

**MARTA ALBU**

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# **NEW PERSPECTIVES IN LITERATURE, LINGUISTICS AND ARTS**

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## PREFACE

This volume brings together the papers presented at the sixth edition of the conference "Communication. Information. Learning", on May 24-25, 2019, within the ARTS AND HUMANITIES section, as well as articles of PhD students in Philology, from the University of Craiova.

The volume contains works on linguistics from research on grammar, phonetics to lexicology and terminology. Delia Mihaela Toarnă approaches some theoretical aspects of specialized vocabulary terms, terminology and the relationship between them; Elena-Lelia Vătafu (Grecu) analyzes the scientific perspectives of approaching the category of synonyms in different specialized papers, as well as the methods of analysis in writing the dictionaries, Mariana-Matei Buciu approaches semantic relations in the lexicon of Liviu Rebreanu's work, Simona Sandu (Pîrvulescu) undertakes a theoretical excursus into terminology, Georgiana- Silvia Leotescu makes a linguistic approach to J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels, Daniel Leotescu explores the Scandinavian influence on old and middle English vocabulary, Isabella-Alice Matieș-Verbuncu (Stoian) discusses some of the functional characteristics of legal language in order to support relevant practitioners and scholars in dealing with the English legal texts. Sterjo Naciku explores the concept of communication from the standpoint of pathways of negotiation, analysing binary systems such as both the verbal and the nonverbal, objectivity and subjectivity, honesty and manipulation. Liana Georgiana Oprea (Moga) focuses on the translator's complex role and multilayered competence in the process of translating and cultural enrichment. Verona-Elena Popa (Ciocioi) examines military language, Mihai Robert Rusu describes the nature, trends and challenges of specialized translation and Anca Monica Stanciu's research deals with administrative translation. Alexandra Ștefania Țiulescu examines the dynamic intersection between translation and transmediation of Shakespeare's language, focusing on the invisible "performance" of the translator in order to sustain authentic meaning. Corina Vasile focuses on the functionality of discourse as a specific genre, with rules that are to be followed and understood at all levels of the participants, speakers or hearers. Adnan Mohaisen Ali Al-Zuabidi intends to shed light on the interconnectedness of various branches of linguistics, with a focus on sociolinguistics, and methodological tools such as the ones provided by corpus linguistics.

Literary works bring together papers on various topics, from Romanian literature to comparative approaches, either theoretical or applied to texts

from several European literatures (French, English, Spanish, etc.), but also to authors who do not belong to the European space (Russian literature, African-American literature). Thus, Victor Olaru approaches some aspects of British contemporary women poets within the European cultural context, the relation of their writings with cultural theories (Tzvetan Todorov, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Helene Cixous), and emphasizes the specific character of this kind of poetry that eventually may prove to be a valuable contribution to the building of an important cultural bond between British authors and their colleagues from other European countries, Romania included, Marta Albu analyzes the image of the child in A.P. Chekhov's stories, Elena-Luminița Hrițcu approaches literary Balkanism, Ana Maria Bîzdoacă is examining some aspects of the sublime in the works of Ann Radcliffe, Andreea Bălan deals with critical theory and the portrayal of foreign women in some Victorian novels, Nicoleta Livia Boghian comments on the Victorian aspects revealed in John Fowles's novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, whereas Jasim Mohammed Fartoosi analyzes the discourse of the black nationalism in Ernest Gain's "*The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*". Hayder Adnan Al Shwaili takes into account the concept of cultural and self-identity based on class, race, and ethnicity of the African Americans. The research of Ileana Mihaela Delcea from the area of ethnology-anthropology analyzes the wedding in Oltenia - ritual and ceremonial.

From the section Arts, Antonie Mihail proposes a phenomenology approach to fencing and duel in Spain, realized in the imagological perspective. The study reveals the outlining of two images: on the one hand, an image of fencing as science and art of weapons, and on the other hand an image of the duel as a form of combat which plenary manifests the power. The image of the combative art of fencing is analyzed by conveyance of fencing as a means of human act in the physical and moral fields, seeking to reveal its imagological perspective, transferable from the perspective image of power in the Spanish theatre of the Golden Century.

Regarding the writing, this year's works had to comply with the previously established requirements for publication, as well as the full presentation in English, aiming at a homogeneity of the way the texts are structured and a greater power of transmission in different cultural spaces. Also, the fact that from the very beginning it was decided not to impose a specific topic of the colloquium was intended to offer the opportunity to all teachers and researchers to present their own areas of interest, topics and achievements in their field of study. The participants had the opportunity to present certain parts of larger projects or stage achievements of their research still in progress and to dialogue on topics of particular interest to them. We understand the assumption of this eclecticism as an opening to different, but

complementary research horizons, which we can organize in an open dialogue, even proposing new ways of interpretation.

The editors thought this volume as a more or less faithful mirror of the sixth edition, meant to register, both the studies of the participants and of the doctoral students in Philology, who are in full research and elaboration of the doctoral thesis and to offer the possibility of asserting new points of view.

Through the variety of topics approached, the participants of this edition of the conference organized by the University of Craiova hope that future editions will further enhance dynamism to interdisciplinary pieces of research. The editors of this volume can only share their optimism with other Romanian and foreign colleagues interested in philological studies.

Editors





# NAÏVETY AND PLAYFULNESS IN A. P. CHEKHOV'S STORIES

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## **Abstract**

The present study aims to highlight the image of the child in A. P. Chekhov's stories, the naivety, this freshness of soul, the diffuse desire to believe possible a sweet and generous world, like a return to childhood - the quality more difficult to render in the literature in general. The author transcends the world of the child, to understand his behavior, his character, his way of speaking, his fears, his naivety, his candor, his extraordinary delicacy, his dreams, how he interacts with others. In this way, this literature becomes cross-cultural thanks to the traveling characters.

## **Keywords:**

child, childhood, naivety, misery

Naivety and playfulness are two concepts that partially define the child and the "happy age". The status of the child has evolved over the centuries, there are several systems of representations of the childhood, not just a single image, but several contradictory images.

Philippe Ariès, known for his study, *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Regime* (1973), a pioneer of the history of mentalities, is the one who speaks of the "birth of the feeling of childhood" in the early seventeenth century: "Then it is formed this moral conception of childhood which insists on the weaknesses (frail nature)... but which associates its weakness with innocence, a true reflection of divine purity, and which places the education at the forefront of obligations". Philippe Ariès and other researchers note a lack of interest in the child before the nineteenth century. He deals with the concepts of childhood, the adult-child relationship and the experience of childhood over cultures and periods of time. According to Ariès, the childhood was not understood as a separate stage of life until the 15th century, and children were seen as adults who shared the same traditions, games and clothes.

Literary criticism has neglected for a long time the analysis of child characters and approached most juvenile characters as adults. Roger Mercier says, for example, that in the literature of the eighteenth century and before, the child did not occupy an important place. It was considered a "boring object" or, in any case, unworthy to attract attention (Mercier, 1961: 65).

In this century, educational books for children were meant to instruct, to "build", offering them examples of model children. Christian Poslaniec compares these early books to old school books, talking about a market for "constructive" books published by Catholic publishers. (Poslaniec, 2008: 18)

In the following centuries, the childhood begins to amuse, to interest as a literary object. There are different trends that can be observed in literary works from different centuries, to evoke the role that the child has in literature, and the transformations, the evolution of mentalities and its rendering in fiction. Therefore, the evocation of childhood is a favorite theme in children's writings, giving birth to the most famous masterpieces in universal literature.

Childhood remains the age of weakness and continues to be thought in relation to the model of an adult, a model of perfection, and thus is not perceived in its true sense. The child's sensitivity comes from innocence, from pleasant, specific naivety.

Naivety is the ability to be naïve and is synonymous with simplicity, innocence, candor or credulity. Naive character presupposes a lack of maturity in judgment or behavior. Naive is the man inexperienced, lacking artificiality and unpretentious, simple, natural, credulous and sincere.

The child is the only one who can manifest in this way, he can be himself, he can act as the soul tells him, without taking into account previous experiences, conditioning. Naivety is the freedom that the child gives to himself to live an experience and to enjoy it without prejudice. It means living in the present and enjoying everything around him, the desire to believe in the generous and gentle world. Naivety gives the child the opportunity to see in any person, in any situation and event, something new and beautiful, gives him the opportunity to see the positive things, the opportunity to learn from mistakes, allows him to have a rich imagination, fabulous ideas to build on another world.

Jean Chateau points out that for the child almost any activity is a game

or, as Eduard Claparède states, "play is work, it is good, it is duty, it is the ideal of life ... it is the only atmosphere in which his psychological being can breathe and, consequently, it can act".

The Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget defined the game as "a functional exercise with the role of extending the environment, a way of transforming the real, by assimilating and accommodating to the real, so a means of adaptation" He noted the special role of the game in child development.

The game is defined and explained in very different ways, just as different are the functions and meanings assigned to it. Johan Huizinga, in *Homo ludens*, approaches the eloquent image of the involvement of the playful spirit in the history of human civilization: "play is older than culture, because the notion of culture, however incomplete it is defined, presupposes a human society and animals do not they waited for man to teach him to play" (1977, p. 33). The existence of the game is therefore not linked to any stage of civilization, to any form of conception of the world.

Huizinga takes, in fact, the theory of Leo Frobenius, according to which "in the intensive play of the child we are dealing with the source - starting from the holiest groundwater - of the whole culture and of any great creative force. "(...) This is how man acquires two forms of life: one of existence, the other of game. In-playing-your-own-role lies the source of the whole culture." (Huizinga, 1977:15).

Modern studies of developmental psychology, preschool and school pedagogy, psycho-sociology, which address the issue of play from various perspectives unanimously admit, with specific arguments, that in childhood, the game is the fundamental type of activity, the form of activity that supports at the highest degree the psychic development, through psychomotor, sensory, intellectual and affective training (Claparède, E., 1975, Chateau, J., 1980, Piaget, J., 1973, Vâgotski, LS, 1971, Huizinga, J., 1998, Roşca, Al ., Chircev, A., 1970, Şchiopu, U., 1970, et alii).

In what follows, we will focus on the two child-specific concepts. We do not intend to draw up an exhaustive table of the textual representations of the child, but we will present only a few images of naivety, different tendencies that can be observed in A.P. Chekhov's work, more precisely in his stories.

In his creation, A.P. Chekhov approaches the theme of the child,

outlining approximately 290 child characters, of all ages, belonging to all social classes, leading different lives. In the first stories of the first half of the 1980s, twenty works focus on child characters.

A warm humor characterizes Chekhov's stories about children: *Grisha, Children, An Incident, Boys, Fugitive*. Let's try to understand how Chekhov's little heroes perceive the world. Some of them feel calm and confident in life, they are only concerned with the problems characteristic of their age.

The story *Grisha* depicts the youngest character: a little boy, born two years and eight months ago, walking with a nanny on the boulevard, has a revelation, a naïve, strange curiosity: from the ordinary world of the house, he finds himself in a new, unexplored street world.

The author sees the world through the eyes of a child, tries to understand his inner state, to understand how a child feels, studying his environment. The boy knows the world at home, its details: that is close, what he looks like.

*Grisha has known only a rectangular world, where in one corner stands his bed, in the other nurse's trunk, in the third a chair, while in the fourth there is a little lamp burning. If one looks under the bed, one sees a doll with a broken arm and a drum; and behind nurse's trunk, there are a great many things of all sorts: cotton reels, boxes without lids, and a broken Jack-a-dandy.*

In this world, apart from the nanny and Grisha, there is often a mother and a cat, the mother looks like a doll, and a cat looks like a father's fur coat, only the fur coat has no eyes and a tail.

Thus, in the story *Grisha*, we observe the surrounding reality that is seen through the child's eyes through an unexpected age-specific scale of values:

*My mother looks like a doll, and the cat looks like my father's coat, except that the coat has no eyes and a tail... My father is a very mysterious person! The nanny and his mother, it is well known, have a purpose in this world: they dress Grisha, feed him and put him to bed. But what's the point of my father - no one knows.*

The boy understands why there is a nanny and a mother: he dresses Grisha, feeds him and puts him to bed. The hero's dissatisfaction is caused only by the extremely mysterious personality of the father, the child is still not able to understand why the father exists in his world.

There is another mysterious personality for Grisha - this is an aunt who

appears and disappears, while she is not behind her chest and under the couch. The new world, in which the hero finds himself while walking on the boulevard, is at first perplexed: there are so many fathers, mothers and aunts that he does not know with whom to run.

*In his new world, where that sun hurts one's eyes, there are so many papas and mammas and anties, that there is no knowing to whom to run. But what is stranger and more absurd than anything is the horses. Grisha grazes at their moving legs, and can make nothing of it. He looks at his nurse for her to solve the mystery, but she does not speak.*

Gradually, the boy begins to get used to this situation, he begins to like everything:

*A crowd of soldiers, with red faces and bath brooms under their arms, move in step along the boulevard straight upon him. Grisha turns cold all over with terror, and looks inquiringly at nurse to know whether it is dangerous. But nurse neither weeps nor runs away, so there is no danger. Grisha looks after the soldiers, and begins to move his feet in step with them himself.*

The glow of the sun, the sound of carts, horses, bright buttons - all these are so amazing and not scary that Grisha's soul is full of a sense of pleasure.

*The brightness of the sun, the noise of the carriages, the horses, the bright buttons are all so impressively new and not dreadful, that Grisha's soul is filled with a feeling of enjoyment and he begins to laugh.*

In the evening, Grisha returns to the familiar world at home, but bursts with the impressions of a new life, just explored. Chekhov shows the natural reaction of children's consciousness to these impressions: everything the child experiences.

Despite the fact that the story ends with the hero's tears, readers understand that the boy is happy because he is surrounded by love, affection and care for family, relatives and friends. He just explored life. Chekhov shows the natural reaction of children's consciousness to these impressions: everything the child experiences, his naivety.

In the story *A Father*, the father appears in the eyes of *the fat and round child like a beetle, and the mother - skinny like a mackerel.*

The story *Children* begins with a description of its heroes - children - who are left alone at home in the evening, in the absence of adults and, instead

of going to bed, they are playing lotto. Right from the beginning of the story, we notice the expression, even the inherent intensity, of the child's psychology. Chekhov invites the reader to enter the world of happy childhood, without worries. The author uses words and expressions typical for children's speech:

*Papa and mamma and Aunt Nadya are not home. They have gone to a christening party at the house of that old officer who rides on a little gray horse.*

The lottery scene is captured very vividly: the children play for money, exchange lines and do different actions (they play, make fun of each other and look for the kopeck). In this part of the story, the text is concise, the author is parsimonious in words, he does not waste details, he sketches. The end of the story is unexpected - falling asleep in the mother's bed - this has probably happened several times already, and this is a sign of a happy childhood.

Chekhov creates an entire gallery of portraits of children. The writer not only accurately depicts the appearance of the characters, but shows that each of the children already has or begins to manifest individual characteristics of character, because each child is a personality. Chekhov points out that each of the children plays in their own way, showing their evolving character and demonstrating the principles of life that will guide them into adulthood.

Grisha, nine years old, is an envious and greedy boy, he plays with emotion, just for the sake of money: (...) *The fear that he may not win envy, and the financial combinations of which his cropped head is full, will not let him sit and concentrate his mind. He fidgets as though he were sitting on thorns. When he wins, he snatches up the money greedily, and instantly puts it in his pocket.* This character trait will persist into adulthood. To show Grisha's mental and moral superiority over other children, the author uses adjectives to the superlative degree. This reveals a kind of hierarchy of relationships in the children's community.

Her sister, eight-year-old Anya, is also vigilant, watching the game, but she is not interested in money. *She flushes and turns pale, and watches the players keenly. The kopecks do not interest her. Success in the game is for her a question of vanity.*

The other sister, the cheerful Sonia, a six-year-old girl, with a curly head, plays for the sake of the game. She plays with pleasure and is happy for anyone who wins. Sensitivity can be seen on her face, she is moved. No matter