance with this almost contemporary production.

After Second World War a whole new approach to children's literature will become soon predominant and, although some of the concepts and ideas here collected still remain, the general feeling is to break with the past and shape a whole new way to address and educate children on more democratic basis. It will be a very long and difficult process which nonetheless would bring many new Russian author's for children in Italy and make it possible to open a small window into the vast and varied world of Russian children's literature.

The title of all the Russian works mentioned in the following texts has been translated into English and put into brackets in Italian. Some of them may slightly differ because of the translation into Italian whom the authors refer to.

Notes

- ¹ For his biography, see <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-fanciulli/>;
D. Montino: <http://dbe.editricebibliografica.it/cgi-bin/dbe/Scheda?883>.

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ИТАЛЬЯНСКИЕ АНТОЛОГИИ О РУССКОЙ ДЕТСКОЙ
ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ: ОБЗОР (1926–1944)

В разделе «Архив» публикуются четыре фрагмента, выбранные из исследований итальянских авторов, писавших о детской литературе — писателя и педагога Джузеппе Фанчулли (1881–1951), учителя и литератора Олиндо Джакоббе (1880–1950), детской писательницы, переводчицы и издательницы Марии Тибальди-Кьезы (1896–1968) и преподавательницы Ольги Висентини (1893–1961). Эти работы, написанные в период с 1926 года по 1943 год, взяты из учебных пособий и интересны тем, что в них представлен взгляд итальянских экспертов на русскую детскую литературу. Авторы выстраивают историю русской словесности для детей, дают обзор современной им эмигрантской детской литературы, пытаются определить национальное своеобразие детской литературы в России. Джузеппе Фанчулли обращается к русскому фольклору, к жанру волшебной сказки и доводит линию своего исследования до начала XX века. В работе Марии Тибальди-Кьезы дан детальный обзор переводов русской литературы на итальянский язык, выполненных с ориентацией на детскую и юношескую читательскую аудиторию, а также представлена развернутая биография А.С.Пушкина. Эссе Ольги Висентини базируется на предшествующем опыте Олиндо Джакоббе, дополняя и продолжая его работу вплоть до первых опытов советской детской литературы.

Keywords: история учебников, русские детские книги, Джузеппе Фанчулли, Ольга Висентини, Олиндо Джакоббе, Мария Тибальди Кьеза, Италия, XX век

Giuseppe Fanciulli

LA LETTERATURA PER L'INFANZIA

Fanciulli G., Monaci E. La letteratura per l'infanzia [Children's literature] (1931, 5 ed.). Torino, Milano, Genova, Parma, Roma, Catania: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1926. Pp. 150–161¹.

*Children's literature in Russia*¹⁾

Popular literature. Russia has a very rich, eminently fantastic, popular literature. A great variety of aspects are reflected in these people, due to the immense extension of the territory — from the freeze of Siberia to the burning heat of Crimea — the diversity of races and nationalities merged or gathered within such vast borders, and the long history marked by the choice between eastern and western life: resigned fatalism and active enthusiasm, creating contradictions that are often mysteries for Westerners.

But a clear feature of that character is the importance of imagination: exuberant, naive, affectionate and — despite the apparent liveliness — often tinged with sadness. This imagination has interpreted the real world, which was frequently fearful due to the cruelty of natural elements and humans, through the invention of beings one often has to fight against, and others who can help, even if that's a rare case.

There is a whole Russian mythology populated with good spirits and evil spirits. The Liesci (from the word *lies*, forest) is the spirit of the forest. It is represented as an old shambling man, with a long green beard and horns on its head. Malignant in character, like the Greek fauns, the Liesci can take on the strangest aspects. Working for it, a host of witches, the *Vedime*, repulsive in appearance, sometimes can take on very vague forms to divert travelers from the right path. The Liesci enjoys making fun of men and making some poor travelers lose

¹⁾The difficulty of obtaining books from Russia (which is decreasing just now) has forced us to reduce this important subject in a very short summary; we promise to resume and complete the discussion another time, in better conditions.

their way: while the wretch wanders through the gloomy bush, the Old Man pursues him bursting into coarse and fearful laughter. (Of course, such sounds are nothing more than the mocking cry of a little bird which is very common in the Nordic woods). At dawn, the Liesci dissolves among the trees and the poor traveler feels he is coming back to life.

The spirit of the waters is called *Vodianoi* (from the word *voda*, water). It lives in deep wells in lakes; in short, it is the spirit of the cisterns, of the abyss, and it is evil too. It has a long dripping beard, magnetic eyes, and draws men into its eddies. Running waters, on the other hand, are the home of the *Russalche*, beautiful, diaphanous and agile girls, with long hair. At night, in the moonlight, they let themselves be lulled by the waves, while they comb their hair. Or they come out of the water, and, holding hands, they dance the *chorovodi* dance, a sort of round dance. The mermaids (*russalche*) are drowned souls, prisoners of the *Vodianoi*.

The *Tsar of water*, powerful and very rich, also lives in the ocean. In his underwater kingdom there are fantastic palaces, made of pure crystal and adorned with precious gems. He controls the seas, and all marine phenomena depend on him. He causes storms and makes ships sink, in order to get their wealth; and he also loves taking crews as prisoners. Sometimes some of the prisoners manage to escape, with the complicity of a mermaid in love.

Finally, another evil spirit is the *immortal Koscei*, which steals young wives and girlfriends. Besides that, the life of the Russian peasants is full of fantasies about witches and sorcerers; but there are also the good fairies, that sometimes manage to undo the devilish actions of the evil spirits.

But the Russian people, despite being so inclined to the marvelous — and perhaps precisely for this reason — do not like the rhetorical emphasis on invention. Their favorite hero is *Ivanuska duraciok* (“Giovannino il semplicione”); his simplicity often triumphs, with the help of the fairies, over the evil cunning of his brothers. Another character who is often present in Russian fairy tales is the evil stepmother who is ultimately punished for her cruelty towards her good stepdaughter. The “red-nosed Moroz” (*Moros krasnei nos*) is also worth mentioning, which is a spirit coming from the North, depicted as an old man, with a good or bad soul, depending on the circumstances.

The stories about animals are very interesting, and there are witty personifications: the fox is famous for its mockery of wolves and bears.

All these popular beliefs and imagines gave rise to a great number of short stories, which remained mostly an oral tradition. Nevertheless,

some transcriptions exist, even anonymous, which let us appreciate all the luxuriant beauty²⁾.

In this popular literature, the so-called Biline (from the word *béll*, things that happened) occupy a place of their own; fantastic poems by unknown authors, born among the people, telling stories of brave knights at the service of Russia.

The best writers

Children's and youth literature is also rich in Russia. This can be explained, in part, by the exuberance of imagination, in the "race", we were just talking about. But there is also another reason. Almost all Russian writers, during the past regime, felt the duty to promote the liberation of their people through education, and therefore they often spontaneously addressed children and young people, hopes of the longed-for future; moreover, the works dedicated to this young audience could also be useful for the people in general. The Revolution of 1917 took place when this educational work was very far from completion, and from this came so many errors and horrors. Bolshevism was a speculation on ignorance, like tsarism.

Due to the above circumstances, there were no writers specialized in children's literature, at least in the classical periods of Russian literature: all of them, starting from the best ones (poets or great novelists), produced a few books, or a few pages, for young people. In this quick review we will mention the best-known ones.

At the very beginning, children's literature, as other types of literature, took its inspirations from popular traditions and artistically elaborated them. Ivan Krylov (1768–1844) was an unsurpassed author of fables. The idea of dealing especially with this genre perhaps came to him after the success of his translation of two fables by Lafontaine, published in the Moscow *Spectator*. His great collection of fables and apologues (about two hundred) dealt with themes originating from popular tradition, such as from ancient legends of other countries. That literary art, due to its grace and its picturesque variety, remained classic. Aleksander Pusckin (1799–1837) and his contemporary Jukowsky beautifully elaborated some popular elements as well. It is said that the two writers challenged each other to write the most beautiful folk tale, and both of them composed a masterpiece: Jukowsky wrote the tale of

²⁾Some of these novels are included in the volume: *Racconti russi*, Italian transl. by Giuseppina Spezia (Collez. cit., soc. Editrice Internazionale, Torino).

Tsar Berendei [Zar Berendei] and Pushkin wrote the tale of *Tsar Saltan* [Zar Saltan], based on a plot which had been suggested to him by his old nurse Arina Radionovna³). She had a deep knowledge of popular short stories and, together with his old grandmother, had a great influence on the education of the poet, founder of modern Russian literature.

With Pusckin, literature already began to deal with stories inspired by real life figures and events. Many writers wanted, in a more or less conscious way, the Russian people to become aware of Russia and the Russian soul. Sergej T. Aksakov (1791–1859) belonged to a noble family of the Urals and acquired great fame above all with two works, that is *Notes on Fishing* [Appunti sulla pesca] and *Tales and Memories of Various Hunter Hunts* [Racconti e ricordi di un cacciatore], where nature is described with a wonderful poetic sensitivity. Many of his pages were read with great interest by young people⁴).

The great Nicolaj V. Gogol (1809–1852), who is also one of the founders of Russian literature, often used humor to represent characters from old fairy tales; but his art is almost always too high especially in the use of irony, to be suitable for a younger audience. However, young people can enjoy reading the *Taras Bulba* [Taras Bulba] and *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka* [I racconti della fattoria di Dikanka] about the rural life, in the excellent Italian translation by Federico Verdinois.

Pavel Ivanovich Mielnikov (1819–1883), a writer/ethnographer, is considered the best scholar and the most profound connoisseur of primitive Russia. He devoted his leisure time to literature, and some of the beautiful stories he wrote, such as *Grandfather Policarpo* [Nonno Policarpo] and *Old Times* [Vecchi anni], made children dream⁵). A poet of that time was able to charm these young souls as well: Ivan S. Nikitin (1824–1862)⁶), who after a very difficult life managed to gain fame. His novel was particularly famous: *The hoarder* [L'incettatore].

Most of Ivan S. Turgenev's (1818–1883) books, so pure and noble, can be offered to young readers, and an anthology of selected stories or passages could be very interesting; the most interesting ones could be the *Poems in Prose* [Poemetti in prosa] and the *Sketches from a Hunter's Album* [Ricordi di un cacciatore]⁷).

³In Russian tradition, the spelling is Arina Rodionovna. Hereinafter, the author's spelling of proper names is preserved.

⁴Ibidem. Their novels are included in the volume: *Russian novels* (Racconti russi).

⁵Idem.

⁶Idem.

⁷Idem.

Another famous writer, Anton P. Chekov (1860–1904)⁸⁾, son of a serf, novelist and playwright, well known also in Italy, wrote excellent short stories for children. The following have recently been translated into Italian: *Little Ivan* [Il piccolo Ivan], a dramatic figure of a little child, a shoemaker's boy, who writes to his distant family on Christmas Eve, and dreams of an impossible happiness; and *Little Chestnut* [Castagnetta], the story of a little dog that prefers the misery of its first master to the splendor of the equestrian circus. These essays are enough to show the author's extraordinary power and finesse, even in this field.

Nicolaj G. Mikailovskij, under the pseudonym Garin (1852–1906), wrote in particular for young people. He spent his childhood and adolescence in Odessa, studied engineering in Petersburg, and until the age of forty he devoted himself exclusively to engineering and rural economics. *Tioma's Childhood* [L'infanzia di Tioma], the book in which he recalled his happy childhood, suddenly revealed his genius as a writer; this work contains many parts suitable for young people. The same can be said of another well-known book he wrote: *Several Years in the Village* [Alcuni anni nel villaggio]. For young people there are two volumes: *High School Pupils* [I ginnasiali] and *The Students* [Gli studenti], lively pictures and tales of school life in Russia⁹⁾.

Dmitrij N. Mamin, better known under the pseudonym Sibiriak, (1852–1912) is like Aksakov, a Russian from the Urals. Man of action, hunter, passionate about athletic exercises, he wanted to describe and celebrate, more than anything else, the active life of his country. He is the unsurpassed poet of the Ural Mountains and their inhabitants; he was also one of the best writers for young people. We believe that only his first novel has been translated into Italian, *The fighters* [I lottatori]. As regards books for youth, the following have been translated: *Simovie on the Studenaia* [Simovie sulla Studenaia], a sublime picture of life in the steppe and *The Little Deer* [Il piccolo cervo], a delicate hunting episode¹⁰⁾.

The *Childhood Memories* [Le memorie d'infanzia] and the *Gospel Parables* [Parabole evangeliche] by Tolstoj were and are widely read by young people — although they were not written for them.

Other good authors who wrote children's literature are Dimitrievna¹¹⁾, Kuprin, Lichovskaia, Remisov, Sascia Cernei, etc. Among the most recent ones, we can mention Michail Ossorghin, author of *The*

⁸⁾Idem.

⁹⁾Idem.

¹⁰⁾Idem.

¹¹⁾This refers to Elizaveta Dmitrieva (1887–1928), she is also Cherubina de Gabriak.

little Swallow Natascia and other Russian Stories [Rondinella Natascia e altri racconti russi]: full of imagination and at the same time a careful observer of childhood life, he created for us very precious stories. Pictures of real life, fresh and graceful, are also the sketches of another young writer, Elacic, now presented for the first time to Italian young people¹²⁾.

Children's literature, mostly developed in times of slavery, has the fundamental feature of great freedom. It aims at playing an educational role, because it aspires to illuminate and elevate the souls of the children, and the great soul of the people without the burden of pedagogical systems or methods. It relies mostly on the charm of art, so that the implicit teaching of poetic invention can become fruitful persuasion. This fundamental character also includes the exuberance of the imagination, the drama and subtlety of the inventions and observations, the colorful and attractive style. It is simply a literature that deserves to be better known and disseminated, also because it probably contains the healthiest part of Russian art and soul.

Translated by Dorena Caroli

Notes

- ¹ For his biography, see <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-fanciulli/>;
D. Montino: <http://dbe.editricebibliografica.it/cgi-bin/dbe/Scheda?883>.

¹²⁾ *Vania e Ferferka*, translation by Rafia Pomeranz, quoted by the Collezione della Soc. Editrice Internazionale, Torino.

Olindo Giacobbe

LETTERATURA INFANTILE

*Giacobbe O. Letteratura infantile [Children's Literature].
Turin: Paravia e C., 1934. Pp. 379–384.*

Russian literature is among the richest in Europe for educative content, not least because nearly all her leading writers thought of themselves, under the Tsarist regime, as heralds of a new era of freedom, and this covert aspiration encouraged them to cultivate close contact with the people, with a view to educating them and bettering their condition, even if in so doing they risked deportation to Siberia, or even the death penalty. However, even as translations of works dealing with complex and tormented aspects of art and life have begun to proliferate here in Italy, there is a lack of studies dedicated to this apparently humbler and more modest side of Russian writers' activities, which would not only help us to grasp many unexplored facets of their powerful originality, but also to get a handle on the complicated and obscure psychology of their mysterious and distant lineage, which today other peoples may well feel pressing at the doors of their history in the form of a dark threat of hegemony and empire.

The first writer of children's stories we meet in Russian literature is the poet VASILY ZHUKOVSKY (1773–1852), whose own life was something of an unusual fairy story. He wrote *The Tale of Iván Tsarévich and the Grey Wolf* [*La storia del principe Ivan e del lupo grigio*], *The Sleeping Princess* [*La principessa addormentata*], *The War of mice and frogs* [*La guerra dei topi e delle rane*] and *The Tale of Tsar Berendei* [*La fiaba dello zar Berendei*], which was penned for a private competition between himself and his friend Pushkin.

Just as in the summer gardens that Peter the Great created in St Petersburg each of the numerous fountains represented one of Aesop's Fables, with texts from Theophan Prokopovich's translation, so the treasury compiled by IVAN KRYLOV (1769–1844), revives nearly all of the mythical elements that produced his fables, songs and poems, and which are linked to a great many European traditions and to the most ancient surviving texts, such as the *Panchatantra*. Krylov is the author

of about 170 fables, more than thirty of which are imitations of foreign originals, and they exemplify the transition between the old and the new Russian literature. In them we find for the first time descriptions of the different classes of Russian society with all their defects and merits, from the muzhik to the prince, from the priest to the tsar, a procedure that would be taken up in numerous works first by Gogol and then by Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. The style of Krylov's beautiful fairy tales has a slightly archaic flavour, although the content is enlivened by a degree of modernity. The impulse to produce fairy tales may have come from the success enjoyed by his translation of two tales by La Fontaine which were published in the *Moscow Spectator*. His great love for fables and moral tales made him the author of unforgettable short stories and fairy-tales for which he was immortalized in a monument erected in those same gardens in St Petersburg where the original creations of the Phrygian poet and educator are remembered. We are lucky in having a good Italian translation of his fables by Umberto Norsa¹.

ALEXANDER SERGEYEVICH PUSHKIN (1799–1837), in the brief intervals between his work as poet and imperial historian, also tried his hand at fantastical tales of an accessible popular nature, four of which have been translated into limpid and sonorous Italian verse by Federico Verdinois²: *The Tale of the Dead Princess and the Seven Knights* [*La storia della reginotta morta e dei sette cavalieri*], *The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish* [*La leggenda del pescatore e del pesciolino d'oro*], *The Tale of the Golden Cockerel* [*Il galletto d'oro*] and *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* [*La leggenda del re Saltan*], notable for their innate naivety and a spontaneity of feeling that imbues even the fast-moving passages, time changes and childish repetitions in which they abound with an air of fresh and appealing primitive poetry.

ALEKSEY REMIZOV, who masterfully succeeded in capturing the Slavic character of his people, which permeates all his works — their lives, customs and habits, their superstitions, traditions and legends — wrote a series of *Tales of Asseka, the Monkey King* [*Fiabe di Asseka, re delle scimmie*] for children.

DMITRY MAMIN (1852–1912), better known by his nom-de-plume SIBIRYAK, wrote hunting stories set among the wild Ural Mountains, as well as an astounding novel *Fireflies* [*Lucciole*].

¹Krylov G. *Le favole*. (Interlinear Russian/Italian text, translated by U. Norsa). Palermo: Sandron, 1919.

²Puškin A. *Le fiabe*. (First Italian edition translated by F. Verdinois). Milan: Sonzogno, 1906.

A highlight of Russian literature is a section of *The Brothers Karamazov* that is well known in Italy under the titles *Precocious children* [*Precoci*] or *The Boys* [*Ragazzi*], in which FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY (1822–1881) anatomizes the huge and painful emotional and intellectual life that unfolds in the souls of little ones no less than in those of grown-ups, perhaps more heartfelt in the former, because of their sweet innocence. Fyodor Dostoevsky is also the author of a magnificent short story with a child protagonist, which can be enjoyed by all age-groups, for all that the author's subtle psychological analysis is more aimed at an adult readership: *A Little Hero* [*Il piccolo eroe*], which has recently been published in a scrupulous Italian translation by Olga Resnevic³⁾

NIKOLAI GOGOL (1809–1852), one of the greats of Russian literature, penned *Taras Bulba* and *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka* [*I racconti della fattoria di Dikanka*] for younger readers.

PAVEL MELNIKOV (1819–1883) was a distinguished scholar who dedicated his hours of idleness to literature and wrote *Grandpa Polycarp* [*Nonno Policarpo*] and *Olden Times* [*Vecchi anni*] for children.

We should not of course forget the name of another great writer, IVAN TURGENEV (1818–1883) whose *Prose Poems* [*Poemetti in prosa*] and *Hunter's Sketches* [*Ricordi di un cacciatore*] can be read with pleasure and profit by the young.

Yet another great writer was ANTON CHEKHOV (1860–1904) who wrote the enchanting stories *Vanka* [*Il piccolo Ivan*] and *Kashtanka* [*Castagnetta*] for children.

Among lesser-known names, we should remember MARKO VOVCHOK and her *Marussia*, VASILY N. DANCHENKO for his story *The Falcon's Nest* [*Nidi di falchi*], T. SHCHEPKINA-KUPERNIK for *The Knight Lionheart and Other Tales* [*Il cavaliere cuor di leone e altri racconti*] and MIKHAIL OSORGIN for *The Little Swallow Natasha* [*Rondinella Natascia*].

Valuable books of childhood memoirs are NIKOLAI MIKHAILOVSKY's *Tyoma's Childhood* [*La fanciullezza di Tioma*] and ZHELIKHOVSKAYA's *How I was as a Child* [*Com'ero da bimba*].

An original example of particularly profound children's literature, for both meaning and message, and no less for its purity and clarity of expression, is that contained in LEO TOLSTOY's (1828–1910) *Gospel Parables* [*Novelle evangeliche*]. The product of the last years of his life, these imbue powerful descriptions of contemporary life, in which

³⁾Dostoevskij F. M. *Cuor debole. Il piccolo eroe*. (Translated directly from the Russian by O. Resnevic). Florence: La Voce, 1921.

the unfamiliar life of poorest people is compassionately dissected, with the Christian message of Good News. A deep love for humanity flows through the story of the devout and generous cobbler, while a profound knowledge of the human soul is revealed in that of the angel cast out of heaven who learns in his long years of earthly experience what there is to men, what is given them and what they make of it. A collection of his easier folk tales has been adapted for Italian schoolchildren by Angelo Colombo...⁴⁾

In Colombo's versions, the great Russian writer's stories lose nothing of their luminous purity or their profundity, but they are skilfully reworked for young minds, who will certainly draw much profit from the numerous simple beauties they contain.

Tolstoy was always ready to put his talents as a writer at the service of his teachings. As Alexander Veselovsky notes in his *History of Russian Literature*⁵⁾, the heretical aesthetic that Tolstoy would eventually formulate in his treatise *What is Art?*, proposing not beauty as the basis of artistic creation but what morally ennobles, what unites men around the eternal principle of love, found concrete expression in his works. He wrote numerous stories that were circulated in millions of copies throughout the years of political upheaval, hammering into the popular consciousness the concepts fundamental to his teachings, in the accessible form of the apologue.

A collection of Russian folk tales in which the spirit of the people is best revealed, selected and transcribed in French by Admiral Dabnour, has recently been translated from that language by Bianca Vigna dal Ferro and published in the collection *Classics for Little Children* [*Classici del fanciullo*] in two volumes⁶⁾. The same series also boasts a translation from the Russian of originally Persian fables, in which the splendid and mysterious figures of Viziers and Shahs never fail to fascinate children, as they find themselves in close company with the great and the powerful alongside the humble and the hardworking⁷⁾.

Translated by John Francis Phillimore. Edited by Raffaella Vassena

⁴⁾Tolstoj L. N. *Storie* (adapted by A. Colombo). Florence: Bemporad-Rome: Mondadori, 1920.

⁵⁾Veselovskij A. N. *Storia della letteratura russa* (transl. by E. Damiani). Florence: Vallecchi, 1926.

⁶⁾D'Abnour C. *Favole popolari della vecchia Russia*. (Translated from the French by B. Vigna dal Ferro). Lanciano: Carabba, 1933. (Classici del fanciullo).

⁷⁾Koržinskij O. M. *Favole tartare*. (Translated from the Russian by K. Tcancenko). Lanciano: Carabba, 1923. (Classici del fanciullo).

Olga Visentini

LIBRI E RAGAZZI: STORIA DELLA LETTERATURA INFANTILE E GIOVANILE

Visentini O. Libri e ragazzi: storia della letteratura infantile e giovanile [Books and Young People: History of Children's and Youth Literature] (3rd ed.). Milan: A. Mondadori, 1940. Pp. 414–423.

Russian writers

1. The land and its peoples

In both its profile and its position — Waliszewski has written — Russia is neither Europe nor Asia: although boundless and wild, it does not oppose an indomitable resistance to the efforts of men, allowing itself to be subdued and domesticated.

Lacking clearcut boundaries it has been the highway for repeated mass emigrations: Scythians, Goths, Avars, Bulgars, Hungarians.

The waves of nomadic peoples that have overlapped one another through the centuries have left behind a sense of the inexorable nature of fate and shaped, despite that, a passionate character in the people for the tenacious defence of every right: at once humble and rebellious, violent and dreamers, essentially mystical.

In addition, Russia has been influenced by countries from both East and West in the perennial ebb and flow of peoples across its endless plains. The struggle to unify so many disparate elements, of which the main ones are the Finns, the Tartars and the Slavs, was a long and difficult one, and delayed all settled forms of civilization.

For these and other reasons, a vibrant and imaginative oral tradition recycles motifs from other lands, intermixing historical figures with legendary indigenous heroes, and the written children's literature has no distinct character of its own like that of some other nations, but is part and parcel of the great literature of all Russia.

Waliszewski recounts how in 1834 the critic Belinsky, while preparing the history of his country's works, asked himself: Do we have a

literature — answering his own question: We have only a book trade. And some years later, when publishing a literary survey, he gave it the title “Trifles on trifles”, suggesting how short is the story of the artistic production of this people, which had to rise to civilization through a very long historical evolution.

2. *The national legends*

The national legends of a people excluded from the European community by geographical and ethnic circumstances, have an immeasurable undercurrent of sadness, veiled with irony. As Pushkin says: “Everything we sing, we sing sadly... a melancholy lament is the true song of Russia...”.

The folksingers travelled through the steppes, the plains, along the rivers, reciting their *byliny*, short heroic songs that are collected in two cycles, the Kievan and the Novgorodian.

The Kievan cycle features many giants who are perhaps the progenitors of the Titans in Greek mythology. Volga Svyatoslavich is the son of a princess and a serpent, strong and cunning, capable of extraordinary deeds. Vladimir is a giant in the guise of a chivalrous knight: he has the soul of an inveterate hedonist, but when the Tartars besiege Kiev, he kneels before Ilya, the saviour appointed by destiny.

Ilya is the hero par excellence of the folksingers: he vanquishes winged monsters, saves cities, survives pitched battles; but like a good Russian peasant he is a great trencherman and not averse to a drink.

Less interesting is the Novgorodian cycle, that offers us merchants, pilgrims, seafarers, racketeering, showing the clear influence of real-life medieval events. The wandering minstrels would also sing of other legends among the huts and villages, hotchpotches of Christianity and paganism.

Legend takes on the grandeur of epic when the shadow of Ivan the Terrible falls over it, garnering all the adoration of the populace.

Hardly less fulsome is the admiration heaped on Vladimir the Saint, or on Igor, the warrior prince and poet, inspirer of all Russia, who in his wars against his enemies, his imprisonment and flight, has something of William of Orange and of Ogier the Dane.

3. *Popular legends*

The Russian people are well supplied with mystical and fantastical legends that mirror life in a fanciful manner.

The people adore the supernatural and they look for it here on earth, hoping to see signs of it in the simple events of daily life. The peasant who wanders through a forest at night is not afraid but marvels at its wonders; and if nothing extraordinary happens to him, he resorts to his imagination and creates what, in the telling and retelling, he will come to believe he has lived.

Many legends begin like this.

And then we have the poetry of the *rusalki*, the water nymphs, once young maidens fallen into the waters, now prisoners of the Spirit of the Rivers, and of *Leshy*, the god of the woods, and of the witches and their nocturnal gatherings

Sly mischief is the leitmotif of the stories about Ivanushka Durachok: “Ivan the Fool, a sort of Sicilian *Giufà*: essentially a pretend idiot who always comes out ahead.”

The folk tales of Russia were collected by ALEXANDER AFANASYEV, who, like the Brothers Grimm, transcribed them directly from the lively tellings of the people: a curiosity among them is the story Little Red Riding Hood with certain adaptations imposed by the Russian environment, its habits and customs.

4. *The fabulists*

As the people sang and dreamed, eternally childlike, Christian, Greek, Roman and Germanic elements gradually infiltrated, preparing the ground for civil unification and the arrival of Peter the Great.

Artistic life largely centred around the courts of the Tsars who seem to have drawn in the creative forces of the people.

La Fontaine was first translated by IVAN CHEMNITZER (1745–1784) with an all but humble simplicity and certainly less artistry than that deployed by IVAN DMITRIEV (1760–1837) who sculpted the tales with a singular musicality and elegance of language. The greatest of the Russian fabulists is surely IVAN KRYLOV (1769–1844), born into a poor family in Moscow: his first collection of twenty-three fables was published in 1809 and reprints soon reached seventy-seven thousand copies. To these, Krylov would add many others, some two hundred in all: initially the poet drew on La Fontaine, as had his fellow countrymen, but then extended his sources to include Aesop and Phaedrus, finally composing his own material set in Russia and imbued with the soul of the country — fables that deal with humble situations, warning against snares, or imparting a lesson, at times betraying the barely veiled and disdainful mordancy typical of many Russian writers. Plots often unfold

powerfully and rapidly, as in *The Pond and the River* [*La contesa fra lo stagno e il fiume*], or *The Vain Ant* [*La formica vanitosa*], or *The Siskin and the Dove* [*Il Canarino e il Colombo*] or *Young Lion's Education* [*L'educazione del Leone*]; others are tinged with a subtle satire and couched in a sprightly, even nervy language rendered in finely crafted verse.

The poet was appointed to a post in the Imperial Library at Saint Petersburg and made a member of the Academy. But his work would receive higher recognition still; one of his sweetest tales — *The Cornflower* [*Il fiordaliso*] — fell under the eyes of the Princess Maria: the story of a flower the colour of the skies, which opens in the shade, and remains pale, almost withering away until the rising dawn bestows dew on its petals, reviving it just as hope can be revived.

The Empress was moved to reward the poet with a simple bouquet of flowers for his fine lyrics; and he kept this singular gift until his death, asking for it to be placed in his coffin. A deep and nostalgic show of feeling in apparent contrast with his often bitter poems and somewhat wild life: but the contrast is ample testimony to the Russian spirituality. Krylov has been translated into many languages.

5. Fairytales

The first fairytales we have from Russia we owe to a poet, VASILY ANDREYEVICH ZHUKOVSKY (1773–1852), whose own life reads like a fairytale: born in a village of the Tula province to a nobleman and a Turkish servant and adopted by Andrey Zhukovsky, he was transferred to an artistically inclined aunt in the city; there the boy composed and recited verses, got into the university and took part in the war of 1812, which inspired his poem *A bard in the fields of the Russian warriors* [*Il bardo nel campo dei guerrieri russi*]. The Empress desired his presence at court and appointed him a reader and later tutor to the young princes. In that role the poet, who possessed a profound knowledge of German and Greek literature, and who had translated from the Indian the Mahabarata and the songs of Firdowsi from the Persian, composed fairy tales for the emperor's sons betraying these varied influences, without losing the characteristic impress of his Russian lineage.

The story *The Tale of Iván Tsarévich and the Grey Wolf* [*La storia del principe Ivan e del Lupo grigio*] revisits the well-known motif of the bird stealing the golden apples from the king's garden and Ivan setting out in pursuit with the help of a grey wolf; *The Sleeping Princess* [*La principessa addormentata*] is a version of the Sleeping Beauty, while

The War of mice and frogs [*La guerra dei topi e delle rane*] is taken from Homer, but with new entertaining elements including an appearance by the Tsar.

One of the loveliest is *The Tale of Tsar Berendei* [*La fiaba dello Zar Berendei*], written for an unusual competition between himself and the great Pushkin: Tsar Berendei, while drinking from a spring finds himself being caught by his long beard: it is the Spirit of the Rivers who will not let him go unless in exchange for his only son Ivan. After many adventures the prince succeeds in extracting himself from imprisonment and returns to claim his kingdom.

This story again contains traditional elements, but it is revitalised by the introduction of fabulous creatures that inhabit the superabundance of Russian nature, and other characters are also given an indigenous makeover, the whole being imbued with a melancholy which only increases its enchantment.

ALEXANDER PUSHKIN (1799–1837), Zhukovsky's great friend, wrote for the unusual above-mentioned competition *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* [*La fiaba dello Zar Saltan*], which although sticking close to well-known models, he invested with such grace and typically Slav melancholy that it acquires a notable originality.

The same qualities can be seen in the fairy tales translated by Verdis: *The Golden Cockerel* [*Il gallo d'oro*], *The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish* [*La leggenda del pescatore*], *The Tale of the Dead Princess and the Seven Knights* [*La principessa morta e sette cavalieri*]: in his stories for the young Pushkin is no different from the Pushkin we know from his adult stories: a harmonious fusion of different elements of European civilization, reshaped by an ardent character and a mysterious power to recreate them with an all-Russian physiognomy. Characteristic and heroic is the story of Russlan and Ludmilla.

It is as if ALEKSEY REMIZOV, born in 1877, had set out to encapsulate the soul of Russian literature so as to transmit it to young people: a novelist working from a strong palette in his early works, in his maturity he captured everything that is Slavic, interweaving the life, customs, traditions, superstitions, portents, and popular legends in his Olya trilogy.

Remizov loved enchantment, wizards, fairies, dreams, wonders, nightmares and animals. This penchant, mingled with folkloric elements, had him compose the stories for children which he called the *Tales of Asseka, the Monkey King* [*Fiabe di Asseka, re delle scimmie*]; strange, vivid fairy tales, full of action and dialogue, sometimes with a nursery-rhyme lilt like *Tiny Wrinkle* [*Sorcetta Rughetta*], often painfully

human like *The Bear Cub* [*L'orsetto*], original even when they take their inspiration from tradition like *Hare Ivanich* [*Il leprotto Ivanic*], which owes something to Bluebeard.

DMITRY MAMIN, who wrote as SIBIRYAK (1852–1912) is best known for his hunting stories set in the wild Ural Mountains, among them the fine *The Little Deer* [*Il piccolo cervo*]. He also wrote a delightful children's novel *Fireflies* [*Lucciole*], set in a woodland landscape.

6. *Leo Tolstoy*

Count LEO TOLSTOY, born in Yasnaya Polyana in 1828, taken by his studies to Moscow, to Kazan and to Petersburg, by military service to the Caucasus and Crimea, and by the desire to see more of the world to travel around Europe, subsequently retired to his lands, reared a family, and wrote. Fame soon came to him, of the most radiant kind. It might seem to represent that chimera of happiness ever pursued by men; but instead it seems as if an abyss opened in front of the great thinker, a huge void, a question that reached out to being, to time, to space and finding no response brought him near to a desperate denial of life.

But a light was glowing in the shadows; it came from the eyes of peasants, from the smiles of little children, it came from a flame of love that revealed God and the infinite to him. And so he returned to what he had once been — a child — to that blessed age that knows how to see the divine in things and in creatures.

And as he wrote: “The idea came to me that I should organise here in the country a school for the whole neighbourhood”.

Tolstoy's school was one of the most engrossing adventures of his life (1): he worried away at opposing principles, and experience by experience arrived at the following formulation: “The only books that the people understand and that meet their taste are the books not written *for* the people but *by* the people and more exactly: short stories, proverbs, collections of songs, legends, verses, riddles”.

And further on, a eulogy of the Scriptures: “Without the Bible our society would not be possible, just as Greek society, the boy developing into the man, would not have been possible without Homer. The Bible is the only book for primary school and children's reading”.

These two key declarations reveal the spirit of the reading books he edited for his schools. There are four of them and they gradually build a collection of fables and tales, true stories and narratives, historical tales, *byliny*, topics for conversation, with an evident concern not to stray into error or excess, into allowing the sentimental world to predominate

over the rational one. Tolstoy does not want limits or preconceptions to condition the impressions that reading can stimulate, so he enters briskly into the meat of matters, does not comment on them, or conclude any passage with a moral precept, but allows the lesson to emerge spontaneously from the reading.

The fables draw on the rich European heritage, that is, on Aesop, Phaedrus, La Fontaine: sometimes they are original, sometimes inspired by legendary religious figures; the true stories say things about life, becoming more complex in the later volumes and with a novel-like flavour in their breadth of reference and pacy plots that keeps the reader in suspense.

Here and there, among the *byliny*, traditional fairy stories appear: *Tom Thumb* [*Pollicino*], for example. The scenes that Tolstoy supplies as conversation topics are very lively and dramatic. But everything (even contributions from different sources) is reworked and carries the writer's unmistakable imprint; the four books constitute both a statement and a new departure. Tolstoy hoped that ideally they would nourish at least two generations of Russian children, from the imperial princelings to the sons of the muzhiks. This elevated sense of mission, which had its basis in the divine, broadened in his Gospel stories, which move from the human to the divine in the course of the narration. We can look at some examples: There is a humble shoemaker who awaits Christ in his lowly abode and sees him coming in the shape of the poor, so that the unfolding of the tale confirms the Gospel verse: "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me".

In *Two Old Men* [*Due Vecchi*], of the two old men who go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, it is the one who stops along the way to help his brothers who truly reaches the tomb of Christ. *How to Resist Evil* [*Come vincere il male*] dramatizes the episode of Saint Nicholas the Hermit and the bandit, and we witness the reflowering of three old trees at each victory of the one for the good of the other. While the story *How much Land does a Man Need?* [*Quanta terra occorre ad un uomo?*] pauses to contemplate a pit less than two meters long, another entitled *What Men Live By* [*Di che vivono gli uomini?*] expands to embrace heaven and earth in the story of the exiled angel who, in the guise of a young boy, has to remain among men until he has learned that what they live on is love. Tolstoy's stories play out on a broad canvas, sometimes with a sort of novelistic legendariness, sometimes with the hovering hint of fairy tale, while his habit of proceeding by dialogue, with naive repetitions, and not without, here and there, prophetic overtones, recalls

the florilegia and the morality of the Middle Ages, and above all to the Gospels.

We feel that the writer speaks to the pure in heart, but as only a poet can speak; and we feel that the pure come to meet him just as children and angels must have met him when, in November 1910, he left the house of his fathers to move, old and gaunt as a prophet, between the snows and the storms towards infinity; and that infinity was death, that is, ascension.

7. *Novels and short stories*

The Russians are passionately attached to their land: they feel it, they describe it, they deploy it as a background to their novels and stories, which draw a particular indigenous flavour from it.

Russian patriarchal life is portrayed with great finesse through a veil of nostalgia by SERGEY AKSAKOV (1791–1859) in his *The Family Chronicle* [*Cronaca di famiglia*], his *Hunter's Memories* [*Ricordi di un cacciatore*], his *Memories* [*Ricordi*] and most of all in *Childhood Years of Bagrov the Grandson* [*L'infanzia del nipotino di Bagrov*] which earned him the title of 'the Russian Homer'. The life he portrays is transparent, without struggles, dominated by old grandfather Bagrov who, not in recognition of any spiritual superiority, but by mere force of tradition, exercises absolute sovereignty over the family; wholesome pages that exude the fresh odour of rustic and homely things.

NIKOLAI VASILYEVICH GOGOL (1809–1852) was a scion of minor gentry from the Poltava district, where old traditions and legends still persisted, and the spirit of that land suffuses his writings: *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka* [*Le serate alla fattoria di Dikanka*], which came out in 1831, aroused considerable admiration for its powerful portrayal of Ukraine, with all its joys and sorrows, conveyed in stories not without a vein of irony and the odd echo of the romantic school. *Mirgorod* is a more robust exercise — though still not entirely free of romanticism — and laughter shines through the tears in a typically Gogol manner.

A fully realised expression of the 'Little Russia' way of life is his *Taras Bulba*: Taras, the father, persistently fights with his sons to prove their strength; elsewhere there is a young Cossack who throws himself into a puddle to show his contempt for the beautiful clothes he has been dressed in: episodes of an almost wild vigour, which demonstrate Gogol's forceful moulding of character, his sincerity, his passion, but also that sense of the inexorability of fate typical of Russia, and which would

result in both a certain mystical elevation and a degree of contradiction in the mature Gogol.

IVAN S. TURGENEV (1818–1883) adopts a procedure similar to that of Thackeray and Dickens in composing his novels: close analysis, a subtle and warm-hearted irony; in his humanitarian outlook he resembles Victor Hugo, but is more astringent. His books maintain a constantly high tone. Particularly worthy of mention are *Hunter's Sketches* [*Racconti di un cacciatore*] and the sketches in the prose poems *Senilia*.

FYODOR M. DOSTOEVSKY (1822–1881) is a powerful portrayer of character and analyser of feelings, but he is certainly not a children's writer; none the less, suitable episodes can profitably be extracted from his books: the publisher Carabba provided an example with *The Little Netochka and Other Stories* [*La piccola Netotschka ed altri racconti*] in a translation by Eva Amendola¹.

PAVEL IVANOVICH MELNIKOV (1819–1883), better known by his non-de-plume A. PECHERSKY, late in life wrote stories that children can read with pleasure, among them *Grandpa Polycarp* [*Nonno Policarpo*] and *Old Times* [*Vecchi anni*].

IVAN SAVVICH NIKITIN (1826–1861), an epic and lyric poet, deserves to be remembered for his profoundly human novel *Kulak* [*L'incettatore*], set in popular surroundings.

NIKOLAY MIKHAYLOVSKY (1843–1906) evoked, well on in his life, his earliest years, capturing them in the radiant, if often tearful pages of *Tioma's Boyhood* [*La fanciullezza di Tioma*], something of a flowering oasis in an otherwise scholarly body of work.

ANTON CHEKHOV (1860–1904) in his profound sense of the drama that can be played out in a small heart, has something in common with Florence Montgomery: there is a sweet but nagging pain in the pages of *Vanka* [*Il piccolo Ivan*]; and even the story of *Kashtanka* [*Castagnetta*], which has a more cheerful tone, is deeply melancholy at heart.

VLADIMIR G. KROLENKO (1853–1921) wrote for adults but is read by adolescents too for his vigorous simplicity and his sense of drama which brings his creatures to life and accompanies them in their vicissitudes: Social questions are touched on here and there without insistence: *The Blind Musician* [*Il musicista cieco*] is justly famous, while the pages of *The Murmuring Forest* [*La foresta mormora*] are very

¹Dostoevsky F. *La piccola Netotschka ed altri racconti per fanciulli*. (Translated from the Russian by E. Amendola Kuhn. Ill. by L. Edel). Lanciano: Carabba, 1920. (Classici del fanciullo).

delicate. In Italy, Vallecchi has published a collection of short stories translated under the title *The Old Bell-Ringer* [*Il vecchio campanaro*]²⁾.

The human shines vividly through the often dramatically expressed melancholy of VSEVOLOD GARSHIN and strongly colours the unfolding of his novels and stories, among which *The Signal* [*Il segnale*] is a small masterpiece: a railway worker who lives a humble life beside the tracks that disappear into the distance, finds himself, by a combination of circumstances, faced with a train heading for disaster if he does not stop it. He has no signals, no means to hand, so he deliberately wounds himself and bloodies a strip of cloth, with which he manages to flag down the train.

The land and its endless steppes form the background to MARK VOVCHOK's *Marussia*, a gentle story, infused with elements of legend.

8. Contemporaries

The countryside, its rivers and the mountains of Russia, that seem to close off the boundless horizon, are perhaps the main protagonists of the writers nearer to us in time; and from that immensity melancholy blooms like a flower.

The lands of the Caucasus, wild and evocative, surround the protagonist of V. J. NEMIROVICH DANCHENKO's *The Falcon's Nest* [*Nidi di falchi*], and his dogged struggles mirror the ruggedness of the cliffs that reach up to the sky.

ALEKSANDR IVANOVICH KUPRIN, born in 1870, is a writer who carries on the tradition, happy to linger over descriptions of the landscape and of small details, as in *The White Poodle* [*Il barboncino bianco*] and *The Taper* [*Il pianista*].

T. SHCHEPKINA-KUPERNIK, far from her native Russia, commemorates her people from exile and captures their typical traits in her volume *The Lion-hearted Knight and Other Tales* [*Il cavalier Cuor di leone e altri racconti*]³⁾.

Among emigrants a nostalgia for the country left behind can often be expressed in passionate works: so much could be said of MIKHAIL OSORGIN who offers young readers a story pervaded with a fresh childlike joy in his *The Little Swallow Natasha* [*Rondinella Natascia*].

²⁾Korolenko V. *Il vecchio campanaro*. (Translation by B. Jakovenko). Firenze: Vallecchi, 1926. (Fontana viva. Opere scelte per l'infanzia e l'adolescenza).

³⁾Shchepkina-Kupernik T. *Il cavaliere cuor di Leone ed altri racconti* (transl. by K. Tkachenko). Lanciano: Carabba, 1923.

Another emigré writer is SASHA CHORNY who plots graceful animal tales and hymns humble things limpidly in poems aimed at children.

A fable about an unusual little dog, *Dashchenka*, is acutely observed and gracefully narrated by KAREL ČAPEK⁴.

V. P. ZHELIKHOVSKAYA stylishly evokes the world of childhood whose distant joys and kindnesses are recalled with a gentle nostalgia in her moving *How I was as a Child* [*Com'ero da bimba*], translated by Maria Chiara for Carabba⁵.

9. USSR children's writing

The troubled history of Russia after the war and during the Soviet regime has had its repercussions on children's and adolescent literature: the melancholy, evocative stories that seemed to breathe the spirit of the land and the mysticism of its people have given way to 'popular' didactic works, whether geographical, scientific, literary or philosophical.

Under this heading come the tomes of N. BAYSUTOV: *In the Chinese Village* [*Nel villaggio cinese*], *In the Country of Severe Frosts* [*Nel paese dei grandi geli*]; BEYUL's *Letters from Africa* [*Lettere dall'Africa*]; S. CHATSKINA's *The First One at the North Pole* [*Il primo al polo*]; and two by N. LEBEDEV, *In the North at the cost of one's life* [*Al Nord a prezzo della vita*] e *Alone among the Savages* [*Solo tra i selvaggi*]; also E. MYUDLIN's *Krassin*, which deals with travel, relations between peoples and their customs and usages.

V. BIANKI with his *Forest Newspaper* [*Giornale del bosco*], and V. DUROV with *My Animals* [*I miei animali*] e *A Feathered Artist* [*Artista pennuto*] offer instead animal stories, while M. ILIN with his *Black on White* [*Nero sul bianco*], *What Time is it?* [*Che ora è?*], *100.000 Whys* [*100000 perché*], and N. RUBAKIN with *Doctor Isaac's Experiences* [*Esperienze del dottor Isacco*], *How Men Learnt to Fly* [*Come gli uomini impararono a volare*] and similar volumes, to mention only these among many, provide scientific and philosophical instruction.

These works, though, are strangers to art. We no longer hear the soul of the people, their 'song', melancholy as may be, but song, nor the life and spirit with which her poets had imbued their homeland.

Translated by John Francis Phillimore. Edited by Raffaella Vassena

⁴The author includes Karel Čapek, although he was a Czech writer.

⁵Gelikovskaja V. P. *Com'ero da bimba. Dai ricordi della prima infanzia*. (Translated by M. Chiara). Lanciano: Carabba, 1930.

Mary Tibaldi Chiesa

LETTERATURA INFANTILE

Tibaldi Chiesa M. Letteratura infantile [Children's Literature]
(4 ed. 1953). Milan: Garzanti, 1944. Pp. 296–316.

The heritage of folk tales and popular and national legends in Russia is immense. They date back to ancient times and have a fantastic content of extraordinary variety and richness; some have a historical background.

In Russia, too, the imagination of primitive peoples filled nature with fantastic beings; in the rivers and springs there were the *russalke*, maidens of marvelous beauty, with long hair and white arms, dancing in the moonlight, singing. In the *russalke*, souls of drowned or fallen young women are impersonated as prisoners of the spirit of the waters, the *vodianoï*.

The *vodianoï* lives in lakes, wells, cisterns, has a long beard, magnetic eyes that lure men down into abyssal whirlpools, is evil and takes pleasure in the misfortunes of its victims. Wicked and malignant are also the witches, the *vedme*, with their hideous appearance and deformed limbs: sometimes, however (as is also the case in our folk tales, both for sorceresses and for the devil), they transform themselves into beautiful women to enchant travelers and divert them from the right path; this is what the Spirit of the Woods, the *liesci*, too does, it is the leader of all witches and imagines himself as an old man with a long green beard and horns on his head. He too takes many forms, and is wicked and terrible: at night he lurks in the woods and chases passers-by with mocking laughter, diverting them from the right path and vanishing at daybreak. In the *liesci* dwell the terrors of those who are forced to cross in darkness the immense lonely forests with dark trees, where the hoarse cries of night birds resound.

A powerful king ruled the sea, alongside his bride Onda [Wave]. He had many beautiful daughters who came to the surface of the waters at night to dance by moonlight. We see them appear in the legend of Sadko, and one of them bewitches the hero, a merchant, known as the Nightingale of Novgorod because of his marvelous voice and his art

of singing while accompanying himself on *gusli*, a kind of small harp. When he descends into the depths of the sea, he plays and sings with such overwhelming power that the King of the Sea, Queen Onda, their daughters, and all the innumerable sea and river beings do a whirling dance, unleashing a terrible storm at the ocean's surface.

Mischievous and sometimes malicious spirits are the *domovoi*, sort of house and field sprites, who play naughty tricks on farmers and their animals.

A terrible wizard was Kastchei the Immortal, who had shut his own life up inside a magic egg and would not die until it had been shattered. The cold that freezes all was personified by Father Frost, an old man with a crimson nose and long white beard, who showed up in the snow-covered woods and possessed great treasure troves of diamonds, — the icicles resplendent in the sunshine, — of gold and silver, — the reflections of the ice and the snow in the sun and moonlight

As popular imagination would have it, all the beasts could speak, and there were numerous fables involving creatures such as foxes, wolves, bears, cats, cockerels, among others.

Popular Russian fairy tales and fables were collected by Afanassiev¹⁾, who wrote down hundreds and hundreds of them as told to him in person by the people. His works are a real goldmine for students of popular Russian literature. There are tales, make-believe stories and fables which are truly enchanting due to the breadth of their imagination and to their narrative wit. Yet others are cruel, with grim moments and bloodthirsty episodes, and are unsuitable and morally corrupting for children. In the popular fables the character Ivanushka the Fool (*durachok*), or Johnny Fathead, often appears, a simpleton upon whom fortune frequently smiles and for whom everything goes swimmingly, despite his gullibility; a clownish, naive, fun character who wins the hearts of children and the people.

Alongside fantastical tales there were national myths, epic in nature, *bylines* told and retold to the people and lords of the land by minstrels and storytellers as they went about their errant lives

The *bylines* split into two branches: the *bylines* of the Kiev cycle and those of the Novgorod cycle. In the Kiev cycle the gigantic *bogatyr* appear, who do great deeds with their tremendous strength. The main hero is Ilya Muromets, whose glorious undertakings are the subject of many a song. In the Novgorod cycle mediaeval events, ancient Christian legends and stories of fabulous princes and tsars are narrated. Particularly lovely

¹⁾Hereinafter, the author's spelling of proper names is preserved.

are those about Prince Igor and his deeds. The *bylines* are also not without their grim countenances and bloody episodes; packed as they are with imaginative and heroic events, often infused with a great epic quality, these tales are not designed for children, but rather for youths, who may learn from them about the legendary events and characteristics of the most remote era in Russian history. An admirable illustrator of the fables and the *bylines* was the painter Bilibin, who rendered them in truly enchanting images.

Ivan Krylov (1768–1844) is one of the oldest Russian authors, who, while not writing expressly for children, may largely also be read by them. He devoted himself to the fairy tale and the apologue, writing around two hundred of them. The idea came to him when translating La Fontaine: two of his versions of the great French poet's tales had been published in the Moscow *Spectator* to an enthusiastic reception. He translated many more and dreamt up some of his own, basing them on ancient Indian texts like the *Panchatantra*. There are occasional political allusions to events and historical persons of the age, to traditions in Russian society, to defects and errors of various social classes, from the tsar to the prince, from the bourgeois to the serf. Fables including animals abound, of exactly the kind that children like. Krylov's first twenty-three fairy tales were published in 1809 and rapidly gained a wide circulation, with tens and tens of thousands of copies. They are written in expressive, incisive, lively and colourful language, in elegant and harmonious verse.

Krylov, who had been born to a poor family in Moscow, quickly rose to great fame, being named as a librarian in Petersburg and made a member of the Academy. One day Princess Mary read a very gentle poem of his entitled *Fleur-de-lis*, in which a sky-blue flower, dejectedly sorrowful in a corner, is cheered by the soft kiss of a ray of sunlight, reviving him in a metaphor for the resuscitation of hope. The tsarina gave Krylov a simple little bunch of flowers which he would keep until his dying day, begging to have it placed with him in his coffin. The most delicate verses reveal a fine-tuned sensitivity which was in contrast to the poet's libertine approach to life, known to all and sundry for his... sweet tooth. Yet such contrasts are not infrequent in Russians, and are very human and understandable, given that the weaknesses of mere mortals, alongside their merits and virtues...

Krylov's art was rightly appreciated for its variety of aspects and its multitude of merits, the pureness of its style and form, its refined irony and satire, its graceful imagination and poetic colour. These qualities are difficult to successfully translate. *60 Animal Fairy-Tales* [*60 favolelli di animali*] by Krylov were transcribed by M. Tibaldi Chiesa, who managed

this feat thanks to the assistance of Natalia Bavastro, and presented in an artistic edition with stupendous illustrations by V. Nicoulin²⁾.

The fairy tales had found their bard in Krylov; soon after, at the beginning of the 19th Century, the fables, or *skazki*, were to find an incredible versifier in the greatest Russian poet, Alexander Pushkin. He was born in Moscow on 26th May 1799 to a noble family and learnt to read with his grandmother Mary, a profoundly Russian woman who was attached to her country's traditions. The boy was much happier to spend time with her than with his French tutor, who limited himself to mild surveillance. Nonetheless, Alexander spent many hours in his father's well-appointed library, reading avidly, especially the works of French authors, and neglecting to study Russian. Fortunately he was called back to tradition and to the worship of his mother tongue by a humble poor elderly lady, his good old wet nurse Arina Radionova. His *niania* was a faithful custodian of the immense heritage of ancient Russian popular traditions, a magical kingdom of fables, legends, proverbs, songs and *bylines*. Little Alexander was very fond of her and would often leave his playmates to seek her out. Aged 12 he started at the Lyceum in Tsarskoye Selo and poetic inspiration began to flow from him in the form of song. Among those early verses we can find some dedicated to trusty old Arina.

How could I fail to mention, oh my dear *niania*, the spell cast by those mysterious nights? With a bonnet on her head, dressed in old-fashioned clothes, she drove the evil spirits away with her prayers, she blessed me piously, then in a low voice she would tell stories. Not daring to move, barely breathing, huddled up under the blankets, I couldn't feel my own body any more. I would shiver, then little by little my eyelids would close as I was taken over by sleepiness. Then, as in a crowd, from the blue heights winged dreams peopled with fairies and sorcerers would descend, and enchanted my sleep with their magic... I would lose myself in sweet thoughts... my youthful spirit floated through the kingdom of the imagination...

At college this unusual boy with his proud and touchy nature, with his quick and keen wit, had immediately caught the notice of his teachers and fellow students; he was, after all, destined to become Russia's greatest poet. Having passed his final exams in 1817, the young man set off for Petersburg and was taken on at the Foreign Office. However, he continued to develop his poetry and his songs made him a champion of freedom. In March 1820 some of Pushkin's poems fell into the hands

²⁾I. Krylov, *60 favolelli*, translated by M. Tibaldi Chiesa, ill. by V. Nicouline, Milan, Italgo, 1945.

of the police and the young man was exiled to Southern Russia. He left with a heavy heart, but at the same time accepted his exile as a chance to get away from the turbine of city life, which had only give him bitterness, tiredness and disillusionment.

The marvellous landscape of the Caucasus, with its towering snow-capped mountains, with its wild and precipitous crags, with its steep and stony paths, with its dark forests and its fearful ravines, and later the sight of the Crimea, ridden over by Cossacks on horseback, populated with rebellious mountain tribes, with its mild climate, with the scintillating smile of its blue sea, with its blooming gardens, with its poplars, with its cypresses. with its myrtles, with its olive groves, with its vineyards offered the poet sustenance for his fevered imagination. The southern nature of the Crimea provided him with the backdrops of Italy, a much longed for destination which he was never to get to visit. He knew, albeit imperfectly, our language, and read Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Tasso, Alfieri, Manzoni, Pellico and Pindemonte; Italian music enthralled him, and he found Rossini especially exhilarating. The Italian revolution of 1820–21 was greeted with enthusiasm in faraway Russia and “found an echo”, as A.M. Pizzagalli writes in an essay on *Pushkin and Italy* [Pusckin e l’Italia] “in the heart of Russia’s first national poet, Alexander Pushkin.” In a letter of 11th March 1821 to his friend Rayevski he wrote extolling the virtues of Italy, which, he said, “by pulling itself out of the miserable condition into which it had fallen, was rising from ‘the dust’ and appeared regenerated ‘on the European political stage’”.

In March ‘21 Pushkin went to Chisinau, “an accursed city”, where he had to live and get bored for two years. Separated from his friends, far away from the literary scene, the poet tried to amuse himself through creative work, reading, social gatherings, playing cards and duels, which he did as often as possible and with total indifference: his hot blood boiled over easily and he would not be placated unless he could settle the matter through the use of arms. In 1823 he obtained permission to go to Odessa to take the waters. He liked to walk along the huge sea front and observe the boundless horizon, dreaming of fleeing to Italy. And in his head the sound of the waves of the Black Sea crashing against the rocks was transformed unconsciously into the rhythm that would accompany the winged harmonies of his verse. The poetry flew around Russia and started to bring him great fame. In August, Pushkin was forced back to his father’s holding at Mikhaylovskoye, still under strict police surveillance. He spent his days writing in bed or riding around the countryside. He had to stay there for two years. He mourned his lost freedom, the chance to come and go as he pleased, but he got more

and more used to his peaceful exile, and his rich creative and imaginary interior life made up for the harshness of the outside world. In a red cloth blouse, tied at the waist with a light blue ribbon, with a straw hat on his head and an iron rod in his hand, with tousled hair, with a sunburnt face overshadowed by long frizzy brown sideburns, he would go to visit the monastery at Svyatogorsk and to see the fairs that were held there, delighted to mix with the common people: he would sit on the ground and gather around him beggars and blind people, who would sing songs and ballads to him. As the long Russian winter set in he had no choice but to shut himself in at home, writing and reading. His old *niania* Arina was living in the same house as him. She stayed in one wing of the building (empty, because Pushkin's relatives, unlike him, had all left) and drove away his boredom in the long nights with the magic of her fantastical stories. Another poet, Jazikov, described her thus in an ode: "Playful as girlhood, free as our youth, knowledgeable as maturity, eloquent as wine". And later, in 1827, Pushkin would declaim to her:

Friend from my days of severe sorrow, my dear little old lady, all alone in the depths of the pinewood, you have been awaiting me for so long. By the window of your little bedroom you fret and wait for me like a trusted sentry, and the knitting needles in your wrinkly hands keep slowing down as you glance towards the entrance and the dark road disappearing into the distance. Nostalgia and premonitions of distress relentlessly oppress your heart...

Pushkin's personality had been taking shape and asserting itself in this loneliness, as he wrote to Rayevski: "I feel my soul has completely evolved. I can create". The two years' exile were destined to produce bear marvellous fruit. Along with the masterpieces of lyric poetry, tragedy and the novel, along with *Boris Godunov* and *Eugene Onegin*, he wrote the *skazki*, the fables in verse, minor works, but nonetheless significant and important. They are the perfect examples of this type of fable, true gems: Pushkin has injected them with the scent and essence of the soul of the Russian people, as he had heard it ringing in the voice of faithful old Arina. He honed and lit up the tales of his *niania*, masterfully tempering imagination with humour, fantastical descriptions with satirical jest, the lyrical with the grotesque. Pushkin possessed a great degree of evocative flair, and his words breathe life into the make-believe beings and unreal landscapes of his fables as they take shape in front of our eyes with the bluntly folkloric tones and dazzling national colour which lend them their unmistakable character. His sarcasm is honed under the iridescent veil of let's-pretend: hence

the obviously inept tsar Dadon is beaten to death, not without reason, by the golden cockerel, whereas Tsar Saltan is more gently satirised as a docile man at the mercy of shrewd, unscrupulous gossips. The fable of *The Princess and the Seven Knights* [*La principessa e i sette cavalieri*] is steeped in atmosphere of dreamy poetic enchantment, and in the episode involving Prince Yelisei in the kingdom of the Sun, the Moon and the Wind, Pushkin's masterstrokes lead him to glorious heights of the poetic art. Consider how *The Tsar Saltan* [*Lo zar Saltan*] echoes the Greek myth of Danae, thrown to the waves locked in a chest with her baby, and how the motif from the German fairy tale of *Snow White* [*Biancaneve*] is recast so that the seven heroes are strapping young men of high standing as against seven dwarves from the mines. The tale of the *Fisherman and the Golden Fish* [*Il pescatore e il pesciolino d'oro*] was already a widely-known theme from popular poetry, but Pushkin treats it masterfully, adding expert touches here and there, and producing an inimitable version. *The Priest and His Workman Balda* [*Il pope e il suo servo Cetrullo*] is a typically Russian short story, comical and diverting in its naivety, while not lacking in satirical undertones. As for *The Legend of Prince Oleg* [*Leggenda del principe Oleg*], this tale is a law unto itself, not being a fantastical fairy tale but the retelling of an episode caught somewhere between legend and history, full of admonitory wisdom and deep symbolism.

Pushkin wrote the *skazki* between 1831 and 1835, when, on the accession of Tsar Nicholas I to the throne, he had come back from exile and could even live in a city, in Moscow and in Petersburg, albeit under continual surveillance and absolutely forbidden from travelling abroad.

Not only from Arina, but, according to his biographer Hoffmann, wherever he went in the Caucasus, in Bessarabia and on the Volga Pushkin happily listened to fables, legends and popular song, taking down notes so as to recast them. *The Golden Cockerel* was the last of the *skazki* he made into a poem, and it is him at his most original, bitter and cruel: Pushkin wrote it at Boldino in 1835.

In that year he had come back to Mikhaylovskoe and written to his wife, in a melancholy letter "I found everything there had always been at Mikhaylovskoe, only my *niania* was gone" And added, "The fir trees have a nest of little trees...". Pushkin too had his children, his own little trees, at Mikhaylovskoe, whom he loved tenderly and to whom he must certainly have read his marvellous fables, which were later learnt by heart by generations of Russian children as they learnt at the same time to love the greatest poet of their homeland. Two years after his last fable, in 1837, Pushkin was to die tragically, crushed by cruel fate at

only 38 years of age. A duel, arising from malicious slander and a vile plot, was the cause of his premature death, suddenly interrupting the life of a genius and stifling a voice which still had so much singing left in it. "Owing to his genius, Pushkin not only belonged to Russia, but to the whole of Europe", wrote Zhukovsky lamenting that sad fate. And as the poet particularly loved our own Italy, Mary Tibaldi Chiesa translated his fables so that Italian children could get to know them: the painter Vsevolod Nicoulin illustrated this book with colourful and imaginative art which was faithful to the spirit and traditions of his homeland³.

Mary Tibaldi Chiesa, in collaboration with Adriana Lyanowa, translated two short novels by Alexander Pushkin, suitable for adolescents from twelve years up.

One, *The Captain's Daughter* [*La figlia del capitano*], is well-known, especially because it has twice been made into a film, as well as having already had numerous versions in our language⁴.

The Captain's Daughter is without doubt one of the most perfect of Pushkin's narrative works. It is a reworking in the form of a short novel of a real event occurring around 1773, but it is so profoundly true and human that in its most intimate being it goes beyond any time and spatial limits.

Just a few characters, living through a series of intensely dramatical events and experiences. After an almost opaque and colourless beginning, which sees a young nobleman of the small landowning class sent, by order of his severe and reserved father, to do his military service in Siberia, the rhythm of the novel picks up as it hastens inexorably along to its conclusion. Everything which befalls the protagonist feels like the call of destiny: the meeting in a blizzard with the rebel chief, Pugachev (to whom Mussorgsky, had he not been taken by premature death, had wanted, after composing in *Boris* the deeds of the "false Dimitri, the usurper Grishka Otrepiev", and in *Khovanshchina* [*Kovantscina*] those of a rebellious squire against Tsarina Sophia, to dedicate an opera by the name of Pugachevshchina), the gift of a hare pelt by the young soldier to the swashbuckling revolutionary, to him an unknown traveller, and the unexpected consequences of that gesture; and then the love for Masha, the sweet and dainty "captain's daughter", a true, passionate, burning love, capable of making any sacrifice and of standing any test, exactly as adolescent and young love should be; here lies the whole plot, which

³ Pushkin A.S. *Il gallo d'oro e altre fiabe* (translated by M. Tibaldi Chiesa, ill. by V.P. Nicouline). Milan: Hoepli, 1942.

⁴ Pushkin A. S. *La figlia del capitano* (translated by A. Lyanowa e M. Tibaldi Chiesa, ill. by B. Bodini). Milan: Mondadori, 1966.

winds and unwinds in an atmosphere of rebellion and war, of massacre and pillage, and draws in the reader with that powerful immediacy which is the hallmark of genius.

Never in his style is there an adjective or a detail out of place: sobriety and straightforwardness accompany a laudable ability to portray character. There are unforgettable characters, like the trusted old wife of the commander of the Siberian fort, whose heroic end is very apt, being described in a few strokes of the pen, with neither hyperbole nor verbosity, so as to be so moving as to make one choke; and the humble devoted servant Savelic, who shows all the infinite joy of absolute dedication to one's lord and master by an infinite number of slaves; Savelic is surly and grumpy, yet full of unlimited goodness and invaluable common sense under his rough and ready appearance. Pugachev is in contrast to him, quite a different popular character, an unscrupulous man with no restraint, reckless and rash, but in whose heart there is still room for rudimentary feelings of gratitude and a certain amount of cocky, chivalric generosity.

It is altogether a picture painted by a magisterial hand, in an era packed with foreboding.

Less well-known is the other short novel by Alexander Pushkin, by the name of *Dubrovsky*.

It tells the intensely dramatic story of the son of an old country nobleman, who has gradually fallen into extreme poverty, and whose possessions have been reduced to practically nothing: an old house with a small parcel of land attached.

Not far from him lives another nobleman, who is rather well-off and owns a large country estate.

These two men were once in the same regiment, and the richer nobleman, who is haughty, overbearing and despotic and gathers to him only mercenaries or false friends who take advantage of his table and his hospitality, has nobody who, as it were, is fond of him, or who will tell him certain uncomfortable home truths, apart from his old comrade. But one day even these two fall out in an irreparable way, after a terrible scene in which the richer of the two crosses a line during a visit to a kennels by saying that he keeps his dogs better than some human beings would like to live. From that moment on he loses the friend of his youth; he walks away to never set foot again in the house of the heartless rich tyrant. The richer man, in a temper, dreams up a mean and cruel revenge: fabricating an interpretation of old documents in an absolutely arbitrary fashion as a way of attempting to expropriate from his old comrade what

little he has left, claiming to have every right over the property on the basis of some cooked up ancient hereditary privilege.

The consequences are awful, going far beyond what the rich nobleman would have imagined or even wanted, causing the poor elderly nobleman to die of a broken heart.

The son of the latter, Dubrovsky, comes to his dying father's bedside and also swears vengeance against the man who had led him to die in such a vile way.

Following his father's funeral he sets fire to the house, and, followed by his faithful servants, runs off into hiding to become a bandit.

Some time later, after getting his hands on the identity documents of a French tutor through a mixture of cunning and money, he introduces himself to the rich man in the guise of this tutor, and is welcomed into the household, where he is supposed to provide the nobleman's young adoptive son with an education. He has a young lass, Maria, as pretty of face as she is mild and sweet of heart and soul. A feeling of ardent affection quickly connects the girl and the fake tutor, whose true identity is bound to be outed sooner or later.

This happens suddenly one day and the "gentleman bandit" is forced to hastily flee.

Soon afterwards Maria is forced by her father into marrying one of his acquaintances, an old and insignificant country landowner for whom she feels neither sympathy nor fondness.

By prior arrangement, she tries to send a message to Dubrovsky so that he can come and save her: but due to unexpected obstacles he gets there too late, after the wedding has already been celebrated. Dubrovsky withdraws chivalrously into the shadows and disappears into the dense forest, having understood that the only way out is to give up on his love, however biting and desperate the pain may be.

This is another minor masterpiece of Pushkin's, from which young readers can learn a lot, as the novel has a deeply human and moral core.

Another Russian writer who devoted himself to the genre of fables was Vasily Andreyevich Zhukovsky (1773–1852). His life was also like a fairy tale. He was the son of a Turkish slave girl and a boyar, Andrea Zhukovsky, who took him from his native village in the province of Tula to the city, to stay with an aunt who was an artist. He quickly showed a flair for literature, studied at University and took part in the 1812 war, which was the inspiration for his poem *The Bard in the Russian Warriors' Camp* [*Il bardo nel campo dei guerrieri russi*]. The Tsarina made him first lector and then tutor for her princelings. Zhukovsky translated German and Greek authors, the great Indian poem of the *Mahabharata*,

the lyric poetry of the Persian Ferdowsi, as well as making up fables for the Tsar's children, in which oriental elements rubbed shoulders with Russian ones. The long fairy tales *The Tale of Iván Tsarévich and the Grey Wolf* [*Lo zarevic Ivan e il lupo grigio*] and *The Tale of Tsar Berendei* [*La fiaba dello Zar Berendei*] (the latter written for a competition between him and Pushkin, who wrote *Tsar Saltan* for the occasion) are among the loveliest and best-known of Zhukovsky's, revealing a lively and lavishly colourful imagination.

A light-hearted, brilliant and lively verse fable, *The Little Hump-backed Horse* [*Il cavallino gobbettino*], was written by Yershov, and Mary Tibaldi Chiesa translated it for young Italian readers, publishing it alongside other Nordic fables in a book with superb illustrations by Gustavino⁵. This story was made into a lovely cartoon film, which thrills audiences from six years old to... 90.

The worthy writer of noble Ural extraction, Sergei Aksakov (b. 1791 — d. 1859), wrote some lovely tales, suitable also for youngsters. His *Tales and Memoirs of a Hunter* [*Racconti e ricordi di un cacciatore*], *Notes on Fishing* [*Appunti sulla pesca*], *A Family Chronicle* [*La cronaca di famiglia*] and *Childhood Years of Bagrov's Grandson* [*L'infanzia del nipotino di Bagrov*] earned him nothing less than the honorary title of "The Russian Homer"; and if truth be told, without going so far as to compare him to Homer, Aksakov did have an unusual talent as a narrator and as a poet: he has a profound sense of nature, about which he writes superbly, and this is well-suited to youngsters. In the book *Russian Tales* [*Racconti russi*], translated by Giuseppina Spezia (S. E. I Torino), one can find rather interesting samples of Aksakov's works.

The great writer Nikolai Gogol (b. 1809 — d. 1852) also included characters and plot twists from old fairy tales in his writing. He is not an author for youngsters, but young people may well read his superbly adventurous and imaginative book *Taras Bulba*, and the famous *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* [*Racconti della fattoria di Dikanka*], which have been translated into Italian by Federico Verdinois⁶.

Lightly happy tales are to be found in the books *Grandpa Polycarp* [*Nonno Policarpo*] and *Old Times* [*Vecchi anni*], by Pavel Melnikov-Pechersky (b. 1819 — d. 1883), an intellectual and ethnographer of

⁵Ershov P. *Il cavallino gobbo ed altre fiabe nordiche* (ed. by M. Tibaldi Chiesa, ill. by Gustavino). Milan: Ed. Genio, 1949.

⁶Gogol N. *Le veglie alla fattoria di Dicanca* (transl. by F. Verdinois). Lanciano: Carabba, 1923.

great note with a great depth of knowledge about primitive Russia, who wrote these tales in his twilight years. They are suitable for children.

Ivan Nikitin (1824–1862) also wrote for children, finding fame after a tough life of struggle and difficulty, especially with his novel *Kulak* [*L'incettatore*].

Another great Russian writer, Ivan Turgenev (b. 1818 — d. 1883), left us many books which, while they may not be suitable for young children, are fine for older kids and teenagers. They are thoughtful, intimate works, including delicately sensitive psychological studies, with images and episodes that are characteristic of Russian country, county and city life. The novels are at times a little gloomy and reserved, with a veil of melancholy and touching flourishes which are deeply moving for the reader. Special mention goes to *A Nest of the Gentry* [*Un nido di gentiluomini*], *Hunter's Sketches* [*Ricordi di un cacciatore*], and the superb *Prose Poems* [*Poemetti in prosa*] and *New Prose Poems* [*Nuovi poemetti in prosa*], where the truest essence of Turgenev's soul comes out, as dreamy and absorbed, agreeable and melancholy, with a propensity for mysticism, calling up memories of certain nostalgic and heartfelt Russian songs, whose echo lingers long in the ears of those who have heard them.

Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) may be read by teenagers and youngsters. The best for older children is the book of fairy tales, fables and short stories, taken from an enormous work of four volumes, called *ABC Book* [*Abbecedario*] and written by Tolstoy during the period of 1853–72, in which he was actively attempting to educate the people and also founded the *School Magazine of Yasnaya Polyana* [*Rivista della Scuola di Jasnaja Poliana*]. The *ABC Book*, alongside the narrative part, included a method for learning to read and count. Subsequently Tolstoy republished the fables and short stories separately, in four volumes, and this work proved immensely popular, running to over a million copies. It includes translations, reworkings and original works by Tolstoy, including translations and imitations of Aesop and La Fontaine's fables and ancient Indian works, Russian fairy tales and popular legends, *bylines*, realist tales, autobiographical pages and historical accounts. They are all written in a plain and simple style so as to be intelligible both to children and to the general public, and were chosen with the aim of educating. In some pages Tolstoy's greatness can be discerned, with his incomparable narrative magic arising out of spontaneity and instinct blended with consummate craft and expertise. Particularly lovely are the stories including animal protagonists, such as those involving the dogs Bulka and Milton; the episode in which the firemen's dog saves not only the

children but also a large doll of theirs from the fire is charming; and worthy or note are some stories imbued with profound wisdom and mystical goodness, such as the one about a man unjustly sentenced to deportation to Siberia, who goes on to find the real culprit there yet forgives him (The title is: *God Sees the Truth, But Does Not Immediately Tell It* [*Dio vede la verità, ma non la dice subito*]); and the stories with a historic background, such as *The Prisoner from the Caucasus* [*Il prigioniero del Caucaso*], superbly translated by Erme Cadei. Another of Tolstoy's books which is suitable for children of 13 years or over is *Hadji Murad*, recently translated into Italian by Adriana Lyanowa and Mary Tibaldi Chiesa, with a few abridgements so as to make it fit for all hands⁷⁾.

Hadji Murad is two times a miracle: once as a work of art and twice because Tolstoy wrote it aged seventy-five, a late gift for mankind at a late stage of his life. News of the existence of this unpublished first emerged in the very same month as the death of the great writer, having been found among his manuscripts. It came out posthumously and may well be considered one of Tolstoy's masterpieces. Towards the end of his life he had seemed to have drifted away from any kind of fantastical or romantic creation, but then the evocative character of Hadji Murad came to capture his imagination. In a letter he admitted that the act of having been taken over by the intoxicating act of creation seemed to him to be a betrayal of his moral and religious mission: to get caught up like that, now he had one foot in the grave, when he should have been concentrating on matters that were more appropriate to his situation, weighed heavily on his conscience. He did it "as if hiding from himself" and he undoubtedly told himself what Hadji Murad's eyes told Prince Vorontsov: "Old as he was, he should have been thinking about death," about eternal life, and not about mortal and fleeting things. But the artist in him could not resist the temptation. He gave in and once again created something immortal.

The charm exerted by the figure of Hadji Murad is so large as to explain how Tolstoy fell for him. The hero of the Caucasus, with a wild and primitive soul, stands out in relief against the incomparable backdrop of the mountainous landscape of his homeland, which is populated by proud strong men who seemingly belong to a time much further back in history than the mid-20th Century. In contrast to him is the antagonist Imam Shamil, both spiritually and physically odious with his half-closed eyes and reddish beard, and in whom can be discerned an echo of the

⁷⁾Tolstoj L. N. *Hadgi-Murat: l'eroe del Caucaso* (Italian version by A. Lyanowa e M. Tibaldi Chiesa, ill. by H. von Horst). Milan: Ed. Genio, 1941.

other antagonist, the cruel and incompetent Tsar Nicholas I, in the midst of his abject and servile courtiers in Petersburg, in a compelling image which is starkly opposed to the scenes of war and peace in the Caucasian settings. Studying the sources took up nine years of Tolstoy's life, from 1896 to 1904, but the story does not become bogged down in historical baggage, and proceeds at a lively and steady pace, and colourful details, characteristic touches and historical information are all perfectly blended with the imaginative part of a story inspired by the land of Prometheus and his sons. The novel has the same freshness as Tolstoy's early works when he was twenty-five, when he was an artillery lieutenant; and yet at the same time it is expertly balanced and laid out, with consummate style and craft, the fruit of long years of experience. The magic of the Orient wraps the tale in the shawl of its enchantment, lending an unusual tone to the book. And underlying Tolstoy's hand-picked topic, the inescapable destiny of the man he compares at times to a "chained hawk", at others to a "crushed thistle", is a greater meaning which goes beyond one man's destiny and lends the book the quality of an article of faith or belief.

The *Gospel Parables* [*Novelle evangeliche*] are also from Tolstoy's late life, and show human depth and pureness of Christian spirit, Angelo Colombo took charge of the version for Italian children, writing in his preface "Count Leo Tolstoy, a peasant among peasants, spread the word of truth and love around him. He went into log cabins to converse and often stopped in village schools to tell his favourite stories: his own, but more commonly those of the people, which inspired his work"⁸). Let's not forget that Tolstoy, in his essay *What is Art?* [*Che cos'è l'arte?*], chose not to emphasise the beautiful as the source of artistic creation, preferring to focus on that which elevates the soul, that which joins men in fraternal love. This aesthetic principle also informs *Gospel Parables*.

Another book of Tolstoy's, which may be given as reading material to teenagers, if not children, is *Childhood, Adolescence, Youth* [*Infanzia, Adolescenza, Giovinezza*]. The style is not without its flaws in slowness of action and overly detailed description, which may at times seem monotonous. Yet for the attentive and thoughtful reader the book is a source of real enjoyment due to its subtle psychological investigation, its sincere and truthful spontaneity, the profound humanity of its characters and of the episodes described. This is where the greatness of Tolstoy lies, in his incomparable narrative artistry, where everything is harmo-

⁸) Tolstoi L. *Ivan l'idiota ed altri racconti* (ed. by A. Colombo). Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1929.

niously tempered and balanced, the dialogue with the observations, the descriptions with the reflections, and the sentences proceeding at a gentle pace, calmly and evenly, as though drawing powerful breaths. Through reading these pages one obtains a deep knowledge of the life of a rich Russian family, with all its numerous employees, the tutor, the teacher, the wet nurse, the servants, and one can follow the upbringing of the boys and girls by the parents and tutors. Everything is portrayed with great simplicity and naturalness, and one gets a sense of real life with its joys and its sorrows. with its everyday routine and its unforeseen events, with its fortunes and its catastrophes. The outstanding figure is that of the mother, who is noble and beautiful, as if bathed in the light of the devotion of her son who lost her at a young age; and beside her the good and faithful *niania*, full of adoring affection for her mistress and her little masters. A superb book upon which one may profitably meditate.

Anton Chekhov (1860–1904), another great Russian writer, famous as a playwright and as a novelist, also has pages suitable for young readers. His novellas *The Young Ivan* [*Il piccolo Ivan*], a melancholy tale about a young boy apprentice cobbler, and *Kashtanka*, the story of a dog who stayed loyal to her master, preferring to go back to him rather than stay at the circus, among others, are lovely and help to introduce teenagers to an author whose theatrical works and adult novellas they will read in later life.

Fyodor Dostoevsky (b. 1822 — d. 1881) wrote many pages in which children act: the great writer has an unusual aptitude for deeply penetrating their psychology. *A Little Hero* [*Il piccolo eroe*], a novella translated into Italian by Olga Resnevic, may well be read by teenagers, along with the novel *Netochka*. But in general, this dark, bitter, pessimistic author is not well suited to first youth, when one's heart is still full of bright hopes and rosy dreams.

A Russian book for teenagers, which has also been very popular and enthusiastically welcomed abroad, is *Marussia* by Marco Vovchog, which was translated into French by Stahl, (under the pseudonym Hetzel) and was read by countless youths. It is the moving story of a heroic little girl, who, driven by love for her country, Ukraine, collaborates with conspirators, risking life and limb several times and finally dying in tragic circumstances. The character of the girl, set against the other characters, the warriors, and the backdrop of a landscape devastated by war, sticks indelibly in the mind of the younger reader, who keenly follows her fortunes, loving her courage, her selflessness, her self-sacrifice. A truly lovely book which is still read today with real enjoyment and profound emotion even years after it was written.

Among Russian authors who have written books for a youthful audience we should not forget Alexei Remizov, who wrote a collection of fantasy tales, *Tales of Asseka, the Monkey King* [*Fiabe di Asseka, re delle scimmie*], which is full of imagination and bright folkloric element; Nemirovich-Danchenko, with his novels *The Falcon's Nests* [*Nidi di falchi*], about the adventures of a young boy in the Caucasus, and *The Storm* [*La tempesta*], set during the Russ-Turkish War; Vsevolod Garshin, whose books *The Bear* [*L'orso*], *Stories of War* [*Racconti di guerra*], (in 1877 the author volunteered to fight against the Turks) and *Four Days* [*Quattro giorni*], are popular with youngsters.

Then there is Dmitry Mamin, well-known amongst young readers, also in Italy, under the pseudonym Sibiryak. Like Aksakov, he hailed from the Urals and he sang of them and their people. A keen hunter and sportsman, he wrote many books about his hobbies. Notable are *The Little Deer* [*Il piccolo cervo*], a delicately told hunting episode; *Simovie on Studenaia* [*Simovie sulla Studenaia*], a portrayal of life on the Steppes, and various novellas, such as *Fireflies* [*Lucciole*], set in the woods, the rather charming *Story of a Sparrow* [*Storia di un passero*], with many little winged beasts alongside the human characters; the lively and amusing *Ivan's Party* [*La festa di Ivan*], *Snow and Charcoal* [*Neve e carbone*], the story of two free horses on the Steppes, who get captured, and their fate; all in lively, animated prose written with clarity and simplicity, well suited to the mind of a child.

A recent translation into Italian by Raia Pirola Pomerantz has seen the appearance of a volume of quite charming stories that are full of imagination and observational ability by Mikhail Ossorgin⁹⁾ called *Natasha the Little Swallow and Other Russian Tales* [*Rondinella Natascia e altri racconti russi*]; and *Vassia and Feferka* by Elachich, another good writer for children¹⁰⁾.

Raia Pirola Pomerantz has also translated a lovely children's novel by Nikolai Gheorghievich Mikhailovsky, known under the pen name of N. G. Garin, *Tioma's Childhood* [*L'infanzia di Tioma*]. Garin, born in 1852, was not by trade a writer. He was an engineer and directed the construction of stretches of railway in the Caucasus and in Bulgaria. Giving up on his chosen career, he retired to the country and, at Samara, after an unhappy attempt at devoting himself to the administration of his own land, was taken on in 1896 as an inspector of work on the Trans-

⁹⁾ Ossorgin M. *Rondinella Natascia e altri racconti russi* (Italian version by R. Pirola Pomerantz, cover and ill. by R. Aloy). Milan: Morreale, 1924.

¹⁰⁾ Elachich E. *Fer-ferka e Vania* (transl. by R. Pirola Pomerantz). Turin: Soc. Edit. Internazionale, 1928.

Siberian Railway. He first broke through as a writer in 1882 at the age of thirty, when he published *Tioma's Childhood* in one magazine, and *Some Years in the Country* [*Alcuni anni in campagna*] in another. The first one was given a particularly good welcome and was followed by two later books called *The High-School Boys* [*I liceisti*] and *University Students* [*I goliardi*].

This trilogy, with autobiographical overtones, and written in simple, lively and truthful style, was widely popular in Russia and is well suited to being read by youngsters, and the same is true of later volumes of stories which came out between 1893 and 1900. Garin passed away in 1906, mourned by his large following of readers.

Another Russian author of books for youngsters is T. Shepkina Cupernik, who wrote *The Lion-Hearted Knight* [*Il cavalier Cuor di leone e altri racconti*] and other tales, translated into Italian by Katia Tcacenko; Alexey Karassik, author of a gripping and unusual autobiographical book, *How I Became a Kalmuk* [*Come divenni Calmucco*], in which he tells of the adventures of his youth, when he fell into the hands of the Kalmuk nomads in the Lower Volga region and Asiatic Russia, and stayed with them as he was believed to have been sent by God; Baikov, author of *The Great Wang* [*Il grande Van*] (a novel translated into Italian¹¹⁾), of *The Forest Rustles* [*La foresta stormisce*] and *Tales of Siberia, Manchuria and China* [*I racconti della Siberia, della Manciuuria e della Cina*]; Alexei Tolstoy, author of *The Silver Prince* [*Il principe argento*]; V.P. Zhelikovskaya, the author of a charming autobiographical work, *When I Was Little* [*Quand'ero bambina*] (translated into Italian by Maria Chiara¹²⁾), of *Prince Iliko* [*Il principe Iliko*] and *In The Savage Tartar Village* [*Nel selvaggio villaggio tartaro*]; Klaudia Lukashevich devoted himself to the genre of adolescent writing. Soschenko is the author of *Comic Stories* [*Storie comiche*], novellas with more than a hint of the grotesque. Kuprin, too, has good writing for a youthful audience.

Special mention must go to Ludmila¹³⁾ Charskaya, author of several novels that are especially suitable for “young ladies” between the ages of twelve and fifteen.

She was very popular in Russia with young female readers at the turn of the century and now Italian girls can get to know one of her most famous novels, *The Princess of the Caucasus* [*La principessa del Cau-*

¹¹⁾Baikov N. A. *Il grande Wang* (trad. di R. Radex). Milano: Garzanti, 1940.

¹²⁾Gelikovskaja V. P. [Zhelikovskaya], *Com'ero da bimba. Dai ricordi della prima infanzia*. (Translated by da M. Chiara). Lanciano: Carabba, 1930.

¹³⁾In the Italian text. The real name was Lydia.

caso], as translated by Mary Tibaldi Chiesa and Adriana Lyanowa¹⁴). A brief plot outline is as follows: Nina, a restless and spirited young Tartar princess of fifteen years of age, a true daughter of the Caucasus, does not feel at home in her adoptive father Prince George's rich home, and dreams of a free and savage life, with carefree gallops in the mountains, with adventure and danger. Her parents try in vain to tame her wild nature.

Nina secretly makes friends with the terrifying Kerim, chief of the bandits, who saved her life one night in a storm, and makes him her idol. After the death of her adoptive father, she becomes a rich heiress, but has to endure confinement in the gloomy castle of her strict grandmother's, and must resist attempts to have her paired off with the vain and opportunistic Durov, whom she hates with a passion. Taken off to boarding school, she fights in vain against the bars of a new prison. She is saved from her desperation by Lydia, a mysterious and incomprehensible friend whom she had met earlier: it is by her efforts that the rebellious teenager Nina, often unfair and sometimes selfish, learns the real meaning of life and to love it and her fellows.

We should also mention the following Russian books for teenagers and youngsters: *In Ukraine [Nell'Ucraina]*, sketches and tales by A. J. Efimenko; *The Old Bell-Ringer [Il vecchio campagnaro]*¹⁵) and *The Blind Musician [Il musicista cieco]* by V. Korolenko (the former has been translated into Italian); *Gutaper, the Boy [Gutaper, il ragazzo]*, and other tales by D. Grigorovic; *Sketches of the Seminary [Schizzi dal seminario]* by Pomialovski; *Naval Tales [Racconti navali]* by Stanukovic; *Tales and Novellas [Racconti e novelle]* by Severzov-Polinov; *Tales for Children [Racconti per bambini]* by D. Tikhomirov; *Humorous Tales of Teffi [Racconti umoristici di Teffi]*; the historical novels of Soloviev; *Gleb's Journey [Il viaggio di Gleb]* and other tales by Boris Zaitsev; the poems and children's books by Sasha Cherniy, the stories by Grebenshikov; *Jura, the Scarab-Beetle in the Sun [Jura, Lo scarabeo al sole]* and other stories by Korsak; *The Good Lord's Summer, Pilgrimage, Mary [L'estate del buon Dio, Pellegrinaggio, Mary]* and other tales by Shmelev; the stories and novels by Krassnov; *Years at the Gymnasium [Gli anni del ginnasio]* by A. Zhablonovsky; *Joy and Sorrow [Gioia e dolore]* and other tales by Chistyakov; the fantastical fables by Zhershov;

¹⁴Charskaja, L. *La principessa del Caucaso* (Italian version by A. Lyanowa and M. Tibaldi Chiesa, drawings by E. Tamburini). Milan: A. Vallardi, 1953.

¹⁵Korolenko V. *Il diu del diavolo, Il campanaro, Il sogno di Makar*. Milan: Sonzogno, 1903; Korolenko V. *Il vecchio campanaro*. (Translated by B. Jakovenko). Florence: Vallecchi, 1926. (Fontana viva. Opere scelte per l'infanzia e l'adolescenza).

and, among the most recent (from 1927 to 1931), the books on zoology and botany by V. Bianki; *The South Pole Expedition* [*La spedizione al Polo Sud*] by Amundsen and Scott in 1910, by S. Cackina; *The Secret of Porcelain* [*Il segreto della porcellana*] by E. Danko (how the secret of porcelain, hitherto known only to the Chinese, was uncovered); *My Life* [*La mia vita*] by V. Durov, a famous animal tamer, in which he shows how a cat, a mouse and a bird can all live peacefully together; *Natasha and Kolya* [*Natascia e Kolja*], the life of two children, by J. Fausek; *Leshka* [*Lescka*], the story of a young boy, by S. Fedorchenko; *Childhood Memories* [*Ricordi di infanzia*], with many animal characters, and the *Story of a Little Rabbit, a Mouse and a Sparrow* [*Storia di un coniglietto, di un topo e di un passero*], by E. Gorbunova-Posadova; *History of Writing and the Book* [*Storia della scrittura e del libro*] and *Story of Time Measurement* [*Storia della misura del tempo*] by M. Iliyn; several popular short stories and songs for children by J. Meksin and A. Olsufieva; *Summer* [*Leto*]¹⁶⁾ children's games for the woods, meadows and vegetable gardens, by A. Pakhomov; the story of a young girl who makes friends with the animals in Daghestan, by O. Perovskaya; stories and books of historical information, by N. Rubakin; the story of a child and a camel, by A. Samokhvalov: *The African Guest* [*L'ospite dell'Africa*], the elephant, by S. Tsayakiy.

Translated by Tom Bird. Edited by Giulia De Florio

¹⁶⁾In Russian in the original text.

RESEARCH PAPERS

Angelica Fascella

I. A. KRYLOV'S FAME AS A CHILDREN'S WRITER IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY ITALY

This article investigates the fame of the Russian fabulist Ivan Krylov (1769–1844) in Italy in the 20th century, with special reference to the collections of fables of that period, which were intended for children. Indeed, the first Krylov's fables in Italian language had been published in Paris in 1825, but in Italy they were unsuccessful: overall there was little interest in Russian literature and language. Only in the beginning of the following century, when Russian literature, language and culture has already become familiar to most Italian scholars and readers, have Krylov's fables gained considerable popularity in Italy. As Krylov's fame in Italy in 20th century is a relatively little-studied topic, this work briefly presents a list of the Italian versions of Krylov's fables published in that period. Afterwards, the article particularly focuses on the role played by the Russian fabulist in Italian Children's literature: the analysis has been carried out with reference to the characteristics identified in some collections for children.

Keywords: Ivan Krylov, fable, translation, Italian language, 20th century, children's literature, Russian literature, reception of Krylov's fables

Ivan Andreevich Krylov (1769–1844) Krylov had already been extremely popular among Russian readers and critics during his lifetime, and he was also named the greatest Russian fabulist. Indeed, at the beginning of his literary career he wrote plays and satirical works, but he gained poetic glory by writing fables; at first Krylov simply imitated or re-elaborated La Fontaine's fables, but soon he started writing original

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verses, intimately connected to the Russian culture and to the authentic Russian soul¹.

His complete works, which contain 197 fables, were not only fundamental for the development of the fable as a genre, but also were a crucial moment in the evolution of the Russian literary language. The liveness of the rhythm and the abundance of proverbs and popular sayings in his fables, all of these imitating the oral language spoken by the lower classes, have introduced in literature concrete elements of the Russian reality and language.

The moral teachings conveyed by Krylov were the expression of Russian wisdom, which could be helpful not only to the adults who needed to rediscover the moral values and the authentic Russian costumes, but also to the children who still had to learn them. Despite knowing that Krylov's fables were not simply texts for children because of their satirical subtext, the critic V. G. Belinskiy enlightened their key role in children's education, as they could enrich their vocabulary and embrace the national spirit:

Нет нужды говорить о великой важности басен Крылова для воспитания детей: дети бессознательно и непосредственно напитываются из них русским духом, овладевают русским языком и обогащаются прекрасными впечатлениями почти единственно доступной для них поэзии. Но Крылов поэт не для одних детей: с книгою его басен невольно забудется и взрослый и снова перечтет уж читанное им тысячу раз¹⁾ [Belinskiy 1976].

In Russia Krylov's fame as children's author consolidated after his death when, in 1845, his illustrated biography was published by Dmitriy Grigorovich under the title *Dedushka Krylov* ("Grandpa Krylov"). This nickname refers to the Russian fabulist's ability to educate the masses, just like a good-humoured grandfather who shares words of wisdom with his grandchildren [Hellman 2016, e-book Kindle pos. 627; Kryukova 2019, 10].

First Krylov's fables in Italian language appeared in the trilingual collection, *Fables russes, tirées du recueil de M. Kriloff et imitées en*

¹⁾All the quotations in this article have been translated by me.

"There is no need to talk about the importance of Krylov's fables for children's education: children unconsciously and indirectly absorb the Russian spirit from them, master Russian language and are enriched by the wonderful impressions of almost the only form of poetry which is available to them. But Krylov is not a children's poet only: with one book of his fables even an adult will forget himself and will read again what he has already read a thousand times" [Belinskiy 1976].

vers français et italiens par divers auteur (“Russian fables, based on Mr. Krylov’s collected works and imitated² in French and Italian verses by various authors”), published in Paris in 1825 on the initiative of Count Grigoriy Orlov (1777–1826), who was Krylov’s close friend. This collection isn’t addressed to children but represents Orlov’s endeavour to spread Krylov’s fables in Western European cultural panorama, where the fabulist was still not well-known: the book consists of 86 fables, each printed in Russian and then imitated in French and in Italian. As the Italian writers didn’t know Russian, their versions were based on French prose literal renderings and not from the Russian source text. The Italian versions of Orlov’s volume were then reprinted in a separated volume in Perugia in 1827³.

However, those fables didn’t succeed and after a short time they were forgotten⁴. Krylov’s fables remained almost unknown in Italy until, at the beginning of the 20th century, the scholar Federigo Verdinois⁵ translated 53 fables which were published by Sonzogno publishing house⁶ in 1906 in the collection *Favole scelte di Giovanni Krilow*, and the scholar Domenico Ciampoli⁷ discovered Orlov’s volume in Saint-Petersburg and decided to republish it in his home country in 1912, adding in the prefaces six texts that he himself translated from Russian [Verdinois 1906, 8; Ciampoli 1912, 6; Maver Lo Gatto 1966, 162–163]⁸.

Only in the 20th century, when Russian literature and language widely became objects of interest in Italy, that Krylov and his fables gained considerable popularity, especially as a Children’s writer.

As studies exclusively about the fame of Krylov’s fables in Italy during the 20th century apparently have not been published yet, I think it could be useful to provide a list of the Italian publications that appeared in that period⁹. Moreover, I have decided to include also the only two collections published at the beginning of the 21st century, because, as far as I know, they are the very last which were published in Italy.

The present list is based on the bibliographic data collected by Mazzitelli, De Florio, Scandura and Vassena, and those I have retrieved from the consultation of the Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale (National Librarian System) catalogue and of the Catalogo Biblioteche Genova Metropolitana (Metropolitan city of Genoa Libraries Catalogue), and the catalogue of the University of Sacred Heart of Milan. Indeed, neither the catalogue of Genova Metropolitana nor the catalogue of the University of Sacred Heart are included in the national librarian system [Mazzitelli 1990, 406; Scandura 2002, 111; Vassena 2015, 293; De Florio 2017, 422–423, 442]. The publications have been ordered chronologically and numbered so that it will be easier to recover the

translations I will mention in the rest of the article. For the same reasons, I have indicated the collections of Krylov's fables specifically for children between brackets: to distinguish the publications addressed to children from those that were published for adults and to identify the main purpose of the different editions; I have established some criteria based on paratextual elements, such as illustrations¹⁰ and prefaces, and other criteria such as the translator's profile, the series in which the texts were published and direct information about the publishing house's strategy. Included in the list are the collections of selected texts and translations of individual fables published in journals and anthologies:

1. Krilow G.¹¹ Favole scelte di Giovanni Krilow / trad. di F. Verdinois. Milano: Biblioteca Universale Sonzogno, 1906. 85 p¹².
2. Krylov G. Favole russe / traduzione e introduzione di D. Ciampoli. Lanciano: Carabba, 1912. 193 p.
3. Kylov G. Le favole di Giovanni Krylov, versione interlineare dal russo di U. Norsa. Palermo: Sandron, 1919. 276 p.
4. Le favole di Giovanni Krylov, versione interlineare dal russo di U. Norsa (2nd ed.). Palermo, Sandron, 1920. 276 p.
5. Krylov I. L'asino e l'usignolo, traduzione in versi di E. Damiani // Rivista di Cultura. 1923. Vol. 4 No 6-7. P. 157.
6. Krylov I. L'asino e l'usignolo, traduzione in versi di E. Damiani // Altius. 1925. No. 2¹³
7. Krylov I. Favole / testo, versione e disegni a cura di Canzio Vandelli e Gimmi Bosi. Venezia: Edizioni litografiche S.E.V., 1940¹⁴. 123 p.
8. Krylov I. 60 favolelli / libera trascrizione di M. Tibaldi Chiesa, illustrazioni di V. Nicouline (Nikulin). Milano: Italgeo, 1945 (for children).
9. Krylov I. L'asino e l'usignolo / traduzione di E. Damiani. Roma: Trevisini, 1947¹⁵.
10. Krylov I. Comare volpe / libera trascrizione di Mary Tibaldi Chiesa, illustrato da Vsevolode Niculin. Milano: Orlando Cibelli, 1950 ca. (for children).
11. Krylov I. Favole della foresta / libera trascrizione di Mary Tibaldi Chiesa, illustrato da Vsevolode Niculin. Milano: Orlando Cibelli, 1950 ca. (for children).
12. Krylov I. Il concerto degli animali / libera trascrizione di Mary Tibaldi Chiesa, illustrato da Vsevolode Niculin. Milano: Orlando Cibelli, 1950 ca. (for children).

13. Krylov I. Messer Lupo / libera trascrizione di Mary Tibaldi Chiesa, illustrato da Vsevolode Niculin. Milano: Orlando Cibelli, 1950 ca. (for children).
14. Krylov I. Papà elefante l'orso e la scimmia / libera trascrizione di Mary Tibaldi Chiesa, illustrato da Vsevolode Niculin. Milano: Orlando Cibelli, 1950 ca. (for children).
15. Krylov I. Sua altezza l'aquila / libera trascrizione di Mary Tibaldi Chiesa, illustrato da Vsevolode Niculin. Milano: Orlando Cibelli, 1950 ca. (for children).
16. Krylov I. Sussurri nell'aria / libera trascrizione di Mary Tibaldi Chiesa, illustrato da Vsevolode Niculin. Milano: Orlando Cibelli, 1950 ca. (for children).
17. Krylov I. Tra bruchi e formiche api e scarabei / libera trascrizione di Mary Tibaldi Chiesa, illustrato da Vsevolode Niculin. Milano: Orlando Cibelli, 1950 ca. (for children).
18. Krylov I. Tra cani e gatti / libera trascrizione di Mary Tibaldi Chiesa, illustrato da Vsevolode Niculin. Milano: Orlando Cibelli, 1950 ca. (for children).
19. Krylov I. Tra ragli e nitriti / libera trascrizione di Mary Tibaldi Chiesa, illustrato da Vsevolode Niculin. Milano: Orlando Cibelli, 1950 ca. (for children)¹⁶.
20. Krylov I. A. L'asino e l'usignolo. Il granchio il luccio e il cigno // *Lecture scelte da Poeti e Prosatori Russi, da Krylov a Korolenko, testo russo con accentuazione, note e versione italiana / a cura di E. Damiani*. Firenze: Valmartina, 1952. P. 67–68¹⁷.
21. Krylov. *Le favolette dei cani // Krylov, La Fontaine, Vitfal e altri. Gianni Porcospino e altre storie / a cura di Giovanni Falzone Fontanelli, ill. di R. Sgrilli*. Bologna: Nettuno Omnia, 1953. Pp. 107–116 (for children).
22. Krylov I. A. Ivan Andreevič Krylov e le «Favole» // *Lo Gatto, E. Le più belle pagine della letteratura russa*. Milano: Nuova Accademia. Vol. 1 (dalle origini a Čechov). P. 253–256.
23. Krylov. *Raccolta di favole / con testo originale a fronte, a cura di V. Zdrojewska*. Firenze, Fussi, 1957. 223 p.
24. Krylov I. *Cento favole / trad. di N. Martini Bernardi, litografie di P. Annigoni*. Parma: Guanda, 1961. 196 p.
25. Krylov I. *La danza dei pesci e altri favolelli / libera trascrizione di M. Tibaldi Chiesa, ill. di M. Ridolfi*. Milano: Mondadori, 1966, 185 p. (for children).
26. Ivan A. Krylov // *Krylov, Puškin, Tolstoj. Parlano gli animali / a cura*

- del Monastero russo Uspenskij, illustrazioni di Otello Perazzi. Roma: Edizioni paoline, 1971. Pp. 13–49 (for children).
27. Krylov I. 60 favolelli / trad. di M. Tibaldi Chiesa, ill. di V. Nicouline. Milano: Edizioni Club Degli Editori, 1975. 115 p. (for children).
 28. Krylov I. 60 favolelli / libera trascrizione di M. Tibaldi Chiesa, illustrazioni di V. Nicouline. Firenze: Pugliese, 1975 (for children).
 29. Krylov I. La saggezza di Krylov / favole in versione ritmica, a cura di Franco Cusmano. Genova: Circolo culturale Autori Autogestiti Associati Liguri & personaleedit, 1977. 51 p.
 30. Krylov I. Ivan A. Krylov // Krylov, Puškin, Tolstoj. Parlano gli animali (2a ed.) / a cura del Monastero russo Uspenskij, illustrazioni di Otello Perazzi. Roma: Edizioni paoline, 1983 (for children)¹⁸.
 31. Krylov I. Ivan A. Krylov // Krylov, Puškin, Tolstoj. Parlano gli animali (3a ed.) / a cura del Monastero russo Uspenskij, illustrazioni di Otello Perazzi. Roma: Edizioni paoline, 1989. Pp. 12–48 (for children).
 32. Krylov I. La saggezza di Krylov / favole in versione ritmica, a cura di Franco Cusmano (2a ed.). Genova: Circolo culturale Autori Autogestiti Associati Liguri & personaleedit, 1998, 51 p.
 33. Krylov I. La Saggezza di Krylov / favolette morali in ferrarese e traduzione letterale italiana, liberamente tratte dalla versione dal russo di Franco Cusmano, trad. di Iose Pervati. Portomaggiore: Bando di Argenta, Tipog.-litografia S. Macario Graf, 1998¹⁹.
 34. Krylov I. La saggezza di Krylov / favole in versione ritmica, a cura di Franco Cusmano (3a ed.). Genova: Circolo culturale Autori Autogestiti Associati Liguri & personaleedit, 1998. 51 p.
 35. Krylov I. Un pö de Krylov azzenezòu (Un po' di Krylov aggenovesato) da La saggezza di Krylov di Franco Cusmano / a cura di Ottavio Giorgio Ugolotti. Genova: Circolo culturale Autori Autogestiti Associati Liguri & personaleedit, 2004.
 36. Krylov I. A. Favole / a cura di Alberto Schiavone. Firenze: Barbès, 2009.

It is extremely interesting to notice that out of a total of 36 publications, 50% of them contains verse translations (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36)²⁰ and other 50% includes prose versions (8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31).

More precisely, about 28%²¹ of publications of verse translations contains quite small number of texts, varying from one to four fables, that appeared in journals and anthologies (5, 6, 9, 20, 22), and that verse

collections of Krylov's fables reach about 72% (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 23, 24, 29, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36).

On the other hand, about 78% of prose publications includes collections entirely dedicated to Krylov's fables (8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 25, 27, 28) and about 22% refers to groups of selected texts published in collections of fables by various authors (21, 26, 30, 31).

What is most striking about this list is that all verse publications are addressed to adults and all prose adaptations were published for children. I will focus on this aspect later on.

The larger amount the Children's prose collections devoted to Krylov's fables suggests that in Italy Krylov is especially known as children's writer. However, before focusing on children's books, it might be useful to shortly present verse publications for adults.

Included in this group are single texts published in literary journals and anthologies to propagate Russian culture and volumes of selected fables printed for entertainment purposes. Moreover, the types of translators can differ: there are famous scholars who contributed to the development of the Slavic Studies in Italy, such as abovementioned Federigo Verdinois²² (1) and Domenico Ciampoli²³ (2), but also Ettore Lo Gatto²⁴ (22) and Enrico Damiani²⁵ (5, 6, 20). Damiani, who firstly published the fable *L'asino e L'usignolo* ("The donkey and the Nightingale") in two literary magazines (5, 6), in 1952 reprinted this fable and added the text *Il granchio, il luccio e il cigno* ("The Swan, the Pike and the Crab") in the anthology *Lecture scelte da Poeti e Prosatori Russi, da Krylov a Korolenko* ("Selected Readings from Russian Poets and Prose-Writers, from Krylov to Korolenko"). Lo Gatto published 4 fables in the first volume of the anthology *Le più belle pagine della letteratura russa* ("The Most Beautiful Pages of Russian Literature"), published in 1957.

Umberto Norsa²⁶ (3, 4), although he wasn't a Slavist scholar by trade, but simply a keen amateur translator of Polish and Russian poetry, also translated Krylov's fables with the same intentions. Although Norsa defined his version "una prosa letteralissima" ("very literal prose"), he maintained the verse structure of Krylov's fables, though without rhymes and other poetic devices [Norsa 1919, 11–12]. Therefore, I have decided to include his collection in the verse publications group.

Unfortunately, Norsa's work remains largely unknown among scholars, even though his book is the only one collecting the entire production of Krylov's fables. Moreover, his interlinear translation is considered one of the most faithful to the source text [Cazzamini Mussi 1921, 76; Marinelli 1998, 5]. Another collection of Krylov's fables with the same didactic purposes, which is one of the most complete with 46 selected

texts, is by Professor Vera Zdrojewska²⁷ (23). All the above-mentioned translators had as their main objective the proliferation of Russian major authors' works. Indeed, they tried to recreate in Italian the rhythm and the vivacity of Krylov's verses.

It is curious to notice in the list the presence of amateur translators, whose works were edited by local publishing houses. For example, Doctor Franco Cusmano²⁸ printed his version of Krylov's fables in Genoa in 1977 and reprinted it in 1998 (29, 32). Cusmano's collection inspired another amateur writer, Doctor Josè Peverati²⁹, who used Cusmano's translation of Krylov's fables as source text for his version in Ferrarese dialect (33). Peverati's vernacular collection is addressed to Ferrarese readers and lovers of Italian regional dialects and, as I will point out later, it will be imitated in 21st century.

Among verse publications there are even valuable limited editions, decorated with lithographs embellishing the texts: *Cento favole* ("100 Fables"), a collection of selected fables translated by Nerina Martini Bernardi³⁰ and illustrated by the painter Pietro Annigoni³¹ (24), and *Favole* ("Fables"), texts with facing translations from Russian selected by the philologist and translator Canzio Vandelli³² and illustrated by Gimmi Bosi³³ (7).

As already noticed, all the verse publications considered above are addressed to adults or, more precisely, to scholars, lovers of Russian literature and fables, rare book and lithographs collectors and amateurs of regional dialects. These publications, even though addressed to a specific group of readers, are clear evidence of Krylov's popularity in the 20th century.

However, as already noticed, even more glaring evidence of Krylov's fame in Italy is the large amount of collections for children. From the mid-20th century, about a century later than in Russia, also in Italy Krylov's fables were published in children's books: from then on Krylov's fables became not just an example of the greatness of Russian literature, available only to scholars and amateurs, but lively narrations, useful for educating and entertaining the youngest readers.

The first collection of Krylov's fables for children was published by the publishing house Itolgeo under the title *60 favolelli* ("60 fables") in 1945 (8). The volume, dedicated to the publisher's son as a Christmas present, is edited by the writer and translator Mary Tibaldi Chiesa³⁴, who was a prominent figure in Italian children's literature (Fig. 1).

Indeed, Tibaldi Chiesa adapted many of the world's greatest masterpieces of juvenile literature, with special interest in fables, fairy tales and folk tales. For example, in 1942 she rewrote in prose Pushkin's fairy

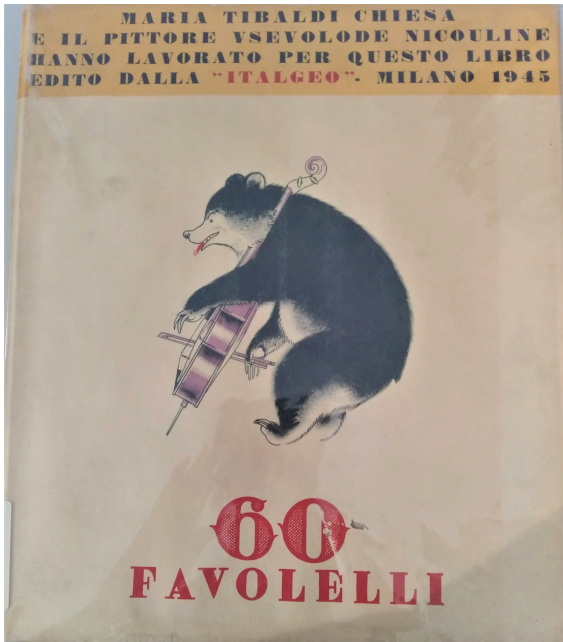


Figure 1. 60 Favolelli cover

tales in the book *Il gallo d'oro e altre fiabe* (The Take of the Golden Cockerel and Other Fairy Tales), printed by Hoepli publishing house (De Florio 2017, 426)³⁵.

As a matter of fact, Tibaldi Chiesa deliberately chose not to translate faithfully the source texts, as she preferred adapting them to Italian children's taste. Moreover, she believed that modifying those masterpieces to make them known to as many people as possible was preferable to let foreign readers remain in ignorance. This is a typical approach adopted in the 20th century by Italian translators who adapted novels or poems for younger readers. For instance, between the 1930s and 1940s UTET publishing house promoted the publication of the series *La scala d'oro* ("The Golden Staircase"), which contained the most famous literary works, adapted in Italian for children and teenagers by many Italian authors. Tibaldi Chiesa, who was one of the most prolific Children's writers of the period, took active part in the project: she adapted the fairy tales written by Perrault, Andersen and Brothers Grimm and La Fontaine's fables, Wilde's short stories, Verne's and Swift's novels and

Tolstoy's *War and Peace* [Tibaldi Chiesa 1945b, 166–167; Rebellato 2016, 43]³⁶.

As she states in the preface to *60 favolelli*, Tibaldi Chiesa got to know about Krylov's fables through the mediation of Natalia Bavastro³⁷ and decided to re-elaborate them in prose to adapt these texts to the cultural context and the psychology of Italian children. For this reason, her versions of Krylov's fables are not properly considered translations, rather "libere trascrizioni" ("free transcriptions"). Moreover, in this and many other collections for children Tibaldi Chiesa collaborated with the illustrator Vsevolod Nikulin. According to her, Nikulin's illustrations perfectly represent Krylov's world to the young readers:

Col prezioso aiuto di Natalia Bavastro mi è stato dato a venire a conoscenza delle favole di Krylov e della sua personalità: ed entrambi sono sembrate così originali e interessanti, così geniali e così significative che ho desiderato avvicinarle ai piccoli lettori italiani. Ho preso gli spunti dei favolelli che hanno protagonisti le bestie, tanto care ai bimbi, e li ho trascritti, modificandoli nello svolgimento, nella stesura e talora nelle conclusioni là dove questo mi sembrava opportuno per le esigenze della psicologia infantile, e in particolare della psicologia del fanciullo italiano.

Vsevolode Nicouline ha illustrato i favolelli con la sua arte squisita e raffinata, tutta pervasa di umorismo e di arguzia, e singolarmente consona con lo spirito di Krylov: i suoi disegni in nero e a colori sono l'interpretazione viva e il commento migliore a questo libro, nel quale vibra la voce di un poeta e di un saggio, una parola eterna di verità e di vita, che non rimarrà inascoltata²⁾ [Tibaldi Chiesa 1945a].

After giving a brief introduction about the history of fable all over the world, Tibaldi Chiesa focuses on Krylov's figure and the importance of his fables, which contain ever valid moral teachings:

²⁾The pages of this book are not numbered.

«With Natalia Bavastro's precious help I got to know Krylov's fables and his personality: they both seemed so original and interesting to me, so brilliant and meaningful, that I have desired to bring them closer to Italian young readers. I have taken my cues from the fables about animals, which children love so much, and I have transcribed them, modifying the plot, the wording and, sometimes, the resolution, where required, to the needs of the child psychology and especially to the Italian child psychology. Vsevolode Nicouline has illustrated the fables with his exquisite and elegant art, which is full of humour and wit and at the same time it is so appropriate to Krylov's spirit. His black-and-white and colour illustrations are the visual representation and the best comment to this book, in which the voice of a poet and wise man vibrates, an eternal word of truth which won't fall in deaf ears» [Tibaldi Chiesa 1945].

Il linguaggio di cui il poeta si valeva aveva la semplicità e la freschezza, l'immediatezza e l'efficacia della parlata popolare onde egli si era imbevuto e saturato sin dalla fanciullezza; ma nello stesso tempo egli si rivelava maestro nel foggiare artisticamente il verso, nel cesellare finemente la forma e nel distillare elaboratamente l'essenza dei singoli componimenti. Alcuni di essi, di intonazione e di atmosfera tipicamente nazionali, hanno un sapore speciale, inconfondibilmente russo. Altri favolelli sono esempi, scene, quadretti tolti dalla vita quotidiana di ogni tempo e di ogni paese. E sempre, sotto il livello di finzione, traspare una verità di vita, come sotto la maschera del travestimento del belluino si indovinano tratti umani di realtà sempre attuale; e dal simbolo si sprigiona un insegnamento eterno di profonda significazione ideale, morale, sociale³⁾ [Tibaldi Chiesa 1945a].

Tibaldi Chiesa's collection achieved great success: in the 1950s small groups of texts from *60 favolelli* were republished by the publisher Orlando Cibelli in ten volumes. Each book is focused on a specific theme: for example, *Comare volpe* ("Mrs Fox") contains only the fables whose main character is a fox (10), and the main topic of *Sussuri nell'aria* ("Whispers in the Air") is the birdsong (16). Vsevolod Nikulin's illustrations were reprinted in these small volumes as well. However, in the colophon the publisher states that some of the original illustrations have been modified, so Nikulin's signature has been removed.

Additional confirmation of the popularity of Tibaldi Chiesa's re-elaboration of Krylov's fables is provided by the republication of all the texts of *60 favolelli* in a new edition titled *La danza dei pesci e altri favolelli* ("The Fish Dance and Other Fables"), published in 1966 by Mondadori publishing house (25) (Fig. 2). This book differs from the 1945 edition in the preface, illustrations and disposition of the texts. Indeed, in the 1945 preface Tibaldi Chiesa states that the fables are addressed exclusively to children, but in the new one she underlines the universality of Krylov's fables, which are beneficial to all readers, without distinction of age: "Col prezioso aiuto di Natalia Kah Bavastro mi è stato dato venire a conoscenza dei favolelli di Krylov e trascriverli per i lettori italiani, certa che piaceranno non solo ai ragazzi, ma a tutti

³⁾«The poet's language had the simplicity and the freshness, the spontaneity and the effectiveness of popular vernacular, that the poet had grown up with; but at the same time, he proves himself as a master in creating verses, in chiselling the shapes and in conveying the true essence of his poems. Some of them, which have typically Russian intonation and atmosphere, have an unmistakably Russian taste. Other fables are exempla, scenes of daily life of every time and place. And beyond the fiction of Krylov's fables there is always true life, like under the mask of a beast it is possible to recognise ever timely human traits; and from the symbol and eternal ideal, moral and social teaching bursts» [Tibaldi Chiesa 1945].



Figure 2. *La danza dei pesci e altri favolelli* cover

quelli che leggeranno, perché vi sentiranno vibrare la voce di un poeta e di un saggio, una parola eterna di verità e di vita” [Tibaldi Chiesa 1966, 8]⁴⁾.

Moreover, the illustrations here aren't those by Vsevolod Nikulin, but by Marisa Ridolfi³⁸. Another very small change concerns the order of the texts: the fable that gives its name to the Mondadori edition, *La danza dei pesci*, which is the 54th text in the 1945 collection, is now the first one.

Mondadori company was fascinated by the artistic value of Tibaldi Chiesa and Nikulin's volume: in the 1975 the original 1945 edition of

⁴⁾“With Natalia Bavastro's precious help I got to know Krylov's fables and I have transcribed them for the Italian readers, because I am sure not only will children love them, but anyone will appreciate these fables, because anyone will be able to hear the voice of a poet and wise man vibrates, an eternal word of truth and life” [Tibaldi Chiesa 1966, 8].

60 *favolelli* was republished by Club Degli Editori³⁹ (27), which is a publishing house included in Mondadori publishing group. It is a faithful reprint of the 1945 volume, and the only change is the illustration on the front cover. Also the same Italgoe edition was republished in the same year by another publishing house, Pugliese, in Florence (28). Pugliese and Club Degli Editori editions are identical.

As I will discuss at the end of this article, the success of Mary Tibaldi Chiesa's versions of Krylov's fables could be associated with the development of children's book market in Italy and the history of the reception of Russian texts for children in the peninsula.

Certainly Tibaldi Chiesa's books play a central role in building Krylov's fame in Italy, but there also are other collections, published in the second half of the 20th century, that include Krylov's fables. These books contain fables written by various authors and folk tales from different parts of the world.

In 1953 publishing house A. & G. Nettuno Omnia in Bologna printed the collection *Gianni Porcospino e altre storie* ("Gianni the Hedgehog and Other Stories"), edited by Giovanni Falzone Fontanelli⁴⁰ and illustrated by Roberto Sgrilli⁴¹ (21). This volume includes some works of the most famous fabulists, like Brothers Grimm and Christian Andersen, adaptations of legends and myths, a free adaptation of *The Arabian Nights*⁴² and one Falzone Fontanelli's fable. What is particularly interesting is that the editors chose to print five of Krylov's fables together with eight Jean De La Fontaine's texts to create the small group of texts entitled *Favolette dei cani* ("Dogs' fables"). Indeed, this choice seems to highlight Krylov's bond with the Western tradition of fable and especially with La Fontaine. The fables of both authors in this collection are prose adaptations.

This stylistic choice depends on the publishers's desire to provide children and young readers famous fables in the simplest and congenial forms:

Nell'affrontare questa Collana dedicata al mondo dell'infanzia, lo scopo che abbiamo voluto raggiungere non è soltanto quello di una accurata selezione dei migliori frutti della fantasia universale...

Noi invece abbiamo voluto affrontare... ...la mescolanza della complessiva materia: così in ciascuna opera pubblicata, i fanciulli godranno della più varia selezione che sia stato possibile raggruppare e comporre per la loro gioia. Avranno cioè il modo di leggere in un unico libro fiabe dei più celebri autori...⁵⁾ [Gianni Porcospino, 1953, 5–6]⁴³.

⁵⁾«Dealing with this series dedicated to the world of childhood, our goal was not

The most recent collection of Krylov's fables for children is *Parlano gli animali* ("Animals Are Speaking") published by Edizioni Paoline publishing house in Rome for the first time in 1971 (26) and then reprinted in 1983 (30)⁴⁴ and 1989 (31). This volume, illustrated by Otello Perazzi⁴⁵, contains fables by Krylov and Tolstoy, Pushkin's fairy tales and folk tales of former USSR countries, translated by Russian nuns of the Uspenskiy ("Dormition")⁴⁶ Convent in Rome. The nuns translated 31 Krylov's fables, using as a source text the Russian-language edition published in Paris in 1921.

It is important to emphasise that in this publication Krylov's figure is associated with Pushkin and Tolstoy (namely two Russian writers who were at the time among the most known and beloved by Italian readers) because of his role in the development of the fable in Russia and in the world. Moreover, in the unsigned introduction the bond between Krylov and Western literature, especially with La Fontaine's fables, is emphasised:

La favola è fiorita anche in Russia... Le favole costituiscono un patrimonio popolare, spesso anonimo, che si tramanda e si arricchisce di generazione in generazione, però anche grandi scrittori russi non hanno sdegnato di dare ai racconti di animali una bella veste letteraria, talvolta anche una veste poetica. Così fecero il più grande poeta russo A. Puškin (1799–1837), e il noto favolista I. Krylov (1768–1844), egregio interprete dello spirito del suo popolo ed emulo di La Fontaine. Anche il grande scrittore L. Tolstoj (1828–1910) nei libri da lui scritti per gli scolari diede largo posto alle favole⁶⁾ [Parlano gli animali 1971, 9–10].

In the introduction of the third edition much more attention is paid to Krylov, whose accurate biography is presented. The reason is as follows: "Ci limitiamo a presentare Krylov, per due evidenti motivi. Primo, perché Krylov, per essendo "il più grande favolista russo", è

merely creating an accurate selection of the best products of universal fantasy... But we wanted to deal with the overall complexity of the subject: so, in every book of the series children will enjoy the variety of selected texts, which have been grouped to their joy. They will have the chance to read in one book the most famous fabulists' works...» [Gianni Porcospino, 1953, 5–6].

⁶⁾«Fable flourished in Russia too... Fables often represent anonymous folk heritage, which is enriched and passed down from parent to son, but even famous Russian writers didn't despise giving to stories about animals refined literary and sometimes even poetic clothes. So did the greatest Russian poet A. Pushkin (1799–1837) and the famous fabulist I. Krylov (1768–1844), who excellently interprets the spirit of his people and emulates La Fontaine. Even the great writer L. Tolstoy (1828–1910) paid much attention to fables in his textbooks» [Parlano gli animali 1971, 9–11].

poco noto. Secondo perché gli altri due [Puškin e Tolstoj] sono talmente conosciuti da non aver bisogno di biglietto da visita”⁷⁾ [Parlano gli animali 1989, 7]. So this introduction emphasises that, even though the number of Italian translations of Krylov’s fables is rather considerable, in the second half of the 20th century Krylov was still poorly known compared to those Russian writers whose names were familiar even to people who didn’t read their works. However, in the preface Krylov’s key role in Russian literature is confirmed and it is even stated that Krylov was the first Russian author to be read abroad [Parlano gli animali 1989, 8–9]⁴⁷. Regarding the content, the third edition is identical to the first.

In contrast to the collections of fables that I examined above, where the texts are highly edited for better adaptation to Italian children’s taste and cultural context, in *Parlano gli animali*, although they translated the fables in prose too, the translators tried to represent the elements that are typical of Russian reality and popular tradition. For example, the original titles of the fables were transliterated in brackets and Russian proper names weren’t changed but explained in footnotes.

All the above-mentioned texts and collections for children are written in prose: the adaptation and re-elaboration of foreign texts and the prose re-writing of poetry have always been very common editorial strategies in Italy as far as children’s literature is concerned, as I will discuss shortly.

According to my research, the 1989 edition of *Parlano gli animali* is the last collection of Krylov’s fables for children that was published in Italy in the 20th century. Indeed, towards the end of the 20th century publications decreased, and completely disappeared after the first decade of the following century.

At the turn of the 21st century increased attention was paid to amateur editions and translations into regional dialects: in 2001 Franco Cusmano’s amateur versions collected in the book *La saggezza di Krylov* (Krylov’s wisdom) were reprinted (34). Moreover, in 2004 the fables translated by Cusmano were reworked in Genoese dialect by Ottavio Giorgio Ugolotti⁴⁸ (35).

The last verse book of Krylov’s collected fables was published in Italy in 2009 by the publishing house Fussi in Florence and edited by Alberto Schiavone⁴⁹ (36). However, translations in this book there are not new, but are reprints of Vera Zdrojewska’s 1957th translations.

⁷⁾“We only present Krylov for two obvious reasons: Firstly, because Krylov, even though he is ‘the greatest Russian fabulist’ is not well known. Secondly, because the other two writers [Pushkin and Tolstoy] are so well-known that they don’t need a business card”.

Whereas I haven't found any publication for children edited in the 21st century.

As I have already stressed, Krylov's fame in Italy is mostly associated with Italian prose adaptation addressed to children and especially with Tibaldi Chiesa's texts: to better clarify the correlation between the choice of formal structure and the final addressee and to show the variations in Krylov's fortune, in the following (Fig. 3) I will compare the quantity of the publications of texts translated in prose with those containing verse translations, published between the beginning of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st.

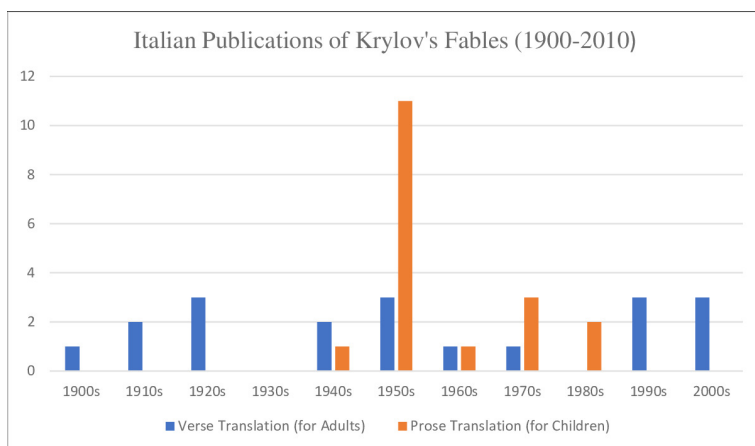


Figure 3. Table

The editions that include verse translation, addressed to adult readers, whether scholars, collectors or lovers of foreign literature and regional dialects, were constantly published throughout the 20th century, except for the 1930s and the 1980s, until the first decade of the 21st century, even though they were often single texts that randomly appeared in journals, anthologised texts that are supposed to briefly present Krylov's works or merely stylistic exercises by amateur and vernacular writers.

The limited circulation of the Italian verse versions of Krylov's fables might suggest that, even though he has always been regarded as a brilliant poet, he is still not included among the Russian classic authors, whose works are much more famous in Italy. However, as I have already noticed in citing the 1989 edition preface of *Parlano gli animali* and

as I will say again below, this opinion is shared also by publishers of children's books.

What is clear from the table is that from 1940s until the end of the last decades of the 20th century, and especially in the 50s, when Mary Tibaldi Chiesa's adaptations widely circulated, Krylov's name in Italy is mostly linked to children's literature and Italian collections of his fables for children are all prose adaptations. Publications for children ceased towards the end of the 20th century and never resumed.

There are no definite answers regarding the success and the subsequent decline of Ivan Krylov as children's writer in Italy over the decades. However, I could make assumptions.

Indeed, the ups and downs of Krylov's fables in Italy could be connected to the development of Italian children's book market, the reception of Russian literature and the translation strategies of foreign poetry for children.

As exhaustively described by De Florio, in the first half of the 20th century Russian children's literature was quite unfamiliar in Italy, where a real children's book market was just recently created, except for fables, folk tales and fairy tales [Boero & De Luca 2009, 161–165; Calabrese 2011, 11–12; De Florio 2017, 422–423].

After the Second World War Italian publishing houses started giving more and more attention to children's literature, also printing an impressive number of foreign books. Two main tendencies, which would become predominant towards the end of the century, emerged in the Italian book market and influenced the reception of Russian children's literature: on the one hand, adaptations of world-famous writers' novels and poems, which weren't necessarily written for children, were widely published. On the other, the genres that children loved most, such as fairy tales, fantasy novels and adventure stories were promoted by publishers [Boero & De Luca 2009, 471–476; De Florio 2017, 432; Calabrese 2011, 13–19]. In both cases publishing houses got a secure income. Consequently, many world's masterpieces were published or reworked for young readers, as demonstrated by the above-mentioned project *La scala d'oro*.

Moreover, it is important to emphasize that prose translation of foreign poetry was a widespread practice because of the objective difficulties in translating poetry without radically changing the source texts and in making it enjoyable for children. For this reason, verse translations for young readers of Russian poetry have always been rare [De Florio 2017, 426–427]. The interest in Krylov's fables, the success of

Tibaldi Chiesa's collections and the publication of the other volumes for children examined above seem to be a consequence of this situation.

However, collapse of the Soviet Union and the crisis of the Italian publishing sector in the 90s produced negative effects in the reception of Russian children's literature and marked the decline of Krylov's fortune. Indeed, the publications dramatically decreased and the aforesaid tendencies radicalised: publishing houses chose to print only adaptations of most famous authors' works to sell magical and adventure stories, fables and fairy tales, which children have always appreciated [Boero & De Luca 2009, 564–581; Calabrese 2011, 4–6; De Florio 2017, 432–433].

Concerning Russian children's literature, publishing houses therefore preferred to sell adaptations of works written by the authors known even by those who knew nothing about Russian literature, such as Pushkin, Gogol', Tolstoy, Chekhov, Bulgakov and others. Unfortunately, Krylov seems to be not enough famous in Italy to be included in this group.

Moreover, publishers remained conscious of the great popularity of Russian fairy tales and folk tales: even today Afanasyev's folk tales, Pushkin's fairy tales and Russian folklore characters such as Baba Yaga, Ivan the Fool, Vasilisa the Wise are well-known in Italy [Calabrese 2001, 13–22; De Florio 2017, 433–436]⁵⁰. Russian folk and fairy tales contributed to create a magical and timeless image of Russia, which is detached from the real world and where the entertaining component prevails over the moral ideals and teachings.

Although the main characters are talking animals or inanimate objects, Krylov's fables seem to be anchored to very specific time and place, 19th-century Russia, and even the universal moral teachings that made them famous all over the world now could sound too masterful and sententious to readers.

Despite the efforts, nowadays Krylov is still little known to the Italian mainstream public. But there is no denying that in the second part of the 20th century Krylov had evidently played a significant role in Italian children's literature: the great success of Mary Tibaldi Chiesa's adaptations and the publications of the collections examined in this article clearly reflect his fame, which was unfortunately short-lived.

Notes

¹ For further information about Krylov's biography and his role in the development of the fable as a genre and of the Russian literary language see [Stepanov 1963, Vinogradov 1990, Kryukova 2019, Rarenko 2019, Trakhtenberg 2019].

² The Italian and French versions of Krylov's fables are not faithful translations of the source texts but the imitations. Indeed, the authors kept the subject of the original fables and then freely modified the texts in the target languages. This approach can be associated to the Neoclassical concept of imitation: the French and the Italian authors who took part in Orlov's project freely interpreted and modified Krylov's fables to adapt them to the Neoclassical aesthetic. Moreover, it would have been impossible to the Italian writers to be faithful to the Russian source text, as they didn't know Russian and, therefore, they re-elaborated the fables from French interlinear translations in prose.

However, it is important to emphasize that when Orlov's collection was published, another concept of translation, the one associated with Romanticism and based on a more faithful approach to foreign texts, was spreading and igniting an intense discussion about literary translation. Therefore, in that debate Orlov's collection of Krylov's fables represented a standpoint, supporting the Neoclassical ideal of imitation [Smirnov 2007, 22–57; De Luca 1981, 172–174].

³ Orlov's volume and the ups and downs of Krylov's fame in Italy in the 19th century are examined in detail by Anjuta Maver Lo Gatto [Lo Gatto 1966] and Ignazio De Luca [De Luca 1981, 163–226]. De Luca especially focuses on the famous poet and translator Vincenzo Monti's participation in Orlov's project.

⁴ There are a few exceptions. Indeed, two authors taking part in Orlov's project, reprint their versions: in 1826 Vincenzo Monti decided to include his imitations of Krylov's fables in *Poesie varie del cavaliere Vincenzo Monti* ("Various poems by Sir Vincenzo Monti"), which were republished again in the miscellany *Versioni poetiche di Vincenzo Monti, con giunta di cose rare o inedite* ("Vincenzo Monti's poetic versions, with rare or unpublished works") edited by the poet Giosuè Carducci in 1869. Also the Abbot Antonio Cesari reprinted his versions in *Favole russe del Kriloff imitate in versi italiani da Antonio Cesari* ("Russian fables imitated in Italian verses by Antonio Cesari") in 1828 [Maver Lo Gatto 1966, 160; 240; De Luca 1981, 171].

⁵ Federigo Verdinois (1844–1927) was a journalist, a translator and one of the first Slavist scholars in Italy. He was appointed to the chair in Slavic literatures in Naples, which was the first established in Italy in 1836. He translated many Russian poems and novels and was the first Italian translator of Nikolay Chernyshevskiy's novel *Chto delat'?* ("What Is To Be Done?"), published in 1906 [De Caprio 1980, 87–96; Scandura 2002, 17–18].

⁶ In her article about the reception of Russian Children's literature in Italy De Florio states that this collection is the first book for children to be published in the 20th century [De Florio 2017, 422]. In fact, the fable has always been one of the most popular genres in children's literature and I cannot deny that Verdinois' version can be easily read by anyone. However, as I

will explain later, in this article I haven't taken into consideration just the genre, but I have looked at several paratextual features and at the translators' profiles to distinguish even more specifically the publications addressed to children from those that were published for adults. Therefore, I didn't consider Verdinois' translation of Krylov's fables as strictly addressed to young readers, rather than as the scholar's effort to spread Krylov's works in Italy, as they were very little known at the beginning of the 20th century.

- ⁷ Domenico Ciampoli (1852–1929) was one of the first scholars who contributed to the spread of Slavic literatures in Italy. He taught Slavic literatures at the University of Catania. He translated into Italian *byliny*, folk tales, *Slovo o polku Igoreve* ("The Tale of Igor's Campaign") and literary works of several Russian authors, such as Pushkin, Lermontov, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenyev and others. Moreover, he was an eminent literary critic and published many works about Slavic literatures, such as *Studi Slavi* ("Slavic Studies") and *Letterature Slave* ("Slavic Literatures"), respectively published in 1888 and 1889 [Bronzini 1983; Patrizi 1983, 20–25; Mazzitelli 1980, 208; Scandura 2002, 13–14].
- ⁸ As Ciampoli himself translated these texts in the preface, the volume has been included in the list of the 20th century Italian translations of Krylov's fables, which I present in this article.
- ⁹ I have no pretensions to draw up a definitive list, especially considering the difficulties in accessing to libraries due to the current health situation and the rarity of some volumes, which are sold only in antiquarian bookshops or online.
- ¹⁰ As I will point out below, the mere presence of illustrations in a book doesn't imply that it is addressed to young readers. Therefore, it has always been necessary to take into consideration not just the illustrations, but also the prefaces and the other criteria I have established for my analysis.
- ¹¹ "G" stands for "Giovanni", which is the Italian form of the name "Ivan".
- ¹² I couldn't find the total number of pages of every item of this list, because in some volumes the pages are not numbered and I couldn't consult other ones *de visu*. Therefore, it is signalled only when possible.
- ¹³ I haven't found this text, which is mentioned by Mazzitelli [Mazzitelli 1990, 81].
- ¹⁴ The volume is not dated. This year is retrievable from Canzio Vandelli's biography in a book presenting the major Italian writers from the town of Ferrara [Roversi 2020, e-book Kindle pos. 85].
- ¹⁵ I couldn't consult this text *de visu*.
- ¹⁶ Even though Vassena cites this book, I haven't been able to find it in the librarian catalogues nor online [Vassena 2015, 293].
- ¹⁷ This anthology is not divided into titled chapters. Therefore, I have simply reported the titles of the Krylov's fables which are included in it.
- ¹⁸ I couldn't consult this book *de visu*.
- ¹⁹ I couldn't consult this book *de visu*.

- ²⁰ The number in the brackets refers to the position of the mentioned texts in the list of the Italian translations of Krylov's fables.
- ²¹ The percentages have been approximated.
- ²² For biographical information about Federigo Verdinois see note 6.
- ²³ For biographical information about Domenico Ciampoli see note 8.
- ²⁴ Ettore Lo Gatto (1890–1983) was one of the most important Slavist scholars, translators and critics of Slavic literatures and nowadays he is considered the founder of the modern Slavic Studies in Italy. He devoted his life to promote Russian literature in his country by publishing journals, anthologies and several books about the history of the Russian literature [Picchio 1962, 1–14; Mazzitelli 1980, 203–206; De Michelis 1997, 704–705; D'Antuono 2017, 199–205].
- ²⁵ Enrico Damiani (1892–1953) was a translator and one of the first Slavist scholars in Italy. He was especially interested in Polish and Bulgarian literatures. His critic works have been essential for the foundation of the modern Slavic Studies in his country [Mazzitelli 1986, 327–328; Mazzitelli 1990, 401–414].
- ²⁶ Umberto Norsa (1866–1943) got a law degree but studied Slavic languages and literatures too. He gained notoriety through his translations of Adam Mickiewicz and Jan Kochanowski's poems from Polish. He was also interested in Russian poetry, but his translations are still little known [Marinelli 1998, 5–18; Marinelli 2003, 113–118].
- ²⁷ I couldn't find biographical information about her. However, Arturo Cronia's research showed that in 1947 she taught Russian language at the University of Sacred Heart in Milan [Cronia 1947, 201].
- ²⁸ Franco Cusmano (1926–2016) was a physician, but he was passionate about foreign languages and regional dialects [Bellone 2017, 33].
- ²⁹ Josè Peverati (1926–2021) was a physician and an amateur writer. He was particularly appreciated for his several works written in Ferrarese dialect [Si è spento a 93 anni Josè Peverati 2021].
- ³⁰ I couldn't find biographical information about her.
- ³¹ Pietro Annigoni (1910–1988) was a portrait and fresco painter. He was well known for his portraits of monarchs and eminent personalities from the world of politics and civil society [Zamboni 2018].
- ³² Canzio Vandelli (1919–2012) was born in Ferrara and graduated in Foreign Languages and Literatures at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. He wrote several books of a technical-linguistic nature and translated from different languages, especially from Russian. He also published autobiographical works and original fables [Roversi 2020, e-book Kindle pos. 84–85].
- ³³ I couldn't find biographical information about this illustrator.
- ³⁴ Mary Tibaldi Chiesa (1896–1968) was a writer, translator, librettist and politician. She was especially interested in children's literature and music. She wrote novels and famous musicians' biographies, composed opera librettos and, first of all, dedicated herself to introducing the greatest masterpieces

of the world literature to young Italian readers. Indeed, she took part in the publishing project, promoting between the 1930s and 1940s the publication of the series *La scala d'oro* ("The Golden Staircase"), which contained the most famous literary works, adapted in Italian for children and teenagers [Gastaldi-Scano 1957, 191; Berardi 2012; Fava 2013, 337–338; Rebellato 2016, 43].

- ³⁵ Even though in the frontispiece and in the preface signed by Tibaldi Chiesa herself the Italian versions of Pushkin's fairy tales are defined "traduzioni" ("translations"), they are prose adaptations. This is the usual practice adopted by Tibaldi Chiesa and Italian translators in general who coped with foreign texts and wanted to publish them for children. As I will see later, the terminology in her collection of Krylov's fables is more accurate.
- ³⁶ Tibaldi Chiesa applied this translation method to children's novels and poems. On the other hand, when she translated adult's literature and opera arias and librettos, she was more faithful to the source texts: for example, she kept the verse structure in her translation of Robert Burns' Scottish songs.
- ³⁷ Natalia Kal' Bavastro (1899–1991) emigrated to Italy in the 1920s. She settled down in Milan, where she established herself as a painter. Afterwards she began her career as a writer and translator of Russian literary works into Italian and English [Piccolo-Vassena 2013b].
- ³⁸ I couldn't find biographical information about her.
- ³⁹ Club Degli Editori is a publishing house which was founded in 1960 as part of the Mondadori publishing group. It is specialized in mail order paperback books.
- ⁴⁰ I haven't found biographical information about him. However, I could assume that he is a Children's writer from the titles of some of his books, such as *La Sacra Bibbia narrata ai ragazzi* ("The Sacred Bible told to Children", 1962) and *L'orsacchiotto sciatore* ("The Skier Teddy Bear", 1966).
- ⁴¹ Roberto Sgrilli (1897–1985) was a cartoonist and a painter. He became famous for his illustrations in children's books and magazines. Moreover, he made animated short films [Bono 2003].
- ⁴² Concerning the texts of foreign authors, it is not specified whether Falzone Fontanelli himself translated them or he selected texts translated by others.
- ⁴³ The preface is signed with "gli editori" ("the publishers"), but their names are unknown.
- ⁴⁴ I couldn't consult this edition.
- ⁴⁵ I couldn't find biographical information about this illustrator.
- ⁴⁶ The Uspenskiy Convent is an Eastern-Catholic monastery which was founded in 1957 in Rome to house Russian nuns in Italy. The convent is dedicated to the Icon of the Dormition of the Holy Mother of God. The main objective of the monastery is contemplative and spiritual life in silence and solitude. Moreover, in this convent the nuns garden, translate texts from Russian and paint icons.

- ⁴⁷ It has been impossible to me to verify the accuracy of this statement. Moreover, in the text there are no bibliographical references. However, it is well known that Krylov's fables were popular also outside Russia even when the fabulist was still alive [Rarenko 2019, 24].
- ⁴⁸ Ottavio Giorgio Ugolotti (1933–2020) was a writer and publisher. In Genoa he founded the private publishing house Circolo culturale Autori Autogestiti Associati Liguri & personale, which printed several books in Italian and Genoese dialect, among which Cusmano's *La saggezza di Krylov* [O. G. Ugolotti *l'inesauribile* 2000].
- ⁴⁹ Italian living writer.
- ⁵⁰ To give just an example: in 2019 BUR publishing house reprinted a deluxe edition of Pushkin and Afanasyev's fairy tales, rewritten in Italian prose and enriched by Ivan Bilibin's illustrations, which was published for the first time in 2015.

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СУДЬБА И. А. КРЫЛОВА В ИТАЛИИ В XX ВЕКЕ: СБОРНИКИ
БАСЕН ДЛЯ ДЕТСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ

В статье рассматривается судьба русского баснописца Ивана Крылова (1769–1844) в Италии в XX в. и представляется обзор изданий переводов и переложений его басен на итальянский язык, обращается особое внимание на издания басен, предназначенные для детей. Первые переводы на итальянский язык басен Крылова появились в трёхязычном сборнике, опубликованном в 1825 г. по инициативе графа Г. В. Орлова, который хотел распространить басенное творчество своего друга в западноевропейском литературном пространстве. Однако уже со второй половины XIX в. крыловские басни в Италии были забыты. С начала XX в., когда знание русского языка и интерес к русской литературе утвердились, стало появляться все больше переводов басен Крылова на итальянский, часть которых появилась в изданиях, особо предназначенных для детей. В данной работе представляются малоисследованные материалы, обращается особое внимание на характер нескольких значимых сборников для детей. Кроме того, в статье анализируются предисловия следующих сборников: *60 favolelli* (1945 г.) и *La danza dei pesci e altri favolelli* (1966 г.) под редакцией Мэри Тибальди Кьеза, сборника *Gianni Porcospino e altre storie* (1953 г.), в который включаются 5 крыловских басен, и *Parlano gli animali*, включающего 31 басню Крылова и переведенного русскими монахинями Успенского Монастыря в Риме.

Keywords: И. А. Крылов, басня, художественный перевод, детская литература, русская литература, переводы на итальянский, рецепция басен Крылова

Nikolaj Guskov

VAMBA'S NOVEL "THE PRINCE AND HIS ANTS" IN A LITERARY CONTEXT

This article deals with the novel "The Prince and his Ants" (1893) by Luigi Bertelli (1860–1920), who wrote under the pseudonym of *Vamba*, who was one of the founders of classical Italian children's literature, and whose work is little known in Russia. The plot about the adventures of a lazy boy turned into an ant is compared with other books about insects. The pretexts of the novel are the works of Alfred Brehm, Jean Henri Fabre, Frances Hubert, Carlo Emery, popular science articles in Italian children's magazines, the novel "The Adventures of a Cricket" (1877) by Ernest Candez. Traditionally ants were portrayed either sympathetically or antipathically in the role of social and moral allegories (Bible, Virgil, Ovid, Aesop and other fabulists, Francis Bacon, and others). Vamba's innovation is that the educational, instructive and entertaining principles are inseparable from each other and are of equal importance. Although there is no direct evidence of the acquaintance of Russian writers with Vamba's novel, a comparison of the texts suggests that this is one of the possible pretexts of famous children's books about insects: "The Adventure of an little Ant" (1935) by Vitaly Bianki, "The Extraordinary Adventures of Karik and Valya" (1937) Jan Larri and "Barankin, be a (hu)man" (1962) Valery Medvedev. While differing in their views on the place of man among other animals, these texts are typologically close to Vamba's creative principles.

Keywords: Vamba, literature for children, Vitaly Bianki, Jan Larri, Valery Medvedev, animal fiction

In 1893 the popular journalist Luigi Bertelli (1860–1920), writing under the pen-name "Vamba", published the novel "Il Ciondolino" ("The Little Tail") with illustrations by the eminent artist Carlo Chiostri¹, in the Florentine publishing house of Enrico Bemporada, which brought

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together talented authors of books for young people². This was one of the turning points in Italian children's literature: in the new field, the former feuilletonist soon became an ideologist and organiser, founding a tradition that is still alive today.

The novel was highly praised by fellow writers: Vamba was congratulated by Gaetano Malenotti, editor of the famous Florentine newspaper "Fieramosca", and Vico Mantegazza, chronicler of colonial expeditions to Africa, thanked him for the fascinating book on behalf of his young son [Santa giovinezza 2008, 131–132]. The success with the public and the critics was exceptional. One of the best children's magazines published a review:

Collodi is not dead! He was resurrected even more alive, even more animated, more charming and more original than ever in that precious type of humorous writer, like Luigi Bertelli, known throughout Italy under the pseudonym of Vamba. And this Vamba, who makes everyone laugh with his hilarious "finds", the same Vamba who knows how to tell so much truth to big and little boys under the guise of a joke, has written a book for children entitled... "The Little Tail". In it, with elegant simplicity of style, with visible purity of language, and with a clearly conscious nobility of purpose, the relationships and customs of ants, bees, and other insects, whose lives are studied truly to the finest detail and reproduced with simple-minded fidelity, with unsophisticated elegance, are told. Oh, lads, buy "The Little Tail"! [Rosso 1895, 103]³

The novel was later praised and recommended by proponents of different pedagogical concepts and authoritative publications. According to "The Italian Almanac" of 1899, it is "a beautiful, but above all a good book, smoothly written, belonging to the best of what can be given to children. / A lot of scientific information is placed there under such a guise that readers are enlightened without noticing it, and on the contrary, amused" [Almanacco italiano 1899, 464]. The Biographical Dictionary of Italians describes the text as pleasant and easy to read, interesting and instructive at the same time [Barsali 1967]. Critics and literary scholars mention Vamba as a classic on a par with Collodi and De Amicis [Santa giovinezza 2008, 19–22]. The reader's appreciation of "The Little Tail" is confirmed by the fact that the 26th edition has already been published in 1953, and the last one in 2017, and judging by the discussions on the Internet, readers like the book: some had it as a child favourite and in some is had awakened a fascination for entomology.

Insects (often as allegorical characters) have long been portrayed in books read by children: fairy tales that trace back to totemic myths, natural history books, popular science books, bestiaries and instructive works. Vamba's innovation is not in the treatment of entomological subjects, but in their interpretation; in the synthesis of entertaining, educational and didactic principles. Being equal and inseparable within the text, they interacted and had formed a qualitatively new work for Italian (and largely European) children's literature of that era, unusual in its semantic versatility which distinguishes, like the originality of manner, any significant artistic work. The best children's authors, while popularising the science, were bent on entreaties and promises:

Ants are your fear and your torment. You cannot afford to lie down on the grass or lean on a tree, for they come to you on your back, penetrate your clothes, bite your hands and palms. You hate them, I know, and if you do not run away you amuse yourself by trampling them with your feet, annoying them in the ant-hills and tormenting them when they parade with their heads up, holding their prey with their claws. / Yet they are animals, if not the most graceful, then certainly the smartest in all of creation. I wish many of you, instead of exterminating them, would study their life: you would, no doubt, gain unspeakable pleasure, for the customs of these particular little beasts are curious and entertaining [Lo Zio 1892, 334].

Vamba, understanding the psychology and taste of the young reader, from the first phrase finds the tone of communication with him — both serious and humorous, trusting without ingratiating and without niceties — a rare in those days manner that ensured success:

Io dovrei cominciare, cari ragazzi, dal descrivervi la villa Almieri vista in una bella giornata di Luglio, verso le due e mezzo, quando tutta la campagna si distende, quasi desiderosa di riposo, in quella gran quiete e in quel gran silenzio che neanche le cicale, le quali sono gli insetti più sfacciati che si conoscano, s'azzardano a disturbare. Ma so, per esperienza, che le descrizioni vo6 ialtri le saltate a pié pari, sicché sarebbe una fatica buttata via: d'altra parte non vi sarà difficile, credo, immaginare una bella casa tutta bianca, con le persiane verdi, sotto le quali sporgeva un bel davanzale di pampini portati fin lassù da due grosse viti d'uva salamanna ch'erano piantate alle due estremità della facciata. <...> Già, questa in Botanica è una cosa più che provata: la vite d'uva salamanna non fa mai grappoli vicino alle finestre... quando ci stanno di casa dei ragazzi. Oh, zitti: eccoli! [Vamba 1926, 3–4]¹⁾

¹⁾"I should have started, dear children, by describing Almieri's cottage on a beautiful summer day around two and a half in the afternoon, when the whole village sleeps so peacefully and soundly that not even the most unscrupulous of insects — the grasshop-

The action begins with two brothers and a sister suffering in a cottage garden, learning lessons at their mother's insistence. The girl dreams of getting rid of her lessons by turning into a butterfly, her older brother into a grasshopper, and the younger one, Gigino (short for Luigi, the author's own name), nicknamed Little Tail because he always has a piece of his shirt peeking out from behind, into an ant, "tutte in fila e che non fanno altro che far passeggiate dalla mattina alla sera"²⁾ [Ibid, 8]. His wish is suddenly fulfilled by a wizard who has overheard the children.

Such transformations in literature have served as a means of punishment, enlightenment or magical assistance to the hero (the Russian reader will remember Prince Gvidon's transformations into a mosquito, a bumblebee and a fly). Ants and bees are especially often likened to humans. Among the pretexts familiar to Vamba are verses 624–658 of Ovid's seventh song of the "Transformations", where, after a prayer by King Aeacus, whose people had died of a plague, the gods, having humanised the ants, created Myrmidons (from the Greek for "ants"), and especially Aesop's Fable, where a character is punished for greed, not for sloth, as Little Tail:

The ant, or pismire, was formerly a husbandman that secretly filch'd away his neighbour's goods and corn and stor'd all up in his own barn. He drew a general curse upon his head for't, and Jupiter, as a punishment, and for the credit of mankind, turn'd him into a pismire; but this change of shape wrought no alteration, either of mind or of manners; for he keeps the same humour and nature to this very day. The fable shows: who is naturally wicked, no punishment can fix him [Fables of Aesop 1968, 112].

The motif of transformation in Vamba is introduced both to punish the hero and to educate him, and most importantly, to playfully defamiliarise the hero with reality. The setting, which makes no stress on plausibility, is contingent not only on its fantasy, but also on the exaggerated naivety of the hero: it is difficult to imagine a boy who is studying Latin grammar and knows the fable "The Dragonfly and the Ant" and lives in the countryside, but is so unobservant and ignorant that he is genuinely convinced of the absolute indolence of ants. Having acquired the appearance and partly the instincts of an insect, he retains his human

pers — dare to break the silence. But I know from experience that you'll just skip over the description, and I don't want to labour in vain. So imagine a white house with green shutters, with lush vines curling underneath from two trunks planted on the sides of the front. <...> But every botanist knows that grapes do not grow under the windows of houses with children. Hush! There they are!"

²⁾"...because the ant does nothing and wanders around from morning till night"

consciousness, the memory of the past, the beliefs and prejudices already nurtured in him, the ability to move on two legs and even the little “tail”, which almost condemned Gigino to death as an “alien”, but then became a talisman, the only link with his former life. The author plays with the reader, shifting the point of view on the depicted, and the situation of the hero, without losing the drama, is perceived with humour, without doom, and the admonition does not intimidate, but captivates, providing useful information in passing.

Insects, although they talk, are not shown anthropomorphically, as in fables and fairy tales. Vamba tries to maintain a life-like character, leaning on works on zoology (most probably, on Alfred Brehm’s “Animal Life” [Brehm 1873, 229–236], on “Ants” (1880) and other studies by Carlo Emery, Jean Henri Fabre, on “Investigations on the manners of ants in our country” (1810) by Frances Huber, on popular essays, which were often published in Italian children’s magazines [Puydt 1876; Mancini 1884]⁴. The image of the protagonist is ambiguous: his attributes, natural to the ant, are presented from a human point of view, which he himself partly shares, so it is ironically perceived, for example, that that Little Tail expressed amazement “con sessanta punti interrogativi per ciascun occhio composto, e tre punti ammirativi nei tre occhi semplici davanti”³) [Vamba 1926, 26], or how he assesses his surroundings based on his poor cultural experience. When the human and the ant are equated, it seems incongruous, especially with the epic rise of style, amusing zeugmas arise: “Armato delle sue *tanaglie e di pazienza (italics mine — N.G.)*, si appostò al buco e aspettò”⁴) [Ibid, 106].

Being part of civilisation both hinders and helps among the insects. In triumphing over them, the hero effectively operates with concepts unknown to them, as in the scene where Gigino wrestles a bee and, depriving it of its sting, remarks that “Lei non ha il porto d’arme!”⁵) [Ibid, 106]. Situations where the ant and the human are paradoxically inseparable are particularly comical: the reader cannot tell whether the speech before him is reported or the author’s, as in the episode where the wasp is described as a killer on one side and an elegant beauty, with golden wings and slender legs on the other [Ibid, 82].

Vamba’s humorous manner marks the specificity of the two kingdoms, human and animal, exposing their advantages and disadvantages

³)“...with all one hundred and twenty compound eyes and admiration with three simple ones”

⁴)“Armed with *patience and jaws*, he waited. The sun was inclining towards the west, but he, true to his word, waited for the enemy, hoping to take him by surprise”.

⁵)“...it has no right to bear arms”

in juxtaposition and contributing to the formation of moral and social values. "The Little Tail" is collectively a fairy tale, a popular science book and a nurturing novel. Gigino evolves, parting with his former position in life, growing up. The empathetic reader is expected to go through a similar process of identity formation.

The first phase of development — the initiation into the new condition and environment — the boy who has emerged from the cocoon had quickly mastered. Having gained an initial knowledge of his anatomy, he observes the queen ant and the processes of egg development in insects; he is present during the earthworm hunt and the delivery of the prey to the ant-hill, and he familiarizes himself with the structure of the latter. This is where the parallels between insects and humans are particularly frequent.

The ability to see in all directions with 123 eyes and some other properties of ants seemed like a bargain: "Non ci manca altro che averci uno spazzolino per i denti, un fazzoletto da naso e una boccetta di benzina per levar le frittelle dal vestito!" [Ibid, 45]⁶. The protagonist is also impressed by ants' cleverness, persistence, industriousness, kindness and courage, extolled in classical texts (such as familiar to Vamba verses 402–407 of Vergil's Aeneid IV and plots going back to Aesop, where an ant is contrasted with a lazy bug, cicada or dragonfly, a vain, fussy fly). Little Tail in practice becomes convinced of the validity of the textbook allegories by encountering the division of labour in ants, which have "nannies, diggers, engineers, soldiers, masons, architects, shepherds" and even cows. A number of virtues are even more developed than in humans: "How new, insects, it turns out, share their surplus with their fellows. And humans?" [Ibid, 52]⁷.

Unfortunate surprises also arose. The ants are obliged to attend classes, though not in Latin. In addition, the hero in his new state has lost his gender, which terrifies him. However, after learning about the unenviable fate of ants capable of mating, Gigino is reconciled: it is explained to him that the ants of the middle gender are the real masters of the ant-hill, who have not only to work, but also to fight [Ibid, 33].

The expansion of entomological knowledge over the course of the action debunks the myth of man as the pinnacle of creation: he is physically imperfect compared to even primitive and defenceless creatures, often cruel, unreasonable, unjust, violates the immutable laws of nature,

⁶"How many different things we have on the ends of our legs. What's missing are a toothbrush and some petrol to remove stains"

⁷This phrase doesn't appear in the original Italian text.

instinctively observed by all living things, and has no right to despise anyone, much less to judge by his own rules. “Che se l’uomo, questo grosso animale, potesse comprendere che tesoro di costruzione e di vitalità si nasconde negli animalucci piccini come me, porrebbe certo certo più attenzione nel camminare per non schiacciarli”⁸⁾ [Ibid, 114]. Wamba draws a sympathetically ironic picture of the naive character’s empirical embrace of natural morality: Gigino is disgusted by the deadly battles of the ants, exclaiming “heathen customs!”, and the author gently remarks that the boy is apparently not yet aware that “...egli era vissuto tra gli uomini in un’età in cui non poteva ancora sapere come anche in quella società possa accadere che due persone della stessa specie vadano a infilzarsi la pancia per questioni molto più piccole di quelle che armano le api l’una contro l’altra, e spesso magari per una gomitata o pera pestata di piede”⁹⁾ [Ibid, 152]. The naturalist’s observations awaken the young hero’s conscience.

The next stage of his development is to try to assert himself in his new community; through cunning during a war with predatory red ants, he gained an honorary title, but in pursuit of his enemies, he left his own ant-hill undefended and it was invaded. Nearly all the inhabitants perished in front of the shocked hero, and the few survivors, to his indignation, submitted to the invaders. Little Tail’s remorse can no longer change anything. He himself was saved from reprisal by a wasp’s sudden attack on the ant hill, which failed to penetrate the armor made of a hemp seed. Moreover, the hero reminded the wasp of a fact he had accidentally known: both belong to the group of Hymenoptera. The relatives have made peace.

The image of the hero in chapters VIII-XVI goes back to texts about the boastful and ambitious ant — an allegory of self-love: compare the fables “The Ant and the Grain” by Ivan Chemnitzer, “The Ant” by Ivan Krylov, “The Ant” by Charles Villeux. “The ant is a wise creature in itself, but in the garden or vegetable garden it is harmful. In the same way, people who are too selfish are detrimental to society. Choose the sensible middle ground between self-love and public duty; be true to yourself enough not to be treacherous towards others, especially the sovereign and the country. One’s own person is a miserable goal for human aspirations and entirely mundane” [Bacon 1972, 403]. This reasoning of Francis Bacon anticipates the ideological programme of

⁸⁾“Eh, human! If you knew even anything about us, you would walk about more carefully, lest you crush insects that are smarter than you”

⁹⁾“...even men sometimes engage in bloody duels because of an empty conceit, because of a nudge with an elbow, because of an ill-considered word”

Vamba, who sympathises with Little Tail while he is animated by the thirst for adventure inherent in youth: Little Tail imagines sea battles, where he finds himself victorious, walking "sulla coperta" ("on deck")—the back of the bugaboo, crossing the puddle [Vamba 1926, 97]. The lust for power and honour is caricatured in the spirit of the satires that made Vamba famous against political adventurers and careerists who are self-satisfied with their greatness and do not care about the common good. Such is Gigino, addressing the army with a speech in the spirit of militaristic rhetoric and shamelessly proclaiming himself a great general [Ibid, 72]. By denouncing egocentrism, vanity, and power, and expressing democratic sympathies, the writer also strives for civic education of his reader. As a leitmotif, Bonapartist allusions are sarcastically introduced: Gigino is compared to Napoleon, his solitude is that of Napoleon on the island of St. Helena [Ibid, 68, 87].

The third stage consists of wanders and trials, and gaining experience and knowledge. The disaster he has undergone develops a sense of responsibility for his actions and for the fate of his neighbours. Gigino is far from being ideal, but his humanity (in the lofty sense of the word) becomes increasingly apparent, and he sometimes manages to combine the advantages of the human mind and the ant's physiology in a harmonious way.

Little Tail has longed for his mother before, but when he loses his shelter he decides to reach his human home at any cost, without thinking about the consequences of returning there as an ant. His inner evolution compensates for the absurdity of the idea. With touching recklessness ("Io non so se a una formica sia possibile nuotare; ma che m'importa? Io raggiungerò la mia mamma o affogherò pensando a lei!"¹⁰) [Ibid, 96]) the hero twice embarks on a perilous journey (having reached the vestibule the first time, he is accidentally carried outside on Uncle Thomas's hat). Gigino is accompanied by two miraculously rescued admirers: two ants called "Big Head" and "Death to Enemies". Along the way, the hero acquires information about hostile and friendly insects and plants, and performs a number of feats: he saves a cricket from a wasp; drives out a mason bee that has taken over a neighbour's nest; helps bees defeat the Death's Head moth, a butterfly that ruins a hive, whose life he then studies, being a guest of the grateful swarm.

Social insects have traditionally been set as a model for people (recall Book IV of Virgil's "Georgics"). The apostle Paul, affirming

¹⁰"I don't even know if ants can swim. All the same! Either see my mother or perish in the watery abyss"

“The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat” [2 Thess. 3:10], was referring to King Solomon: “Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest” [Proverbs 6:6–8]⁵. It is true that during the Enlightenment era it was common to contrast humans and social insects: “Les hommes ne sont point faits pour être entassés en fourmilières, mais épars sur la terre qu’ils doivent cultiver”¹¹) [Rousseau 1912, 35]. If analogies were drawn, the beehive and the ant-hill appeared as an allegory of social vices and religious prejudices, as in B. de Mandeville’s “Fable of the Bees” (1714) and Feodor Dmitriev-Mamonov’s “The Nobleman Philosopher” (1796). The boom of natural science and collectivist theories in the 19th century actualised the apologetic interpretation of natural communities. Lev Tolstoy noted on September 13, 1890:

What if everything... was done together and shared. It wouldn’t seem difficult: bees and ants and beavers do it. But it is very difficult. Man is very far away from this, precisely because he is a rational, conscious being. <...> A man before the community of bees and ants has yet to consciously reach the cattle; from which he is still so far away: not to fight (battle) over wages, not to glutton, not to fornicate, and then one has to consciously reach bees and ants, as it begins in communities [Tolstoy 1984, 441].

The writer recalled his childhood games of “ant fraternity”, embodying his first utopian dreams [Tolstoy 1964, 466–467].

For example, in the Italian press the problem of the naturalness of celibacy [Osservazioni 1852] was discussed on the basis of entomological material. In the anonymous essay for children “Danniki”, the description of an ant hill is an occasion to raise most pressing social problems:

...insects fight only when they have to do so, but do not know the feeling of triumph for the mere pleasure of triumph. We are far ahead in all such things; we are creatures of refinement, and the influence of our vast civilisation is felt in everything — in peace and in war. We fight not only when others force us to do so, but we fight for glory, for the honour of the banner, for the pleasure of victory, and often, moreover, chronicles say, we take arms without knowing, without asking why [I tributari 1881, 152; see also Rizzatti 1886].

¹¹)“Humans are not created to huddle together in ant-hills, but to live scattered over the land they have to cultivate”

Vamba, an active member of the social movement, expressed his credo in the words of the hero's mother: "...e ricordati che ogni persona che lavora dev'essere sacra... specialmente poi per chi non fa nulla come te!"¹²⁾ [Vamba 1926, 170]. The hive and the ant-hill are therefore represented in utopian terms. Here Little Tail comprehends the basics of social justice. However, the ants are forced to leave the hive, where the population and power have been renewed after the swarming.

At the end of the book, Gigino meets his sister, who has also been turned into a butterfly by her wish. The sister formulates the author's moral by saying that Gigino, who wanted to turn into an ant because of laziness, was forced to become an ant-worker, and she herself, who dreamed of becoming a butterfly because of vanity, has become a caterpillar-moth and is forced to "measure the earth" "misurare" all the time, i.e. to study the hated geometry [Ibid, 173]. She recognises her brother by his "little tail", and she gives herself away by her literacy: in the naturalist's notebook the sketches of the caterpillar's successive positions add up to the word "stupido" ("fool") — in front of Gigino. On the heroine's promise to tell her adventures, the narrative breaks off. The writer has not created a sequel; the ending remains open: it is not known whether the children were able to regain their human form.

Although the author makes no secret of his didactic aims, it is impossible to predict the course of the story until the very end, so the reader's interest is sustained and attention is constantly sharpened. The insect kingdom is presented both as reserved, understood only by a scientist, and as the embodiment of recognisable common places of culture, and in both manifestations it is ambiguous. The playful nature of the narrative makes ample use of entomological topics. Its contradictory nature contributes to the productivity of the reception. Mikhail Gasparov showed that no qualities are assigned to allegorical characters (in different fables one and the same animal can be endowed with opposite traits), and gave an example of ants from the above-mentioned fables [Fables of Aesop 1968, 263]⁶⁾. The ant has often acted as an illustrative argument for relativists. Traditionally it is a symbol of nothingness: "...if a man meditate much upon the universal frame of nature, the earth with men upon it (the divinity of souls excepted) will not seem much different than an ant-hill, whereas some ants carry corn, and some carry their young, and some go empty, and all to and fro a little heap of dust" [Bacon 1971, 140]. The city mouse in the fable of Aesop and his followers,

¹²⁾"Human labour is sacred. Remember this for life. Sacred is the work of all who live on earth."

describing the wretchedness of the existence of the country mouse, does not find a more humiliating comparison than with the ant. However, the well-known scholastic problem: who is stronger and smarter — a horse or an ant — reveals that the last is capable to lift weight, many times exceeding its own, and to carry it for a long time, supporting it by paws, therefore it is the ant that man should imitate on his road to Calvary [Nigrelli 1710, 158–159]. Going back to Aesop, the fable plots about the ant and the dove helping each other, and about the unwise man who grumbled at the destruction of the ship with swimmers, but crushed hundreds of insects for an ant's sting, illustrate the classical topic “the small is a manifestation of the great”, “the insignificant hides an advantage.” Vamba's novel is prefaced with the epigraph: “Ho pensato, bambini, di farvi vedere molte cose grandi negli esseri piccoli... Più tardi, nel mondo, vedrete molte cose piccole negli esseri grandi”¹³ [Vamba 1953, 4]. Little Tail and with him the reader become convinced: nothing should be judged by looks and habitual opinions. Personal experience is the best adviser, and Gigino in the guise of an ant learns a lot of things that, as a boy, he had no idea about [Ibid, 123]. Similar principle of education was portrayed by Hector Malo in “The Adventures of Romain Calbri” (1869): Mr. Bigorel, not wishing to bring up a baron, lawyer or notary, but simply a good man, makes the boy watch the ant-hill and look into the relations of insects, then draws social and political parallels, reinforcing them by his personal experience during Napoleon's campaign in Prussia, and tells the boy to read the work of the entomologist Hubert as a proof [Malo 1959, 43–46]. With Vamba the young observer of the world of small creatures (by the way, Bacon likened the scientist-empiricist exactly to an ant [Bacon 1972, 58]), becomes familiar with the complexity of universal life problems, grasps the relativity of stable ideas about the surrounding reality and at the end of the way is able to judge about it sharply and sensibly, in a spirit of high true humanism.

Outside Italy “The Little Tail” attracted attention after the death of the author [Santa giovinezza 2008, 20]⁷ and was translated by Countess de Gemcé in French — “Gigi parmi les insectes” [Vamba 1922], by Helena Grotowska in Polish — “Cesarz mrówek” [Vamba 1924], by S. F. Woodruff in English — “The sovereign⁸ and his ants” [Vamba 1937], by C. de Castro in Spanish — “Pingajillo, el Muchacho que se volvió hormiga” [Vamba 1943]. The titles emphasize which aspect of the book was brought to the fore: popular science, political or fantasy.

¹³“I thought, children, to show you many great things in small creatures... Later, in the world, you will see many small things in creatures large”

Many of the book's meanings were actualized precisely by the 1920s. It was only the terrible experience of the gas attacks that made us realize the unscrupulousness of the alliance with the bombardier beetles that destroyed an entire army, and appreciate the author's remark: "Gigino voleva replicare: — O se anche gli stessi uomini ammettono in caso di guerra le alleanze tra popoli di diversi ordini e di nature diverse! — Ma si avvide subito che l'esempio dei costumi umani sulle formiche non avrebbe fatto né caldo né freddo"¹⁴⁾ [Vamba 1926, 79]. After the revolutions and the world war, the ant-teacher's calls for peace and unity resounded in a new way:

Forse verrà giorno in cui tutte le formiche del mondo riconoscendo i loro antichi errori e meglio intendendo i loro interessi e la loro missione, uniranno le loro forze, e sparite le assurde inimicizie, diverranno il primo popolo fra gli insetti¹⁵⁾ [Ibid, 53].

– Formiche! Con questo nome, prima di morire, io intendo rivolgermi a tutte le formiche del mondo, di qualunque razza esse sieno. E a tutte io dico: fino a quando dureranno queste stolte lotte tra popoli che la natura ha creato fratelli? Non avete forse abbastanza nemici da combattere tra gli insetti d'altri ordini e perfino tra gli uccelli? Perché vorrete distruggervi tra voi, invece di unire le vostre forze, voi che nei vostri interni ordinamenti civili rappresentate tra gli insetti tutti la grande forza dell'ingegno e del lavoro? Unitevi, o formiche! È l'ultimo grido di un moribondo, il quale ha vissuto abbastanza, e vi lascia per sempre chiamandovi col dolce nome di sorelle, e inviando a tutte voi una parola di pace e di perdono!¹⁶⁾ [Ibid, 76].

Allusions to the swarming bees, which referred to the drama of emigration, were also perceived more sharply than 30 years earlier: "Gigino si ricordava... <...> ...di Stato che moveva uno sciame ad abbandonare l'arnia natia. La popolazione, with le nuove nascite, era via via cresciuta, anzi raddoppiata addirittura; l'alveare era ormai tanto angusto, da non poter contenere tante migliaia di individui... <...> Ed ecco la vecchia Regina, la provvida fondatrice della città, l'antica madre de tutto quel

¹⁴⁾"Gigino wanted to say: 'How are people not shy in the ways of killing in war?', but realised that ants don't care about people"

¹⁵⁾Now we are all hostile and condemn to death any foreign ant that wanders in. But who knows, maybe the day will come when ants, realising their mistakes, will unite and be the strongest people among the insects

¹⁶⁾Before I die, I turn to the ants of the world and ask: Brothers, how long will wars last between you? Don't you have enough other enemies? Insects, birds? Why do you still fight among yourselves, exhausting your strength! Why do you waste them, instead of joining together in common useful work! He who is dying asks you, sisters and brothers, to live in peace!

popolo, dare la suprema prova di tutto il suo amore e di tutta la sua tenerezza per quel popolo e per quella città ch'ella stessa aveva creato. Ella dà il nobile esempio alle giovanii madri che nasceranno, ella si muove per la prima, ella per prima olontariamente si distacca da tutto ciò ha amato, e in uno slancio di sacrifice sublime si esilia dalla patria per salvarla e va a fondare alta colonia"¹⁷⁾ [Ibid, 150–151]. It was not by chance that the Russian translation (under a neutral title close to the original) appeared in the “Smena vekh” milieu⁹⁾: it was done by Nina Petrovskaya, who lived in Rome and was preparing an anthology of contemporary Italian prose, and edited by Aleksey Tolstoy. The book was published in the State Publishing house (series “For youth”) in 1926 with edition of 7000 copies, and was also published in Belarusian [Vamba 1929]. Advertising announcements were printed: “Which of the children, who have been in the village or simply travelled out of town, has not come across annoying little insects — ants. But who among the boys is well acquainted with the life led by these curious toilers? Probably very few. In the story ‘The Little Tail’ you will find a very curious and fascinating description of all ant life” [What to Read 1926, 15]. Mikhail Gershenzon, a graduate and collaborator of the Bryusov Institute, later a well-known children’s prose writer and translator, posted a review in “The Press and the Revolution”:

Fabre, clothed in a highly artistic form; the life of insects, where the reader with unflagging interest follows the adventures of the little boy hero, turned into an ant; where the reader himself, in the fascination, almost turns into an ant, to experience all its joys and anxieties — a book like this is unheard of in children’s literature. The transformation into an ant. Fiction! Fictions that litter children’s brains, taking them away from life, replacing a slice of bread with the glitter of fairy wings! No, here fantasy is far less malevolent and dangerous. There is no shadow of danger here. The author himself every now and then winks at the reader and winks at his character’s transformations. <...> Meanwhile the reader anxiously considers how to drag the earthworm into the ant-hill, miraculously escapes from the dreaded wasp, gains a most intimate acquaintance with the beetle, the bumblebee, the bees, the death’s head moth, and many other winged and wingless strangers. He swallows 170 pages of pure entomology and eagerly awaits the author’s promised sequel to the book. The translation is masterfully done [Gershenzon 1926, 216–217].

¹⁷⁾“Gigino... <...> ...understood why two swarms had left the hive. Its population had doubled, it could no longer fit there. <...> The old queen sacrificed herself and saved the people by leaving her homeland forever”

In the 1920s, "The Little Tail" suited everyone from defenders of animism, fiction and adventure to advocates of popular science editions that instil collective work, but later in Russia, strangely enough, it was neither reprinted nor mentioned, nor was its author's name, which speaks little even to philologists, including after the 2015 publication of Vamba's most famous novel, "Dnevnik Gianni Uragani" ("Il giornalino di Gian Burrasca"). It is possible, however, that "The Little Tail" has left its mark on our children's literature, as it evokes a number of associations with texts that are familiar to the Russian reader.

In his creative style, Vamba resembles Vitaly Bianki. It is not known whether "The Little Tail" is mentioned in his extensive archive, but it is hard to assume that this work would not have attracted attention of someone from the like-minded family of zoologists. The writer's father Valentin Lvovich, Director of the Zoological Museum, was apparently proficient in Italian, which was, if not a native, then a familiar language to his mother, an opera singer who lived in Europe. The scientist successfully inculcated a love of the natural sciences in his sons, including through his fiction, among which might have been a novel that was then sensational in Italy. Vitaly Bianki's diary says that his elder brother Lev Bianki (1884–1936), an entomologist, fascinated by this science since his childhood, helped him when working on "The Adventures of a Little Ant" (1935): "I am beating about the 'insect book'. Nothing works. I went to talk to Lev (...later Vitaly Bianki regretted that he did not dedicate this thing to him.) Then it went swimmingly" [Bianki 1972, 389]. When the translation of "The Little Tail" came out, Bianki was already composing for children and might have been interested in a new "insect" book.

In reflecting on the success of "The Little Forest Houses" (about a swallow looking for its home), the writer decided that the reason was "the great cosiness: all the little houses, and one is better than the other, cosier. The *little* hero is still 'silly', not knowing anything in the big world, poking his nose in everything, — just like the readers (listeners) themselves. <...> Actually, almost on the same theme I have 'The Adventures of a Little Ant', 'Mousey Peek' — too" [Bianki 1972, 387]. Didn't the book give the writer an idea of the plot: an "odyssey" of a naive character and a passing acquaintance with the inhabitants and laws of the animal kingdom? Other authors, such as Seton-Thompson, have similar situations, but animalists of the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries avoided anthropomorphism; instinct does not draw heroes (except cats, pigeons, etc.) to their native havens. The professional zoologist Bianki willingly allows, as well as Vamba, those fairy-tale

motives which do not distort the natural essence, but make the narration more fascinating: animals talk, make alliances against enemies, provide each other with lodging and transport services; their dwellings, similar to a human house, protect from the hostile world, create comfort, even correspond to aesthetic tastes of inhabitants. In “The Little Tail”, the theme of home is one of the key ones: the attachment to it, the desire to return is inherent in the hero (like in the swallow and in the ant) not out of anthropomorphism, but because for both writers the concept of home is a necessary condition for normal life of any creature, so Gigino sadly sighs about his homelessness as he passes the wasp’s nest, while the bee that meets him wonders how it is possible that a living being has no home [Ibid, 87, 134].

Both of Bianca’s works about ants are based on motifs of wandering and returning home, and contain echoes of Vamba’s novel. In “The Adventures of a Little Ant”, the protagonist crosses a river on a water bug, Gigino swims across a puddle on a floating beetle, intimidating it with the power of his jaws; Bianca’s character also threatens to bite those who carry him badly. In the posthumously published story “The Ant and the Dragonfly” (1957), the hero sees bees chasing a death’s head moth; Little Tail himself takes part in the battle with it.

Apart from Vamba, Bianki as a creator of scientifically accurate “insect books” had few predecessors (mammals and birds were usually depicted in this way), but there were common, most probably familiar to both writers, potential antecedents: of fiction, the best known is a popular at one time novel by the Belgian entomologist Ernst Candez “The Adventures of the Cricket” (1877), translated both into Italian (Milan, 1879) and into Russian (St. Petersburg, 1885)¹⁰.

Even more than Bianki, the Russian reader of Vamba is reminded of Jan Larri, a postgraduate biologist, who, on the recommendation of his supervisor, the eminent zoologist and geographer Lev Berg, composed the entomological novel “The Extraordinary Adventures of Karik and Valya” (1937) commissioned by Samuil Marshak. It is unlikely that when they were discussing book plans with the wordy customer, they did not touch upon “The Little Tail”, whose translation came out when Marshak was already the head of the children’s department at Gosizdat. At the time, Larri himself, who had printed the first children’s books in Ukraine, had just arrived in Leningrad, become a journalist and could pay attention to a literary novelty.

Unlike Gigino, Karik, Valya and the professor who rescues them retain their human form, but are very much diminished (a motif known from the works of Jonathan Swift, Lewis Carroll, Selma Lagerlöf,

Antony Pogorelsky, Vladimir Odoevsky and others. The best known of these stories is "Doktor Muchołapski: fantastyczne przygody w świecie owadów" (1890, Russian translation — 1899) by the Polish scientist and author Erasm Majewski, with a number of coincidences in the direct artistic context. In the 1920s and '30s, under the influence of Welles and Einstein, the arbitrary transformation of the dimensions of the subject and his environment attracted not only children's authors, and it is only natural that Larri, always interested in fantasy, should turn to current themes. In his novel, as in Vamba's, reduction is neither an abstract scientific-philosophical experiment nor an entertainment device in itself, but above all a means of immersing naive characters in an otherwise inaccessible environment, necessary both for their punishment (for careless pranks), for moral education, and for objective comprehension of reality, acquiring a scientific picture of the world. The latter function clearly predominates in Larri's novel:

Karik stood up and pulled on his forget-me-not shirt. — Ivan Hermogovich... if you want to give each of us a good slap, please feel free. We are ready to pay for our behaviour... We shouldn't have touched anything in your office, of course, but you see... That's the way it happened! <...> <...> The professor waved his hand good-naturedly: <...> You've been punished for disobedience already <...> You've seen a lot these days, but truth be told, you've only looked into one of the tiny corners of the small world. You've only read a few lines from a thick book called Nature. And those lines, I would say, are far from the most interesting. There are other pages in the book of Nature that are simply impossible to tear yourself away from [Larri 2021, 191, 357].

Larri is close to Vamba in dismissing entomological material for the sake of popularizing it in the form of an adventurous narrative, including comic, dramatic and scary episodes, a playful, humorous presentation of serious information. Bianca, though a zoologist, started from humanistic principles, but accepted the laws of the animal kingdom as an unfortunate inevitability. Both Vamba and Larri are humanists, but portray human society and the animal world as parallel and equivalent forms of being, each with its own advantages and disadvantages, and humanity must learn from other creatures in order to improve itself. Of course, Larri's approach, as he was an employee of the Fish-Breeding Institute, is more utilitarian: "You've only seen a tiny slice of the world next to us so far... <...> we often don't pay attention to it. We do not know it well enough. Yet it is an important part of the larger world in which we live. Its life is firmly connected to our life ... At least, much more firmly than many

people think. In this small world, there are our friends and there are our enemies. Both of which we need to know” [Larri 2021, 357].

Larri devoted to ants only a part of chapter IX, where he unexpectedly touched on social problems, poetising, like Vamba, the well-organised peaceful labour of black ants and condemning the invading war and violence (in the guise of red ants) against the weak. It is not by accident that children, driven by noble indignation, recklessly engage in unequal combat.

The novel “Barankin, Be A Human!” by Valery Medvedev is also close in plot to “The Little Tail” (1962)¹¹: two D-students, in order to get rid of the need to study, turn into animals, imagining their life carefree. The author uses the traditional symbolism of the number three, only Vamba has three characters transformed into different insects, and here both characters undergo three identical transformations. Two of the creatures the lazy schoolboys turned into are the same — a butterfly and an ant; first transformation, described by Medvedev, is not into a grasshopper (never described by Vamba), but into a sparrow.

Barankin and Malinin, like Gigino, are convinced of the discrepancy between reality and their ideas and, to their surprise, are also forced to learn, work, fight, get food and shelter, flee danger, acquiring scientific knowledge through their own experience: “Nina Nikolayevna will tell me: ‘Yura Barankin! You know the life of butterflies very well... When you were answering, it even seemed to me that you grew wings behind your back!...’. After these words the whole class will roll round laughing, and only Kostya and I will not smile, and will sit at the desk all serious” [Medvedev 1965, 141–142]; Medvedev’s metamorphosed characters retain, like Little Tail, the features of their individual appearances: “And Kostya opened his blue, like a girl’s, eyes... A sparrow with blue eyes! Great! <...> — Yur-chee-chee-chee-cheek! — he said. — You’ve turned into a sparrow, but your beak is still snub-nosed. Mir-ir-iracle!”; “The blue-eyed ant laughed, wiggled his whiskers and tapped the dark-eyed ant on the shoulder with his paw” [Medvedev 1965, 32–33; 97]; habits and inclinations: “It is very cool that an ant has six paws — I thought, — it is convenient to play football. Especially to hit the goal with all six paws. It is also convenient to stand in goal: you stand on two paws and catch the ball with four of them...” [Medvedev 1965, 101].

Like Vamba and Larri, Medvedev has created a novel of education, but the formation of personality here occurs through overcoming, rather than assimilating, all the experiences of the animal kingdom. This ideological divergence (if not a polemic with an Italian book, which the writer may have known as a child) is particularly noticeable against the back-

ground of the enumerated interchanges. Lev Kassil accurately expressed his humanistic pathos to the utmost, titling the preface to Medvedev's novel: "How good it is that we are human beings!" [Medvedev 1965, 3]. The heroes need to be among the birds and insects (where they still evaluate everything from the point of view of humans) not so much to expand their knowledge, but to realize the greatness of Man and unlock their almost unlimited potential. This is the path to re-education and self-improvement. However misguided human beings may be, they have nothing to learn from other beings: the attempt to change one's nature leads not to happiness but to disaster. It is unacceptable to give up a better lot and a higher destiny — to give up being human. This is why the boys, unlike Gigino, Karik and Valya, are unable to assimilate into an alien environment. The most praiseworthy characteristics of animals (from the ability to fly to industriousness) are only instincts. But humans are endowed with a will that works wonders: the boys are transformed without outside magic — through a passionate effort of will. Their return to being humans is available to them at any moment, and this noticeably weakens the didacticism of the narrative. The characters' actions are more akin to a cautionary creative experiment than to unwitting self-punishment.

The most indicative is the part devoted to ants, whose life did not attract the characters, who are quite inquisitive, despite their laziness and ignorance: instead of lessons they are busy with fantastic inventions, they read serious, addressed not only to children popular science literature, like the book about ants "Crossed Antennas Password" (1962) by Iosif Khalifman [Medvedev 1965, 106], so they know, unlike Little Tail, about the work instinct and collectivism of ants, and turn into them, saving their lives and finding no alternative. The boys are convinced (and with good reason) that they will be able to overcome the insects' inherent instincts. The misfortune that befalls them comes from without: no environment will tolerate those who resist its established order, and a slacker in an ant-hill is doomed to a shameful execution or to a sacrificial death in a confrontation with the enemy. Soviet children are capable of self-sacrifice, unlike Little Tail, who fought for glory and only came to altruism at the cost of his losses: "Kostya was not very brave in life, and no instinct could make him get into a fight. But this time a HUMAN has spoken in Kostya; after all in every person a human being should rise, if in front of him the big ones start to unfairly offend the small ones, and especially such nice and real workers, as the black-bellied ants were" [Medvedev 1965, 121]. The salvation of the heroes is not a reason to doubt the greatness of the feat and contrast it with the instinct of self-

preservation as a natural impulse, but it is the evidence that Barankin and Malinin are ready to carry out their intended purpose among the people, where their true place is.

Thus, although there is no information about Vamba's direct influence on Soviet prose, writers' familiarity with his novel is not excluded, and "The Little Tail" should be considered one of the probable potential pretexts for a number of books about insects. Even more important are the typological similarities noted above. They point to the similarity between the creative attitudes of the school of Italian literature for young people which developed around Vamba, above all in "The Sunday paper" (*Giornalino della domenica*, 1906–1911, 1918–1927) [Santa giovinezza 2008, 22–45; Faeti 2011, 238–258] and the children's literature which developed in Russia in the 1920s–1930s.

Translated by Yana Timkova

Notes

- ¹ See about him: [Faeti 2011, 60–71].
- ² The year 1895 is usually mistakenly cited, but this is refuted by documentary material [Santa giovinezza 2008, 19–20, 131–132].
- ³ *Marinella del Rosso* is the pen name of the popular Italian children writer Ida Baccini (1850–1911).
- ⁴ The reference to the influence of Maeterlinck's books [Santa giovinezza 2008, 20] is erroneous, as they were written later: *Life of Bees* in 1901, *Life of Termites* in 1922, *Life of Ants* in 1830.
- ⁵ There is another translation that mentions a bee instead of an ant [Or, go to the bee and learn how diligent she is and how seriously she does her work — her products kings and private persons use for health — she is desired and respected by all — though feeble in body, by honoring wisdom she obtains distinction].
- ⁶ The reasons for the dual treatment were explained by Gottfried Keller in his monograph "The Ancient World of Animals" (Leipzig, 1913): "Despite the wonder aroused by their merits, above all their intelligence and diligence, ants were severely persecuted by man. They devoured everything the farmer did, no grain was safe from them either in the field or on the threshing floor" [Cited from: *Fables of Aesop* 1968, 290].
- ⁷ Although the influence of Vamba's novel on the famous Czech writer and artist Ondřej Sekora's cycle of the ant *Ferda* with its entirely anthropomorphic characters (begun in 1936) cannot be ruled out, it is unlikely to have been significant.
- ⁸ The title 'prince' refers to the title of Machiavelli's famous treatise "Il principe" ("Prince").

- ⁹ "Smena vekh" is an ideological and political movement that emerged in the ranks of the Russian emigration in the 1920s. Its representatives advocated reconciliation and collaboration with Soviet Russia. The movement was named after a collection of articles entitled "Smena vekh" (The Change of Milestones) (Prague, 1921).
- ¹⁰ Bianca also had domestic pretexts, the best known being Vladimir Odoevsky's "Anecdotes of Ants" (1835), Vasilii Avenarius's "The Tale of the Shaggy Bee" (1879) and "The Tale of the Mighty Ant" (1885), "Amazing Adventures of an Ant" (1894) by Feodor Skvortsov, "The Adventures of the Red Ant" (1930) by Grigory Bruk, and a Ukrainian story, "The Amazing Adventures of Ant Sangvin, Told by Himself" ("Дивні пригоди комахи Сагвіна", 1901) by Gnat Hotkevich, whose translation was published in 1902 by the "Children's Reading" magazine.
- ¹¹ An animated film, based on the book, was awarded the bronze medal at the XV Festival of Films for Children and Young People in Venice in 1963.

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РОМАН ВАМБЫ «ХВОСТИК» В ЛИТЕРАТУРНОМ КОНТЕКСТЕ

Статья посвящена роману «Хвостик» (1893) Луиджи Бертелли (1860–1920), писавшего под псевдонимом Вамба, одного из создателей классической итальянской детской литературы, творчество которого мало известно в России. Сюжет о приключениях ленивого мальчика, превращенного в муравья, сопоставляется с другими произведениями о насекомых. Претекстами романа являются труды натуралистов А. Э. Брэма, Ж. А. Фабра, П. Юбера, К. Эмери, научно-популярные статьи в итальянских детских журналах, роман «Приключения сверчка» (1877) Э. Кандеза. Традиционно муравьев выводили то с симпатией, то с антипатией в роли социальных и нравственных аллегорий (Библия, Вергилий, Овидий, Эзоп и др. баснописцы, Ф. Бэкон и др.). Новаторство Вамбы состоит в том, что просветительное, поучительное и развлекательное начало присутствуют в его книге нераздельно друг от друга и равноценны. Хотя нет прямых данных о знакомстве русских писателей с романом Вамбы, сопоставление текстов позволяет предположить, что это один из возможных претекстов известных детских книг о насекомых: «Приключение муравьишки» (1935) В. В. Бианки, «Необыкновенные приключения Карика и Вали» (1937) Я. Л. Ларри и «Баранкин, будь человеком» (1962) В. В. Медведева. Различаясь во взглядах на место человека среди других животных, эти тексты типологически близки творческим принципам Вамбы.

Keywords: Вамба, детская литература, Виталий Бианки, Ян Ларри, Валерий Медведев, зообеллетристика

Raffaella Vassena

“THE COUNTRY OF A DISTANT AND
MYSTERIOUS TRIBE”: RUSSIA AND RUSSIAN
LITERATURE IN ITALIAN JOURNALS AND
BOOKS FOR CHILDREN (1920–1940S)

This article examines translations and adaptations of Russian literature in Italian periodicals and book series for children in the fascist period (1921–1945). By analyzing the repertoire of publications translated from Russian and other languages and comparing it with the repertoire of translations from other foreign literatures, the share of Russian authors is established, the most popular genres and narrative characteristics of Russian texts are identified, the cultural and pedagogical aims of publishing Russian books and what factors influenced the selection of works for translation are clarified if possible. Special attention is paid to the cooperation between Russian emigrants and Italian editors and illustrators, as well as to the perception of Russian literature by Italian educational critics. The analysis offers an essential contribution to the study of Italian-Russian cultural and literary relations in the first half of the twentieth century and sheds light on hitherto little-studied publishing practices that after World War II would allow Russian classics to reach an increasingly diverse audience in Italy.

Keywords: Russian-Italian cultural relations in the first half of the 20th century, children’s literature, children’s magazines, book series, translation, adaptation, illustration of children’s book

Until the early 1920s, Italian translations of Russian literature were published primarily in book series aimed at an adult audience, and mainly by those publishers who were particularly attentive to the new political and social order of post-revolutionary Russia [Mazzucchelli

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2006; Mazzucchelli 2009]. In contrast, Russian literature was long absent from publications intended for young people, unlike the works of other foreign literatures. The reasons for this are cultural rather than political¹. Italian children's literature, which emerged in the second half of the 19th century after the unification of Italy, responded to the need to spread literacy among the masses. Thus, at least until the end of the 19th century, books and periodicals for children retained a strong instructive connotation, remaining closely linked to the world of school. Only at the beginning of the 20th century did entertaining books find their place among school textbooks and morally edifying books for reading, prompting, however, a reaction of detractors who denied any merit or meaning in the existence of children's literature [Turi 2004, 20–21]. For a long time children's literature in Italy was considered the poor relation to adult literature, which was given much more space in publishing catalogs and in the magazine sections on new books. Nevertheless, publishing for children and young people gradually developed into an independent field, thanks not only to the educational potential of children's books, but also to the economic profits made by publishers and authors alike, including those of "high" genres. While at first the array of publications for children was dominated by books by Italian authors, foreign classics soon began to circulate in various series. For example, the Modena-based publisher A.F. Formiggini, in his illustrated *Classici del ridere* (Laughing Classics) series for an adult audience, also printed translations of works included in children's reading, such as Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" (1913) or Oscar Wilde's "The Canterville Ghost" (1914). Beginning in the late 1910s, many publishers produced adaptations of foreign works in series intended for children, and a few years later there even appeared separate series devoted entirely to masterpieces of foreign children's literature. But Russian children's literature hardly found a place in this series.

Partly due to the practice of translating into Italian not from the Russian originals, but from French and German translations [Scandura 2002, 14], for a considerable part of the Italian public of the early 20th century Russia remained, in the words of the Italian educator Olindo Giacobbe, a country of "a distant and mysterious tribe" [Giacobbe 1934, 379]. Its main features were a "complex and gloomy psychology" [Giacobbe 1934, 379], a "resigned fatalism" [Fanciulli, Monaci Guidotti 1926, 150], sadness [Battistelli 1923, 98], and a generally introspective attitude that took painful pleasure in analyzing the human "underworld". It is no coincidence that the Russian author most represented in Italian editions for the adult public was Fyodor Dostoyevsky, "the most Russian

of Russians,” the embodiment of “Slavic primordiality” as opposed to European rationalism (see Adamo 1998, 19–62). In the early twenties Italian publishers had an extremely limited idea of what Russian literature had to offer in the field of educating and entertaining young readers. Only through the mediation of representatives of the Russian emigration — translators, artists, and cultural figures — did they gradually begin to offer young readers the works of some Russian authors, first in magazines and then in book series. It should be made clear that it is impossible to reconstruct an exhaustive picture of the translation practices used, mainly because of the complete absence at the time of a generally accepted and scientifically valid methodology. With a few exceptions, the texts were abridged and adapted; moreover, it can be assumed that in those cases where the translator was an Italian, the translation/adaptation was not from the Russian original, but from a translation (most often French). In the present paper an attempt is made to identify the composition of Russian authors, the genres and narrative characteristics of “Russian” texts in Italian periodicals and in Italian book series for children during the Fascist period (1921–1945)², and, if possible, to clarify the cultural and pedagogical aims which determined the choice of this or that work for translation. Such an analysis will be carried out by comparing the proportion of works of Russian literature with works of other foreign literature in the magazines and book series for children. On the basis of the analysis of the paratext (prefaces, illustrations) and critical reviews, we will also try to establish whether and to what extent Russian translations and adaptations corresponded to the conventional image of Russia or, on the contrary, detached from it, calling the young Italian public to a deeper knowledge of Russian culture and literature.

THE IMAGE OF RUSSIA IN TWO FAMOUS ITALIAN CHILDREN’S MAGAZINES

Magazines for children in Italy appeared relatively late compared to other European countries. The heyday of the genre in Italy was in the so-called Giolittian era (1901–1914), when a new legislative policy in favour of the working class and the poorest social classes led to a re-assessment of popular culture [Genovesi 1972, 27–31]³. With the new children’s periodicals, it was intended to reach the poorest strata of the population, not retreating from educational goals, but embodying them in the form of a catchy and engaging publishing product. It was at this time that two periodicals appeared, which we will focus on. The first was

«Il giornalino della Domenica» (Sunday magazine), founded in 1906 in Florence by the writer and journalist Vamba (pseudonym of Luigi Bertelli) and published until 1927. The second was «Il Corriere dei piccoli» (Little children magazine), founded by the novelist and journalist Silvio Spaventa Filippi in 1908, as a supplement to the Milan-based newspaper *Il Corriere della sera* and printed almost without interruption until 1995.

«Il giornalino della Domenica» and «Il Corriere dei piccoli» were far ahead of the 19th century children's periodicals in both style and content. The pedantic and paternalistic tone of the adult tutor was replaced by the light and playful language of a world, in which the protagonist was a child. The boring textbook on literature was suddenly enriched by interesting rubrics: charades, games, short biographies of writers, articles on art, geography, news and excellent illustrations. Each of the aforementioned periodicals had its own style and purpose: «Il giornalino della Domenica» shows attempts to foster in the young generation a sense of respect and love for the homeland, as well as to establish a sincere and constructive dialogue with the children of the bourgeois class, as can be seen in the correspondence between the young readers and the writer Vamba. On the other hand, the main characteristic of «Il Corriere dei piccoli» is an ideal of education based not on sermons and/or touching stories, but on the funny and paradoxical — that is, on what can really entertain and delight a child of any social background. (These two approaches also accounted for the considerable difference in cost: 25 cents for the didactic «Il giornalino della Domenica» compared to 10 cents for the entertaining «Il Corriere dei piccoli».)

With the onset of Fascism, children's publishing was forced to conform to the directives of the regime, issuing mostly anthology excerpts and adaptations, as well as original stories that reflected the spirit of the times. Nevertheless, the children's press and children's literature were able to maintain a measure of independence from Fascism, at least initially. This was probably because the authorities themselves did not consider children's books to be powerful instruments for the education of young people in a Fascist spirit, relying more on schools in this respect [Scotto di Luzio 1996, 81–83, 253–267]. All this made it possible to publish novels and stories from foreign literature, including Russian literature, in the pages of «Il giornalino della Domenica» and «Il Corriere dei piccoli». When comparing translations from Russian with translations from other foreign languages, a certain balance is observed: there are no significant differences in the number of Russian authors and other foreign authors (mostly French and English). Rather, there is a difference

in genre preferences: while the translations from French and English, in addition to short stories, have novels published in parts, the translations from Russian deal only with short forms: short stories and fairy tales, literary and folk. However, poetry is almost entirely absent — this is probably because the genre of poems for children had entered Russian literature relatively recently, and by the 1920s had become very popular in the Soviet Union. The repertoire of Russian translations in «Il Corriere dei piccoli» and «Il giornalino della Domenica» partly reflected the tastes of the Russian émigré staff, who probably played an important role in the selection of texts. Among the Russian collaborators of «Il Corriere dei piccoli» are the writer, poet and translator Rinaldo Küfferle, the translator and teacher Nina Romanovskaya, the translators Iris Feline (pseudonym of E. O. Blinderman) and Marussia Grigorieva, the artist Lilia Slutskaya, while «Il giornalino della Domenica» gave preference to Italians who translated from Russian, such as Erme Cadei, Alberto Cecchi, Giuseppina Spezia, perhaps with the sole exception of Raia Pirola Pomeranz and Lilia Slutskaya⁴. The presence of Russian émigré collaborators partly explains why preference was given to the classics, such as A. S. Pushkin, L. N. Tolstoy and I. S. Turgenev. Alongside the classics, the name of A. P. Chekhov is found, as well as contemporary writers from the Russian abroad (such as A. I. Kuprin, E. A. Elachich, A. T. Averchenko and M. A. Osorgin). The only Soviet writer was P. S. Sukhotin as an author of fairy tales. Although some of the authors named were not children’s writers, they had long been part of the circle of children’s reading in Russia, and therefore emigrant translators could consider them suitable for the young Italian reader.

Chekhov’s stories “The Tutor” (1884) and “Who is to blame?” (1886) appeared on the pages of «Il Corriere dei piccoli» in 1924, translated by Nina Romanovskaya, who had lived in Italy since the turn of the century and had already published a number of translations of Russian authors, including D. S. Merezhkovsky, A. I. Kuprin and M. Gorky [Chekhov 1924; Chekhov 1924a]. The stories “Kashtanka” (1887) (Fig. 1) and “Grisha” (1886) were published in «Il giornalino della Domenica» in 1925 and 1926, translated by Italians Giuseppina Spezia and Alberto Cecchi [Chekhov 1925; Chekhov 1926]. Chekhov was already quite well known in Italy at this time, but, as far as can be ascertained, his works were never published in the series aimed at young people. Nonetheless, as his contemporaries pointed out, the brevity and simplicity of Chekhov’s prose made it particularly suitable for young readers. The irony and humour of “The Tutor” and “Who’s to Blame?” were in the manner of the cheerful and playful character of «Il Corriere

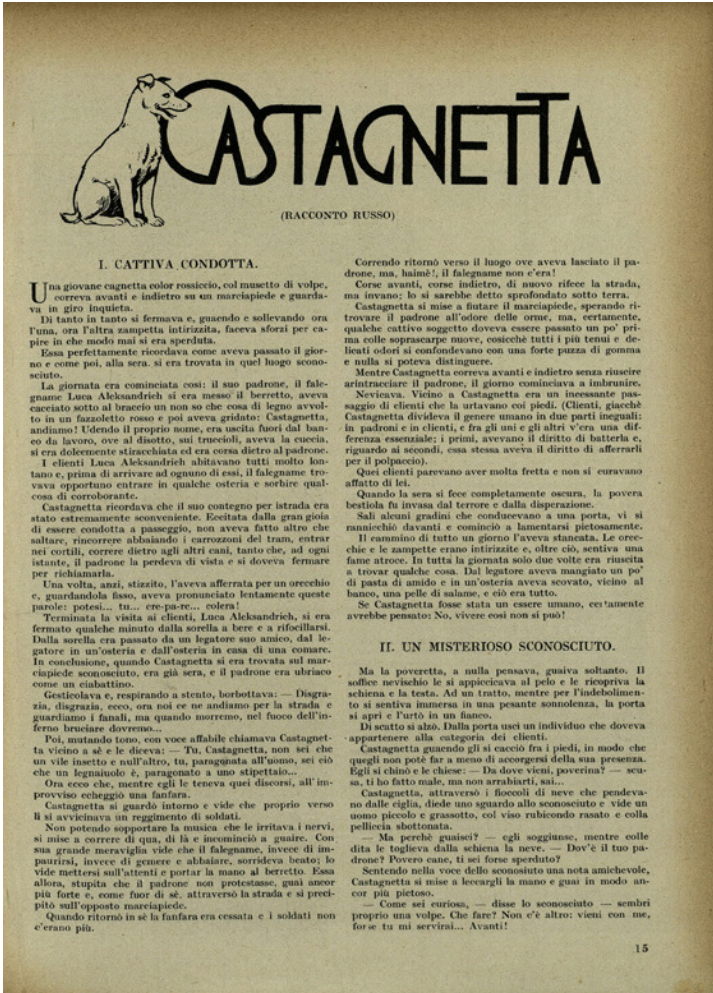


Figure 1. Cecof, A. (1925). Castagnetta (trad. di G. Spezia, disegni di Pinochi). Il giornalino della Domenica, 9, 15 maggio, 15-19

dei piccoli», while the more instructive “Kashtanka” and the charming essay on child psychology titled “Grisha” were more in keeping with the educational ideals of «Il giornalino della Domenica».

In 1925, «Il giornalino della Domenica» published translations of two of Kuprin’s works — the philosophical tale “Happiness” (1906)

and the children's story "The Elephant" (1907) [Kuprin 1925a; Kuprin 1925]. This last story embodies one of the key principles of Kuprin's poetics, namely the special intimacy between children and animals, through which the sick girl regains her health and smile. As for I. S. Turgenev and L. N. Tolstoy, they attracted the attention of Italian young readers more with aspects of their biographies than with specific literary works. In articles about Turgenev published in «Il giornalino della Domenica» in 1923, edited by Erme Cadei [Cadei 1923], and in «Il Corriere dei piccoli» in 1927, edited by the Russian émigré Rinaldo Küfferle [Küfferle 1927a], much attention was given to the kindness and purity of Turgenev's prose, especially his "Sketches from a Hunter's Album". Cadei's article, which preceded his translation of Turgenev's three prose poems [Turgenev 1923], was a critical analysis of Turgenev's literary output. Küfferle's article, on the other hand, was written in a good-humoured tone, not devoid of melodramatic overtones. It shows a great emotional engagement with the object of analysis: born of an Italian father and a Polish-Lithuanian mother, and raised in St Petersburg, Rinaldo Küfferle left Russia in 1917 and moved to Italy, where he became a journalist and translator. In his article, Küfferle dwells on Turgenev's unhappy childhood and how his mother's cruelty and insensitivity had a negative effect on the writer. It also cited some better moments from Turgenev's childhood, including his friendship with an old servant who read him fairy tales and taught the young Turgenev to respect children. Following the example of Turgenev, Küfferle urged the young Italian reader to trust adults and in turn become a patron of the youngest.

Küfferle also wrote an article about Leo Tolstoy, which was published in «Il Corriere dei piccoli» in 1927 [Küfferle 1927]. Comparing Tolstoy to Giuseppe Mazzini for his conception of life as a 'mission', Küfferle gave an overview of Tolstoy's pedagogical activities in Yasnaya Polyana. To the Italian young reader, the Tolstoy school seemed diametrically opposed to the rigid and centralized school system established in Italy after the reform of Minister Giovanni Gentile in 1923. A few years later, the socialist and former director of the Italian Federation of Public Libraries, Ettore Fabietti, held a similar view. His 1931 article on Tolstoy, printed in «Il Corriere dei piccoli» under the title "Tolstoj e la terra" ("Tolstoy and the soil"), described the principles of education at the Yasnaya Polyana school and argued that, 'to such a school, the Italian young reader would go with pleasure and learn much more' [Fabietti 1931].

The most popular genre in the two periodicals examined is the fairy tale, perhaps due to the fact that the fairy tale was still perceived as a space



Figure 2. The illustration by the Russian artist Liliya Slutskaya

of freedom of imagination and escape from everyday life. Moreover, the Russian fairy tale combined the exoticism and mystery that had always shrouded Russia in the collective Italian consciousness. In 1926 the educator Giuseppe Fanciulli noted the only truly clear side of the 'mysterious' character of the Russian people:

fantasy — exuberant, naive, affectionate, often — despite the vividness on the surface — with a tinge of sadness. This fantasy interpreted reality, often terrifying — by the cruelty of the natural elements and humans — by inventing beings with whom one often has to fight and others from whom, less often, one can get help [Fanciulli, Monaci Guidotti 1926, 150–151].

The two magazines in question provided quite a lot of space for fairy tales, both literary and folk. «Il giornalino della Domenica» published in 1921 translations of the tales “The Frog-Traveler” by Vsevolod Garshin and “The Three Bears” by Leo Tolstoy [Cadei 1921; Cadei 1921a], a collection of folktales translated by Cadei was published in 1923 [Cadei 1923a], and in 1926 a rendition of the Russian folktale “Salt” was published by Taulero Zulberti [Zulberti 1926]. In «Il Corriere dei piccoli», the main translator of Russian tales was Küfferle, whose renditions of Pushkin's, P. S. Sukhotin's and Russian folk tales were published from 1928 to 1931. [Sukhotin 1928; Küfferle 1929; Küfferle

1929a; Küfferle 1929b; Küfferle 1930; Küfferle 1931]. Mary Tibaldi Chiesa was also an important populariser of the Russian tale in Italy, editing two renditions for «Il Corriere dei piccoli» in the 1930s [Tibaldi Chiesa 1933; Tibaldi Chiesa 1935]. In her case, it is more appropriate to speak of an adaptation rather than a translation of the tales. Tibaldi Chiesa rewrites Russian fairy tales, replacing their titles, the names of their characters, adding or deleting whole episodes. These changes are primarily driven not so much by a limited knowledge of the sources, but rather by the need to adapt the text to certain pedagogical purposes. For example, translations and adaptations of Russian folk tales eliminate gruesome or bloody details — as in Tibaldi Chiesa’s adaptation of “Ivashko and the Witch”, where it is omitted that the witch and her guests “took a fried Alyonka out of the oven and... ..ate, drank, and went out into the courtyard and began to roll on the grass”, or as in Küfferle’s translation of “The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, the Firebird and the Grey Wolf”, where Dmitry does not “stab Ivan the Tsarevich and chop him up into little pieces” [Afanas’yev 1984–1985, 336], but Ivan simply “fell asleep” [Küfferle 1929a]. The terrifying element of the Russian tale is embodied rather in the illustrations by the Russian artist Liliya Slutskaya [see Slutskaya 1924; Tibaldi Chiesa 1935; Fabula 1936; Fabula 1936a] (Fig. 2). The elongated and almost stylised forms, the geometry and skillful play of lines, the grotesque monstrous faces with sharp teeth and purple lips, reveal the influence of the avant-garde with which the artist came into contact in Munich and later in Ascona in the Monte Veritas environment.

It is worth mentioning the prominent Italian artists who created illustrations for translations of Russian fairy tales and stories: Mario Pompei, author of stylised drawings in black and red for “Russian Folk Tales” [Cadei 1923a] (Fig. 3); Gustavino (pseudonym of Gustavo Rosso), whose realism is reflected in the illustrations for “The Tale of the Fisherman and Little Fish” [Küfferle 1929b]; Edina Altara, who managed to adapt her elegant manner both to the drama of M. Osorgin’s “Princess Pearl” [Osorgin 1923] as well as to the naiveté of E. A. Elachich’s stories “Reconciliation, Dispute, and Then Reconciliation Again” and “Fyr-fyrka” [Elachich 1923; Elachich 1923a] (Fig. 4); and, finally, Peppino Migneco, whose expressionism fills the stark illustrations for the tale ‘Two Frosts’ in «Il Corriere dei piccoli» [Küfferle 1929] (Fig. 5).

Short comments with autobiographical details at the beginning or at the end of the text are also an important paratextual elements of fairy tales. For example, Küfferle shares with the young reader memories of his grandmother, as well as Marusia Grigorieva in addition to the tale



Figure 3. Fiabe popolari russe. (1923). Adattamento di E. Cadei (ill. Di M. Pompei). Il giornalino della Domenica, 15

“Nadia and the White Mouse” [Grigor’eva 1929] writes an autobiographical story “Polkan” for «Il Corriere dei piccoli» [Grigor’eva 1929a]. The same nostalgic spirit pervades short anonymous stories, such as “Cuore di re”, published in «Il Corriere dei piccoli», which extols the generosity of the deceased Tsar [Cuore di re 1924]. Such details implicitly drew the attention of young readers to the events that had taken place in Russia and pointed to the reasons that forced the emigrants to leave their homeland. It is interesting to note that the dramatic situation in post-revolutionary Russia and the tragedy of Russian exiles was not concealed from children. In addition to chronicles, these events were reflected in articles



Figure 4. Altara E. Illustration for Elachich's story “Fyr-fyrka”

(‘Little Russian Emigrant’, 1924), [Noemi 1924], games [see Giuochi e canzoni... 1926] and allegorical stories. For example, the short novel “Bolshevik dip pens” (Pennini bolscevichi), printed in «Il Corriere dei piccoli» in 1921, signed “Fiducia” (pseudonym of the writer Ada Della Pergola), tells the story of the girl Martinella sleeping in her cot while a revolution of student dip pens erupts in her room against an “ungrateful pencil case”, a “paper saboteur” and an “ink exploiter”. Among the protagonists are the “Bolshevik” — an arrogant fountain pen which rants to the crowd of other pens urging them to protest; the “European” — an English pen of a serious and sedate appearance; and a representative of old Russia — an old limp pen which shakes its head in regret for the



Figure 5. Migneco, P. (1929). I due geli (R. Küfferle, trad.). *Il Corriere dei piccoli*, 3. 20 gennaio, 4

old days. The moral of the story emerges at the end, where the author, turning to Martinella, writes: “Good night: the nightmare is over, the pen rebellion is a fait accompli. And tomorrow, if indeed in their quest for rebellion they go blunt, do you know what we will do? Since blunt pens are useless... let’s throw them in the rubbish!” [Fiducia 1921]

It can be concluded that the young subscribers to «*Il giornalino della Domenica*» and «*Il Corriere dei piccoli*» involuntarily associated their ideas about Russian everyday life with the magic of illustrated Russian fairy tales, and such ideas acquired specific features in the biographical sketches of Russian writers and the memories of Russian

emigrants. The articles about Russia sometimes expressed political views, which probably aroused sincere sympathy among young Italians for their Russian peers who were suffering under the Soviet regime⁵.

RUSSIAN LITERATURE IN BOOK SERIES FOR CHILDREN

The large-scale industrialisation of post-war Italy put an end to the many small publishers who had produced literature for an upscale audience. Cheap series began to appear, offering classics of Italian and foreign literature at very low prices, and often including illustrations by talented artists. In this context, we can consider the increase in the number of children's book series, which originated at the end of the 19th century but spread exponentially in the 1920s and 1930s [Turi 2004, 17–18]. The gradual proliferation of children's series had a significant impact on the editorial policies and mechanisms that regulated the book market. While the periodicity of children's magazines plays a very important role in shaping a child's expectations and desires, the serialization of book publications allows a particular text to stand out and connect it with other texts, making it recognizable and appealing. In short, serial publishing faces the challenge of not only identifying the audience the text was originally aimed at, but also of creating a new one. This is revealed when comparing the Russian translations published in the Italian children's book series of the 1920s and 1930s. While in the beginning publishers limited themselves to reprints of those works which had already been published in «Il giornalino della Domenica» or «Il Corriere dei piccoli», over the years they expanded the range of authors and texts. Various political and cultural factors contributed to this. First of all, new directives for the reformed primary school curricula suggested a reliance on the “folk tradition” and “the great literature that gave birth to wonderful works... accessible to the simplest people precisely because they are great” [Catarsi 1990, 313]. This allowed publishers of children's books to focus increasingly on 'adult' classics adapted for young people, although not always according to consistent and philologically rigorous criteria. Furthermore, despite all the Fascist regime's attempts to make children's literature a vehicle for the construction of a new Italy, the Fascists succeeded in achieving only 'partial appropriation' [Scotto di Luzio 1996; Colin 2012]. The reasons for this partial failure lay in widespread 'passive resistance', which could not be eliminated by circulars and decrees. Above all, there was a lack of school libraries or youth departments in rural people's libraries [Scotto di Luzio 1996, 95–133]. The family continued to be the place where

a child's world-view was shaped, and the family represented a separate space, partly inaccessible to political power. Parents offered their children works that they themselves loved as children and which continued to form a significant part of their libraries and publishing range. Equally important was the intuition and experience of editors and translators, as well as the growing interest of Italian pedagogical critics in Russian literature, which starting from the late 1920s found its place in children's literature manuals and in lists of recommended books [Battistelli 1923; Fanciulli, Monaci Guidotti 1926; Bersani 1930; Giacobbe 1934; Visentini 1940; Tibaldi Chiesa 1944].

The number of works in Russian literature varies from series to series, and the criteria that guided publishers are not always clear: after all, even Italian critics were not always aware of the reasons for including a particular work for adults in editions for children. In this paper we have decided to divide the material into three categories: short stories, literary fairy tales, and adaptations of novels. Leo Tolstoy's didactic tales have an important place in our analysis. In fact, the deep connection between the history of children's literature and the social history of childhood in Italy explains the interest in Tolstoy and his pioneering pedagogical experiments. To this is added the respect for the religious feeling that permeates some of the later Tolstoy stories, thanks to which they were included in the list of books recommended for reading to young Italians [see Battistelli 1923, 149; Bersani 1930, 48]. In 1924, the publisher E.S.T., in the "Series of readings for children and young people in Italian and in French" (*Collana di letture per ragazzi e giovinetti in italiano e in francese*) under the direction of Rosa Errera and Maria Mariani, publishes "Simple Stories", translated by Nina Romanovskaya [Tolstoy 1924]. These are nine tales taken from Tolstoy's first and second "Reading Books", which by that time had not yet been translated into Italian⁶. Their content is in line with the educational aim of the series, which, for a modest price (0.80 lire), offers young readers inspiring works by Italian and foreign authors. The series presents the works of two Russian writers — Tolstoy and Kuprin; the other authors are mostly French (J. F. Guichard, A. Balzac, P. Corneille, J. La Fontaine, etc.), followed by the German F. Schiller and the English W. Shakespeare. When the E.S.T. publishes Tolstoy again in the same series in 1933 [Tolstoy 1933], the selection is more varied, though still inextricably linked to Tolstoy's pedagogical activities. It includes parables and stories with religious content, such as "Two Old Men", "How Much Land does a Man Need", "Three Elders", "Where love is, God is", "Ilyas", and the short novel "The Prisoner of the Caucasus". The collection was approved by one of

the main critics of the time, Emilio Formiggini Santamaria, who wrote in the magazine "L'Italia che scrive. Rivista per coloro che leggono": "This reading can be offered to young people who are mature enough to follow and understand moral teachings. They could scarcely find so much sweet inspiration as in a simple, human story composed by a Russian writer" [Formiggini Santamaria 1935, 13]. Similar educational principles underpinned the publication of Tolstoy's tale "The Righteous Judge", published in 1930 by La Nuova Italia in the "Fireflies" (Lucciole) series [Tolstoy 1930]. Less clear criteria underlie another Tolstoy's collection published in 1932 by the Paravia publishing house of Turin, in a series edited by Maria Bersani, *La piccola ghirlanda* ("The Little Garland") [Tolstoy 1932]. This series was intended for "class libraries" of primary schools, both urban and rural, and included short stories by both Italian and foreign writers. Of the Russians, only Tolstoy, Chekhov, and Dmitriev are present, while the number of other foreign authors (including women) is quite large: there are the French (Madame Veillet, G. Sand, A. Daudet, R. Bazin, F. Mistral, J. Maset, H. Lefebvre), the English (Hesba Stretton, J. H. Ewing, Ouida, F. H. Burnett, C. Dickens, J. Ruskin), the Americans (M. Mapes Dodge), the Germans (C. Von Schmid), the Danes (H. Andersen). Tolstoy's translation, in particular, was included in "Series B", intended for children over third grade. The book is decorated with black and white illustrations by Fabio Fabbi, an artist known for the oriental atmosphere of his drawings. In the preface "To Little Readers", the author of the revisions, Rosa Fumagalli, wrote that the collected texts "reflect the pure faith which [Tolstoy] espoused and which he gradually revived by the light of his elevated mind, tempered in the pain and struggle of his life, which was a long service of good" [Tolstoy 1932, 3]. The book's contents, however, cause some consternation: along with a selection of parables and byliny such as "The Master and the Worker", "A Grain as a Hen Egg", and "Svyatogor the Bogatyr", it also contains parts of "Childhood" and "Adolescence", which are carelessly assorted. The same impression of carelessness is given by the brief biography of Tolstoy, compiled by Maria Bersani, in which there are several mistakes (for example, the writer's death is dated November 20, 1900).

As already mentioned, in addition to Tolstoy's works, the book series for children of the 1920s and 1930s contain texts by other Russian authors who had already been published in magazines. For example, in 1924 the publishing house E.S.T. published A. Kuprin's story "Tapeur", in the aforementioned "Series C" of readings for children and adolescents [Kuprin 1924]. A new adaptation of his story "The Elephant" [Kuprin

1932] appeared in the Paravia publisher's series "The Little Flowers" (Fiorellini), which Maria Bersani described in 1930 as follows: "it was conceived for very young children who had just learned to read with the syllables; it includes easy, lively stories that children can read and understand without help" [Bersani 1930, 13]. In 1931 Paravia also published Chekhov's stories "Kashtanka" and "Kids" in the "Little Garland" series, translated by Erme Cadei and with exquisite 'nursery-decò' drawings by Edina Altara [Chekhov 1931].

One of the most active Italian publishing houses in distributing Russian literary works to young Italian readers was the Venetian publishing house La Nuova Italia. La Nuova Italia did not offer a traditional repertoire, but sought to publish novelties, which was made possible primarily by the intuition of the writer Elda Bossi, who was the editor of the "Fireflies" (Lucciole) and "Children's Book" series (Il libro dei ragazzi) from 1929 to 1930. These series included works by both Italian and foreign authors: French writers (W. Hugo, C. Nodier, J. Maset, F. Mistral), German writers (E. T. A. Hoffmann, E. Bergmann, the Grimm brothers), the Belgian M. Maeterlinck, the Englishman O. Wilde, the American H. W. Longfellow, the Portuguese J. M. de Eça de Queiroz, and the Russian writers D. N. Mamin-Sibiriyak, F. M. Dostoevsky, and L. N. Tolstoy. The series published five collections of tales and stories by D. Mamin-Sibiriyak [Mamin-Sibiriyak 1929; 1929a; 1929b; 1929c; 1929d]. The four volumes were translated by Stefania Quadrio and lavishly illustrated in the Art Nouveau style by the Russian artist Irina Khrushka, who emigrated to Venice after the October Revolution. For all the elegance of the graphic design, Mamin-Sibiriyak's stories have received mixed reviews: while "Il giornale della libreria" described him as an excellent representative of the genre of the moralistic fable [Il giornale della libreria 1930], in "L'Italia che scrive" the critic Formiggini Santamaria pointed out the inadequacy of his work for children because of its "background of veiled sadness" and "morbid scepticism" [Formiggini Santamaria 1930, 320].

Adaptations of works aimed at an adult audience have also aroused mixed reactions. An excerpt from *Brothers Karamazov* by Dostoevsky, whose stories and excerpts the publisher Carabba boldly included in the Classics for Children series as early as 1920⁷, was published in 1929 in La Nuova Italia's Lucciole series [Dostoevskiy 1929]. Although the excerpt from Book X of the novel had entered the canon of Russian children's readings as early as the end of the 19th century [Vassena 2021], the volume published by La Nuova Italia went completely unnoticed, while the complete translation by the Brothers Karamazov, issued by the



Figure 6. Guerra e pace. (1935). Narrato da Giuseppe Morpurgo (ill. da Carlo Parmeggiani). Torino: UTET. (La scala d'oro VIII)

publisher Slavia that same year, won the praise of “adult” critics [Vita Finzi 1929]. Very severely assessed was another edition, published in 1926 by the Florentine publisher Vallecchi in the series for children and adolescents “Fontana viva” (“Living fountain”), which included four stories by Korolenko (“The old bell ringer”, “The night before Christmas”, “Makar’s Dream” and “In a bad company”) in a translation by Boris Yakovenko [Korolenko 1926]. The author of the review in “L’Italia che scrive” magazine expressed his fear that the misfortune and suffering of Korolenko’s characters would leave a deep, painful impression in children’s soul, and suggested removing the edition from the children’s series and addressing it to “those who can understand, love, suffer” [W. Korolienko. Il vecchio campanaro... 1927].

Finally, worth mentioning is the 1935 publication of the adaptation of Tolstoy’s “War and Peace” in the famous illustrated series for children called La Scala d’Oro (“The Golden Staircase”) by the Turin publisher UTET [Tolstoy 1935] (Fig. 6). “La Scala d’oro”, the first ‘graded’

series for children, founded in 1932 by Vincenzo Errante and Fernando Palazzi, offered increasingly complex texts divided into eight series. However, the texts were not printed in the original, but paraphrased by other writers or educators. The novel “War and Peace”, retold by Giuseppe Morpurgo and illustrated by Carlo Parmeggiani, was included in the eighth series, which was aimed at children aged 13 and over, and was reprinted several times until 1987. The elegant graphics and noble pedagogical intent, however, failed to dispel the bewilderment of some contemporaries. They felt that by offering retellings of literary works, the La Scala d’oro series inevitably discouraged young readers from reading the full versions [see Tibaldi Chiesa 1944, 165–168].

Without claiming to be exhaustive, this review of the presence of Russian literature in Italian book series for children shows that the most popular genres in the 1920s were the didactic tale and the literary fairy tale. Between the late 1920s and the early 1930s, some adaptations/reductions of short stories and novels for adults also appeared. Although often perplexing to critics, these early experiments marked the beginning of an important process that, after the Second World War, would allow the Russian classics to expand beyond their “theoretical audience” [Escarpit 1971, 56, 68] and reach an increasingly diverse Italian public [De Florio 2017].

FINAL REMARKS

The materials analyzed in this article, although limited to children’s magazines and book series for children, lay the foundations for more extensive research, both from a thematic and chronological point of view, on the history of the translation and reception of Russian literature for children in Italy. As we have seen, the original repertoire of Russian translations on the two main Italian children’s magazines of the twenties converges on the book series of the thirties, gradually becoming more varied and also welcoming adaptations of works intended for adults. The proportion of works by Russian authors in comparison with other foreign authors seems fairly balanced, at least until the early 1930s. With the tightening of fascist censorship in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the presence of translated foreign literature in Italian magazines and book series for children was drastically reduced. As far as Russian literature is concerned, during the war years one can observe an increase in the number of remakes/retellings by Italian authors, on the one hand, and an increase in the popularity of the fairy-tale genre, on the other. Starting from the late thirties, large publishing houses, such as Hoepli and Italego,

published separate collections of Russian folktales and fables, illustrated by Russian émigré artists L. Slutskaya and V. Nikulin [Tibaldi Chiesa 1937a; Tibaldi Chiesa 1945; Krylov 1945]. The reasons for the growing popularity of Russian folktales were various: first, the genre of fairy tale met the need for imagination and fiction, which could somehow alleviate the horrors and deprivations caused by war and the political instability associated with it; moreover, the fairy-tale, even if not belonging to the native tradition of readers, managed to escape the close net of Fascist censorship because of its universality, which deprived it of any political or ideological overtones. Thanks to their rich paratext, the collections of Russian fairy tales in the forties mark a crucial phase in the history of Italian reception of Russian culture. Especially in Nikulin’s illustrations, Russia loses that mysterious aura that for years made it a distant and impenetrable country, and turns into an enchanted but good-natured and hospitable world, able to attract both children and adults [see Vassena 2012; Vassena 2015].

This article leaves open several questions worthy of further investigation. We intend to draw attention to two of them in particular. Firstly, the dissemination of Russian children’s literature in Italy was the result of a fruitful cultural exchange not only between representatives of the Russian emigration and publishers, but also some of the Italian artists. Further research in the archives of publishing houses and in the personal fonds of Italian translators, publishers and artists could shed new light on the history of Italian-Russian cultural relations in the first half of the 20th century. Secondly, the gradual entry of the names of some ‘adult’ Russian authors into the Italian literary canon for children reveals an important evolution in Italian publishing policy. Extending the chronological scope of this study would allow a more accurate reconstruction of a process that continues up to the present day. Interestingly enough, among the children’s publishing novelties in Italy, three books issued by the Roman publisher Atmosphere libri stand out: “My First Dostoevsky”, “My First Chekhov” and “My First Gogol” [Dostoevskiy 2017; Chekhov 2017; Gogol’ 2018].

Translated by Yana Timkova

Notes

- ¹ An important exception is the publication in 1920 of translations of Dostoevsky, Mamin-Sibiriyak, and Tolstoy in two children’s series [see Dostoevskiy 1920; Mamin Sibiriyak 1920; Tolstoy 1920]. The situation was

different in children's periodicals, where, beginning in the 1910s, Russian stories and fairy tales appeared in translation. See, for instance, the magazine "Primavera", published by Vittorio Podrecca in Rome from 1911, where translations of works by L. N. Tolstoy, Vasilij Morozov, M. Osorgin, and Maxim Gorky appeared [see Vagliani 2014, 53–54].

² The years of the emergence of the National Fascist Party and the end of World War II are taken as the basis. The National Fascist Party came to power after the march on Rome (26–28 October 1922).

³ Between 1901 and 1914. Giovanni Giolitti was Minister of the Interior and then Prime Minister. He launched a series of school reforms which raised the age of compulsory education to 12 and placed primary school under state control.

⁴ For more information on the lives and activities of the Russian translators and artists mentioned in this article, see the dictionary "Russians in Italy" <http://www.russinitalia.it/dizionario.php>

⁵ Many Italian magazines and newspapers of the time appealed to their readers for sympathy for street Russian children [see e.g. Cadei 1921b].

⁶ Only a few years later, in 1928, on the centenary of Tolstoy's birth, an Italian translation (from French) of all four reading books was published by the Milanese publisher Monanni, edited by Angelo Treves.

⁷ The collection included: «La piccola Netotschka senza nome (episodi da un romanzo non finito); Il piccolo eroe (dalle memorie di uno sconosciuto); Il Muzik Marej; Il piccino povero da Gesù per l'albero di Natale; Le birichinate del piccolo Kolia (dal romanzo «I fratelli Karamasoff»)».

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«СТРАНА ДАЛЕКОГО И ТАИНСТВЕННОГО ПЛЕМЕНИ»:
РОССИЯ И РУССКАЯ ЛИТЕРАТУРА В ИТАЛЬЯНСКИХ
ИЗДАНИЯХ ДЛЯ ДЕТЕЙ (1920–1940-Е ГГ.)

В статье рассматриваются переводы и обработки произведений русской литературы в итальянских периодических изданиях и книжных сериях для детей в фашистский период (1921–1945 гг.). Путем анализа русского репертуара и сопоставления с репертуаром из других зарубежных литератур, предполагается определить долю русских авторов, установить самые популярные жанры и сюжетно-тематические характеристики русских текстов, а также по возможности прояснить культурно-педагогические цели, которые обуславливали выбор того или иного произведения для перевода. Особое внимание уделяется плодотворному сотрудничеству представителей русской эмиграции с итальянскими редакторами и иллюстраторами, а также восприятию русской литературы итальянской педагогической критикой. Статья вносит свой вклад в изучение итальянско-русских культурных и литературных связей в первой половине двадцатого века и проливает свет на издательские практики, которые после Второй мировой войны позволят русским классикам войти в чтение все более разнообразных слоев итальянской публики.

Keywords: русско-итальянские связи в первой половине XX века, детская литература, детские журналы, книжные серии, перевод, адаптация, иллюстрация детской книги

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THE GREAT ABSENTEE:
NOTES ON THE ITALIAN RECEPTION OF
TWENTIETH-CENTURY RUSSIAN POETRY
FOR CHILDREN

The article offers a review of 20th century Russian children's poetry translated into Italian. Despite the fact that Russia can boast a great tradition of children's literature in verse, the number of existing Italian translations is not very large and the authors translated are only some happy few. They are Vladimir Mayakovskiy, Osip Mandel'shtam, Boris Pasternak, Korney Chukovskiy and Samuil Marshak. Their not very many texts have mostly appeared for little publishers with scarce circulation. Attention to formal aspects has also not always been impeccable, and no Italian poet has systematically devoted himself to elaborate Italian versions that could aspire to true aesthetic autonomy. This is why, in spite of some notable translations in recent times, we must continue to speak of Russian poetry for children as the great absentee on the Italian cultural scene.

Keywords: Russian literature for children (20th century), reception of Russian literature in Italy, poetic translation, compared metrics, Vladimir Mayakovskiy, Osip Mandel'shtam, Boris Pasternak, Korney Chukovskiy, Samuil Marshak

Twentieth-century Russian poetry for children has not been much translated into Italian. To the contrary, several fairy tales in verse (Afanas'ev) and those written by nineteenth-century famous authors (mainly Krylov, Pushkin and Ershov) are quite well-known in Italy (at present this vast subject is being explored by Giulia De Florio¹). The causes for this neglect are hard to identify. Arguably, one of the reasons might be a prejudice towards children's literature, which is considered

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ancillary to classic Russian literature “for grown-ups”; moreover, these texts are rather difficult to translate, due to formal issues such as rhyme and rhythm. Whatever the reason, it must be acknowledged that, unfortunately, the number of works translated into Italian can be counted on one hand.

To begin my investigation, I would like to recall one of my works [Niero 2019, 326–334], which deals with the translation of Russian poetry. The essay I am quoting does not focus on children’s literature, but some of those considerations may be fruitfully applied to this field as well. In one of the chapters I highlighted how, in the last thirty years, translators have started to pay more attention to formal aspects of poems, such as meter and rhyme. However, on the whole, the choice of free verse continues to dominate in translation (it would be more precise to define it a “liberated” verse, more than a free one: but this question is too complex to be examined here).

Why then is free verse still predominant? In my view, the problem lies in the fact that when the translator of poetry chooses certain meters (especially the more obvious and “monotonous” ones) and opts for full rhymes (worse if grammatical), s/he is always afraid, and rightly so, of slipping into dolled up tones and childish cadences. However, when we are dealing with Russian children’s literature in verse, this potential flaw — if handled with care — could be turned into a quality. Nonetheless, it is clearly the difficulty of the operation that — numbers in hand — seems to discourage even the most zealous translators. There are, of course, some examples of translations carried out with conviction, which have produced very interesting results.

1. I would like to start from what was done in 1969 by scholar and translator Gabriella Schiaffino, who decided to translate Vladimir Mayakovsky’s *Kon’ ogon’* [The fire horse / Il cavallino di fuoco]² into Italian. To carry out this task, she asked for the support of the Italian poet Antonio Porta (1935–1989). Porta, one of the protagonists of the Italian Neo-avant-garde, was thus involved in the translation of the work of the Cubo-futurist poet, who himself belonged to the historical avant-gardes. As we understand from the introduction written by Maurizio Spatola [Spatola 2006], who speaks of a “veiled socialist message”, that specific historical moment favored the dissemination of an increasingly multi-faceted Mayakovsky into Italian culture. However, free verse remained the prevailing instrument used by the translators³.

This option was opportunely discarded for *Il cavallino di fuoco*. Schiaffino and Porta decided to use an eight-syllable verse, stressed on the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th syllables. This is a sort of “trochaic octosyllable”,

which is grafted onto the already firm tradition of the Italian octosyllable with accents on the 3rd and 7th syllables (an example is «Sul castello di Verona / batte il sole a mezzogiorno» from *La leggenda di Re Teodorico*, by Giosuè Carducci [Beltrami 1996, 67]). By doing this, the two translators try to echo the dominant rhythmic pattern of the original, which, although fragmented due to the famous *lesenka*, is easily reassembled in a sequence of trochaic tetrapodies, sometimes interspersed with groups of iambic tetrapodies and some sporadic verses of uncertain metrics. To a certain extent, therefore, the translation homogenizes the metric variety of the original. The two translators, dealing with a mostly uneven rhyme scheme (although the AABB and ABAB schemes prevail), choose to respond with rhymes which lack regularity; as a matter of fact, the rhymes are used in conjunction with the segmentation of the text, which is, in turn, subordinated to the rhythm of the illustrations. As a result, the text is characterized by Italian “stanzas” sealed by rhymes (*cavalcare: incominciare; andare: approntare; ossatura: cura; spalmare: saldare; aiutare: colorare; dorso: morso; pittore: splendore; occhi: ginocchi; bardatura: ventura*) or by assonance (*donare: quantità, serve: compiacente*).

The two translators often opt for grammatical rhymes, which seems to be an appropriate choice in this context. As it was foreseeable, the choice to keep the meter and the rhyme scheme forces the translators to employ substitutions (the Russian word *bok*, [fianco, side], just to give an example, becomes, for reasons of rhyme, *ginocchi* [knees]), which in some cases are consistent; however, the structure and the content of the original are fundamentally respected. The clearest difference between the original and the translation concerns the ending, where the reference to Semen Budenny, whose army on horseback was immortalized by Isaak Babel’ only a year before Mayakovsky composed his poem, disappears:

Here is the original poem:

Взнуздан
и оседлан он,
крепко сбруей оплетен.
На спину сплетенному —
помогай Буденному!

[Mayakovskiy 1958, 256]

[trad. lett.: «È imbrigliato e sellato, / è saldamente intrecciato alla sua bardatura. / Sali in groppa al cavallo bardato, / aiuta Budënnj»]

This is the translation:

Con l'incedere marziale,
 con la sella di gran pregio,
 con la ricca bardatura,
 va col bimbo alla ventura.

[Mayakovskiy 1970, [32]]

Mayakovsky is the protagonist of two other volumes: *Chto takoe khorosho i chto takoe plokho* (What is good and what is bad)⁴, translated by Aldo Canestri as *Questo è bene e questo è male* [Mayakovskiy 1978], and *Chto ni stranitsa, — to slon to l'vitsa* [Every page is an elephant, then a lioness], which has become, in the translation by Saverio Reggio, *Immagina: un animale ad ogni pagina* [Mayakovskiy 1979].

In this case, the translators try to offer formal solutions which can be suitable for a product conceived for children, but this time rhyme is predominant, while the meter remains rather varied. Reggio moves away from the trochaic rhythm of the original text and opts for traditional, full rhymes, which are not particularly creative (*perché: re; attentamente: presidente; lama: lama, pellicano: strano; etc.*). Canestri, instead, chooses a trochaic octosyllable (with frequent infractions) which echoes the meter of the original text. As a consequence, he re-creates a fragmentation close to that of Mayakovsky and, above all, offers a brilliant variety of phonic responses which, to some extent, allude to the stylistic richness of the Russian Cubo-Futurist poet. We thus find true rhymes (*viene: bene; interrogando: quando; ventosa: cosa; scheggiata: passeggiata; sapone: oppone; ometto: metto; spersi: vedersi; pezzi: apprezzati; ditino: bambino; bambino: beniamino; piccino: maialino; maiale: male; soddisfatto: benfatto*), slant rhymes (*pupo: saputo; igiene: genio; ieri: cattività; confermare: male*), compound rhymes (*giovane: giova, no; studio: tu ed io; uccello: ce l'ho: stivali: tu vali*), sight rhymes (*néra: tènera*), consonances (*impicciona: piccino: decine: sudicione; lavandino: ad uno*), assonances (*intorno: genitore; arco: codardo; frugolo: fuga; razzola: razza*) and paronomastic solutions such as *libro: libero, libro: brr (!) and guai: guardarsi*.

It is, on closer inspection, a two-faced Mayakovsky: the text is suitable for children in terms of content (despite the inevitable semantic adjustments), but, perhaps, a little too “grown-up” in form: the pyrotechnic choices of the translator are not easy to convey to a small listener, even when one reads the text aloud.

2. In light of what was previously done in the rendition of Mayakovskiy's *Il cavallino di fuoco*, the Italian edition of Pasternak's *Zverinec* (Menagerie) [Pasternak 1973], also carried out by Gabriella

Schiaffino, appears to be a missed opportunity. Once again, the scholar was assisted by a poet, indeed a poetess, Giulia Niccolai (1934), who is active in the field of experimentalism (might this be an encrypted homage to the avant-garde Pasternak of «Centrifuga»?). The translation, however, seems to be following the usual path of free verse and consists of segmented prose with rare metric cues. We find assonances and consonances here and there, and sometimes even full rhymes (many of them are identical rhymes *indietro: indietro; tram: tram*; a few verses later we find *gabbia: gabbia*), which, however, do not constitute a scheme. Some solutions appear to be very interesting, such as *verso: Golfo Persico* and *voliera: serra*, but, unfortunately, they are very few in number.

3. The remaining translations in verse — with one small exception — concern two Russian classics of the second half of the twentieth century: Korney Chukovskiy and Samuil Marshak.

Margherita Cozza-Zoubok (1971, 1974) offers a good rendition of Chukovskiy's *Telefon*⁵ (The Telephone / Il telefono), *Ajbolit*⁶ (Ow-it-hurts / Mifamale), *Mojdodyr*⁷ (Wash-'em-clean / Mangiasporco) and *Kradenoe solnce*⁸ (The stolen sun / Il sole rubato). The translator employs intelligent strategies, and the formal strength of the text is mainly made of rhymes and rhythm.

The most musically problematic of the four texts written by Chukovskiy is *Il telefono*, where the rhythm of the Russian original changes from stanza to stanza (and even within the same stanza) and does not always flow in clearly recognizable metric figures. The choice of maintaining the rhyme scheme in Italian forces the translator to many “changes of gear” and to a frequent reshaping of the number of stanzas. An example of the freedom with which the translator works can be found in the second verse of *Il telefono*:

А потом позвонил
Крокодил
И со слезами просил:
— Мой милый, хороший,
Пришли мне калоши,
И мне, и жене, и Тотоше.
— Постой, не тебе ли
На прошлой неделе
Я выслал две пары
Отличных калош?
— Ах, те, что ты выслал
На прошлой неделе,

Мы давно уже съели
 И ждем, не дождемся,
 Когда же ты снова пришьлешь.
 К нашему ужину
 Дюжину
 Новых и сладких калов!

[Chukovskiy 2013, 83–84]

Poi si è udito un altro trillo.
 Questa volta è il coccodrillo.
 — Amico mio diletto, —
 sospira il poveretto.
 — Mandami delle galosce,
 ti prego, morbide e flosce,
 per me, mia moglie e Totò...
 — Ehi, aspetta un po'!
 Te ne ho spedite, la settimana passata.
 due magnifiche paia, di gomma felpata.
 — Quelle che hai mandate
 le abbiamo già mangiate
 e non vediamo l'ora
 che tu spedisca ancora,
 per la nostra cena,
 una dozzina appena
 di nuove galosce
 morbide e flosce.

[Chukovskiy 1974, [3]]

Chukovskiy uses a ternary foot: he starts with an anapestic sequence (vv. 1–2), which he “breaks” in verse 3; subsequently, he maintains an amphibrachic rhythm from verses 4 to 12; he then returns to the anapest (v. 13), to the amphibrach (v. 14–15) and closes with a trio of dactyls (16–18).

Cozza-Zoubok begins with a pair of octosyllables with accents on the 3rd and 7th syllables (vv. 1–2), continues with two septenaries with accents on the 2nd and 6th syllables (vv. 3–4), three octosyllables with accents on the 4th and 7th syllables (vv. 5–7), a senary (v. 8), two tridecasyllables (vv. 9–10) and concludes with four septenaries stressed on the 4th and 6th syllables (vv. 11–14, the first with a dialefe between ‘che’ and ‘hai’), a senary (v. 15), a septenary (v. 16), a senary (v. 17) and a quinary (v. 18).

Considering that almost half century has passed, the lexicon (I am referring only to *Il telefono*) has not particularly aged, with the exception of few words such as *figlietto*, *bertucce*, *babbucce*, *accorare*, *carosello*, *vanerelle* (which for various reasons would perhaps require some footnotes so that children could understand them) and *demodé* truncations such as “domandan”, “ver”, “girar”, “vadan”, “dan”. Similar observations on lexicon can also be made for *Mifamale*, *Mangiasporco* (which has also been published as a single volume with the same translation: see [Chukovskiy 1978]) and *Il sole rubato*.

As far as meter is concerned, in her rendering of *Mojdodyr* Cozza-Zoubok massively adopts a trochaic octosyllable, which takes up the trochaic rhythm created by Chukovskiy throughout the text. However, in the last eleven verses the original text suddenly deviates towards ternary figures: here Chukovskiy alternates amphibrachs and anapests and closes with dactyls. In the Italian version we find no trace of the “metric island” that is so evident in *Mojodyr*: the translator, probably due to some sort of rhythmic inertia, concludes her work in octosyllables and with a solemn closing line: «*E sia all’acqua fresca e pura / gloria lunga e imperitura*» [Chukovskiy 1974, [38]].

To make the text more understandable for Italian children, the translation is frequently domesticated: while in the original *Mangiasporco* threatens the filthy child that he will throw him into the Мойка («Прямо в Мойку, / Прямо в Мойку, / С головою окунут!» [Chukovskiy 2013, 33]), in the Italian version the child only risks to end up «dritto nella saponata / per i piedi a testa in giù» [Chukovskiy 1974, [33]]. Similarly, the streets Sadovaya and Sennaya and the Tauride Garden disappear («А от бешеной мочалки / Я помчался, как от палки, / А она за мной, за мной / По Садовой, по Сенной. / Я к Таврическому саду, / Перепрыгнул чрез ограду, / А она за мною мчится / И кусает, как волчица» [Chukovskiy 2013, 34]), becoming, respectively, «stradine e vicoletti» and, more prosaically, «giardinetti». Finally, the scene in which pies and sandwiches fly right into the child’s mouth is particularly enjoyable; however, the Italian translation of Russian *pirozhek* is rather unconvincing: «e mi salta dritto in bocca / il gelato d’albicocca» [Chukovskiy 1974, [35]].

As for *Ajbolit*, the translator does not reproduce its rhythmic variety and decides to make the text uniform mainly by exploiting the octosyllable or, in part 8, by adopting a rhythmically trochaic senary, but with infractions (see the quinary of the exclamation in capital letters): «Ma ecco, guardate, / sull’ale spiegate, / d’un grosso uccello, / agitando il cappello, / gridare cordiale / il buon Mifamale: / “EVVIVA L’AFRICA”»

[Chukovskiy 1974, [24]]. In short, a “trochaic structure” acts as the rhythmic leitmotif of the *Mifamale* translation.

In *Kradenoe solnce* as well, Chukovskiy embraces variations in meter and rhythm, but, in this case too, the work of the translator tends to uniformity: the octosyllable used in *Il sole rubato* is maintained constantly (despite some infractions), even when it is apparently fragmented in shorter lines. See the following sequence: «L’orso s’alza / e con baldanza / verso il grande fiume / avanza. / Nel Gran Fiume / il coccodrillo / sguazza ilare e tranquillo / e fra i denti ben serrato / tiene il sole trafugato» [Chukovskiy 1974, [47]]. Of these nine verses, the first six can be recomposed into three octosyllables, which organically join the next three lines.

The Italian translations by Cozza-Zoubok, which are rather admirable, deserved better luck. It is possible that the publishing circuit in which they entered — Russian editions conceived in Italian and mainly distributed in the bookstores of Italy-USSR associations — did not help their diffusion. If they had been published by some major publishing house specialized in children’s literature, we would now probably have access to an “Italian Chukovskiy”.

Quite surprisingly, a second Italian version of *Il sole rubato* exists, edited by Reggio and published a few years after the first one [Chukovskiy 1985]. This translation allows us to make some initial comparisons:

Солнце по́ небу гуляло
И за тучу забежало.
Глянул зайнька в окно,
Стало зайньке темно.

А сороки-
Белобоки
Поскакали по полям,
Закричали журавлям:
«Горе! Горе! Крокодил
Солнце в небе проглотил!»

[Chukovskiy 2013, 76]

Esce il sole a passeggiare:
una nuvola, e scompare.
Il leprotto, senza fiato,
fissa il buio trasecolato.

E la gazza fa uno strillo
 «Oh sventura! Il coccodrillo,
 s'è ingollato, quel cialtrone,
 tutto il sole in un boccone!»

[Chukovskiy 1974, [41]]

Passeggia il sole nel cielo lassù:
 Va dietro le nubi non lo vedi più!
 Dalla finestra guarda il leprotto
 Tutto buio s'è fatto di botto.

E le gazze
 Che sui fianchi han bianche chiazze
 Per i campi saltellando
 Alle cicogne van gridando:
 «Un coccodrillo, — disperazione! —
 Del sole intero ha fatto un boccone!»

[Chukovskiy 1985, [1]]

Compared to Cozza-Zoubok's version, Saverio Reggio's translation is definitely less disciplined on the metric front: there is a clear propensity towards a decasyllable (devoid, however, of the fixed accents on the 3rd and 6th syllables, which are firmly attested in the Italian tradition) and the rhymes are the sole indicator of a "poetic environment". This translation is also a little more modern on the lexical level, but, on the other hand, it overflows with end and grammatical rhymes.

On the other hand, the version of *Telefon* carried out Mauro Di Leo [Chukovskiy 2007] cannot be compared with the one realized by Cozza-Zoubok, because, as it is stated on the title page, Di Leo's version is more an adaptation than a translation. If we juxtapose the memorable beginning of Chukovskiy's text with Di Leo's rendition, the degree of recreation to which the text is subjected immediately stands out:

У меня зазвонил телефон.
 — Кто говорит?
 — Слон.
 — Откуда?
 — От верблюда.
 — Что вам надо?
 — Шоколада.
 — Для кого?
 — Для сына моего.

— А много ли прислать?
 — Да пудов этак пять
 Или шесть:
 Больше ему не съесть,
 Он у меня ещё маленький!

[Chukovskiy 2013, 83]

Driing Driing.
 Il telefono squilla.
 «Ciao! Chi è la?»
 L'orso bianco strilla:
 «Sto chiamando per l'elefante.
 Vuole un po' di croccante».
 «E per i figli?»
 «Cosa mi consigli,
 cinque o sei tonnellate?»
 «Di certo non sbagli,
 si faranno,
 delle belle abbuffate!»

[Chukovskiy 2007, [4, 8, 10]]

Leaving aside a few substitutions — in the fragment cited above the white bear (actually in Russian only *medved'*, 'orso') appears much earlier than in the original text, and inexplicably replaces *verblyud* (cammello) — the zoo set up by Chukovskiy becomes rather smaller in translation: for example, there is no mention of the 'leverets' (*zaychatki*), of the 'nightingale' (*solovey*), of the 'crow' (*vorona*), of the 'vice' (*morzh*), of the 'sea urchin' (*morskoy ezh*), of the 'sea lion' (*tyulen'*), of the 'deer' (*olen'*) and of 'gazelles' (*gazeli*). On the other hand, a 'dove' [Chukovskiy 2007, [12]] and a 'stork' [Chukovskiy 2007, [22]] are added to the text. At one point of the original text a plantigrade appears, as if it were a zoological synecdoche representing Russia as a whole: in translation, it is rendered with «l'orso Grizzly» [Chukovskiy 2007, [20]], an animal that has more to do with North America than Russia. The de-russification of the text is completed when a "classic" of Italian advertising from the 1960s is unexpectedly introduced into the Italian text: *il pulcino Calimero*. Finally, the rhymes are not used systematically and follow no guiding principle.

Di Leo is also the author of *Tarakan's* [The monstrous cockroach / *Il gran scarafaggio*] «prose adaptation» (as in the colophon of the

volume), which has become, with a clear regionalization of the lexicon [Chukovskiy 2019a], instead of ‘lo scarafaggio’, *Lo scarrafone*. The colophon, however, also mentions something else, namely that the prose adaptation was preceded by a «translation of the poem Tarakanishche (sic)» by Mario Caramitti. The latter, consulted on the subject, revealed to me that, in essence, very little of his initial version, which was in verse, was maintained as it was. To confirm this, he kindly provided his earlier translation to me, to show the painful (and paradoxical) transformation of his work, which not only preserved the texture of the rhymes, but also maintained (I am referring only to the section that I mention below) a recognizable meter: a septenary with a trochaic trend, which reproduces the trochaic tripod of the original text.

Ехали медведи
 На велосипеде.
 А за ними кот
 Задом наперёд.
 А за ним комарики
 На воздушном шарике.
 А за ними раки
 На хромой собаке.
 Волки на кобыле.
 Львы в автомобиле.
 Зайчики
 В трамвайчике.

[Chukovskiy 2013, 22]

Tre orsi in bicicletta
 pedalan di gran fretta.
 Dietro viene il gatto,
 gira come un matto.
 Su nel ciel leggera
 zanzara in mongolfiera.
 I granchi senza intoppo
 in groppa a un cane zoppo.
 I lupi sul vagone
 sul Suv ci sta un leone.
 Leprotto e lepreto
 sul loro tranvetto.

[Chukovskiy 2019b]

In its published version, Chukovskiy's poem sounds like this (I quote it in prose, but I follow the segmentation of the text produced by the presence of illustrations): «Tre orsi andavano in bicicletta, / dietro di loro arrivò il gatto / guidando all'indietro la sua bici. // Nei cieli volavano dei moscerini sul pallone. // E poi c'erano dei granchi / trainati da un cane zoppo e dei lupi su una cavalla, / dei leoni in macchina, dei conigli in un tram» [Chukovskiy 2019b, [2]]. Even though the disposition of the text recalls versification, the flatness of the prose is easily recognizable: this rendition is thus totally different from the creative work of Caramitti, which hopefully will be published elsewhere and bodes well for an increasingly conscious approach to the translation of the classics of Russian poetry for children.

Daniela Almansi also moved in this promising direction with *Crocodilo*, translation of Chukovskiy's *Krokodil* (The crocodile)⁹ [Chukovskiy 2021], which was published by a specialized and respectable publishing house such as Orecchio Acerbo.

Жил да был
Крокодил.
Он по улицам ходил,
Папиросы курил,
По турецки говорил, —
Крокодил, Крокодил Крокодилович!
А за ним то народ
И поёт и орёт:
— Вот урод так урод!
Что за нос, что за рот!
И откуда такое чудовище?

[Chukovskiy 2013, 94]

Un tranquillo
Coccodrillo
Con l'accento d'Istanbullo,
Passeggiava a Leningrado
Sfumacchiando un sigarillo.
Si chiamava Crocodilo!
Si stupiscono i passanti
Strepitanti e canzonanti:
«Va' che muso! Va' che denti!
Va' che zampe repellenti!
Ma da dove salta fuori:

Dalla casa degli orrori?»

[Chukovskiy 2021, [4]]

Almansi's very interesting and fluent rendition, which avoids both a mortifying literality and an annihilating rewriting, demonstrates how Chukovskiy can be convincingly translated as a modern author. Almansi's approach is thus very valuable and hopefully will be embraced by other translators.

4. The work of Samuil Marshak was briefly introduced in Italy in the early 1980s (thus almost 40 years ago!). Only *Skazka o glupom myshonke* (The tale of the silly little mouse), translated as *Favola del topino sciocco*¹⁰ [Marshak 1980] and *Detki v kletke* (Kids in a cage), which became *Animali in gabbia* [Marshak 1983], have found the path of the Italian reader. Unfortunately, these two works did not reach a wide public due to the limited resources of the Malysh — Edest publishing house.

In these two volumes, the translator, Saverio Reggio, behaved in two different ways. In *Animali in gabbia*, which only shows a selection of the animals which inhabit the large zoological garden set up by the Russian poet [Marshak 1968, 37–67], both the rhymes and the meter are diligently adopted (a hendecasyllable, even if not always impeccable, acts as a counterpart to the trochaic tetrapody of the original, although this choice is rather infrequent in the Italian translation tradition¹¹). However, here the text seems ancillary to the drawings and, in this case in particular, appears to be of secondary importance due to the effervescence of the pop-up edition. One example may be the following:

ЖИРАФ

Рвать цветы легко и просто
 Детям маленького роста,
 Но тому, кто так высок,
 Нелегко сорвать цветок!

[Marshak 1980, [2]]

LA GIRAFFA

Cogliere fiori è solo un giochetto
 per un bambino ancor piccoletto.
 Per chi è così alto sono dolori
 chinarsi a terra a raccogliere fiori.

[Marshak 1968, 40]

As for *Favola del topino sciocco*, the pressing trochaic rhythm and the strict alternation of ABAB and AABB rhyming concatenations of the original dissolve in a verse oriented on eight or nine syllables, which lack a regular rhythmic articulation and with *impromptu* rhymes. The jaunty freshness of the Marshakian text is largely compromised. The encounter between Marshak and the Italian public was essentially unsuccessful.

5. Chukovskiy and Marshak aside, the Italian reader is almost entirely unaware of the literary works written for children which belong to the Silver Age of Russian poetry, the so called *Serebryany vek*. We have already mentioned Mayakovsky and Pasternak, but these are not the only authors to have written poetry for children. For example, we can mention Osip Mandel'shtam, who wrote, among other things, the poem *Dva tramvaja* (Two trams)¹². This poem was published in a truly delightful little volume, illustrated by Boris Ėnder [Mandel'shtam 1925]. In 2014, a small but courageous publishing house from Bologna gave me the opportunity to translate the text [Mandel'shtam 2014].

In my rendition, I avoided deviating too much from the semantics of the text while trying to employ rhymes which would not result too obvious. I was unable to avoid grammatical rhymes completely, but I am still modestly proud of solutions such as *deposito: riposo; luci: lucido; fabbro: fabbrica; trottano: semplicitto*. I must say that I feel particularly attached to this translation — the quality of which, of course, is not for me to judge. In my mind, it is associated with a circumstance that undoubtedly sharpened my sensitivity for children's literature: my daughter's ninth birthday. After all, I owe my foray into a wonderful territory such as children's literature to her.

In conclusion, it is my belief that courageous and sensitive translators are needed to keep exploring the fascinating field of Russian poetry for children. Its dissemination will certainly be appreciated by the Italian public, which is already accustomed to children's literature of many different cultures and times.

Notes

¹ I take this opportunity to thank Giulia De Florio for having made available to me the bibliography that she is tenaciously collecting in view of a forthcoming volume. A first result of this patient work is a survey of Russian children's literature in Italy [cf. De Florio 2017] to which a first bibliographic systematization of the phenomenon is attached [cf. De Florio, Niero 2017, 437–447].

² In *Il cavallino di fuoco*, a little boy, who is eager to become a rider, asks his father to practice with a toy horse. Not finding the toy in the shops, he

decides to turn to a craftsman, who will turn to as many of his colleagues to assemble the horse. This becomes an opportunity to meet a whole series of humble workers who, with a spirit of collaboration, give their contribution so that the horse can be built.

- ³ The exception to the rule had been, two years earlier, Lenin [Mayakovskiy 1967], translated, albeit with some reticence, by Angelo Maria Ripellino, who employed a vast rhetorical orchestration including meter, rhymes, assonances, consonances etc. In this regard, I refer to [Niero 2019, 185–244].
- ⁴ The poem is constructed around oppositions: good weather *versus* bad weather; cleansing of the body *versus* dirt of the body; arrogance towards the weak *versus* defense of the weak; courage *versus* pusillanimity; neglect towards books *versus* love for books; clean clothes *versus* unkempt clothes. The aim of the poem is illustrating what is good and what is bad.
- ⁵ In the poem, the protagonist receives phone calls from various animals that express the most varied needs. The last one, the most important, is the request for help in extracting a hippo from a swamp.
- ⁶ The story is that of a generous veterinarian who, having received a telegram with a request for help, must go to Africa to treat animals. The very adventurous journey is successful thanks to some animals, who help the doctor at a difficult time, bringing him to Limpopo River to carry out his mission.
- ⁷ *Mojdodyr* is the name of a strange washstand that comes to life and forces a dirty kid to take care of his body and be cleaner.
- ⁸ *Il sole rubato* tells the story of a crocodile that is about to swallow the sun. Only a bear is brave enough to face him and tear the sun from out of his mouth.
- ⁹ In Chukovskiy's tale, a crocodile appears in Petrograd and begins to swallow people, but is stopped by the brave Vanya Vasil'chikov who makes him spit them out and drives him back to Egypt. There, the crocodile tells the other animals how sad life is for caged animals at the zoo and they all decide to go to Petrograd to free them. The result is a battle between humans and animals. Little Lyalechka is taken hostage, but is immediately freed by an army of humans led by Vanya Vasil'chikov. The man, however, understands the tragedy of animals in captivity and decides to free them as long as humans and animals agree to live in peace.
- ¹⁰ The story is that of a mouse that does not like his mother's voice when she tries to make him fall asleep. The mouse then discards one by one a whole series of animal-nurses and finds satisfaction only in the voice of a cat. The cat, however, ends up eating the mouse.
- ¹¹ In this regard, I rely on my analysis see: [Niero 2019, 126–127] of the meters used by Renato Poggioli for his anthology *Il fiore del verso russo* [Poggioli 1949]. It should also be noted that in the systematization of the possible "correspondences" between Russian and Italian meters proposed almost thirty years ago by Michele Colucci, the hendecasyllable is proposed

for the rendition of the iambic tetrapody, for the iambic pentapody and for tripodies with ternary feet (anapest, amphibrach, dactyl) [Colucci 1993, 116–118].

- ¹² The protagonists of this tale are two trams. One is wiser and prudent, the other is more reckless. At the end of the day, the wiser tram will tow the other tram to the depot.

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ВЕЛИКОЕ ОТСУТСТВИЕ: ЗАМЕТКИ О РЕЦЕПЦИИ РУССКОЙ ПОЭЗИИ ДЛЯ ДЕТЕЙ XX ВЕКА В ИТАЛИИ

В статье предлагается обзор русской детской поэзии XX в., переведенной на итальянский язык. Несмотря на то, что в России традиция детской поэзии весьма обильна и разнообразна, количество существующих итальянских переводов не очень велико. В числе авторов, чьи произведения были переведены на итальянский язык — Владимир Маяковский, Осип Мандельштам, Борис Пастернак, Корней Чуковский и Самуил Маршак. Немногочисленные издания их стихов выходили в основном в небольших издательствах, небольшими тиражами и широко не распространялись. В качестве одной из возможных причин низкого интереса автор указывает предубеждение к детской литературе, которая относительно классической русской литературы «для взрослых» считалась факультативной и даже маргинальной; кроме того, поэтические тексты сложно переводить из-за формальных параметров, таких как рифма и ритм. В статье отмечается, что переводчики не всегда тщательно передавали формальные свойства оригиналов, и что ни один итальянский поэт не ставил перед собой задачи по систематическому созданию переводов русских детских стихов, которое могло бы претендовать на подлинную эстетическую автономию. Все это позволяет, несмотря на некоторые заметные переводы, появившиеся в последнее время, охарактеризовать русскую поэзию для детей на итальянской культурной сцене, как «великую отсутствующую».

Keywords: русская литература для детей XX века, восприятие русской литературы в Италии, поэтический перевод, сравнительный подход, В. Маяковский, О. Мандельштам, Б. Пастернак, К. Чуковский, С. Маршак

Ilaria Remonato

PINOCCHIO FROM ITALY TO RUSSIA, OR THE LITERARY JOURNEY OF AN ICONIC PUPPET

As is well known, in 1935 the famous Soviet writer Aleksey Nikolaevich Tolstoy (1883–1945) wrote the fairy tale *Zolotoj klyuchik, ili Priklyucheniya Buratino* (The Little Golden Key, or the Adventures of Buratino) inspired by Collodi's *Pinocchio* (1883), that he read and loved some years earlier. Considering the substantial relationships between the two works, the present paper aims at analysing them from two main points of view: a) the different connotations attributed to animal and human characters; b) the authentic nature of the “implied reader” (W. Iser) in the two texts, regardless of the moralistic or ideological contexts in which they were respectively conceived. Are they really to be considered as “fairy tales for children”? To what kind of child are they addressed?

Keywords: Pinocchio, The Little Golden Key, Burattino, Collodi, A. Tolstoy, animals vs. human characters, “implied reader”, fairy tale, children

To invest on children requires attention,
spirit of service, a constant effort to be,
for them, the hundred things they need:
a mate to grow, to play and to discover with,
an entertainer, an expert, the power that gives them
the tools they need, the adult that provokes them,
revealing to them new horizons, new directions of
movement.

We are the steps of the staircase that children climb.¹

Rodari 1992, 32

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As is well known, Pinocchio's character appeared for the first time in *La storia di un burattino* (The Story of a Puppet) by Carlo Collodi (pseudonym of the Florentine writer and journalist Carlo Lorenzini, 1826–1890). The adventures of the famous marionette were first published in serial form in the children's weekly magazine "Giornale per i bambini" ("Children's Magazine")² from 7th July to 27th October 1881 (Fig. 1). Initially they consisted of eight episodes that ended with the death of the protagonist, whom the "Assassins" had hung on the Great Oak. The author sent to the director of the magazine the first pages of his fairy tale with this ironic note: "I send you this children's story, do what you want with it; but if you print it, pay me well, so that I feel keen to continue it" [Castellani Pollidori 1983, XIV]. In the following months, also thanks to several children's letters addressed to the editorial staff, the writer was really induced to widen and continue the work, and new episodes came out in the magazine until 25th January 1883. Then the whole text was published as a single book in February 1883 with the definitive title *The Adventures of Pinocchio. The Story of a Puppet*³.

Originally a fairy tale written, as some scholars claimed, to quickly earn some money and pay off gambling debts [Bertacchini 1993, 238–242; Raggi 2016, 218], it became a work that is currently considered one of the absolute masterpieces of world's literature for children. In fact, along the thirty-six chapters that compose the full-length edition of the novel, the vicissitudes of a puppet carved from a special piece of wood unfold. The animated marionette is reckless, he tells lies and is naturally prone to disobedience; at times he is fickle and rebellious, but he is endowed with a heart of gold and an immense imagination. From its first publication *Pinocchio* has known ever-growing success, also favoured by the popularity of its numerous theatrical and cinematographic reductions⁴. To this day, the fable has been published in 261 versions and it has been translated into 240 different languages⁵. The stylistic vivacity and the smoothness of Collodi's language, rich in fulminating inventions, still nowadays make relevant a story in which the humanity of the characters is skilfully intertwined with the visionary transfiguration of a poor and rural Italy. The lexical elements coming from Tuscan vernacular, as well as the presence of proverbs and idioms in the protagonists' incisive jokes have contributed to the vitality of the text also from the point of view of its formal structure, i. e. as a literary document of an era. In line with his previous works, the writer abandons himself to a free, playful and allusive composition, which tends to disrupt any realistic or consequential logic parameter. As a satirical journalist with educational purposes, Lorenzini already had extensive experience

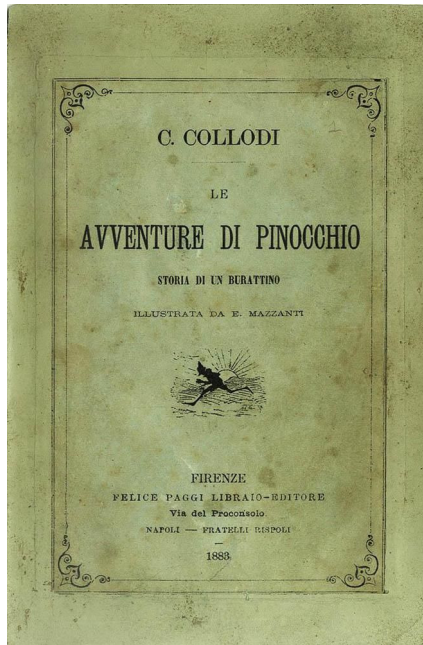


Figure 1. Original frontpage of *Le avventure di Pinocchio. Storia di un burattino in sigle volume*, Firenze: Fabbri edition, 1883

in children's literature⁶, but in this work, despite the moralistic approach typical of the contemporary pedagogical context⁷, he chooses to act in a new way. “My little readers”, he writes at the beginning of the narrative, as to reassure of his intentions. However, in a careful analysis we can observe that the author changes the rules and creates something surprising: a fairy tale in some respects “realistic”, in which Pinocchio's first antagonist is not an ogre, but a Carabineer. As has emerged from several recent studies [Vagnoni 2007; Bertacchini 2015; Marcheschi 2016], Collodi was a writer who passionately loved theatre⁸, animals and the timeless dimension of playing (let us consider the metaphorical connotations of the “Land of Toys” in the novel, but also his passion for gambling in real life: [see Bertacchini 1993, 43–44]). The puppet, created by the author in the wake of the marionettes of the Italian Theatre of Art, is carved from an extremely hard wood⁹, that despite its ordinary aspect is intrinsically anomalous. The choice of the name itself seems to announce the initiatory journey of the character, his transition through

significant trials from inert to living matter: ‘Pinocchio’ (or ‘pignocco’) is the Tuscan dialectal form for ‘pinolo’ (or pignolo, pine nut), that is the edible seed of the pine tree contained in the pine cone. In the natural world this type of seed has got a soft core enclosed in a wooden skin. As various scholars remarked, this concrete image recalls, on the symbolic level, the idea of a germ full of future potential [Carosi 2001, 25]. In fact, the puppet’s adventures, his encounters, his raids and errors along the way generate the moral commitment that in the end transforms his vegetable physicality, giving universal value to the character.

As is also well known, among the readers fascinated by Pinocchio’s story in the Russian cultural context the writer Aleksey Nikolayevich Tolstoy (1883–1945) stood out, as he composed his own version of the fairy tale, *Zolotoj klyuchik, ili Priklyucheniya Buratino* (The Little Golden Key, or the Adventures of Buratino) in 1935. It was published at first in serial form in the children’s magazine “Pionerskaya Pravda” (“The Pioneer Truth”)¹⁰. Collodi’s work had been translated into Russian for the first time in 1906 and had aroused a lot of interest, so much that in the first twenty-five years of the century several other Russian translations of it were produced. A. Tolstoy himself collaborated on a translation-adaptation of the novel that came out only in Berlin in 1924¹¹. His deep knowledge of *Pinocchio* and the explicit links with the text were highlighted by the writer in the preface to the volume edition of *The Little Golden Key* (1936) (Fig. 2), which can be interpreted as an affectionate *captatio benevolentiae* addressed to his readers:

Когда я был маленький — очень, очень давно, — я читал одну книжку: она называлась «Пиноккио или похождения деревянной куклы» (деревянная кукла по-итальянски — буратино).

Я часто рассказывал моим товарищам, девочкам и мальчикам, замечательные приключения Буратино. Но так как книжка потерялась, то я рассказывал каждый раз по-разному, выдумывал такие похождения, каких в книге совсем и не было.

Теперь, через много много лет, я припомнил моего старого друга Буратино и надумал рассказать вам, девочки и мальчики, необычайную историю про этого деревянного человечка [Tolstoy 1948, 59]¹⁾.

¹⁾When I was little — a long, long time ago — I read a booklet: it was called “*Pinocchio or the Adventures of a Wooden Marionette*” (a wooden marionette in Italian is called “burattino”). I often told my friends, girls and boys, about Burattino’s amusing adventures. But as the book had been lost, each time I told the story in a different way, inventing such adventures that in the book were not present at all. Now, after a long, long time, I remembered my old friend Pinocchio, and it came up to my mind to tell you, girls and boys, the extraordinary story of this little wooden man (my translation — I. R.).



Figure 2. Original cover of the 1936 volume edition of *Zolotoj klyuchik, ili Priklyucheniya Buratino*

As for the plot and the main characters, apart from some details until Pinocchio's gold coins are stolen by the Fox and the Cat, A. Tolstoy's work coincides with Collodi's text (chapter XIX of *Pinocchio* and chapter XVI of *Zolotoj klyuchik*). From that point onwards, instead, the adventures of Buratino and his companions considerably differ from Pinocchio's, firstly for the presence and the search for the coveted "little golden key", secondly for the fact that the protagonist does not turn into a real child in the end, but he (happily) remains a puppet. The Soviet writer articulates his own narrative, born as a hybrid of the Italian source, on six days, adding some characters and parallelisms with motifs from fairy tales of the Russian popular tradition. The little golden key hides a secret, it opens a small door¹² beyond which happiness lies. This concrete and symbolic threshold is hidden behind the painted pot in father Carlo's little room, which echoes Collodi's illusionist image, with the difference that in the Russian text the fireplace and the pot are not directly painted on the wall, but on a piece of old canvas:

La casa di Geppetto era una stanzina terrena, che pigliava luce da un sottoscala. La mobilia non poteva essere più semplice: una seggiola cattiva, un letto poco buono e un tavolino tutto rovinato. Nella parete di fondo si vedeva un caminetto col fuoco acceso; ma il fuoco era dipinto, e accanto al fuoco c'era dipinta una pentola che bolliva allegramente e mandava fuori una nuvola di fumo, che pareva fumo davvero.

Appena entrato in casa, Geppetto prese subito gli attrezzi e si pose a intagliare e a fabbricare il suo burattino [Collodi 1995, 367]²⁾.

Карло жил в каморке под лестницей, где у него ничего не было, кроме красивого очага — в стене против двери.

Но красивый очаг, и огонь в очаге, и котелок, кипящий на огне, были не настоящие — нарисованы на куске старого холста.

Карло вошел в каморку, сел на единственный стул у безногого стола и, повертев так и эдак полено, начал ножом вырезать из него куклу [Tolstoy 1948, 66]³⁾.

A. Tolstoy's description of the shabby room appears more laconic and concise, but the colourful detail of the painted canvas, which recalls theatrical backdrops with its *trompe l'oeil* inconsistency, creates an intense contrast with the poverty of the surrounding environment. Later on in the story, the painting will be pierced with the nose by a hungry Burattino, evoking a shift from everyday life to literary fantastic: as Manganelli writes, "the function of this singular painting seems twofold: on one hand it is the story of a house that does not exist, but that lets itself be invented; a platonic house, in which everything is everlasting, but not touchable. On the other, that subtle fiction is reassuring; ...this painting is a game: the fire does not heat nor burn, the pot does not feed and does not require sacrifices of 'talking pieces of wood'. The non-existent is both elusive and consoling" [Manganelli 2002, 28]. In

²⁾Little as Geppetto's house was, it was neat and comfortable. It was a small room on the ground floor, with a tiny window under the stairway. The furniture could not have been much simpler: a very old chair, a rickety old bed, and a tumble-down table. A fireplace full of burning logs was painted on the wall opposite the door. Over the fire, there was painted a pot full of something which kept boiling happily away and sending up clouds of what looked like real steam. As soon as he reached home, Geppetto took his tools and began to cut and shape the wood into a Marionette.

³⁾Carlo lived in a small, shabby room under the staircase, where there wasn't anything apart a beautiful fireplace on the wall opposite the door. But the beautiful fireplace, and the fire in it, and the pot boiling on the fire were not real, they were painted on a piece of old canvas. Carlo entered the small room, sat on the only chair by the footless table and, after having turned the log this and the either way, he started to cut a marionette out of it with a knife.

The Little Golden Key the plot is interwoven with magical elements, pursuits and coups de théâtre. There are certainly a moral and a formative process accomplished in the final part, but without the paternalistic insistence on “becoming a respectable boy” that marks *Pinocchio*’s pages and events. As Hellman observes, to make the story more suitable for Soviet children’s audience the author amplifies the amount of word games and humorous effects of the Italian original [Hellman 2013, 358]. This choice reflects A. Tolstoy’s general attitude towards Collodi’s work: the desire to propose a synthetic version of it from the narrative point of view (twenty-nine vs. thirty-six chapters), devoid of rhetoric and, consequently, more dynamic. Even though Burattino does not change in his basic character traits, the new-born friendship and “team work” with other marionettes like Mal’vina and Pierrot reveal some new aspects of his personality. In fact, if at the beginning he is depicted as a slothful daredevil and a wastrel, in the frantic final part of the fable he behaves as a sort of brave hero¹³, able to be lucid and to guide his mates towards a shared goal. By standing by each other’s side, Burattino, his dad Carlo and their friends will find a wonderful puppet theatre rich of colours, sounds and sceneries behind the small door. At the end of *Zolotoj klyuchik*, then, we witness the triumph of creative freedom and of the theatre world, evoked in an unprecedented version self-managed by the marionettes that enhances even more its phantasmagorical and imaginative potential:

Широкие лучи с танцующими в них пылинками освещали круглую комнату из желтоватого мрамора. Посреди нее стоял чудной красоты кукольный театр. На занавесе его блестел золотой зигзаг молнии.

С боков занавеса поднимались две квадратные башни, раскрашенные так, будто они были сложены из маленьких кирпичиков. Высокие крыши из зеленой жести ярко блестели. <...>

Никто, даже папа Карло, никогда не видывал такой красивой декорации.

На сцене был сад. На маленьких деревьях с золотыми и серебряными листьями пели заводные скворцы величиной с ноготь. На одном дереве висели яблоки, каждое из них не больше гречишного зерна. Под деревьями прохаживались павлины и, приподнимаясь на цыпочках, клевали яблоки. На лужайке прыгали и бодались два козленка, а в воздухе летали бабочки, едва заметные глазу [Tolstoy 1948, 131, 132]⁴⁾.

⁴⁾The wide beams of light with specks of dust dancing within them illuminated a round room of yellowish marble. In the middle of it there was a magnificent puppet theatre. On its curtain was shining a golden zigzag of lightning. Two square towers stood at the sides of the curtain, and they looked like they were made of little bricks. Tall roofs made of green

Considering the Italian translations of A. Tolstoy's *povest*¹⁴, we can talk about a metaphorical "circular route" of Pinocchio/Burattino's image — from Italy to Russia and backwards — of a literary dialogue between these two works. In fact, even though they were conceived in quite different social and cultural contexts, they show close affinities both on the thematic and on the contemporary theory of reception plans. As Efendiyeva remarks,

One can say that in the Twentieth century Pinocchio as a popular literary character has firmly entered the consciousness of Russian and foreign readers. A variety of translations of Collodi's fairy tale, realized at different stages of the history of Russian literature, make it possible to see how they reflect and refract Russian-Italian cultural ties, and how elements of Italian national culture penetrate Russian culture, forming in it a special sense of "aesthetic responsiveness" [Efendiyeva 2020, 75].

A detailed comparative analysis of the two texts, already dealt with in other studies [Petrovskij 2006; Chernysheva 2007; Giovannoli 2013, 172–262; Ascenzi, Caroli, Sani 2018; Poddubnaya 2020], is not the aim of the present work. Starting from the ways animal and human figures are represented in both fairy tales, on the basis of the well-known theory of Wolfgang Iser (1926–2007) we propose to delineate the image of the "implied reader" that emerges between the lines, investigating the mechanisms of literary reception. Contemporary pedagogical research, in fact, considers reading as one of the main sources of "cultural supply", and aims to highlight the educational potential of the text as such [Negri 2012; Mascia 2020]. Keeping in mind the due differences between the works in question and between the didactic-educational settings which prevailed in late Nineteenth-century Italy and in Stalinist USSR of the '30s, we will try to understand to which type of child they were addressed, and whether they were really conceived and intended only for children.

Animals vs. human figures

Since it belongs to the fairy tales genre, one of the elements that characterizes *Pinocchio*'s textual fabric is the thick presence of animals

tinplate shone brightly. <...> No one, not even Papa Carlo, had ever seen such a beautiful scenery. There was a garden on the stage. On small trees with golden and silver leaves sang wind up starlings the size of a nail. There were apples on one tree, each no more than a buckwheat. Peacocks would walk under the trees and pick apples on tiptoes. On the lawn, two caps jumped and punched, and butterflies flew in the air, barely noticeable to the eye.

in the roles of characters. Most of them have human — and in some cases also magical — attributes, in fact they talk to the protagonist, and they interact with him along the narrative path. In tune with many folk tales coming from popular tradition, vices and virtues of human beings are allegorically expressed through animals. From the White Blackbird to the Hawk, from the Big Pigeon to the Tuna, from the Mastiff Dog Alidoro to the Dolphin, from the Snail to the Owl, the Firefly and the Poodle Dog Medoro¹⁵, animals advise and help concretely Pinocchio in his wanderings in search of parental figures [Tinelli 2017, 15–90]. Despite the pedantic and paternalist tone which is unpopular today, even the Talking Cricket, who represents the restless puppet's voice of consciousness, has the beneficial intention of avoiding him future suffering:

— Non ti fidare, ragazzo mio, di quelli che promettono di farti ricco dalla mattina alla sera. Per il solito o sono matti o imbroglioni! Dà retta a me, ritorna indietro.

— E io, invece, voglio andare avanti.

— L'ora è tarda!...

— Voglio andare avanti.

— La nottata è scura...

— Voglio andare avanti.

— La strada è pericolosa...

— Voglio andare avanti.

— Ricordati che i ragazzi che vogliono fare di loro capriccio e a modo loro, prima o poi se ne pentono.

— Le solite storie. Buona notte, Grillo.

— Buona notte, Pinocchio, e che il cielo ti salvi dalla guazza e dagli assassini!

Appena dette queste ultime parole, il Grillo-parlante si spense a un tratto, come si spenge un lume soffiandoci sopra, e la strada rimase più buia di prima [Collodi 1995, 403–404]⁵⁾.

Among the characters depicted with considerably negative connotations in the text the Fox and the Cat¹⁶ stand out, two anthropomorphic animals posing as invalids who have become the cheaters and false

⁵⁾— Don't listen to those who promise you wealth overnight, my boy. As a rule they are either fools or swindlers! Listen to me and go home. — But I want to go on. — The hour is late! — I want to go on. — The night is very dark... — I want to go on. — The road is dangerous. — I want to go on. — Remember that boys who insist on having their own way, sooner or later will repent. — The same nonsense. Good night, Cricket. — Good night, Pinocchio, and may Heaven preserve you from the Assassins. There was silence for a minute and the light of the Talking Cricket disappeared suddenly, just as if someone had snuffed it out. Once again the road was plunged in darkness.

friends *par excellence* in collective imagination. In the evocation of the donkey, instead, — who appears in the double version of beast of burden and small donkey for the circus show — we can find overshadowed violence and man's oppression of animals, that in the poverty of that time were the norm. Although it contains a series of transfigured references to the daily life of late Nineteenth-century Italy, (consider, for example, non-school Thursdays)¹⁷, *Pinocchio* is an atemporal fable. On the whole, between cues taken from reality and deviations in the fantastic, the twenty-six animal characters present in Collodi's work, — belonging to the earth, to the air and to the water — have educational functions. Let us think, as an example, about the little Dormouse's admonitions in the Land of Toys: "Oramai è destino. Oramai è scritto nei decreti della sapienza, che tutti quei ragazzi svogliati che, pigliando a noia i libri, le scuole e i maestri, passano le loro giornate in balocchi, in giochi e in divertimenti, debbano finire prima o poi col trasformarsi in tanti piccoli somari"⁶⁾ [Collodi 1995, 490]. If on one hand animal characters appear wise, "moralists" and at times (ironically) judgmental, on the other the marvellous expressive creativity of the writer transforms them into the ethical and spiritual consciousness of the narrative, especially if compared with human figures. The animals present in the text can be divided in warning (or symbolic) animals, antagonists and rescuers, but above all they become living metaphors in the picaresque journey made of encounters, defeats and inner yields that Pinocchio accomplishes [Tinelli 2017, 18]. In particular, most part of the antagonist animals — consider the Gorilla-judge and the mastiff dogs-gendarmes — are clearly evoked as human allegories or caricatures. Also their colours assume symbolic values in the work: black represents mourning and disgrace, light blue (or, better, turquoise) recalls peace of mind, white traditionally alludes to purity and red to passion [Barsotti 2012, 4]. As Andreoli remarks, "the animals' theme in the sense of non-human beings has also in this book such an enormous relevance that one is surprised, but it is an extraordinary stunt for the language of fairy tales" [Andreoli 2019, 211]. In other words, to employ animals in this way may suggest, on the part of the author, a denunciation of the educational absence of human beings, of the errors and omissions of those adults who supposedly had to set an example for children¹⁸. Excluding father Geppetto and the Fairy with Turquoise Hair, the human figures that appear in the text have a deformed

⁶⁾It is destiny now. It is now written in the decrees of wisdom that all those lazy boys who, taking to boredom books, schools and teachers, spend their days in toys, games and entertainment, have to end up sooner or later turning into many small donkeys.

aspect and negative connotations: in fact, the adults that Pinocchio meets are in many cases concretely disguised or ambiguous. Bad characters are never the ones who present themselves as such: Mangiafuoco — “Fire-Eater” — is a grumpy big man with a heart of gold, while the Carabineers, the Innkeeper, the farmer and The Little Man driving his carriage and singing in the dark are depicted in a negative manner. If at the beginning the bearded puppeteer wants to burn the wooden marionette, the Carabineers unjustly arrest first Geppetto, and later on in the story Pinocchio, too. Besides, the Green Fisherman who looks like a monster tries to fry up the puppet, while the unctuous and terrible Little Man tricks kids into selling them. Finally, the master of the chickens, the circus director and the horticulturist Giangio do not hesitate to exploit animals to the point of exhaustion [Tinelli 2017, 36–39]. As Ballerio observes,

What the story shows, even if the moral discourse does not say it, is that the moral and social order to which Pinocchio should conform is not immutable by nature or by divine decree, because it only lasts as long as men impose it through violence and deceit. This can throw a sinister light on the moral discourse carried out by the author and his characters [Ballerio 2018, 180].

Collodi’s critique, if one interprets it in this way, does not even spare children: Pinocchio’s schoolmates, in fact, have a derisory and aggressive attitude towards the diversity and the diligence of the wooden puppet. At a careful investigation, we can conclude that in the work there is a constant opposition, a sort of reversal of roles, in which the real ‘beasts’ actually become human beings. Even Geppetto and the Fairy with Turquoise Hair, who love Pinocchio like a son and forgive his escapes and mischief, represent parenting models *sui generis*, or at least ambiguous, if compared to traditional family views of the time. On the level of symbolic resonances, therefore, we can observe that in the text uncanny elements¹⁹ are expressed more consistently in human figures, from which also come the fear and punishments at the basis of the educational parameters of the period [Andreoli 2019, 192–193]. Similarly to many fairy tales of the European tradition, in *Pinocchio* abound mystery, an ill-concealed and pervasive violence, loneliness and the image of death, which is thickly present in Collodi’s topography. It is no coincidence that on the publishing market children have been offered reduced and, above all, “sweetened” versions of the original novel, in some cases of dubious quality.

Except for the old and cruel rat Shushara, new relevant characters belonging to the animal world do not appear in the first part of *Zolotoj*

klyuchik, compared to *Pinocchio*, but we can note a constant tendency to substitute them. For example, the White Blackbird (Chapter XII) becomes an Old Crow in A. Tolstoy's work (Ch. IX), instead of the Talking Cricket's shadow (Ch. XIII) there is a Talking Owl (Ch. X), in the place of the Falcon (Ch. XVI) four hundred ants free Burattino from the rope (Ch. XIII), and so on. The Fox and the Cat, called respectively Alice and Basil²⁰, have the same negative connotations of Collodi's version, however, after having stolen the golden coins, they ally with the evil Karabas Barabas to find Burattino and the little golden key. In this way, they will share with him also the ultimate destiny of remaining dry-mouthed in the rain. In the second half of the text, instead, in tune with the substantial changes in the plot, a rich series of new animal-characters appear. Without too many moralistic comments or educational purposes, these animals find themselves on the protagonist's path and help him get out of trouble, often by carrying him away. From the Swan to the Grey Hare, from the forest animals that nourish and protect Mal'vina to the doctors — the famous doctor Owl, the nurse-Toad and the "charlatan" Grasshopper²¹ — from the four tailors (a Crayfish with a gloomy air, a grey Woodpecker, a big Beetle and a Female Little Mouse) to "the frogs with a large mouth", several echoes of Russian folk tales emerge between the lines. In accordance with Propp's well-known functions, let us think about the manifold "trials" to which the hero was subjected, about the aids of magical and/or demonic nature, about the wisdom of certain animal figures and about the mysterious presence of the little golden key, which recalls *Koschei the Immortal's*²² golden egg and needle. Mal'vina, that in *Zolotoj klyuchik* keeps the attribute of turquoise hair, but is a sweet and well-mannered marionette devoid of maternal attributes, has a special relationship with forest animals — among which appear a mole, caterpillars, insects, butterflies and even a hoopoe-hairdresser²³ — and with the elegant Poodle Dog Artemon, who magically rush to her requests for help. It is no coincidence that in the last years of his life A. Tolstoy worked on a collection of Russian popular fairy tales, which came out posthumously in 1946²⁴. Going back to *The Little Golden Key*, the old and harmless turtle Tortilla of Aesopian and Krylovian memory is the most significant addition²⁵. She is the most long-lived and authoritative animal of the pond, into which Burattino is thrown by the Dobermans-cops, and she decides, urged by the other inhabitants of the aquatic microcosm, to entrust him with the precious object lost by Karabas. Unlike most other animal-characters present in the text — almost forty in total — Tortilla talks to Burattino in a chanting, almost

formulaic way, reproaching him more than once for his laziness and credulity:

— Ах ты, безмозглый, доверчивый мальчишка с коротенькими мыслями, — сказала Тортила, — сидеть бы тебе дома да прилежно учиться. Занесло тебя в Страну Дураков.

— Так я же хотел же добыть побольше золотых монет для папы Карло... Я оччень хороший и благоразумный мальчик...

— Деньги твои украли кот и лиса, — сказала черепаха. — Они пробегали мимо пруда, остановились попить, и я слышала, как они хвастались, что выкопали твои деньги, и как подрались из-за них... Ох ты, безмозглый, доверчивый дурачок с коротенькими мыслями... [Tolstoy 1948, 96]⁷⁾.

At a general level, in A. Tolstoy's fairy tale animals also have predominantly positive values, especially if we consider the dark undertones associated to human figures, which, by the way, are numerically inferior. It is worth underlining that in the Russian version almost all animal-characters, even those less important in the developing of the story, appear with their own names and tempers. Apart from the barrel organ player Carlo — a reinterpretation of Geppetto in homage to Collodi — there are the Innkeeper, the dark rubber-faced Duremar who catches leeches for a living and, above all, Karabas Barabas, Mangiafuoco's wicked counterpart. Compared to the dreamlike light and shade effects of *Pinocchio*, these characters are depicted in a less ambiguous way, and they contribute to delineate a clear, Manichean opposition between Good and Evil. The image of death, so pervasive in Collodi's text, is frequently attenuated or removed from Burattino's path, that on the whole looks more linear from the psychological point of view. The effects of "lightness" and thematic simplification are achieved by the author through the adoption of a clear, concise style, characterized by vivid, colourful dialogues and by insightful intertextual references. It is no coincidence that for what concerns the linguistic expressions typical of spoken language and the many *realia* present in the text, in his analysis of the archetypal structure of the *povest'* Lipovetsky wrote about an "*aura*

⁷⁾— Oh you brainless, trusting little boy with little thoughts, — said Tortilla, — you should have stayed at home and studied hard. Instead you ended up in the Land of Fools. — But I just wanted to get more gold coins for Papa Carlo... I'm a verry good and sensible boy... — Your money was stolen by the Cat and the Fox, — said the turtle. — They ran by the pond, they stopped to drink, and I heard how they bragged about digging up your money, and how they fought over it... Oh, you brainless, trusting little fool with little thoughts...

of the objects” common to Russian literature of modernist ancestry, traditionally rich in symbols, allusions and hidden quotations [Lipovetsky 2003; Ainsley Morse 2016, 1–64]. The success of the fairy tale and of its cinematographic transpositions has generated a flourishing subculture around it in the Soviet era, making it a cult object still nowadays²⁶. If Tuscan idioms, vernacular expressions and similes are recurring elements in the formal texture of *Pinocchio*, even in the Russian version stand out proverbs, biting jokes and passages full of literary refinement, as the description of the new-born Burattino’s thoughts: «Не нужно забывать, что Буратино шел всего первый день от рождения. Мысли у него были маленькие-маленькие, коротенькие-коротенькие, пустяковые-пустяковые», “Let’s not forget that Buratino was only on his first birthday. His thoughts were little-little, short-short, trifling-trifling” [Tolstoy 1948, 67]. The emotional impact of dialogues and of characters’ retorts is conveyed by the writer through the syntactic inversion of sentences, a frequent employ of diminutives and the repetitive presence of particles and interjections [Rytsel’ska 2018, 93–106]. The protagonists’ exchanges are distinguished by the usage of a linguistic register taken from everyday life, with words and idiomatic expressions coming from spoken language. The frequency of repetitions and the choice of an individual style — a sort of idiolect — in which the single figures talk give dynamism to the textual fabric²⁷. In both works, then, the wooden puppets’ encounter with animals and with their inner impulses appears similar, and, ultimately, positive. While in *Pinocchio* we can talk about a typical “fairy tale zoomorphism”, with animals mostly being simple, coming from the courtyard and more human than anything, in *Zolotoj klyuchik* a lot of them are derived from Russian folk culture. That is why they live free in the woods and only some of them have anthropomorphic traits; in general, they are vividly characterized, and they tend to assume a magical and saving role for the marionettes. In this sense, their role in the story is more important than in *Pinocchio*’s one, because they particularly contribute to the final victory of Good over Evil:

Буратино взобрался по смолистому стволу на вершину итальянской сосны, одиноко стоявшей на поле, и оттуда закричал, завыл, запищал во всю глотку:

— Звери, птицы, насекомые! Наших бьют! Спасайте ни в чем не виноватых деревянных человечков!.. <...>

Первыми на помощь прилетели стрижи, — бреющим полетом начали стричь воздух перед носом у бульдогов. Псы напрасно шелкали зубами, — стриж не муха: как серая молния — ж-жик мимо носа. <...>

На помощь Артемону шли жабы. Они тащили двух ужей, ослепших от старости. Ужам все равно нужно было помирать — либо под гнилым пнем, либо в желудке у цапли. Жабы уговорили их погибнуть героической смертью. <...>

На помощь Артемону шло семейство ежей: сам еж, ежиха, ежова теща, две ежовы незамужние тетки и маленькие еженята. Летели, гудели толстые черно-бархатные шмели в золотых плащах, шипели крыльями свирепые шершни. Ползли жужелицы и кусачие жуки с длинными усами.

Все звери, птицы и насекомые самоотверженно накинлись на ненавистных полицейских собак [Tolstoy 1948, 103, 104, 105]⁸⁾.

Among animals and humans in the fables puppets are placed, and they can be considered as intermediate figures between the two categories²⁸. Pinocchio, in particular, belongs at the same time to the vegetal world (he is made of wood), to the animal one (he turns into a little donkey) and to human community (for his behaviour and for his final edifying transformation into a real child). Constantly suspended between death and salvation during his adventures, the marionette often runs or runs away from danger, and he is characterized by an extreme speed, so that he is compared several times to a hare, a wild horse and a lizard²⁹ [Gasparini 1997, 87–106]. Anyway, until the end of his wanderings he keeps within himself the warm core of the wooden puppet, with his challenges and his bewitching vitality. As Giovannoli writes,

Pinocchio's author initially referred to *Burattino*, a character that, in Italian Comedy of Art of the Seventeenth century, was one of the figures interpreted by the mask 'Zanni'. It was a character who sifted flour moving in a broken, slouchy way (the name *Burattino* was in turn taken over by the *Burattini*, or those who by trade sifted flour). Therefore, from the technical point of view Pinocchio would be an automatic marionette, a puppet without his strings;

⁸⁾Burattino climbed a tar barrel to the top of an Italian pine alone on the pitch, and from there he screamed, he screamed, he threw down his throat: — Animals, birds, insects! Our people get hit! Save little innocent wooden men!... <...> First to the rescue came the trimmings, that with their flight grazing the ground began to cut through the air in front of the bulldogs. The dogs snapped their teeth in vain, trimmings aren't flies: they darted like grey lightning bolts past the dogs' noses. <...> Then Toads came to help Artemon. They were dragging two grass snakes blind from old age, who had to die anyway, — either under the rotten stump or in the stomach of an egret. The toads persuaded them to die a hero's death. <...> A Hedgehog Family also came to help Artemon: the male hedgehog, his wife, his mother-in-law, two single aunts and many little hedgehogs. Fat, black and velvet bumblebees flew and whistled in their golden coats, the fierce hornets roared. The golden beetles came crawling with other bugs and biters with long moustaches. All the animals, birds and insects selflessly attacked the hated police dogs.

he is *de facto* an animated wooden puppet for the definition attributed to him by Collodi with a precise reason, and not by mistake [Giovannoli 2013, 160].

On a pragmatic level, even though Pinocchio and Burattino are described by the authors from the beginning as ‘puppets’, morphologically they cannot be so, as the latter are usually maneuvered with fingers. Not even marionettes, to be fair, is an entirely appropriate definition, because the protagonists do not move through strings. In a more generic way, thanks to the fairy tale context they could be considered as “animated wooden puppets” [Eller 2021, 8], originally carved to keep company and amuse. In the course of the narrative Pinocchio becomes a conscious human being through a series of mixed experiences: this strange creature reflects the growth path of each child, along which metamorphosis plays a meaningful role [on this topic see Carosi 2001, 208–216; Manganelli 2002, 168–173]. The same can be said of Burattino³⁰, a “middle being” that openly refuses the educational impositions of the human world and remains a wooden puppet, learning from his naivety and mistakes. At a more in-depth analysis, in his resourceful and easy-going attitude emerge some echoes of the *velikij kombinator* (The Great Combinator) Ostap Bender, protagonist of the well-known Russian satirical novel *Dvenadtsat’ stul’ yev* (The Twelve Chairs) by Il’ya Il’f e Yevgeni Petrov (1928)³¹, and of certain “street characters” from the *Odesskiye rasskazy* (Tales of Odessa) by Isaac Babel’ (1931). According to Lipovetsky, by his nature Burattino belongs to the *tricksters*’ category, he is a little scamp who tends to go against the social order, and is therefore not akin to the canonical heroes of socialist realism:

He is the most unimportant character of Soviet culture; it has nothing to do with any social or ideological model. It is significant that, having entered the canon of social realism, Tolstoy’s fairy tale does not fit in a socially realistic proto-story as described by K. Clark: Burattino’s social gains are not repaid for by his growing “consciousness”. Contrary to the social realist canon, he remains “a spontaneous individual” as a literary hero [Lipovetsky 2003, 265].

Throughout his picaresque adventures, Burattino is portrayed as a positive model of creative and non-conformist behaviour. If he is equally good-hearted and curious, impulsive and lazy, compared to Pinocchio he does not waste time to reflect, cry or complain, and overall he is less prone to self-pity. In the wake of the sadly known *bezprizorniki* (orphan “street children”) crowding the streets of big Soviet cities in the 1920s, the little wooden man has developed the art of getting by, he appears

cunning and resolute and does not seem to be particularly longing for a maternal figure.

The “implied reader” and the reception of the two works

Reading a text is always a dynamic process, which in itself entails interaction, a dialogue between the source and the recipients; nowadays it may also involve different senses³². As Negri observes, this aspect is even more relevant as far as children are concerned, whereas the approach to reading implies “the relationship between the space of the page and the reader’s experience, with particular attention to how the book — intended as specific object, texture of verbal, iconic and graphic signs — is received by children’s readers” [Negri 2012, 8]. Iser maintains that these effects and responses are not exclusive characteristics of the text or of the reader. In fact these two elements interact in a certain way: each literary work represents a potential effect that is achieved during the act of reading, often compared to a ‘journey’ [Iser 1974, 274]. In other words, a text is a potential semiotic and semantic system, and only the reader, interacting with it, can draw a coherent image, a whole. Readers go through the various perspectives opened by the text, connecting one to the other in different models and points of view, putting form and content into action and experimenting with themselves, too. Meaning, then, according to Iser, is an effect of which the reader makes active experience, not a set of predefined ideas pre-existing to reading [Iser 1974, 278–280]. Literary texts, in particular, are characterized by a double and heterogeneous nature, because they exist independently from reading, but only at a potential level; they become acts only when we read them. In this perspective, an authentic literary work is created by the interaction between the text and the reader’s imagination, and it becomes a virtual scheme made of white spaces, gaps and indeterminacy, in which the affective component also intervenes. We attempt to understand the materials of a text within a consistent and coherent framework because it is this which allows us to make sense of whatever is unfamiliar to us in it [Iser 1978, 21]. Complementary to the “implied author”³³, within each text there is a space for the “implied reader”, in which the real readers are free to place themselves or not. The “implied reader” is a textual construction that the actual reader can perceive as constraint, since it corresponds to the role assigned to him/her by the semantic and formal structure of the literary work. The “implied reader” stands as a model for specific readers, it defines a point of view that allows them to rebuild, from time to time, the meaning of the text [Iser 1978, 27–29].

Which “implied reader”, what image of a child emerges between the lines of the two works? First of all, it is important to underline that for their poetics both texts are literary fables, they are not of popular origins, although they have some aspects in common with traditional fairy tales of magic [see Lipovetsky 1992]. Both share with the latter the continuous twists in the plot, the presence of absurd elements, the mixture of real and fantastic and the happy ending, which has a compensatory function. These texts have a double reception channel, i.e. they are aimed at both children and adults [Wojchikowska-Wantuch 2019, 67]. From the formal point of view they alternate moral admonitions and linguistic inventions typical of the fairy tale genre and of the puppet theatre with a series of allusions, cultural references and more or less veiled quotations. Each of the two works reflects the educational conceptions of their respective epochs and cultural contexts. For what concerns *Pinocchio*, as Mascia writes, “in the Nineteenth century children were considered as ‘passive subjects’, to whom knowledge and correct behaviour should be imparted; their most appreciable virtues were mnemonic ability and obedience” [Mascia 2020, 72–73]. Collodi apparently seems to adhere to the educational principles dominant in his time, but, as has already been said, at a close reading we can notice in his work an ironic underhand criticism of adult figures. Since the famous and parodic *incipit*, the narrator often intervenes in the story, directly addressing his little readers and commenting the puppet’s choices, lies and pranks. In particular, the narrator’s voice reprimands with subtle irony his young audience, inviting children not to follow Pinocchio’s example. The rhetorical insistence on the positive effects of study and work, on money and on “becoming a good boy”, however, contrasts with other *leitmotifs* that innervate the text. Precisely because of their recurrence these warnings appear “emptied from within”, as if they were sheer formulas repeated in deference to late Nineteenth-century pedagogical line. Thanks to the vivacity of the jokes drawn from orality and to the typical linguistic deconstruction of the writer’s style, we can speak of an alienating realism, that through moments of pure humour and sweet and sour comedy generates surreal effects³⁴. Elements of dialogue with the readers can also be found in the detailed titles-summaries of the chapters, which contain anticipations and analepses of the events that, as Marcheschi notes, attract and surprise at the same time:

Then, it is as if other spaces of escape were opened within the work: the author-“fish” would seem to give the reader-“fisherman” the hook to get caught, but fleeing immediately after. It’s the game of giving and subtracting,

of the fantastic freedom to follow one's creative flair. But it is also a way to surprise, to create further spaces for paradox and parody, that is to say, for modes of writing that had always been the most congenial to Collodi [Marcheschi 1995, 218].

Even today, children who read *Pinocchio* are attracted by the puppet's curiosity, by his fantasy and rebellious spirit, by his "germinal" and dishevelled nature that highlight his existential hunger [Carosi 2001, 30]. Rule rebellion also means experimentation, in fact the stubborn wooden marionette is moved inwardly on his educational path by impulses and desire much more than by the sermons of the Talking Cricket or the "refrain" on becoming a morally good boy. To the eyes of young contemporary readers Pinocchio is one and original, he fascinates them through his naivety, his whims and his passion for typically childlike dimensions such as uninterrupted playing and the colourful world of marionettes. What really drives them to the process of "filling in the gaps", in Iser's terms, is the possibility to evade, the disobedience and tenacity of the puppet during his escapades. As Wojchikowska-Wantuch underlines, the novel in full version is too long and difficult for pre-school age and so, in fact, the success of the fairy tale among its potential readers *par excellence* is mainly due to its appearance in reduced versions: "The paradox is that *Pinocchio*'s complete text is inaccessible for children in pre-school age, who would be its main potential addressees. For them it is too long and complex, although, as it seems, children are perfectly capable of identifying with the book's hero. That is why *Pinocchio*'s adaptations are so popular" [Wojchikowska-Wantuch 2019, 66]. In several studies has been pointed out that the image of the little rascal with a heart of gold that permeates the pages — initially not very prone to fatigue and study effort — contains a series of ironic autobiographical references to the writer's childhood. Despite the constant tension created in the narrative by the fear of death and by the punishments/metamorphoses of the character, the implied child reader, today certainly less naïf, is fascinated by the puppet's whimsy, lively and enterprising nature. From the beginning to the end, his literary and existential journey takes place through a series of unexpected reversals and incessant drilling from one opposite to another. There is no good purpose that does not turn into mischief, nor a misadventure that is not overturned in escape and salvation [Agamben 2021, 16]. Nowadays, in contact with educational parameters completely different from those in which the work was born, the story has not lost its freshness and inventiveness:

— Aiuto! aiuto! Oh povero me! Non c'è nessuno che venga a salvarmi?
 — Chi vuoi che ti salvi, disgraziato?... — disse in quel buio una vociaccia fessa di chitarra scordata.

— Chi è che parla così — domandò Pinocchio, sentendosi gelare dallo spavento.

— Sono io! sono un povero Tonno, inghiottito dal Pesce-cane insieme con te. E tu che pesce sei?

— Io non ho che vedere nulla coi pesci. Io sono un burattino. <...>

— Neppure io vorrei esser digerito, — soggiunse il Tonno, — ma io sono abbastanza filosofo e mi consolo pensando che, quando si nasce Tonni, c'è più dignità a morir sott'acqua che sott'olio!...

— Scioccherie! — gridò Pinocchio.

— La mia è un'opinione, — replicò il Tonno, — e le opinioni, come dicono i Tonni politici, vanno rispettate! <...>

— Chi è che muore?

— Sono io e il mio povero babbo!...

— Questa voce la riconosco! Tu sei Pinocchio!...

— Preciso: e tu?

— Io sono il Tonno, il tuo compagno di prigionia in corpo al Pesce-cane.

— E come hai fatto a scappare?

— Ho imitato il tuo esempio. Tu sei quello che mi hai insegnato la strada, e dopo te, sono fuggito anch'io.

— Tonno mio, tu càpiti proprio a tempo! Ti prego per l'amor che porti ai Tonnini tuoi figliuoli: aiutaci, o siamo perduti.

— Volentieri e con tutto il cuore. Attaccatevi tutt'e due alla mia coda, e lasciatevi guidare. In quattro minuti vi condurrò alla riva. <...>

— Amico mio, tu hai salvato il mio babbo! Dunque non ho parole per ringraziarti abbastanza! Permetti almeno che ti dia un bacio in segno di riconoscenza eterna!... Il Tonno cacciò il muso fuori dall'acqua, e Pinocchio, piegandosi coi ginocchi a terra, gli posò un affettuosissimo bacio sulla bocca. A questo tratto di spontanea e vivissima tenerezza, il povero Tonno, che non c'era avvezzo, si sentì talmente commosso, che vergognandosi a farsi veder piangere come un bambino, ricacciò il capo sott'acqua e sparì [Collodi 1995, 508; 509; 517]⁹⁾.

⁹⁾— Help! Help! he cried. — Oh, poor me! Won't someone come to save me? — Who is there to help you, unhappy boy? — said a rough voice, like a guitar out of tune. — Who is talking? — asked Pinocchio, frozen with terror. — It is me, a poor Tuna swallowed by the Dog-Fish at the same time as you. And what kind of a fish are you? — I have nothing to do with fishes. I am a Puppet. <...> — But I don't want to be digested, — But I don't want to be digested, — shouted Pinocchio, starting to sob. — Neither do I, — said the Tuna, — but I am wise enough to think that if one is born a fish, it is more dignified to die under the water than in the frying pan!.. — What nonsense! — cried Pinocchio. — Mine is an opinion, — replied the Tuna, — and opinions, as Tunas employed in politics say, should be respected! <...> — Who is dying? — It is my poor father and me. — I know the voice. You are Pinocchio. — Exactly. And you? — I am the Tuna, your

After all, if the protagonist in the final part decides to change his behaviour, he does it mainly for love, the same that has been shown to him, on every occasion, by Geppetto and the Fairy with Turquoise Hair. The happy ending is connected to the growth and progressive acquisition of self-awareness of the marionette, who begins to think about his own choices. As Tinelli writes, “Pinocchio’s adventures represent the story of a journey undertaken in a world of values, on a path of human formation during which every acquired virtue — although always limited and unable to avoid a subsequent fall — is condensed in the spiritual baggage of the protagonist to the point of constituting the formation of a person. It is not only Pinocchio’s story, but also the metaphor of the story of each person who as a child becomes a man” [Tinelli 2017, 86]. Towards the end of the narrative the puppet reveals a commitment to be formed from an ethical point of view that is meant to be more fully understood by adult readers, to which are also addressed the complaints and allusions in a satirical key to the Italy of the time (let us think about the allegorical representation of medical science or about the “upside-down” management of justice in the novel).

In the early years of the Soviet Union Collodi’s work had been banned as belonging to a genre — the fairy tales one — that was strongly unpopular from the educational and ideological perspective. From 1933 on, instead, *Pinocchio* got a sort of official “rehabilitation”, and was considered suitable for kids’ education in the wake of a massive campaign in favour of a new literature for Soviet children. Also for this reason A. Tolstoy resumed with enthusiasm his old project of reworking Collodi’s text, coming soon to create something original. In Giovannioli’s words, starting from the playful preface already mentioned “the author talks to his young readers from the point of view of an adult who is remembering his own childhood, marked by the memory of a lost book that has been preserved in time thanks to his diverse ways of re-narrating it. The literary expedient of memory passed on orally

companion in the Dog-Fish’s stomach. — And how did you escape? — I imitated your example. You are the one who showed me the way, and after you went, I followed. — Tuna, you arrived at the right moment! I implore you, for the love you bear your children, the little Tunnies, to help us, or we are lost! — With great pleasure indeed. Hang onto my tail, both of you, and let me lead you. In a twinkle you will be safe on land. — <...> — Dear friend, you have saved my father! I have not enough words to thank you! Allow me to embrace you as a sign of my eternal gratitude!... The Tuna stuck his nose out of the water and Pinocchio knelt on the sand and kissed him most affectionately on his cheek. At this warm greeting the poor Tuna, who was not used to such tenderness, felt so moved that, being ashamed to be seen weeping like a child, he turned quickly, plunged into the sea, and disappeared.

is employed here by the writer to declare the intention to tell the story in its authenticity now that he has fully recovered the memory of it” [Giovannoli 2013, 187]. Of course it is literary fiction, the prologue is the result of the Soviet writer’s imagination, and is in fact an integral part of the text. However, it also serves to highlight the homage and the explicit reference to the Italian author. As we already observed, during the drafting of his literary reworking A. Tolstoy reduced the moralistic and didactic message of Collodi’s fable, at the same time adapting to the Russian-Soviet cultural context a number of ideas and references coming from the Italian original background. Scholars are divided: some noted that, on the whole, *Zolotoj klyuchik* is less gruesome and less stylistically redundant than *Pinocchio*; it has been evidenced, moreover, that the work is free of the moralism typical of Nineteenth century positivist pedagogy [Wojchik-Dudek 2012, 14–17]. Other researchers interpreted A. Tolstoy’s fairy tale as political propaganda, associating it with the canons of socialist realism for the final “collective rebellion” of the marionettes — that would overshadow class struggle, — and also for the prominent position of the author, nicknamed “the Red Duke”, in the Soviet Writers’ Union. As Wojchikowska-Wantuch writes, however, this type of reading comes from a superficial understanding of the work, connected to a stereotypical reception of Soviet literature [Wojchikowska-Wantuch 2019, 74]. *The Little Golden Key* contains a series of meanings and symbolic resonances that differentiate it from children’s books of literature *tout court*, and that explain the reasons why the work has become a real cult object in Russia³⁵. The fairy tale had been conceived by the author as a text for multiple addressees, in fact in the revised manuscript for the volume edition was added the subtitle “новый роман для детей и взрослых”, “a new novel for children and adults” [Petrovskij 2006, 220; Wojchikowska-Wantuch 2019, 67]. On one hand the most direct implied readers appear to be the new generation of Soviet children, seen as cheerful and strong *pioneers*, positive builders of a society different from the previous ones, a society in which friendship, progress and a sense of community are the most significant values. On the other hand there are adult recipients able to read between the lines, who can make emerge and interact with their cultural and experiential baggage a series of allusions and references to contemporary reality. In particular, in recent research has been evidenced the presence of a secondary, satirical subtext in the work, which alludes in a parodical way to events and well-known personalities in the Moscow literary and theatrical milieu of the ‘20s and ‘30s: for example, in the figure of Burattino would be ironically depicted Gorky,

in the dreamy poet Pierrot — Blok, in *Mal'vina* one could glimpse either Lyubov' Mendeleeva, Ol'ga Knipper or Mariya Andreeva³⁶, while Karabas Barabas would be a treacherous and caricatural portrait of the theatre director E. V. Mejerhol'd [Tolstaya 1997; Poddubnaya 2020, 52]. Burattino's character is not monolithically evoked: he is careless and irreverent, and in the footsteps of Pinocchio in some situations he proves lazy, mischievous and unwilling to study and work like any lively child who refuses a too serious and responsible approach. A. Tolstoy's little wooden man seems to enjoy disobeying, he is rebellious and independent, even though his exceptionally long and pointed nose does not stretch, because he does not tell so many lies as Pinocchio. Like any daring street boy he reacts with impatience to the good manners that *Mal'vina* tries to impose on him, "because Burattino is the prototype of the new Soviet child who must acquire a pragmatic sense to cope with the difficulties of life. He must also love nature, travel, have a sense of adventure and overcome fear, learning to be a leader to guide oneself and others" [Giovannoli 2013, 273]. At the beginning of the narrative Burattino appears inclined to play and transgress naively: he is endowed with a "lightness" that distinguishes him from Pinocchio, who is more mature, because he manifests awareness of the world and a clear distinction between play and school duties [Ascenzi, Caroli, Sani 2018, 232]. Within Collodi's puppet a docile and a rebellious part are opposed, and the Talking Cricket symbolically represents the inner voice of consciousness:

— Chi è che mi chiama? — disse Pinocchio tutto impaurito.

— Sono io! —

Pinocchio si voltò, e vide un grosso grillo che saliva lentamente su su per il muro.

— Dimmi, Grillo, e tu chi sei?

— Io sono il Grillo-parlante, e abito in questa stanza da più di cent'anni.

<...>

— Guai a quei ragazzi che si ribellano ai loro genitori, e che abbandonano capricciosamente la casa paterna. Non avranno mai bene in questo mondo; e prima o poi dovranno pentirsene amaramente.

— Canta pure, Grillo mio, come ti pare e piace: ma io so che domani, all'alba, voglio andarmene di qui, perché se rimango qui, avverrà a me quel che avviene a tutti gli altri ragazzi, vale a dire mi manderanno a scuola, e per amore e per forza mi toccherà studiare; e io, a dirtela in confidenza, di studiare non ne ho punto voglia, e mi diverto di più a correre dietro alle farfalle e a salire su per gli alberi a prendere gli uccellini di nido. <...>

— E se non ti garba di andare a scuola, perché non impari almeno un mestiere tanto da guadagnarti onestamente un pezzo di pane?

— Vuoi che te lo dica? Replicò Pinocchio, che cominciava a perdere la pazienza. Fra i mestieri del mondo non ce n'è uno solo che veramente mi vada a genio.

— E questo mestiere sarebbe?

— Quello di mangiare, bere dormire, divertirmi e fare dalla mattina alla sera la vita del vagabondo. <...>

— Povero Pinocchio! mi fai proprio compassione!...

— Perché ti faccio compassione?

— Perché sei un burattino e, quel che è peggio, perché hai la testa di legno [Collodi 1995, 371–373]¹⁰⁾.

All rebuke Pinocchio in the story, but he also reproaches himself, he sins and repents, he is intimately good and unruly at the same time. In his figure Good and Evil coexist, so much that from the implied reader's point of view one could think, with the due distinctions, to what Massimo Fusillo has defined as “negative empathy” of a literary character [Fusillo, 2019]. In the Soviet fable, instead, readers can distinguish from the first lines the good from the bad, there are no ambiguous characters. Negative emotions are downplayed through laughter and A. Tolstoy's humorous style [Urnov 1985, 254], and children are offered a fresco in less dark colours of dangers and difficulties in life:

Буратино завертел головой, оглядывая каморку.

— Эй, кто здесь?

— Здесь я, — кри-кри...

Буратино увидел существо, немного похожее на таракана, но с головой, как у кузнечика. Оно сидело на стене над очагом и тихо потрескивало, — кри-кри, — глядело выпуклыми, как из стекла, радужными глазами, шевелило усиками.

¹⁰⁾— Who is calling me? — asked Pinocchio, greatly frightened. — I am! — Pinocchio turned and saw a large cricket crawling slowly up the wall. — Tell me, Cricket, who are you? — I am the Talking Cricket, and I have been living in this room for more than one hundred years. <...> — Woe to boys who refuse to obey their parents and run away from home! They will never be happy in this world, and when they are older, they will be very sorry for it. — Sing on, Cricket mine, as you please. What I know is, that tomorrow, at dawn, I'll leave this place forever. If I stay here the same thing will happen to me which happens to all other boys and girls. They are sent to school, and whether they want to or not, they must study. As for me, let me tell you, I hate to study! It's much more fun, I think, to chase after butterflies, climb trees, and steal birds from nests. <...> — If you do not like going to school, why don't you at least learn a trade, so that you can earn an honest living? — Shall I tell you something? — asked Pinocchio, who was beginning to lose patience. — Of all the trades in the world, there is only one that really suits me. — And what can that be? — That of eating, drinking, sleeping, playing, and wandering around from morning till night. <...> — Poor Pinocchio, I am sorry for you. — Why? — Because you are a Puppet, and, what is much worse, because you have a wooden head.

— Эй, ты кто такой?

— Я — Говорящий Сверчок, — ответило существо, — живу в этой комнате больше ста лет. <...> — Ах, Буратино, Буратино, — проговорил сверчок, — брось баловство, слушайся Карло, без дела не убегай из дома и завтра начни ходить в школу. Вот мой совет. Иначе тебя ждут ужасные опасности и страшные приключения. За твою жизнь я не дам идохлой сухой мухи.

— Поччччему? — спросил Буратино.

— А вот ты увидишь — поччччему, — ответил Говорящий Сверчок.

— Ах ты, столетняя букашка-таракашка! — крикнул Буратино. — Больше всего на свете я люблю страшные приключения. Завтра чуть свет уйду из дома — лазить по заборам, разорять птичьи гнезда, дразнить мальчишек, таскать за хвосты собак и кошек... Я еще не то придумаю!..

— Жаль мне тебя, жаль, Буратино, прольешь ты горькие слезы.

— Поччччему? — опять спросил Буратино.

— Потому, что у тебя глупая деревянная голова [Tolstoy 1948, 70, 71]¹¹).

The two passages quoted above clearly show the differences between the writers' tones and styles: the flourishing literary richness of Collodi's sentences is opposed to the incisive, almost onomatopoeic lines that recall the comics language in the Russian text. Both protagonists are ironically labelled as "wooden heads" for their laziness, and react in a rebellious way to the Talking Cricket's admonitions, shouting their playful and anarchic desire for freedom. A. Tolstoy's tendency to adapt the characters and the setting of the Italian tale to the imaginary of Russian culture in which he intended to introduce it made it possible to highlight "other" ideas and values, such as friendship and the sense

¹¹Burattino turned his head, looking around the little room. — Hey, who's in here? — There's me, crri-crri... Burattino saw a creature a little bit like a cockroach, but with a grasshopper head. It sat on the wall above the hearth and quietly cracked, — crri-crri, — it looked out with its rainbow, bulging eyes that seemed like glass, and it waved its small antennae. — Hey, who are you? I'm the Talking Cricket, — answered the creature, — I've been living in this room for over a hundred years. <...> O, Burattino, Burattino, — said the Cricket, — Stop your foolishness, listen to Carlo, don't run away from home without a reason and start going to school tomorrow. Here's my advice. If not, terrible dangers and frightening adventures await you. I wouldn't give a dead dry fly for your life. — Whyyyy on earth? — asked Burattino. — You'll soon see, whyyy — answered the Talking Cricket. — Oh you, a-hundred-year-old cockroach bug! — shouted Burattino. — I love scary adventures more than anything. Tomorrow I'm going to run away from home at dawn: I'll climb fences, tear up bird's nests, tease boys, I'll pull dogs and cats' tails... and I'll think of something else!... — I pity you, Burattino, you will shed bitter tears. — Whyyyy on earth? — asked again Burattino. — Because you have a stupid wooden head.

of belonging to a to a collective community. Within this framework, Burattino's search for happiness sharply differs from the individual moral parable of Collodi's hero. In fact, as Caroli writes,

The end of the two narratives differs. The ultimate struggle against Karabas Barabas is very difficult, as is the exit from the Dog-Fish's belly, which gives Pinocchio the opportunity to show his courage. It's the first step towards his change, the transformation in real child and the achievement of a happy life. While in the Italian tale Pinocchio becomes a good boy after having experienced numerous misadventures, in A. Tolstoy's text the little wooden man's re-educational process is equally adventurous, but less painful. The two puppets have a "wooden head", but they are motivated by courage, a sense of solidarity and justice [Ascenzi, Caroli, Sani 2018, 241].

Pinocchio and Burattino are in their own way explorers and adventurers, in their figures prevails an everyday life fantastic, with the pot painted on the wall and the *leitmotiv* of street kids, who tend to wander and to have fights with other children. The two little wooden men move in a world, in many respects drawn from the real one: it is their genetic diversity that makes it fairy-tale. They are both stringless puppets, so they are different from human beings, but also from real marionettes. Between the pages of the two texts the protagonists are always running somewhere, they run away and are chased, they fight, they risk being devoured and devour in their turn: hunger is a powerful and recurring image in their narratives³⁷. All these aspects appear in line with the classical development of the literary road adventure. If Pinocchio is characterized by a constant inner monologue which accompanies his path of initiation and also becomes a metaphor of free will, Burattino, as we already observed, is pragmatic and bold, he does not think or despair much, but tends to act. Both characters must go towards their respective destiny, towards the satisfaction of the wonderful curiosity typical of childhood, dealing on various occasions with adults' insensitivity or sadism.

The evolution of the reception of the two works tells us a lot about the socio-cultural phases that have occurred in their respective contexts of reference³⁸. Each generation of readers, in fact, implements something and draws from a text different meanings, which are linked to their own experiences and cultural background. If in the late nineteenth century the addressees, especially adults, could grasp and "decipher" specific references and allusions to the surrounding reality, today *Pinocchio* is considered as a paradigmatic model of work of art with a multi-generational and multimedia fruition, which is also re-semantized

through languages other than the literary one [Marazzi 2018, 148]. As Faeti writes, on the whole Collodi's fairy tale may be read allegorically as an entire "library about the Italians", with a rich gallery of characters, moods, vices and little quirks coming from post-unification Italy. At the same time, though, the figure of the puppet, with his loneliness and frenzy, has become a universal archetype of the imaginary [Faeti 2018, 259]. The success and popularity of Pinocchio among children and adults, on different reading plans, reached their peak in the first decades of the Twentieth century, even if adequate critical analyses from the stylistic and formal point of view have been conducted, especially since the 1980s. Previously, in fact, in our country the intellectual reception was affected by the preconceptions towards journalism and children's literature, considered as minor genres. As Ballerio underlines, on the whole contemporary readers of Collodi's work — whose approach to the text is often mediated or influenced by Walt Disney's well-known film transposition (1940) — express positive views for what concerns the protagonist and the linguistic inventions. However, they tend to find moralistic admonitions obsolete, and they also wonder whether the novel is really suitable for children, given the violence that pervades it:

other readers keep a more open mind — they admit that at least for some children the book may be suitable — and still others recognize that violence has always been an element of children's narratives. The majority, in any case, still insists on violence, and considers it a good reason not to read the original *Pinocchio* to children. In this sense, it seems to me that what the story exemplifies, beyond what the moral discourse refers to, acts very widely and profoundly on the reception of contemporary readers, because it touches a theme with respect to which their attitude towards childhood deeply differs from the prevailing one of the Nineteenth-century public [Ballerio 2018, 182].

Since its first publication in the 1930s A. Tolstoy's *povest'* enjoyed success and positive reviews in the Soviet Union and in the satellite countries of the former socialist bloc, but its mass popularity is mainly connected to some subsequent film transpositions³⁹ (Fig. 3). In the early years after the fall of the USSR, instead, the reception of the work was negatively conditioned from its previous interpretation in a political-propagandist light and from the preconception, currently in many respects debunked, of its adherence to the canons of socialist realism [Wojchikowska-Wantuch 2019, 80]. It has been observed, for example, that in the character of Karabas Barabas — the tyrannical director of the puppet theatre — would be stigmatized metaphorically imperialism and the NEP capitalism that exploit the oppressed masses



Figure 3. Photogram from the Soviet musical film *Priklyucheniya Buratino* (1975)

(i.e. the marionettes, that in the final part rebel and run away ripping their strings) [Giovannoli 2013, 97–98]. Anyway, the celebration of the Soviet Union as the country of freedom and equality is not present in the text itself, but was added in the endings of some theatrical productions that enjoyed great success, among which a version of 1936, another one staged in 1938 and the 1939 one written by the same author⁴⁰. Beyond the heavy influence of the Stalinist cultural context, in *The Little Golden Key* there is much more, and in fact today the fable is republished, read and loved in Russia, especially since some jokes and expressions taken from the tale have entered proverbs and sayings used in everyday language. As some scholars noted, the most popular of them have also been re-proposed by contemporary mass media see [Budaev, Chudinov, Nakhimova 2019]. Similarly to Pinocchio, *Zolotoj klyuchik* has endured the passage of time and has become part of the reference cultural models, occupying a leading position in the Soviet and then Russian children's literature, while despite the several translations and reissues Collodi's novel is currently less well known [Efendiyeva 2020, 76]. Since the first publication of the fairy tales, the wooden features of Pinocchio and Burattino have indelibly impressed in collective imagination also through the interpretations of great illustrators, and, more recently, through the animated works realized by international masters of modern graphic and visual arts. Their re-interpretations have contributed to the timeless fascination of the characters and to their iconic

status [Grilli 2016, 109–111]. There is no doubt that the high quality and the creativity of many visual artworks have positively influenced the popularity and the contemporary reception of both texts⁴¹.

Thanks to their evocative power, *Pinocchio* and *Zolotoj klyuchik* are regarded as transgenerational fables; they still appear to us as witty and compelling narratives, in which the lively and airy tone of writing is fed by a subtle humour and by the lexical and idiomatic peculiarities of language. The two authors take us, as readers, inside the silences of the text: what transformed the two puppets into universal archetypes of the imaginary are not the paternalistic moral rules, the admonitions or the idea of an education based on fear. It is not even the sheer exaltation of friendship and collective efforts. What captures present-day readers — children and adults as well — are the transgression, the tendency to follow one's own impulses, the desire for something new and different, the rebellion against the rules and the charm of a fantastic, magical and metamorphic world in which playing games and the theatre have central role. In this regard, the symbolic value of the theatre found behind the little door and then self-managed by the marionettes at the end of A. Tolstoy's tale is emblematic: in fact, the coveted goal of so many adventures for Burattino and his friends is not the transformation into human beings, but the assertion of their autonomy and dignity as puppets. These are cheerful works and, especially in the case of *Pinocchio*, also painful, because they make us reflect on the necessary end of childhood, that can live again only if it is told. They were composed by writers who knew, through their own experience, that the world is not always suitable for children. Hence the dual fascination of their texts, in which an adult author talks to children and at the same time he tells adults about his childhood. As the well-known Italian songwriter Giorgio Gaber sang, "Don't teach children / don't teach them your morals / it is so tired and sick / it may do harm / <...> Do not show them / A known path / But if you really want to / Teach them only the magic of life"⁴². Going back to Gianni Rodari's image in the epigraph of this work, the reading of *Pinocchio's* and *Burattino's* fairy-tale *Bildungsroman* gives us the possibility even today, detaching us for a moment from the chaos and the frenetic multimedia rhythm of our everyday lives, to be the steps of the staircase that each child should climb.

Notes

¹ (My translation, *I. R.*). Unless otherwise specified, all the English translations in the present work are mine.

- ² On the story of the first Italian periodical for children published in Rome and on its innovative character see [Loparco 2016].
- ³ See [Collodi 1883]. As is known, the novel had five reissues meticulously reviewed by the author already before his untimely death (1890). The work achieved its greatest success and circulation in the first two decades of the Twentieth century [Castellani Pollidori 1983, XLVIII].
- ⁴ Among the several cinematographic transpositions of *Pinocchio*, we mention for their popularity and for their refined soundtracks the world-famous animation film realized by Walt Disney in 1940 and, in the Italian context, the television series directed by Luigi Comencini (1972), the film version by Roberto Benigni (2002) and the most recent one by Matteo Garrone (2019). In our view, thanks to the accurate make-up and costumes, this last transposition brings to the surface the Gothic-oneiric substrate, Pinocchio's loneliness and the dark night tones in which the events take place. For these reasons, it may be considered one of the most akin to the atmosphere of the original novel; (on it see: <https://www.mymovies.it/film/2019/pinocchio/>).
- ⁵ The proliferation of new editions, translations and reductions of *Pinocchio* was also favoured by the expiry of Lorenzini's copyright in 1940. The number of translations to date refers to a research carried out recently by Noemi Veneziani and the American translation agency *7 Brands Inc*, according to which Collodi's work is currently the best-selling Italian children's book in the world, and ranks second among the most translated works see [Veneziani 2021, 13–18] and <https://thetranslationcompany.com/news/blog/language-news/worlds-translated-books/>. In our country have also been published various editions of *Pinocchio* in dialects and three in Latin see [Eller 2021, 8].
- ⁶ As is widely known, six years before writing *Pinocchio* Collodi had translated into Italian and edited with success a collection of fairy tales by Perrault: [Collodi 1876]. This work had enthralled him in the world of magic fairy tales. He also wrote some funny and innovative school textbooks for children with naughty, but very lifelike protagonists as Giannettino e Minuzzolo see [Ascenzi, Sani 2018, 123–169]. The first to be published was *Giannettino. Libro per i ragazzi* (Giannettino. A Book for Children, 1877), in which using a simple, enjoyable language Collodi told children's stories connected to some notions and didactic narratives. The same cheeky kid appeared later also in some following Grammar, Geography and Maths textbooks produced by the author. *Minuzzolo. Secondo libro di lettura* (Minuzzolo. The Second Reading Book, 1878) was focused instead on the adventures of a young boy, and was aimed at increasing children's love for reading.
- ⁷ Some examples of this approach were the ideas of children traditionally seen as “empty bags” to be filled above all with a rigid moral distinction between Good and Evil, with obedience to parents and teachers, and with the norms of a socially and ethically accepted “correct behaviour”. Fear and punishment for transgression were at the basis of this Positivistic educational

approach, which was aimed at raising good future citizens of the Italian state [see Caroli, Ascenzi, Sani 2018, 209–210]. Most of children's books of the time were imbued with these views, and were consequently full of edifying stories and paternalistic recommendations on how to behave well at school and at home. See, for example, Pietro Thouar's works (1809–1861): the Florentine writer was a very popular author for school in the second half of the Nineteenth century. It is not without malice that, during the fight on the beach between Pinocchio and his schoolmates, one of the books thrown into the sea is precisely Thouar's *Tales* [Collodi 1995, ch. XXVII, 460].

- ⁸ Lorenzini was a theatre critic, a frequent visitor and connoisseur of the scenes, and wrote on the subject for various journals (the satirical weekly «Il Lampione», «L'Italia musicale», and so on). Besides, in 1853 he founded a new magazine entirely devoted to the theatre world, «Lo Scaramuccia», on which he published theatrical chronicles and satirical pamphlets, carrying out at the same time certain cultural battles or controversies see [Bertacchini 1993, 39–60; Ascenzi, Sani 2018, 150–152].
- ⁹ In the course of the narrative there are several references to the hardness and strength of the wood of which Pinocchio is made: let us think about the kicks he gives to his rough classmates, more painful than human ones, about his foot that fits in the door of the Fairy with Turquoise Hair's house without breaking, or about the many occasions in which the puppet does not drown and is not devoured thanks to the firm texture of the material.
- ¹⁰ Aleksey Tolstoy, recovering after a heart attack, wrote in a letter to Gorky on 13th February 1835: "I'm working on *Pinocchio*. At the beginning I only wanted to rewrite in Russian Collodi's content. But then I gave up on it, it was coming out a bit boring and bland. With Marshak's approval, now I'm writing on the same subject in my own way" [Kryukova 1989, 202]. The publication of the fairy tale on the children's magazine "Pionerskaya Pravda" began on 7th November 1935, anniversary of the October Revolution according to the Gregorian calendar adopted in 1918. The first volume edition dates back to a few months later [see Tolstoy, 1936].
- ¹¹ The first Russian translation of *Pinocchio* was made by Kamill Danini (or Camillo Dagnini, 1850–1903), and it was published in Saint Petersburg in 1906 on the children's weekly magazine "Zadushevnoe slovo" ("Sincere Word", No. 1, pp. 14–16) with the title *Priklyucheniya derevyannogo malchika* (The Adventures of a Wooden Boy). Later this version was published in volume by O. M. Volf with the title *PINOKKIO. Priklyucheniya derevyannogo malchika* (Saint Petersburg, 1908), and recently it has been re-issued by Eksmo Press (Moscow, 2014). In 1907 a second translation of Collodi's fable came out in Moscow with the title *Priklyucheniya Fistashki. Zhizneopisanie Petrushki-marionetki* (Pistachio's Adventures. The Life of a Petrushka-Marionette), produced by S. E. Pavlovsky and published by I. N. Kushnerev's editing company. In this case the title highlights the references to the popular Russian marionette *Petrushka* and to the Italian

Comedy of Art. Among other Russian translations of the early Twentieth century is noteworthy the version by the writer Nina Petrovskaya (1878–1928) with the collaboration of the same Aleksey Tolstoy, that came out only on a Russian émigré magazine in Berlin with the title *Priklyucheniya Pinokkio* (1924). In the Stalinist era Collodi's novel was highly unpopular for ideological reasons, and in fact a new full Russian translation was only published in 1959. It was carried out by the poet and writer E. G. Kazakevich (1913–1962) with the brilliant illustrations by V. Alfeyevskiy: K. Kollodi, *Priklyucheniya Pinokkio. Istoriya derevyannogo chelovechka* (The Adventures of Pinocchio. Story of a Wooden Little Man), Moscow, "Detskaya literatura". This renowned translation had twenty-two re-issues, and it is the version in which the vast majority of Soviet readers knew the work for the first time see [Efendiyeva 2020, 77–80]; it was also the most complete and faithful to the original text. Considering the international success of the fable and its various theatrical and cinematographic adaptations, after the fall of the USSR a growing number of Russian translations have been made, among which should be mentioned the recent versions by N. Kray (2017) and M. Volchonsky (2021).

- ¹² The image of the little golden key is recurrent in Russian symbolist poetry that Tolstoy well knew, as he had probably read *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) by L. Carroll (1832–1898), in which appears a little golden key that opens a mysterious door hidden behind a curtain see [Aleshina, 2006]. Some critics have also underlined that it may represent a secret reference to the heraldic coat of arms of the Counts Tolstoy, in which the object is present [Poddubnaya, 50].
- ¹³ Although he is much more alone in his misfortunes, even Pinocchio is capable of heroic acts, for example when he proposes to Fire-Eater to die instead of Harlequin or when he guides his father Gepetto out of the terrible Dog-Fish.
- ¹⁴ In the wake of the literary critical in-depth analyses of Collodi's biography and novel connected to the centenary of its first publication, *Zolotoj klyuchik* has been translated into Italian twice in the same decade: see [Tolstoy 1981 and Tolstoy 1986, 17–84]. The latter is distinguished by a greater fidelity to the original text, rich in idioms and expressions typical of the spoken language. For an accurate comparison between the two Italian translations and Tolstoy's work see [Giovannoli 2013, 300–328].
- ¹⁵ On the many references underlying the dogs' names in Pinocchio and in other works by Collodi see [Paccagnini 2018, 63–75].
- ¹⁶ Among the other animals that appear in the narrative, the Dog-Fish is frightening and swallows everything he finds on his path, but almost without a real will to do evil: to dampen his monstrous attributes it is said that he is old and suffers from asthma. As Tinelli observes, his gigantic dimensions and his voracity out of measure detach him from everyday reality, so that his belly may be considered metaphorically as a "figurative place" in Pinocchio's odyssey in search for his father [Tinelli 2017, 83–84].

- ¹⁷ In the novel, Candlewick alludes to non-school Thursdays when he tries to convince Pinocchio to go with him to the Land of Toys: “In quel paese benedetto non si studia mai. Il giovedì non si fa scuola: e ogni settimana è composta di sei giovedì e di una domenica”¹²⁾ [Collodi 1995, 479]. It’s a detail taken from contemporary reality: in post-unification Italy, in fact, Thursdays were really off because the state, establishing compulsory school attendance (1877), considered that a midweek break was necessary for a balanced physical and psychological development of children. This choice was also due to the fact that many children had to help their families in field-work. The same “Children’s Magazine”, on which Pinocchio was published for the first time, came out not surprisingly on Thursdays [see Marcheschi 1995, 1008].
- ¹⁸ In this sense, opposing the Positivistic teaching approach of the 1880s to the contemporary one, Andreoli observes that from the educational point of view *Pinocchio* “is not only useless, but could be defined as anti-pedagogical” [Andreoli 2019, 195]. There are other mechanisms and background images, directly connected to the author’s irony and to his extraordinary formal inventiveness, that have made the fairy tale part of the heritage of collective human imagination.
- ¹⁹ Here we refer to the Freudian concept as an artistic effect within the text. As Rimondi suggests, “The *Unheimliche/Uncanny* does not indicate something foreign that suddenly makes its break, but something familiar that emerges from within and should not have done it. It is therefore not a one-way route, from the familiar to the stranger or vice versa, but of a dual, return movement, to which we cannot escape because it concerns our own subjective constitution” [Rimondi 2006, 32].
- ²⁰ In the name chosen for the Fox, of female gender compared to Collodi’s male character, the direct reference to the common name of the animal in Russian is evident: ‘Alisa’ contains in fact the word ‘lisa’, ‘fox’. In A. Tolstoy’s fable to the negative symbolic values of the two anthropomorphic felines is added the Bat, who charms Burattino shut into punishment and leads him to meet them in the “Land of Fools”. In our view, besides, the Duty Mastiff and the Dobermans of the police office that grab the protagonist in the text allude to the atmosphere of violence and sudden arrests of the Stalinist Terror: “Дежурный, все еще рыча, позвонил. Ворвались два доberman-пинчера, сыщики, которые никогда не спали, никому не верили и даже самих себя подозревали в преступных намерениях. Дежурный приказал им доставить опасного преступника живым или мертвым в отделение. Сыщики ответили коротко: — Тяф!”, “The Duty Mastiff, still growling, rang a bell. Two Doberman pinschers burst in, they were bloodhounds who never slept, who believed in no one and even suspected themselves of criminal intentions. The duty Mastiff ordered them to bring the dangerous

¹²⁾In that blessed country you never study. On Thursdays there is no school: and every week consists of six Thursdays and a Sunday

criminal, dead or alive, to the police station. The bloodhounds replied briefly: Yaf!" [Tolstoy 1948, 92].

- ²¹ In *Pinocchio* the three famous doctors summoned by the Fairy are an owl and a crow, who are unsure of the puppet's status, with the owl claiming that Pinocchio is alive and the crow claiming that he is dead. The third doctor is the Ghost of the Talking Cricket, who says that the puppet is fine, but has been disobedient and hurt his father [Collodi 1995, ch. XVI, 412–415]. As Marcheschi underlines, in this passage about doctors there are many subtle social and symbolic allusions, especially if we consider that in popular tradition the owl and the crow were birds of ill omen. Collodi re-uses some iconic satirical images coming from his journalistic experience in a ludic and fantastic way [Marcheschi 1995, 978–979].
- ²² We refer in particular to the well-known collection of Russian folk tales published in eight volumes by A. N. Afanas'ev (1826–1971) between 1855 and 1863. Many themes and images are common to different fairy tales, especially if we consider those with animals and magical elements; however, the grey hare to which Pierrot clings in his escape reminds, in our view, the grey wolf in the fairy tale of *Prince Ivan, the Firebird and the Grey Wolf*, while the symbolic connotations of the key and its being made of gold recall some *leitmotifs* present in *Vasilisa the Beautiful and Koschei the Immortal*: [Afanas'ev 1984, 331–343.].
- ²³ In the text the industrious hoopoe is summoned by Malvina to style her turquoise hair: “Влетел суетливый, пестрый, веселый удод с красным хохолком, который вставал дыбом, когда он чему-нибудь удивлялся. — Кого причесать? — Меня, — сказала Мальвина. — Завейте и причешите, я растрепана... — А где же зеркало? Послушайте, душечка... Тогда пучеглазые жабы сказали: — Мы принесем... Десять жаб зашлепали животами к озеру. Вместо зеркала они приволокли зеркального карпа, такого жирного и сонного, что ему было все равно, куда его ташат под плавники. Карпа поставили на хвост перед Мальвиной. Чтобы он не задыхался, ему в рот лили из чайника воду. Суетливый удод завил и причесал Мальвину. Осторожно взял со стены одну из бабочек и припудрил ею девчонкин нос. — Готово, душечка... И-ф-ф-фр! — пестрым клубком вылетел из пещеры”, “A busy, fluffy, jolly hoopoe with a red crest, which she stood up when something surprised her, flew over there. — Who do I need to comb? — Me, — said Mal'vina. — Curl and comb my hair, please, I'm dishevelled... — But where is the mirror? What shall we do, sweetheart... Then the bug-eyed toads said: — We'll bring it... Ten toads walked into the lake. Instead of a mirror, they brought a mirror carp, so fat and sleepy, that he didn't care where he was being dragged under his fins. The carp was erected on its tail in front of Mal'vina. To keep him from choking, water from the teapot was poured into his mouth. The busy hoopoe curled up and combed Malvina's hair. Then she carefully took one of the butterflies off the wall and powdered the girl's nose with it. — You

- are ready, sweetie... And -frrr! She flew out from the cave like a colourful ball” [Tolstoy 1948, 107, 108].
- ²⁴ At the beginning of his literary career, A. Tolstoy had published a collection of fairy tales entitled *Soroch'i skazki* (The Magpie's Fairy Tales, 1910); in the Twenties he then composed the children's stories *Kak ni v chem ne byvalo* (As if nothing had happened) e *Rasskaz o kapitane Gatterase, o chuligane Vas'ke Taburetkine i zlom kote Chame* (Story about Captain Gatteras, the hooligan Vas'ka Taburetkin and the evil cat Cham). In the last months of his life he was finally involved in the re-edition of a collection of Russian fairy tales with animal characters, which came out posthumously in 1946: see [Tolstoy 1946].
- ²⁵ As is well known, the turtle is associated to various metaphorical meanings in fairy tales, myths and cosmogonies of different countries of the world. Similarly to the owl, it is a symbol of wisdom, and also of strength, endurance, eternity and inviolability. In many nations this animal is connected with immortality and the creation of the world, as well as male fertility and gender extension; in other cultural contexts (China and Japan) its characteristic slowness symbolically alludes to patience, diligence and perseverance in achieving a goal.
- ²⁶ The name 'Buratino' has been and continues to be used as branding for a variety of products and stores marketed to children in Russia and the post-Soviet states: among the most notable of these are the Buratino brand soft drink, which has a caramel taste, and *Zolotoj klyuchik* (“Golden Key”) toffees. Buratino is also the nickname of the TOS-1 multiple launch rocket system, due to the big “nose” of the launcher. A location in the story, besides, *Pole chudes* (v *Strane Durakov*), literally “*The Field of Wonders*” (in the *Land of Fools*), is used still nowadays as the name of the Russian TV adaptation of the *Wheel of Fortune* game show. It is worth mentioning that in the 1960s and 1970's the expression “*Strana Durakov*” was used to ironically stigmatize the Soviet Union.
- ²⁷ Some jokes and expressions from the text, as happened with other very popular literary works, have entered Russian everyday language as *krylatye vyrazheniya* (lit. “winged phrases”): we cite among others the expression “*работать как папа Карло*”, “work like dad Carlo”, which has become proverbial in Russian and alludes to a continuous work, without any rest. The linguistic dynamism of A. Tolstoy's *povest'* is by no means easy to reproduce, in fact the two Italian translations made so far do not always manage to recreate the phonetic and onomatopoeic effects of the original, which are closely intertwined, by the way, with cultural references to specific *realia* of the time.
- ²⁸ The Polish scholar Zigmund Bialek defined this type of characters, very common in children's literature, “*subdetskie*” (“sub-childlike”), that is to say equipped with the skills of understanding and the reception of the world typical of children [Bialek 1979, 50].

- ²⁹ As Manganelli observes, several “animal” similes characterize Pinocchio’s physical description and movements throughout the narrative [Manganelli 2002, 41]. Moreover, during the humorous scene of their fight in chapter II Geppetto and Mastro Antonio (“Cherry Nose”) call each other with the animal epithets “donkey”, “mule” and “monkey” [see Collodi 1995, ch. II, 366].
- ³⁰ As we already remarked, in some of the first Russian versions the Italian word ‘burattino’ had been translated as ‘*Petrushka*’, which is the name of a famous character of Russian popular puppet theatre, and it has also become the technical term to define a puppet, or, more precisely, a wooden marionette.
- ³¹ As is known, Il’f and Petrov were also journalists with a remarkable satirical vein, and as it happened with Pinocchio the brilliant *Great Combinator* Ostap Bender, brutally killed at the end of the *Twelve Chairs*, was then “miraculously” (and ironically) resurrected by popular acclaim for the serial publication of the writers’ next picaresque novel, *The Little Golden Calf* (1931).
- ³² Apart from the sense of sight, further stimulated by the graphic and visual elements usually found in children’s literature, touch, smell and hearing are also involved (let us think about the audiobooks, currently very popular).
- ³³ In Twentieth-century literary criticism the term “implied author” refers to the “authorial character” that a reader infers from a text; it is usually based on the way a literary work is written, and it is used to distinguish the virtual author of the text from the real one. Distinct both from the author and the narrator, the implied author is the image of the writer produced by a reader as called forth from the text. It may or may not coincide with the author’s expressed intentions or known personality traits. The concept was first introduced by the American scholar Wayne C. Booth (1921–2005) in his seminal study *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961).
- ³⁴ In her studies about the writer, Marcheschi identified at the origin of Lorenzini’s style Sterne’s “deconstructionist” inventiveness, characterized by a playful inclination to involve the reader surprising and displacing him at the same time. We can talk about a kind of “structural irreverence” in Collodi’s writing, which is tendentially anti-fictional, imbued as it is with intellectual humour and cheerful caricatures of social types. The satirical elements that dot *Pinocchio* are anything but innocent, they are rooted in journalistic language and also recur in other works of the author [Marcheschi 1995, XXXVI–XXXVIII].
- ³⁵ In Russia have been published two literary sequels of Burattino’s adventures, but they did not have the same success: the 1941 *povest* by E. Ja. Danko *Pobezhdennyj Karabas* (Karabas is defeated), (Moscow, re-issued in 1989), and *Vtoraya tayna Zolotogo klyuchika* (The Second Secret of the Little Golden Key) by A. B. Kumma and S. V. Runge (Elista, 1988). Besides, in 2009 the Petersburg publishing house “Amfora” released a *fantasy* novel by

Maks Fray (literary pseudonym of S. Matrynychik and I. Stepin), *Klyuch iz zheltoho metalla* (The Yellow Metal Key), built on a subtle play of allusions and references to A. Tolstoy's fable.

- ³⁶ As is known, Lyubov' Mendeleyeva (1881–1939), daughter of the renowned chemist Dmitriy I. Mendeleyev, was A. A. Blok's (1880–1921) wife, Ol'ga Knipper (1868–1959), famous stage actress of the Moscow Art Theatre, was also A. P. Chekhov's wife, while Mariya Andreyeva (1868–1953), stage actress in Moscow as well, later left acting for a career in theatrical administration. In 1903, besides, she became Maxim Gorky's (1868–1936) common-law wife. All these female figures have in common with Mal'vina a high level of education and refinement, which in the tale is satirically downplayed through the marionette's obsession for personal hygiene and good manners.
- ³⁷ Pinocchio has a huge hunger, it is a trait that characterizes him along the entire narrative arc: "E intanto la fame cresceva, e cresceva sempre: e il povero Pinocchio non aveva altro sollievo che quello di sbadigliare, e faceva degli sbadigli così lunghi, che qualche volta la bocca gli arrivava fino agli orecchi. E dopo avere sbadigliato, sputava, e sentiva che lo stomaco gli andava via. <...> Oh, che brutta malattia che è la fame!", "Meanwhile, hunger was growing, and it was always growing, and poor Pinocchio had no other relief apart from yawning and he yawned so long that sometimes his mouth would reach his ears. And after he yawned, he spat, and he felt his stomach fading away. <...> Oh, what a terrible disease is hunger!" [Collodi 1995, 374, 375]. Even Mangiafuoco is very hungry, and craves for cooking his mutton; the Fox and the Cat devour food at the Red Lobster Inn, as well as the Dog-Fish swallows everything he finds on his path. Many scholars have pointed out that the constant presence of hunger overshadows in the text the peasants' misery in the Italy of the time; also the pervasive recurrence of the money theme represents, on the psychological and symbolic levels, a typical feature of poverty [Gasparini 1997, 60–76; Marcheschi 2015, 7–8]. *Mutatis mutandis*, in A. Tolstoy's work also Burattino appears endowed with a pantagruelic hunger, and is often in spasmodic search of food; when he has the opportunity to feed, he eats in an immoderate and greedy way, with a full mouth, so much that he is reproached by Mal'vina for his coarse manners. The Fox Alice and the Cat Basil order everything on the stove at the Three Gobies' Inn, while Karabas Barabas, the evil "doctor of puppet science" with some echoes of the famous Russian constructivist director V. E. Mejerkhold (1874–1940), wants to throw Burattino into the fire to cook his roast. In the end, moreover, the despotic director leaves without eating and drinking his own marionettes, causing their rebellion and flight.
- ³⁸ The translations of the fairy-tales in the two cultural fields and in other countries, as we already observed, have had and still have a significant

connection with their reception: on this topic see [Zanotto, 1990; Malenová et al., 2019 and Efendiyeva, 2020].

- ³⁹ In addition to positive reviews in various literary magazines, the actual popularity of A. Tolstoy's *povest'* in the USSR was connected to some film transpositions realized by known directors with the presence of actors loved by Soviet public: we talk first of all about the film *Zolotoj klyuchik* directed by A. L. Ptushko (1939), and about the animation version *Priklyucheniya Buratino* (The Adventures of Buratino, 1959), directed by I. P. Ivanov-Vano, D. N. Babichenko e M. A. Botov. Mass success was especially reached by the wonderful *Priklyucheniya Buratino* (The Adventures of Buratino), a 1975 live-action Soviet-Belarusian children's musical film in two parts produced by Belarus film for television and directed by Leonid Nechayev [See Fig. 3]. In post-Soviet times two other versions were realized: the musical film *Noveyshie Priklyucheniya Buratino* (The Newest Adventures of Burattino, 1997), directed by D. K. Machmatdinov, and the musical *Zolotoj klyuchik* by A. I. Igudin (2009). As evidence of the iconic value of the figure in Russian culture, we also note the popularity of another recent production that imagines and proposes a sequel of Burattino's adventures with the title *Vozvrashchenie Buratino* (The Return of Burattino, 2013): see [Hellman 2013, 421–422].
- ⁴⁰ About the propagandistic nature of the 1936 theatrical adaptation of A. Tolstoy's work, of the theatre staging realized in 1938 by V. M. Baljunas and A. M. Fedorov, on the play written by the same author — A. N. Tolstoy, *Zolotoj klyuchik: pesa v 3 dejstviyakh dlya samodeyatelnogo detskogo teatra* (The Little Golden Key: Play in three acts for Amateurs' Children's Theatre), Moscow: Detgiz, 1939 — , and about other productions staged in the early 50s see [Risaliti, 1990]. As the Italian scholar claims, the Soviet writer's opportunistic position can be understood in the context of the terrible years of great Stalinist repressions. We already observed that especially in some countries of the former socialist bloc after the fall of the USSR the objective reception of the *Little Golden Key* was influenced by the negative *cliché*, now outdated, of its adherence to socialist realism.
- ⁴¹ On this topic see the contemporary artworks and visual reinterpretations of various kinds inspired by *Pinocchio* present in Eller, 2021 and in [Catelli, Scattina 2017]. As evidence of the pervasiveness of the fairy tale in contemporary imagination and in everyday life, a *Pinocchio Amusement Park* has been set up in the hamlet of Collodi, not far from Pescia and Pistoia, in Tuscany (see *Parco Policentrico Collodi Pinocchio*). It is located in a pine forest and it is arranged as a labyrinth, with interactive didactic activities for schools, URL: <https://www.pinocchio.it>.
- ⁴² The song by Giorgio Gaber (1939–2003) and Alessandro Luporini *Non insegnate ai bambini* (Don't teach children, 2003) was released posthumously on the album *Io non mi sento italiano* (I don't feel Italian), URL: <https://youtu.be/IVnPotcVkJFQ>.

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ПИНОККИО ИЗ ИТАЛИИ В РОССИЮ, ИЛИ ЛИТЕРАТУРНОЕ ПУТЕШЕСТВИЕ ЛЕГЕНДАРНОЙ КУКЛЫ

В статье рассматривается история создания советским писателем Алексеем Толстым в 1835 г. сказки «Золотой ключик, или Приключения Буратино», написанной по мотивам книги итальянского журналиста Карло Коллоди «Пиноккио» (1883). Как показано в ряде исследований, А. Н. Толстой был знаком с русским переводом сказки Коллоди. Принимая во внимание существенные связи между этими текстами, в статье предпринимается их сопоставительный анализ. Детально описывается история создания «Пиноккио», раскрывается связь этой сказки с литературной и фольклорной итальянской традицией и творческой биографией Коллоди. В исследовании рассматривается, какие оттенки в изображении героев (животных и людей) преобладают у того и другого писателя, в чем заключается символика «золотого ключика», ставшего центральным сюжетно-смысловым образом в адаптации А. Толстого, как и в связи с чем меняется финал произведения, язык и стиль повествования. Автор статьи характеризует идеологический и педагогический контексты создания этих книг, рассуждает о том, кто является их истинным «имплицитным читателем» (по выражению Вольфганга Изера), высказывая сомнение в том, что Коллоди и Толстой адресовали свои сказки исключительно детской аудитории.

Keywords: Пиноккио, Золотой ключик, Буратино, Карло Коллоди, Алексей Толстой, персонажи-животные против персонажей-людей, «имплицитный читатель», сказка, дети

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EDUCATION BY THE WORD: GIANNI RODARI IN THE TEXTS AND CONTEXTS OF ITALIAN AND SOVIET CHILDREN'S LITERATURE¹

The article examines the early stages of the work of Italian children's poet, prose writer, and editor of children's periodicals, Gianni Rodari. The authors analyze Rodari's work in the context of the postwar situation in Italy; the authors considers Rodari's relations with Soviet Russia and the sources of the popularity of his work in the Russian translations on the example of the tale-tale "The Adventures of Cipollino".

Keywords: Mussolini's Italy (1922–1945), reconstruction of children's literature and periodicals, postwar children's literature, Marshak, "The Adventures of Cipollino", translations from Italian, playful poetry

Gianni Rodari and children's literature in Italy after Second World War

Analyzing the history of children's literature in the interwar period (1919–1939) in Italy and the Soviet Union, especially of literature included in school textbooks and curricula, we can identify many common points in the use of children's literature for the purpose of ideological influence on the child. As Benito Mussolini (1922–1943) came to power in Italy and Italian fascism took root in the daily culture of the country, schools and especially school textbooks were tasked with raising children and youth in the spirit of the new values of patriotism and fascism. All progressive children's and youth organizations, such as the Associations of the Italian Scouting movement (1910–1927), were dissolved

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as unbefitting the new worldview. A new organization for children and youth, the Opera Nazionale Balilla (ONB) became a locus of military and ideological propaganda for children and adolescents².

In Soviet Russia, the changeover in coordinates took place somewhat earlier, in the early 1920s. Founded in 1922, the All-Union Pioneer Organization — after 1924, named for V. I. Lenin — replaced all existing forms of children's life outside the family. Pioneer postulates also changed life within the family itself, heightening generation gaps and intrafamily ideological conflict, whether in families of workers and peasants or of the postrevolutionary intelligentsia³. A significant difference between the culture of childhood in Soviet Russia and the new dictatorship in Italy was the rapid development, in the former, of innovative forms of children's literature: the Soviet 1920s and 1930s saw interesting experiments in children's literature, and although there is no denying the strong pressure of ideology and the enforcement of "political correctness" on the part of the Soviet regime, children's literature remained a territory of greater freedom than in Mussolini's Italy.

In both countries, important events took place in the 1930s that would long determine the course of development of children's literature and its didactic value. The First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers (Moscow, 1934) and, four years later, the National Conference on Children's and Young People's Literature (Bologna, November 9–10, 1938) [Lollo 2010, 48–49 and Hellman 2013, 354–355] demonstrated, respectively, the ways in which literature for children was to develop in the Soviet ideological space, and the new values Italian children's literature of the fascist period was to adapt to. In a coauthored report to the First Congress of Soviet Writers, Samuil Marshak, one of the leading figures in the creation of the new children's literature in Russia after the difficult years of the Civil War, specified certain key new themes for children's books, among them: historical stories about Russia's past; stories about science and construction; the creation of the school story genre; and the foregrounding of active and inquisitive children of the new age as new literary protagonists [Hellman 2008, 217–239]. In the Italian context, the *Manifesto on Children's Literature*, drafted during the Bologna Conference, laid out specific objectives for a new children's literature, which similarly presented the (albeit different) values a child should find upon reading a new children's book describing the nationalist regime of Mussolini. The book should portray the "serene joy of the child," nourish "national roots," and serve as a "source of religious and patriotic faith, kindness and strength, courage and perseverance, of a spirit of self-sacrifice and discipline" [Lollo 2010, 48–49].

Furthermore, in Benito Mussolini's Italy, children's literature was to be purged of the presence of foreign authors. A special commission for the selection of books was responsible for reviewing Italian literary production and translations for children, which, in the particular case of Jewish authors, were placed on a special list that excluded their subsequent circulation. In both countries, children's literature was full of portrayals of "worthy children," model young Stalinist and fascist heroes who carried out the precepts of the political leaders of the fatherland, who grew up and acted in the name of the triumph of the new ideological values [Boero, De Luca 2010, 171–174].

It should be noted that the children's literature of the twenty-year reign of Italian fascism — during which schools and textbooks reinforced the regime's one-party ideology, with all the requisite iconography this entailed — indeed shaped the imagination of new generations. This literature was not marked by any particular experimentation. In this respect, Soviet children's books, especially the picturebooks of the same period, differed significantly from children's books of fascist Italy. First and foremost, the hierarchy of values for children growing up under the Italian fascist regime was supposed to include, not freedom or fantasy, but obedience and authoritarianism, religiosity and conformism, patriotism and militarism [Boero, De Luca 2010, 154–157].

Nineteenth-century Italy's liberal-conservative triad of *God-Father-Family* became the basis for countless literary narratives for children. Salvatore Gotta's (1887–1980) novel *Piccolo alpino* (1926), about a boy who lost his parents in an avalanche, found again them after several adventures and became a national hero because of his courage, was like a bible for the preschoolers and elementary school children of the ONB youth organization. The novel continued in print until the end of the Second World War, by which point its chiming with the nationalist ideals of Mussolini's Italy rang hollow. Gotta was also the author of the anthem "Giovinezza, giovinezza" ("Youth, youth"), an important part of the mythology of the younger generation in fascist Italy that identified with the demiurgic force of fascism [Boero, De Luca 2010, *Ibid*].

Along with traditional values, Gotta's novels nevertheless introduced their readers to the emergence of new technologies and technological progress; by contrast, such narratives as *Lisa-Betta* (1932) by Giuseppe Fanciulli (1881–1951) extolled patriarchy and the unity of man and nature, the ideal being the rural family with its "hardy and strong-willed" characters. Thus, the main character in Fanciulli's novel is a strong girl who, thanks to her gumption, is able to become the backbone of her family [Boero, De Luca 2010, *Ibid*].

For Italy, the end of the Second World War meant the end of the fascist regime and its replacement with a democratic republic. Upon liberating Italy, the Allies reorganized school education, in particular quickly, abandoning textbooks, and most reading books, from the prewar and wartime period. It was in the postwar period that the importance of children's books as a source and support for new democratic values was reevaluated all over Europe. A great deal of change took place in fundamental ideas about how a child should work with books, what knowledge and moral categories should be put in the heads of young readers. An important moment in the development of the postwar European tradition of children's reading was the establishment of the International Library for Children and Youth (Die Kinder-und-Jugendbibliothek, International Youth Library) in Munich in 1949. Its founder, Jella Lepman (1891–1970), worked extensively on a new conception of the role of books in the formation of the child, and would subsequently also help found the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) in 1952⁴. This initiative was followed by others at the international level aimed at producing new children's books, with new content—books conducive to the inculcation of democratic values in the coming generations. In addition to the books removed from circulation during Mussolini's fascist dictatorship and now restored to the children's canon, new children's authors emerged in Italy, one of whom was the humble elementary school teacher Giovanni Francesco Rodari, known to the wider world as Gianni Rodari (1920–80) [Cambi 1985, 119–154; Argilli 1990].

Gianni Rodari remains one of the best known and beloved Italian children's authors at home and abroad. He was born in Omegna in 1920 in the family of a baker. As a child, Rodari played the violin and dreamed of becoming a musician. Being of poor health, he was not drafted when Italy entered the Second World War in 1940. A graduate of St. Peter's Catholic Teachers' Seminary in Milan, during the war, under conditions of the German occupation of the country, Rodari taught elementary school. In a sense, this work was obligatory, as the family was not well off, and teachers were in great demand; but in moral and ideological terms, it was the years of teaching children, mostly poor ones, that formed Rodari's enduring conviction that the unjust world of war and inequality had to be remade. Rodari lost his brother and friends in the war, and these losses, along with his conviction that the world had to be rebuilt according to new egalitarian values, led him to join the Italian resistance, and in 1944 he became a member of the Italian Communist Party⁵.

As the contemporary Italian researcher Giulia De Florio observes, the young elementary school teacher Rodari's interest in Russia was

logical: for many of his fellow party members, the USSR represented the model for the Italian democratic society [De Florio 2019, 172–181]. Undoubtedly, his work as a teacher, and the lectures in literature and journalism that the future writer attended at the University of Milan, prepared him for his literary work, which turned out to be closely linked to his party and political commitments.

After the war, beginning in 1948, Rodari worked as a journalist for the communist newspaper *L'Unità*. In this capacity, the future children's writer sharply critiqued the content of elementary school textbooks. In his analyses of these works, Rodari emphasized their lack of reflection of the current moment in the country. They gave no sense of what was happening in postwar Italy, of its status as a new republic; the military past of the country was vaguely presented, with some references to partisan struggle against the German occupation, but also some remaining distortions of the history of the Mussolini regime. Rodari was not alone in this assessment, which was shared by the prominent educator Carleton W. Washburne (1889–1968), head of the Education Subcommittee of the Allied Commission, which in 1947 was tasked with revising educational curricula and textbooks that still retained nationalist discourse from the Italian fascist period.

Rodari's debut as a children's poet came in Sunday editions of the communist newspaper *L'Unità*: asked by the editor to run the Sunday "Children's Corner," Rodari now began to develop his talent as a children's poet and storyteller. In 1950, his first poetry collection *Il libro delle filastrocche / The Book of Nursery Rhymes* (illustrated by G. Mafai in the first edition of 1950) was published, followed by the prose novel *Il romanzo di Cipollino* (illustrated by R. Verdini in the first edition of 1951), *Filastrocche in cielo e in terra / Nursery-rhymes In the Sky and on Earth* and *Favole al telefono / Tales by the Telephone or Fairy Tales Over the Phone* (both illustrated by B. Munari in the first editions of 1960 and 1962). These poetry collections treated such key post-fascist themes as social inequality, exploitation, and antimilitarism and international solidarity. In the 1950s, Rodari was not only a communist children's author — in his story of a revolution in a vegetable garden, the main character Cipollino is a little boy-onion — but also a socially engaged poet, one keen to foster a new morality and greatly expand the political outlook of his childhood audience. In 1950, Rodari moved to Rome, where he became the first editor of the communist children's magazine *Il Pioniere*. His poems, stories, and tales for children are full of fantastical themes; he makes extensive use of wordplay and unexpected rhymes. Everything that emerged from Rodari's pen was lively

and unusual, full of reflections on life, and far from the moralizing of dry school textbooks. Meanwhile, a significant role in Rodari's growing popularity as a children's author was played by translations of his works into Russian⁶.

The Italian critic Alberto Asor Rosa says of Rodari's style that he "began by reorganizing the linguistic universe to offer a new dimension of human and social relations." Among these linguistic devices were metrical iteration (the insistent use of a single rhyme, making it easier to assimilate); the interweaving of "engaging themes and wordplay"; ludic nonsense that "conceals a transgressive element"; "paradox with a lapidary imprint" that also reconciles "hyperbolic and surreal" expressions; a search for deformation and alienation; and, last but not least, "a technique by which truth is sought via error or reversal" [Asor Rosa 2010, 13–18].

Nevertheless, the originality and novelty of his poetry, and his attempts to instill democratic principles in a new generation, were poorly received in Italian society, which, both by virtue of tradition, and amid the tense climate of Europe's Cold War division into opposing camps, met Rodari's many innovations rather tepidly. But this reaction at home in Italy did not keep him from continuing his pedagogical and literary experiments. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Rodari published several prose works for children, including *La torta in cielo / The Cake In The Sky* (1966), *Venti storie più una / Twenty Stories and One More* (1969), and *Tante storie per giocare / Many Stories for Playing* (1971).

Rodari's *La grammatica della fantasia. Introduzione all'arte di inventare storie (Grammar of Fantasy. Introduction to the Art of Inventing Stories)* represented a completely new phenomenon in children's literature when it appeared in 1973. Here Rodari gives his readers — not just children, but adults as well — a course in the basics of creativity, in how to fashion stories themselves. Rodari attached great importance to the art of oral storytelling, which is largely lost in modern culture amid the ever-accelerating pace of life. In his view, human relationships suffer from our urge to cram so much activity into our available time; but, he believed, inventing and narrating stories together — in particular, grownups and children carefully listening to and discussing their joint work — can help restore lost family ties. Rodari saw the child as an independent individual, worthy not only of attention but also trust. In this, his views coincided with the pedagogical trend, popular in post-war Italy, set by Loris Malaguzzi (1920–1994), who developed his own system of preschool education in the Reggio Emilia kindergartens. For both Rodari and Malaguzzi, the most fruitful educational model was

that which focused on children's creativity⁷. Rodari's final works for children included *Novelle fatte a macchina / Stories Written On A Typewriter* (1973), describing the absurdities of modernity, and *C'era due volte il barone Lamberto ovvero I misteri dell'isola di San Giulio / Once Upon A Time There was Baron Lambert. The Mysteries of San Giulio Island* (1978).

The broad Italian public cannot be said to have immediately hailed Rodari's work. The issues he dealt with in his writings were not only, and not primarily, issues of European postwar reality. The success of translations of his poetry and prose into other European languages attests to the international significance of the pedagogical aims he set for himself; his concern for the younger generation was based on the cultivation of universal, worldwide values. His poetic style was not only cheerful and energetic, it was also full of deep reflection and discussion of the ethics of human behavior, of the relationship between past and present, and of the many important questions of human existence that confront children and adults throughout their lives. Rodari's poems and tales were especially popular in the Soviet Union. This success is, of course, in part attributable to his political affiliation, his membership in the Italian Communist Party; but Rodari's popularity in the USSR also had purely literary roots. As his Italian biographer Marcello Argilli remarks, his fame in his native country and in the world was owed to "the extraordinary success of Rodari's translations in the USSR, first and foremost that of his tale 'The Adventures of Cipollino' and the children's poems perfectly rendered by the great poet Marshak." [Argilli 1990, 84–85] Also contributing to Rodari's Soviet popularity were the numerous trips he made to that country (1952, 1963, 1967, 1973, and 1979), both as a member of delegations of the Italian Communist Party, and on individual visits, during which the writer spent a great deal of time with children, visiting children's institutions, schools, and theaters, and often giving readings to child audiences.

All Vegetables, Unite': The Adventures of Cipollino as Revolutionary Legacy in post-Stalinist Russia

"The Adventures of Cipollino", the fairy tale written by Gianni Rodari in 1951 enjoyed an enormous popularity among children and adults in Russia. The book has reached more than 60 editions with a total number of copies exceeded several millions. During the Soviet era, an animated film was released in 1961⁸; it was turned into a feature film

by Tamara Lisizyan in 1973⁹, and in 1974 the famous Soviet composer, Karen Khachaturian, created its ballet version for children, for which he was awarded the State Prize in 1976. Most recently, in 2014, a total number of 7,000 copies of the book (not a small number for contemporary children's literature market in Russia!) were published with new illustrations by well-known contemporary artist Dmitry Nepomniashchy. This was completed by the premier Russian publishing house in Moscow, "EKSMO". Also interesting is the fact that this new edition still used the first 1953 translation of this fairy tale about the "vegetable revolution" by Zlata Potapova. In the 1970s, there was another attempt to translate this story, but the new translation or rather re-telling did not gain popularity. Instead, the leading Soviet publishing house, "Detskaiia literatura", reintroduced the first translation by Zlata Potapova, a professor of French and Italian literature at one of the Moscow institutions of higher education. Potapova's translation was heavily edited by Samuil Marshak, who has translated Rodari's poetry earlier [De Florio 2019, 175]. In her above-cited article "Gianni Rodari and Samuil Marshak: A Dialogue in Time and Space," Gulia De Florio provides interesting information from reminiscences of Tsitsillia Kim, wife of TASS correspondent Viktor Kim, whom Marshak had met on his first visit to Italy in 1933. Herself a noted researcher of Italian culture and literature, Tsitsillia Kim recalls Marshak as an admirer of the Italian language, and one who knew it well [De Florio 2019, Ibid.]. This information adds to the picture of Marshak's interest in translating from Italian, as it contradicts the claim that Marshak did not know the language, that, having been first introduced to Rodari by Zlata Potapova, he worked with Rodari's poetry as provided in a word-for-word translation by Potapova herself.

However, Rodari, a children's poet, was always viewed in Russia secondary to the fairy tale writer. *The Adventures of Cipollino* was translated and published in Russia only a year after its publication in Italy; his next fairy tale, *The Blue Arrow*, 1952, was published in Russian in 1957; *Jelsomino in the Country of Liars*, 1959, was translated in Russia just one year later, in 1960. The logical question that arises immediately is why: Why wasn't Rodari's poetry widely introduced to the soviet children's audience? Why didn't the poetic translations of Rodari in Russia gain momentum until 1968? The art of translation in Russia, due to socialist realism restrictions and political censorship, was highly valued as a medium for self-expression. There were always enough experience translators who would have engaged themselves into this work.

We believe that the answer to this question could be found in the close resemblance between Rodari's non-sense poetry, whose whimsical verses were always open to allegorical interpretation, and the condemned art of the OBERIU group (The Association of Real Art), one of the most popular, as well as the most controversial poets of the 1920s and 1930s. Daniil Kharmis, Alexander Vvedenskii, Nikolai Zabolotsky, and Nikolai Oleinikov all worked in this genre in the variety of children's periodicals during this time and all fell victims to Stalinist purges. For over two decades, their literary works were condemned as "bourgeois sickly fantasies". Kornei Chukovsky, a pioneer in this type of poetic verse in Russian and a strong follower of the British tradition of absurdist nursery rhymes, was forced out of soviet children's literature by political functionaries who insisted that such poetry is not needed for a proletarian child. Thus, 1953, the year Rodari made his way to the Soviet reader, was hardly the time to revive this tradition, even in the form of translating the works of a communist Italian compatriot¹⁰.

Contemporary scholar of Russian children's literature, Ben Hellman, attributes the strong interest to Rodari's work by the new phase of Soviet history, the Khrushchev's "Thaw". Hellman writes:

After decades of enforced but self-satisfied isolation, a window was slightly opened to the outside world. Some new foreign writers were introduced, while some long-since forgotten names of importance were "rehabilitated" through new translations. The best qualities for a foreign writer hoping for an introduction to the Soviet book market were to have a revolutionary background and to be a Communist and a friend of the Soviet Union. The Italian Gianni Rodari was the perfect case... In 1952 he fulfilled his long-cherished dream of a visit to the USSR [Hellman 2013, 473–474].

We do agree with the general meaning of this statement — indeed, the Thaw period that started with Khrushchev's speech at the XX Party Congress (1956) brought back many forgotten names of Russian literati who perished through the years of Stalin's terror¹¹. New foreign authors became household names for Soviet readership through such venues as literary magazines *Foreign Literature*, through numerous translations (Hemingway would be the most cited example), but it did not happen until 1956! Why was then Rodari singled out and translated as early as 1953, the year of Stalin's death, when political struggle for power among survived leaders of the country was at its highest with little hope for liberal reforms? We believe that the answer to this question could be found precisely in the story that was selected for translation, "The Adventures of Cipollino", that introduces

the young readers to the familiar plot — the revolutionary struggle between the poor and the rich, between the oppressed and the oppressors, but it presents the obviously politicized conflict as humorous and funny, as a story of coming of age of a little onion, who is a true fairy tale truth-seeker, and who — together with his friends — overpowers the injustice and oppression by being inventive, courageous and... **KIND!**

Revolution as a literary theme became the focus of soviet children's literature from the very days of its formation. The decision to claim children's literature as its own ideological property was made by the Communist Party as early as 1924. The resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party has proclaimed the creation of children's literature as one of the most important issues on its agenda [O partynoy pechati 1954, 294]. The debates of the 1920s reveal two contradictory directions in soviet children's literature. On one hand, critics and party activists promoted the institutionalization of children's literature and required ideologically correct themes for the works of literature; on the other hand, the demand to illuminate these themes in the most engaging and innovative ways called for the continuation of the literary experiments. Therefore, although children's literature was increasingly appropriated by the rules imposed by the government, the actual body of texts produced under the general rubric of this literature was extremely diverse. Thus, such a compulsory theme as revolutionary history was simultaneously presented by Jury Olesha's fantastic tale *Tri Tols-tiaka* (*Three Fat Men*, 1928) and through class-oriented didactics in Anna G. Kravchenko's *Kak Sasha stal krasnoarmeitse* (*How Sasha Became a Red Army Soldier*, 1928).

Cruelty of the revolution and the Civil War that immediately followed was well-known to the children's audience from their personal experiences. According to the data provided by the British scholar Catriona Kelly, the number of the homeless children in post-revolutionary Russia rose out of all proportion when famine struck along the Volga in 1921–1922, reducing at least 4 million children to total abandonment and destitution. Two years later, forced industrialization, followed rapidly by collectivization, added to the numbers of deserted and needy children [Kelly 2007, 193]. Jury Olesha was the first writer who made an attempt to address the horror of the revolution and created a fairy tale that focused on the festive nature of the new post-revolutionary world. Instead of depicting the struggle and torture of the class enemies, brother killing brother, and bloodshed and deprivation, his fairy tale stresses the playful nature of the revolutionary change, when good people, despite

their class orientation, all unite in the fight against evil — the tyranny of three fat men¹².

In *Three Fat Men*, the heroes are ordinary — among them is the circus acrobat Tibul, courageous smith Prospero, little girl and circus ballerina Suok, and an absent-minded scholar and inventor Dr. Gaspar Gvarneri. Evil is also ordinary — three fat men are not scary, they are rather laughable! Gluttony — the usual sin of the rich — is the major vice: they are even capable of chewing of each other's ears and napkins! Revolution in Olesha's story is not bloody and it ends in the joined feast, after three fat men and their subordinates left the country. Its triumph is celebrated by a big and joyful circus performance so the future of the people is bright and happy. However, this fairy tale remained a single attempt to create happy revolutionary victory. The legacy of the revolution began to shift from happiness and joy to the stories of struggle and a customary heroic death of revolutionary leaders, children and adults alike.

The dominant revolutionary narrative was associated through the 1930s with the child-sacrifice story: the infamously fabricated story of Pavlik Morosov, a boy who went against his own family and reported on their attempts to resist collectivization that led to their arrest. For this "betrayal" he was killed by his own relatives. Child martyrdom for the sake of the revolution and for the overall victory of the Soviet cause expanded into the years of WWII, and more children's victims were celebrated and put forward as examples of true revolutionary loyalty¹³.

It is hard to imagine that it was in this particular cultural climate that Potapova and Marshak decided to introduce a story about a bloodless revolution in the vegetable garden! Evaluating recent scholarship on Gianni Rodari, Jack Zipes writes in his review for *The Lion and the Unicorn*: "Rodari never wrote entirely for children; he rather wrote in their behalf and constantly undermined the position and perspective of adults through silly nonsense and fervent political beliefs" [Zipes 2014, 424–425]. Both the translator and the editor immediately recognized this as a possibility to present the young audience with the greatness of revolutionary justice in a form quite different from bloody tortures and untimely death, thus employing the redeeming quality of Rodari's writing. It is difficult, at this point, to reconstruct the sequence by which the text of Rodari's tale was transposed into a theatrical production, but we can state that in 1954, Sergei Bogomazov wrote the play *The Adventures of Cipollino*, which first appeared as a radio play on Leningrad Radio, and was subsequently included in the repertoire of the Central Children's Theater in Moscow. Marshak wrote

several songs for this production, including the one sung by Signor Tomato¹⁴.

Sensing rather than knowing that the change in political atmosphere is about to come, Marshak, who carried through his entire life a remarkable dedication to his young readers, recognized in Rodari's fairy tale the healing potential in addressing the horrors of Stalinist terror. Rodari's story had the same emotional impact as Olesha's *Three Fat Men*, and it was precisely this positive effect that both the translator and the editor were trying to achieve. We would argue that the choice was made not based on Rodari's political persuasion (of course it has helped, but there were many other candidates who could have competed with the Italian communist). It was rather the positive power of his tale about a little onion boy who was able to triumph over his enemies, Prince Limon and Lord Tomato, and unite the best and the bravest among the vegetables and fruits in their struggle against the injustice, and lead them to the victory.

Another very important theme in the story that was close to Marshak's heart was the resurrection of the idea of family responsibility. Old Cipollo, Cipollino's father goes to prison in order to save his son. When Cipollino is pushed through the crowd during the arrival of Prince Lemon, leading him to accidentally step on the Prince's toes, he should have been arrested for such disrespect. His father protects his son by taking the responsibility for his "crime"¹⁵. In the recent context of Soviet history when children were forced to denounce their parents as enemies of the people, when blood relatives were afraid to support each other in fear of possible arrests and accusations, family as an institution of protection and love has seized to exist. The story of Cipollino, his struggle to liberate his father and his fight for truth sounded especially refreshing and full of hope for both young children and their parents. As in Olesha's case, there was no bloodshed at the end of the story: the palace of old countesses Cherries is converted into a school for all children; Baron Orange finally is losing weight and works as a carrier at the train station. Old Mr. Squash, whose house was so unjustly appropriated by Lord Tomato, gets a new house that is collectively built by all vegetables and fruits together.

The focus of Rodari's fairy tale is on creation rather than destruction, on strengthening family ties rather than alienating family members, on friendship and support and on utopia of justice for all. This utopia, however illusionary it might look today, was very much needed in the uncertainty of 1953. In many ways, the ideals that brought together so many different characters of Rodari's story — the brave little girl Straw-

berry, her friend Radish, Professor Pear with his violin, little lonely Viscount Cherry, the nephew of old and greedy countesses were indeed the ideals of the generation raised in the 1960s. The generation of the 1960s embraced utopian hopes for a brighter future and enthusiastically aimed their energy on restoring revolutionary dreams. While the children's audience was entertained by the adventures of the little onion and his friends, the adult readers focused on the positive and playful message of revolutionary victory, ultimately recognizing its potential as a healing power for the damaged ideal of revolution. It is the collective building of a new home for Mr. Pumpkin that becomes the key episode in Rodari's tale. This collective action crystalizes the new ideology of the generation of the sixties. Striving to cleanse the revolutionary past of the crimes of Stalinism, these "children of the Twentieth Congress" were keen to revive forgotten ideals and build a bright new future in the first proletarian country. Rodari's tale could thus not have been more apt, as it taught children, in a fun and accessible way, about friendship, mutual support, and fairness, which always triumphs in the end. Although the ideals of the 1960s soon proved illusory, giving way to the disappointment and cynicism of the Brezhnev "Stagnation," the Italian writer's lighthearted tale endures, beyond the timeframe of Soviet children's literature, because, along with politics, it speaks of lasting human values.

Rodari himself articulated his poetic credo in the speech he gave upon receiving the highest international award for children's literature, the Hans Christian Andersen Medal, and we would like to conclude our account of his contributions to both Russian and Italian children's literature with an excerpt:

I think that fairy tales — both old and new — can help in the development of the mind. Fairy tales are the place of all hypotheses — they can give us the keys and help find new ways to reality. They can help the child learn about the world and give them ability to evaluate it. Things we say can come true. The big problem is to want the right things to come true — no one alone has the magic word. We must seek it together, in every language, with discretion, with passion, with sincerity, and with fantasy [Rodari 1970].

Notes

- ¹ This article is the result of joint work of the authors, Marina Balina and Dorena Caroli. Caroli authored Part I of this text while Balina is responsible for Part II. The extended version of this article appeared in M. Balina, D. Caroli, *Libri per l'infanzia di Gianni Rodari tradotti in Unione Sovietica*. In L. Todaro

- (Ed.), Gianni Rodari. *Incontri e riflessioni a cento anni dalla nascita* (pp. 215–247). Roma: Anicia, 2020. Both authors significantly reworked their text for this recent edition. The current title is taken from that of Samuil Marshak’s book *Education by the Word / Vospitanie slovom. Stat’i, zametki, vospominaniia* (Moscow, 1961).
- ² On this topic see [Koon 1985].
 - ³ On this particular debate see [Caroli 2015].
 - ⁴ Jella Lepman was a German writer and journalist, creator of the International Children’s Library (1952), the International Board on Books for Young People (1953), and the Hans Christian Andersen Award in Children’s Literature (1956). On her life and work, see [Pearl 2007].
 - ⁵ On Rodari’s political affiliations see [Boero, Luca 2010, 218–221, 242–243, 333–334].
 - ⁶ On Rodari’s work as an editor, see [Rodari 1951; Franchini 2006, 1–54].
 - ⁷ The views of Malaguzzi and Rodari on the educational potential of art in child development are very much in line with the ideas of the Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934). Rodari was familiar with his work.
 - ⁸ Boris Dezhkin’s animated film did not include all the characters in the tale but was nevertheless a smash success in Russia. Karen Khachatourian composed the film’s score, which later served as the impetus for the creation of the ballet. The latter work first premiered in Kiev, and was subsequently staged in Moscow; see https://www.belcanto.ru/ballet_cipollino.html.
 - ⁹ In the film by Tamara Lisizyan, made at Mosfilm Studios, Gianni Rodari himself appears in an episode with his daughter Paola.
 - ¹⁰ For more information on the fate of Rodari’s books in Russia, see [Brandis 1980, 248–52].
 - ¹¹ It was precisely in 1956 and 1957 that new works by Russian researchers on foreign children’s literature appeared. In the collection *Questions of Children’s Literature*, Zlata Potapova, the translator of Rodari’s *Cipollino* in Russia, published the article “The Struggle for Progressive Children’s Literature in Italy” (Voprosy detskoi literatury, 1957). The same volume included N. Elina’s article “The Origins of Modern Children’s Literature”.
 - ¹² Evgenii Brandis was the first to note the resonance between the pedagogical aims of Gianni Rodari and Jury Olesha, drawing parallels between these two tales. See [Brandis 1980, 251].
 - ¹³ See [Maslinskaya 2019].
 - ¹⁴ Marshak may have written the songs to be used in the Central Children’s Theater production, but the radio play came out before that, and Marshak, who still had creative contacts in Leningrad, gave his poems to the radio production, or at least did not object to their use in it.
 - ¹⁵ In the context of Stalinist repressions, Stalin’s famous phrase “a son is not responsible for his father” read quite differently. In public settings (mass meetings and open letters in newspapers) in which, in the Stalin era, Soviet citizens would renounce arrested family members — this was usually a

matter of children put in the position of having to distance themselves from “enemy” parents — the very structure of family trust was destroyed. Old Cipollo’s behavior and his willingness to sacrifice himself for his son hinted at the restoration of generational bonds shattered by years of fear and repression — a subtext that would be felt by adult readers.

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**ВОСПИТАНИЕ СЛОВОМ: ДЖАННИ РОДАРИ В ТЕКСТАХ И
КОНТЕКСТАХ ИТАЛЬЯНСКОЙ И СОВЕТСКОЙ ДЕТСКОЙ
ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ**

Статья посвящена творчеству итальянского детского поэта, прозаика и редактора детской периодики Джанни Родари. Авторы исследования выявляют и сопоставляют то, как в условиях авторитарного общества в Италии и в СССР детская литература использовалась в идеологических целях, какие события и институции (съезды детских писателей и конференции по детской литературе) влияли на её развитие, каким сходством обладают эти национальные литературы в рассматриваемый период. В статье анализируется творчество Джанни Родари в контексте послевоенной социокультурной ситуации в Италии, детально рассматривается его творческая биография, освещается поэтическое наследие писателя, знакомое советскому читателю в меньшей степени, чем повести («Приключения Чиполлино», «Джельсомино в стране лжецов», «Путешествие Голубой стрелы»), осмысляются причины неравномерной читательской рецепции и факторы, влияющие на вхождение книг Родари в круг чтения советских читателей. На примере повести-сказки «Приключения Чиполлино» исследуется отношение писателя к Советской России, осмысляются источники популярности творчества Родари у советского читателя, рассматриваются переводы его текстов на русский язык — в частности, работа Самуила Маршак над детской поэзией Родари и перевод «Приключения Чиполлино», выполненный Златой Потаповой.

Keywords: итальянская детская литература, переводы итальянской детской литературы на русский язык, Джанни Родари, поэзия для детей, «Приключения Чиполлино», Самуил Маршак

Marina Gerber

TALES, TEXTS AND IMAGES: APPROACHES TO FOLKTALE ILLUSTRATIONS

This essay thematizes issues around studying and analyzing book illustrations of folktales and folk wondertales. It surveys some of the most recent and relevant studies of folktale illustration by international scholars with the view of developing a systematic approach to the emergence of a large corpus of Russian folktale illustration since the rise of the illustrated folktale book in the late 19th century in Russia. The specific focus of the survey is on approaches that are able to address the large amount and variety of illustration traditions of particular folk wondertales on the one hand, and the cultural and historical dynamics of the literary interpretation of the tale. To contrast these approaches from literature studies and art history, the essay also raises the perspective of folklore studies on book illustration. This raises important perspectives around the relation between tales, texts and images, that have yet remained muted or presupposed.

Keywords: folktales, illustration, iconography, Soviet iconography, Afanasjev, Grimm, folklore studies, defolklorization, ban on images, lubok

Introduction

It seems self-evident to us that folktales¹ are extensively illustrated. Especially when intended for young children, the illustrations are an indispensable part of the book. Folktales themselves are highly evocative of images, and this has inspired a rich tradition of illustrating folktales. However, the analysis of all these illustrations is mostly absent from folktale studies, whose methods of collecting, systematizing and interpreting folktales do not involve looking at book illustrations. Indeed, visual images are sometimes treated as alien to the aural and linguistic constitution of the folktale. This neglect or exclusion characterizes

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a wide range of methodological approaches to folktales, such as the historical-geographical, the morphological, the psycho-analytical, feminist and others. As a result, folktale illustrations tend to be studied by visual methods and art history, which in turn tend to neglect the folktale tradition. In Russia, only few folktale illustrators were object of study, namely those who were able to contribute to the established canon of art history. Consequently, almost the entire imagery of the Russian folktale as it developed since mid-19th century remains largely unexplored. Yet this material can serve as a rich source for studying Russian and Soviet culture and the history of socio-political developments. This essay is concerned with surveying approaches to folktale illustrations that could help addressing the largely understudied corpus of Russian folktale illustrations. Despite the abundance of folktale illustrations since the rise of the popularity of the illustrated folktale book in Germany in the early 19th century and in Russia in the late 19th century there has been a surprisingly limited range of methodological analyses of these images. It is the aim of this essay to survey the most convincing and most recent approaches to folktale-illustration research, and to suggest ways in which they can be developed further to elaborate our understanding of the Russian folktale imagery.

I. Approaches within Illustration Studies

Whereas there is a wide range of scholarly studies on book illustration and book design [Vereshchagin 1898; Fomin 2015; Ottowitz 2017], especially on illustrated children's literature [Thiele 1991; Thiele, Doonan 2000; Ries 1992; Johnson 2019; Scherer 2020; Rigler 2020; Balina, Vyugin 2013; Balina, Oushakine 2021; Chistobaev 2017–2021], there is relatively little to be found specifically on folktale (or fairytale) illustration. If we focus on publications that are dedicated to folktale illustrations and address their specificity, we have relatively little at hand. Generally, the methods at stake revolve around stylistic, formal and socio-historical (including biographical) analyses, which are common in traditional art history, or what is more interesting for the analysis of folktale illustrations, around the analysis of the content which is depicted. In image-oriented art history (*Bildwissenschaften*) we analyze the evolution of traditions that depict certain contents, such as a motif, historical or mythical person or event. 'Iconography' is an important method here for analyzing the historically evolved conventions of depicting certain content and addressing the multiplicity of images. As will be demonstrated below, this approach is very productive of analyzing

illustrations, especially because they have become an important mass medium, playing a key role in the process of popularization of folktales in the 20th century.

One prominent publication with an art historical focus is Nadezhda Shanina's *Skazka v tvorchestve russkich chudozhnikov* (The tale in the work of Russian artists) from 1969. It presents black and white illustrations and color plates, accompanied by a long contextual essay. It deals with folktale illustrations by "the most outstanding artists" of the 19th and early 20th centuries [Shanina 1969, 16], namely Ilya Repin, Viktor Vasnetsov and those associated with Abramtsevo and *Mir Iskusstva*, such as Ivan Bilibin, Elena Polenova, Mikhail Vrubel, Nikolai Roerich and Sergei Maljutin. This list of artists already indicates that Shanina has chosen a traditional art-historical approach. She contextualized the folk- and fairytale illustrations within the art-critical discourse of the period at stake, considering the historical views of the artists' contemporaries, for example, the critics. Although this approach is justified and remains important within art history, Shanina's accounts are problematic. For example, she draws our attention to the shortcomings of Repin's attempt to depict the legend (*bylina*) "Sadko" in his painting from 1876. After completing it, Repin himself admitted that it was "terrible". The reasons for such a harsh judgement remained in the dark, and Shanina did little to shed light onto this issue. Otherwise, she praised the achievements of Vasnetsov in creating a new genre within painting with his *Ivan Tsarevich and the Grey Wolf* (1889). But here she omitted the reactions of the critics: Vladimir Stassov found this, and other paintings by Vasnetsov, "helpless spawns" and "weak images" [quoted in Lang 2003, 186]. Aleksander Benois drew on an already established view on this painting in the press, when he referred to the wolf as a taxidermized, stuffed bag from a shop window [quoted in Lang 2003, 186]. The German art historian Walther Lang explains that what Vasnetsov's critics problematized was the fact that Vasnetsov failed to translate Realism into folktales because of his rather clichéd imagination. Lang's *Das Heilige Russland* (2003) offers a more critical analysis of folktale painting, when he thematizes the problematic relation of Vasnetsov and his critics to Nationalism and how this, in fact, stood in the way of developing a new genre, namely that of fairytale painting. The argument that Vasnetsov's fairytale paintings are valuable from the art historical perspective thus remains problematic².

Art-historical or art-critical approaches to folktale or fairytale illustration are also employed in analyses of book illustrations. Helena Goscilo analyzed illustrations by various artists of Hans Christian Ander-

sen's "The Little Mermaid" [Goscilo 2020]. Such a single-text approach is revealing, insofar as it offers the possibility to reflect on the different visual interpretations of the text, which in turn contribute to its literary interpretation. Yet Goscilo's analysis hinges on the art-critical approach, and so the assessment of good and bad painting turns into the assessment of good and bad illustration. Such an approach tends to reproduce the canons of art history. The question of *why* fairytale or folktale illustration needs to be considered as art, or what the relevance of such a canon is, is not critically addressed.

Interestingly, Shanina acknowledges the existence of a broader range of folktale illustration in Soviet children's books, which, as she says, would require a separate study [Shanina 1969, 16]. But we should add that it would also require a completely different approach. The Russian folk- and fairytale illustration does not stop after Bilibin or Vasnetsov, but, as Goscilo has demonstrated, spans over several decades, artistic movements and historical contexts [Goscilo 2020]. A method to incorporate a broad range of folktale illustration must be therefore epoch- and genre-spanning. Furthermore, folktale illustrations should not be considered only as 'art', but more generically as *images*, especially in terms of their political, religious iconography and in terms of their specific folktale iconography.

II. Iconography in Folktale Illustrations

The earliest study that paves the way towards such an image analysis of folktale illustration is by Ruth Bottigheimer from the mid-1980s, her approach being a combination of literature and art historical methods. She focuses on single folktales and how they were illustrated by various artists. In her essay "Iconographic Continuity in Illustrations of 'The Goosegirl'" (1985), Bottigheimer draws our attention to two clusters of illustrations, or 'elaborated images', as she terms them, which dominate the iconographic tradition of the folktale "The Goosegirl" (Grimm's *Kinder und Hausmärchen*). She shows how these 'elaborated images' played an important role in the reception and interpretation of that tale. One 'elaborated image' shows the unrecognized 'right princess' passing through an arch, where the head of the previously beheaded magic horse is attached to the wall. Only the horse head knows of her real descent and thus the illustrations from this cluster depict the girl in a melancholic mood, in a hopeless situation. Another 'elaborated image' has a feminist character, Bottigheimer argues, since it shows the girl as she is performing her magical powers, making the wind blow. Illustrators

who chose other scenes to illustrate “The Goosegirl” have — deliberately or not — departed from this initial feminist meaning of the folktale [Bottigheimer 1985, 69–70]. This analysis presupposes a close reading of the text and the decision to interpret this folktale as a feminist tale. The iconographical analysis serves to reinforce this reading. With this approach Bottigheimer departs from an art-historical analysis of the artistic achievements of single artists.

In 2010, Bottigheimer characterized her approach and methodology as “content analysis”, which is “both nominal (what is depicted) and dynamic (effective action within illustrations)” [Bottigheimer 2010, 143]. Furthermore, she draws attention to the substantive difference between single and multiple illustrations of a tale:

[W]hether to create multiple images that mirror the narrative as a whole or to craft a single image that visually concentrates the narrative into a single moment is crucial. Since the number of illustrations has commercial consequences, that decision generally springs from the publisher. On the other hand, the choice of illustration moment(s) usually belongs to the artist [Bottigheimer 2010, 148].

According to Bottigheimer, it is not only the artist who makes decisions about the function of the image, by choosing scenes, interpreting, reformulating or replacing the folktale text. The publisher’s decisions need also be taken in consideration. When one illustration is printed as a full-page color illustration and the other as a small black and white drawing, then this will also have an impact on how the folktale is interpreted [Bottigheimer 2010, 154]. Furthermore, the issue of reprinting is key: is a particular illustration reprinted in later editions or even in other cultural contexts? [Ibid] Thus, her approach includes practical, economic, and quantitative aspects, which goes far beyond the analysis of the artist’s and critic’s aesthetic judgements.

With her earlier study of how children responded to “The Goosegirl” with their own drawings [Bottigheimer 1990], she implies the necessity of also going beyond the analysis of canonical illustrators. As a consequence, we depart from the idea that images of folktales are only images by well-known artists. Furthermore, her case study of American and Japanese multi-image editions of “The Goosegirl” indicates the relevance of a comparative approach for gaining insight into gender, culture, and the very conceptualization of illustrations [Bottigheimer 2010, 151–153]. A large data set, as was used in Bottigheimer’s study, enables an analysis of a range of culturally acceptable images for a given story and thus to derive insights about various social constructs.

As a further example of recent approaches to folktale illustration, Regina Freyberger's *Märchenbilder — Bildermärchen* (2009) should be singled out. It is a comprehensive and ambitious study of illustrations of the Brothers Grimm folktales (*Kinder- und Hausmärchen*) from 1819 to 1945. Freyberger was able to identify many more illustrations to "The Goosegirl" than Bottigheimer, because she did not only look at the official collections of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (KHM), but at all kinds of editions, such as picture books, single-text books, broadsheets and even paintings and advertisements. However, her aim is not primarily to analyze different illustrations of one folktale (although this is one of the outcomes), but rather to write a history of illustrating the KHM folktales, including narratological methods from art history, an analysis of the printing industry and of publishing houses. What is significant about Freyberger's approach to the aims of this survey is that she acknowledged the visual specificity of folktale illustrations. She argues that artists in the 19th century did not have an iconographic tradition of folktale to draw from, so they had to either invent it or borrow from other iconographic traditions, such as history painting [Freyberger 2009, 18]. But primarily, she tried to work out the specific iconography of folktale illustrations by grouping illustrations of the same tale together and by comparing them. As an art historian, Freyberger speaks of 'iconography' when she basically means the same as Bottigheimer with her term 'elaborated image'. In this context the single or mono-scenic illustration plays a particular role. The mono-scenic illustration is, as it were, at once the medium and the precondition for the 'elaborated image'/iconography:

Das monoszenische Einzelbild zeigt dem Betrachter nur eine Szene, zumeist die Schlüsselszene, die *pars pro toto* für das Märchen steht und in ihrer Prägnanz das ihm zugrunde liegende Märchen so problemlos erkennen lässt, dass die Erzählung, in die das Bild eingebettet ist, vom Betrachter assoziativ ergänzt wird¹⁾ [Freyberger 2009, 19].

However intuitive and convincing it may sound, it is also worth enquiring into the statement that the mono-scenic image tends to illustrate a 'key scene', which stands for the tale as such. Bottigheimer has already demonstrated that decisions about what is a 'key scene' are made on a subjective basis. The mono-scenic illustration expresses the artist's

¹⁾The mono-scenic single image offers merely one scene to the viewer, mostly the key scene, which stands for the tale *pars pro toto* and which by means of its conciseness easily enables a recognition of the tale at stake, so that the viewer can complete the story, in which the image is embedded (transl. M.G.).

individual interpretation of the folktale, which is infused by his or her specific social and cultural context. In other words, the concept of ‘key scene’ is a result of subjective interpretation and becomes ‘objective’ only insofar as it gets reprinted and insofar as other illustrators pick up on this scene. The identification of a ‘key scene’ is therefore not the result of a scholarly method but of the history of illustrating only. In contrast to this, folklore studies, which engage in systematic analyses of folktales, do not offer such a concept: a folktale does not have one ‘key scene’, which stands for the folk or fairy tale, but rather a *set* of ‘key scenes’ (*set* of motifs) [Uther 2004].

Where folktale scholars do engage in illustration, we find a different term. The folktale scholar and editor of the revised version of *The Types of International Folktales* (2004) Hans-Jörg Uther employs the term ‘identifying illustration’ (*Erkennungsillustration*) [Uther 2013, 118], meaning an illustration that enables the viewer to identify or recognize a specific folktale. The question, however, whether the viewer recognizes it because it is a ‘key scene’, or because he or she had seen other similar illustrations of the folktale, or because of a different dynamic, is yet to be answered. It is perhaps less misleading to proceed on the assumption that a folktale is recognized by an image, not because the iconography is immanently key to the tale, but because it has been reproduced many times before. Freyberger found out that the most recurrent iconography for the folktale “Frau Holle” (KHM 24) is when the kind girl shakes Frau Holle’s bedding out of the window, which causes snow to fall [Freyberger 2009, 357–358]. For the development of the plot of “Frau Holle” this scene is irrelevant, which demonstrates that a ‘key scene’ is not necessarily dramatically relevant, but rather a ‘key’ to visual recognition. What makes it a ‘key scene’ is the choice of the artist, and the subsequent emerging tradition of illustrating the folktale in this particular way. As a consequence of this tradition, we begin to recognize the folktale by merely one (mono-scenic) illustration.

Dargestellt wurden immer wieder dieselben Szenen, die als Schlüsselszenen der Märchen zuletzt so populär wurden, dass sie nicht nur im Bereich der Buchillustration, sondern auch im Bereich der Malerei autonom und stellvertretend für das ganze Märchen stehen konnten²⁾ [Freyberger 2009, 152].

A ‘key scene’ can only ‘stand’ for a folktale when there is a long tradition of illustrating it in this way. The choice of this scene should not

²⁾The same scenes, that as key scenes of the tale finally became popular, were depicted again and again, so that they became autonomous not merely within book illustration, but also in painting, and representative of the whole tale (transl. M.G.).

be conflated with mass reproduction of the illustration, although mass reproduction obviously enhances its dissemination. An illustrations' status as 'identifying illustration' or 'key scene' is a product of a dynamic process of reception and distribution of folktale illustrations, which is yet to be explored.

III. 'Soviet' Iconography of Folktales

Megan Swift's *Picturing the Page: Illustrating Children's Literature under Lenin and Stalin* (2020) employed a method that is comparable to Bottigheimer, insofar as she analyzed single fairytales in relation to the varying ways they were illustrated, and insofar as she considers the illustration as an important aspect of interpretation.

The texts themselves were fixed, but illustrations proved to be a malleable medium that could begin to imbue works with new meanings, make ideologically appropriate shifts and adjustments, and connect to the values of the present. Illustrations could be the voice of today sounding from the pages of yesterday [Swift 2020, 12–13].

Her book includes case studies on fairytales, i.e., literary adaptations of folktales by the canonical Russian writers Pushkin and Ershov, which were newly illustrated and printed between 1920 and 1950. Her specific selection of the fairytales is oriented towards the archival material concerning political campaigns between 1920 and 1930. Through her analysis of the Soviet illustration of these fairytales it becomes clear that the campaigns and political debates are reflected in those illustrations and respectively change the politics of those fairytales. Herewith she demonstrates the relation between children's literature and politics, drawing on illustration alone, since the texts of the fairytales do not change significantly.

Under Stalin, the magic of the flying humpback horse was depicted in terms of the Soviet achievements in aviation [Swift 2020, 59]. If in the 1920s Ivan was depicted "as a kind of village idiot", under Stalin he "became more earnest and serious" [Swift 2020, 61]. Under Lenin, the horse was donkey-like, whereas in the mid 1930s it became heroic and folkloric [Ibid]. As Swift demonstrates, these differences in the visual characterization of the sky, the hero and the horse seem to echo political campaigns, social and cultural shifts. In the contexts of the analysis of these visual differences, she employed terms such as 'versions of Ivan' or 'depiction of the horse'. Furthermore, Swift draws our attention to the fact that certain 'scenes' received at times more attention than

others. Even though she has not done this systematically, this approach is comparable with Bottigheimer's or Freyberger's, insofar as one scene is singled out to stand for the whole tale. Additionally, Swift provided a possible interpretation for the choice of this scene: in publications from 1917 and 1924, it is the final scene of the demise of the Tsar, when he is boiled alive, which alludes to the revolutionary history [Swift 2020, 63–64].

Potentially, Swift's book can provide an idea of what a Soviet or political iconography of the fairytale could be: technological progress, the powerful and heroic worker and peasant, a modern topography, etc. Such Soviet political iconography of the fairy- or folktale could also be read in terms of the process of 'politicizing magic'. In *Politicizing Magic* (2005) Marina Balina, Helena Goscilo and Mark Lipovetsky show how the folkloric wonder tale was adopted to the Soviet revolutionary spirit:

Soviet Russia... elaborated a very specific relationship to fantasy and wonderland, harnessing the fairy tale's teleological protagonist to socialist realist do-gooders and achievers (Gaidar's group-loyal Malchish-Kibalchish, Kataev's "consciousness-raised", petal-tearing little girl), the magic helper to benevolent older Soviet "mentors" (Kataev's anonymous kindly old woman, Lagin's ethnically suspect but politically useful Khotabych, Bazhov's rich but anticapitalist Mistress of the Copper Mountain), and the happy ending to the "radiant future" of a classless paradise (in Gaidar, Tolstoy, Lagin, and Kataev) [Balina, Goscilo, Lipovetsky 2005, X.].

And thus, Swift's book can be seen as a contribution to analyzing the politicization of the fairytale. However, not all fairytales were subject to such a process. Swift as well as Balina, Goscilo and Lipovetsky provide only a selection and do not attempt to give a full picture. Regarding the folktales edited and published by Aleksandr Afanas'ev (*Narodnye Russkie Skazki* (Russian Folktales), first published in 1855–1864)³, we can expect an alternative politicization, namely, more subtle, and possibly with aspects that are yet to be identified as 'Soviet' or 'socialist'. Furthermore, we need to critically consider that our understanding of 'Soviet political iconography' has been informed by contemporary perspectives of what is considered to be 'Soviet'.

IV. 'Iconography' of the Ancient Russian Culture

In her Master dissertation, "Book Illustration of the Russian Wonder Tale: Interrelations between the Verbal and Visual Text" (*Knizhnye illyustratsii russkoy volshebnoy skazki*), Oksana Barsukova studied 71

illustrated wonder tale books from the end of the 18th century until 1914 [Barsukova 2016]. She produced four case studies analyzing the editions *The Feather of Finist the Bright Falcon* (Peryshko finista yasnacokola, 1902) illustrated by Bilibin; *The Tale on Marja Morevna* (Skazka pro Mar'yu Morevnu, 1904, illustrated by Boris Vasil'evich Zvorykin; *Russkie narodnye skazki i pribautki*, there the tale "Synko Filipko", 1906, illustrated by Elena Polenova; *The Frog Princess* (Tsarevna lyagushka, 1914), illustrated by Maximilian Eberman. She analyzed the illustrations in terms of the categories of 'costumes', 'attributes', and 'topology' and came to the conclusion that the 'iconography' of the Russian wonder tale is oriented towards ancient, pre-medieval Russia (900–1240). This corresponds to her general analysis of the 71 illustrated books:

In the course of the 19th century, Russia's own tradition of folktale iconography was established, which is oriented towards the peasant's everyday life and the ancient, pre-Peter-the-Great-history. Folktale illustration becomes the incarnation of the national myth of original 'Russian-ness' (transl. M.G.)³⁾ [Barsukova 2016, 37].

In those illustrations, the wonder-tale space and the heroes are inscribed into a certain historical reality, namely, the epoch before the reign of Peter the Great [Barsukova 2016, 20], albeit these are only approximations. Barsukova understands these approximations in terms of 'simulacra' (following Baudrillard) because they do not represent any particular reality. For instance, the folktale does not provide any details about costumes [Barsukova 2016, 19]. This is the process in which "the tale is objectified, and the historical reality is mythologized" [Ibid, 19].

The "tradition of visualization of the Russian wonder tale" in terms of this historical simulacrum is "based on the individual work of the artists-illustrators" [Barsukova 2016, 21]. We know that the artists around the Abramtsevo, such as Bilibin and Polenova, were interested in medieval and pre-medieval Russian culture, and the parallel this has to the medievalism of other artistic movements, such as the 'Arts and Crafts' in England, could be developed in relation to art-historical research on these movements.

The term 'iconography' is not understood by Barsukova in the same way as Bottigheimer or Freyberger, but rather as a general orientation,

³⁾На протяжении XIX века в России устанавливается своя традиция сказочной иконографии, ориентированной на крестьянский быт и древнерусскую, допетровскую историю. Сказочная иллюстрация становится воплощением национального мифа самобытной «русскости».

or as a general way to visualize the space and time in which a wonder tale is taking place, namely, in ancient Russia. For Barsukova, the categories of such an iconography include costumes, architecture, tools and weapons, whereas for Bottigheimer and Freyberger iconography concerns a particular way of depicting a scene or folktale.

Barsukova's approach is comparable with others that analyze the way in which illustrators inscribe a specific historical reality into their images. This process is facilitated by the fact that the folktale texts do not offer description, so the 'description' provided by illustrations is easily discerned. For example, there are illustrations of Hans Christian Andersen's fairytales that include architecture from the Estonian city Tallinn [Leving 2020, 354], or illustrations of Grimm's folktales that present a Hessian landscape [Zuch 2015].

Barsukova understands 'Russian-ness' in terms of costumes and architecture, but alternatively we can think of this category in terms of motifs that emerged in Russia and that formed an iconographic tradition of a particular folktale. A good example to illustrate this point could be a comparison between the "German" folktale "Frau Holle" and the "Russian" folktale "Frost" (*Morozko*), both belonging to the same tale type, namely ATU 480, "The Kind and the Unkind Girls". According to Freyberger, shaking out the pillows for Frau Holle by the kind girl has become the dominant iconography for this folktale. This motif is special and only exists in this German folktale (version). The scene depicted can be read as an image or work⁴. More precisely, we can understand it as an image of housework by women. Some illustrations include the visualization of feathers turning into snowflakes, which 'causes' the meteorological phenomenon of snowfall on earth. In the 'Russian' folktale "Frost" the kind girl does not have to work, to carry out household chores and gets rewarded simply for being friendly, kind and modest. The fact that the dominant iconography of "Frau Holle" is about work, triggers the question of what the iconography of this Russian tale would be? What is 'Russian' about not working and 'German' about 'working'? Such approach would enable a different level of interpretation of folktale illustrations, namely more socio-historical, and philosophical. They could help us understand 'Russian' culture (and on a comparative level, other regions) not in terms of costumes and attributes, but in terms of the way concepts such as work, non-work, reward, punishment, etc.

Barsukova envisioned how folklore studies, specifically Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*, could provide methodological tools for image analysis. Her approach is based on the assumption that the hero goes into the underworld and returns, hereby moving through different

places, as described by Propp [Propp 2011, 8–21]. Thus, we look at the illustrations in terms of various places. However, this method can only be applied to multiple-image illustrations but does not offer any insight for mono-scenic images. In some ways, Barsukova's approach seems to be inspired by Propp's thinking, namely that all folktales have a certain structure in common. And fundamentally, this approach is not oriented towards analyzing the differences between the tales (albeit Propp attempted to provide a tool for it, it is not applied widely within folklore studies) and their types and motifs, but towards understanding the folktale as such.

IV. The Ban on Book Illustrations in Folklore Studies

According to Barsukova, so far, the image-text relation has not been addressed in folklore studies. She justified her decision to consider the 'folklore text' in terms of the image in her study by pointing to the assumption that the image influences our perception [Barsukova 2016, 4]. As we have seen so far, in literature and illustration studies, this approach has been productive. However, what service would image analysis do to folklore studies? And what are the reasons for its current absence within folklore studies? In the following I will indicate possible answers to these questions. One reason for this absence is that folklore studies understand book illustration in terms of 'art' or 'fine art', herewith excluding it from its own discipline. The second possible reason is a certain apprehension towards the book and the printed text in general and the illustrated book in particular, which manifests itself in concepts such as 'defolklorization' (defol'klorizatsiya) [Pankeev 2005, 66] and in the fear of the 'loss of sight' of the oral tradition.

The seventh edition of *Narodnye Russkie Skazki* (1984–85) by the Soviet folklorists Lev Barag and Nikolaj Novikov included four types of images: (1) *lubok* pictures from Dmitri Rovinski's collection, (2) photographs of objects from the Museum of Folklore in Moscow, from the Museum of Toys in Zagorsk, etc.; (3) objects such as embroidery and stove tiles; and Palekh (4). Those are all types of 'folklore images', i.e., images that derive from folklore-based crafts. That Barag and Novikov limited themselves to so many illustrations of this kind, was not due to the lack of folktale illustrations at the time. They themselves mention in their appendix to the first volume, that Afanas'ev's *skazki* have been richly illustrated, by "talented artists" e.g., Ivan Bilibin, Emil Lissner, Georgii Narbut, Nikolai Karazin, Evgenii Rachev, Elena Polenova, Konstantin Kuznetsov, Yury Vasnetsov, Tat'iana Mavrina, Aleksandr Kurkin, u.a.

[Barag, Novikov 1984, 419]. They add that this presents the most “vivid material for the various fine-art styles of Russian book illustration” [Barag, Novikov 1984, 419]. The list of illustrators by Barag and Novikov is by no means representative of the actual, very large number of illustrators of Afanas’ev’s folktales. By 1984 we can speak of an overwhelming flood of existing folktale book illustration. Evidently, they have not chosen these illustrations but instead images of folklore crafts, figurines and toys. The fact that this choice is not explained or even mentioned in their edition adds to the mystery.

Even when they refer to the traditional illustrations by Bilibin and Karazin, the general tone is that ‘fine art’ has its own tradition and that it lives its own life, which is not to intersect with folklore. This point can be qualified further by noting that some images that Barag and Novikov provide do not predate Bilibin and other illustrators. Thus, recent book illustration is excluded from this edition *only* because of its supposed relation to fine art. It is suggested that the visual cultures of folklore and fine art are neatly separate spheres, and that the visual folklore is more likely to have influenced fine art than the other way around. As a consequence, we should consider the visual culture of folklore as a possible source for studying book illustrations, precisely because of its historical precedence.

Another major folktale scholar to echo this view is the structuralist Vladimir Propp, who wrote two books that had a significant impact on folk- and fairy tale research (*The Morphology of the Folktale*, 1928). In his equally important *Historical Roots of Wonder Tales* there is an interesting passage about book illustrations:

Sometimes the place at which the hero arrived is described as a city or state. <...> “There is the blue sea, spreading freely and widely before her. And there, in the distance, the golden cupolas are blazing like suns on the white-stone towers” (Af. 235). The pseudo-Russian style in painting loves depicting this kingdom with churches — this is not in the folktale’s style. It does not know a Heavenly Jerusalem (transl. M.G.)⁴ [Propp 1946, 360–361].

Propp refers to the folktale “The Feather of Finist the Bright Falcon” (Peryshko Finista yasna sokola, AF 235)⁵. Bilibin illustrated exactly this

⁴Иногда это место, куда прибыл герой, описывается как город или как государство. <...> “Вот и синее море, широкое и раздольное, разлилось перед нею, а там вдали как жар горят золотые маковки на высоких теремах белокаменных”(Аф. 235). Ложнорусский стиль в живописи любит изображать это царство с церквами – это не в стиле сказки. Небесного Иерусалима она не знает.



Figure 1. Illustration for “The Feather of Finist the Bright Falcon”,
Illustrator Ivan Bilibin, 1900. From *Skazki. Peryshko Finista Yasna-Sokola*. Goznak: Moscow, 1987

scene from the folktale (Fig. 1). What Propp means with “the style of the tale” remains ambiguous. Possibly, he confuses here concepts of ‘style’ and ‘iconography’. Heavenly Jerusalem (Nebesnyy Ierusalim) is an iconography, i.e., a historically evolved way or tradition of representing paradise with particular characteristics. On Bilibin’s illustration the city is represented as standing on a cliff edge, relatively high up in the left corner of the composition — as if ‘in the sky’ — heavenly paradise. According to Propp, the folktale “does not know” this way of depicting cities, implying that this iconography is more recent than the origin of the folktale. Even though the artists associated with the so-called pseudo-Russian style were particularly interested in a genuinely historical depiction of the middle-ages, it fails at giving the correct visual context for the emergence of the folktale. Presumably he refers here to Vasnetsov, to Bilibin and to other artists who are associated with the artistic movement, which has been characterized as ‘pseudo-



Figure 2. Final vignette for “The Feather of Finist the Bright Falcon”.
 In Ja. V. Propp (Ed.) Afanas’ev A. *Narodnye Russkie Skazki*. Vol. 3.
 Gosizdat: Moscow, 1957

Russian style’. Because Propp is interested in investigating the historical roots of the folktale, such illustrations are discarded as ‘misleading’. He does not approve of the ‘new iconography’ in book illustration, presumably because it is unable to tell us anything about the origins of the folktale. It comes as no surprise that his edition *NRS* from 1957 and 1958 is not illustrated, other than with purely decorative images, that have nothing or little to do with the text, such as the so-called ‘final vignette’ (Fig. 2). At the same time, Propp’s view on folktale illustration echoes Barag’s and Novikov’s implicit view, that book illustration belongs to a different sphere, namely (fine) art, which has its own rules and historical traditions. Consequently, for Propp folktale illustration should not be taken seriously in folklore studies, because it not only postdates folklore culture, but also because it is unfaithful to it.

But what kind of images are welcome in scholarly folktale editions? The images in Barag and Novikov’s edition do not illustrate any particular folktales but float around as examples of visual depictions of folktale motifs. Mark Konstantinovich Azadovski, who edited an academic selection of folktales in 1932 and who included lubok pictures into this edition, writes the following:

The drawings that accompany the textual part of the book, were taken from various lubok-tales editions and so-called popular pictures. They are not

illustrations in any strict sense: they do not illustrate any particular plot or certain episode of a tale. Rather they live in the consciousness of the bearers of the tale and its audiences, since the storytellers' latest contemporary repertoire owes its origin to that *lubok* literature, which, on the one hand, ceaselessly introduces new themes, and on the other hand, keeps the old tradition through reprinting. (transl. M.G.)⁵ [Azadovski 1932, 8].

We can deduce that in the scholarly editions the relation between the image and the folktale is guided by a specific idea of the origins of the folktale, where text, image and tale existed in a non-hierarchical relation. What came first and what came second is not relevant, because the folktale as well as the image have a common source, namely the oral tradition and the life in a community.

This argument can also be illustrated by the choice of images for the fourth edition of *NRS* in 1913–1914, by Alexei Evgen'evich Gruzinski. In the editor's foreword Gruzinski writes, that as it was the wish of the publisher, each of the four volumes includes one image. The images show situations in which folktales were told in different parts of Russia. These color plates have the function of a frontispiece, appearing after the book title (in the first volume it appears after the editor's foreword and before the folktale section). One of them shows a group of people sitting together in a chamber: there are children of different ages, young adults and adults (Fig. 3). One adult woman is at the center of the evening scene. All the attention is directed at her, and her mimic suggests that she is about to tell something. She is knitting on the side and the yarn leads over her knee and to the yarn ball on the floor. This image, like those in the other volumes, does not relate to one specific folktale printed in the volumes, rather it points to a context that lies outside of the printed book and the written text. The image relates to the process of the oral tradition of the folktale and to the lack of illustration in that process. In this drawing by Mikhail Shcheglov's the experience of telling and listening comes to the fore. The dark common room is illuminated by a faint light source. This light throws shadows on the faces and the objects in the

⁵Рисунки, сопровождающие текстовую часть книги, заимствованы из различных лубочных изданий сказок и так называемых народных картинок. Они не являются иллюстрациями в тесном смысле этого слова: они иллюстрируют не тот или иной отдельный сюжет или определенный эпизод в какой-либо сказке, но они являются общим иллюстративным материалом: они иллюстрируют характер тех образов, которые живут в сознании носителей сказки и их аудитории, так как позднейший и современный репертуар сказочников в значительной степени обязан своим происхождением этой лубочной литературе, с одной стороны, непрерывно вводящей новые темы, с другой — поддерживающей своими перепечатками старую традицию.



Figure 3. Coloured drawing, *Skazka v central'noj Velikorossii*, artist Mikhail Shcheglov. In A. Afanas'ev *Russkie narodnye skazki* (ed. by Gruzinskij). Vol. 1. Sytin: Moscow, 1913

room and might prompt the imagination of the listeners. Additionally, the storyteller engages gesture and offers with her knitting an additional visual stimulation. A performance takes place which involves multiple senses. Shcheglov's image is full of symbolic meaning. The yarn is the thread of life that leads to death; the knitting is associated with the fabrication of stories. The depiction of the story-telling scene could be considered as a proto-illustration. This points to the historical context of the emergence of the folktale, when text and illustration were absent in some parts of Russia, and when tales were disseminated orally. In contrast to this, book illustrators illustrate particular texts, which, from the perspective of Barag, Novikov, Propp and Gruzinski, does not do justice to the very essence of the folktale.

V. 'Defolklorization' and the Bottigheimer-Controversy

Perhaps it comes as no surprise that Ruth Bottigheimer, who has produced one of the most productive and elaborated approach to folktale (book) illustration, was involved in a controversy with folklorists. The thesis by Bottigheimer, that the fairytale only came into existence with its textualization in mid 16th century [Bottigheimer 2002], was firmly rejected by a group of folklorists in 2010 on the pages of the journal *The Journal of American Folklore* and elsewhere. This controversy was

emotional and confrontational in parts. Such events are not frequent in academia, and they tend to reveal a lot about the self-understanding of a discipline. Bottigheimer argued in her book *Fairy Godfather: Straparola, Venice, and the Fairy Tale Tradition* (2002), that the poet Giovanni Francesco Straparola had invented the fairy tale⁶ as we know it today.

Folklorists, however, assume that the fairytale existed long before Straparola or anyone else who has put it in writing and in this literary form. Furthermore, Bottigheimer shows that Straparola, who lived in Venice, was writing for the local bourgeois public of this important trading city. Thus, the Godfather of the fairytale is not the peasantry or folk, living in the countryside, but the high-bourgeois Straparola. It was also him, according to Bottigheimer, who invented the most well-known fairytale type, namely the rise-tale ('from rags to riches'), which gets its popular expression in "Cinderella". She employs the method of socio-historical analysis, when she demonstrates that the story of a poor and neglected girl, who rises through marriage, must have been particularly compelling to the Venetian bourgeois, since they have also nurtured the wish of a rise in status. Her main objection to folkloristics is: There is no evidence for an existence of fairytales before 1500. The origin of fairytale cannot therefore be in the oral tradition but must be in the written text (by Straparola).

In his response to Bottigheimer Francisco Vaz da Silva writes that her proposition is a challenge to folklorists, who tend to ignore literary texts as a matter of principle. But he also doubts aspects of her proposition, e.g., whether it would be possible to demonstrate that "Straparola's 'invention' could have yielded the whole modern oral fairytale tradition, by literary means only, in just two and a half centuries" [Vaz da Silva 2010, 411]. Referring to Bottigheimer's claim, that the fairytale only exists, if and when it is written down and that the "absence of evidence is evidence for absence" [Bottigheimer 2007, 19], Jan Ziolkowski responds:

Absence of evidence does not indicate the nonexistence of a phenomenon, any more than the absence of a person from a room of observers indicates that the individual in question has ceased to be or has never existed [Ziolkowski 2010, 387].

As an attempt to summarize the numerous objections from her critics, we could say that Bottigheimer's approach was found to be too positivist. She has the tendency to define the fairytale as specific to text, whereas the

folklorists tend to believe that its origin is in the oral tradition. However, this summary is also reductive, because folklorists do not insist anymore on the purely oral origin of the fairytale and have concluded that it is more productive to consider a non-hierarchical and perhaps non-causal relation between the oral and the written tale [e.g., Ziolkowski 2010].

“The folktale is being forgotten” (*Skazka zabyvajetsa*) — this claim was made in the context of field work in Soviet Russia during the period of 1956–1974 [Vedernikova 1975, 118]. This means, that once the folktales are not told orally anymore, they stop existing. N. Vedernikova writes: “The regularity of performance is an indication of the full-fledged life of the tale within the oral tradition”⁶⁾ (transl. M. G.) [Vedernikova 1975, 118]. She observes that this process has been changing for several decades and that reading folktales from books has also become more common in the countryside [Vedernikova 1975, 120]. Such social and cultural processes change the way folktales are disseminated and consequently they change the form of the folktale (e.g., it becomes shorter, *ibid.*). Moreover, it changes the way we understand the folktale or folklore in general. The process of this change is referred to as ‘defolklorization’. The invention of the book press and the possibility to print folktales has, in a way, undermined the ‘original’ character of the folktale that it acquired in the process of the oral tradition. It made it, as we have seen above, for folklorists impossible to clearly state that one fairytale or one folktale has a purely oral origin. From this perspective, book illustration only adds to this ‘problem’, by potentially confusing cause and effect. Propp’s criticism of Bilibin’s iconography can be considered as a symptom of this ‘problem’, as well as the Bottigheimer-controversy, being an effect of the folklorist’s fear of being undermined by ‘black-on-white’ arguments that become possible through book publishing. In other words, book illustration perpetuates and solidifies this mournful process of ‘defolklorization’.

VI. Conclusion

The melancholic attitude of some folklorists regarding the disappearance of the oral tradition of the folktale is to be taken seriously, because the printed book has become a dominating form of folktale dissemination and popularization. And the book illustration played a prominent role, the dynamics of which is yet to be explored. As a consequence of

⁶⁾Показателем полнокровной жизни сказки в устной традиции служит преемственность исполнения.

the concerns of folklorists we should take the visual culture of folklore more into focus when studying book illustrations, and not merely fine art, art historical concepts of Christian and mythological iconography. This could help defining the specificity of the folktale imagery, something that is yet an understudied question within art history and visual analysis of folktale illustrations.

The recent debates in folklore studies promise to open the question regarding how our understanding of the folktale has changed since the rise of the book. Folklorists do not insist anymore on the purely oral origin of the folktale and have concluded that it is more productive to consider a non-hierarchical and perhaps non-causal relation between the oral and the written tale [e.g., Ziolkowski 2010] and of *lubok* pictures [Korepova 2012]. Also Barag and Novikov point to the fact that Afanas'ev's *skazki*, in their textual form, have had an impact on the late *lubok*, on oral variants of folktale tellers and in all the forms of visual folklore and professional arts [Barag, Novikov 1984, 426]. This indicates that they acknowledge the potentially non-hierarchical relation between tale, text and visual arts, and that they acknowledge that the text can also have an influence on the oral tradition. They go on pointing to the overwhelming number of adaptations after Afanas'ev's *skazki* in Soviet culture:

They also received a diverse synthetic incarnation on the stages of drama and music theatres for children and in cinema films. Thanks to the mass-produced editions for children, during the Soviet time many of Afanas'ev's folktales had an unprecedentedly broad distribution (transl. M. G.)⁷⁾ [Barag, Novikov 1984, 426].

The processes of 'synthetic materialization' referred to by Barag and Novikov and of 'appropriation' and 're-creation' of folktales referred to by Jack Zipes in his study *The Enchanted Screen* [Zipes 2010, 7–15], can also be identified within folktale illustration. This process is different in illustration, because illustration reduces the narrative to one or several motifs, which come to represent the whole folktale. There are already a number of studies on the folktale film, which address this synthetic 'materialization' and 're-creation', i.e., novelty of motifs, motif-combinations and versions which result from it. But there is nothing like it for illustration.

⁷⁾Разнообразное синтетическое воплощение получили они также на сценах драматических и музыкальных детских театров и в кинофильмах. В советское время многие из сказок Афанасьева, благодаря массовым их изданиям для детей, получили небывало широкое распространение.

And finally, to comprehend the iconography of Afanas'ev's folktales and to understand what became subsequently 'Soviet' about them, and to analyze how they influenced our contemporary understanding of the folktale, we can turn to a systematic approach of analyzing the political iconography of those images. What was the illustration's role in "politicizing magic" [Balina, Goscilo, Lipovetsky 2005] and how did this contribute to the dissemination and popularization of the folktale? This would imply that folktale illustrators are producing representations of folktales, which need to be taken seriously, not just from the art historical perspective, but also from the perspective of story-telling tradition. It would show that folktale illustrations produce their 'new versions' of folktales, and that they are not merely illustrating a text. However, these new versions are yet to be defined and this process would involve a rethinking of how folktale illustrations impacted not only on the single folktales, but also on the very conception of the folktale today.

Notes

- ¹ The term 'folktale' translates from the Russian term *narodnaja skazka*. Following Jack Haney's translation of Afanas'ev's *Narodnye Russkie Skazki* (2014–2021) this term will also be used here. The use of the term 'fairy tales' is more common, but according to Haney, it should be reserved for literary adaptations or imitations of the folk wondertales [Haney 2014, Preface]. This is also the case in *Politicizing Magic. An Anthology of Russian and Soviet Fairy Tales* [Balina, Goscilo, Lipovetsky 2005].
- ² For more successful examples of 'fairy-tale painting' see the work of the Pre-Raphaelite Edward Burne-Jones [Rager 2009] and of the German painter Moritz von Schwind [Freyberger 2007].
- ³ For an English translation of Afanas'ev's *Russian Folktales* see [Haney 2014–2021]. Haney's translation is based on the seventh edition of *NRS* by Lev Barag and Nikolaj Novikov (1984–85).
- ⁴ I thank Hans-Jörg Uther for this observation in a conversation in 2019.
- ⁵ Even though Barsukova deals explicitly with this illustration and its relation to the text as well as with Propp, she does not mention this passage in Propp's *Historical Roots of Wonder Tales*.
- ⁶ Bottigheimer uses the term 'fairy tale' to refer to the literary genre, which, as she argues, was invented by Straparola.

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СКАЗКИ, ТЕКСТЫ И КАРТИНКИ: ПОДХОДЫ К ИЛЛЮСТРАЦИЯМ НАРОДНЫХ СКАЗОК

В статье освещаются различные аспекты, связанные с изучением традиции иллюстрирования фольклорных и литературных сказок, вошедших в круг детского чтения. Автор обозначает перспективу сопоставления фольклористического, литературоведческого и искусствоведческого взгляда на книжные иллюстрации к изданиям сказок и поднимает вопросы о соотношении между традицией народной сказки, текстом и изображением. Здесь представлен обзор наиболее значительных современных работ по данному вопросу (авторства Ольги Гоцилло, Меган Свифт, Регины Фрейбергер и др.) где предлагается систематический подход к объёмному корпусу изданий иллюстрированных сказок. Фольклористический и литературоведческий аспекты раскрываются на основе исследований В. Я. Проппа, Дж. Зайпса, М. Балиной, С. Ушакина. В качестве материала рассматриваются издания сказок братьев Grimm, Х.-К. Андерсена, А. Н. Афанасьева, А. С. Пушкина, П. П. Ершова, иллюстрации В. Васнецова, И. Репина, советская графика. Основное внимание в статье сфокусировано на тех исследовательских подходах, которые базируются на анализе большого количества изданий с разнообразными иллюстрациями, что позволяет проследить историческую динамику интерпретации сказочных текстов художниками. В качестве одного из примеров рассматривается история иллюстрирования сказки братьев Grimm «Гусятница», описанная в работе Рут Боттихаймер.

Keywords: фольклорная сказка, литературная сказка, иллюстрации, книжная графика

INTERVIEW

Anastasia Strokina

AN INTERVIEW WITH GUIDO SGARDOLI

At the request of Children's Reading, Russian writer Anastasia Strokina interviewed Guido Sgardoli, one of the most famous Italian children's writers today. In Italy the name of Sgardoli needs no introduction: his books have been translated into many languages, are loved by readers and have been awarded various prizes for achievements in children's literature. Sgardoli is also known for his social activities — he is a member of the *Writers with Children* movement, which fights for the rights of refugee and migrant children

In 2009, the jury of the prestigious Andersen Prize awarded to him the title of best writer with the following motivation: "For being, among the authors who have emerged in recent years, undoubtedly the most interesting and new voice. For a narrative production capable of tackling different themes, narrative forms and audiences, but always with high and convincing results. For having given us a novel of absolute value and skillful construction such as *Eligio S. — I giorni della Ruota*" (*Eligio and the Days of the Wheel*).

In Sgardoli's novels we see a great variety of themes and narrators' voices. His stories shift easily between the most disparate genres and age groups. Thrillers and science fiction with a historical background are the setting for *The Frozen Boy*. A lot of irony is given room in *Morto che parla* (*Dead Man Talking*), a detective story populated by ghosts, while a poetic (but not corny) language tackles the delicate and thorny issue of parental separation in *Due per uno* (*Two for One*), just to name a few of Sgardoli's brilliant books. Being by training and for work a vet, animals are omnipresent in his stories but a lot of space is also given to reality and history, as *Eligio and the Days of the Wheel* demonstrate: the story takes place over a period of about 100 years, around the establishment of

the Hospice of Mercy, a historic building in Venice which, in the XVIII century, gave shelter to orphans and children who were abandoned in the ‘wheel’ or revolving door. The reference to Dickens’ *Oliver Twist* is not out of place both regarding the plot and the style. Sgardoli is not afraid to tackle major issues and difficult times, such the First World War, during which *Il giorno degli eroi* (The day of the heroes) is set: it is the story of a very young and daring soldier who no longer wants to kill, a cry for peace so as not to forget the victims of all wars.

Sgardoli is always looking for the right language and point of view to stay “at child’s height” and give prominence to children’s imaginative ability. In this process, according to the writer, art, and literature in particular, should play a significant role: as Gianni Rodari’s one said, “I would like everyone to read, not to become writers or poets, but so that no one is any longer a slave”. Guido Sgardoli’s books definitely move in that direction.

Anastasia Strokina: In your book “The Island of the Mute” (L’isola del Muto) you quote Anna Akhmatova’s poem “The Door is Half Open” (Дверь полуоткрыта). I should confess, this is one of my favorite paragraphs of the book — with such sadness and thoughts of the soul in it, when the whole family gathers to bury their beloved father and grandfather. I even burst into tears when I was translating this episode into Russian. By the way, in Russia this book has become really popular and I hope it’s gaining the same fame all over the world! My first question is related to this episode. Why have you chosen Akhmatova? What other Russian poets did you read?

Guido Sgardoli: Anna Akhmatova is well known and appreciated in Italy. She was a poet who knew how to mix suffering, love and mysticism with great wisdom. So reading her, I always find myself in her personal torments, which are — simultaneously — the torments of the human soul itself. I also love her because I associate her with another great poetess of pain, Alda Merini. Other Russian poets I know (but not as well as I would like) are definitely Pushkin, Mayakovsky and Lermontov — I even wrote about him in my last novel.

Anastasia Strokina: Thank you for your honest answer. It’s really important to hear that you are involved in cross-cultural communication especially nowadays, you see, when misunderstanding and aggression arise among people in different countries. Do you think that art can change anything in the world? Influence it? In what way?

Guido Sgardoli: I think that art and literature can really change the consciences and thoughts of people, especially those of the young readers to whom we, who write for children and adolescence, address.

Books and fascinating stories help to understand the world around us and even to create democracy and better citizens, as long as you know how to make good use of literature. Books also allow us to find the ways to escape from reality that sometimes angers or oppresses us, as it's happening now. Books can make us change our point of view, put ourselves in the shoes of others, compare other truths with our own, and create our personal opinions. However more than anything, books help us to imagine some — probably — strange ways of changing the world, completely different from the ones we thought would change it.

Anastasia Strokina: On the contrary, the great Anglo-American poet W. H. Auden said that art hadn't changed anything in the world. Sometimes I agree with him. Nevertheless, one thing is certain: art can change something within a particular person. Would you please tell me about the book that influenced you most as a child.

Guido Sgardoli: There is not a single book that influenced me the most when I was a child. There are many of them. From an early age my imagination forced me to invent alternative worlds and characters to escape my reality, which by the way wasn't unbearable or suffocating at all: I had a quiet childhood full of love and respect. I just mean that my childhood reality simply was not enough for me. Books allowed me to travel and make discoveries before life let me actually do so. The adventures of Salgari, London and Verne were my first exciting literary experiences, my first trips away from home. I remember with particular fondness the mysterious island of Verne, where a group of castaways find themselves building a new life out of nothing on a deserted island. Discovering how bread could be made from a grain of wheat or glass from sand for tiny self-made windows — seemed miraculous to me.

Anastasia Strokina: I adored Verne! However nowadays he is not that popular as in your or my childhood. Are you following the modern literary trends in Italy? What is especially popular with young readers right now? Do you notice any trends in the Italian book industry?

Guido Sgardoli: In Italy, as far as I have noticed, there are some literary trends that I do not share. One of them is closely related to the popular TV series. But let us remember that books — literature itself — are not television, they do not speak the same language. If we think of attracting readers with books that mimic television series then we are wrong, because when boys and girls realize (and they definitely do — soon or later) that a book cannot be the same as a TV series, they will be disappointed and we will lose rather than gain our readers. The second trend I would call “mimetic fiction” — I mean books that reflect the world too closely — this everyday world in which the reader

is immersed. These books repeat reality and their narrative has an insignificant weight. Such stories may be true but not interesting. Books should work with our imagination. I suppose, we can hardly imagine anything in the repetition of reality. I am also sure that the task of writers is to propose new challenges to their readers, to raise the bar more and more but not to follow market demands. In today's world there is a dangerous tendency of averageness, of mediocrity, which authors have a duty to combat by offering the young people a range of the best possible suggestions, not the least ones.

Anastasia Strokina: Definitely, we face some new tendencies now. The age of machines is coming soon, the time of total digitalization. I'm convinced that a person will be able to compete with machines only with the help of critical and creative thinking. Do you believe that the book can help to develop this type of thinking in a child? And what are the tools for developing it?

Guido Sgardoli: The development of critical and therefore creative thinking (I would call it imaginative) is achieved through the incitement to be curious. Curiosity is the key to discovery, knowledge, comparison. Without curiosity a man would be still staying in caves. Curiosity gives us tools to decode reality and form personal opinions. Books, cinema, travel, music, art, socializing — all these contribute to developing us as complete individuals.

Anastasia Strokina: Especially if we are to remember that the Latin word "individuum" means something that cannot be divided into parts. So books can help us to come back to our personalities. Good books, naturally. Would you be so kind to name five Italian books that children and teenagers from all over the world should read.

Guido Sgardoli: Well... Here are these five books:

Piccolo blu, piccolo giallo by Leo Lionni; *Favole al telefono* by Gianni Rodari; *Cipì* by Mario Lodi; *L'ultimo elfo* by Silvana De Mari and *Il rinomato catalogo Walker & Dawn* by Davide Morosinotto.

Anastasia Strokina: Great! And I would also add your book *L'Isola del Muto*. This is a profound story about a family where people argue, suffer, love, change their locations, kill, cure, but nevertheless are trying to understand each other — something that we miss so much nowadays.

PUBLICATIONS

Giulia De Florio

MARSHAK EDITOR OF GIANNI RODARI'S *CIPOLLINO'S ADVENTURES*. SOME PRELIMINARY ARCHIVE-BASED OBSERVATIONS

Samuil Marshak's brief account "Why Did I Translate Gianni Rodari's poems" [Marshak 1971] provides an interesting "inside look" at his translation practice in relation to the poems of the Italian children's poet. Nevertheless, the information it contains is far from exhaustive on the subject of "Marshak translator of Gianni Rodari". Moreover, Marshak was also the editor of other translations of the Italian writer's works, namely *The Adventures of Cipollino* by Zlata Potapova. When analysing Potapova's translation and Marshak's suggested changes—included in a typewritten copy kept in Marshak's archive — one can easily observe a number of translation strategies that underline not only Samuel Yakovlevich's close attention to the transfer of the verbal text and whole cultural system from Italian into Russian, but also his freedom to shift the emotional and logic accent of the text according to his own belief about what makes children's literature great. Such preliminary observations aim at providing a starting point to identify his approach to editing and translation of children's literature.

Keywords: Samuil Marshak, Adventures of Cipollino, Gianni Rodari, Marshak's editing, Marshak's archive

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Introduction

The history and reception of Cipollino in Soviet Union has been already analysed [Roberti 2020] [Roghi 2020, 91–100] and it is the object of study of Marina Balina and Dorena Caroli's article in this issue, which gives a detailed account of the ideas brought by the Italian onion-like little hero and the huge impact of this literary character on the Soviet public of children as well as adults.

Here I would like to point out a few mainly textual observations about the transformation from the Italian text (Source text or ST) to Potapova's final version (target text or TT) through Marshak's intervention. Firstly, I shall make some brief observations about the different versions of the book in Italian. Then, I will focus on the changes suggested by Marshak directly on the typewritten manuscript that is present in Marshak's archive. Finally, I will make some brief comments on Marshak's approach to editing and translation. I shall take into account only the first two chapters of the novel, though a complete analysis should include the whole text.

The aim is to provide a starting point for further consideration on Marshak's view of editing and translation in order to find similarities and differences in his own translation practice of children's literature from foreign languages into Russian.

The Adventures of Cipollino in Italy and Soviet Union

The first appearance of Cipollino in Italy traces back to September 3 1950, when the Italian weekly journal of young communists *Il Pioniere* ("The Pioneer") publishes the first story of *Cipollino and his friends* (*Cipollino e i suoi amici*). In fact, vegetables and fruits depicted as sentient beings has already appeared earlier that year in the magazine *Vie Nuove* ("New ways"): in *L'orto ortolano* ("The vegetable garden") and *Il frutteto musicale* ("The musical orchard") for the first time the author includes some of the characters that will also appear in later works.

In the first issue of *Il Pioniere*, directed by Rodari from 1950 to 1953, the story of Cipollino "...takes the form of a comic strip illustrated by Raoul Verdini with Rodari's texts in 8-syllable quatrains. In 1952, Edizioni di Cultura Sociale published a fourteen-board story signed by *Giampiccolo*; in 1954 'Albi di Cipollino' were released, while twenty-two boards which had appeared in *Pioniere* between 1952 and 1959 were re-published in 1973 as *Ritornano i personaggi del 'Pioniere'*. Al-

manacco del 'Pioniere' (The Return of the characters from 'Pioneer'. Almanac of 'The Pioneer'). *Il romanzo di Cipollino ('The Tale of Cipollino')* was published in book form by Edizioni di Cultura Sociale: due to its success it has been republished many times, but each publication was preceded by a careful ideological and stylistic revision" [De Florio 2019, 31, note 10].

As noted by Boero, the major differences are to be found between the first edition of 1951 and the next one by Editori Riuniti of 1957, and concern mainly the formal aspect of the narration or the increase of paradoxical elements¹ [Boero 2010, 17–18].

Other publications concerning the adventures of Cipollino are *Cipollino e le bolle di sapone (Cipollino and the soap bubbles)*, published by Edizioni di Cultura Sociale in 1952 and written with the pseudonym of Giampiccolo, whereas in 1954 some illustrated stories of these characters are re-published in one book, which includes *Le avventure di Cipollino (The Adventures of Cipollino)*, *La giostra di Cipollino (The Carousel of Cipollino)* e *Cipollino e le maschere (Cipollino and the Masks)* [Roberti 2020, 17].

Interestingly enough, the little hero moves to Soviet Union very soon; apparently, Rodari gave his book to Potapova during his first trip to the USSR in 1951 as part of an Italian delegation of communists [De Florio 2019a]. Mario Alicata, the head of the Italian delegation, writes in his report on the trip that the guide and translator for the Italians was a young Italianist, a teacher at the Institute of World Literature in Moscow. At that time Zlata Potapova was working there. We can then assume that Rodari had given her the newly published *Libro delle filastrocche (The Book of Nursery Rhymes)* (1950) and *Il romanzo di Cipollino (The Tale of Cipollino)* (1951) during his first visit in Soviet Union.

A year later, the journalist Paolo Robotti confirms the common acquaintance: in an article that appeared in newspaper "l'Unità" [Robotti 1952], he states that professor Zlata Potapova had published in "Literaturnaja Gazeta" an article about the huge success of Cipollino in Soviet Union. Indeed, in her article in the "Literaturnaya Gazeta" of 27 November 1952 [Potapova 1952], *The first victories of Cipollino (Pervye pobedy Cipollino)*, Potapova talks at length about *The Adventures of Cipollino* and the Italian current situation, which she seems to know very well.

Let us also note that Marshak's first translations of Rodari's poetry appears in "Literaturnaya Gazeta" a few days before Potapova's article, on 22 November 1952 [Marshak 1952]. In his introduction Marshak describes how he became acquainted with Rodari's work thanks to

Potapova. Most likely, having received the books from Gianni Rodari, Potapova approached Marshak and they decided to “split” their work: he would translate the poems, she — the prose, under his supervision.

Samuil Marshak, the editor

“Marshak the editor” is a very intriguing topic that still has not been fully disclosed. It is well acknowledged, though, that in the 1920s and 1930s his activity both as an editor (and a translator and poet himself) had a huge impact on the evolution of the “new children’s literature”: as Ainsley Morse rightly observes “his influence as an editor of children’s literature in the 1920s–1930s meant that something like this style was reproduced by many of his disciples, becoming a standard for Soviet children’s poetry” [Morse 2021, 80]. Marshak covered all the stages of editing, from the selection of the books to be published to their revision together with the authors. Lidiya Chukovskaya, daughter of the most famous critic, poet and translator of children’s literature Kornei Chukovsky, recalls in her essay the work of Marshak as editor² of the Leningrad-based section of the publishing house Detgiz [Chukovskaya 2011, 188–392] where she worked from 1928 to 1936 together with Tamara Gabbe, Zoia Zadunaiskaya e Aleksandra Lyubarskaya.

Since he fought with all his might for children’s literature to be considered true art, he spared no criticism or judgement to improve the final result of any story which was supposed to be read by children. The care and scrupulousness he put into each editorial project was well known to all the authors he had worked with over the years. He strongly believed that precision, clarity and simplicity of words should be the keys to the creation of the best children’s books, as Tolstoy and other major classics have demonstrated when addressing children through literature³.

Marshak’s work on Potapova’s translation belongs to a later period of his literary activity: in 1937 he fled from Leningrad after the brutal closing of Detgiz in 1937, the persecution of illustrators close to Vladimir Lebedev’s circle of artists, the arrest and execution of many collaborators [Blyum 1996]. Being actively involved in the Second World War satirical propaganda thanks to his collaboration with the collective of artists Kukryniksy (made of Mikhail Kupriyanov, Porfirii Krylov and Nikolai Sokolov) and to the publication of war poetry, Marshak was able to keep and even consolidate his prominent role as a leading figure in Soviet children’s literature, who could still provide orientation in the evolution of the genre. His interest in Gianni Rodari’s production has certainly helped the Italian writer become so successful in the Soviet Union.

Archive material: The Adventures of Cipollino

In Marshak's archive a typewritten copy of Potapova's translation with Marshak's handwritten edits is kept⁴. The archive also contains a second typewritten version of *The Adventures of Cipollino*, in which, after Potapova had accepted almost all the editing from the previous version, some final "touches" by Marshak were added.

Even at a quick glance it is very easy to understand how carefully and thoroughly Marshak edited the first draft. I shall not take into account all the interventions made in the text⁵ by Marshak, but only the most significant ones that allow us to draw some conclusions about Marshak's general approach to the translation of children's texts.

As it has been already noted by scholars of children's literature translation, in translated texts the range of vocabulary is usually comparatively narrower, the information load is lower and the average sentence length is shorter [Laviosa 2002, 60–62]. In other words, it is common to activate "the tendency to simplify the language used in translation" [Baker 1996, 181–182]. In Potapova's version this is not the case and even Marshak's intervention in this respect is very limited. Sometimes Marshak tends to simplify the lexical choice or the syntaxis by eliminating some parts of the sentence, but there are a few interventions of this kind⁶:

р. 2 И строго воззрился на старика > и строго посмотрел на старика.

р. 5 Сам поймешь, как настанет время > Сам поймешь, когда придѣт время.

р. 8 Тебе виднее, ты арифметике учился! Значит правильно > Тебе виднее, ты арифметике учился! ~~Значит правильно~~.

They can be dictated by the search for conciseness which helps the reader (especially a young one) to focus on what is being narrated: р. 1 Что ж поделаешь: коль родишься луком, слѣз в доме не оберешься > Где лук — там и слѣзы. On the other hand, it is far more common to find in the text examples of another typical feature of translated texts, namely explicitation, that is "all those grammatical and lexical elements that are absent in the ST and that render the TT more precise and unambiguous" [Ippoliti 2013, 10]. Marshak goes beyond that and tends to add details that are absent in ST and Potapova's version in order to give a more vivid description of the scene:

р. 1 На окраину немедленно отправили дюжину солдат-Лимончиков, чтобы надушить бедняков. На этот раз солдаты оставили дома сабли и пушки и взвалили на плечи бидоны с опрыскивателями. В бидонах

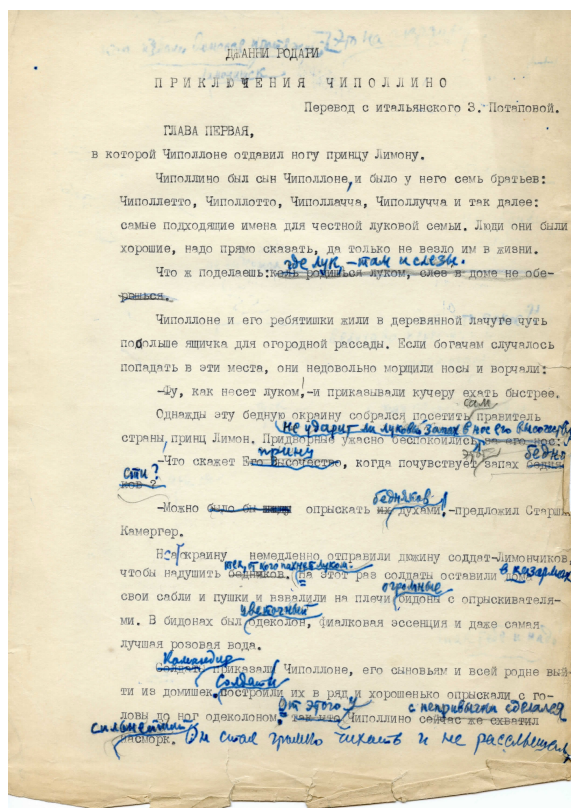


Figure 1. Marshak, S. (1953). Priklyucheniya Chipollino: typewritten copy with Marshak’s handwritten remarks, private archive of Marshak’s heirs. [P. 1]

был одеколон, фиалковая эссенция и даже самая лучшая розовая вода > На окраину немедленно отправили дюжину солдат-Лимончиков, чтобы надушить тех, от кого пахнет луком. На этот раз солдаты оставили в казармах свои сабли и пушки и взвалили на плечи огромные бидоны с опрыскивателями. В бидонах был цветочный одеколон, фиалковая эссенция и даже самая лучшая розовая вода.

In this passage there are a few observations to be made: Marshak seems not to appreciate the word “bednyak” which he replaces with a longer periphrasis (“those who smells like onion”). He chooses preciseness instead of vagueness by replacing the general “doma” (“at home”)

with “v kazarmakh” (“in the barracks”) since Lemon Court soldiers live there, and finally indicates the size of the canisters (“huge”) and the kind of cologne soldiers are spraying the outskirts to eliminate the smell of onions (“floral”). These little details, that are absent both in the ST and in Potapova’s translation, help children’s imagination to depict the scene and to feel being the part of it.

Such insertions are dictated also by the willingness to make as clear as possible the logical passages in each narrative sequence. It is worth noting that most of Marshak’s own production for children was addressed to little children (pre-school or up to 7–8) so it is legitimate to assume that he always had a natural propensity to give as many details as possible and describe precisely the consequentiality of actions:

р. 1 Чиполлино сейчас же схватил насморк > Чиполлино сейчас же с непривычки сделался сильнееший насморк.

р. 2 Может быть, тебе не нравится, что мои верноподданные жаждут увидеть меня, а? > Может быть, тебе не нравится, что мои верноподданные так жаждут увидеть меня, что рвутся вперед, а?

р. 2 ...и им доставалось немало толчков и пинков от тех, кто напирал сзади. Бедный старик Чиполлоне закричал: > Им обоим доставалось немало толчков и пинков от тех, кто напирал сзади. Наконец бедный старик Чиполлоне не выдержал и закричал:

р. 4 ...но потом он подумал, что лучше не поднимать шума > Подумав, он решил, что болтунов всё равно не переспоришь, и промолчал.

The last two examples are particularly interesting from a semantic point of view: notice that Cipollone is characterized by his incapacity to bear or tolerate, especially the lack of justice, whereas at the beginning Cipollino thinks it is useless to raise his voice. Therefore it is not unsurprising that Marshak decides to emphasize Cipollino’s decision to “keep quiet” (“promolchal”). This is a key element of the Rodari’s story of rebellion, since Cipollino can change his world when he decides not to stay quiet anymore. The semantic linked to say/not say lies at the core of the story, which is about the strength to speak up and do not be silent when injustice reigns. Some other corrections made by Marshak’s can be interpreted in this respect:

р. 7 Мастер Виноградника задумчиво почесал себе шилом сначала за правым ухом > Мастер Виноградника молча почесал себя шилом сначала за правым ухом.

Marshak’s additions often concern descriptions of characters’ actions, which he tends to make more detailed:

р. 3 В конце концов поднажали так, что старый Чиполлоне полетел прямо на ногу самому принцу Лимону > Не выдержав напора, старый Чиполлоне завертелся кубарем и наступил на ногу самому принцу Лимону.

р. 5 Сам же Чиполлино, завязав свои вещи в узелок и повесив его на палку, пустился в путь > Попрощавшись с дядей, матерью и братьями, Чиполлино завязал свои вещи в узелок и, нацепив его на палку, пустился в путь.

р. 7 Кум Тыква решил работать побольше, а есть поменьше > Кум Тыква подумал-подумал и решил работать подольше, а есть поменьше. Так он и сделал.

р. 7 Мастер Виноградинка захватил шило, посмотрел на грудку кирпичей и начал: > Мастер Виноградинка, захватив с собой шило, вышел из мастерской, посмотрел на грудку кирпичей и начал:

р. 10 Из кареты вылез толстяк, одетый в зеленое, с пухлой красной физиономией, которая казалась вот-вот лопнет, как перезревший помидор > Из кареты, пыхтя и отдуваясь, вылез толстяк, одетый во все зеленое. Его красные, пухлые, надутые щеки, казалось, вот-вот лопнут, как перезревший помидор.

Elsewhere Marshak's editing aims at increasing the lyrical atmosphere of the tale, as in the following example where Marshak clearly makes use of a lullaby intonation:

р. 10 Никакого Помидора здесь больше нет... Я в своем домике плыву, как моряк в лодочке, посреди Тихого океана. В море вода голубая, спокойная... как мягко она колышет мою лодочку... > Никакого сеньора Помидора тут больше нет... Я сизжу в своем домике и плыву, как моряк в лодочке, по Тихому океану. Вокруг вода — синяя-синяя, спокойная-спокойная... Как мягко она колышет мою лодочку!..

In certain passages, such addictions grow up to significantly alter the text and depict a whole new scene

р. 11 На самом же деле океаны были тут непричем: попросту кавалер Помидор ухватился за верхушку домика и стал трясти его изо всех сил, так, что черепица полетела во все стороны. > Конечно, никакого моря вокруг не было и в помине, но домик кума Тыквы и в самом деле покачивался то вправо, то влево. Это происходило оттого, что кавалер Помидор ухватился за край крышки и стал обеими руками трясти домик изо всех сил. Крыша ходила ходуном, и аккуратно уложенная черепица разлеталась во все стороны.

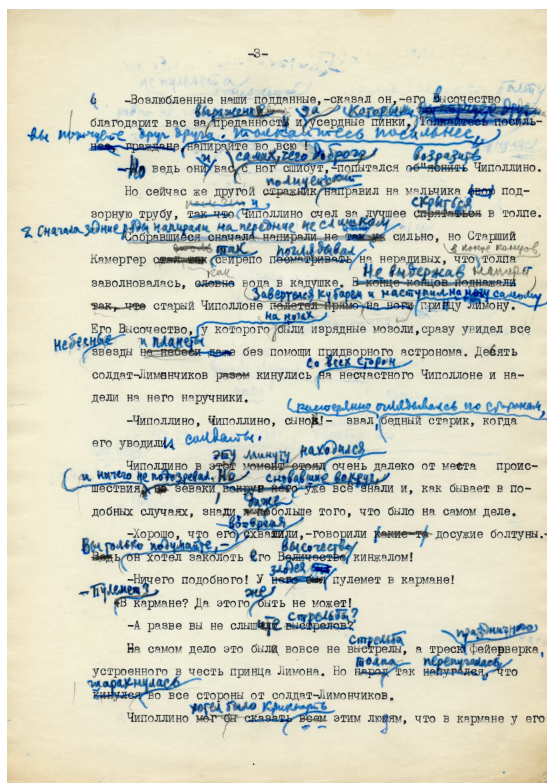


Figure 2. Marshak, S. (1953). Priklyucheniya Chipollino: typewritten copy with Marshak's handwritten remarks, private archive of Marshak's heirs. [P. 3]

Unlike Potapova's translation, which strictly follows Rodari's ST, Marshak is not afraid to add explanations (“Eto prosikhodilo otogo”, “This happened because”), new actions (“Krysha khodila khodunom”, “The roof was shifting”) or details to objects (“akkuratno ulozhennaia cherepitsa”, “neatly laid tiles”). This decisions cannot refer to changes due to the transfer to another language and culture; they show precisely in which direction Marshak drives his text and wants to guide the reader: toward a vivid, dynamic and precise narration of an incredible adventure.

In this respect playfulness, which is a key element in any story for children, especially for little ones, is constantly underlined in the translation. Some wordplays are added — and they bear distinct Marshak's

“brand” — but also at the level of punctuation it is easy to see how Marshak wants to give more emphasis to the scenes and to increase the emotional side of the narration, even when in the ST it is plain and neutral.

As far as wordplay is concerned, the following example reminds the well-known pun of the absent-minded man from Basseinaya Street:

р. 12 Да, да, действительно... то есть... — бормотал Горошек, ещё пуше зеленея от страха

— Что там еще действительно или действительно? Адвокат вы или нет?

> Да-да, действительно непочтительно... то есть... бормотал Горошек, еще пуше зеленея от страха. — То есть недействительно почтительно!

— Что там еще действительно или действительно? Адвокат вы или нет?

Sometimes Marshak plays on the effect of accumulation⁷, by means of hyperbolic climax, in order to increase the irony of the whole scene, as in the following example where terrible Senor Tomato cannot help sneezing after ripping some hair out of Cipollino's head:

р. 14 Страшный кавалер Помидор вдруг почувствовал, что у него ужасно щиплет глаза, и от едкого лука он заплакал, как фонтан. Даже как два фонтана. Слезы текли у него по обеим щекам в два ручья так обильно, что полили всю улицу, словно по ней прошелся дворник со шлангом

> Выврав у Чиполлино прядь луковых волос, грозный кавальер Помидор вдруг почувствовал едкую горечь в глазах и в носу. Он чихнул разок — другой, а потом слезы брызнули у него из глаз, как фонтан. Даже как два фонтана. Струйки, ручьи, реки слез текли по обеим его щекам так обильно, что залили всю улицу, словно по ней прошелся дворник со шлангом.

Punctuation too plays a relevant role in marking the different intonations in dialogues and narrative parts. The constant replacement of full stops or dots by exclamative marks makes it clear that Marshak strives to make the text sound more expressive, showing in this way his attention to the children audience that always enjoys high intonation and oral features in written texts.

р. 7–8 Она мышей ловит > Она мышей ловит!

р. 8 Тебе виднее, ты арифметике учился > Тебе виднее, ты арифметике учился!

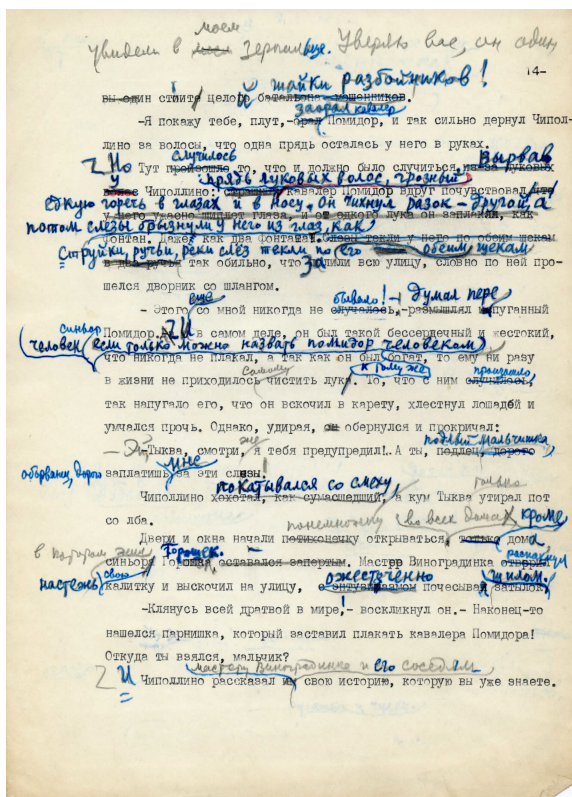


Figure 3. Marshak, S. (1953). Priklyucheniya Chipollino: typewritten copy with Marshak's handwritten remarks, private archive of Marshak's heirs. [P. 14]

р. 8 Надо быть поосторожнее > Надо быть поосторожнее!

р. 9 мне было бы здесь очень очень уютно > мне было бы здесь очень очень уютно!

р. 13 Если ты нашел нового, покажи-ка мне его! > Если ты нашел нового, покажи-ка мне его!

In all examples Rodari puts full stops or dots, and so does Potapova, while Marshak prefers to raise the tone of the speaker⁸, especially in dialogues that represent an extremely important part of any children's

book. By alternating the descriptive and narrative passages they vary the rhythm, and also add elements of orality to the written text.

Finally, in dialogues it is also easier to spot Marshak's willingness to increase the Esopian subtext, already well present in Rodari's novel and even more fitting in the Soviet context:

р. 4 — В тюрьме полным-полно честных людей.

— А что же плохого они сделали?

— Ничего. Вот за это-то их и засадили. Принцу Лимону не по нутру хорошие люди.

>

— Да ведь в тюрьме полным-полно⁹ честных людей.

— А за что же они сидят? Что плохого они сделали?

— Ровно ничего, сынок. Вот за это-то их и засадили. Принцу Лимону порядочные люди не по нутру.

The above-mentioned examples are only a starting point for a deeper investigation, but they allow us to claim that Marshak's intervention on Potapova's text is extensive and covers all aspects of language at both lexical and syntactic levels. Marshak does not try to simplify Rodari's text, on the contrary, sometimes he makes it more challenging from a grammatical and syntactical point of view. Moreover, Marshak is not afraid to *interpret* the ST and add or modify some parts of it in order to meet his own criteria for a "great art for little ones", even if this means to shift the logic accent or the intonation of a sentence or a whole passage. Since it is a tale for children, Marshak tends to modify the neutral tone of Rodari's voice in favor of a more expressive intonation. According to Marshak, preciseness, clearness and irony, together with imagination, are the most important criteria for any children's writer and/or translator; his systematical choices in editing Potapova's translation go in that direction and demonstrate his general approach to the text. Furthermore, Marshak strongly believes in the power of words and their symbolic or hidden meaning. He does not distort the meaning of the ST but stresses those elements and characteristics that appear to him the most important for his new readership. The Aesopian language inherent in much children's literature is brought here to the fore even more than in Rodari's source text. Thus, the double-reader orientation of any children's literature, and Soviet above all, receives full disclosure and turns this amusing story into a multi-layered and complex work of art potentially dangerous for the official ideology.

Notes

- ¹ Note also that in the first edition Rodari uses a lot of metaphors that are omitted in the second version of the story, sometimes replaced by other expressions, as can be seen in the following examples (my emphasis): “accarezzandolo *come fosse un gattino*” [Rodari 1951, 14] and “accarezzandolo affettuosamente” [Rodari 2020, 268]; “Il sudore gli scendeva a ruscelli dalla fronte, *come la rugiada*, e gli entrava in bocca” [Rodari 1951, 17] and “Il sudore gli scendeva a ruscelli dalla fronte, e gli entrava in bocca” [Rodari 2020, 270]; “con gli occhietti piccoli e cattivi, con la bocca *che pareva la fessura di un salvadanaio*” [Rodari 1951, 20–21] and “con gli occhietti piccoli, con la bocca cattiva” [Rodari 2020, 273].
- ² Marshak officially worked at the publishing house as literary consultant [Shvarts 1990].
- ³ Marshak highly valued Tolstoy’s short stories, his *Knigi dlia chteniya* (“Books for reading”) and other masterpieces. He was also very fond of Pushkin’s fairy tales and his lyric in general.
- ⁴ I am very much in debt to Marshak’s heirs, Aleksandr Immanuilovich and Tatiana Aleksandrovna Marshak, for their permission to work on this material and publish it, and for all their support in my research on Marshak’s works.
- ⁵ As mentioned before, only the first two chapters of the book were taken into account.
- ⁶ The examples are given in the following way: the first is from Potapova’s typewritten translation, the second, after “>” sign, is Marshak’s revision. I underline the most relevant changes. The pages are numbered in the manuscript.
- ⁷ He uses the same technique also in the first Chapter: *р. 3 сразу увидел все звезды на небеси (sic) даже без помощи придворного астронома > сразу увидел все небесные звезды и планеты без помощи придворного астронома.*
- ⁸ This tendency could also be due to Marshak’s great passion and activity in the world of theatre for children, where he has worked for some crucial years of his formation as a children’s writer [De Florio 2020].
- ⁹ In the typewritten version at the beginning Marshak adds “samych” (“the most”), but then cancels it. This could well serve as an example of self-censorship.

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МАРШАК — РЕДАКТОР «ПРИКЛЮЧЕНИЙ ЧИПОЛЛИНО»
ДЖАННИ РОДАРИ. ЗАМЕТКИ НА ОСНОВЕ АРХИВНОГО
МАТЕРИАЛА

Краткая заметка Самуила Маршака «Почему я перевел стихи Джанни Родари» (Маршак 1971) представляет собой интересный «взгляд изнутри» на его переводческую практику в отношении стихов итальянского детского поэта. Содержащаяся в ней информация далеко не исчерпывает тему «Маршак — переводчик Джанни Родари». Маршак был редактором и другого перевода произведений итальянского писателя: «Приключений Чиполлино» Златы Потаповой. При анализе перевода Потаповой и предложенных Маршаком изменений, включенных в машинописную копию, хранящуюся в архиве Маршака, можно легко заметить ряд переводческих стратегий, которые подчеркивают пристальное внимание Самуила Яковлевича к передаче не только словесного текста, но и всей культурной системы с итальянского языка на русский, а также его свободу в смещении эмоциональных и логических акцентов текста в соответствии с собственными представлениями о том, что делает детскую литературу «высшей литературой». Такие предварительные наблюдения служат отправной точкой для определения подхода Самуила Маршака к редактированию и переводу детской литературы.

Keywords: С. Маршак, Приключения Чиполлино, Джанни Родари, Маршак, редактор, архив Маршака

SOURCES

Olga Selivanova

EDMONDO DE AMICIS' BOOKS IN THE COLLECTION OF THE HERZEN STATE PEDAGOGICAL UNIVERSITY'S FUNDAMENTAL LIBRARY

The article provides an overview of the works of E. De Amicis published in Russian and stored in the collections of the Fundamental Library of the Herzen State Pedagogical University. Most of the publications contain certain book signs, by which you can find out the history of the existence of each copy and trace the path of their entry into the library. The books of E. De Amicis were very popular, therefore they were present in almost every library oriented to the children's readership: libraries of state institutions (for example, the library of employees in the Ministry of Finance, the library for employees of the State Bank) and various educational institutions (schools, colleges, institutes), public children's libraries and personal collections. Recommendations for the purchase of books by E. De Amicis for reading to children came from both official departments of the Ministry of Public Education and specialists in children's literature as part of various indexes and on the pages of periodicals. The main attention is paid to translations and editions of the most popular story "Cuore", as well as editions of individual stories extracted from it. Their number was difficult to name already at the beginning of the 20th century.

Keywords: Edmondo De Amicis, Italian literature, translated literature, children's literature, children's writer, Diary of a Schoolboy, Cuore, The Fundamental Library of the Herzen State Pedagogical University, Indicative library for children's reading, Olga Kapitsa, book signs

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The Fundamental Library of the Herzen State Pedagogical University has more than 40 editions of Edmondo De Amicis' works.

Edmondo De Amicis (1846–1908) was a famous Italian writer, journalist and screenwriter. He began his literary career with a series of witty short stories reflecting his experiences in the Austro-Prussian-Italian War of 1866, known in Italy as the Third Independence War. Edmondo De Amicis gained worldwide fame by his writings for children. In 1886 his story “Cuore” was published (its title translated into Russian as *Serdtshe* (The Heart), *Dnevnik shkol'nika* (Diary of a Schoolboy), *Shkol'nye tovarishchi* (Schoolmates), etc.); the story was narrated in the form of a diary, kept by a student of the Turin school during the school year. Within a few months, the story was republished many times and then translated into dozens of languages, including Russian. Later Edmondo De Amicis wrote a series of essays on education in Italy, political and social issues, and his travels in Europe, Asia and North Africa.

The structure of “Cuore” is noteworthy. The main narrative takes the form of a diary which Enrico keeps from the beginning to the end of the school year. The boy reflects on the events of the school life, describes classmates and various life situations that they participate in, writes down conversations between friends and family members, and describes what happens in the city. Each chapter corresponds to one month, and each chapter contains so called *ezhemesyachnye rasskazy* (Monthly Stories), which are stories about child protagonists. The chapters also contain instructive letters from Enrico's father, mother and sister, which address the boy's actions and provide moral and behavioural guidelines for each case.

In Russia, interest in the work of De Amicis sprang during the author's lifetime — his popularity peaked in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Publications in the Library's collection are the evidence of this, since most books (36) were published before the October Revolution. The earliest editions are dated 1891, while the latest ones were published in the 1950s.

It is worth noting that as a children's writer De Amicis was not only popular with the readers and acknowledged by critics of children's literature, but was also noted by official institutions regulating children's reading. For example, many of De Amicis' editions are marked by the Ministry of Public Education and have a corresponding admission on the title page, e.g: “Included in the catalogue of books allowed by the Scientific Committee of the Ministry of National Education for the libraries of secondary schools, and allowed in the student libraries of basic schools and free public reading rooms and libraries. Recommended for

the libraries of basic and secondary educational institutions of the Office of Empress Maria" [De Amicis 1914, 1].

In the 1910s Edmondo De Amicis' books were represented in practically all reference lists for pre-teens and teens, as well as in the lists for the formation of children's and school libraries, compiled by the authorities in the field of children's reading Nikolay Chekhov [Chekhov 1912, 77], Aleksandr Lebedev [Lebedev 1912, 165], Vera Grinevich [Grinevich 1908, 19], Mariya Lemke [Lemke 1910, 41], Elizaveta and Lidiya Ticheeva [Ticheeva 1909, 47], etc. The general opinion of critics about the writer's work was most fully expressed by the Tikheev sisters in the pages of the Encyclopaedia of Family Education and Training published by the St. Petersburg Parents' Club: "There are books whose authors did not set out to make a contribution to special children's literature. But unknown to them, their pen was led by a gift, inherent in the few, which opens the shutters in the mind and heart of a child, who was not amenable to the efforts of many fervent children's writers. One of such books is the Amicis' *Dnevnik shkol'nika* (Diary of a Schoolboy). In the whole world only the pure, malleable, impressionable heart of a child will respond to the high unsophisticated morality with which the whole book is imbued" [Tikheeva 1909, 12].

In 1911 in Moscow and St. Petersburg had appeared several specialized critical and bibliographical journals on children's books and children's reading, and after that the novelties of publishers with the works of Edmondo De Amicis began to be regularly covered in the pages of periodicals. This allowed the interested public to promptly receive a competent opinion of the writer's work and reliable information about numerous editions. On the whole, the critics noted the extremely positive aspects of all the author's works, while the remarks concerned the quality of the translation and the layout of the editions.

Each copy of every Edmondo De Amicis' work in the collections of the Fundamental Library has its own unique history as indicated by institutional and personal library stamps, owner's signatures and other book marks. Most of the books came to the Fundamental Library from the Reference Library for Children's Reading, which, from 1919 to 1925, was operating under the Paedagogical Institute for Pre-school Education and to which, after the Revolution, books were collected from many closed or repurposed educational institutions. However, it is possible to trace other ways of forming the collections.

The journal *Chto i kak chitat' detyam* (What and How to Read to Children) published the review of the Russian editions of Edmondo De Amicis' most famous work "The Heart" (Cuore). Zinaida Pavlova-

Silvanskaya, the author of the review, writes: “This book enjoys such popularity that there is no need to recommend it at all: the best recommendation is that it is read and loved, that both children and those who direct their reading have appreciated it” [Pavlova-Silvanskaya 1913, 2–5]. The author was not able to count the number of published translations, so she limited herself to considering only the most widespread and respectable ones.

First translation of the novel into Russian was done in 1888 by Nadezhda Khvoshchinskaya (published under the pseudonym of V. Krestovsky)¹. This translation was considered the most successful and was reprinted by many publishers. Thus, the collections of the Fundamental Library have three editions with the same title *Dnevnik shkol'nika: (Cuore)* (Diary of a Schoolboy: (Cuore)), published by Aleksey Suvorin (2nd edition 1891), Mikhail Lederle (3rd edition 1895) and Vasilii Gubinsky (6th edition 1917). One of the copies published by Aleksey Suvorin is interesting in that the title page bears a stamp of the Imperial St. Petersburg Theatre School, the oldest educational institution in Russia that trained ballet, opera, and drama artists. The same stamp is on the title page of the 4th edition of the collection of Edmondo De Amicis' stories *Za rodinu: (yunye geroi)* (For the Motherland: (Young Heroes)) (Moscow, 1917), published by Maksim Klukin.

A copy of the edition by Mikhail Lederle was originally kept in private collection of Pavel Yegorovich Keppen (1846–1911), a professional military man, court administrator of Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich and Grand Duchess Alexandra Josephovna, friend and associate of Grand Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich (poet K. R.). Pavel Keppen, besides his activity in the field of education, education and charity, was a passionate bibliophile. His book collection, in accordance with his will, was passed on to the library of the Women's Pedagogical Institute (over 20000 volumes of various topics). In 1918 the First Petrograd Pedagogical Institute was formed on the basis of the Women's Pedagogical Institute, which in 1922 was merged with the Third Petrograd Pedagogical Institute. The library collections of both institutions were merged, and the books from the collection of Pavel Keppen ended up in the Fundamental Library of the Leningrad State Pedagogic Institute (now the Russian State Pedagogical University) Herzen State Pedagogical Institute.

For the libraries of basic schools the Academic Committee of the Ministry of Public Education recommended the edition by Vasilii Gubinsky, but the copy of the Fundamental Library has a stamp of a library of a government institution, namely the library of the employees of the

Ministry of Finance. This library was established in 1824 by the order of Count Egor Kankrin², but by the sixties of the 19th century its books had already been gathering dust in cellars, never been used and in a deplorable condition. The credit for the restoration of the library belongs to Nikolai Fan-der-Flit³: the books were dismantled, cleaned and systematized, then moved to a new building, which became a favourite place for work and meetings of the ministry employees. Later on, most of the specialized literature of the Ministry of Finance staff library went to the collections of the reorganized Leningrad Finance and Economics Institute (now St. Petersburg State University of Economics, SPbSEU) [Mavlikhanova 2002, 17–18]. Part of the library, suitable for employees' children, with the help of Olga Kapitsa was moved to the Expository Library for Children's Reading.

The partnership of Mavrikiy Wolf had published another translation of the novel in the series *Zolotaya biblioteka* (Golden Library). The novel's title is *Dnevnik shkol'nika: (Cuore)* (Diary of a schoolboy: (Cuore)), and the name of the translator is not given. According to Zinaida Pavlova-Silvanskaya this translation is oddly close to the one of the first edition. A copy of the 4th edition of 1904 has a distinguishing serial design: a hard cloth boards binding with an embossed star pattern, decorated with an oval gilt emblem of the series. The title page bears the stamp of the library of the Institute of Social Education for Normal and Defective Children. The Institute (full name — Pedagogical Institute of Social Education and Research of Normal and Defective Child) was established in 1921 on the initiative of V.M. Bekhterev at the Psychoneurological Academy in order to combine theoretical research and practical experience in the field of experimental pedagogy. In 1925, the Institute was incorporated into the Herzen Leningrad State Pedagogic Institute, and so it became possible to deepen and develop the traditions of national defectology that had been laid down on the High Froebel Courses.

The copy is also noteworthy because on the front flyleaf there is a typographically printed message, from the book to the children, which states the culture of reading in simple and clear words:

Please don't touch me with dirty hands, I would be embarrassed when other readers pick me up. Don't make pen and pencil marks — it's so ugly. If you would like to express your thoughts about me, write them down on clean paper sheets at the end of the book. Don't lay me open face down on the table, don't throw me on the floor: you wouldn't like it if you were treated that way either. Don't leave a pencil, pen or anything thick in me; it will tear the spine. If you have finished reading and are afraid to lose the place

where you stopped, do not make a fingernail mark, but put a nice bookmark in me, so that I can rest comfortably and peacefully. Don't forget that after you've read me, I'll have to visit other readers. Help me to stay fresh and clean. Don't forget what I told you [De Amicis 1904].

It is known for certain about five editions of *Zapiski shkol'nika* (School-boy's Notes) published by the Mavrikiy Wolff partnership, but the collection of the Fundamental Library has the 6th edition, presumably printed in Petrograd after 1914. It still has hard-cover binding, but the material is paper, not cloth, and the design is different: title of the *Zolotaya biblioteka* (Golden Library) series is placed horizontally on the upper part of the binding; information about the author, title and publisher is printed in a special frame on the lower right part; the remaining space is occupied by a floral ornament, namely carnations in red and black. Unfortunately this copy is defective, missing the title page. On the front flyleaf there is a stamp of the Central Zvankov library of the Murmansk Railway. Construction of the Olonetskaya railway started in 1914 from Zvanka station (now Volkhovstroy) to Petrozavodsk. Later it was connected to the main line of the Murmansk Railway, and in 1959, during the strengthening of railway lines, joined the network of the October railway. The library network of the Murmansk Railway was extensive, all station libraries were under the authority of the Cultural and Educational Council. Larger libraries had their own stamps and ex-libris (in Petrozavodsk, Sviri, Lodeynoye Pole, etc.), for smaller libraries a single stamp was developed, in which the station name was inscribed by hand [Bookmarks].

Maksim Klukin's bookstore had ordered a separate translation of the novel "Cuore", which was done by A. P. Repina. Pavlova-Silvanskaya praised the translation as being very good. To the present date the circumstances of the translator's life have not been established, so we can only say that in the early 20th century she was quite in demand, as she translated from English, German, French and Italian the works of Mark Twain, James Fenimore Cooper, Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, Francis Bret Harte, Berthold Auerbach, Elisa Françoise Pressensé, De Amicis and others.

The collection of the Fundamental Library has the 2nd edition of Maksim Klukin, 1917, published under the title *Serdtshe: (Shkol'nye tovarishchi)* (The Heart: (School Comrades)) and reprinted from the first edition, which was authorized to be used in basic school libraries by the Academic Committee of the Ministry of National Education. The title page has the following stamps: "The Library of the Putilov

Commercial School” and “The Library of the Putilov A. I. Herten College”; the front flyleaf has an exlibris “The Library of the Putilov Commercial School”. The Putilov Commercial School was founded in 1912 by the Society for Promotion of Commercial Education outside the Narva Gate; its members were mostly employees of the Putilov Plant. The school was under the direction of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Its education process was quite different from that at grammar schools, especially the classical ones, as the ministry allowed school autonomy, joined classes of boys and girls, and a wide margin in the curriculum. Admission was from the age of eight, and the pupils were the children of workers and employees of the Putilov plant. Classical languages were excluded from the teaching, the emphasis was on the study of Russian language and literature, the curriculum was enlarged by subjects in the natural sciences, and special attention was paid to physical education, sports and excursion activities. The school was headed by the natural scientist Vladimir Gerd. According to the memoirs of his wife Y. Gerd, the school gradually set up ‘an exemplary school library’ and its own movable museum of study aids [Gerd 2005, 60–74]. The collection of stories *Za rodinu: (yunye geroi)* (For the Motherland: (Young Heroes)) (Moscow, 1915) and the original work *Syn polka* (Son of the Regiment) (M., 1911) are marked in the same way (stamps and exlibris).

Another person who worked on the translation of “Cuore” was Maria Watson, a Russian poet, author of books and articles on writers⁴. Despite Maria Watson’s sufficient popularity in literary circles and her considerable experience in translations from Spanish, Italian, English and French, her translation of Edmondo De Amicis story was heavily criticized in an article by Zinaida Pavlova-Silvanskaya. The author of the review considered the translation as the main drawback of Ivan Sytin’s edition, published under the title *Shkol’nyy god: iz dnevnika uchenika 3-go otdeleniya gorodskoy shkoly* (School year: from the diary of a pupil of the 3rd department of city school) (Moscow, 1905), because the structure of the phrases did not fully correspond to the grammar of the Russian language, which makes reading difficult. The book’s appearance was also criticized because the font was too large and so not appropriate to the age category of readers, and because of the large number of pictures, not appropriate to the general tone of the book. The title page of the copy of the Fundamental Library bears the stamp of an employee library of the Ministry of Finance. It is worth noting that the staff library of the Ministry of Finance took children’s reading needs seriously. Its collection was equipped with modern and popular at the time children’s literature, from Vasiliy Avenarius to Lidiya

Charskaya. Apart from the already mentioned *Dnevnik shkol'nika* (Diary of a Schoolboy) (St. Petersburg, 1917) and *Shkol'nyy god* (The School Year) (Moscow, 1905), the library's collection also included a separately printed "monthly story" *Apenniny i Andy* (The Apennines and the Andes) (St. Petersburg, 1894) and travel notes with a description of nature, art and manners of the southern countries, *Ocherki Marokko* (Sketches of Morocco) (Moscow, 1894).

Zinaida Pavlova-Silvanskaya was even more critical of the edition titled *Shkol'nye tovarishchi: iz dnevnika uchenika gorodskoy shkoly* (School Comrades: From the Diary of a City School Student), part of the Gorbunov-Posadov Library for Children and Youth series. The novella by De Amicis, which asserts a profound respect for the human person in general, without regard to social status, was chosen for publication not by chance but because it corresponded to the main idea of Ivan Gorbunov-Posadov's publishing house (promoting Tolstoy's ideas of love, goodness and truth). The translation was done by Anna Ulyanova. However, in the opinion of the author of the review, both the translator and the publisher wronged the original text, not mentioning it anywhere — the chapters on war, love for the fatherland, chapters on national heroes were omitted, and the three monthly stories were replaced by works of other authors. Nevertheless, the book was as popular with readers as any of Edmondo De Amicis' works and went through more than seven reprints⁵.

The collection of the Fundamental Library has the 1st edition from 1898 and the 3rd edition from 1904. Unfortunately, the copy of the 1st edition is defective and has no title page, but by indirect signs one can assume that this book was in the library of the St. Nicholas Orphanage Institute. The Saint Petersburg Nicholas Orphanage was established in 1837 after pupils of the Saint Petersburg Orphanage were separated (girls were left in the building on the embankment of the Moika River in the palace of Count K. Razumovsky and boys were transferred to Gatchina) and became part of the institution of the Empress Maria. Graduates of the Institute could work as domestic schoolteachers, music, dance and French teachers, as well as teachers in village schools and kindergarten teachers. In 1918 the building of the Nikolaev Orphanage was transferred to the Pedagogical Institute of Pre-school Education (PIDO), and the library funds formed the basis of the fundamental library of PIDO. In 1925, as a result of the reorganization of Leningrad's pedagogical institutes, PIDO became part of the Hertenzen LSPI as a preschool department.

There is no doubt that individual editions of "monthly stories" in the form of cheap pamphlets can be attributed to the library of the Nicholas

Orphanage Institute: *Ot Apennin i Andov: v poiskakh za mater'yu* (From the Apennines and the Andes: In Search of Mother) (Moscow, 1914) and *Devochka, spasshaya poezd i Korablekrushenie* (The Girl Who Saved the Train and the Shipwreck) (Moscow, 1915). All these books have on the title pages the following stamps: "St. Petersburg Institute of the Emperor Nicholas I. 1915" or "Petrograd Orphan Institute of the Emperor Nicholas I. 1916". Some later hardcover copies are marked on the spines with gilt embossing "N.S.I."

The popularity of De Amicis' novels and the isolated plots of the "monthly stories" encouraged publishers to publish them as separate collections. For example, in the collections of the Fundamental Library there are three books composed almost entirely of such short stories: *Za rodinu: (yunye geroi)* (For the Motherland: (Young Heroes)) (Moscow, 1911), *Prostye lyudi* (Simple People) (Moscow, 1911) and *Malen'kie geroi* (Little Heroes) (St. Petersburg, 1913). The books come from the collection of *Chto i kak chitat' detyam* (What and How to Read to Children)⁶. They all have a few common features in their design: the title page has a round stamp *Chto i kak chitat' detyam* (What and How to Read to Children); a review by Zinaida Pavlova-Silvanskaya attached to the front flyleaf; next to each review there are written by hand Arabic and Roman numerals, which indicate the issue of the journal in which it was placed; the upper side of the paper cover is labeled with colored paper (strips of red and blue). The colours are not chosen arbitrarily but according to the age of the readers. The principles of such design of books are described in an article reporting on participation in the First All-Russian Congress on Family Education, held from 30 December 1912 to 6 January 1913 in St. Petersburg. The editors of the magazine *Chto i kak chitat' detyam* (What and How to Read to Children), together with their Moscow colleagues from the magazine *Novosti detskoy literatury* (News of Children's Literature), organized an exhibition of children's books, referred to in both magazines, for participants and guests of the Congress. All in all, about 1500 exhibits were presented at the exhibition. The books were systematized according to their content into departments: 1) fiction (with fairy tales and picture books singled out), 2) history, 3) geography, 4) natural history, 5) children's magazines, 6) publishers' reviews, and 7) games and activities. Within each department the books were divided according to readers' age, and, as the article says, "to make it easier to see — the books are labeled with coloured paper, conventionally indicating: blue — older age, red — middle age, green — younger age. Also we have attached to each book a corresponding reference cut out from a magazine" [Re 1912, 1]. Ac-

ording to the red and blue labels, De Amicis stories were intended for middle and older ages. All the reviews traditionally have no remarks on the content of the stories, but do contain criticisms about the quality of the drawings and the translation.

The title page of the 2nd edition of the collection of short stories *Prostye lyudi* (Simple People) (Moscow, 1914) bears the stamp “M[inisterstvo] N[arodnogo] P[rosveschenija]. State porcelain and glass factory. School of ceramics and glassmaking”. The Imperial Porcelain Factory traces its history back to 1744. In 1765 a special school was established at the factory to cater for the children of factory workers. From that time onwards, administration of the factory paid special attention to its institutions of general education (basic schools, secondary schools and colleges) as they made it possible to educate successive masters of production or artists. However, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the idea of a school, which belonged to and was governed by the factory had become obsolete, and the school, together with the factory, went into decline. In 1902, the Ministry of Public Education proposed the establishment of a higher ceramic-technical school near the Imperial Porcelain Factory as an independent, open-type educational institution [Imperial Porcelain Factory 1906].

The works of De Amicis have not been overlooked by such authoritative researchers of children’s literature as Olga Kapitsa and Aleksandra Kalmykova. The owner’s signature “O. Kapitsa” is signed on the upper side of the original paperback and on the title page of the collection of stories *Malen’kie geroi* (Little heroes) (St. Petersburg, 1913). The personal collection of Olga Kapitsa shows the sphere of her professional interests. The collection includes practically the whole genre diversity of the circle of children’s reading: books related to children’s folklore (mostly fairy tales), and children’s fiction for pre-school and school age, and translated works of foreign authors, and children’s literature of the new proletarian ideology, and books from the “Robinson” series. According to the inventory books of the children’s literature library, the books came in at different times. Some of the books were probably brought by Olga Ieronimovna herself during her active teaching career: these books have earlier disparate inventory numbers and are sometimes marked with dedicatory inscriptions. Most of the books, judging by the fairly close inventory numbers, came in a single block, probably after Olga Kapitsa’s death.

The books from Aleksandra Kalmykova’s collection do not bear her personal signature, but the front flyleaves of three editions by De Amicis, namely the collection of stories *Yunye geroi* (Young Heroes)

(St. Petersburg, [1908]), the separately published story from “Cuore” *Apenniny i Andy* (Apennines and Andes) (St. Petersburg, 1903) and the original story *Poedinok* (The Duel) (Moscow, 1913) have paper pockets for the forms, the pockets are marked with the following note made by biro: *B[ibliote]ka A. M. Kalmykovoy* (B[ibliote]ka by Aleksandra Kalmykova). On the title page of these publications is also a stamp of the library of the Pokrovsky Leningrad State Pedagogical Institute. The absorption of the Pokrovsky Institute into the Herzen Leningrad State Pedagogical Institute in 1957 marked the completion of almost half a century of the global reorganization of pedagogical universities in Leningrad. In the 1959–1960 inventories of the children’s literature library, the arrival of books from the new institute was noted with the notation *In[stituu]t Pokrovskogo* (The Pokrovskij Institute) and next to it, *B[ibliote]ka Kalmykovoy* (The Kalmykova Library). Such notes accompany more than 1,400 inventory records. Unfortunately, Kalmykova’s personal collection has not yet been inventoried.

I would like to list the stamps of other institutions and educational establishments found on De Amicis’ works in the collection of the Fundamental Library. Among them there are stamps of state institutions, such as the library for employees of the State Bank and its successor, the library of the Finance Department of the Petrograd Provincial Executive Committee. Some stamps are associated with the higher education institutions that were part of the Herzen State Pedagogical University: the Third Petrograd Pedagogical Institute, the Pedagogical Institute of Pre-school Education, the Krupskaya Academy of Communist Education. Most of the stamps belong to the elementary and secondary schools: the Sadovnikov and Gerasimov schools, the Alexandro-Nevisky four-classes city school in memory of Empress Catherine II, the 8th four-class Pavel Potekhin’ women’s city school, No. 107 Soviet United Workers’ School of Smolny District People’s Education Department, No. 110 I and II stage Soviet United Workers’ School; there are also stamps of city children’s libraries: M. Derunova Children’s Library, Central Library of the 1st city district. We can conclude that Russian translations of E. De Amicis works were an obligatory component of the children’s library, both personal and public.

What is the secret of the popularity of Edmondo De Amicis’ works, especially the story *Serditse* (The Heart)?

As stated in the preface to one of the editions, *Dnevnik shkol’nika* (Diary of a Schoolboy) is “the desk book of young Italy” [De Amicis 1895, IV]. It reflects the national flavour in many ways, but above all it is a book about childhood. Young readers can relate to the hero

and understand him, he is not perfect, he makes mistakes and feels them deeply. It is no coincidence that Edmondo De Amicis chose the diary genre, as it allows not only to depict events in the life of Enrico and his schoolmates, but also to show how the child's soul reacts to them. Through the boy's eyes the multifaceted process of education and personality formation is shown: through the life stories of classmates, the behaviour of their parents, the personal example of father and mother, conversations with the teachers, the boy gradually learns comradeship and respect for work, to honour the elders and to commit to the family. A special pathos of the narration is created by a pronounced patriotic mood, and that is not only heroic deeds in extreme situations, but also an opportunity to show the best qualities in everyday life. The description of the school and the learning process is of considerable interest to readers, and the methodology of teaching blind and deaf children is described in considerable detail for a non-specialist (Edmondo De Amicis was hardly knowledgeable in the field of defectology).

It has already been mentioned that most of the Russian editions by De Amicis belong to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After the revolution, several "monthly stories" from "Cuore" were published as separate books: *V poiskakh materi* (In Search of Mother) (Moscow, [1919–1920]), *Chichillo* (Cicillo) ([Moscow, 1927]), *Malen'kiy pisets* (The Little Scribe) (Moscow; Leningrad, 1930); during the Great Patriotic War a single story *Dzhulio* (Giulio) (Moscow; Leningrad, 1941) was published. A slight upsurge of interest in the works of E. De Amicis is noted in the late 1950s. The holdings of the Russian National Library, incomparably more extensive, reflect the same trends. Publications in Yiddish in 1900–1910s or translation of "monthly stories" from Russian into Azerbaijani "Апениндэн Анда гэдэр: (хекајэлэр)" (Baki, 1964) are of interest. A more contemporary edition, *Serdtshe: [zapiski shkol'nika]* (Heart: [Notes of a Schoolboy]) (Moscow, 1993), can also be found there.

As Olga Kapitsa noted in her lectures, formulating the tasks of children's literature in the post-revolutionary period (1918 onwards): "There is now a reappraisal of values: the labour, the democratisation in the broadest sense of the word — this is what our time has brought forward. And these ideals will undoubtedly be reflected in the literature of our children. But alongside these currents there are books that have endured not only for decades, but even centuries, and remain perennial favourites with our children. These are books to which we can apply Merezhkovsky's title 'eternal companions', these are books that reflect those ideals of goodness, verity and truth, which in essence have

remained unchanged since the time of Christ"⁷. Olga Kapitsa considered *Robinzon Kruzo* (Robinson Crusoe), *Khizhinu dyadi Toma* (Uncle Tom's Cabin), *Printsa i nishchego* (The Prince and the Pauper) and, among others, *Dnevnik shkol'nika* (Diary of a Schoolboy) to be such classic works of children's literature.

Bibliographic description of Edmondo De Amicis' editions from the collections of the Fundamental Library of the Russian State Pedagogical University named after A. I. Herzen:

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Translated by Yana Timkova

Notes

- ¹ Nadezhda Khvoshchinskaya (1822–1889) was a Russian writer, who published under numerous pseudonyms, the most famous being V. Krestovsky (pseudonym), author of novels and novels about provincial life, family life and love affairs. She was published in literary magazines *Panteon* (Pantheon), *Russkiy vestnik* (Russian Herald), *Biblioteka dlya chteniya* (Library for Reading), by the invitation of Nikolay Nekrasov she collaborated with the renewed *Otechestvennymi zapiskami* (Annals of the Fatherland). At the end of her life she was engaged in writing critical articles on the works of Russian and foreign writers, as well as translating novels of Italian and French authors.
- ² Egor Frantsevich Kankrin (1774–1845) — Russian statesman and economist, Minister of Finance of the Russian Empire, initiator of the monetary reform.
- ³ Fan-der-Flit Nikolai Fedorovich (1840–1896) was an official for special assignments under the Minister of Finance. He was widely engaged in charity, reorganized the library of the Ministry of Finance, as the secretary of St. Petersburg Committee of Literacy, promoted the publication of books for the people, paid much attention to public schools.
- ⁴ Maria Valentinovna Watson (1848–1932) was a Russian poetess, translator from Spanish, Italian, English and French. She collaborated with the journals *Vestnik Evropy* (Herald of Europe), *Russkaya mysl'* (Russian Thought), and *Russkoe bogatstvo* (Russian Wealth). She was the author of complete biographies of Dante and Friedrich Schiller published in Fedor Pavlenkov's Life of Wonderful People series and compiled dictionary articles for Brockhaus and Efron on Spanish literature as well as on Spanish, Italian, Norwegian and other writers.
- ⁵ For information on the seventh edition of Ivan Gorbunov-Posadov and a brief description of it, see: [Synopsis 1915, 41].
- ⁶ It has been repeatedly stated that the original basis of the collections of the Indicative Library for Children's Reading was formed by the collections of the St Petersburg Mobile Museum of Study Guides and the editors of *Zhurnal Chto i kak chitat' detyam* (Chto i kak chitat' detyam). See, for example, [Selivanova 2020].
- ⁷ The lecture notes on children's literature, which Olga Kapitsa read at the Pedagogical Institute for Pre-school Education between 1918 and 1920, are part of the Children's Reading Library's archive and are kept in the Especially Valuable Collections and Reading Promotion Department of the Herzen State Pedagogical University's Fundamental Library.

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КНИГИ Э. ДЕ АМИЧИСА В СОБРАНИИ ФУНДАМЕНТАЛЬНОЙ БИБЛИОТЕКИ РГПУ ИМ. А. И. ГЕРЦЕНА

В статье дается обзор произведений Э. Де Амичиса (1846–1908), изданных на русском языке и хранящихся в фондах Фундаментальной библиотеки РГПУ им. А. И. Герцена. Большинство изданий содержат те или иные книжные знаки, по которым можно узнать историю бытования каждого экземпляра и проследить пути их поступления в библиотеку. Книги Э. Де Амичиса пользовались огромной популярностью, поэтому присутствовали практически в каждой библиотеке, ориентированной на детскую читательскую аудиторию: библиотеках государственных учреждений (например, библиотеке служащих в Министерстве финансов, библиотеке для служащих Государственного банка) и различных учебных заведений (школ, училищ, институтов), общественных детских библиотеках и личных собраниях. Рекомендации для приобретения книг Э. Де Амичиса для чтения детям поступали как от официальных подразделений Министерства народного просвещения, так и от специалистов по детской литературе в составе различных указателей и на страницах периодических изданий. Основное внимание уделяется переводам и изданиям самой популярной повести «Сердце», а также изданиям отдельных рассказов, извлеченных из нее. Их количество затруднялись назвать уже в начале XX века.

Keywords: Эдмондо Де Амичис, итальянская литература, переводная литература, детская литература, детский писатель, дневник школьника, Сердце, Фундаментальная библиотека РГПУ им. А. И. Герцена, Показательная библиотека по детскому чтению, О. И. Капица, книжные знаки

ESSAYS

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PINOCCHIO FROM FLORENCE IN RUSSIAN BERLIN

The article deals with the story of Carlo Collodi's "The Adventures of Pinocchio", translated by Nina Petrovskaya and revised by Aleksey Tolstoy in Berlin at the time of their collaboration in the newspaper "Nakanune". Attention is drawn to the use of *commedia dell'arte* characters' names in international political newspeak in connection with the press appearances of A. Gramsci whose biography is closely linked with pro-Bolshevik circles in Berlin and Moscow. The interest in the translation of "The Adventures of Pinocchio" in the Russian press in the 1920s was most probably linked to the beginning of Soviet-Italian relations and the choice of future course facing Russian emigrants. The hypothesis of the different positions of Aleksey Tolstoy and Maksim Gorky concerning the question of return to Russia is put forward. The circumstances of the choice of the book for translation and the alignment of translation by Nina Petrovskaya and processing of the translation by Aleksey Tolstoy are described. Emphasis is placed on the anti-fascist movement, the centre of which was Florence, the city of Carlo Collodi. Petrovskaya's anti-fascist views and Tolstoy's pro-Soviet stance enable us to see the tale from the perspective of social struggle and personal choice. The roles of both Russian authors in the work on the book and their relationship to the Italian-Russian patronage family Signorelli are clarified. The re-addressing of the tale, which predetermined the further oblivion of the Berlin book, is explained: the new translation was addressed not so much to children as to adults, Russian émigrés.

Keywords: Soviet-Italian relations, Russian emigration, Maksim Gorky, Antonio Gramsci, Carlo Collodi, Anatoliy Lunacharsky, Benito Mussolini, Aleksey Tolstoy, Nina Petrovskaya, Olga Resnevich-Signorelli, folk puppet theatre, author's fairy tale, pamphlet, Pinocchio, Buratino

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The scope of this article is limited mainly to the external circumstances of the appearance of Carlo Collodi's "The Adventures of Pinocchio", translated by Nina Petrovskaya and revised by Aleksey Tolstoy, which was published in 1924 in Berlin by the pro-Bolshevik publisher "Nakanune". The aim of the study is to provide a background to another book, published in Moscow in 1936, "Zolotoy klyuchik, ili priklyucheniya Buratino" (The Little Golden Key, or The Adventures of Buratino), Tolstoy's own tale.

The mystery of Berlin's Pinocchio is a kind of key to the mystery of Moscow's Buratino. And it is not only about family, literary and theatrical circumstances of Aleksey Tolstoy's biography, which are well researched [Petrovsky 2002; Tolstaya 2008]. In the 1920s and 1930s, all these circumstances were due to the turbulent political process, which Tolstoy followed closely.

It is known that Russians' sincere love for Italy has long been supported not only by cultural contacts, but also by trade and economic interests. Thus, before the First World War Italy was one of the top five importers of Russian goods, primarily grain [Khormach 1993, 31]. Although Italy was at times part of anti-Russian alliances, the bridges between Italy and Russia were always extremely strong and were rebuilt after catastrophes with maximum rapidity. The national liberation and revolutionary movements of the nineteenth century, which produced the Russian Decembrists and the Italian Carbonari, made a tradition of rapprochement between the social circles of the two countries. Entire generations of Russian artists were formed in close communion with the Italians.

In the early 1920s, Soviet Russia sought rapprochement with the West in every way possible. From the spring of 1920, a Soviet-Italian public began to form in Moscow, linking the "red" intelligentsia with Italian diplomatic and party representatives, and in the summer the first official contacts between the two countries were established¹. In the autumn of the following year, the Leninist government adopted a policy of commercial rapprochement with Germany and Italy. Lenin considered it necessary "to accelerate and push forward with all its might" [Khormach 1993, 43]. It was equally important to expand and strengthen the political alliance, the Third International, so the Bolsheviks supported in every possible way the Italian Leftists (socialists, anarchists and communists). However, between the two paths — bourgeois and socialist — Mussolini laid out a third, previously unseen path — the fascist one. In 1922, after the "march on Rome", Mussolini declared the Bolsheviks enemies. The Leninist government tried to compensate for its loss of influence in Italy

by becoming as close as possible to the Italian Communist Party and its leader Antonio Gramsci. A journalist, Marxist philosopher, critic, philologist, teacher, theorist and practitioner of the ideological methods of the revolutionary movement, he was the first to expose fascism as an international evil and became a fierce opponent of Mussolini. Representing the Communist Party of Italy in the central bodies of the Comintern, Gramsci stopped in Berlin on his way to Moscow in May 1922, and from June to the end of November 1923 he lived in Serebryany Bor, a secluded holiday resort near Moscow. Here he was under the tutelage of the Soviet-Italian public and statesmen, including Anatoliy Lunacharsky. In October 1922 a large Italian delegation arrived in Moscow via Berlin (and thus thanks to contacts with pro-Soviet Berliners) to attend the Fourth Congress of the Communist International. And on 29 October Mussolini took over the Italian government, by decision of the King and against the will of the parliamentary majority. The delegates debated the event vigorously [Lombardo-Radice, Carbone 1953, 106]. Their party was faced with the task of restructuring and maintaining influence under the new conditions. Gramsci moved from Moscow to Vienna in the spring of 1923 and started to work on this from there. His work culminated in the founding of *Unita* (Unity), the central organ of the Italian Communist Party, on February 12, 1924, in Milan. In the same February Italy officially recognised the USSR.

Such is the heterogeneous historical and political background of the literary event of our interest.

The paths of Tolstoy and Gramsci were bound to cross in the editorship of “Nakanune” as well as later in Moscow. Pinocchio came to the aid of “Nakanune” as a fitting emblem for the beginning of cooperation between certain social and political circles in Italy and the USSR. At the same time, the international journalistic *newspeak* of the time was already using images (masks of popular *theatre del'arte*) similar to Pinocchio

This is what Gramsci did in his vigorous journalistic speeches. As early as 1914–1918, he characterised the Italian bourgeoisie by comparing it to the Florentine *Stenerello* mask [Gramsci 1991, 408], and compared the opportunism of small parties to the “kingdom of Pulcinella”. The “capital” of this realm has long been considered Naples, for there were many small and cheap Pulcinella theatres, always packed with people. Enchanting descriptions of such theatres were left by Anatoliy Lunacharsky, Pavel Muratov² and Gorky³. There were also many street puppeteers giving performances very similar to the Russian folk theatre of Petrushka. Gorky referred directly to Pulcinella as Petrushka. He did

not seem to pay attention to the fact that Pulcinella was a folk-satirical ethnonym for Neapolitans, not all Italians. “Pulcinella’s kingdom”, or “Pulcinella’s country” is the world of the Neapolitans. The mask of Pulcinella is a glutton, a sloth, a fool and a happy man at that. Pulcinella can be a masked actor or a puppet, the leader of the gloved *burattini*. His name comes from the Italian word *pulcino* for chicken. It is not without reason that Collodi inserted a micro-episode with a chicken in the chapter on Cricket, as if accidental and superfluous. Tolstoy kept it in the Berlin translation and in “Zolotoy klyuchik” (The Little Golden Key). In his own fairy tale, he even strengthened the Italian connotation: here, the chicken, when saying goodbye to the hungry Pinocchio, who broke an egg, instead of an at the same time polite and impudent greeting “to all yours”, declares that Mama Hen is waiting for him. A seemingly minor fringe in the system of fairy-tale characters, the chicken is actually Pulcinella, the comic antagonist of Pinocchio (and Buratino), a representative of the Florentine “kingdom.”

It is known that Carlo Collodi followed the national tradition, according to which writers depicted contemporaries of their own region only and necessarily transmitted the local dialect [Muratova 1971, 157]. Kseniya Muratova emphasised that the Italian critics of Gorky’s “Fairy Tales about Italy” perceived them exactly as *fairy tales*, as the writer had not conveyed the regional types and dialects. The cycle was updated by the author and republished in 1923 by the Berlin publishing house “Kniga” in Gorky’s collected works. The penultimate “fairy tale” about the boy Pepe (the hero’s name recalls Guglielmo Pepe, leader of the Neapolitan revolution of 1820–1821) is written in such a way that the character and speech of the little caprice are revealed with perhaps the greatest realism in the entire cycle, with the story claiming that Pepe would become a poet or anarchist. The boy Pepe is far removed from the “Berliner” Pinocchio by his happy gift and anarchistic actions, but in the same time he resembles Buratino from Tolstoy’s fairy tale, written more than a decade later.

In the Neapolitan Revolution, Pulcinella sang mutinous songs⁴. In the first Russian Revolution this character was described in detail by the Marxist Anatoliy Lunacharsky — in an article entitled “Neapolitanskiy teatr” (The Neapolitan Theatre) [Lunacharsky 1924]), which was included in his 1924 collection “Teatr i revolyutsiya” (Theatre and Revolution). Lunacharsky urged the use of Pulcinella’s theatre for propaganda. He had seen performances by maskers and puppeteers in Naples, and on the island of Capri he interacted with Gorky, Alexander Bogdanov and Vladimir Lenin. Thus, Gramsci’s use of images of Pul-

cinella or Stenerello in his later speeches was no longer a surprise for the Russian public, especially since in these and his other works, researchers have found striking similarities with Bogdanov and Lunacharsky's ideas on the meaning of the proletarian revolution, which consists in creating a "new man" (or "putting together a man", by Bogdanov, "forming a man", by Gramsci) [Andrianova 2009, 280–281]. Gramsci describes the "unformed man", a worker in an enterprise as follows:

He is intellectually lazy, unable and unwilling to see an inch beyond his nose, so he is devoid of any criterion in choosing his leaders and easily allows himself to be deceived with promises; he is inclined to believe that he can achieve his goal without much labour and without much mental effort [Gramsci 1983, 61].

It is generally accepted that of all the Italian masks Stenterello is the one closest to Pinocchio, the hero of Collodi's tale. However, Tolstoy in the Berlin fairy tale ignored, as did Gorky, the differences between the masks — the differences that are essential to the Italians. For these Russian writers all the masks were *petrushkas*, the universal was being more important than the regional, and by *universal* they meant class-political content. As a result, the character of Pinocchio, whose name had already become a household name in Italy and beyond, lost its traditional regional semantics in the Russian book, but retained a set of universal features.

At the turn of 1923–1924 Aleksey Tolstoy was faced with his most important, indeed momentous, choice of returning to Russia. In the tale of Pinocchio, familiar since his youth in Camilla Danini's translation⁵, the ideas of Carlo Collodi, a left-wing journalist and participant in the Italian unification movement, were seen through the simple didacticism for children.

The Bolshevik-funded newspaper "Nakanune", published in Berlin, constantly covered the situation in Germany and Italy as news of the utmost importance. Until July 1923 Tolstoy led there "Literaturnoe prilozhenie" (Literary Supplement), also he was the head of the artistic and literary department of the same publishing house.

The writer worked in the midst of political news and ideological struggles — his position obliged him to stick to the newspaper's course, which he sometimes strayed from, however. He also had plans to promote his own works in the Italian market and to prepare for the publication in the USSR a multi-volume anthology of modern Italian literature. In the difficult circumstances of 1923 — the financial collapse and the abolition of Bolshevik subsidies for publishing houses

in Berlin — Tolstoy stepped up his Italian projects, making use of the connections of a freelance journalist Nina Ivanovna Petrovskaya, who had lived in Italy for many years. The publishing house “Nakanune”⁶ had already been practically closed when the book “The Adventures of Pinocchio” was published there, translated by Petrovskaya and processed by Tolstoy, in the series “Detskaya biblioteka ‘Nakanune’” (Nakanune Children’s Library).

Tolstoy and his family eventually had returned to their homeland. Petrovskaya, to whom he had given an insistent advice — an invitation — to follow him, nevertheless ended up in Paris and soon died there in poverty and illness. We should stress that their joint book came out in time for the beginning of official inter-state relations, as did another translated children’s book from 1924, which suited Tolstoy’s taste and the course of the liberals in the “Smena vekh” (Change of Milestones) group, namely Giovanni Verga’s story, “Rosso Malpelo” (The Branded Redhead), about the lives of working-class teenagers [Verga 1924]. Overall, the tale of Pinocchio proved to be one of the symbols of the crisis between Russia, Italy and Germany in 1923–1924. Of particular significance here were the great changes in Russia: the Leninist regime was replaced by the Stalinist-Trotskyist bloc, in which a fierce struggle was brewing.

It seems to us that Tolstoy, seized by politics, reworked the most famous Italian fairy tale in the genre of pamphlet, addressing its satirical hints and lessons to those emigrants who, while not being open enemies of Bolshevism, were in no hurry to return to Russia — primarily to Gorky and his entourage. In this work Tolstoy paid little attention to the needs of children and teachers, and the translator was even less interested in these; not surprisingly, no reprints followed, the Berlin book was long forgotten even by scholars of the Soviet classic writer’s work⁷.

In the history of the creation of Berlin’s “The Adventures of Pinocchio” the contacts of Russian émigré writers with the Roman salon of Olga Ivanovna Resnevich-Signorelli are important. She was a patron of Nina Petrovskaya and in all probability it was she who suggested that Collodi’s tale be translated — it is well known that Petrovskaya asked her to select two books for translation: one pedagogical book and another one for children. To “Nakanune” Pinocchio came in handy as a convenient symbol of collaboration that had begun between certain social and political circles in Italy and the USSR.

The popular version that Tolstoy simply helped Petrovskaya in working on the fairy tale because of her plight (poverty, severe chronic illness, homelessness) is insufficient, to say the least, because it does not cover

the full range of material and does not touch those problems that concerned the newspaper editor, who fulfilled the party-state order.

Nina Petrovskaya's biography has now been sufficiently reconstructed [Bogomolov 1997; Lavrov 1999; Garetto 2012]. She was a professional writer, so fluent in Italian that she wrote an essay on dialects for "Literaturnoe Prilozhenie" (Literary Supplement). She was in dire need of commissions and royalties, but did not need the help of a literary dresser at all. Moreover, in the dramatic atmosphere of 1924, Tolstoy's scandalous name might have compromised her in the émigré milieu, which in part it did. Despite her confession of dislike for children's literature, she began to understand it little by little, and wrote for "Nakanune" several reviews of children's books, in particular of a collection of poems by Natal'ya Krandievskaya, Tolstoy's wife.

In our understanding, what mattered in the story of the translation and remaking of the fairy tale was not so much friendly charity as the commonality between Tolstoy and Petrovskaya in their assessment of Italian fascism and Russian emigration, which was partly living with the illusion of "Skazok ob Italii" (The Fairy Tales about Italy) and partly ready to support the fascists in their struggle against the Bolsheviks. Tolstoy never expressed a negative attitude towards Italy, on the contrary, he sought writerly cooperation, but anti-fascist, anti-bourgeois course of his newspaper held firmly. Petrovskaya wrote articles and essays on Italy for "Literaturnoe Prilozhenie"; in one of them she expressed deep, scathing scepticism about Mussolini and his Blackshirt boys. Her denial of Fascism was entirely sincere and not at all a tribute to the political agenda of the newspaper, for she had observed the first Fascists with her own eyes.

There is an important nuance to be considered here: the Roman patroness Olga Resnevich-Signorelli, who sent the tale for translation, had her Russian salon in Rome, as well as the solid "Russia" magazine, funded by her husband, the prosperous Dr. Angelo Signorelli, a great admirer of Mussolini.

It was with regret that Petrovskaya refused to help her benefactress with the publication of Signorelli's big article in "Nakanune". From her letter of 2 August 1923:

A third thing: I *can't* publish Sre Angelo's article in "Nakanune". *Nor is it good* for him to be published there. He is in love with Mussolini, and I am calling him bad words there... I will pass it on to Zaitsev or Osorgin for "Dni", I will translate it "surreptitiously", and they will publish it under their name. <...> and explain to Sra Angelo that it's not my "reluctance" at all, but political considerations. He's an Italian! He can't understand our

Russian affairs! Only, for God's sake, don't let him be offended. You do understand all this, don't you? It's still a matter of "nuances". Yesterday the Sov[jiet] Rep[ublic], embodied in one of its ardent representatives, told me: "Welcome to us!" On leaving, Tolstoy on the train's footstep said to me: "Nina, if you don't want to die, come back soon!" And he was right. You can't live in Berlin. Hunger sets in, 'paying with a hangover for the feasting of others' begins (*italics by the author.* — I.A.) [Garetto 2012, 204–205].

Translated and reworked in a certain ideological spirit, the Berlin fairy tale contributed to the rupture of Resnevich-Signorelli's relations with Petrovskaya in the first place and then with Tolstoy. Although the main blow to relations was dealt by the unfortunate project of an "Italian anthology", which Tolstoy undertook with Petrovskaya and Resnevich-Signorelli, but abandoned the project, driving a wedge between two friends, and also disrupting, to put it mildly, mutual understanding in the Russian-Italian family. Dr. Signorelli could hardly have liked the book published by a "red" publisher, even leaving aside the ideological direction of Tolstoy's adaptation and Malakhovsky's drawings.

It should also be taken into account that Petrovskaya did not at all share the enthusiasm of Russian artists for Italy⁸, she even had the idea of compiling a book from her scathing Italian sketches. "Just don't tell Italians! It's just a newspaper grotesque. That's the spirit that 'Nakanune' likes. When I write like this, I hide my name", from a letter dated 3 February 1923 [Garetto 2012, 187].

In the light of "Nakanune" stance on the Italian question and these letters and essays by Petrovskaya (including three articles on Mussolini and young fascism), it is impossible to imagine the two authors working together on the fairy tale as merely a random mark in the margins of their biographies. For Petrovskaya, it was a side note in her work, the last successful work she had done to make a living. She carefully distanced herself from the Bolsheviks, rejected their most tempting offers, but trusted Tolstoy. For Tolstoy, however, her translation and anti-Italian scepticism were of entirely different interest.

Not surprisingly, the publisher particularly praised Petrovskaya for her "choice" of this tale (the letter of 16 February 1923) [Garetto 2012, 188], and not surprisingly, Tolstoy, to the translator's astonished delight, changed his habits on this occasion and personally undertook the revision and reworking of the text for the first time. The purpose of this revision was most likely to reduce the pathos of Catholic edification inherent in the original, and to strengthen ideologically relevant features in the image of Pinocchio, anarchism and vitality above all. Why these?

The taste and the sense of the order for the selection of contemporary works for translation is described by Petrovskaya in a letter to Resnevich-Signorelli of 21 February 1923 (this was after the translation had been sent to the publisher, but before the book was published): for his Italian anthology Tolstoy wants to select such writers “whose soul wells up with the healthy anarchic spirit of life and art”:

The domestic-*village* ones are very desirable, also good, juicy and infused with the juices of Italy. Look, for example, how old, but how unfadingly beautiful Verga is!..! In a word, send something *with juice* and with pure Italian. So it would be Italian, inherent, perceptible at a glance. Especially not desirable are “decadents” howling and barking at the moon (italics by the author. — I.A.) [Garetto 2012, 192].

So, for Tolstoy, Collodi’s tale, though uncontemporary, from the 1880s, turned out to be both anarchic and with “the juice of Italy”.

The 1924 book lacks the original subtitle (*‘Le avventure di Pinocchio. Storia d’un burattino’*) but has a commentary replacing the subtitle:

Translated from Italian by N. Petrovskaya Revised and reworked by Aleksei Tolstoy Cover and drawings by Lev Malakhovsky

In these captions, combined with the name “Nakanune”, printed in catchy type at the bottom, next to the year, the provocation is hidden. The publishing house closed in June, because of the disaster of the whole Berlin emigrant colony in the face of German hyperinflation and the end of Bolshevik support. The children’s book teased the émigrés with the very name of Aleksey Tolstoy in the subtitle commentary. “The Red Count” became the hero of a grand scandal: in violation of ethics, he published a private letter by Korney Chukovsky with poisonous assessments of the emigrants. Tolstoy became a pariah and was expelled from everywhere.

The book may have also been a taunt to Gorky, who had previously expressed extreme scepticism about “Nakanune”, resorting in derision to a “childish” vocabulary⁹, and soon preferred Mussolini’s Italy to Bolshevik Russia. Tolstoy’s gesture in handling Petrovsky’s translation appears to us to be a scathing response to the leader of proletarian literature.

In our opinion, Lev Malakhovsky’s drawings also contain provocation. They follow the most famous drawings by Carlo Chiostri, but at the same time they are far from them. The image of Pinocchio is extremely laconic, almost to the point of being a sign; it is reduced to

a light construction made of thin slats and screws. The impression is that Malakhovsky based his drawing of Pinocchio on Gorky's son, exaggerating to the point of caricature his lean, tall figure and early bald head. At the time Maxim Peshkov was fascinated by the trendy ideology of Italian youth and Marinetti's manifestos, he even drew closer to young fascists, but has done so in his typical manner— superficially and temporarily. He was a grown up, but behaved like a careless boy. His father's letters to various addressees allow us to judge in this way. Maxim Peshkov knew Italian and wrote some letters on behalf of Gorky (jumping ahead, we note the impertinent letter to Mussolini — in connection with the search in 1925 in the office of Mariya Zakrevskaya-Budberg). His father was concerned about his son's frivolity, his risky adventures (an episode with a fight with the police is known)¹⁰, all of which might have led to a comparison with Pinocchio, especially since it was customary in Gorky's "family" to make fun of everyone and give nicknames¹¹.

Admittedly, Gorky himself might have given Tolstoy an excuse to use the fairy tale of Pinocchio as a parody, as well as to argue about Italy and the European perspective associated with Italian events: the writer would sometimes pose for the photographer's camera and the artist's canvas as a puppet, a puppet on a screen, "petroushka".

The year 1924 brought Tolstoy and Gorky sharply apart. Tolstoy had no choice but to leave Germany, and according to the direction of his newspaper, he went to Russia. Tolstoy trusted in the spiritual health of the Russian nation, which would somehow survive radical Bolshevism. Gorky, on the other hand, who arrived in Naples on 6 April, expressed faith in the spiritual health of Italians, who would outlive Mussolini and his Blackshirts as a temporary phenomenon. Gorky's choice was not so much due to a loudly expressed love for Italy as to a quiet and sober assessment of the end of the Leninist regime¹². Misconceptions about Mussolini swept some Russian émigrés at the time. Tolstoy was also mistaken about Russia's prospects after Lenin's death.

The Berlin publication of "The Adventures of Pinocchio" is perceived as an argument for the colony of emigrants in the choice of a country in which to live and work. This was Tolstoy's final attempt to reason with Gorky: by countering the republished in 1923 "Fairy Tales of Italy" and its embellished, romanticised Italians with the original Italian tale, full of an entirely different spirit, which brings out the basic national types. Indeed, the romantic boy Pepe is a contrast to Pinocchio, a satirical hero. Moreover, Pepe is a Southerner, a Capri, and Pinocchio is a Florentine with a Tuscan name, and this is a big difference.

Florence, the city of Carlo Collodi, was also the birthplace of Fascism as an international political force. At the same time, of all the Italian cities, Florence resisted the nascent fascism most fiercely and repeatedly¹³. In this struggle, the Florentines were allied with Bolshevik Russia, and the strong metonymy of Moscow-Florence [Lekmanov 2014], existing in Russian culture and literature up to I.A. Bunin, could have had significance in the translation and reworking of the tale of Pinocchio.

When Gorky and Tolstoy later would settle in Moscow, nearby, on Malaya Nikitskaya Street, they will be able to evaluate their decisions of ten years ago and return to the fairytale plot. It is not without reason that “Zolotoy klyuchik” (The Little Golden Key) was first read by the author at in Gorky at Gorky’s. The second chapter ends with a comic fight between the two old men and a touching suggestion to Pope Carlo: “Let’s make up, shall we...” [Tolstoy 2007, 297].

Gorky’s Moscow life turned out to be a farcical parody of his Italian existence. The luxurious mansion, given to him by Stalin, was built and decorated like a seaside villa: there was a copy of Da Vinci’s Madonna Litta by Aleksandr Korin, and there was, hanging above Gorky’s desk, “Panorama of Sorrento” by Pavel Korin — “Landscape with Vesuvius” (an oil painting on glued sheets of paper). Let us note that this was the view from the windows of Gorky’s study in his last Italian home¹⁴. This real paper Vesuvius in “Zolotoy klyuchik” (The Little Golden Key) is an ironic counterpart to the allegory from Collodi’s tale: a hearth with a cauldron is drawn on a piece of old canvas.

Tolstoy, in his fairy tale, treated Collodi’s allegory with liberty: the wooden boy pokes his nose through a canvas and discovers a door behind it, which is to be opened with a little golden key — this plot-forming “trifle”, an invention of Tolstoy, will become a primary structure in the new fairy tale. The canvas with the picture, the door covered in cobweb — all this is also in Collodi’s tale. But for the Italian reader the picture-poster is the commonplace, from the national traditions of the interior, and the fireplace is also commonplace. With Collodi the mystery lies in the drawing, which the Italian, who has studied the Risorgimento era, reads as a historical-political allegory. “Burning coal” is the most important ritual of the “coal miners”, or Carbonari. It is one of those allegories used to decorate by hand the diplomas issued to members of the “venta”, the primary cell of the secret organisation¹⁵.

“Poor Pinocchio rushed to the fireplace, where a kettle seemed to be smoking. He wanted to see what was brewing there, but the pot and the smoke were only painted” — translation by C. Danini [Collodi 2007,

35]. Petrovskaya and Tolstoy probably did not decipher this allegory, although technically they could have done so [Tarle 1901; Dito 1905; Sidorenko 1913]. They combined the fireplace with the cauldron and omitted the most important details — the hearth and the smoke: “He was hungry terribly and went to the fireplace, over which the cauldron was boiling merrily. He poked his nose in to see if there was any food in the pot. But both the fireplace and the kettle were fake, painted” [Collodi 2007a, 195].

And in “Zolotoy klyuchik” (The Little Golden Key), Tolstoy had put the key details back into place: “He ran to the hearth and stuck his nose into the boiling kettle. But Buratino’s long nose pierced the pot because, as we know, the hearth, the fire, the smoke and the pot *were all drawn by poor Carlo* on a piece of old canvas” (italics mine — I.A.) [Tolstoy 2007, 303–304]. Nothing here suggests that Tolstoy finally learned something authentic about Collodi’s allegories; rather, he put new meaning into the microsystem of motifs in this fragment. Tolstoy’s attributed authorship of the hoax picture contains an ironic allusion to the creative method promoted by Gorky, already called *socialist realism*, which consisted in depicting reality not as it is, but as it could and should be. The author will need a golden key — an allegory from a completely different series of characters.

In May 1925, the Second International Book Fair was held in Florence, and a Soviet pavilion was there too. This is how Pinocchio, who was speaking modern Russian and was referred to in the book by the Russian name *Petrushka*, found himself in his hometown, famous for its anti-fascist spirit.

Translated by Yana Timkova

Notes

¹ In April 1920, Odoardo Campa arrived in Moscow, having set up the Society of Friends of Russia in Italy. He set up the Italian Studio in the library of the Romyantsev Museum; from May he gave lectures on the history of Italian culture and art, with the support of Anatoliy Lunacharsky. Together with Campa, the professional diplomat G. Amadori appeared in Moscow on a private visit, both of them gaining an extensive circle of acquaintances [Khormach 1993, 43].

² “In Naples there are several dozen theatres; among them is the famous San Carlo Opera. But for an understanding of the local mores, the small theatres scattered in the people’s quarters are much more interesting. In the evening they are all crowded. <...> Under the changed conditions of life, manners,

notions Pulcinella remained an unchanged and necessary participant of the comedy of life” [Muratov 1994, 146].

- ³ In June 1910 Gorky wrote to Leopol'd Sulerzhitsky about the Neapolitan theatre: “My friend — what a magnificent theatre it is! There is a comic actor Edoardo Scarpetta, he is also the director of the theatre ‘Mercadente’ and the author of all the plays that are produced in this theatre. He and his comrade Della Rossa are marvellous artists! Scarpetta comes from Polichinelle — from our Petrushka — but how! <...> Theatres are good here, and theatre life is amazingly lively. I mean mainly dialect theatres. Did you know that Italy has the greatest number of theatres? There are 3557! <...> And I watched in Scarpetta, how hungry Neapolitans dream — what and how to eat — I watched and — cried. And our whole barbaric Russian lodge — cried. In a farce? In the farce, my dear, yes! They cried not from pity, — don’t think it! — but from pleasure. From the joy that a man can laugh at his grief, anguish, humiliation — and laugh splendidly” [Gorky 2001, 92–93].
- ⁴ After the defeat at Rieti, a mock poem became widespread in the kingdom, a poem about the fate of Pulcinella, a hero who represented a generalised type of Neapolitan people:

The discontented Pulcinella,
 Deserted from his regiment,
 Wrote to his mother in Benevento
 Of the sad fate of the homeland.
 Rebellion and Parliament,
 Oaths and repentances,
 The preparation for war and the ordeals.
 From fear and treachery.
 We fled at the speed of the wind.
 I repent of what I have done.
 Sweet mother,
 Pray for Pulcinella!

[Kowalska 1971, 67].

- ⁵ The works of the writer’s mother, Aleksandra Turgeneva-Bostrom, had been published in the 1906 “Zadushevnoe Slovo” magazine alongside chapters of “Priklyucheniye derevyannogo mal’chika” (The Adventures of the Wooden Boy), translated and reworked by K. Danini.
- ⁶ In 1922, in the newspaper “Nakanune” had been organized a publishing department: the literary and artistic department was headed by Aleksey Tolstoy, the foreign department — by the translator and literary critic Zinaida Vengerova. The publishing house published a series entitled “Nakanune Children’s Library”, which included Tolstoy’s book.
- ⁷ Let’s note that the publishing house and newspaper “Nakanune” were established to publish the works by émigré authors and also by the authors from Soviet Russia. The publishing house was supported by funding from

- Russia and the newspaper was accessible to Soviet readers, unlike many other émigré newspapers and magazines.
- ⁸ Extremely harsh assessments of Italy and the Italians are contained in letters from Nina Petrovskaya to Vladislav Khodasevich from Rome of 19 July 1922, and to Olga Resnevich-Signorelli of 13 October 1922. Elda Garetto, noting this non-admiration, reports: “At the beginning of her life in Berlin, Petrovskaya even conceived of publishing a separate book consisting of essays and feuilletons from life and daily routine in contemporary Italy, with her ‘images of Italy’ probably intended to appear in an ironic refraction and written in a denunciatory spirit” [Garetto 2012, 156].
- ⁹ From a letter by Gorky to Yuriy Zhelyabuzhsky in March 1923: “Read the leftist-communist and falsely-optimistic newspaper ‘Na-ka, nunya’ [Here, take it, sniveller!]! I by no means consider myself a sniveller, but I recommend this little newsie to all people younger than me, even if only three days younger, as it is good for the stomach” [Gorky 2001, 309].
- ¹⁰ From a letter from Gorky to his wife Ekaterina Peshkova of 25 December 1922, Saarov: Maxim, “revealing ingenious abilities, composes crazy pictures in the style of Bosch. But — to study seriously and persistently — [he] is not capable [of]. Here he would go to Mars, and also he is willing to sink to the bottom of the sea to study the politics of deep-sea frogs. Healthy and cheerful. Strange gentleman: everybody likes him, he easily attracts people’s sympathy, but he still has no definite attitude to himself” [Gorky 2009, 112].
- ¹¹ Mariya Budberg-Zakrevskaya, in a letter to Gorky of 28 January 1922, resorts to a delicate and ironic alogism: “Maksimka is vey skinny, but a very decent young man” [Gorky Archive 2001, 59].
- ¹² On March 24, 1923, in a letter to El Madani, a Spanish publicist and translator, Gorky reported confidential information: “Lenin’s health is very poor; the general belief is that he is permanently incapable of work, so the German medics report from Moscow. I earnestly ask you not to hurry with your departure for Russia. First get your health situation in order and, if possible, make yourself familiar with situation here, so as not to be disappointed. Of course, it is not as bad as the emigrant newspapers say, but it is not as great as ‘Nakanune’ says” [Gorky 2009, 167].
- ¹³ The Italian Fascists vowed to apply “all their forces to the collapse of Bolshevism” [Mussloni 2013, 204], which encouraged the enemies of the Bolshevik regime among the Russian emigration. F. Marinetti and G. D’Annunzio acted as Fascists’ allies. Gorky wanted to publish a collection of D’Annunzio’s works in *World Literature*.
- ¹⁴ “The artist worked in liquid oil on five glued together album sheets of paper. The painting was given to the writer on his birthday, March 28, 1932. Gorky spent long hours at his desk, and every time he raised his head from the manuscript, he had the happy opportunity to rest his gaze on his favourite images and remember Italy” [Demkina 2013, 11].

- ¹⁵ “On joining the Carbonari organisation, each Carbonari was given a diploma — a membership card, handwritten, signed by all the officials and sealed with the Venta seal. The three colours of the Carbonari ribbon — blue, red and black — associated with the most important ritual (burning coal in the hearth) and signifying smoke, flame and coal, symbolized hope (blue), virtue (red) and faith (black)” [Kowalska 1971, 43]. The image of Vesuvius symbolised the “revolutionary hearth” and the Neapolitan revolution.

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ПИНОККИО ИЗ ФЛОРЕНЦИИ В РУССКОМ БЕРЛИНЕ

В статье излагается история сказки «Приключения Пиноккио» Карло Коллоди, которую перевела Нина Петровская и обработал Алексей Толстой в Берлине, в пору их сотрудничества в газете «Накануне». Обращено внимание на использование имен масок *commedia dell'arte* в международном политическом новоязе благодаря выступлениям в печати А. Грамши, биография которого тесно связана с пробольшевистскими кругами в Берлине, и Москвой. Актуализация данной сказки в русской печати первой половины 1920-х гг. была задана началом советско-итальянских отношений и выбором дальнейшего курса, стоявшим перед русскими эмигрантами. Выдвигается гипотеза об отражении в переводе-обработке различных позиций А. Н. Толстого и М. Горького в отношении вопроса о возвращении в Россию. Описываются обстоятельства выбора книги для перевода и направление перевода Н. Петровской и обработки перевода А. Н. Толстым. Акцент сделан на антифашистском движении, центром которого была Флоренция — город Карло Коллоди. Антифашистские взгляды Петровской и просоветская позиция Толстого позволяют увидеть сказку в актуальном ракурсе общественной борьбы и личного выбора. Уточняются роли обоих русских авторов в работе над книгой и их отношения с итало-русской семьей меценатов Синьорелли. Объясняется переадресация сказки, предупредившая дальнейшее забвение берлинской книги: новый перевод был адресован не столько детям, сколько взрослым русским эмигрантам.

Keywords: советско-итальянские отношения, русская эмиграция, М. Горький, А. Грамши, Карло Коллоди, А. В. Луначарский, Б. Муссолини, А. Н. Толстой, Н. И. Петровская, О. И. Ресневич-Синьорелли, народный театр кукол, авторская сказка, памфлет, Пиноккио, Буратино

REVIEWS

Enrico Meglioli, Ludovica Broglio

THE REDISCOVERY OF VISUAL AT THE BOLOGNA CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR: THE SILENT BOOK CONTEST

The Bologna Children's Book Fair (BCBF) is one of the capital events for the professionals in the field of children's and young adults' books and media contents, where a variegated and international audience meets to exchange ideas, projects, and creations. Moreover, during the years, the BCBF has established fruitful collaborations with many countries, Russia among them, where the international programme "The visual world of children's books" was developed in collaboration with the Russian State Children's Library of Moscow. As the very name of the programme suggests, both countries, Italy and Russia, have fully recognized the slow but steady rise of the iconic language, which is crucial for the construction of meaning in the newest and most appreciated children's books. Another proof of the central role of images and visual storytelling was the founding of the Silent Book Contest (2014) for the best wordless visual narrative of the year, which was showing how images can be powerful cognitive attractors. This article will focus in particular on the last edition of the contest (2021), a virtual one due to the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the participants proposed works echoing the dramatic situation the world was (and is) living in. Now more than ever, 'to look at' seems to be synonymous with 'to know', as well as to 're-elaborate'.

Keywords: visual storytelling, silent books, Bologna Children's Book Fair, pandemic

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The Bologna Children's Book Fair: an international reference event

In 1964, Bologna, which is one of the most vibrant cities in the Italian cultural landscape and the one where the first University of the Western World was established in 1088, hosted its first fair dedicated entirely to the world of children's books. Since then, the Bologna Children's Book Fair has become an unmissable event for all the professionals involved in creation, promotion, sale, and distribution of children's and young adult' books and other media contents, reaching the astonishing numbers of 28946 visitors and 1442 exhibitors from over 80 countries around the world (during its last in-person edition in 2019, before COVID-19 forced the organizers to move the event online). In Bologna, the new frontiers of children's literature are explored, and many prizes are awarded to highlight the most extraordinary creations brought to the attention of both the industry and the public. Moreover, in 2021, with the creation of the BolognaBookPlus, a parallel event dedicated to a broader professional public in the publishing industry, Bologna made another important contribution to offer more opportunities and services to improve the quality and scope of the work of all the professionals in the publishing industry.

But it is not all limited to Italy. Rejecting a competitive approach and understanding that a collaboration with other cities and events could benefit all, Bologna Children's Book Fair established a strong network of international partnerships, not only with its ever-increasing presence of international participants and exhibitors, but also choosing a 'Guest Country of Honour' every year (in 2022 it will be Sharjah, United Arab Emirates), and, most importantly, supporting the creation and organization of similar book fairs and events around the world. Such is the case of the China Shanghai International Children's Book Fair, the only book fair in Asia-Pacific fully dedicated to children's literature and culture, co-organised by BolognaFiere and Bologna Children's Book Fair since 2012, and the New York Rights Fair, the only professional event in the USA where literary scouts, rights managers, publishers, licensees, film producers, and many others can meet to exchange the rights of publishing and distributions of cultural contents for adults, children, and adolescents. Given the extraordinary success of such collaborations, a more recent one was developed with the Moscow International Book Fair, resulting in creation of a new International Children's Book Fair in Russia. This new connection between the two cities and fairs will provide fresh energies and ideas to the publishing world, with new opportunities for knowl-

edge, entertainment, development, and wonder, for children and adults alike.

During the decades of its history, the Bologna Children's Book Fair, with all its organizers and participants from every corner of the world, has analysed, prepared and anticipated the future literary trends for the young generations. Transmediality, internationalization, and digitalization were just three of the main trajectories taken by the children's book industry, following the path of the wider cultural and social world. Moreover, the variety of themes dealt with in children's books, both fiction and non-fiction, exponentially increased, and the role and quality of the visual elements in them became paramount. As a matter of fact, illustrations ceased to be an embellishment for the page, a mere backdrop for the centrality of words, and turned into real co-protagonists of the story. Or even more.

Look and understand

Recent neuroscientific acquisitions and their application in the narratological field offer an explanation for the remarkable diffusion of images in recent decades: iconic representations activate mechanisms of embodied simulation of actions, emotions and sensations, which consequently ensure a truly direct and immersive experience [Calabrese, Conti, Broglia 2021, 92–93]. In other words, visual storytelling represents a biological and cognitive endowment that allows humans to convey concepts in a simplified and emotionally attractive way: moreover, when children encode reality, they grammaticalize it through the iconic language which is only later transformed into verbal language [Calabrese 2013, 27].

These findings have been well received by the world of children's publishing, which in visual narratives – from *picture books* to *graphic novels* – has gradually given way to a complementary relationship between words and images, in which it is the latter that leads to the real understanding of the story [Nikolajeva, Scott 2000, 230–231]. In this regard, particular attention was paid to strategies related to *visual literacy* that directly contribute to the construction of meaning. The authors, for example, recognize the role of colour choices – intended as real cognitive attractors – and of the choices relating to the shapes of the elements represented. If dark, broken lines convey an idea of negativity, rounded shapes and soft colours are linked to positive emotions [Bang 2010].

Therefore, in recent years, children's publishing has re-evaluated the role of *visual narratives* and of *silent books* (also known as 'word-

less books’): the reader becomes a real co-author as he/she activates a mechanism of re-interpretation of the iconic code that refers to the negotiation of meanings starting from the autobiographical experience and knowledge related to *visual literacy* [Arizpe 2013; Serafini 2014]. Silent book seems to be synonymous with cognitive and emotional complexity: when a child reads a text without words, he/she is led to develop sequential thinking (and, therefore, to recognize what happens before and what after) and counterfactual thinking, to integrate schemas and scripts, to consider visual clues and finally to recognize the links between actions and intentions, increasing his/her Mind Reading abilities. *Silent books*, therefore, can be considered not only a rising trend in the publishing industry, but also an innovative means of expression among artists and a source of wonder and contemplation for readers/viewers of any age.

The Silent Book Contest: trends and evolution

The Silent Book Contest, established in 2014, is the proof of this. Its finalists, selected by an international jury, are announced and exhibited at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair and the Salone Internazionale del Libro of Turin, the other major book fair in Italy. The contest is dedicated to the memory of Gianni De Conno (1957–2017), a Milanese award-winning illustrator. During its eight editions so far, the Silent Book Contest brought to public attention some of the best creations in the field of illustrations and visual storytelling, acknowledging the great talent and skills required to convey feelings and entertaining stories without words, just through colours, shapes, and atmospheres. The winners of the contest so far, along with the other finalists, explored themes as different as travel and curiosity (as in *Bounce Bounce* by Brian Fitzgerald, Ireland), dreams and life after the sunset (*Mentre tu dormi*, by Mariana Ruiz Johnson, Argentina), memories and growth (*Ciao ciao giocattoli*, by Marta Pantaleo, Italy), transformations, differences, and similarities (*R/Evolution*, by Arianna Papini, Italy), the power of imagination (*Immagina*, by Anastasiia Suvorova, Russia), fantastic tales (*Costruttori di stelle*, by Soojin Kwak, South Korea), illness (*Che febbre!*, by Rina Allek, Russia), and the special relationship between a girl and her grandfather (*Lo zainetto di Matilde*, by Sardo, Cognolato, del Francia, Italy). This extremely rich variety of themes shows how the world we live in is plural, fragmented, and ever-changing. On the other hand, it is also a globalized and hyper-connected one, both from a digital and physical point of view, as it has become dramatically clear with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Silent books and the 2021 edition: the reflection of COVID-19 pandemic

If visual storytelling may be considered a privileged tool in terms of understanding and re-elaborating reality, it is not surprising that most of the silent books involved in the last contest reflect the complexities associated with the period of pandemic we are living in¹. In visual narratives, negative emotions, such as loneliness and melancholy, are perfectly integrated with actions that enhance the time dedicated to beloved people and small things: for example, in the Lithuanian text *Grains Feather* (by Deimantė Rybakoviene, Lithuania, 2021), a grey bird visits different places in several seasons of the year and simultaneously experiences both loneliness and happiness. On the other hand, in the Spanish text *Waiting*, the ability of children to use their imagination and to make the most of waiting time is appreciated (by Violeta Gomez, Spain, 2021): at the bus stop, while all the adult characters look bored, a little girl creates counterfactual events that help her pass the time (for example, the scarf around a passer-by's neck becomes a huge red dragon and a little animal on a tree trunk grows so large that it looks almost scary). In these texts, the emotional expressions of the protagonists undoubtedly guide – through the well-known mechanism of embodied simulation – the authentic understanding of the narrative; at the same time, a fundamental role seems to be attributed to colour, which is closely linked to the emotional value of the event represented and to the salience of certain elements of the scene.

Moreover, two other silent books, published in Italy and Russia respectively, deserve special attention. *Matilde's backpack* (by Luca Cognolato, Silvia Del Francia, Fabio Sardo, Italy, 2021) presents the story of a grandfather and a little girl who experience some daily adventures, including leaving school, a stop at the village playground and a snack at home. The authors recount the rediscovery of activities usually considered “banal”, representing them through regular graphic strokes and specific chromatic games: the protagonist has curly red hair and a blue dress that lead the reader to focus on her, and, consequently, on her emotional expression.

Where is my home? (by Masha Shebeko, Russia, 2021) tells the story of a crab that is looking for its shell, or its home, but runs into a series of dangerous waste: the author's attention is undoubtedly directed at conveying a message related to environmental sustainability, but, at the same time, she express the feelings of disorientation and melancholy that the protagonist feels when is unable to place itself in specific space-



Figure 1. A double page that represents the daily life of the grandfather-granddaughter relationship (Cagnolato, Del Francia, Sardo, 2021)

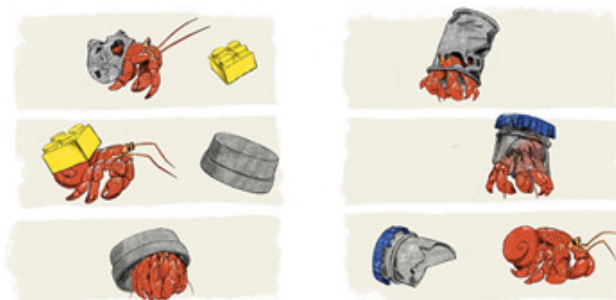


Figure 2. Sequential images that communicate the negativity of the scene (Shebeko, 2021)

time coordinates. Through sequential images at the base of a negative emotional climax and through the protagonist's emotional expressions – accentuated through the red colour that distinguishes the crab from the surrounding environment – the author communicates the tragic nature of the situation.

These are just a few examples that show how contemporary children's stories are increasingly moving towards formats that are open to multiple interpretations and free from boundaries, and thus capable of walking alongside their young readers/viewers, rather than leading them towards distinct ends. Visual language, moreover, seems to be the most suitable tool to represent and reflect the complexity of reality: visual narratives, which tell the stories of characters who face everyday problems, such as

loneliness and social isolation, helps the children – starting from the well-known identification mechanism – to build meaningful links between the characters and their own semantic memory related to the pandemic period. The iconic language supports the construction of a specific mental model, which is reworked by the reader’s knowledge about the world: moreover, recent neurocognitive studies confirm the substantial coincidence of the mnemonic process and the process of counterfactual imagination. In summary, visual language becomes synonymous with imagination and, at the same time, with autobiographical reworking.

As the publications of the latest edition of the Silent Book Contest clearly show, authors and illustrators are increasingly aware of this mutual relationship between images and cognitive and socio-emotional complexity. The publishing industry, therefore, is called to support and promote the artists’ work, and to better attend and feed the needs of the young generations. To do so, in an increasingly complex world, nothing is more helpful than a place and time to exchange ideas with highly qualified people, as the Bologna Children’s Book Fair and similar events are showing year by year.

Notes

- ¹ All illustrations from the books are available at <https://silentbookcontest.com/exhibition/>.

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**НОВОЕ ОТКРЫТИЕ ВИЗУАЛЬНОГО НА БОЛОНСКОЙ ЯРМАРКЕ
ДЕТСКОЙ КНИГИ: КОНКУРС «ТИХАЯ КНИГА» («SILENT
BOOK»)**

Обзор посвящен Болонской ярмарке детской книги (BCBF), прошедшей в 2021 г., главному событию для всех профессионалов в области детской книги и медиаконтента. Традиционно на этом мероприятии собирается представительная международная аудитория для обмена идеями, опытом и результатами своего творчества. За годы своего существования Болонская ярмарка детской книги установила плодотворное сотрудничество со многими странами, в том числе и с Россией, разработав совместно с Российской государственной детской библиотекой международную программу «Визуальный мир детской книги». Как показывает само название программы, издатели и авторы обеих стран признали медленный, но неуклонный рост иконического языка, который имеет решающее значение для современной детской литературы, стремящейся к выражению важных смыслов и ценностей. Визуальная литература, адресованная детям, становится заметным явлением и знаком нашего времени. Одним из доказательств центральной роли визуального повествования стало учреждение в 2014 г. конкурса «Silent Books» («Тихие книги») на лучшее графическое повествование года без слов, демонстрирующее, как изображения могут быть мощными когнитивными аттракторами. В данном обзоре описывается последний этап конкурса, проходивший в 2021 г., из-за пандемии COVID-19 ставший виртуальным, в рамках которого участники предлагали работы, перекликающиеся с той драматической ситуацией, в которой находился (и продолжает находиться) мир. Сегодня, как никогда ранее, «смотреть» кажется синонимом «знать», а также «проживать» и «осмыслять».

Keywords: визуальный сторителлинг, тихая книга, Болонская ярмарка детской книги, пандемия

James M. Bradburne

ON THE EDGE OF THE KNIFE — COLLECTING SOVIET CHILDREN’S BOOKS 1930–1933

This paper looks at a private collection of Soviet children’s books collected during 1930–33 by a young couple of German architects, and its subsequent donation to the national library at Brera in Milan. The 257 book, which include 85 in Ukrainian and several in Yiddish, provide a snapshot of the Soviet Union at a time of transition, from the euphoric collaborations of the NEP to the purges during Stalin’s Terror.

Keywords: collection, children’s books, Soviet Union, education, literacy, Ukraine, Yiddish

The story begins with a brown leather suitcase. The daughter of the collectors Hans Edward and Hedwig Adler, Susan McQuail, first became aware of their collection of Soviet children’s books with the death of her grandmother in 1959. Her parents debated long and hard about what to do with their mother’s house in Germany. Realising they would never want to live there again they decided to sell it, which meant they were able to buy the flat they had lived in since 1943 (having emigrated to Britain in 1939) and could help their children buy a house when they were married in 1964. Some key pieces of furniture and other objects from the house in Germany, some of them acquired in Stalinabad in the 1930s, went to the children, but the Russian books in their brown leather suitcase remained with Susan’s parents. And there the story ended until Susan’s mother died in 1986, when she had to clear her mother’s flat and the suitcase came to her own family, who looked at them, admired them and then put the suitcase in the attic. In summer 2020, serendipitously,

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thanks to the generosity of Susan McQuail, the books in the suitcase were donated to the Biblioteca nazionale Braidense.

At the heart of the story of the books is a young couple, Hans Edward Adler and Hedwig Feldmann — he 30 and she 26 years old in 1930 — both architects, drawn by the possibility of helping to build a new world in a new country, different from the decadent, impoverished, rapaciously capitalist West they lived in. It is also the story of the young country, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, born at the beginning of a century that saw the collapse of the Romanov dynasty, the abdication of the Habsburg Emperor and the October Revolution, as well as Einstein, Picasso and Freud; and Relativity, Cubism, and psychoanalysis. Not since the French Revolution had there been such a dramatic rupture with the past, and never before did the answers to life's problems seem so clearly to be in the future, rather than the past. Staring at the ruins of European society at the beginning of the 1920s, it would be hard to imagine a future bleaker than the present, a present that was the result of centuries of feudal oppression, unfettered capitalism and dynastic hegemony. For some, whatever the losses entailed by destroying the legacy of the past, they would be made up for by a brighter future. Others were more cold-blooded — the virtuous end of the creating a Socialist paradise justified means that would be considered brutal even in Hell.

The end of the 19th century had already seen a new interest in children's education, and as public education became increasingly universal, educational theories were hotly discussed and disputed. The pioneering work of the Czech educational reformer Comenius found new readers; inspired by Pestalozzi Froebel created the first kindergartens; Montessori developed the innovative system of early childhood education. When Leo Tolstoy created his school based on enlightenment values at Yasnaya Polyana in 1860, and the former Director of Brera, Corrado Ricci, wrote 'The Art of Children' in 1887 the momentum for universal public education had increased, as did the drive for increased literacy.

There was definitely the need for a new system of early childhood education as the society broke free from the old world, and the children of the October Revolution were of real interest as they were the first generation born into a new value system and ideology. The new Socialist paradise needed new citizens, and in the spirit of the Jesuit maxim widely attributed to Ignatius Loyola "Give me the child for the first seven years and I will give you the man" the Soviet authorities began to place a major emphasis on what the youngest comrades were doing and reading. The world of the 1920s was one of artistic ferment, and

Futurists, Constructivists, Suprematists and other champions of the pre-war avantgarde jostled to create new projects for children: books, games, theatre and graphics. The Commissariat of Enlightenment Anatoly Lunarcharsky presided over this explosion of creativity, which included experiments such as the agit-boats that travelled throughout Russia spreading revolutionary messages. He also gave support to Constructivist theatrical experiments and initiatives including the revolutionary posters of Mayakovsky, Rodchenko and others. Lenin's wife Nadezhda Krupskaya, who effectively controlled the Ministry of Education until her death in 1939, ensured the young comrades' minds were not seduced by bourgeois fantasy and fairy tales.

What were the right kinds of influence? For the artists of the Russian avantgarde, inspiration often came from local folk traditions, primitive art entering the museums of St. Petersburg from expeditions to the outer edges of the Russian Empire, and the crudely printed blockprints known as *lubki* (sing. *lubok*). To these artists, children's art — like primitive and folk art — had an immediacy and power that was not captured by the Mir Isskustva artists' orientalist fantasies. Corrado Ricci's *Children's Art* had been published in Russian in 1911, and the grown-ups of the Russian avant-garde understood children's literary creativity to be equal to that of adults. Children's collages had even been included in the famous avantgarde exhibition 'The Target' in 1913 organized by Mikhail Larionov. Alexander Shevchenko, who supplied some of the children's drawings for the exhibition, underlined the connection in his manifesto on neo-primitivism that appeared the same year, and in 1914 Alexei Kruchonykh published a book on the children's drawings. The child was to be considered a creative artist in her own right.

In the late 1920s a new publishing trend emerged — 'samodelka' [do-it-yourself] books. There were other types of illustrated books at that time like books-riddles, books-toys, coloring books but *samodelka* soon replaced the fairy tales which had dominated the market before the Revolution. The end of 1920s and the beginning of 1930s experienced an industrial boom as Stalin put pressure to achieve the First Five-Year Plan. The new priority was industrialization, not literacy. Future builders of socialism were supposed to get involved as soon as possible, starting with hands-on activities. That was the task that publishing houses faced — to introduce young readers to modern technologies, professions and manufacturing. Books with the same format and layout were favoured at the expense of individual editions. The small format of school notebooks already familiar to children prevailed. Chromolithography was the main method for printing these books. Despite the low-quality paper used,

the high quality of this new type of book is due to the talent of their author-illustrators (including Vera Ermolaeva, Vladimir Konashevich, Eleonore Kondiain, Konstantin Kuznetsov, Natalie Paren, Lidia Popova and others) and writers (Boris Zhitkov, Mikhail Ilyin, Samuil Marshak, Yakov Perelman). These heady days were not to last. In 1929, Lunacharsky was removed from his position and sent first to the League of Nations, then to Spain as ambassador. Of the artists and writers, Marshak, Chukovsky and Lebedev were among the survivors of the next decade, but Mandelshtam and Bulatov perished in the gulag, Nikolai Zabolotsky and Ilia Zdanevich survived the gulag but died later of ill health, Mayakovsky was found dead with a bullet in his chest, Tretyakov died in prison, and Kharms died in a prison psychiatric ward. The brief Spring of the 1920s was followed by a cruel summer.

By the time the Ernst May Brigade arrived in Fall 1930 their assignments would include playgrounds, parks, pre-schools and kindergartens. Margarete Schütte-Lihotsky already specialised in designing for children and was assisted by the only other woman architect in the original team, Hedwig Feldmann, freshly arrived from Cologne. When they returned to Germany in 1933, the Adlers brought back over 250 Russian children's books, the work of 107 different artists. They include leading figures in fields other than children's book illustration: Lebedev himself, Shterenberg, Bruni, Deineka, Yermolayeva, Charushin, Favorsky, Konashevich, Kukryniksy and others were known as painters, printmakers, poster and theatre designers. The work of some of these individuals stands out; but almost equally remarkable is the presence of artists who have remained largely unknown. These artists were young: about half of them were under 30 in 1930. These witnesses remain, testimony to a brief but optimistic period in the history of the Soviet Union, when it seemed as if the Socialist paradise could become reality, despite Lenin's binary vision of the revolution, a 'third way', beyond feudal oppression, dynastic hegemony, and capitalist exploitation.

The legacy of these books — a time capsule of life in the Soviet Union 1930–33 — became the basis of over a year's intense work at Brera.

Children's literature was already present in the library's collections, which included artist's books created by children, and a rich archive of Italian children's periodicals from the 1930s. When Milan locked down on February 23rd, 2020, and families and children were isolated in their homes, the library immediately began an extensive programme of readings by famous actors of children's stories, including classics by Marshak, Chukovsky and Mandelshtam. The need to find early editions

of these works led indirectly to the discovery and subsequent donation of the Adler Collection. Another consequence of the lockdown and the development of online materials was the creation of Brera's enhanced online offer Brera Plus (<http://www.breraplus.org>) which featured interactive documentaries co-produced with the Moscow-based production company VIKO. One of the first documentaries was the story of the Adler Collection, and included interviews with Varvara Shlovskaia, Memorial, Yakov Marshak and Irina Rudenko. Despite the uncertain situation at the end of 2020, it was decided to proceed with the exhibition *Tempi Terribili Libri Belli*, which opened to the public on January 20, 2021 and was to run until 21 March. The exhibition began with the brown suitcase, and was organized according to a double logic: the intertwined lives of the Adlers and the USSR, and the history of illustrated children's literature from the beginning of the 20th century until the Stalinist Purges. Unfortunately, after only 10 days, the exhibition had to be closed due to the Covid lockdown. Nevertheless, the exhibition was accompanied by an illustrated booklet by Corraini and an interactive guided tour online, to supplement the existing documentary on Brera Plus (<http://www.breraplus.org>). The Adler collection is one of Italy's most significant, so an important goal was not only to catalogue, scan and make available the collection online, but to create the definitive catalogue. Putting the books into the context of both the 1930s in the USSR and the lives of the two young architects, the bilingual and extensively illustrated Catalogue Raisonné published by Corraini in November 2021 made the Adler Collection available to a wide audience. As both the end of a full year's activities and a beginning for future research projects, on 19 January 2022, the Biblioteca Braidense together with the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence hosted a Study Day for international scholars on various aspects of the Adler Collection, in particular its emphasis on Modern architecture.

Another consequence of the Adler donation was the creation of the International Centre for Research in the Culture of Childhood (CIRCI). The Centre was created by the Braidense Library to preserve, study and communicate the experience of childhood and the values of curiosity, creativity and learning. It is committed to defending the competence, curiosity, imagination, ambition, desires and fundamental human rights of children. Its first research projects include 20th century Italian children's literature, innovative pedagogy in the early years of the Soviet Union and the contemporary role of children's literature.

Above all the Adler Collection has become a symbol of the library's renewed commitment to childhood. Now, as in the 1920s and 30s, we are

living through times of rapid change, political turbulences, and economic uncertainty, not helped by an international pandemic. Now as then, this means returning to the centrality of childhood and a recognition of the importance of young minds and new approaches.

Джеймс М. Брэдбёрн

Пинакотека Брера

НА ОСТРИЕ НОЖА: КОЛЛЕКЦИЯ СОВЕТСКИХ ДЕТСКИХ КНИГ
1930–1933 ГГ.

В статье рассматривается история создания частной коллекции советских детских книг, начало которой было положено в 1930-х гг. годах супружеской парой немецких архитекторов — Гансом Эдвардом и Хедвигой Адлерами. Супруги приехали в СССР в 1930 г., привлеченные мечтой о строительстве коммунизма. Вернувшись в Германию в 1933 г., Адлеры привезли с собой более 250 русских детских книг, созданных 107 советскими художниками. Среди них работы корифеев детской книжной иллюстрации и художников широкого профиля — Лебедева, Штеренберга, Бруни, Дейнеки, Ермолаева, Чарушина, Фаворского, Ко-нашевича и прочих, книжки авторства В. Маяковского, С. Маршака, Б. Житкова, М. Ильина, М. Перельмана. Эта коллекция в 2020 году была передана дочерью Адлеров Сьюзен Макуэйл в дар Национальной библиотеке Брейдэнси (Библиотека Брера, Милан), а затем представлена на выставке детской книги. Собрание из 257 книг, среди которых 85 напечатаны на украинском языке и несколько на идише, дают блестящее представление о детской литературе и искусстве детской книги в Советском Союзе в переходный период: от НЭПа до времени первых пятилеток (1933 г.).

Keywords: советская детская книга, книжная графика, коллекция советской детской книги, Национальная библиотека Брейдэнси (Библиотека Брера)

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