



Słowiańskie świąty wyobraźni

Metamorfozy

Pod redakcją
Magdaleny Dyras, Alicji Fidowicz, Marleny Grudy

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Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego

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Przedmowa

Oddajemy po raz kolejny – i ostatni – tom będący pokłosiem międzynarodowej konferencji naukowej „Słowiańskie światy wyobraźni III: metamorfozy”, która odbyła się w Krakowie w dniach 23–24 września 2019 roku. Mamy jednocześnie świadomość, że ta książka ukazuje się w wyjątkowym kontekście: nie tylko jako zamknięcie cyklu „Słowiańskich światów wyobraźni”, ale także pełnych (*nomen omen*) metamorfoz przełomowych lat 2020–2021.

Niniejszy tom otwiera artykuł Mileny Milevy Blažić, która przez porównawczą analizę baśni słoweńskich i polskich wykazała intertekstualny charakter motywu Amora i Psyche, przez co zwróciła uwagę na uniwersalność tych tekstów. Następnie, Elżbieta Zarych podejmuje próbę prześledzenia dziejów recepcji *Ballad i romansów* Adama Mickiewicza wraz z ich obecnością na rynku wydawniczym jako książki. Zagrzebska badaczka, Ana Batinić, analizuje powieść Jagody Truhelki zatytułowaną *Tugomila* w kontekście gatunku *Bildungsroman*. Praca Giulii De Florio to przegląd historii rosyjskiej literatury dla dzieci we Włoszech. Marijana Jelisavčić w swoim artykule poddaje analizie temat metamorfozy postaci diabła w serbskiej fantastyce XIX wieku. Joanna Kulczyńska-Kruk rozważa ewolucję *Wiosennych obrazków* Stanisława Młodożeńca jako książki wobec transformacji społecznych i kulturowych w Polsce połowy XX wieku. Nikola Danišová przeanalizowała słowacką baśń ludową *Hadogašpar* w świetle teorii Arnolda Gennepa i Mircei Eliadego. Milena Zorić analizuje przemiany znaczeń w *Czerwonym Kapturku* (oryg. *Crvenkapa*) – adaptacji baśni u jednego z serbskich dramaturgów XX wieku, Aleksandra Popovicia. Kolejny artykuł, którego autorką jest Aleksandra Wojtaszek, stanowi próbę opisu rozwoju chorwackiej fantastyki oraz

światów przedstawionych w tekstach tego rodzaju. Następny autor, Mateusz Kucab, skupia się na komparatystycznej analizie dzieł Selmy Lagerlöf i Marii Konopnickiej.

Wszelkie przemiany społeczne mają swoje odzwierciedlenie w literaturze dla dzieci i młodzieży, która nie jest (wbrew powszechnemu przekonaniu) zupełnie oddzielona od szerszego kontekstu. Pisze o tym Marijanca Ajša Vižintin podejmująca w swoim artykule problematykę imigracji oraz obrazu dzieci z rodzin imigranckich w słoweńskiej twórczości dla młodych czytelników. Z kolei Daria Targosz analizuje zjawisko konfliktu pokoleń w *Piaskowej Górze* Joanny Bator. Tom zamyka artykuł Michała Kózki, który skupia się na sowieckiej literaturze dziecięcej i wizji Lenina jako wychowawcy.

Mając na uwadze szczególny kontekst publikacji niniejszego tomu, chcemy podziękować wszystkim Autorom i Autorkom za współpracę, jak również za współtworzenie interesującego wydarzenia naukowego. Z nadzieją, że spotkamy się ponownie, w innych okolicznościach, dedykujemy Państwu owoc naszej ostatniej konferencji.

Magdalena Dyras
Alicja Fidowicz
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Foreword

We publish for You the third – and the last – volume, which is the effect of International Conference “Slavic Worlds of Imagination: Metamorphoses”, which had been held in Cracow, 23rd–24th September 2019. We are aware, that this book has been published in unusual context: not only as the closure of “Slavic Worlds of Imagination” cycle, but also in breakthrough years 2020–2021.

This book is opened by the work of Milena Mileva Blažić, who presents intertextual character of Amor and Psyche, using comparative analysis of Polish and Slovenian folk tales and focusing on universality of this motive. The next author, Elżbieta Zarych, made an attempt to track changes in reception of Mickiewicz’s *Ballady i romanse* along with analysis of the presence of this work as a book. Ana Batinić, scholar from Zagreb, investigates Jagoda Truhelka’s novel *Tugomila* as *Bildungsroman*. Giulia De Florio shows history of the presence of Russian children’s literature in Italy. Marijana Jelisavčić wrote an analysis of metamorphoses of devil in Serbian fantasy prose of the 19th century. Joanna Kulczyńska-Kruk wrote about evolution of *Wiosenne obrazki* by Stanisław Młodożeniec as book in the context of wider societal and cultural transformations in Poland in the half of the 20th century. Nikola Danišová analyzed Slovak folk tale *Hadogašpar* in the light of theories of Arnolda Gennep and Mircea Eliade. Milena Zorić wrote about changes of meaning in *Little Red Riding Hood* (in Serbian: *Crvenkapa*), which is an adaptation of this fairy tale written by Serbian playwright, Aleksandar Popović. Aleksandra Wojtaszek, who is the author of the next paper, made an attempt to analyze the development of Croatian fantasy prose and featured

worlds which are present in this genre. The next author, Mateusz Kucab, is focused on comparative analysis of works written by Selma Lagerlöf and Maria Konopnicka.

All societal changes have their reflections in children's literature and young adult, contrary to popular belief, that this kind of literary works are detached from wider reality. Marijanca Ajša Vižintin wrote about it, focusing on the topic of migration and representation of immigrants in Slovenian children's literature. The next scholar, Daria Targosz, is focused on generation gap present in *Piaskowa Góra* by Joanna Bator. This volume is closed by the paper of Michał Kózka, who wrote the paper about Soviet children's literature and vision of Lenin as pedagogue.

We keep in our minds, that the context of this volume is really special, therefore we want to thank all Authors for cooperation and for creating this scientific event. We dedicate this book as a fruit of the last conference to You, with hope, that we will meet together in other conditions.

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Russian Classics for Italian Children

Summary

The article is part of a larger study devoted to the analysis of Russian children's literary texts translated into Italian in the 20th and 21st centuries. In this investigation I will focus on classical works of famous writers such as Nikolai Gogol, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Mikhail Bulgakov and Boris Pasternak, whose masterpieces were adapted for a young audience and published by various Italian publishing houses, sometimes in numerous reprints. The suggested classification points out similarities and differences between the versions in accordance with the editorial strategy, the choice of the target public and the historical period in which the book was published. Such a corpus of texts represents a significant part of the Russian literature translated into Italian aimed at children and allows us to draw more general conclusions about the reception of Russian-Soviet children's literature in Italy in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Key words: Russian classics for children, translation history, adaptations, retelling, history of publishing, Italian publishing market

Introduction

A quick glance at the list of Russian children's literature translated into Italian in the 20th century and in the first twenty years of the 21st century shows a considerable number of Russian literature classics so-called 'for adults.' Since the end of the Second World War, there has been a conspicuous growth in this type of literature motivated by a double trend: a growing popularity of children's

literature in general¹ and an increasing presence in Italy of Russian-Soviet literature and, as a consequence, also of the literature for young people.

The subject of the present analysis includes four of the best known Russian authors in Italy, namely Nikolai Gogol, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Mikhail Bulgakov and Boris Pasternak. Alexander Pushkin and Lev Tolstoy were ruled out of the corpus for two main reasons: first, because the number of books to be analysed would have been excessive – there are several dozen publications by the two Russian writers specifically addressed to children and young people – and, second, these two authors have special characteristics that deserve an analysis in their own right: Tolstoy has written works for children, such as *The Russian Books for Reading*, whereas Pushkin wrote fairy tales that originally were not intended for children, but over time have occupied this niche, entering the literary canon of Russian children's literature. Moreover, concepts such as fairy tale, fable or *basnja* would be brought up needing terminological clarifications, which is beyond the scope of the investigation I am presenting here.

On one hand, it is interesting to analyse the books chosen from the perspective of the history of publishing. On the other hand, the survey takes into account the textual aspect as well, bringing the literary, linguistic or figurative aspects to the fore. Finally, in every literary text for children and young people, there is a certain pedagogical element; it is interesting to specify, case by case, how the volumes are positioned according to their didactic orientation and whether they represent a form of entertainment or support for school action. Based on the data collected from the selected corpus, I will try to answer some general questions and finally suggest further research development.

Chronology

The re-collocation of a text for adults for the use and consumption by youth is not an exclusive sector that belongs to some specific publisher in a certain

¹ Initially considered only an extra-scholastic product, children's and children's literature began to flourish when a national school book market was created, i.e. after the unification of Italy. However, it was from the 1930s, at the time of the modernisation of the publishing industry, that a real children's publishing industry developed in Italy. According to Gabriele Turi, what took place in those years was a conspicuous entrepreneurial commitment, an overall project, a wide and articulated production as well as different ways to 'tie up' the reader and a partial differentiation with respect to school production or its pedagogical and moralistic contents (i.e. with some autonomy of contents) (Turi, 1997).

period but a widespread practice in the Italian publishing industry since the early 19th century:

In Italy, since the first half of the nineteenth century, in addition to a narrative production specifically created for children, almost always holding didactic or edifying content [...], a new editorial production has developed, based on adaptations and reductions of texts from the foreign literary tradition in translation. It often takes advantage of the regulatory uncertainty concerning international copyright² (Palazzolo, 2004: 73).

Therefore, all publishers, especially those who also publish school textbooks, add to the school production a series of entertainment books in which are included, alongside contemporary writings, reductions and adaptations from European literary works. Russian literature began to arouse greater interest and to be considered a new and potentially large market from the second half of the 20th century, an extremely complex and interesting moment in the history of Italy and in particular for its publishing industry (Tortorelli, 2002; Finocchi, Gigli Marchetti, 2004; Tortorelli, 2008).

From the 50s three institutions engaged in a long and complicated struggle, each with its own powerful agendas: the Catholic church, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and the Christian Democracy Party (DC). They had different views on cultural politics and the interaction between their strategies had huge impact on the publications that were launched on the market. Besides, after the Second World War, the influence of USA mass culture has exponentially grown in a few decades, charming the Italian society, and conquering the publishing and audiovisual sectors with films, books, comic strips (Gundle, 1995; Franchini, 2004).

In other words, the 50s were a period of strong contradiction in which very different drives seemed to simultaneously take place, and a climate of restoration had to face an overall process of transformation in progress. The first hints of the Cold War and Italy's political alliance with the USA were about to start but at the same time a close dialogue between the European, French and Italian Communist parties with their Soviet model has been taking place.

Given the traditional low propensity of Italians to read, the government took a series of measures to stimulate interest. In 1962, a reform of the middle school, new ministerial programmes and greater freedom of choice granted

² The translations are all mine except for the brief description of Holden School.

to teachers led to a renewal of teaching and the development of children's literature in publishing houses already active in the sector; for example, De Agostini in 1962 inaugurated "La biblioteca dei ragazzi" ("Young People's Library"), and Einaudi in 1965 gave life to "Lecture per la scuola media" ("Readings for Middle School"). Some publishing houses created specific series of commentated texts (Boero, De Luca, 2009: 242). Moreover, since the end of the 50s important publishing houses and series dedicated to children's books were created – in 1958 Vallecchi inaugurated the series "Il Martin Pescatore" ("The Kingfisher"), Rosellina Archinto founded Emme Edizioni in Milan in 1966.

From the 60s to the 80s in Italy children's literature thrived: a whole generation of authors, publishers, booksellers, librarians, critics and readers, who recognised themselves as a community, was born and consolidated. Very different subjects emerged and developed, and they all had a common purpose: to give children a quality book, designed for them, that respects their intelligence and personality. This was the golden age of the illustrated book, which was the first 'art gallery' for an education in image and visual culture. In that period the International Book Fair for Children and Youth was held for the first time in Bologna (April, 1964), and it immediately became a space for sharing and exchanging ideas, helping to bring together and train new generations of professionals in the sector. In the wake of the protests that hit the country in 1968, in the 1970s even the children's publishing industry began to offer books on hot topics such as politics and social issues through the fiction series "Nuovi adulti" ("New Adults") (SEI, 1977) and "Biblioteca giovani" ("Library for Young People") (Editori Riuniti, 1977). In 1974 the well-known Editoriale Libreria, edited by Gianni Stavro, gave way to the new Trieste-based publishing house EL. In the 1980s, less attention was paid to the educational character of children's books and, compared to the previous decade, children's literature was "characterized above all by humour and irony. Just think of the first translations into Italian of the works of English author Roald Dahl such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1988)" (Garavini, 2017: 88).

Since the 1990s, growth has been constant: large publishing groups are becoming increasingly more interested in this group of readers, and, at the same time, micro-publishing is developing, occupying specific niches in the market, often identified according to the themes of the volumes proposed, for example gender issues, or according to the type of book, such as the picture book or the pop-up book. According to LiBer data, 952 new literary titles were published in Italy in 1987, reaching almost double that figure 10 years later in 1997

with 1.740 copies. Since 1998 the number of new books published each year has exceeded 2.000, and the last decade has confirmed this trend (Garavini, 2017: 91).

Russian classics for Italian children

This brief chronological review was meant to frame the evolution of children's literature in Italy and is the starting point for understanding which publishing houses decided to invest time and resources in the publication of the classics of Russian children's literature as well as trying to explain why some authors are privileged over others.

Since the 1950s, among the stunning variety of Russian *detskaja literatura* the classics stand out in the Italian shelves along with some names of writers known in the Soviet Union even for works not specifically addressed to children (Shvarts, Olesha, Kaverin).³ In addition to the four authors mentioned in this article, editions of works by Chekhov, Leskov, Pushkin and Tolstoy are mostly published. The most obvious motivation is commercial since it is much easier to convince the adult, who usually makes the choice of the book, to buy titles of already known and established writers, whose names act as an immediate attraction, rather than suggest a new or unknown author.

Traditionally, if we refer to other European countries, the texts chosen for adaptation to an audience of young people belonged to the literary canon and were written for adults;⁴ they were often adventure novels – especially those with pedagogical purposes – because they were believed to motivate adolescents to read. Novels by Walter Scott or Alexandre Dumas, usually adapted, were emblematic in this sense. Such motivation could explain the presence of numerous editions of Nikolai Gogol's *Taras Bulba*. From 1954

³ The data come from a bibliography I have been working on and which was partially published in an article in 2017 (De Florio, Niero, 2017). Since this is a work in progress, the figures are constantly evolving.

⁴ According to Hans-Heino Ewers (2012) children's works can be divided into: 1. Recommended reading for children and young people: works originally meant for adults but then recommended for children without textual or editorial modifications; 2. Children's only publishing: works originally meant for adults but then recommended for children in specific editions; 3. Children's editing: works originally meant for adults but then recommended for children and therefore adapted and reduced; 4. Original children's writing: texts originally meant for children.

until today there have been ten different Italian editions of the Cossack epic, as the following table shows, both unabridged and adapted:

Table 1. Italian editions for children of Gogol's *Taras Bulba*

Publishing house and year of publication	Unabridged translation	Adaptation/reduction/rewriting
Malipiero 1954		X
Mondadori 1959	X	
Mursia 1962	X	
RADAR 1963		X
Edizioni dell'Albero 1966	X	
Edizioni Paoline 1970		X
Emme Edizioni 1975	X	
Fabbri 1989	X	
Il giornalino rilegato Dal Prà 1996		X
Edisco 2008	X	

Source: own elaboration.

Let us note that in the Fabbri edition (1989) there are some significant rephrasing and textual interventions so that it can be placed in between a continuum from integral, unabridged translations to adapted texts.

Moreover, there may be contingencies that push publishers to bet on an author or a title: It seems plausible to think that the publication of three different editions of *Taras Bulba* in the 60s may be associated to the release of the film *Tarass il Magnifico*, directed by J. Lee Thompson in 1962, precisely because of the increased circulation of audio-visual media and their impact on book culture in the second half of the 20th century.

Gogol was also famous for his fantastic novels and short stories mainly located in a dreamy and grotesque Saint Petersburg. The numerous translations and adaptations of *The Nose* and *The Overcoat* demonstrate the interest of publishers for this part of Gogol's production as well, especially from the end of the 20th century and in the two first decades of the 21st century.

Table 2. Italian editions for children of Gogol's *The Nose* and *The Overcoat*

Publishing house, year of publication and title	Unabridged translation	Reduction/adaptation/rewriting
Paravia 1958: <i>The overcoat and other stories</i>	X	
Emme Edizioni 1990: <i>The nose, The overcoat</i>	X	
La Spiga Junior 1994: <i>The nose</i>		X
Einaudi Ragazzi 2004: <i>The nose</i>		X
Scuola Holden 2010: <i>The nose</i>		X
Atmosphere Libri 2018: <i>The nose</i>		X

Source: own elaboration.

As in *Taras Bulba*, the 1958 edition of *The overcoat and other stories* is unabridged but the translator felt free to make some important syntactical changes and lexical choices. Since similar translation behavior can be observed also in the Italian versions of other authors we can suppose that it was a widespread practice, though not always explicitly stated in the volume.⁵

Also, certain editorial choices are based on very precise historical circumstances, such as Loescher announcing the release of a new version of *Dr Zhivago* for young people on the occasion of the first publication of the Russian text in the Soviet Union:

Gorbachev's perestroika finally allowed, in 1988, after thirty-one years, the serial publication in the Soviet Union, in the literary magazine 'Novyj Mir', of Boris Pasternak's novel *Dr Zhivago* (Pasternak, 1988: IX).

More complex is motivating the choice of other classics whose stories do not allow themselves, at first glance, to be easily transformed into catchy

⁵ It would be interesting to compare these data with the translations of classics from other European and non-European countries to see if it is a common trend of the Italian publishing practice, especially in the 50s and 60s.

children's books, as in the case of Dostoevsky whose main novels, at a first glance, do not seem to appeal a child audience; still, the 'status' of the author's name can trigger off the curiosity of the parent/buyer.

There have been basically three ways of presenting Dostoevsky to youth readership in Italy. First, Dostoevsky as an author linked to the world of childhood with the volume *Ragazzi. The pages of The Brothers Karamazov, which narrate the story of Iljuscia and his companions* (Dostoevskij, 1970) and *Netocka (Netochka)* (Dostoevskij, 1985). Second, with *La storia di Delitto e Castigo* (Dostoevskij, 2011) Dostoevsky is presented as the author of *Crime and Punishment*, which, despite being a detective story where the culprit is immediately declared, has many elements of crime and adventure. Third, recently the most phantasmagorical and humorous Dostoevsky has been rediscovered (as Gogol) with two almost contemporary versions of *The Crocodile*, published in 2017 by Atmosphere Libri and Orecchio Acerbo.

As for the last author taken into account in this analysis, Mikhail Bulgakov, let us note that the official publication of *The Master and Margarita* came out some decades after the novel was written. The first full edition was published in the Soviet Union in 1973, preceded by an edition released in France in 1967 for YMCA-Press. The stories of the 1920s *Heart of a Dog*, *Fatal Eggs* and *Diaboliad* were published in Italian in the 1980s and 1990s, and they draw on the topicality of the subjects they deal with – the importance of scientific progress, but also its consequences, which are not always predictable:

And in fact, both *Fatal Eggs* and *Heart of a Dog* put as a theme the possibility of the scientist to intervene on the biological process, changing its course in the praiseworthy intention of advancing science and man, but also opening the way to disastrous and uncontrolled consequences: a theme, as we can see, of great actuality even today (Bulgakov, 1994: 6).

Finally, there are two children's versions of *Dr Zhivago* by Pasternak, and both, significantly, are commentated and extra-scholastic editions with didactic cards, in-depth analysis, notes and comments to guide the children to discover the novel. Loescher translation is not integral and aims at middle school children, as the series "Narrativa scuola" ("Narrative for School") indicates: "Narrative for School' mainly presents Italian and foreign books of the 20th century selected according to their genres (novels, biographies and

memoirs, travel literature, fantasy and detective stories) to make them “close” to young people” (Pasternak, 1988).⁶

At the moment, there are no children’s versions of other works by Pasternak except for his poem *Zoo*, published by Emme in 1973 and republished in 2003 by Archinto.

Observations on paratext and peritext

Let us focus now on the content presented in the volumes. The first question that emerges is the kind of interventions most used by publishers to adapt a book to the needs of the new reader. These interventions can be divided into two categories: the interventions on the paratext, therefore on the physical presentation of the volume, and the interventions on the actual text.

The paratext is adapted each time to the objectives of the publisher and the potential audience. The main elements in this category concern the title and subtitle, the collocation in the series, the illustration, the introduction or notes and the presence of didactic apparatus. The paratext may play a crucial role:

by following the attitude of the editors and those who translate with respect to certain paratextual elements, such as the series and the title, and by investigating the role that the translator may play inside other peritextual spaces, such as prefaces or footnotes, it can be inferred how the translation theory and practice has evolved and how the attitude of the readers has changed as well (Elefante, 2012: 12).

Following I propose some considerations for each category.

Title and subtitle

Title and subtitle are key element in any book (Hoek, 1981) and children’s books make no exception. The latest adaptations of Russian classics for children present some significant changes in the title. The publishing house Atmosphere Libri, which has already published three adapted versions of Russian classics for children, chooses to precede the actual title of the work with

⁶ The quotation is on the book cover (rear), there is not the number of page.

“My First...” followed by the name of the author.⁷ Graphically, the space made for the writer is also more relevant than the title of the work, highlighted in larger print at the top of the cover.

A somehow diametrically opposite solution is the one carried out by the series “Save the Story” published by the Holden School of creative writing.⁸ In this case, the title of the work is preceded by the words ‘The story of’ in small print followed by the title of the work and the name and surname, in large print, of the new ‘narrator.’ The name of the original author of the work disappears, and the focus is on the story itself, as it is told by a contemporary writer who collects and re-launches it in the future. As we read at the end of the book, the series “Save the Story,” designed by the Italian writer Alessandro Baricco, “is a lifeboat that brings to safety, in our millennium, something that is wrecked in the past” (Biblioragazzi, 2010). The slogan is: “Great writers, small readers, immortal stories.”

Collocation in a series

The series has the function to recall the reader, who recognises precise traits in it (gender, text/image relationship, age group) and as Genette points out (1987), it indicates to the potential reader which kind or genre of work of art they deal with. It is part of the publisher’s strategy to make readers loyal to books they do not know precisely because they are included in a well-known and appreciated series. In series for children, the aims of the editorial project are often indicated, as in the 2008 edition of *Taras Bulba*:

The final objective of the series is to bring students closer to the literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, thus re-evaluating these two

⁷ The publishing house has published three volumes of Russian authors so far: *My First Chekhov* (2017), *My First Dostoevsky* (2017a) and *My First Gogol* (2018). Other authors in the same series are Franz Kafka and Lewis Carroll.

⁸ “Scuola Holden was founded in 1994 by five friends, all in their thirties (those were the years of optimism and nobody was thinking that we were going to go straight towards a world economic crisis). The idea was to create a school for storytellers. Back then, the word ‘storytelling’ was definitely out of fashion. And in Italy, as well as in ‘old’ Europe generally speaking, people tended to believe that teaching people how to write and things like that were useless, perhaps even noxious, but definitely annoying anyway. The five thirty-year-old friends had a different way of thinking. The school was named Holden because the idea was to create a school Holden Caulfield would never have been expelled from. In other words, a place for out of the ordinary people” (*Holden. About us*).

centuries, often neglected by the programs [...] and stimulating, in particular, the direct reading of texts: a reading guided by the teacher, but which can also be personal, because the student has at his disposal a whole series of valid instruments of accurate scientific level (Jacomuzzi, 2008).

The reference series therefore delimits the target audience of the edition and makes the text immediately recognisable.⁹ In Gogol's works for children, for instance, we can notice over the decades an age shifting: in the 60s and 70s almost exclusively *Taras Bul'ba* was translated and adapted for children and the Russian writer was mainly seen as an author for 14-16-year-old boys and girls, whereas the latest publications focus on his short stories (especially *The Nose* and *The Overcoat*) and aim to a younger audience.

An exception is the recent publication of Orecchio Acerbo, specialising in books for children and young people, well known in Italy for the quality of the illustrations and the great attention paid to graphics. In 2004 the Rome-based publishing house won the prestigious Andersen award in the category "Best publishing project", "for production", without having a clear-cut division into a series.

The jury's motivation is the following:

For courageously contributing to renewing the language and forms of the illustrated language. For the high overall quality of the editorial proposal. But where is the series? It doesn't exist. At least on paper. Well, as the jury of the Prize, this is not the first time that we have taken such a liberty, dictated by a precise but, I believe, polite and justified provocative will. In other words, the series is nothing but the beautiful catalogue that in the course of a few years Orecchio Acerbo has been building up and developing. An implicit series, therefore, dictated by a strong but conscious desire to experiment new ways in the field of illustration, trying to break, or at least to crack, worn-out skills and subdivisions that, in Italy, seems to resist. Just think of the role that is entrusted to the illustrated album or the bad taste still dominant in much, too much, production. Orecchio Acerbo has worked and works in the direction of showing how it is often foolish to add 'for childhood'. He tries to show, just through the figures, how there

⁹ However, since the 2000s there has been a sharp decline in the phenomenon of series that had characterized Italian publishing production in the 1980s and 1990s. According to Garavini, "This is probably partly due to the fact that there is a great variety of genres in new titles, sometimes difficult to include in series, as the proliferation of genres makes it complex to include new titles in specific series" (Garavini, 2017: 93).

is, in the first place, good illustration, to be read by everyone. It contaminates the genres. Shuffle the cards. It promotes the discovery of great international artists and gives those who work in our country spaces of experimentation and freedom. It shows in the book object great love for every detail, starting from graphics to formats, materials, bindings. He gave us amazing books such as *In bocca al lupo* by Fabian Negrin. It uses experience to develop. In short, he showed how much art (in the sense of craft and skill, technical experience, creative activity and ingenuity) is needed to make 'art books' (Orecchio Acerbo, 2004).

Illustrations

Illustration is what most characterises children's book:¹⁰ "Illustration is an important key to reading, tending to emphasize certain moments of the narrative and to accentuate its pedagogical purposes" (Palazzolo, 2004: 77).

The type of illustration and the space it occupies within the book is an indication of the publishing strategy chosen for the publication: in the 20th century, school or school support editions have left less space for images in the text but often included iconographic material, such as photographs or posters of the time, which served to better contextualise the story and the historical period in which it takes place, as is the case for the version of *Doctor Zhivago* by La Nuova Italia (1967). The illustration can also take on other functions in addition to dialoguing with the text; for example, the series "Piccoli Lettori" ("Small Readers") by the publishing house La Spiga is aimed at an audience predominantly of pre-school children and

[...] proposes works by famous authors – and not only those belonging to children's literature – which have been rewritten so that children can easily enjoy them. The books have a number of operational cards in the appendix and offer illustrations on which the child can intervene. The purpose of this publishing project is in fact to make the book an educational tool that comes close to the creative and emotional needs of childhood (Gogol, 1994: 2).

The child can colour the black and white illustrations, personalising the book and making it a product for active use and not just for reading.

¹⁰ This does not always hold for books aimed at young adults, where illustrations tend to disappear.

Since 2000 there are two following clearly opposite tendencies: some series make almost no use of illustrations¹¹ and offer a drastic reduction of the plot. This is the case of the series “In poche parole” (“In a Few Words”) by Einaudi that, as the title suggests, aims at giving a short version of the classic. On the other hand, many publishing houses focus on the graphic aspect of the book: in the three adaptations of Gogol’s *The Nose* by Einaudi, Atmosphere Libri and Scuola Holden, in Dostoevsky’s *Crocodile* by Orecchio Acerbo and Atmosphere Libri and in *Crime and Punishment* by Scuola Holden illustrations are predominant. The text is shortened and simplified, the books are aimed at children of elementary school (up to 10-11 years old).

A borderline case, in which the relationship between image and text is completely overturned, is the 2009 graphic novel proposed by Guanda, which presents a very ‘noir’ version of *The Master and Margarita* aimed at young adults. The book catches up with the great success of the ‘new comic book’ that in the contemporary market is often read by them.

Introduction

The introduction, a sort of frame placed before the text, has the following double function: “To provide a reassuring key of pedagogical interpretation of the narration offered and to motivate in this direction, albeit broadly speaking, the interventions and any cuts made on the original text” (Palazzolo, 2004: 78).

In the corpus, some volumes contain an in-depth presentation of the author and the work as well as the story that the reader is about to read; others provide some bio-bibliographical information to better frame the story and who wrote it; finally there are reductions that do not include introductions or explanations either at the beginning or at the end of the book. Again, the choices are functional with regard to the type of audience to which the book is addressed, but they are usually addressed to the ‘double receiver’ (Wall, 1991: 40-41) of children’s literature, that is, the child and the adult mediator (parent/buyer). In general, there is little information about the choices made in the translation or reduction/adaptation of the text, and much more space is left for the contextualisation of the writer and his/her work, the

¹¹ The choice seems to also be motivated by the economic placement of the series; these are books with a small format, on very common paper and with small price (€8.00). The illustrations would certainly have increased the price and placed the books in another segment of the market.

interpretation of and commentary on the story and the reflections that may arise after reading it.

Some editions also present summary paragraphs at the beginning of the chapters or paragraphs; they substitute the missing parts and are useful to follow the plot so that the reader does not lose the thread of the story, as happens in *Taras Bulba* of the publishing house Edisco and in *Dr Zhivago* by La Nuova Italia.

Again, the tendency varies according to the period. In the second half of the 20th century this kind of paratextual or peritextual elements was very common, whereas it almost disappears in the contemporary editions, except for the books used as extra-didactic reading.

Footnotes

In the case of a narrative-oriented book, footnotes are absent or limited in number; in the case of an extracurricular text, they are articulated and of various kinds. Generally speaking, in the texts analysed, translators and adaptors tend not to include many footnotes, since the target audience, the child, is not interested in them. However, Russian classics, especially the writers of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries talk about a world that no longer exists, full of *realia* (Vinogradov, 2001) that are unknown even to Russian younger generations. Therefore, it is easy to find footnotes about the food, the professions or any other linguo-cultural element which could make it difficult to understand the setting of the story and follow the plot. The voice of the translator/adaptor here is not relevant and does not have to intervene directly in the reading experience.

The 2008 edition of *Taras Bulba* is an exception, since it is full of very thorough footnotes, which makes it closer to a sort of academic edition, even if aimed at children. In this case, the pedagogical function prevails over the purely aesthetic function of the enjoyment of a literary text.

Didactic material

Again, there is a sort of line dividing the production of the 1950s–1990s and of the 2000s, the latter of which clearly points at the new trends in children's literature and the new choices in the consumption of books – even the most

conservative ones, such as the classics. All the versions adapted for school were published in the last century with the exception of Edisco's *Taras Bulba*, which came out in 2008.

As for the past editions, they often included didactic or extra material: it varied in quantity and amount of information and aimed to highlight different aspects of the work. For example, in Bulgakov's *Fatal Eggs* and *Diaboliad*, the editors, after contextualising the work and suggesting the main lines of the didactic work, insist on an aspect that is usually not very emphasised.

Given the nature of the story [...] the reading of the text must be respectful of its most relevant characteristic, the whirling and often exhilarating narrative rhythm. We therefore recommend an initial immersion in the vortex of events and vicissitudes narrated by the writer and, only later, with the book closed, begin to develop some thematic and stylistic reflections, return to open it, reread some parts of it, check the practicability of some educational paths such as those mentioned earlier (Bulgakov, 1988: 231).

The operation conducted on a part of the novel *The Brothers Karamazov* urges the editors to explain the criteria that guided the preparation of the didactic apparatus, inviting them to focus attention on the final aim of the volume, which is to "lead the children to understand the work in depth, to taste it, to know how to grasp all the values" (Dostoevskij, 1970: IV) and explain how they decided to obtain it: "To achieve this goal, the best way seemed to us to reduce our commentary to the indispensable and rather urge the children, with appropriate questions, to a personal deepening and comparison of what they have read with their own experience" (Dostoevskij, 1970: IV-V).

In this volume, at the end of each chapter, there is a section titled "Let's think again", with questions that deal with various issues related to the text, such as the discovery of a character or the contextualisation of the environment, or that serve as a starting point to reflect on what we read. There are many links with the reality of those who read; often the intent is also to provide moral and behavioural guidance to the children, and it is suggested in class to deepen the issues raised. The educational objective is to maintain a strong relationship between the story presented in the volume and the daily reality of those who read it.

The structure and purpose of the cards depends to a large extent on the age group to which the book is addressed. *The Nose*, by Gogol and published for La Spiga junior, belongs to the series "Small Readers" and offers some cards

called “A step backwards in the text...”, which present general questions of analysis and criticism but without leaving room for deepening or personal reflection because, precisely, it is a work to be undertaken with young children of preschool or primary school age.

The choice of the Edisco publishing house to publish a version of *Taras Bulba* rich in materials for the teacher stands out in the panorama of the 2000s. The editors all have school experience, “and this ensures that the needs of teaching come first and that a rigorous but extremely clear and simple dialogue is always established with the student: a method in which each one of them believes and which characterizes the whole series” (Jacomuzzi, 2008). The book is accompanied by a real guide for the teacher that contains various types of suggestions on how to make students read and work on the text beyond the advice already contained in the book itself.

Translations and adaptations

The debate about translations VS adaptations is a very long one and it is still very open (Raw, 2017). Lefevre (1992) considered any translation as a kind of adaptation, but this definition does not help define the boundaries between the two concepts. In her study on adaptations Linda Hutcheon (2013) interprets the phenomenon of adaptation both as a product and as a process. Drawing parallels between the process of biological (genetic) and narrative adaptation, the scholar identifies the key to success of some narratives in their ability to adapt to changing social and cultural contexts, just as living organisms do according to Darwinian theories.

Classics perfectly fit this model. They are great stories that deserve being handed over through generations; what changes over time is the way they are offered to different audiences. As far as adaptations for children are concerned the underlying reason has always been double: to provide children with the best examples of literary texts in terms of language and topics and to make them curious about different cultures enriching their imagination, sense of humor and knowledge of reality.

In the corpus analysed, as far as the interventions on the text are concerned, the first macro distinction to be made is between unabridged translations which have some paratextual elements addressing a children audience or reduction/adaptation of the source text.

In the case of books that present the full text of the original we can have the following options:

1. *Ex novo* translation ‘oriented’ to children, such as the Edisco edition of *Taras Bulba*: “All the texts are offered in full editions and the Italian classics are offered in the most accredited editions as far as the philological aspect is concerned; the foreign ones are presented in specially prepared translations with a special attention to the addressees” (Jacomuzzi, 2008).
2. Revised previous translations, for example *Dr Zhivago* of 1967, in which the source is expressly quoted: “This reduction of *Dr Zhivago* is based on the translation by Pietro Zveteremich, revised by Mario Socrate, Maria Olsoufieva and Pietro Zveteremich, and published by Editore Feltrinelli of Milan” (Pasternak, 1967: XVIII).
3. Translations published without modification. Often in these cases it is the illustrations that characterise the orientation towards children’s literature. There are not many volumes of the corpus investigated that fall into this third category, and in general they are short stories, such as *Fatal Eggs* and *Heart of Dog* by Bulgakov or *The Nose* translated by Landolfi.

In cases where the text has been somehow ‘manipulated,’ we have different types of adaptation/rewriting that, in general, move in the direction of a simplification of the text.¹² A preliminary difference has to be pointed out between publishers who openly claim the changes that have been made and publishers who do so without communicating them. Often on the front page, on the colophon or on the frontispiece the words ‘narrated by’, ‘adaptation’, ‘reduction’ stand out, but there are also editions that somehow mask or do not

¹² There is some exception, for instance, the version of *The Nose* proposed by La Spiga represents a rewriting that not only reduces the original story but also adds internal notes, stresses moments which are not underscored in the source text and tries whatever it needs to recreate the humorous tone and the magical atmosphere of the Russian version. I report the incipit of the Italian version to give an idea of the work done on the text: “Ivan Jakovlevich, that is Ivan Jakov’s son, did not have a last name. Or rather, none of us know him. And maybe not even him” (Gogol, 1994: 3). In the Russian short novel, this sentence does not exist; it was added by the editors of the book to present the story in a key that oscillates between mystery and irony and which, in fact, says a lot about the style and poetics of the Russian writer and at the same time has the intention to give a friendly approach to small readers.

underscore the re-writing process the volume went through, which is a bad habit drawn from the 20th century.¹³

A comparison between the three most recent series that have dealt with Russian classics adapted to children gives some useful and interesting elements for discussion and at the same time highlights very different trends in the publishers' strategies. These are *The Master and Margarita* published by Einaudi for the series "In poche parole", Gogol's *The Nose* told by Andrea Camilleri for the series "Save the Story" and finally *The Crocodile* and *The Nose* taken from the stories of Dostoevsky and Gogol, respectively, and proposed by Atmosphere Libri in the series "Zuccherò filato."

Einaudi's series "In poche parole" was inaugurated on May 13, 2016 and is aimed at children and adults who, without being strong readers, have the desire to approach the top of world literature. The project conceives the versions of the classics proposed as a tool, a way to approach high literature, starting from the observation of its complexity (textual, stylistic, thematic) and the context of contemporary fruition, so different from the one in which these stories were created. The people in charge of the series specify the location of their books, the objective of the project and the affinity with trends already present in the foreign market:

It is not a collection of reductions, extracts or rewritings, but a refined operation of telling the classics [...]. "In a few words" represents a new way of meeting great names and great literature. So that the classics become truly within everyone's reach. The desire is not to replace the experience of reading the originals, but to encourage and facilitate it. By establishing an indissoluble bond between reader and characters and immortal events that can soften the impact with the possible harshness of the original text. Why "In a few words"? Let us face the fact that it is a real need of today's readers. A need that, in Anglo-Saxon countries, is not ignored, so much so that, on the occasion of the Shakespearean year, similar initiatives involving the masterpieces of the great Bard are receiving extraordinary public and critical acclaim (Einaudi, 2016).

The book therefore does not claim to replace the original but rather to entice readers to take the classic in their hands once they are in possession of all the linguistic and cultural tools to fully understand and enjoy it. As it

¹³ Roberto Denti complained about this practice and noticed that many publishers did not claim which kind of text they presented their readers (Denti, 1998, 10-14).

is said on the back cover, the intention is to “get passionate about the great classics of literature before you even read them”.

The series “Save the Story” was conceived by Alessandro Baricco and published by Holden School/Biblioteca di Repubblica – L’Espresso. In these volumes the name of the author of the novel, Dostoevsky or Gogol in our case, does not appear in the volumes; only the narrator is mentioned, that is, the person who is in charge of getting the story across the third millennium. From a linguistic point of view, the creators of the project have no doubt that the books they propose “are all stories suitable for children from five to twelve years of age: simple language, short periods, fast pace” (De Santis, 2012). The linguistic complexity that often constitutes an essential part of the charm of a classic is cancelled here in favour of an approach that follows the writing trends of the 21st century: brevity, effectiveness and communicability.

The narrator can choose how to direct the story; in the case of Russian classics, both Yehoshua and Camilleri choose to become omniscient narrators present in the text, intervening in the first person, with subjective evaluations: “Just think, this poor and future homicidal student is capable of being generous towards the misery of others!” (Dostoevskij, 2011: 12) and personal comments: “‘What a freak!’, you will say. Eh, no! Mind you, literature is full of these facts” (Gogol, 2010: 8). Camilleri, compared to Yehoshua, intervenes more often with digressions that contextualise the entire work of Gogol and dwells on the history of the Nevsky Prospekt and the protagonists of the greatest works of the great novelist.

Unlike Camilleri, Yehoshua uses the section at the end of the book to explain why he chose this very novel:

At a time when children and adolescents are exposed to violence, fake and real, shown on television or the Internet, it would not hurt them to read a story that describes a slow and profound process of moral awareness by an intelligent but arrogant young man, guilty of a horrendous crime (Dostoevskij, 2011: 90).

This first two examples focus on the text; “In a Few Words” decides to omit the illustrations, “Save the Story” uses them, but the textual dimension remains predominant. Atmosphere Libri¹⁴ takes a completely different approach,

¹⁴ Atmosphere Libri was founded in Rome in 2010 as a publishing house specialising in Japanese and Chinese fiction that, three or four times a year, dedicates a title from its catalogue to a contemporary Russian or Arabic writer. Since 2016, it has also added to its catalogue illustrated books (picture books).

in which the visual aspect is decisive in the choice and presentation of the stories, as the director of the publishing house Mauro di Leo underlines:

We like beautiful books and we focus on the originality of the texts; illustrations are fundamental in our decisions. We have also proposed to children classic 'adult' authors such as Dostoevsky, Gogol and Kafka, adapting some of their stories and adding illustrations (Tamberlani, 2019).

The age range to which these books are addressed is not specified, but judging by the language and the preponderance of the images – with Strambetty's unmistakable black and white stroke – one can assume that the intention is to attract very young readers, from six to eight years old.

Orecchio Acerbo, which, as mentioned before, has always paid particular attention to the non-verbal dimension of the book for children and teenagers, proposes a more complex dialogue between word and image. *The Crocodile: An Extraordinary Event* came out almost at the same time as the version by Atmosphere, in 2017, with illustrations by Marco Marinangeli; the translation and reduction is entrusted to Assia Nobiloni with adaptations by the editorial staff.

As far as the text is concerned, the translation is quite respectful of the source text, especially at the beginning, while there are significant reductions and rewritings in the course of the story. In particular, the final part is modified, and the newspaper report is summarised in half a page, to the detriment of the suspense created in the original. Two elements emerge from the textual analysis. First is the presence of internal notes that seem to be intended to explain the context to the reader, albeit in the reduced spaces reserved for the text. At the beginning there is talk of "a crocodile that was exhibited at the Passage, the gallery in the centre of Petersburg" (Dostoevskij, 2017b: 1). The translator or curator decides to specify what the Passage is, knowing that it is not a comprehensible reference for an Italian reader (adult or child) of the 2000s. Moreover, the language seems rather old-fashioned and aims at recreating the atmosphere of the time in which the story took place and was written. This is clearly opposite to the approach highlighted in other operations of rewriting the classics, where instead the language is very close to that of today's reader and becomes the privileged means to hook the child to the narrated story. Even the refined illustrations point out the orientation to the complexity of the global message and not to its reduction to the most elementary aspects; the images have much more space on the page than

the words and enter into dialogue with them through particular solutions, such as a black page when the text says: “I am surrounded by an impenetrable night” (Dostoevskij 2017b¹⁵). The text itself becomes iconic, playing with characters, higher, lower, full page, imitating newspapers, etc. It then recreates a new path of meaning that, while starting from the story of the Russian writer, wants to take readers into another dimension, where the ‘extraordinary’ subtitle seems to be the orientation that dictates the choices of the editors.

Conclusion

From the Second World War to the present day reductions of Russian classics for children and young people have represented a significant part of the Russian literature aimed at children in the Italian language. In fact, the re-proposal of classics, in whatever version or typology, constitutes, quantitatively, together with fairy tales, one of the two privileged channels of cultural mediation and the appropriation of Russian culture for children (De Florio, Niero, 2017). The most obvious motivation is the authors’ reputation as ‘classics’ for adults, whose success may entice parents to buy the volumes.

From the post-war period to the present day, there has been a constant growth in the number of Russian classics designed for an audience of small Italian readers; in particular, in the 2000s, 12 titles entered the catalogues of Italian publishing houses. The analysis has revealed a greater presence of school editions of classics from the 60s to the 90s, while today the trend is to enhance their stories as such and not as a starting point to encourage young people to reflect on great literature. In 1998 Denti asked himself (1998, 13-14):

- a) whether it is always necessary for young people to read the classics;
- b) whether the translations should follow a minimum criterion of correctness or be (as in fact happens) shabby and sloppy;
- c) whether it is indispensable to read the complete unabridged text;
- d) at what age are children capable of tackling the classics (considering that there are classics that are very different from each other in terms of level of difficulty).

¹⁵ Curiously enough, Orecchio Acerbo does not include the numeration of pages in most of his books.

The question is still open and despite the fact that there are many different types of adaptation and reduction it is doubtless that they all have an ultimate pedagogical intent, of ‘rediscovering’ the value of the great literary masterpieces of past centuries. However, according to the new directives of the science of education and pedagogy, reading a book is a 360° experience, and the approach to a book of great literature must fascinate and amuse, adapting to the demands of contemporary society: be the driving force to generate other stories (Holden School); adapt to the modern consumption of literature, faster and more synthetic (“In a Few Words”); and interact with visual culture (Atmosphere, Orecchio Acerbo). The strength inherent in the stories narrated by the classics also pushes us to use them in the genres that most characterise the so-called post-modern, as in the case of the graphic novel based on Bulgakov’s *The Master and Margarita*.

The internal dynamics of each publishing house remain to be thoroughly investigated in order to understand the motivations that lead to choosing or rejecting a text and carrying out a certain operation on it. In fact, as far as Russian literature for children in the Italian language is concerned, this is one of the most difficult knots to unravel because it is not always possible to identify a red thread or a clear strategy at the basis of the choices made.

Many questions are still open to discussion: what is kept of the original ‘masterpiece’? What is the deep meaning of adapting classic works of literature for children? Can such stories stimulate reading in general and arouse the reader’s curiosity to such an extent that they are encouraged to read the unabridged version? These questions now circulate increasingly more in debates related to the world of childhood and are intertwined with similar questions concerning intersemiotic translation; in times of ‘adaptation economy’ (Calabrese, Conti, 2018: 23) the consumption of cultural products increasingly passes through serial and cinema, and great literature is often the subject of remakes and adaptations. The field of investigation thus opens up to other semiotic codes and is enriched with further engaging issues.

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Streszczenie

Artykuł jest częścią większego studium poświęconemu analizie rosyjskiej literaturze dla dzieci tłumaczonej na język włoski w XX i XXI wieku. Autorka skupia się w swojej pracy na klasycznych dziełach znanych pisarzy, takich jak Nikołaj Gogol, Fiodor Dostojewski, Michaił Bułhakow i Boris Pasternak, których arcydzieła zostały zaadaptowane do młodych czytelników i opublikowane przez różne włoskie wydawnictwa, czasem w licznych wznowieniach. Sugerowana klasyfikacja jest oparta na podobieństwach i różnicach między wersjami zgodnie z przyjętymi strategiami edytorskimi, wyborem docelowego odbiorcy i okresu historycznego, w którym książka została wydana. Taki korpus tekstów reprezentuje znaczną część literatury rosyjskiej przetłumaczonej na włoski oraz przeznaczonej dla dzieci, co pozwala na wyciągnięcie ogólnych wniosków dotyczących recepcji literatur radzieckiej i rosyjskiej we Włoszech w XX i XXI wieku.

Słowa kluczowe: adaptacje, historia przekładu, historia wydawnictw, rosyjskie klasyki dla dzieci, włoski rynek wydawniczy

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