

Grzegorz Michalski

University of Lodz  
The Faculty of Educational Sciences  
The Department of History of Education and Pedeutology

## The Circumstances of the Origin and the First Years of *My Little Newspaper* (1902-1905)

Okoliczności powstania i pierwsze lata  
*Mojego Pisemka* (1902-1905)

### KEYWORDS    ABSTRACT

children's literature,  
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The subject of the article is the origin and development of the periodical *My Little Newspaper* when Aniela Szycówna held the duties of the editor-in-chief. Despite the numerous references to this title in publications devoted to juvenile periodicals, there is no genuine and in-depth study of its origin and functioning in the initial years. The research conducted in this field involves answering the following questions: How did the newspaper come about? Whose texts were published in there? What message did it convey to its readers? What was its formal side like? What distinguished it from other contemporary papers? An analysis of four years of that weekly and the literature on the subject allows to conclude that an inspirer of the periodical was M. Arct, a Warsaw-born bookseller. Prominent poets, writers, journalists and pedagogues published their articles in *My Little Newspaper*. Among the discussed subjects there were moral, social, religious, historical, geographical, environmental and tourist-oriented issues as well as some topics referring to traditions and customs. Black and white graphic design with texts illustrated with drawings and pictures was characterised by editorial diligence. Its articles were tailored to the abilities of young readers. They were all based on the most recent knowledge on child development with appropriate care for its substantive level, which guaranteed its educational value and distinguished it on the publishing market.

## SŁOWA KLUCZOWE ABSTRAKT

literatura dla dzieci,  
 czasopiśmiennictwo  
 dla dzieci, XX wiek,  
 działalność wy-  
 dawnicza, edukacja  
 dzieci

W artykule podjęto problem powstania i rozwoju periodyku „Moje Pisemko” w okresie, kiedy obowiązki redaktorskie sprawowała Aniela Szcówna. Mimo że stosunkowo często tytuł ten przywoływany jest w publikacjach poświęconych czasopiśmiennictwu dla dzieci, to brak jest szerszych i pogłębionych informacji o jego genezie i funkcjonowaniu w kolejnych latach. Poszukiwania w tym zakresie zmierzały do udzielenia odpowiedzi na pytania: Jak doszło do ukazywania się pisemka? Czyje teksty zamieszczane były na jego łamach? Jakie treści przekazywał czytelnikom? Jak prezentowała się strona formalna pisma? Czym wyróżniało się od innych wydawnictw tego typu ówczesnie istniejących? Analiza czterech roczników tego tygodnika i literatury przedmiotu pozwala stwierdzić, że inspiratorem powołania periodyku był warszawski księgarz M. Arct. Natomiast utwory na jego łamach zamieszczali uznani poeci, pisarze, dziennikarze i pedagodzy. „Moje Pisemko” podejmowało na swych łamach zagadnienia moralno-społeczne, religijne, historyczne, dotyczące tradycji i zwyczajów, geograficzno-turystyczne, przyrodnicze. Czarno-biała szata graficzna, z tekstami ilustrowanymi rycinami i rysunkami charakteryzowała się starannością edytorską. O jego walorach wychowawczych i wyróżnianiu się na rynku wydawniczym świadczy fakt, że tworzono je w oparciu o najnowszą wiedzę o rozwoju dziecka i w dbałości o odpowiedni poziom merytoryczny zamieszczanych utworów, dostosowanych do możliwości odbiorczych młodszych czytelników.

## A few words about the juvenile press towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

Published in 1885 in the “Educational Encyclopedia”, a conclusion of an analytical review, devoted to Polish periodicals for children and youth<sup>1</sup> issued since 1824, contains P. Chmielowski’s view that the periodicals published in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century lack specialist and separate publications targeted at the young generation.

<sup>1</sup> *Rozrywki dla Dzieci* (English: *Entertainment for Children*), issued in the years 1824-1828 is believed to be the first children’s periodical in Poland. Klementyna z Tańskich-Hoffmanowa was an initiator and editor as well as an author of the majority of articles published in the monthly. It is worth noticing that she is considered to be the creator of the original, Polish literature for the young generation. See, e.g. I. Kaniowska-Lewańska, *Literatura dla dzieci i młodzieży do roku 1864*, Warsaw 1980, pp. 58-69 and 115-121; J. Dąbrowska, “Pierwszy polski periodyk dla dzieci i młodzieży”, in: *Czasopiśmiennictwo XIX i początków XX wieku jako źródło do historii edukacji*, eds. I. Michalska, G. Michalski, Łódź 2010, pp. 199-204; P. Grabowski, *Na przyszły pożytek. Z dziejów polskiej prasy dla dzieci 1824-1939*, Pułtusk 2001, pp. 7-26.

Chmielowski also noticed that the existing periodicals were not always of a high substantive and artistic level. He wrote: “Despite some recent development, our children’s literature is still very poor (...), a vast majority of articles are wishy-washy garrulity (...). Moreover, too little attention is paid to some crucial aspects of upbringing and education.”<sup>2</sup> In this context, he highlighted the necessity of improving the juvenile press, emphasising that attracting young readers requires not only a comprehensive knowledge of their psychological development, but also knowledge of the rules and methods of educational influence. Convinced that the choice of the best pedagogical means determines the range and permanence of the press message, Chmielowski urged publishers and authors of children’s texts to keep up-to-date and familiarise themselves with the most recent scientific achievements in foreign and Polish pedagogy.

Without a thorough analysis of the issue of how favorable and strong the response of P. Chmielowski’s recommendations was, it should be concluded that exactly at that time, children’s periodicals underwent a systematic transformation. To a greater extent, their content and form were adapted to the age and life circumstances of children. Among the aspects taken into account were the already assimilated terms, experiences and knowledge familiar to children. This was exactly the direction taken by two periodicals published and popular in the Kingdom of Poland: *Przyjaciel Dzieci*<sup>3</sup> (English: *Children’s Friend*) and *Wieczory Rodzinne*<sup>4</sup>, (English: *Family Evenings*), which were initially targeted at an unspecified age group, with the intention of including a separate supplement for young children with simple, communicative nursery rhymes, short stories as well as uncomplicated puzzles, charades and riddles.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> P. Chmielowski, “Czasopisma polskie dla młodego wieku”, in: *Encyklopedia Wychowawcza*, vol. III, eds. J.T. Lubomirski, E. Stawiski, P. Przysański, J.K. Plebański, Warsaw 1885, p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> The periodical was published in Warsaw in the years 1861-1914. A special children’s supplement was added in 1870. In 1892 (with no.10.) the practice was abandoned, which did not mean that articles in the periodical were no longer targeted at that age group. Such texts still appeared, but there were much fewer. It is worth mentioning that among the authors of these articles were Jadwiga Papi (pen name: Teresa Jadwiga) and Maria Weryho. The latter is considered to be a reformer of preschool education. She presented her concepts in *Pedagogical Review*, which was the first periodical of the kind in the Kingdom of Poland.

<sup>4</sup> The newspaper was published in the years 1880-1914. A separate supplement was published in 1882. Distinguished intellectuals and pedagogues, among others, Paulina from Radziejowskich Krakowowa and Jadwiga Papi, Zuzanna Morawska, Zofia Bukowiecka, Or-Ot (Artur Oppman), Leon Rygier, Aniela Szcówna, Henryk Wernic submitted their work there. See for example Z. Kmiecik, *Prasa warszawska w okresie pozytywizmu (1864-1885)*, Warsaw 1971, p. 187-188; Id., *Prasa warszawska w latach 1886-1904*, Wrocław-Warsaw-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódź 1989, p. 174-175; I. Kaniowska-Lewańska, *Literatura dla dzieci...* op. cit., pp. 28-29.

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. *Przyjaciel Dzieci* 1870, No 5, pp. 49-52; 1873, No 23, pp. 273-276; 1877, No 52, pp. 621-624; 1883, No 8, pp. 93-96; 1885, No 32, pp. 381-384; 1888, No 24, pp. 285-288; 1892, No 10, pp. 118-120; *Wieczory Rodzinne dla Małych Dzieci* 1884, No 41, pp.161-164; 1885, No 12, pp. 45-48; 1886, No 24, pp. 93-96; 1887, No 18, pp. 69-72; 1888, No 48, pp. 189-191; 1889, No 29, pp. 113-115; 1900, No 28, pp. 109-112; 1902, No 52, pp. 206-208; 1903, No 47, pp. 185-187; [Supplement for

## The origin of the creation of My Little Newspaper

The transformation of Michał Arct's publishing house at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it dramatically increased its number of children's publications, was a breakthrough in the development of the press. From that point on it was not only school coursebooks that were published there but also the large-edition and eminently affordable two book series *Moje książeczki* (English: *My Little Books*) and *Zajmujące czytanki*<sup>6</sup> (English: *Engaging stories*). An introduction of a new children's periodical entitled *My Little Newspaper* in 1902 had a great significance for these innovative, publishing ventures. Unlike *Przyjaciel Dzieci* (English: *Children's Friend*) and *Wieczory Rodzinne* (English: *Family Evenings*), it was targeted at a clearly defined readership. As a result, for the first time in the history of the Polish children's press, an independent periodical for 10-year-old children, which could be bought once a week, appeared on the publishing market. Expressing her view, I. Moszczeńska wrote in *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* (English: *Pedagogical Review*) that "*My Little Newspaper*, as a novelty, aroused considerable interest, without established tradition; it had to create its own style and to find its own way of attracting and appealing to young readers."<sup>7</sup>

Creating a periodical for children which would be different from the existing ones was the brainchild of M. Arct – a bookseller and owner of a publishing house, one of the biggest in Warsaw at that time. According to his son, S. Arct, the periodical was his "burning desire" and therefore he personally raised the necessary funds which would allow him to fulfil his ambition in the short term.<sup>8</sup> Searching for people prepared to carry out his project, he invited A. Szcycówna to cooperate with him. In June 1902, she began working as an editor on the ultimate form of *My Little Newspaper*. She also expended considerable effort in finding experienced authors as well as appropriate texts which she intended to include in the first issues of the newly-created periodical.<sup>9</sup>

There were several reasons behind the decision to appoint A. Szcycówna as the editor of *My Little Newspaper*. Firstly, as a member of the editorial staff of *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* (English: *Pedagogical Review*) – which was supported in many different

children]: 1904, No 1, pp. 1-4; 1904, No 48, pp. 189-192; 1905, No 5-6, pp. 17-20.

<sup>6</sup> The series *Moje książeczki* and *Zajmujące czytanki* were introduced in 1902. The first one was meant for children aged 4 to 10, the second one for children aged 4 to 12. They were published with a circulation of 2-3,000 copies. Each booklet in the format had between 15 to 16 pages. It contained short stories, poems and fairy tales by such authors as: M. Konopnicka, A. Oppman, M. Buyno-Arctowa, A. Domańska. See: J. Konieczna, "Rynek wydawniczy książki dziecięcej w zaborze rosyjskim w XIX i w początkach XX wieku", *Sztuka Edycji. Studia Tekstologiczne i Edytorskie* 2013, vol. 5, No 1, pp. 62-63.

<sup>7</sup> I. Moszczeńska, "Krytyka. Czasopisma dla dzieci", *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* 1903, No. 11, p. 139.

<sup>8</sup> P. Arct, *Okruchy wspomnień*, Warsaw 1962, p. 189.

<sup>9</sup> J. Piskurewicz, "Anieli Szcycówny listy do Kazimierza Twardowskiego z lat 1901-1903", *Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy* 1986, vol. 113, No 3, p. 313.

ways by M. Arct, who allowed Szcówna to hold meetings in his office – she had made a name for herself as a talented and conscientious person, genuinely committed to education and upbringing.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, A. Szcówna was known for her love of pedagogical work with children. In her diary, she wrote: “I like children immensely. Watching them, predicting their feelings, intentions and desires is one of my favourite pastimes. I will never be tired of writing for them, reading about them and observing them.”<sup>11</sup> Thirdly, she graduated from the six-grade boarding school for girls in Warsaw run by Helena Budzińska. Following this, she chose the profession of a tutor, obtaining a government patent to carry out teaching duties which enabled her to teach at one of Warsaw boarding schools and to work legally as a tutor in families of the gentry. Fourthly, she had learnt much from the courses at *Uniwersytet Latający* (English: *Flying University*), mainly in fields such as pedagogy, psychology, philosophy and literature, attending the lectures of such prominent scholars as Stanisław Norblin, Piotr Chmielowski, Władysław Smoleński, Ignacy Chrzanowski, Adam Mahrburg, Ludwik Krzywicki, Jan Władysław Dawid.<sup>12</sup> Fifthly, A. Szcówna already had experience in writing texts for children<sup>13</sup> and she also knew and was able to introduce substantive and layout editorial corrections in texts, as she had learnt these skills from J.W. Dawid, who she cooperated closely with when he held editorial duties of *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* (English: *Pedagogical Review*). Many years later, this is how she remembers her mentor: “He never imposed his views, nor did he look down on anybody, he knew how to discover what one was capable of writing and how one could contribute to the paper. He advised, suggested what books were worth reading, sometimes offered ideas for articles, and his suggestions were essential for young pedagogues. Dawid was not only a scholar, but a teacher. He adopted this teacher-director approach not only towards his listeners but also towards his young, still inexperienced colleagues.”<sup>14</sup> Sixthly, to her credit, she had written numerous psychological dissertations explaining the characteristics and principles governing child development as well as methodological texts in which, on the one hand, she emphasised the importance of proper home schooling and, on the other, presented detailed advice on how to teach particular subjects at school. She insisted on educators wisely and efficiently applying their

<sup>10</sup> See M. Kulus, “Arctowie dzieciom”, *Bibliotheca Nostra. Śląski Kwartalnik Naukowy* 2011, vol. 25, No 3, p. 76.

<sup>11</sup> J. Ciembroniewicz, “Anieli Szcówna”, *Szkoła Powszechna* 1921, No 3-4, p. 271.

<sup>12</sup> G. Michalski, “Kierunki działalności naukowo-pedagogicznej Anieli Szcówny i jej współpraca z *Ruchem Pedagogicznym*”, *Ruch Pedagogiczny* 2014, No 3, p. 37.

<sup>13</sup> She published her first texts for children already at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. See, e.g. A. Szc, “Czy ja z moich wad wyrosnę?” *Wieczory Rodzinne* 1891, No 52, pp. 412-414; Id., “Trzy chwile nad książką”, *Wieczory Rodzinne* 1892, No 31, pp. 241-243.

<sup>14</sup> A. Szcówna, “Jan Władysław Dawid”, *Wychowanie w Domu i Szkole* 1914, No 2, p. 104.

methods and means of influence.<sup>15</sup> Finally, she had already demonstrated a thorough knowledge of literature and the children's press, not only by keeping up to date with the most recent achievements in these fields but also by expressing her views publicly, mostly in the *Pedagogical Review*.<sup>16</sup> For instance, in an extensive article about M. Konopnicka's works, she explained to readers that children's literature was of much greater importance than adult literature because, unlike grown-ups, children often go back to their favourite book several times, frequently act out its content when they play, impersonating "heroes and heroines (...) and similarly to them, they write (...) the novels of their own lives."<sup>17</sup>

A. Szcówna held the post until June 1905, when M. Buyno-Arctowa became the new editor of My Little Newspaper. M. Buyno later married Zygmunt Arct, the co-owner of the publishing house.

### My Little Newspaper under Aniela Szcówna's editorship

The launch of the first issue of My Little Newspaper on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1902 was accompanied by a wide advertising campaign. Its main objective was to persuade parents and teachers that the periodical was different from the publications they had bought so far and that it was not created to make a profit but was the result of deep concern to provide educators with a modern means of pedagogical influence based on research findings, efficiently supporting educational processes and fostering child personality development.

Promoting the new title, M. Arct's publishing house used the various marketing channels available at that time. In the window display of the bookshop in Warsaw at 53 Nowy Świat Street, there was a poster and in the shop, there was an advertising

<sup>15</sup> See e.g. A. Szcówna, *Rozwój pojęciowy dziecka w okresie lat 6-12: badania nad dziećmi*, Warsaw 1899; Id., *O zadaniach i metodach psychologii dziecka*, Lwów 1901; Id., *Nauka w domu: przewodnik dla wychowawców*, Warsaw 1895; Id., *Gramatyka polska dla dzieci zaczynających się uczyć systematycznie: z przykładami, ćwiczeniami i wskazówkami dla nauczycieli*, Warsaw 1899; Id., "Ostrożnie z karami", *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* 1893, No 4, pp. 17-18; Id., "Bunt córek", *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* 1894, No 14, pp. 181-184 and 1894, No 15, pp. 195-196.

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. A. S., "W domu i świecie. Książka dla dzieci od lat 10 do 12 napisana przez Maryję Konopnicką", *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* 1891, No 24, pp. 291-292; A. S., "Trójlistek. Obrazki sceniczne dla młodocianego wieku napisał Tomasz A.", *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* 1891, No 24, pp. 292-293; A. S. "Uciechy dziecięce, opisała wierszem i prozą Helena Bojarska z 16 obrazkami"; "Dla grzecznych dzieci. Powiastki i wierszyki, napisała Ciocia Janina z 16 obrazkami", *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* 1892, No 24, p. 313; A. Szcówna, "Maryja Konopnicka, jako autorka dla dzieci", *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* 1902, No 18, pp. 219-220 and 1902, No 19, pp. 231-232 and 1902, No 20, pp. 240-243 and 1902, No 21, pp. 253-254; A. Szc., "Czasopisma dla dzieci w roku 1890", *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* 1891, No 3, pp. 29-31 and 1891, No 5, pp. 54-56; Id., "Czasopisma dla dzieci w roku 1891", *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* 1892, No 5, pp. 62-63 and 1892, No 6, pp. 78-80.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, p. 219.

brochure and a free sample and later a published booklet. Announcements were published in other periodicals including *Głos* (English: *Voice*) and in *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* (English: *Pedagogical Review*) where the announcement of the forthcoming issue was decorated with a complete table of contents and a drawing of a reading child.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, brochures and free samples were sent to acclaimed authorities such as professors, educational activists, writers and owners of educational institutions. Among these prominent scholars was Kazimierz Twardowski,<sup>19</sup> a professor of Lviv University.

Among the authors who most frequently published their articles in *My Little Newspaper* were A. Szycówna, M. Buyno-Arctowa, A. Oppman, M. Lipsk, Teresa Jadwiga (Papi), T. Pudłowski, M. Konopnicka, Z. Bukowiecka, Z. Morawska, E. Lejowa, Bożydar (E. Bogdanowicz), Z. Okołowiczówna, M. Dynowska, A. Domańska, M. Weryho, H. Wernica, F. Gęsówna, R. Minkiewicz, W. Weychertówna, H. Prawdowska, M. Budziszewska, T. Prażmowska, M. Bogusławska, L. Rygier and I. Rożen.

There were several permanent sections in the internal design of the periodical, but a few sections and columns appeared irregularly. The cover was decorated with pictures of children in various everyday situations along with a clearly displayed title of the periodical. It always contained a table of contents, subscription conditions and the address of the editorial office and administration.

Sizeable portraits of famous and distinguished people or drawings of various subjects accompanied by poetic or prose texts appeared on the first page of the periodical. In the following pages there were stories, tales, memories, poems, sometimes musical pieces such as carols, marches and lullabies, often accompanied with musical scores. The editorial staff also decided to publish novels in installments, among which *Cat Mum and Her Adventures*, written by M. Buyno-Arctowa, published in the years 1903-1904, proved to be immensely popular with children. The presented texts were adapted to the seasons and school terms.

From time to time, a series appeared entitled: *Gazetka dziecinnna (Children's Newspaper)* which was meant to inform readers about interesting events, taking place mostly in Warsaw. These were for example a games and toys exhibition, the opening of a doll theatre and performances put on by that theatre, performances of gifted children in the National Philharmonic in Warsaw and in the National Institute of Child Hygiene as well as music concerts organised for children.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> See e.g. *Głos* 1902, No 37, p. 577; 1903, No 39, p. 628; 1903, No 46, p. 740; *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* 1902, No 20, p. 249; 1902, No 21, p. 262; 1903, No 1, p. 12; 1903, No 5, p. 64; 1903, No 9, p. 116.

<sup>19</sup> J. Piskurewicz, "Anieli Szycówny listy", op. cit., p. 313.

<sup>20</sup> See e.g. "Wystawa gier i zabawek", *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 1, pp. 17-18; "Zamknięcie wystawy gier i zabawek", *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 4, p. 8; A. S., "Otwarcie teatru marionetek", *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 2, p. 39; "Teatryk marionetek", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 51, p. 400; A. S., "Miccio Horszowski (dziecko, które komponuje) wystąpił w Filharmonii w Warszawie", *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 7, pp. 127-128; A. Szycówna,



A section promoting games organised in the house, the playground and the garden was very popular. Among these, there were numerous stage scenes or role play texts to act out at home, scripts for games such as “Blind Postman”, “Little Jumper”, “Bakers”, “Candle Blowing”, “Illustrated Proverbs”, “Shadows”, “Wizard” as well as instructions for games promoting physical activity.<sup>21</sup>

The section *Gazetka listowna* (English: *Letters to the Editor*) appeared quite frequently. Readers’ correspondence and answers to these letters were published there. In the beginning, the section was published in the periodical, but later it appeared on its cover.

In the periodical, there were often various kinds of “educational tasks”. Some of them were brain-teaser games and some manual tasks. In the case of mind games, there were various puzzles, charades and riddles and in terms of manual tasks, the authors encouraged children to make flower baskets, a cargo steamship out of card stock, Christmas tree decorations, doll clothes, and to draw bands and borders.

A special supplement entitled *To Mothers* proved to be an interesting addition. In these brief articles, A. Szyćówna attempted to share both theoretical knowledge about mental, moral and physical child development, as well as give practical advice on what the best age is to start learning foreign languages, what books children should read and what toys, underwear and clothes should mothers buy for them.<sup>22</sup>

The vast and diverse subjects raised in *My Little Newspaper* referred to the issues which editorial staff wanted to familiarise children with in order to foster their wide-ranging development. Among the main directions of educational influence, considerable attention was paid to moral and social aspects. Such multifaceted subject matter was, on the one hand, accompanied with a tendency to provide sufficient knowledge about good and evil and, by doing so, setting examples to follow in

“Instytut higieny dziecięcej”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 9, pp. 143-144; “Koncerty dla dzieci”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 15, pp. 279-280.

<sup>21</sup> See e.g. M. Lipska, “Sen Józia (Obrazek sceniczny w dwóch aktach)”, *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 11, pp. 187-189; (1902)12, pp. 208-209; “Boże Narodzenie (Obrazek sceniczny w dwóch odsłonach)”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 11, pp. 162-165; T. Pudłowski, “Książę leniusek. Komedyjka w 2-ch odsłonach”, *Moje Pisemko* 1905, No 19-20, pp. 314-317, 1905, No 21, pp. 329-331; 1905, No 22, pp. 352-353; 1905, No 24, pp. 378-380; 1905, No 25, pp. 398-400; 1905, No 26, pp. 411-413; “Gry towarzyskie. Niewidomy listonosz”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 30, pp. 61-62; W. Ż., “Mali Piekarze”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 8, p. 123; M. B., “Zdmuchnięcie świecy”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 2, p. 29; “Cienie”, *Moje Pisemko* 1905, No 18, p. 297; M. B., “Czarodziej”, *Moje Pisemko* 1905, No 33, p. 109; M. Buyno-Arct, “Gry i zabawy na świeżym powietrzu”, op. cit., pp. 108-109.

<sup>22</sup> See e.g. A. S., “Z praktyki wychowawczej. Kiedy rozpoczynać naukę gramatyki i języków obcych”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 11, pp. 3-4; Id., “Wybór zabawek”, op. cit., pp. 1-3; A. Szyćówna, “Kilka słów o karach”, *Moje Pisemko* 1905, No 26, pp. 3-4; Id., “Do matek”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 2, pp. 1-2; M. B., “Jesień i zima. Pogadanka higieniczna”, op. cit., pp. 2-4; “Wzory garderoby i bielizny dziecięcej”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 32.



everyday life. On the other hand, there was another trend to construct plots of stories so that there would be no clear-cut models of behaviour, thus making readers think and choose for themselves.

Let us now turn to a consideration of the main motifs of fairy tales, short stories, anecdotes, tales and poems which presented moral values to the reader. Personality traits such as truthfulness, dutifulness, sense of justice, communicative skills and the ability to compromise, courage, responsibility, industriousness, resourcefulness and concern for others were all portrayed in a positive light. When literary heroes and heroines broke particular moral norms, they experienced unpleasant spiritual states, such as remorse, sorrow and a bad mood.<sup>23</sup> Sometimes, towards the end of a story and as a kind of conclusion, there was a reference to some proverbs like: *What goes around comes around* or an attempt to encourage children to ponder the discussed issue by means of questions like: *Dear children, do you go along with that view as it was presented in the story? Which girl was better at taking care of their little brother: Zosia or Gienia? Do you think Wacjo loved his Mum a lot? Would you do the same thing he did?*

Forming and cultivating ethical and moral values in children in *My Little Newspaper* was achieved by raising children's awareness of poverty and human suffering. Numerous stories informed children that, apart from middle-class and rich city dwellers and villagers, there were also those finding it hard to get by. Some stories portrayed the tough conditions of families living in filthy, damp and cold basements. Others depicted hungry, orphaned children who were forced to make their living from an early age, often with sick parents, who scavenged on the streets, collecting whatever might be of any use – leftovers from rubbish bins or firewood scattered in the streets.<sup>24</sup> Their dreams were not sophisticated, e.g. to have their own shoes which fitted, so that they would not fall off their feet or make walking difficult.<sup>25</sup> Such texts were never left without a moralising commentary. A fragment of one such story in which Czesia: “was thinking why (...) some children like Stasia and Zygmus live in luxury and other get

<sup>23</sup> See e.g. M. R., “Prawdomówny Kazio”, *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 1, pp. 11-12; St. M., “Tresowana myszka”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 7, pp. 103-105; Z. K., “Odważny chłopiec”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 8, p. 122-123; Z. K., “Mali wybacwcy”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 18, pp. 319-320; M.M. “Siostrzyczka”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 26, pp. 454-456; Bożydar, “U babuni”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 30, pp. 49-50; Or-Or, “Starzec i chłopczyk”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 36, pp. 156-157; M. Bogusławska, “Poróżnione”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 41, pp. 230-233; M. M., “Surowa mateczka”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 29, pp. 44-45; M. Buyno, “Na schodach”, *Moje Pisemko*, 1905, No 1, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> See e.g. S. Okołowiczówna, “W suterenie”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 6, p. 90-96 and 1903, No 7, pp. 107-109; Id., “Na pastwisku”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 39, pp. 194-199; M. Budziszewska, “Łamigłównka”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 9, pp. 135-138; Wila, “Mały pastuszek”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 1, pp. 10-12; Wila, “Co te dzieci robią”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 24, pp. 394-396; P. Laskowska, “Mały kupiec”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 35, pp. 133-135; Cz. Halicz, “Do słońca”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 36, pp. 154-156.

<sup>25</sup> M. Lipska, “Marzenie Walka”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 12, p. 201.

few presents at Christmas. The girl couldn't answer the question, but she also thought that if God made her rich, she would share with the poor."<sup>26</sup>

The editorial intentions of the periodical connected with children's moral education also referred to the animal world. The conveyed message said that all living creatures deserve respect and tormenting or abusing animals was considered unacceptable. Feeding hungry, homeless or wild animals was recommended, as was making sure that the ones living in flats would be properly taken care of. It was explained that taking a dog or a cat into the house meant showing responsibility and sometimes refraining from one's own pleasure.<sup>27</sup>

A. Szygówna had some considerable difficulty in introducing children to the Catholic faith. Some critics claimed there were too many religious-oriented texts, while others stated there were not enough of them. Consultations with K. Twardowski allowed her to confirm her belief that it was impossible to raise children without religion, but children should not be exposed to dogmatic texts or fanatical attitudes. Therefore she mostly included articles and texts referring to festivals from the church calendar such as Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Whitsun, All Saints' Day.<sup>28</sup> In an article prepared in 1903 for Easter, it was explained: "This beautiful spring festival should not only make you happy and joyful, but should awake your hearts, your minds – Resurrection! What a great, magnificent word! Do you know that you also possess something, which will never die or be destroyed and sooner or later will rise from the dead."<sup>29</sup> Children were reminded about the period of Lent, Palm Sunday and May dedicated to the Mother of God. In the latter case, a relevant poem encouraged them to pick flowers so as to worship the Blessed Virgin Mary and to ask Her to intercede for us.<sup>30</sup> Many poems were already prayers, others encouraged readers to say morning and evening prayers every day.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> I. Rożen, "Czesia", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 13, p. 218.

<sup>27</sup> See e.g. "Cezar", *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 1, pp. 12-14; J. Omańkowska, "Wróbel", *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 9, pp. 155-157; M. Rolicz, "Oleś i piesek", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 16, pp. 287-288; Or-Ot, "O Janku, co zwierzętom pomagał", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 18, p. 325; M. Weryho, "Dwaj przyjaciele", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 37, pp. 170-171.

<sup>28</sup> See e.g. "Gwiazdka bożego Narodzenia", *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 12, pp. 212-216 and 1902, No 13, pp. 233-236; M. Dynowska, "Boże Narodzenie", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 11, pp. 162-165; Bożydar, "Trzej Królowie", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 15, pp. 265-266; Id., "Alleluja", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 28, pp. 17-18; Tenże, "Zielone Świątki", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 35, pp. 129-130; "Święto Zmarłych", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 5, pp. 65-69.

<sup>29</sup> M. Buyno-Arct, "Niech Zmartwychwstaną!", *Moje Pisemko* 1905, No 30, p. 51.

<sup>30</sup> Bożymir, "Maj", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 35, p. 138-139. See also: A. P., "Co to jest adwent", *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 9, p. 147-148 and 1902, No 10, p. 162-164; Bożydar, "Na Palmową niedzielę", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 27, pp. 1-2.

<sup>31</sup> See e.g. Or-Ot, "Modlitwa poranna", *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 1, p. 2-3; Id., "Prośba dziecięca", *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 11, p. 180; Id., Tenże, "Pragnienie", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 24, p. 409-410; M. D., "Dobranoc Hanji", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 47, p. 324.

Familiarising readers with Polish history and some elements of general history was two-pronged. One way was to present brief profiles of famous, distinguished people, whose achievements were vital not only to their contemporaries but also to their descendants. In the periodical there were portraits of many people from various epochs, such as A. Mickiewicz, J. Słowacki, M. Rej, Saint J. Kanty, J. Matejko, M. Kopernik S. Jachowicz, K. z Tańskich-Hoffmanowa, Father J. Falkowski, F. Karpiński, Maria Konopnicka and J.H. Andersen.<sup>32</sup> The biographies were written in such a way as to emphasise personality traits which would foster the creation of role models for children. The second way involved descriptions of past events such as the coronation of Queen Jadwiga, the battle of Grunwald, the defence of Częstochowa from the Swedes, the circumstances of the death of Hetman S. Czarniecki or the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>33</sup>

Some articles in *My Little Newspaper* were also devoted to Polish national customs. To a limited extent, children were familiarised with pre-Christian customs, focusing mainly on the customs connected to the catholic church festivals and feasts. It was emphasised how joyful the holiday seasons were, Christmas with Christmas Tree decorations, Christmas Eve Supper, Christmas presents, whereas Easter – with the blessed food and sweets, Easter Coloured Eggs, Easter Bunnies, Easter Cakes and *Śmigus Dyrngus* (English: *Wet Monday*). The customs related to Midsummer Night, Harvest Festivals or fortune-telling by pouring hot wax through a key were also not omitted, together with the celebration of the name-days of patron saints.<sup>34</sup>

Yet another objective of the periodical was to present the beauty of the homeland by raising geographical issues combined with promoting tourism. It was usually achieved by means of tales, stories or accounts from school trips and excursions.

<sup>32</sup> See e.g. A. Szcycówna, “Z lat młodocianych Adama Mickiewicza”, *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 1, pp. 3-5, 1902, No 2, pp. 22-24, 1902, No 3, pp. 41-44; “Z lat młodocianych Juliusza Słowackiego”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 1, pp. 1-4 and (1903)2, pp. 18-21; M. Dynowska, “Mikołaj Rej”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 17, pp. 297-298 and (1903)18, pp. 314-316; K. Kalisowski, “O św. Janie Kantym”, *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 3, pp. 44-48; W. T., “Franciszek Karpiński”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 1, pp. 1-3 and (1904)2, pp. 18-20; W. Wejchertówna, “O Mikołaju Koperniku”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 15, p. 245; A. Szcycówna, “Maria Konopnicka”, *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 4, pp. 61-64, 1902, No 5, pp. 83-85; 1902, No 6, p. 88-89; Id., “Jan Krystyan Andersen”, *Moje Pisemko* 1905, No 33, pp. 97-100.

<sup>33</sup> See e.g. Z. Morawska, “Pajęczce nici”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 15, pp. 272-273; “Pod Grunwaldem”, *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 7, pp. 114-116 and 1907, No 8, pp. 130-132; Z. Morawska, “Dzień radosny”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 44, pp. 273-276 and 1903, No 45, pp. 290-292; A. Czajkowski, “Śmierć Czarnieckiego”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 20, pp. 321-322; M. Łopuszańska, “Mały gwwardzista napoleona”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 49, pp. 313-315.

<sup>34</sup> See e.g. Or-Ot, “Piosenka przy laniu wosku”, *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 9, p. 157; Bożydar, “Przy choince”, *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 13, p. 230; E. Nowicka, “Święty Mikołaj”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 10, pp. 145-149; H. N., “W wigilijny wieczór”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 12, pp. 194-196; “Zające przedwielkanocne”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 27, pp. 11-12; A. Pomańska, “Noc Świętego Jana”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 38, pp. 189-192; T. P., “Powinszowania dla mamy”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 20, p. 330 and 1904, No 22, p. 365; E. Lejowa, “Dożynki”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 48, pp. 237-238.

Children were provided with knowledge about various regions, cities and interesting places such as Kurpiowszczyzna, Krakow, Kalisz, Kazimierz, Czersk, Zakopane, Piaszkowa Skala, Łowicz and Arkadia.<sup>35</sup> An account of a journey to Lublin took on an interesting form of three letters which a certain young Wojtuś wrote to his aunt. The first letter began in the following way: “Dear Aunt! Fulfilling my promise, I am writing what I have found out about Lublin, where we are with Daddy at the moment.”<sup>36</sup> Then there was a brief description of the city’s history, its location by the river, the cathedral, royal castle, the Krakow Gate, *Krakowskie Przedmieście* (English: *Krakow Suburb*), the Lubelski theatre, the building of the lower-secondary school and some monuments. Boat trips on the Vistula River and its tributaries were recommended.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, the periodical attempted to familiarise its readers with the wider world by drawing their attention to some attractions in France, Greenland, Japan, Australia and to children living in Cameroon.<sup>38</sup>

Definitely, the vast majority of the subjects of the articles published in *My Little Newspaper* referred to the immediate environment of the readers. The theme of discovering the secrets of nature could be found in almost every issue. Within this subject matter, four groups of particular themes can be selected, explaining and characterising atmospheric phenomena, the changing seasons and familiarising readers with the animal and plant kingdoms.

Knowledge about clouds, fog, dew and the origin of wind was intertwined in the texts in an interesting way. Explaining the disappearance of snow from fields, it said: “Such warm sun rays fall on snow lying on fields! Under these rays, snow melts revealing thirsty soil. And what happens to the snow, which has turned into water? Some of it dries, that is evaporates and forms clouds, which you have already read about.”<sup>39</sup> Signs of approaching seasons were explained in a similar way. Summer was associated with flowers fully in bloom and fruit ripening; autumn with falling leaves, dying plants and

<sup>35</sup> See e.g. K. P., “Gdzie mieszkają Kurpie?”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 23, pp. 393-395; Or-Ot, “Kraków”, *Moje Pisemko* 1905, No 10-11, pp. 129-131; “Kalisz”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 19, pp. 320-322 and 1903, No 20, pp. 346-248; “W Kazimierzu nad Wisłą”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 30, p. 49-51; “W starym zamczysku”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 45, p. 305-307; W. T., “Wycieczka do Piaskowej Skąły”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 40, pp. 209-212; M. Arctówna, “Zakopane”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 45, pp. 290-293; “Odwiedziny w Łowiczu i Arkadyi”, *Moje Pisemko* 1905, No 34, pp. 116-118.

<sup>36</sup> “Lublin (Wyjătki z listu Wojtusia do cioci)”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 4, p. 49.

<sup>37</sup> Bożydar, “Wisła”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 26, p. 441-442.

<sup>38</sup> M. K., “Mały Sabaudczyk”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 6, pp. 83-86 and 1903, No 7, pp. 99-102; H. N., “W Grenliyi”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 22, pp. 383-385; “Dzieci japońskie”, *Moje Pisemko* 1905, No 32, pp. 88-89; Z. G., “Żako i malec”, *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 23, pp. 377-380 and 1904, No 25, p. 410-412; Z. K., “Czarna różyczka”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 17, pp. 304-306.

<sup>39</sup> Z. Kwiatkowska, “Gdzie się podział śnieg z pola?”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 26, p. 446. See also: Eadem, “Chmura, mgła, rosa”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 17, pp. 307-310; Eadem, “Lód i śnieg”, *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 19, p. 338-340; “Wiatr”, *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 1, pp. 9-10.

chilly days; winter with the white landscape, the hibernation of many animals; while spring saw nature's rebirth. In one text, the longing of a young girl called Roma, who observed how lilies and lilacs lost their fragrance and became ugly because of the cold, was soothed by her father, who said: "Try to remember what they looked like last winter, but in spring they became green again and then blossomed until autumn came. Aren't you convinced by the fact that they aren't dead now but they are merely asleep and are sleeping awaiting lively spring?"<sup>40</sup> The animal world was represented by cats, hares, hedgehogs, frogs, swallows, lapwings, storks, ostriches, butterflies, flies, beetles, earthworms and ants. Their appearance, role and function for the environment were all taken into account and some interesting facts were mentioned. For instance, in a tale about industrious insects, their "shared house" was portrayed in the following way: "... an anthill, which is a big mound of twigs, dried leaves and pine needles. What turmoil was there in the anthill and around it! Thousands of ants were moving in various directions, entering the hill through tiny openings, apparently serving as doors, or leaving it."<sup>41</sup> Moreover, in an impressive style, children were introduced into the rich world of plants, getting to know their immense variety. Various garden, meadow, field and wild forest flowers, both useful ones and weeds, featured in these articles. In the usually illustrated articles, the following flowers and plants appeared: pansies, peonies, phloxes, lilies, primroses, pulsatilla, anemone, kingcups, ferns, herbs and couch grass. Moreover, readers were encouraged to pick, dry and create herbaria of local plants. M. Arctówna wrote: "I strongly encourage you to collect plants and to create a herbarium as it is not only enjoyable but also useful. By doing so, you will get to know our plants, you will learn to examine the environment, and in the future you will be able to share what you have discovered with others and explain it to them."<sup>42</sup>

The editorial staff of *My Little Newspaper* proved to be diligent in creating the layout and graphic design of the periodical. Although it was published in various black

<sup>40</sup> R. Minkiewicz, "Ach! Kiedyż drzewa ze snu się zbudzą?", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 26, p. 451. See also: "Babie lato i jego sprawcy", *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 2, pp. 32-34; M., "Jesienią", *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 3, pp. 44; M. Lipska, "Jesienne liście", *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 4, pp. 74-76; R. Minkiewicz, "Zmartwychwstańcy. Opowieść o śnie zimowym zwierząt", *Moje Pisemko* 1905, No 19-20, pp. 309-312; M. Arctówna, "Wiosna", *Moje Pisemko* 1905, No 30, pp. 72-75.

<sup>41</sup> D. N., "W mrowisku", *Moje Pisemko* 1905, No 37, p. 165. See also: F. Gensówna, "Opowiadanie zajęczka szarusia", *Moje Pisemko* 1902, No 7, pp. 122-124; M. Weryho, "Jaskółki", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 27, pp. 15-16; "Motylki", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 34, pp. 122-124; Z. Kwiatkowska, "Czajka", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 37, pp. 163-165; M. L., "Rodzina Jeżów", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 40, pp. 215-218; M. Arctówna, "Muchy", *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 41, pp. 229-331; T. Prażmowska, "Bezlotki", *Moje Pisemko* 1905, No 21, pp. 336-337.

<sup>42</sup> M. Arctówna, "Do naszych małych przyjaciół przyrody", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 39, p. 208. See also: A. Grudzińska, "Bratki", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 2, p. 27-28; M. M., "Pierwiosnek", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 26, p. 449-450; M. Arctówna, "Kwiaty paproci", *Moje Pisemko* 1903, No 38, pp. 184-186; M. A., "O urządzeniu ogródka", *Moje Pisemko* 1904, No 27, pp. 7-8.

and white shades, which was common practice in all children's periodicals at that time, *My Little Newspaper* also contained numerous drawings, using woodcut technique, many pictures and ornaments in the form of vignettes. Not every page was illustrated, but every issue contained a few illustrations. An important procedure, from an aesthetic point of view, was the use of various font sizes and shapes which made the periodical more attractive. Additionally, the thorough composition and typesetting of the periodical served the same purpose. It was a 16-page periodical, the price of which was 5 kopecks (Polish: kopiejka) (with a delivery charge, 6 kopecks), which meant it was among the cheapest of this kind of publications.

## Instead of a conclusion

*My Little Newspaper*, the idea of which was created and realised by A. Szycówna, became a talking point for booksellers, publishers and pedagogues. Janina Mortkowiczowa, without undermining its fundamental concepts, criticized the traditional way in which philanthropy was presented, as well as one of the stories in which the issues of the upbringing of an exemplary heroine, a spoilt only child, was inappropriately portrayed.<sup>43</sup> Whereas the son of Michał Arct – the periodical's founder – wrote in his memoirs that “A. Szycówna deserves credit for brilliant pedagogical level of the newspaper. However, the entertainment section, indispensable in children's periodical, had a few shortcomings. Too little attention was paid to make the content both educational and useful, and at the same time attractive for young readers. Some typical of that time teachers' stiffness could be felt, as well as a lack of sensitivity to the need of instilling in children a liking for reading.”<sup>44</sup> I. Moszczeńska, praising the periodical, paid attention to other aspects and, at the same time, criticised the writing style of some of the stories and claimed that biographies of famous people would not interest young readers. Comparing *My Little Newspaper* to *Children's Friend* and *Family Evenings*, she concluded that all of them were at a similar level and had similar shortcomings.<sup>45</sup>

Despite these views, it is necessary to conclude that, in comparison to publications issued previously, the Warsaw periodical was an essential step in the development of the children's press. The period under A. Szycówna's editorship ended in June 1905, when her post was taken over by M. Buyno-Arctowa. M. Arct's daughter-in-law had earlier been involved in work on the periodical, but the cooperation between the two ladies did not go smoothly and resulted in A Szycówna leaving the post.

<sup>43</sup> J. Mortkowiczowa, “Moje Pisemko”, *Ogniwo* 1903, No 23, p. 549-550; See also: Id., “O postępowym czasopiśmiennictwie lat 1909-1926”, *Studia Pedagogiczne* 1958, vol. V, p. 167.

<sup>44</sup> P. Arct, *Okruchy wspomnień*, op. cit., p. 190.

<sup>45</sup> I. Moszczeńska, “Krytyka. Czasopisma...”, op. cit., pp. 139-140.



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**CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS**

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ADRES DO KORESPONDENCJI

Prof. Grzegorz Michalski, PhD  
University of Lodz,  
The Faculty of Educational Sciences,  
The Department of History of Education and Pedeutology  
e-mail: [isia.m7@wp.pl](mailto:isia.m7@wp.pl)