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A CHILD IN THE ART SPACE: A STUDY IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF STANISŁAW WYSPIAŃSKI'S WORK

S u m m a r y: The values of the relationship that takes place between a parent and a child can be analyzed on various levels: moral, biological, symbolic, social, legal or artistic. The aim of this study is an attempt to characterize the presence of a child as a subject in the European visual arts, with particular emphasis on the value of fatherhood in relation to the artistic work of one of the greatest Polish painters: Stanisław Wyspiański. Through the identification of values through semiological and iconographic axiology, it becomes possible to read an artistic work as a specific, philosophical record about the essence of understanding the analyzed value.² In the case of Wyspiański, the artist's child portraits will be analyzed, which can be treated as a kind of symbolic record not only of understanding but above all of experiencing the value of fatherhood. In the multidimensional process of raising a child, the father plays an extremely important role, influencing the formation and development of a young person's personality. But it is not a one-way process, and the child also significantly shapes the parent as a father, friend and companion in everyday life.

Ke y w o r d s: childhood, child, art, Wyspiański, child portrait, fatherhood, raising children

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² Cf. Mariusz Szajda, "Identyfikacja wartości na drodze aksjologii semiologiczno ikonograficznej". *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 54 (2018): 31–59.

Entry

Among the many topics that have been present in the history of art, the child undoubtedly occupies a special place. Although the search for the first significant traces of the presence of such themes cannot begin with prehistory, the ancient space became the ground for the first representations of children in sculpture and painting. In ancient Egypt, there were numerous statuettes of Isis with little Horus, or in ancient Greece – images of the fertility goddess Tellus, or Hermes with Dionysus.³ Undoubtedly, the emergence and development of Christianity meant that presenting Jesus as a child became a very common topic in art.

A child in European art over the centuries

Early Christian and medieval art largely neglected secular depictions of children, focusing primarily on depicting saints, among whom the only image of a child was the young Jesus. Many such examples can be found, starting with the first images of Mary with the baby Jesus in the catacombs, through the works of great artists of the Middle Ages. A good example is *Measta di Santa Trinita* by Cenni di Pepo.⁴ This painting from around 1285 shows the Madonna with baby Jesus seated on a throne. The Savior not only gives blessings, but also has the face of a mature, wise young man. There were many such images in the Middle Ages and in the following centuries, thanks to the popularity of the Christian religion.⁵ No less the vast majority of artists showed the baby Jesus as an almost adult, small, unnatural and serious man. Until the 15th century, in art, the child was usually presented either in the perspective of biblical stories or mythologically – as Cupid, the Roman god of love. In the Middle Ages, the appearance of a child in the family was a significant event, although the day of its birth was not generally celebrated, but above all day of the patron saint whose name it was given. The aristocracy, basically, at the time of the birth of a child, was thinking above all about the beneficial conclusion of a future marriage than about the sphere of life and emotional or intellectual development

³ Cf. *Bogini Tellus. Ara Pacis*, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5d/Ara_Pacis_Tellus_05.jpg [accessed: 13.05.2024]; *Statuette of Isis nursing Horus, dedicated by Ankhhor, son of Perechbanebdjedet and Heretib*, Metmuseum, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/545961> [accessed: 13.05.2024]; *Hermes with the Infant Dionysus*, University of Saskaychewan, <https://artsandscience.usask.ca/antiquities/collections/items/greek-items/classical/sculpture/hermes-with-dionysus.php> [accessed: 13.05.2024].

⁴ Cf. AA. VV, *Galleria degli Uffizi. I Grandi Musei del Mondo* (Roma: Scala, 2003), 21.

⁵ Among the famous paintings showing Mary with the baby Jesus, the following can be mentioned: *Maesta di Santa trinita* – Cimabue (around 1280), Uffizi Gallery, Florence; *Maesta* – Duccio di Buoninsegna (around 1308–1311), Museum dll'Opera del Duomo, Florence; *Maesta Ognissanty* – Giotto di Bondone (around 1310), Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

of a new family member. On the other hand, in families where there was poverty, the child was quickly sent to help with manual labor.⁶

From the very beginning, portraits of children were reserved mainly for very rich people, i.e. the aristocracy and royal families. Although the number of images of children increased rapidly during the European Renaissance, it was not associated with any social change in relation to the child. Due to the expectations of the times, a child, even in a wealthy family, was deprived of “childhood” in the modern sense of the word.⁷ This can be clearly seen in the 16th and 17th century children's portraits.⁸ The images of laughing children by Frans Hals, created at that time, seem to be a kind of phenomenon.⁹ It seems to be one of the few more well-known artists who tried to see something more in a child during this period than just an adult-styled exterior. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the smile on the faces of people portrayed at that time was still not welcome and associated rather with lack of reason. Thus, as Bożena Matyjas states: “the attitude towards the child was different in Egyptian antiquity (Spartan and Athenian approaches) and non-European antiquity (Asian e.g. in the country of UR), different in the Middle Ages (restrictive nature of the attitude towards the child), revival and enlightenment (strong humanistic trends) different in subsequent epochs and nowadays.”¹⁰ Children's portraits, so common in royal families from the 15th to the 19th century, basically had not only a commemorative function, but above all a political and propaganda one. A good example is the painting by Diego Velázquez entitled *Las meninas* or *Court Ladies* from 1656.¹¹ The main pretext for painting it was to show the five-year-old Infanta Margaret Theresa in a very discreet environment of

⁶ Cf. Margaret L. King, “Concepts of childhood: What we know and where we might go”. *Renaissance Quarterly* 60 (2007): 371–407.

⁷ Reflections on the child and childhood, depending on the historically changing history, were subject to modification. As Barbara Smolińska-Theiss points out, recognizing childhood “is a historically and culturally variable social category. [...] Time and space have been recognized as an inalienable context, without which it is impossible to recognize childhood” (Barbara Smolińska-Theiss, *Dzieciństwo w małym mieście* (Warszawa: Uniwersytet Warszawski. Wydział Pedagogiczny, 1993), 23).

⁸ Examples of children's portraits of the 16th and 17th centuries include: Girolamo Mazzola Bedoli, *Parma embracing Alessandro Farnese*, (1556), Galleria nazionale di Parma; Alonso Sanchez Coello, *Portrait of Don Juan de Austria*, (1560), Museo Soumaya, Mexico City; Cristóvão de Morais, *Portrait of Sebastian I, King of Portugal*, (1572), Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon; Frans Pourbus the Younger, *Louis XIII as a Child* (1611), The Cleveland Museum of Art; George Jamesone, *Anne Erskine with her daughters* (1629), National Galleries Scotland.

⁹ An interesting example of a child portrait by Frans Hals are undoubtedly: *The Laughing Child*, (1620–1625), Los Angeles County Museum of Art; *Child with Soap Bubble* (1625–1649), Louvre Abu Dhabi; *The Laughing Boy* (1625), Maurishuis, Netherlands; *Laughing Boy with Flute* (1629), Staatliches Museum Schwrin, Germany; *The Drinking Boy* (1625–1628), Staatliches Museum Schwrin, Germany.

¹⁰ Bożena Matyjas, *Dzieciństwo w kryzysie. Etiologia zjawiska* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie “Żak”, 2008), 22.

¹¹ Diego Velázquez, *Las meninas*, Museo del Prado, Madrid, <https://www.museodelprado.es/coleccion/obra-de-arte/las-meninas/9fdc7800-9ade-48b0-ab8b-edee94ea877f?searchMeta=las%20meninas> [accessed: 13.05.2024].

family and servants. It should be noted that painting children's portraits, even by such brilliant artists as the aforementioned Velázquez or Anthony van Dyck, was not an easy thing at that time. Each of them tried to combine on the one hand the childishness of a royal family member while maintaining their high status, being aware that in a few years this innocent creature could become a monarch. After all, the child was the heir to great family titles and huge fortunes.

In the following centuries, there were minor changes and, apart from official portraits, there were also images of children at play, work, or more casual portraits. It should be noted that the bourgeois class, which was getting richer during the period of industrialization, could afford to use the services of even the most famous painters, thanks to which many very intimate child portraits were created.¹²

Particularly noteworthy, however, are the portraits of children made by fathers, often great and famous artists, such as: Hugh Camaron, William McTaggart, Allan Ramsay or Jan Matejko.¹³ Among Polish painters, whose children's portraits not only touch with their beauty, but also become a carrier of important values and deep emotions, is undoubtedly Stanisław Wyspiański. Thanks to the method of identification of values by means of semiological- iconographic axiology, it is possible to read the children's portraits of the Krakow artist as a means of principled values in human life.¹⁴

¹² Children's portraits of the 19th and 20th centuries include: Auguste Renoir, *Young Girls at the Piano* (1892), Musée d'Orsay, Paris; Thérèse Schwartze, *Portrait of Mrs. A. G. M. Ogtrop – Hanlo with Five Children* (1906), Centraal Museum, Utrecht; George Washington Lambert, *Group Portrait* (1908), National Gallery of Australia.

¹³ Portraits of the artist's own children: Hugh Cameron, *Buttercups and Daisies*, (1881) – the artist's daughter Margaret Cameron, National Galleries Scotland; William McTaggart, *The Belle* (1885–1886) – daughter of artist Jean Isobel McTaggart, National Gallery of Scotland; Allan Ramsay, *The Artist's Son* (1741), National Gallery of Scotland; Jan Matejko, *Portrait of the artist's three children* (1870), National Museum in Warsaw; Jan Matejko, *Portrait of the Artist's Children* (1879), Lviv Art Gallery named after Borys Woźnicki, Lviv.

¹⁴ The method of identification of values by means of semiological-iconographic axiology consists of three stages: 1 – pre-axiological stage, determining the context of the creation of the work, as a preliminary stage preparing for the identification of the values the work carries; 2 – iconographic and semiological stage, related to the functioning and identification of the sign in the space of the work; 3 – stage of axiological synthesis, allowing for the proper axiological interpretation of a work of art. Therefore, semiological-iconographic axiology extracts and indicates specific values located in the knowledge space of the cognizing subject. Depending on the effect of the semiological, iconographic and pre-axiological analysis, it is also possible to reinterpret specific values, their different exposure and reception. It can be said that the semiological-iconographic analysis remains on the plane of the work itself, while the axiological synthesis takes the recipient to the metaphysical plane, where it becomes possible to find not only the deeper message of the work, but also to read the indications calling for a certain moral response. This possibility is provided above all by moral and spiritual values, because they are the ones that lead to responsibility. Cf. Szajda, *Identyfikacja*, 43–55.

Stanisław Wyspiański as a husband, father and artist

Stanisław Mateusz Ignacy Wyspiański was born on January 15, 1869 in Krakow, at a time when the Polish nation was experiencing times of loss of independence.¹⁵ How important a place for the future artist was the family house located in Kanonicza Street (House of Jan Długosz)¹⁶ is evidenced by a fragment of one of his poems: “At the foot of Wawel, my father had a studio, great white room, there lived a great multitude of the dead as figures; I used to go there as a little boy, and what I felt, it was later in the shapes of my art that I encased...¹⁷ Nevertheless, in his childhood, in his family home, Stanisław, apart from coming into contact with the world of art, also experienced a lot of pain. On the one hand, it was the death of his brother Tadeusz, professional problems and his father's drunkenness, and on the other hand, the death of his mother. All this meant that eleven-year-old Wyspiański, as a consequence of these events, moved in with his mother's sister and her husband: Joanna and Kazimierz Stankiewicz.¹⁸

From an early age, Stanisław developed a passion for art and deep patriotism. At first, it was probably due to the professional work of his father, who was a well-known Krakow sculptor, and over time also people of culture whom he met on his youthful path. Among them were: Józef Szujski¹⁹, Jan Matejko²⁰ or Władysław Łuszczkiewicz.²¹ Stanisław Wyspiański gained great artistic preparation thanks to his studies at the School of Fine Arts in Krakow, but also to exploring the secrets of

¹⁵ Cf. Wojciech Natanson, *Stanisław Wyspiański* (Warszawa: PWN, 1976), 18; Ignacy Witz, *Polscy malarze, polskie obrazy* (Warszawa: Nasza Księgarnia, 1970), 295. Stanisław Wyspiański was the son of the sculptor Franciszek Michał Wyspiański and Maria née Rogowska. He was born at a time when Poland was occupied by Russian, Prussian and Austrian partitions for 123 years.

¹⁶ Cf. Krystyna Zbijewska, *Krakowskim szlakiem Stanisława Wyspiańskiego* (Warszawa–Kraków: Wydawnictwo PTTK “Kraj”, 1986), 23.

¹⁷ Stanisław Wyspiański, *Wybór poezji*, ed. Aniela Lempicka (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1987), 16.

¹⁸ Cf. Zbijewska, *Krakowskim*, 9.

¹⁹ Józef Szujski (born June 16, 1835 in Tarnów, died February 7, 1883 in Kraków) an outstanding Polish politician, historian, poet, educator and professor at the Jagiellonian University. He was a co-founder of the Krakow school of history, which studied the national failures of Poles. Cf. Marcin Janeczek, “Józef Szujski wobec powstania styczniowego”. *Wieki Stare i Nowe* 6 (2009): 160–161; Władysław Smoleński, *Szkoły historyczne w Polsce (główne kierunki poglądów na przeszłość)* (Warszawa: Nakładem Gebethnera i Wolffa, 1887), 68.

²⁰ Jan Matejko (born June 24, 1838 in Krakow, died November 1, 1993 there) – one of the most outstanding Polish painters and educators. Author of over 300 oil paintings, many drawings and sketches. Director of the School of Fine Arts in Krakow. Among his students were Stanisław Wyspiański, Maurycy Gottlieb and Józef Mehoffer. Cf. Henryk M. Słoczyński, *Matejko* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, 2000); Juliusz Starzyński, *Jan Matejko* (Warszawa: Arkady, 1973).

²¹ Władysław Łuszczkiewicz (born September 3, 1828 in Krakow, died May 23, 1900 there) – a well-known Polish painter, educator, art historian and museologist. He was primarily interested in historical topics, becoming a precursor of historicism in Polish painting. After the death of Jan Matejko, he became the director of the School of Fine Arts in Krakow. Cf. Maria Rzepińska, *Władysław Łuszczkiewicz. Malarz i pedagog* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1983); Maria Rzepińska, “Władysław Łuszczkiewicz jako malarz historyczny i portrecista”. *Folia Historiae Artium* 18 (1982): 137–168.

art history at the Faculty of Philosophy and History of the Jagiellonian University. Already at that time he travelled a lot around Europe (Italy, Switzerland, Germany, the Czech Republic, France) but above all he loved Paris. It was there that he developed not only as a painter, but also as a writer and poet. In 1894, he returned to Krakow, although, as he indicated, this situation did not fill him with enthusiasm.²² However, he returned to his hometown as a modern artist, aware of his skills, not afraid to break the existing rigid rules – both in his professional and private life²³. Nevertheless, he felt misunderstood and underestimated in Krakow, which made him often think about returning to Paris.

Undoubtedly, an important event in the artist's life was his marriage to a peasant Teodora Teofila Pytko (September 1900). Stanisław had been in a relationship with her for a long time, and he decided to get married only after the birth of his second child. Most likely, he met his future wife at his aunt and uncle's house as a maiden with a child, working as a servant. Marriage was a misalliance, hence the reaction of various people to it was very often completely extreme. Some saw it as a happy relationship, while others only saw it as a source of pain and unhappiness.²⁴ Stanisław, perhaps against all odds, respected his wife very much, seeing her as the best mother for his children. He had four children: Helena (1896–1971), Mieczysław (1899–1924), Stanisław (1901–1968) and his son Teodor (1890–1916). The family was a bridgehead of happiness for Wyspiański. Even in the face of a debilitating disease (as a result of contracting syphilis, which was then incurable in Paris), he never isolated himself from his loved ones. He spent the last period of his life, experiencing poverty, in Węgrzce near Kraków, practically bedridden²⁵. Despite feeling bad, in such a difficult moment for himself, he never forbade the children

²² Stanisław Wyspiański wrote in a letter to Henryk Opieński on October 31, 1895: "I am bored in Krakow..." (Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska, "Życiowe i artystyczne dylematy Wyspiańskiego". *Alma Mater* 97 (2007): 5.

In a letter to Lucjan Rydel, he wrote: "[...] I feel suffocated here, embarrassed, shy [...]. I am ashamed to think in my own way here and I get close to so many people whom I can't stand – whom I despise, because I'm not allowed to think or act in my own way – and I'm still limited in my actions" (*Listy Stanisława Wyspiańskiego do Lucja na Rydla*, vol. 2, eds. Maria Rydlowa, Leon Płoszewski (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1979), 306).

²³ Cf. Alicja Okońska, *Stanisław Wyspiański* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1975), 110–111.

²⁴ Maria Waškowska, who was present at the Wyspiański wedding, recalled: "My aunt told me and my brother told me [...] that Staś cried at the wedding [...] he sobbed and sobbed as he pronounced the words of the oath". On the other hand, Adam Grzymała Siedlecki saw it completely differently, pointing out that Wyspiański's face on the day of the wedding was "brightened with a truly unearthly exultation" (Monika Śliwińska, "Gust miał odrębny". *Tygodnik Przegląd*, <https://www.tygodnikprzeglad.pl/gust-mial-odrebny/> [accessed: 13.05.2024]); Joanna Jaśkiewicz, "Mezalianse, czyli małżeństwa artystów, które wywołały skandal". *Niezła Sztuka*, <https://niezlasztuka.net/o-sztuce/wyspiański-tetmajer-wyczolkowski-mezalianse-w-sztuce/> [accessed: 13.05.2024].

²⁵ Cf. Jacek Cieślak, "Stanisław Wyspiański: Pobożny antyklerykał". *Rzeczpospolita*, <https://www.rp.pl/literatura/art2430331-stanislaw-wyspiański-pobozny-antyklerykał> [accessed: 13.05.2024].

to come to his bedroom. They were for him a refuge of hope and joy, which he missed so much at that time.

Stanisław Wyspiański was a brilliant portraitist. In this form of artistic expression, he was most delighted with learning and preserving the depth of the depicted figure, its interior, psyche, and spirit. A special place in this regard was occupied by portraits of children, especially those closest to him. It is in them that Wyspiański recorded something more than just his own artistic craftsmanship. It was his form of communicating his own feelings, desires, and seeing the world around him. Above all, however, it was his way of seeing a child through the prism of art and communicating about it.

Children's portraits of Stanisław Wyspiański

Due to his allergy to oil paints, Wyspiański found everything he needed in his artistic work in pastels. It was in this form of artistic expression that he achieved mastery. A child's portrait is by nature a difficult artistic task. This is mainly due to the fact that no child likes to pose for hours even for the most seasoned artist. Wyspiański's success in this respect was related to pastels, which enabled the project to be implemented very quickly, as he himself used to say: "A man is not the same on Tuesday as he was on Monday, he will change forever, he is changed by experiences and thoughts, a portrait is a reflection of the moment, an artistic reflection capturing a thing in depth."²⁶ That is why Wyspiański made portraits in a dozen or so minutes, as if catching a fleeting moment of life.

Children in his works are natural, devoid of artificial pathos or excessive sweetness. Instead, the recipient receives a whole range of emotions, from boredom through curiosity or sadness. It was also important that the artist really liked spending time with children and working with them. As Zenon Parvi, his cousin, recalled: "Wyspiański was fond of children, he drew and painted them wherever he could."²⁷

Among the many drawings of children, some of them are special. In 1904, already seriously ill, Wyspiański painted *Sleeping Mietek* (fig. 1).

²⁶ Julian Nowak, "Ze wspomnień o Wyspiańskim". In: *Wyspiański w oczach współczesnych*, vol. II, ed. Leon Płoszewski (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1971), 177.

²⁷ Krystyna Zbijewska, *Orzeł w kurniku. Z życia Stanisława Wyspiańskiego* (Warszawa: PIW, 1980), 140.

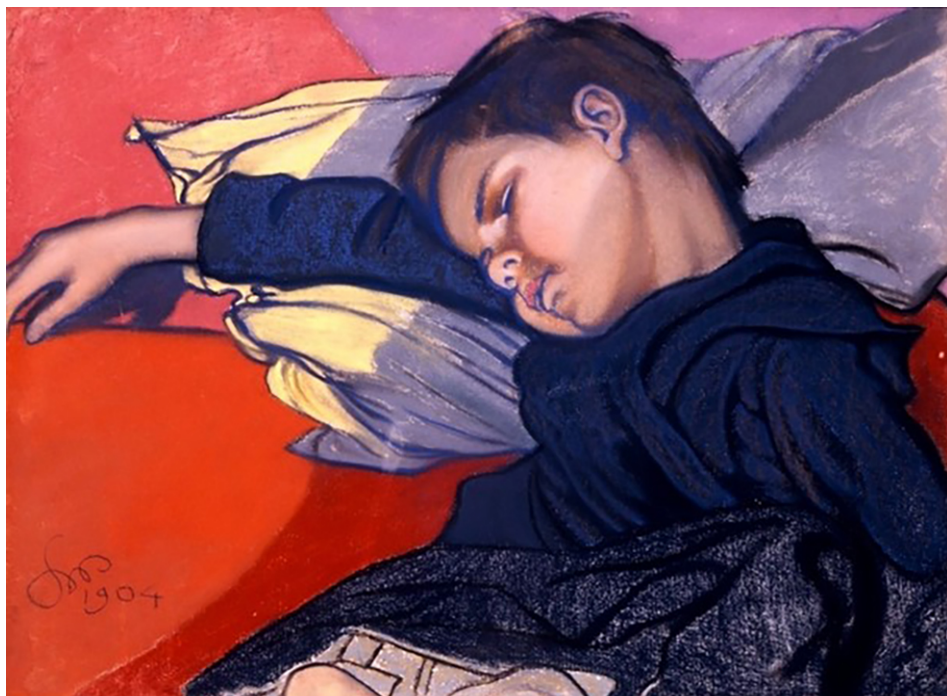


Fig. 1. Stanisław Wyspiański, *Sleeping Mietek*, 1904
(Herbst Palace Museum, Museum of Art in Łódź)

Full of naturalness, a three-year-old boy, slightly touched by the light of a lamp – all this contributed to a real miracle of transforming a child's dream into a real work of art. You can see here not only a beautiful line betraying the influence of Art Nouveau and Japanese art, but above all, a subtlety in showing what could be called fatherly tenderness. In this approach, the child gains subjectivity, becoming not only an element of decoration, or an heir to goods and titles (as was often the case in portraits of aristocratic families). Wyspiański touches on a child's delicacy and what is the most natural in a human being, regardless of age, when one cannot control one's body, facial expressions and behavior through sleep. It is felt in the picture *Sleeping Mietek* is a sense of security and trust that can only be born in a tender relationship between a parent and a child. The open composition even more intensifies the whole palette of positive emotions, giving up anything that could disturb this peace. This portrait is also one of the artist's most bold paintings. On the one hand, you can see aggressive colors, and on the other hand, the delicacy of a child's face. It is amazing that despite this disharmony, there is so much peace and gentleness here. Anyway, a similar atmosphere of home silence can also be found in the portrait of *Sleeping Staś* (fig. 2.)

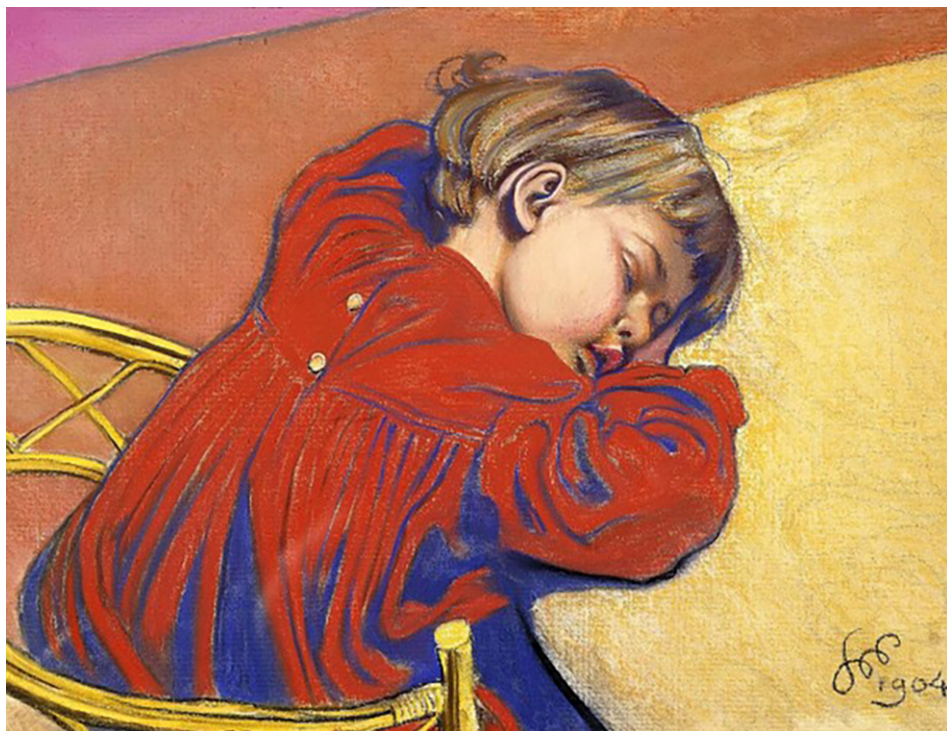


Fig. 2. Stanisław Wyspiański, *Sleeping Staś*, 1904 (National Museum in Poznań)

Three-year-old Staś puts his head on the table, supporting it with his children's hands. The delicate face is directed towards the viewer, giving a sense of silence, peace, stopping in time. His dark blond hair, round cheeks, closed eyes and slightly open mouth seem to suggest a peaceful, worry-free sleep. In this portrait, vivid, pastel colors delight, but also an unforced pose, evoking the most tender and truest feelings.

Wyspiański undoubtedly loved his children very much, and each time he parted with them (as when he went for treatment) aroused deep longing in him. While away from his relatives at the health resort, he wrote: "I would like to have all of them with me."²⁸ Anyway, even on his desk, among various documents and objects, the artist kept a child's shoe of his son Staś.²⁹ In his portrait from 1904, the artist uses a diagonal plane, again playing with contrasting colors: yellow, red, orange.

²⁸ Wyspiański. *Katalog wystawy dzieł ze zbiorów Muzeum Narodowego w Krakowie*, eds. Danuta Godyń, Magdalena Laskowska (Kraków: Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, 2018), 33.

²⁹ This fact is described by Józef Sosnowski, recalling the words of Wyspiański regarding his son's child's shoe kept on the desk: "I – I took it on purpose [...] because it... reminds me of my beloved son, Staś" (Zbijewska, *Orzeł*, 144).

And all this entwined with a delicate natural light that gives a sense of peace. The whole presented space is lyrical, but there is no room for banal pathos.

In addition to many portraits of sleeping children, Wyspiański also shows the nature of children in subtly observed, full of activity situations of everyday life. This is clearly visible in the portraits of the artist's daughter – Helenka. One of them, the painting *Girl with a vase of flowers* (fig. 3), shows the quintessence of childhood.



Fig 3. Stanisław Wyspiański, *Girl with a vase of flowers*, 1902 (National Museum in Krakow)

Looking at the portrait of Helenka touching a vase with flowers with her finger, one gets the impression that it is close to falling over and breaking. The girl rests her chin on her hand and looks at the pink jug with blue lilac flowers. Her slightly closed eyes indicate concentration. The shiny table, in which you can see the reflection of a child's hand and a vase, delights. Again, Wyspiański enchants with the realism and naturalness of the scene, achieved despite the resignation from clearly outlined details. In the transience of the moment, the artist closes the child's curiosity of the world, but also the tendency to mischief. The closeness of the father does not depress the girl but makes her feel calm and natural. In one of the many anecdotes, the already matured Helena recalls a moment from her childhood when, as a little

girl, she slipped out alone from her family home in search of her father: “The hustle got up at home. Father was mad that the child had probably been kidnapped, but when I turned up, dirty as a heavenly creature, brought by some old man [...] instead of spanking – I was hugged and kissed in the air, on his hands, and the old globetrotter received ten crowns as a reward gold.”³⁰

Epilogue

A peaceful and happy childhood ended for Wyspiański's children on November 28, 1907, when their father Stanisław died³¹. The children experienced this event very deeply. Helenka, recalling this difficult experience, recalls: “the whole world simply ceased to exist for me.”³²

Due to the great reluctance towards the artist's wife, she was deprived of custody of the children over time. As a consequence, they were first taken care of by their legal guardians, and then placed in lodgings. The siblings, isolated from their mother, rebelled and fled to Teodora to the countryside. With time, Helenka found herself in Switzerland, in Vinzel, at a boarding school run by nuns, Mietek and Stasiu began their education at a school run by Jesuits in Chyrów. Teodor dropped out of school before his final exams and was eventually hospitalized in a psychiatric ward. Besides, Staś was also treated in institutions for the nervously ill. The quietest life of the Wyspiański siblings was led by Helenka, who got married in 1916 and started a family. Stanisław Wyspiański, despite his short life, was a very loving father for his children, and the feeling was fully reciprocated. The house he founded and what he wanted to give to his children were perfectly in line with the axiologically oriented personality development. Artistic works are only a tacit proof of the rich sphere of feelings he had for his loved ones. The images of his own children shown by him are devoid of cheap sentimentality, but full of naturalness and a sense of security. The youngest were shown in their own children's world, not dominated by conventions, but surrounded by love. Portraits of Staś, Mietek or Helenka are a testimony to the great respect of the artist – father for their innocence and delicacy. He does not interfere in their world, but becomes a part of it, thanks to this, you can discover one of the most important indications regarding upbringing, consisting not only in *being with the other* but also *being for the other*³³.

³⁰ Monika Śliwińska, “Wyspiański. Dopóki starczy życia”. *Niezła Sztuka*, <https://niezlasztuka.net/książki/monika-sliwinska-wyspianski-dopoki-starczy-zycia/> [accessed: 13.05.2024].

³¹ Cf. Maria Stokowa, *Stanisław Wyspiański. Dzieła zebrane. Kalendarz życia i twórczości 1869–1890 Stanisława Wyspiańskiego*, vol. 16 (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1971), 34.

³² Monika Śliwińska, *Wyspiański. Dopóki starczy życia* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Iskry, 2017), 484.

³³ “[...] in education, the point is for a man to become more and more a man – to be more and more, and not just to have more – so that through everything he has, he can be more and more fully a man – that is,

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Streszczenie: Wartość relacji, jaka zachodzi między rodzicem a dzieckiem, można analizować na różnych płaszczyznach: obyczajowej, biologicznej, symbolicznej, społecznej, prawnej czy też artystycznej. Celem niniejszego studium jest próba charakterystyki obecności dziecka jako podmiotu w przestrzeni europejskiej sztuki wizualnej, ze szczególnym zwróceniem uwagi na wartość ojcostwa w odniesieniu do twórczości artystycznej jednego z największych polskich malarzy: Stanisława Wyspiańskiego. Poprzez identyfikację wartości na drodze aksjologii semiologiczno-ikonograficznej możliwe staje się odczytanie dzieła artystycznego jako swoistego, filozoficznego zapisu o istocie rozumienia analizowanej wartości. Analizie poddane zostały portrety dziecięce artysty, które potraktować można jako swego rodzaju zapis symboliczny nie tylko pojmowania, ale nade wszystko przeżywania wartości, jaką jest ojcostwo. W wielowymiarowym procesie wychowania dziecka ojciec odgrywa niezwykle istotną rolę, poprzez którą w znaczący sposób wpływa na kształtowanie się i rozwój osobowości młodego człowieka. Nie jest to jednak proces jednokierunkowy, dziecko w znaczący sposób kształtuje bowiem rodzica jako ojca, przyjaciela i współtowarzysza przeżywanej codzienności.

Słowa kluczowe: dzieciństwo, dziecko, sztuka, Wyspiański, portret dziecięcy, ojcostwo

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to know how to be more, not only with others, but also for others" (Jan Paweł II, "Przemówienie wygłoszone 2 czerwca 1980 roku w UNESCO". *Teologia Polityczna*, <https://teologiapolityczna.pl/jan-pawel-ii-przemowienie-wygloszone-2-czerwca-1980-roku-w-unesco> [accessed: 13.05.2024].

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