

THE CONCEPT OF «CHILDHOOD» IN THE STORY «BABYNI KAZKY» BY B. ANTONENKO-DAVYDOVYCH

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-076-6-20>

The works for children take a special place in the creative heritage of B. Antonenko-Davydovych. The author has written such collections for children during his creative career: «Parotiah ch.273», 1933; «Slovo materi», 1960; «Yak vono pochynalos», 1969. The stories in the collection «Babyni kazky», which was published after the writer's death in 1991, have a very strong autobiographical dominant. The works included in it have been written by B. Antonenko-Davidovich at a very respectable age, and therefore they contain a lot of information about the formation of his personality as a writer, ideological and creative origins of his creation.

B. Antonenko-Davydovych's works for children were researched by V. Dmytrenko «Educational opportunities of a literature lesson (on the example of considering the story «Ne sviati horshky lipliat» by B. Antonenko-Davydovych)», «Education of humanism in the process of studying stories for children by Borys Antonenko-Davydovych», N. Okhrimenko «Borys Antonenko-Davydovych «Slovo materi»«etc. O. Khamedova in her thesis and monograph «The fate and creation of Borys Antonenko-Davydovych» researches the relationship between the biographical author and the character and also refers to the children's works of the writer. However, the issue of the concept of «childhood» on the example of works for children by B. Antonenko-Davydovych in general and the story «Babyni kazky», in particular, was not considered separately.

The appeal to the concept of «childhood» in the creation of B. Antonenko-Davydovych is due to the fact that the writer's childhood was really happy and joyful, «real» and sincere, as it is evidenced by the autobiographical works «Zoloty korablyk», «Babyni kazky» etc. His childhood was carefree and frank, humane and honest, and therefore it created the basis for the unquenchable optimism of life, which the writer maintained and carried throughout life, recreating in psychological and masterful works for children.

The concept of «childhood» together with the concepts of «happiness», «truth», «song», «family», «death» is an integral part of the general conceptosphere of the creation of B. Antonenko-Davydovych. All the experience that a person gets, knowing the world around, forms picture of the

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world, which is transformed and forms its conceptosphere. According to N. Khrystych, each concept «combines important human knowledge of the world around us. The system of concepts forms a picture of the world (world view, perception of the world), which reflects the child's (or person's – our clarification – K.P.) understanding of reality, forms a special conceptual picture, which is the basis of further worldview, that is, a certain human experience is determined, which then is represented by a concept» [5, p. 409].

The formation of the main dominants of the human worldview occurs in the childhood. The childhood is an integral part of human life, when fundamental truths about life are laid down through knowledge of the world. So, S. Luparenko, researching the concept of «childhood» in the scientific literature, concludes that «it is during childhood laid the foundations of personal activity and personal qualities, human values that determine the quality of future life» [6, p. 293], and also there is a socialization of the person who passes the basic, but such significant stages of education, training and development. T. Haievska affirms that «the social feature of childhood affects to the future life of an adult. At this time the foundations of health, personal value-normative basis are laid, the basic habits, character traits, features of behavior are formed» [3, p. 106].

T. Pirozhenko proposes to identify several components for a full picture of childhood. So, considering childhood in the context of ethnographic and cultural trends, she identifies the first component, talking about «the actual culture of childhood: the environment in the broadest sense, the surroundings, cultural forms that adults create for children» [7, p. 7]. Accordingly, «the nature of childhood, the manifestation of the child's essence, children's subculture, namely forms of activity of the child» [7, p. 8] are the second component of childhood researches. Thus, the period of childhood is the most valuable. In this period a child communicates openly and sincerely with the world, expresses his/her care and feelings, is not ashamed to be real, learns with his/her heart everything he/she sees around him/her.

The childhood is not only fun, victories and dreams, gifts and holidays, but also instructive lessons of fate, which awaken a thirst love for the Motherland and for life. There are important strategic core lines in defining the phenomenon of childhood, which «intersect, do not exist without each other: it is a valuable importance of childhood as a dynamic social formation and personal significance for each child of the social center in which there is his/her formation, development, prosperity» [2, p. 27–28]. Therefore, the society, in particular, the family are an important and decisive factor in the child's life.

So, in the story «Babyni kazky», 1964 B. Antonenko-Davydovych, who at the time of writing was 65 years old, introduces us to the older members of his

family, especially narrates about his grandmothers, who have influenced the further understanding of the world by the writer and awareness of his place in it. The story contains a subtitle – «from children's impressions», because in it the author introduces to the reader the events of his early childhood, which have influenced the formation of his consciousness.

The writer reproduces the meaningful pictures of his childhood from a considerable distance. «The voice of the narrator is really decisive, – says O. Khamedova, – but not unique. It intertwines with the voice of another autobiographical character – little Borys. The change of worldviews is also emphasized by temporal forms: the past tense of the story is replaced by the present when the child-character speaks. Children's view of events reproduces the joy of learning about the world, experiencing the «fullness of life», which are unknown to adults» [4, p. 62–63].

In the story «Babyni kazky» we highlight several components of the concept of «childhood». In this story memories of childhood connote with the feeling of happiness, reveal the source of the formation of national consciousness.

Childhood as the feeling of happiness. B. Antonenko-Davydovych, comprehending life, repeatedly returned to memories of his childhood in order to better understand himself, to once again realize the lessons which he has learned. The boy lived with his parents in Bryansk (Russia) and arrived to Ukraine to visit his grandparents. He was happy to come there, due to he felt happy to be united with his family and Ukrainian nature: «We came in the middle of summer, when the lush Ukrainian nature was blooming and showing green, to visit family, it seemed to me that in those regions there is never a cold Bryansk winter, but just always summer and holiday, when everyone is happy, everyone is joyful» [1, p. 581]. It seems «charming», but «lost paradise» [1, p. 581] for the little boy to visit his grandmothers. Only warm and pleasant memories enveloped his soul and heart as he told of his grandmother's yard and house. Romenska grandmother has «a garden near the house with plums and pears, which my grandmother treats to me, and two hives with careful bees, like my grandmother...» [1, p. 581], and also there are portraits of Shevchenko and lieutenant Shmidt on the wall. Nedryhailivska grandmother «has a stork or chornohuz, as grandmother says, which lives on the barn, and behind the barn there are thickets of elderberry, where it is good to hide <...>» [1, p. 581].

We should also mention the moments when after housework, grandmother Oleksandra went outside to play with her grandchildren in geese and wolves, and after that they all sat in a circle and sang Ukrainian songs. And then grandmother began to talk about long ago and the glorious kozaks. And these stories by grandmother taught her grandson to be always ready, gritting his

teeth, to give honest and fair resistance to his enemies «like the last kozak in her fairy tale» [1, p. 589]: «Come, enemies, I call you!» [1, p. 586].

Childhood as the source of the formation of national consciousness.

Grandmother Oleksandra and grandmother Olena perceived Russian language of their little grandson differently. Grandmother Olena was happy to heard reciting poems by her grandson, she was even proud of his success. And on occasion she praised him among present people. But grandmother Oleksandra was not satisfied with her Russian-speaking grandson. And the boy was even afraid of her. She didn't even respect her son, Borys's father. Authority of grandmother Oleksandra and her clear Ukrainian core formed in her grandson a clear idea of his roots and contributed to the awakening of national consciousness. He begins to care about Ukrainian songs, admires stories about Ukrainian honorable kozaks. But everything was different in romenska grandmother Olena. It is impossible to avoid her desire to worry and care, to feed and cherish everyone. Grandmother Olena was more gentle and instilled to her grandson the understanding that any situation should be resolved amicably: «And you obey, Borys, obey! It will be better for you...» [1, p. 587].

The story represents two different views on the exactingness and severity of grandmother Oleksandra. Little Borys does not agree to come to terms with this, he sometimes even gets upset that the grandmother calls him «perekotyple» [1, p. 582], «so silly boy that he doesn't even know a good song» [1, p. 583]. However, from a distance of years, the writer takes the instructions and advice of his grandmother for the right advice not to break the connection with the Motherland, but on the contrary to feel and strengthen this connection with the native land. Advices and precepts of grandmother Oleksandra awakened in her grandson's mind «a mixed feeling of pity, resentment and ardent love for something unconscious yet, but so great and dear, for which it is not a pity to give own life...» [1, p. 588–589]. The songs, legends and stories that the boy have heard from her had the strongest influence to his personality and formed his national consciousness.

Consequently, the analysis of the story «Babyni kazky» by B. Antonenko-Davydovych in order to define the concept of «childhood» in the story, suggests that this concept connotes with the awareness and understanding of happiness, and acts as the source of national consciousness of the writer.

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