

Orphan hero and positive hero in ‘The Republic of ShKID’ by G. Belykh and L. Panteleev and ‘Pedagogical Poem’ by A. Makarenko

Hay Marn Jar Noo Moon

Doctoral candidate (Doctoral School of Literary and Cultural Studies, Institute of Slavic Studies, University of Szeged, Hungary)

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the characters in two literary works with socialist realism themes, ‘The Republic of ShKID’ by Belykh and Panteleev and ‘Pedagogical Poem’ by Makarenko, to demonstrate that orphan heroes in these two works have the attributes of positive heroes who also share the same qualities of the new Soviet man. The discussion of the orphan hero suggests that social orphanhood reflects the characteristics of the orphaned children in these two autobiographical writings. The correlation between a positive hero and the ‘new Soviet man’ is described in a way that the orphaned children in both literary works are educated in boarding schools to become new Soviet men, and a person who can achieve this position is seen as a positive hero of this period. The teachers or educators in these two works who foster the traits of the new Soviet man are likewise considered positive heroes in this category. The argument that socialist realism's idealized concept is not fully implemented in every situation is also highlighted in light of the fact that some of these works' positive heroes only partially embody the qualities of the new Soviet man while maintaining the value of individuality and personal identity.

Keywords : educator, pupil, positive hero, orphan hero, new man

Introduction

Children's literature usually portrays the purpose to educate children. The children's literature of Russia of the first half of the 20th century functions as a morale booster and deterrent against bad behavior among children. The writers of Socialist realism attempted to depict a realistic hero, and at the same time, they turned most often to realism as a form of narration. The 1920s were the most difficult years in the history of Russia. Everything was obliterated, and a new beginning was required. It was most effective to introduce a new generation to a new society and a new system. Schools were where a new generation received its education. During these years, children who had lost their families during the war and

those who still had families became strays. These children grew up on the street, stealing and committing robberies. Consequently, it is not surprising that the writers of the socialist realism of the 1920s set their goal as participation in the utopian process of creating a 'new man', and a realistic narrative style prevailed in their works (Bukhina & Lanu, 2015, p.26). Therefore, the writers of socialist realism were viewed as educators of a new man. When children write about themselves, however, their motivation for writing is different. In this instance, it describes how they feel, what they experience, how they react to the adverse environment, and how they survive. The most ideal characters in such works are the juvenile authors. According to these young authors, the life and experience of a destitute orphan were intriguing and captivating.

'The Republic of ShKID' and 'Pedagogical Poem' are characterized by the way they express the historical event and the personal identity as it relates to that historical event, as well as the course and progression of the children's education during those years. The first is written from the perspective of the pupils, the homeless children, Belykh and Panteleev, who, based on their experience, conveyed their experience of learning the new ideology and the foundation of the new system. They wrote about the residents of the boarding school, who were previously hooligans and juvenile delinquents. In their narrative, the authors described their educational experiences in detail. They were able to fully convey not only the traits of the characters but also the fascinating events in their lives. These defective inhabitants simply narrate their personal life experiences, without any ideology or philosophical statements. They were simply describing everything that was occurring. There is no specific protagonist in the story, just as there is no 'good' or 'bad' person, as all the characters were the central figure in their own lives, and the book is a lively biography of the 'Shkids' that resembles the autobiographical work in some respects. The Pedagogical Poem, on the other hand, is written from the perspective of the educator, the teacher, Makarenko, who endeavored to complete his pedagogical task using a new methodology. Education, colonist life, and pedagogy itself became the subject of Makarenko's artistic creativity, and in this instance, there was a fusion of fiction and theoretical creativity – pedagogy. The characters in both works reflect the actual social and humanitarian situation of the period: their actions and perceptions reveal the problems and conflicts of the whole community.

There are two primary groups of characters in these two works: the educator and the pupil. None of the characters in these two works of literature are fictional; they are all actual people. Therefore, it is impossible to describe the writer's fictional interpretation of the positive hero or the orphan hero. In contrast, they exhibit the characteristics and qualities of the literary archetypes of socialist realism. Analyzing these two works reveals the distinction between the realistic form of the positive hero and the idolized or propagandized positive hero, as well as the orphan hero of socialist realism. In socialist realism, these two literary archetypes were typically portrayed as 'new man'.

Research Framework

This article will attempt to distinguish between the literary positive hero, the actual positive hero, and the orphan hero, all of whom attempt to illustrate the character of the "new Soviet man" in the literary works of 'The Republic of ShKID' by G. Belykh and L. Panteleev and 'Pedagogical poem' by A. Makarenko from the social, historical, and literary archetypical point of views.

Research Methodology

The descriptive qualitative method is used to explain the relationship between the positive hero, the orphan hero, and the new Soviet man in these two literary works. The social-historical method is used to analyze the reflection of the 'new man' in the concept of the positive hero and the orphan hero in socialist realism.

Literature review

In Russian literature, the development of the child's image begins with classical literature. Different authors such as Chukovskiy K.I, Mayakovskiy V.V, Mihalkov S.V, Gaidar A.P and many others have written about childhood and children's images in various ways. Among these images of children, orphans were prominent and garnered widespread attention.

Orphan heroes of Russian literature at the beginning of the Soviet period are the symbols of the possibility of revolutionary changes, the suffering, and broken victims, since society failed to cope with the task of protecting childhood and caring for orphans (Bukhina & Lanu, 2015, p.26). They also reflect the hope for a better future inherent in the Soviet state. Their successful integration into the new social order corresponded well with the revolutionary promise of a better life (Balina, 2009, p.104). The childhood of those orphans is depicted in a way that the adventurous heroes, armed with revolutionary ideology, and corresponding modern plots are characterized by dynamism, conflict, and acute struggle between the old and the new (Kondakov, 2013, p. 101).

If we must discuss the educator and pupil in these two works of literature, we must review the definitions of these two terms for a deeper understanding. The definitions of 'educator' and 'pupil' depend on how education is conducted. In the explanatory dictionaries of Efremova (2009), Kuznetsov (1998), and Ozhegov (1953), 'educator' is defined as a person who educates or has educated others, a specialist engaged in educational work, or an employee, teacher, or mentor in any children's institution, educational institution, boarding school, college, etc. In these three dictionaries, the word 'pupil' is defined as a foster child, a companion, a child (typically an orphan), or a young person taken into care by someone, somewhere. A person who has been raised is being taught or is a student who receives an education in an educational institution, orphanage, university, or college. A student in secondary school or a closed educational institution. In the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia

(1969), an educator is defined in a broad sense as a person who conducts education, and in a narrower sense as an official who carries out educational duties in an educational institution. The educator is responsible for the upbringing and education, the health and physical development of the pupils, the organization of their life and recreation, the implementation of various policies and cultural activities with them, the coordination of academic assistance, etc. The educator associates with pioneers, Komsomol, children's collective, and children's self-government entities.

When discussing the new man of socialist realism, it is important to consider the orphan hero characteristic of this literary ism. As a result of the revolution and the civil war destroying the social order and many families, a great number of orphans emerged, which led to the depiction of orphan heroes in the literature of the time. About this Bukhina (2016) remarked that in Soviet literature, stories about an orphan began to develop differently. Therefore, the literary works usually begins with the opening of a new state institution, in which new teachers come to re-educate stray children.

Orphanhood can be divided into orphan (orphanage) and social orphan (social orphanhood) categories. An orphaned child is a child under 18 years old whose both or one of the parents died. A social orphan is a child who still has biological parents, but for whatever reason, they do not care for or indulge in childrearing. In this case, the state and society are responsible for their welfare (Galaguzova, 2000, p.192). The growth in the number of children without any parental care is especially observed in times of economic crises and wars, as well as in periods of transition from the old state of the social system to a new one (Korchagina et al., 2010). Therefore, most of the orphans following the revolutionary war were classified as social orphans.

Regarding the image of the positive hero in Russian literature of the 1920s and 1930s, Steiner notes that in addition to demonstrating miracle machines and impersonal service personnel, a large portion of the literature of the 1920s was devoted to the image of a positive character; the creation of a new hero acting actively and socially correctly was a crucial aspect of the poetics of the time (Steiner, 2002, p.104). The purpose of the hero's ideal image in post-revolutionary Russian literature was to educate the populace by using this image as a model. After the revolution, there was a wish to create a new, unified socialist art, and the concept of a new person incorporated a utopian image of an ideally positive character. As noted by Geller, the literary paradigm of a revolutionary hero in the early 1920s was a destroyer of the old order who was devoted to the communist party (Geller, 1994, p.10). Hence, the positive hero of that socialist realism inherits some features of the revolutionary hero to some extent.

Slepukhin wrote in his article about the image of a 'new man' as a positive hero, in which the concept of a new man continued to create a hero of the new time', a man devoid of prejudice, perfect and harmonious, almost a Renaissance man. For instance, athletes and collective farmers, workers, and scientists appeared in the paintings, looking like athletes,

with the bright look of an idealist believer, and mythologized images of 'new' heroes, children of the revolution, such as pilots and polar explorers appeared in print (Slepukhin, 2017, p.602). A positive hero in literature is closely associated with the utopian form of humanity, in which each individual works and contributes to society. It was expected that the new Soviet man would serve as the foundation of a technocratic utopia in which the distinction between mental, creative, and physical labor was erased. (Izmozik, Lebina, 2010, p.234). Mathewson (1975) noted that placing the positive hero at the center of attributes of Soviet writing signified a break with traditions of nineteenth-century Russian classics which socialist realism claimed to continue. Friedberg (2012) asserted that socialist realism only has one element in common with nineteenth-century Russian aesthetic traditions: the concept of 'ideinost' which calls for a literary work to embody a significant idea. However, he continued, the concept of 'ideinost' in socialist realism was greatly corrupted by the requirement of 'partiinost' which required the author to eschew all pretense of objectivity and openly express his sympathies with admirable ideals and hostility toward, for instance, bourgeois survivals in the consciousness of his characters. He interpreted the concept of 'narodnost' or public accessibility as a way to banish overly difficult and experimental art which resulted in the disappearance of modernist tendencies from Soviet writing. He claimed that The fabricated 'future-oriented' psychology of Stalinist positive heroes was incongruously blended with familiar settings and everyday reality with regard to the ideologically-inspired requirement of 'tipichnost', in which the reality, the main idea of socialist realism decreed, was to be depicted 'in its revolutionary development', and it was to be future-oriented: the typical was not that which was, admittedly, typical of today, but that which was to become typical tomorrow.

The endings in the literary works of socialist realism typically target the 'happy ending' and about this Kelly (2007) commented that by the 1930s, it became difficult to mention that children in the Soviet Union itself could be unhappy. Although there is a correlation between the qualities of a 'new man' and a positive hero, Mathewson (1975) argued that the characteristics of the socialist positive hero do not always reflect reality in the manner intended by the literary work. There can still be a gap between these archetypical heroes and the traits and characters of the literary heroes that are portrayed by the authors.

Discussion and analysis

The concept of the educator and the pupil is more complex than it first appears. At first glance, it is apparent that educators educate students, which means that teachers are educators and students are pupils. Despite this, it is impossible to conclude that teachers are educators and students are pupils from a thorough examination of these two works of literature. Even teachers are considered pupils in both works because they had to adopt a new pedagogical methodology, observe new social principles, and ultimately become "a new man" by abandoning the previous conventional pedagogical approach when teaching homeless children. Makarenko and Vikniksor are 'educated' by the school in the sense that it teaches

them about solidarity, the proper attitude toward homeless children, and the development of new pedagogical techniques. In this regard, the school serves as an educator. Moreover, each character in these works was born out of a new system. Here, the education system itself serves as the primary engine. All objects within this system are influenced in turn by pupils as well as educators. Every responsible person fulfills his or her responsibilities and educates the next generation.

Unlike the orphan hero of literature of other eras, the orphan hero of Russian literature of the 1920s and 30s rather refers to the topic of the transformation of a new society. Bukhina claimed that the children embodied a huge potential for a new ideological experiment, in which they turned out to be both experimental subjects and necessary human 'building material' (Bukhina, 2016, p.96). In this instance, 'The Republic of ShKID' and 'Pedagogical Poems' present their own 1920s issues. The children in these narratives proved to be the ideal 'building material' for revolutionary transformations. The description of their maturation and successful assimilation served as a reflection of the new revolutionary reality, as they were still perceived as unfinished, incomplete adults. Despite being homeless children and orphans, the young authors of 'The Republic of ShKID' expressed how much joy they had. They believed that their conduct and actions were neither a violation of the norms nor a neutral occurrence. They were their heroes in life. It relates to Balina's statement that the adventure became a very significant part of the children's narratives in the literature about homeless children. (Balina, 2009, p.105). The children in the Pedagogical Poem are also portrayed in such a way that they are not stigmatized for being orphans; rather, they are given assistance and taught to integrate into the new society.

The majority of children characters in 'The Republic of ShKID' and 'Pedagogical Poem' are typically social orphans. Some of them still have parents, but because their parents neglect them, they end up wandering the city streets as stray children. The parents and relatives of these children were not viewed as 'ideal' individuals in the new era, nor did they suit the role of a new person's educator. The children in 'The Republic of SHKID' were legally convicted and relocated from various locations. Some were taken from prisons, concentration camps, and orphanages. The majority of children were selected by school heads based on their talent and abilities. In contrast, the first students in The Pedagogical Poem by Makorenko were extraordinary. At the beginning of his novel, Makarenko described his first six students: four were eighteen years old and accused of armed robbery, while two were younger and accused of theft. They were elegantly dressed in breeches and fashionable footwear. He even presumed that they were not strays at all due to the fact that their hairstyles were on trend.

The assumption that these orphans are criminal is debatable, given that they perpetrate crimes even after being sent to school. Some orphans in both works are expelled from school or sent back to the police because they continue to perpetrate crimes and make no effort to change. The children's collective of 'The Republic of ShKID' and the 'Pedagogical Poem' is

comprised of juvenile delinquents who know how to fight and are even willing to use lethal weapons. These children smoke, drink alcohol, steal and commit a crime. They desire a life devoid of adult guidance and autonomy. However, rather than a 'criminal' orphan who receives social punishment for committing the crime, the children in these literary works are portrayed as merely orphaned children who seek refuge and whose criminal behavior is not a consequence of their genes but rather their surroundings.

“In the colony itself, we never used words like ‘criminal’, and our colony was never called that. At that time, we were called morally defective” (Makarenko, 1975, p.23).

These children were simply searching for a place in life and society. They believed these places to be temporary shelters where they could eat, sleep, and relax. In his narrative, Belykh wrote as follows:

“For the first time I felt that the shore had finally been found, a quiet pier had been found, from which he would not leave for a long time now” (Belykh & Panteleev, 2010, p.18).

And Makarenko wrote in this regard as follows:

“It seemed to me then that one hundred and twenty colonists were not just one hundred and twenty homeless people who had found a home and a job for themselves” (Makarenko, 1975, p.417).

With the rise of communist ideology at that time, the feature of the new Soviet man is clearly reflected in the image of orphan heroes of socialist realism. In the story ‘The Republic of ShKID’ and the novel ‘Pedagogical Poem’, the authors formulate the image of an orphan hero, who at first is a stray child and a juvenile delinquent, but then progressively transforms into a new Soviet person. The description of the orphan hero in these works exemplifies a new socialist perspective on the world. The lack of depiction of depressed children who blamed society for their homelessness and hunger suggests that a new type of orphan hero, a happy and stressless child, is portrayed in socialist realism. Despite their mental suffering and moral damage, they were able to survive, form their personality, and attain their own contentment with the help of the school and the educators, which also implies the propaganda that a child has to enter the socialist status and abandon all of the sufferings in the past. This image is ideal in that it represents optimism for an excellent future. According to Balina, the orphan hero’s successful integration into the new social order corresponded well with the revolutionary promise of a better life. This applies to the orphan in these two works (Balina, 2009, p.104). They all pursued their ambitions and ultimately realized them. The children resided in school, experienced the school's new upbringing, and grew up there. When it was time for them to leave school, they enrolled in an institute, technical school, or factory and eventually found a career. Thus, the orphan heroes in these two literary works exemplify the majority of the characteristics of the new Soviet man, who has inherent optimism for a better future.

This orphan hero of socialist realism shares similarities with the positive hero of 1920s-1930s Russian literature. In these two works, both teachers and students exhibit the attributes of the positive hero. Some educators have been successful in raising and educating children and in guiding students to a new existence. There are also pupils who, after completing their studies at these schools, find a career and transform from criminals to law-abiding citizens and whose lives have been transformed by doing so.

In 'The Republic of ShKID', Educator Vinkniksor, Educators Lidochka Petrovna, and Ekaterina Grigoryevna are portrayed as excellent teachers who have a strong interest in pedagogy, care for students as if they were their own children, and help students find a new path in life. Long-ignored juvenile delinquents were the focus of their concept, which centered on the desire to educate their students. These educators identified the talents and abilities of each child and guided them in the right direction. They were honest, diligent, and interested in the pedagogy and education of the 'new man'. These characteristics represent the ideal savior of that time. For example, Vinkniksor recruited children from prisons, orphanages, police stations, dysfunctional families, and other locations based on their talents. He recognizes their abilities and establishes the school's systematic regulations. Throughout the process, his efforts to educate not only the defective and poorly performing pupils but also the teachers were remarkable.

Although the narrative is set in the 1920s, the educator, Makarenko in 'Pedagogical Poem' embodies the characteristics of a positive hero of the 1930s. Makarenko exemplifies the qualities of a true Soviet man: the ability to systematically organize his work in education, to struggle for the quality of social, cultural, and educational work, for the quality of the study, patriotism, and career enthusiasm. The most obvious trait of a successful Soviet man, according to Makarenko, is the ability to work as part of a team and to be committed to public affairs, as well as conscious discipline.

After three years of leaving the school of Dostoevsky, the young writers of the Republic of Shkids, Belykh, and Panteleyev, found a career as journalists. Their other friends, Yaponyes, graduated from the Institute of theatrical studies; even the once-naughty child, Sasha, became a teacher; and Kupytes became a military officer in the red army. All of them joined Komsomol and became activists in the collectives. Some actively partake in the collective farm's operations. The School of Gorkiy also produced engineers (Zdorova), physicians (Burun), teachers (Nyisinov, Zoren), a pilot (Shelaputin), a pioneer (Shurka), Bolsheviks, and party representatives with the characteristics of the Soviet new man (Zdorova, Burun, Nyisinov, Zoren). The evolution and metamorphosis of the students in both works are similar in that they began as immature, socially, and morally deficient children who lacked moral value, intelligence, and ethics, and then transformed into intelligent, socially respected, and ethical adults. This applies to the note of Friedberg (2012) that aware of the artistic limitations of featuring ordinary workers and collective farmers as Positive

Heroes and models for emulation, Soviet literary artisans often preferred to portray in that role middle-level Party functionaries, factor directors, scientists and artists.

Despite all these qualities of the ideal positive hero of socialist realism that are emphasized in these two works, it is intriguing to consider whether all these qualities truly reflect the ideal positive hero of socialist realism. Mathewson (1975) doubted that humans could ever be perfect in the sense that socialist realism's idealized concept cannot be practiced for everyone and in every circumstance, and it is difficult to implement the precise imitation of that positive hero. The characters of these two works demonstrate this assertion. As these two works are based on reality, we can observe how these excellent teachers and students behave and perform; however, there are still some discrepancies between reality and the idealized hero archetype.

As a characteristic of socialist realism literature, neither of these works depicts the struggle between good and evil. Personnel are categorized according to their adaptability to new systems: those who get along with the new environment, new society, new rules, and new system, and those who do not. It is evident that the motif of the positive hero is only visible in a person who adapts to something new.

Even though both Makarenko and Viknisor are headmasters of their respective schools, their performance and relationships with the students are quite distinct. The similarity is that they both must deal with unprofessional instructors who are attempting to profit from the school system's collapse, as well as immoral youths who attempt to solve problems with violence and even firearms. The educator Makarenko enforces strict collectiveness, group labor, and socialist ideology at his school, and his students must act accordingly. They work in collective farms, act in units, share the fruits of their labor, wear uniforms, and speak and behave like true new Soviet men. However, the educator Vikniksor is depicted as prone to establishing an open dialogue with students and granting greater rights to individual ideology, freedom of expression, and freedom of publication on his school grounds. These are evident when he encouraged the students to publish a newspaper titled 'Student' and the number of newspapers multiplied to more than 50 when there are more than 50 students, indicating that each newspaper represents the uniqueness of each student. His method of education is described as being solely focused on morality, intelligence, and discovering the individual value and meaning of life. All of the activities that students engage in at the school of Dostoyevsky are primarily focused on academics, talent discovery, and moral improvement. Other than that, there are no activities such as collective labor, group performance, or learning socialist ideology. The children later became positive role models in a socialist society. The new man of these positive heroes in the Republic of ShKID, however, is more akin to a new man who is neither influenced nor completely covered by the new socialist ideals. Externally, they may appear to be new Soviet men, but internally, they retain distinct individual characteristics.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the concept of 'educator' and 'pupil' incorporates the notion that the educator and pupil represent distinct literary and social images. Both educators and pupils in these two works exhibit the quality of a positive hero of socialist realism. The orphan heroes depicted in these two works is carefree and enjoys life on his or her own terms. The characteristics of these orphan heroes in these works reveal the possibility for revolutionary changes as well as the conflict between the old and new ideologies. Although both criminal and social orphanhood are relevant for the context of these works, social orphanhood is emphasized in such a way that the children are not considered criminals despite the reality that some were taken in from prisons and the streets. The main idea is that the orphan hero finally rose to a position of social worth, becoming a new man who embodies the qualities of the new Soviet man, particularly a new man who adheres to the new communist ideology. When portraying orphan heroes, the recent past of the orphan is overlooked and only the future is focused on. Makarenko appears to place more emphasis on achieving this goal, and his orphan heroes are portrayed alongside the qualities of the new Soviet man. However, the authors Belykh and Pantelev focus greater importance on their experiences as orphans studying at the boarding school and receiving an education to enable them to blend in with society. The essential ideas of socialist realism—ideinost, partiinost, narodnost, and tipichnost—were thoroughly represented in both literary works. The important idea of educating the social orphans after the war and developing an innovative form of education for these children to become the new Soviet man is how the concept of 'ideinost' is manifested. The concept of 'partiinost' is clearly expressed in these works, where not only the educators, but also the pupil despises the self-centered individuals who attempted to gain benefits by taking advantage of the other students, who denied capitalism in school, and who engaged in a disagreement with the local kulaks. The idea of 'narodnost' is explicitly conveyed in the way that both works are written as autobiographies in which the events that occurred at the boarding schools are simply narrated. When it comes about the concept of 'tipichnost', typical of today is well demonstrated through the life of the children and the educators whose actions were the familiar acts of the typical daily life of that period. An intelligent, fair-minded teacher and a moral, diligent pupil are given as examples of positive heroes and the behavior of these exemplary protagonists demonstrated their moral worth. The authors of these works narrated an experience that exemplified the formation of a new man, a man who acts without prejudice, who lives in harmony with other people. The positive hero and the orphan hero in these two literary works share a common goal: to become the new man of their era. The only difference is that the positive heroes in Makarenko's works are more likely to reflect the characteristics of the new Soviet man, who fully affiliate with the characteristics of the socialist realism's concept of 'ideinost', 'partiinost', 'narodnost' and 'tipichnost', and the qualities of future-oriented' Stalinist positive heroes, whereas the positive heroes in work of Belykh and Panteleyev are inclined to the characteristics of the

new man that partially have the quality of a new Soviet man, but retain their individuality and personal identity internally.

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