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# Russian theatre for children and Marshak's *Teatr dlja detej*

Giulia De Florio

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Bientôt les grandes personnes viendront avec  
nous.

Elles iront vers les petits enfants.

Elles apprendront à jouer.

(Marcel Schwob, *Le livre de Monelle*, 1894)

## Introduction

- 1 Between the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Russia, many important critics, pedagogues and experts of theatre began to pay attention to the theme of theatre and children. Plays specially devoted to children were initially meant to be staged in a domestic or school context, the objective being mostly didactical or for home entertainment. Still, some relevant experiments paved the way to a more substantial interest in children's theatre; new questions arise in relation with the influence of theatre on children, the repertoire, and the role of children on and off the stage. Since 1907, Nikolaj Bakhtin has played a fundamental role in the development of the debate; in his seminal articles and remarks about children's theatre, he claims the educational meaning of the theatre, gives advice on the selection of plays for children and underlines the importance of theatre for children under certain conditions. After the October Revolution the focus was on the creation of a professional children's theatre that would meet the expectations of the new ideology. In this new context, Samuil Marshak's first collection, *Teatr dlja detej*, plays a fundamental role and clearly shows his ability to understand children's need for true art without, at least apparently, contradicting the new ideology.

## The beginning of theatre for children in Russia

- 2 Theatre for children takes cue from the school theatres of religious institutions and the initiatives of some key figures, such as Andrej Timofeevich Bolotov (1738-1833), writer, scientist and founder in 1779 of the first children's theatre in Bogorodick in the governorate of Tula. The first performance of the new theatre featured *Atheist* (*Bezbozhnik*) by M. M. Kheraskov and was performed by children. As there was no specific repertoire for younger audiences, Bolotov himself began to write dramas with a strong educational imprint. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, dramaturgy for children was a topic of discussion in intellectual circles, as shown in the articles of Nikolaj Pirogov<sup>1</sup>, Konstantin Ushinskij<sup>2</sup>, Aleksej Ostrogorskij<sup>3</sup> and others. Nonetheless, in this period, children's theatre remained substantially at the level of domestic entertainment since children of lower classes did not attend school and were not acquainted with theatre<sup>4</sup>.
- 3 However, a few important experiments took place in this field: the pioneer was Nikolaj Bunakov (1837-1904) who, in the 1880s, organised in the village of Petino (in the region of Voronezh) a school and a Peasant Theatre where his pupils played on stage after reading the texts in class. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in order to give access to some entertainment to children of lower classes, the so-called People's Houses (*Narodnyj dom*) were organised, which hosted "children's departments" with theatrical repertoires different from the usual theatre. From 1894 to 1904, there was a special children's department at the Nevsky Society (*Nevskoe obshhestvo*) for the arrangement of folk entertainment, which also staged performances for children with a troupe consisting of teenagers from working families. It was a children's theatre for children, that is, children played in it, whereas adults were not allowed. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a completely anonymous group of artist-intellectuals announced the decision to create an original children's theatre called *Children's Balaganchik*<sup>5</sup> and to open it (in October 1907) by staging Oscar Wilde's *Happy Prince*. The plan unfortunately could not be realised, but this is yet another sign of the attention given to theatre for children. In Petrograd, the theatre for children of Aleksandr Juchnevich (?-1911) was active. Aleksandr Juchnevich was head of the theatrical commission of the Nevsky Society of Folk Entertainment, and he wrote and staged plays for children.
- 4 In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the scientific community, the attention to childhood greatly increased: "Interest in childhood as a valuable period in human life [led] to interest in children's books and reading."<sup>6</sup> Discussions around childhood and children's works of art, including theatre, appeared in magazines in the form of articles and notes and were brought about at pedagogical conferences and congresses on children's topics. Once again, the privileged perspective was didactic-pedagogical: many discussions focussed on the psychology of the child in relation to theatrical fiction, on the social value of the shows and the educational intent of the stage performances. People committed to the creation of a theatre specifically dedicated to children tried to define its objectives and peculiarities; among them, it is worth mentioning, were Nikolaj Aleksandrovich Popov (1871-1949), who wrote plays and articles on the subject underlining children's attraction to adventures and the imitation of adults<sup>7</sup>, and the writer Vasilij Rozanov, who made some significant remarks after the strong impression his daughter received while attending the play *The Queen of Spades* (*Pikovaja dama*) by

Aleksandr Pushkin, stressing the importance of transmitting the “sublime”, the feelings excluded from the daily life of adults<sup>8</sup>.

## A new turn (1906-1917)

- 5 The new stage of this development took place in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when such various and fragmentary experiences received some solid theoretic basis: in the wake of the resolutions proclaimed at the First Congress of Pedagogical Psychology held in 1906 in Petersburg<sup>9</sup>, according to which pedagogy in Russia came to be considered a scientific discipline that should follow American and British models, the topic of children's theatre was addressed in a series of initiatives taking place in the years immediately before the Revolution: between December 1913 and January 1914 in St. Petersburg was held the First Congress of Popular Education (*Pervyj Vserossijskij s'ezd po voprosam narodnogo obrazovanija*), hosting around 7,000 participants – teachers, pedagogues and scholars from every corner of Russia. One of the sections of the Congress was dedicated to cinema and children's theatre<sup>10</sup>. Eleven years before, in 1902 in Moscow, the First Congress dedicated to Konstantin Ushinskij (1824-1871) took place (*Vserossijskij s'ezd predstavitelej obshhestv vspomoshhestvovanija licam uchitel'skogo zvanija*). Theatre was also an issue at the Second Congress<sup>11</sup>, dedicated to the founder of scientific pedagogy in Russia, which was almost contemporary to the Congress of Popular Education<sup>12</sup>. A year later, in the winter of 1915-1916, the Section for the Promotion of Village, Factory and School Theatres (*Sekcija sodejstvija ustrojstvu derevenskih, fabrichnyh shkol'nyh teatrov*), which belonged to the Moscow Society of Popular Universities (*Moskovskoe obshhestvo narodnyh universitetov*), organised the National Congress of Personnel of Popular Theatre (*Vserossijskij s'ezd dejatelej narodnogo teatra*), which included a subsection dedicated to children's theatre<sup>13</sup>.
- 6 At the two Congresses, many issues of theatre arts in relation to children were addressed: the “dramatic instinct”, which is supposed to exist in every child, and the use of dramatisation (“dramatizatsija”) as a teaching method<sup>14</sup>; the need to distinguish between a theatre *made by* children and a theatre *for* children; the question of repertoire; the didactic-pedagogical function of school theatre; and much more. The transcriptions of theses, debates and proposals make clear that Russian pedagogues, critics and teachers were well aware of the great amount of research carried on in other countries, especially Great Britain, America and Germany. At the Congresses and on journals a significant amount of works and initiatives were mentioned in order to show the right path to follow for the development of such a field in Russia.
- 7 At both Congresses, the works of Granville Stanley Hall<sup>15</sup>, Alice Minnie Herts<sup>16</sup> and Elnora Withman Curtis<sup>17</sup> in the United States; Harriet Finlay-Johnson<sup>18</sup> in Great Britain; and Hugo Münsterberg and Dr Lovenfeldt in Germany were mentioned. Furthermore, Russian scholars had access to works by John Dewey<sup>19</sup> that had been translated into Russian. Meanwhile, the first collections of repertoires appeared—*Domestic theatre (Domashnij teatr)* (1906-1913) and *The curtain's up (Zanaves podnjat)* (1914).
- 8 In sum, going through the publications of the pedagogical press of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, it is easy to understand that the value of the theatrical art as a means of education of children and youth was highly estimated by the pedagogical and intellectual circles of the country. Alongside the pedagogical values that were to be fostered and developed in children through theatre<sup>20</sup>, workers

and specialists aimed at creating a theatre for children with specific features and purposes:

Since we recognise the need for special children's literature along with literature in general, we must also recognise the need for special children's theatre along with the general public theatre. With the help of such a theatre, it is possible to awaken the love for art in children without forcing them at all and to fulfil the main task of development—to create and strengthen moral and ennobling instincts in children.<sup>21</sup>

- 9 Once the needs of a special children's theatre are identified, people involved in the task should be carefully selected:

If such a theatre is available, the necessary repertoire of children's plays can be formed [...] The head of the organisation should be, on the one hand, teachers—people who are closest to children, who have studied children's life and psychology—and, on the other, actors and artists. Only in the interaction of such social elements can the matter be properly posed and have an artistic-educational character without the tendency and morality inherent in teachers [...] The performers, of course, should be adults, not children.<sup>22</sup>

- 10 Such theoretical requirements were beginning to be put into practice in a number of publications by critic, essayist and theatre expert Nikolaj Bakhtin (1866-1940)<sup>23</sup>. In particular, in a series of articles that appeared in *Russian School (Russkaja Shkola)* in 1911, Bakhtin makes an overall review of published plays, subdividing them by categories. He stresses the importance of talking about plays for *little* children (“*deti mladhsego vozrosta*”) and considers plays for children a way to satisfy their natural “dramatic instinct” while simultaneously achieving pedagogical purposes. Bakhtin also underlines the importance of “imitability” (“*podrazhatel'nost*”), whose greatest manifestation is to be found in the dramatic instinct<sup>24</sup>. From the reviews of critics on the plays recommended by Bakhtin, it is easy to understand the main criteria to judge a play for children: it is supposed to be easy to comprehend, have simple scenography, be easy to put on the stage, have both literary and pedagogical value, and have simple and vivid language<sup>25</sup>.
- 11 At the basis of these considerations is the brilliant essay of 1907 on the educational significance of theatre in which the scholar, starting from the theory of aesthetic pleasure and its relationship with morality, concludes that theatre, for its educational significance, “can rightly be defined as a *school of life*.”<sup>26</sup> About a decade later this idea would be taken up by Samuil Marshak as he thought upon a new children's theatre that was inspired by his experience of the “School of Simple Life” of Philip Oyler.

## After 1917

- 12 As far as children's arts are concerned, the Revolution did not bring, at least in the very first years, substantial changes in the content, that is, in the ideas that had been carrying on in the pre-revolutionary period; rather, there was a shift to constant growth in attention to the theatre dedicated to children, which resulted in the birth of many journals and newspapers specifically dedicated to children's theatre: *Play (Igra)*, *Theatre and School (Teatr i shkola)*, *Plays for the School Theatre (P'esy dlja shkol'nogo teatra)*, *Children's Theatre (Detskij teatr)*. Others host columns or publications on the same topic, such as *The New Spectator (Novyj zritel')*, *The Life of Art (Zhizn' iskusstva)*, *Rabis (Rabis, acronym for “rabotniki iskusstva”, “Workers of Art”)*, *The Pedagogical Thinking (Pedagogicheskaja mysl')*, and others were published.

- 13 What changed at this point was *who* dealt with such issues, apart from specialists and experts: not by chance, the introduction in the first volume of the journal *Play (Igra)* was signed by Anatolij Lunacharskij (1875-1933), the first Commissioner of the People's Commissariat for Education (*Narkompros*), who repeated the key points that were highlighted in the previous years: the importance of imagination<sup>27</sup> and children's dramatic instinct<sup>28</sup>.
- 14 The Bolshevik re-organisation of all major institutions involved theatre, too: the Sub-Section of Children's Theatre at the People's Commissariat for Education hosted both the Bureau and the Periodical Council of Children's Theatre and Festivals. Pedagogues, playwrights and artists were part of the staff. The Children's Theatre for Junior and Middle-Aged Children (*Detskij Teatr dlja mladshogo i srednego vozrasta*) officially opened on June 15, 1918. It was a mobile theatre without a permanent stage or space for rehearsals, designed so that plays could reach children of all the districts in Petersburg. On September 17, 1918, at the Theatre Department of the People's Commissariat for Education, the Pedagogical Section was created and divided into three groups: the Scientific Theoretical Group (*Nauchno-teoreticheskaja gruppy*), the Theatre School Group (*Gruppy teatral'nyh shkol*) and the School Theatre Group (*i.e.*, Theatre Arts in Schools, *Gruppy shkol'nogo teatra*). The School Theatre Group has existed at the Theatre Department since the middle of May 1918 under the name of the Bureau of Children's Theatre and Children's Festivals (*Bjuro detskogo teatra i detskih prazdnestv*).
- 15 Furthermore, in December 1918 in Petersburg, the Courses for the Organisation of Performances and Theatre Festivals for Children (*Kursy po rukovoditel'stvu detskimii teatral'nymi predstavlenijami i prazdnikami*) were inaugurated, whereas in Moscow, under the control of the Soviet Workers, Peasants and Red Army Deputies, the Children Department as part of the Theatrical and Musical Section (*Detskij otdel Teatral'no-muzykal'noj sekcii*) was founded, run by the young Natalia Sats (1903-1993). Finally, in 1920, the first State Theatre for Children (*Gosudarstvennyj Teatr dlja detej*, abbreviated as GTDD, then *Goscentjuz*), was created in the capital. All these institutions were directly or indirectly under the control of *Narkompros*.
- 16 In a short time the control of the state became pervasive and systematic, and the aim of the changes in the management of theatrical affairs was formulated as follows: "To make the state theatrical body a political body."<sup>29</sup> At the beginning of 1921, new challenges arose in the debates about theatre for children: "One of the most significant issues was the question of modernity and its interpretation in the theatre for children."<sup>30</sup> In November 1921, a resolution on the political surveillance of the theatrical repertoire was approved, under which control commissions were set up<sup>31</sup>.
- 17 In his brief pamphlet *Detskij teatr* (1921), Boris Glagolin states that the tasks of the children's theatre coincide with the tasks of the new school: "The new pedagogic principle is a creative principle and for this reason it is common both to art and school."<sup>32</sup> In February 1923, a resolution of the *Sovnarkom* (Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union) paved the way for the work of the Main Committee on Repertory (*Glavreperkom*), which from then on managed all theatrical activities taking place in the territory of the Soviet Union. Ideology came to the fore again, and in this new context artists had to choose each time how to deal with it. In this very tumultuous and undefined context, a new children's writer was about to take his first steps in children's literature, carving out his own path, which would be emblematic for his literary career from then onward.

## Samuil Marshak and his *Teatr dlja detej*

- 18 Far from the capitals of the new-born Soviet State, Samuil Marshak (1887-1964), critic, lyric poet and translator, later to become one of the most famous children's writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, took his first steps in the world of children's literature through the theatre after meeting young audiences in the experimental "Oyler's School"<sup>33</sup> in Great Britain (1913-1914) and working as a pre-school educator in the popular education section of the Governorate of Oloneck (1918). After his debut as a foreign correspondent for various magazines, first in the Near East and then in Great Britain, in the years 1910-1914, Marshak started writing poetry and translating Jewish and English poets, and finally, in the months of revolutionary disorder, he found himself in Kuban', where, in the middle of the civil war, he collaborated with various magazines, composing mostly epigrams and satirical poems.
- 19 In the city of Krasnodar (today Ekaterinodar), devastated by hunger and war, he managed to set up, thanks to the strength and enthusiasm of a group of friends<sup>34</sup> and artists, a space entirely dedicated to children—*The Children's Little Town (Detskij gorodok)*—which also hosted a theatre, as his son later recalls in a detailed account of his father's experience:
- Prior to the departure of Marshak and his comrades from Krasnodar, the theatre staged more than 20 new plays, more than a hundred performances, which were attended by several tens of thousands of people. The "town" reached around 750 children, almost 2,000 subscriptions were issued in its library, clubs of many kind were founded—locksmith's and carpenter's skill, nature lovers, young geographers and historians, musical, singing, literature, drawing, plastic, gymnastics and sports, etc., which numbered from 15 to 140 participants.<sup>35</sup>
- 20 Together with the poet Evgenija Vasil'eva-Dmitrieva (1887-1928), Marshak wrote several plays that were staged in Krasnodar and later included in the collection *The Children's Theatre (Teatr dlja detej)* (1922)<sup>36</sup>. He then stated which kind of theatre he had in mind—a theatre for children where professional adult actors could perform for young people<sup>37</sup>—and where the idea of a theatre for children comes from. When he was in London he visited the Children's Fair and was impressed by the ancient, popular games that were put on stage: "And then I had the idea of a theatre for children—with a more developed stage plot, but on the basis of the same simple and clear chorus game, combining dramatic action, music and plasticity."<sup>38</sup> Moreover, in Marshak's opinion, children are great improvisers, and a theatre dedicated to them should provide space for improvisation. Finally, such a theatre has to open its doors to the realm of fantasy and creativity. Marshak wanted to eliminate any boundary between the public and the stage, pushing the young audience to co-create and overcome viewer passivity, thus making his task coincide with the Soviet official discourse: "Both theatres [for adults and young people] have the same fundamentals: a common effort to create a theatre, both for spectators and for stage actors; the same co-creative process, which is expressed in the interaction of stage and auditorium teams."<sup>39</sup>
- 21 As he later recalls, "My first written works for children were the plays for the theatre for children."<sup>40</sup> Indeed, *Teatr dlja detej* is an important work in many ways: it is one of the first collections of a writer who specifically composed plays for children in which the aesthetic-artistic function prevailed over the didactic-pedagogical one. It marks the beginning of Marshak's career as a writer for children, an activity that would occupy



him until his death. It is a relevant example of creative reworking of styles and processes derived from popular culture—both Russian and English<sup>41</sup>—and, finally, it is a matrix of images that would return in his later and most successful works. In this collection, Marshak “naturally combined formulas and plot elements of folklore theatre with those of his own art”<sup>42</sup>; in the plays it is easy to identify typical folkloric techniques, and the replies of the characters are often reminiscent of folkloric children’s sub-genres, such as the lullaby (*kolybel'naja*),

And now the advice is:  
After lunch—retire.  
You'll sleep well now  
I will be quietly spinning  
while spinning I will sing to you  
baju-bajushki-baju.<sup>43</sup>

the counting rhyme (*schitalka*),

Would you excuse me, please?  
One, two, three, four, five.  
Until now  
I couldn't dance,  
One, two, three, four, five.  
One, two, three, four, five.<sup>44</sup>

or the *draznilka*, which is a brief or very brief reply with ironical or, rarely, satirical intent<sup>45</sup>, like this one pronounced by Petrushka:

Who's not rich, sit on the number nine!<sup>46</sup>

- 22 The play *Petrushka* is a good example of the balance Marshak finds between traditional elements and new features of his own art<sup>47</sup>. Though not included in the original collection of plays but written immediately after it, *Zolotoe koleso*<sup>48</sup> gives some other interesting hints about Marshak's play on intertextuality: the characters are taken from the traditional repertoire—Ivan the fool (*Ivan-durachok*), Petrushka and the Humpbacked Horse (*Konek-gorbunok*). Here, Marshak stresses the humoristic aspect, combining it with the motif of the stolen sun, which Kornej Chukovskij would use in 1927 for his poem *The Stolen Sun* (*Kradenoe solnce*). But the writer is also able to insert quotations from a very well-known cruel romance, *Sereža-pastušok*, which is unusual for a young audience:

The last hour of separation  
with you, my dear.<sup>49</sup>

- 23 But Marshak does not rely exclusively on the tradition and makes modern times appear on stage: while the characters are desperately looking for the sun, the ambassador of Japan shows them a gift from the emperor, the “artificial sun”, which, according to his description, looks very much like a modern lamp<sup>50</sup>.
- 24 As it has been said before, *Teatr dlja detej* is also the starting point for many of Marshak's future works for children. In *The Magic Wand* (*Volshebnaja palochka*), for instance, the master (*uchitel'*) forgets his wand because of his absent-mindedness, thus paving the way to a full gallery of funny day-dreamers that appear in later works by Marshak, culminating in the most famous poem, *The Absentminded Fellow*<sup>51</sup> (*Vot kakoj rassejannyj*). In this poem from 1928<sup>52</sup>, we find a play on words between the conductor (*vozhatyj*) and the formal address “well-respected” (*glubokouvazhaemyj*) which, with a spoonerism, turns into “vagonouvazhaemyj” and “vagonovozhatyj”<sup>53</sup>. In fact, the same pun had already been used by Petrushka in the homonymous play included in the collection *Teatr dlja detej*: “Tram number nine! Wait, train driver! I am completely ill,



take me home. I will not be in debt, deeply respected wagon-driver (*glubokouvazhaemyj vagonovozhatyj*), wagon-respected driver! (*vagonouvazhaemyj glubokovozhatyj*)."<sup>54</sup>

- 25 Other images and stylistic techniques in later works come directly from this first exploration of Marshak into the world of children's art, thus confirming the relevance of his first production.

## Conclusion

- 26 The creation of a theatre specially devoted to children was a topic discussed long before the Revolution. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and particularly between the end of 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, ideas and theories taken from other countries were actively debated at conferences and in specialised journals for critics, teachers and pedagogues.
- 27 The Revolution did not put an end to all this ferment; on the contrary theatre for children became more and more important for the new Soviet state. Yet, in the first years after the Revolution, ideology was not as pervasive as it would be later on; the individual still kept the right to develop in his own way, as stated by the People Commissioner of Enlightenment Anatolij Lunacharskij<sup>55</sup>. Repertoire mostly included fairy tales, and a fantastic approach was welcomed to tell children about contemporaneity: "Contemporaneity will inevitably enter the walls of children's theatre; however, it should be given to children in a fairy tale aspect."<sup>56</sup> In such context, Samuil Marshak started his career in the arts for children with theatre, elaborating his own previous experience both outside and inside Russia. In *Teatr dlja detej*, a peculiar use of folkloristic material, the introduction of traditional genres in an unusual context, as well as the personal elaboration of a new language for children, full of laughter and nonsense, are clearly visible. In this collection the writer is able to keep "that amount of free game which allows art for children not to turn into a Narkompros' circular."<sup>57</sup> His style and motifs will change, his strive to find some compromise with his époque will lead him to seek new artistic paths but he will always remain faithful to the original task at the basis of his first collection of plays—"give children elements of authentic art."<sup>58</sup>

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## NOTES

1. N.I. Pirogov, "Byt' i kazat'sja", in: V. A. Bogdanovskij, A. Georgievskij (eds.), *Sobranie literaturnych statej N. I. Pirogova*, Odessa, Gor. Tipografija, 1858, p. 62-73. Nikolaj Pirogov (1810-1881) was a prominent Russian scientist, medical doctor, pedagogue, public figure and corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences.
2. A. M. Egolin, E. N. Medynskij, V. Ja. Struminskij (eds.), *K. D. Ushinskij: Sobranie sochinenij*, Moskow, Saint Petersburg, Akad. Ped. nauk RSFSR, 1948-1952. Konstantin Ushinskij (1823-1871) was the most important Russian national educationist of the nineteenth century and pursued questions of education and teaching as a full-time occupation. Thanks to his all-round erudition and exceptional creative gift, he was called "the patriarch of Russian pedagogy", "the teacher of Russian teachers", "the friend of the Russian child", "the founder of the Russian primary school" and "the father of Russian scientific teaching" (See M. Cipro, *Konstantin Dmitrievich Ushinsky*, Paris, UNESCO: International Bureau of Education, vol. 14, n° 1, 1984).
3. A.N. Ostrogorskij, *Izbrannye pedagogicheskie sochinenija*, Moskow, Pedagogika, 1985. Aleksej Ostrogorskij (1840-1917) was an ardent follower of Ushinskij's work, a pedagogue, school teacher and children's writer. He was concerned about the diffusion of the achievements of Russian pedagogy; therefore, in 1907, he published *Pedagogical Textbook* with the purpose of acquainting teachers and parents with the ideas of N.I. Pirogov, K.D. Ushinskij, V.Ja. Stojunina and P.F. Kaptereva.
4. At the end of the 19th century, Russian children did not have access to school at all. Most of the population was uneducated: "According to the 1897 all-Russian census more than 125 million (125,640,021) people lived in the Russian Empire, of which [the] educated (able to write and count) constituted 26.5 million (26,569,585) people (All-Russian First Census Data 1905: 39-40), 21 per cent of the population [...] More than 3.3 million people studied in primary educational institutions of all kinds (about 72,000). At that time those who studied constituted about 3 per cent of Russia's population". A.A. Cherkasov, "All-Russian primary education (1894-1917): Developmental milestones", *Social Evolution & History*, vol. 10, n° 2, September 2011, p. 139.
5. It is sometimes translated into English as "puppet show".
6. O. Mjaeots, "Kritika detskoj literatury v Rossii v gody pervoj mirovoj vojny (po materialam zhurnalov *Novosti detskoj literatury* i *Chto i kak chitat' detjam*)", *Detskie chtenija*, vol. 10, n° 2, 2016, p. 136.
7. N. Popov, "Detskij teatr ili teatr dlja detej", *Rampa i zhizn'*, n° 48, 1910, p. 783-785.
8. V. Rozanov, "Teatr i junost'", *Ezhegodnik Imperatorskih teatrov*, vol. 1, 1910, p. 46-55.
9. See M. I. Kokorov (ed.), *Trudy Pervogo vserossijskogo s'ezda po pedagogicheskoj psihologii* (Saint Petersburg, 31 May-4 June 1906), Tipografija P.P. Sojkin.

10. See Org. Kom. S'ezda (ed.), *Trudy Pervogo Vserossijskogo s'ezda po voprosam narodnogo obrazovanija (dekabr' 1913 - janvar' 1914)*, vol. 1, Saint Petersburg, Petrogr. o-vo gramotnosti, 1915, p. 234-263.
11. See V. A. Zelenko (ed.), *Trudy Vtorogo Vserossijskogo s'ezda im. K.D. Ushinskogo*, vol. 1, Saint Petersburg, Ispoln. fin. komis., 1914-1915.
12. This is the reason why they are usually called the "little" and the "big" congress, respectively.
13. See Org. Kom. S'ezda (ed.), *Trudy vsrossijskogo s'ezda dejatelej narodnago teatra v Moskve (27 dekabrja 1915-5 janvarja 1916)*, Saint Petersburg, Izd. Kom. po organizacii S'ezda, 1919, p. 18-19, 314-342.
14. In 1911, the Russian translation of this important work on dramatisation appeared. See N. Ticher, *Dramatizacija kak odin iz metodov sovremennoj shkoly*, Saint Petersburg, Sinodal'naja Tipografija, 1911.
15. Granville Stanley Hall (1846-1924) was a pioneering American psychologist and educator as well as the first president of the American Psychological Association. See S. Kholi, *Sobranie statej po pedagogii i pegagogike*, Moscow, Kn-vo, 1912 and S. Kholi, *Instinky i chuvstva v junosheskom vozraste*, edited by L. G. Orshanskij, Saint Petersburg, izd. gazety "Shkola i zhizn", 1913.
16. Alice Minnie Herts (1870-1933) was the founder and manager of the Children's Educational Theatre of New York. She is the author of *The Children's Educational Theatre* (1911).
17. Elnora Withman Curtis, Hall's doctoral student, is the author of *The Dramatic Instinct in Education* (1914).
18. Harriet Finlay-Johnson (1871-1956), schoolteacher and educationalist, is the author of *The Dramatic Method of Teaching* (1911), published in Russian in 1916 (Kh. Finley Dzhonson, *Dramatizatsija, kak metod prepodavanija*, Moscow, 1916).
19. See D. D'jui, *Shkola i obshhestvo*, Moscow, Tip. Torg. Doma A. Pechkovskij, P. Bulanzhe, 1907; D. D'jui, *Psihologija i pedagogika myshlenija*, Moscow, N. D. Vinogradov (ed.), 1915; D. D'jui, *Shkoly budushhago*, Moscow, 1918.
20. This is clearly stated in the resolution of the First Congress of Popular Education: "The dramatisation of educational material is one of the most valid ways of applying the principle of learning by visual aids" [ДРАМАТИЗАЦИЯ УЧЕБНОГО МАТЕРИАЛА ЯВЛЯЕТСЯ ОДНИМ ИЗ САМЫХ ДЕЙСТВИТЕЛЬНЫХ СПОСОБОВ ПРИМЕНЕНИЯ ПРИНЦИПА НАГЛЯДНОСТИ]. Org. Kom. S'ezda (ed.), *Trudy pervogo vsrossijskogo s'ezda po voprosam narodnogo obrazovanija*, op. cit., p. 263. "Nagljadnost'" is an educational method for teaching/learning with visual aids.
21. O.I. Galakhova, "Vospitatel'nyj teatr dlja detej naroda", in: *Trudy vsrossijskogo s'ezda dejatelej narodnago teatra v Moskve*, op. cit., p. 315. [РАЗ МЫ ПРИЗНАЕМ НЕОБХОДИМОСТЬ СПЕЦИАЛЬНОЙ ДЕТСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ НАРЯДУ С ЛИТЕРАТУРОЙ ВООБЩЕ, ТО МЫ ДОЛЖНЫ ПРИЗНАТЬ И НЕОБХОДИМОСТЬ СПЕЦИАЛЬНОГО ДЕТСКОГО ТЕАТРА, НАРЯДУ С ОБЩИМ НАРОДНЫМ ТЕАТРОМ. С ПОМОЩЬЮ ТАКОГО ТЕАТРА МОЖНО, СОВЕРШЕННО НЕ НАСИЛУЯ ДЕТЕЙ, ПРОБУДИТЬ В НИХ ЛЮБОВЬ К ИСКУССТВУ И ВЫПОЛНИТЬ ОСНОВНУЮ ЗАДАЧУ РАЗВИТИЯ – СОЗДАТЬ И УКРЕПИТЬ В ДЕТЯХ ПОБУЖДЕНИЯ НРАВСТВЕННОГО И ОБЛАГОРАЖИВАЮЩЕГО ХАРАКТЕРА].
22. *Ibid.*, p. 318. [ПРИ НАЛИЧНОСТИ ТАКОГО ТЕАТРА МОЖЕТ ОБРАЗОВАТЬСЯ НЕОБХОДИМЫЙ РЕПЕРТУАР ДЕТСКИХ ПЬЕС [...] В ГЛАВЕ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ДОЛЖНЫ СТОЯТЬ С ОДНОЙ СТОРОНЫ ПЕДАГОГИ – ЛЮДИ НАИБОЛЕЕ БЛИЗКО СТОЯЩИЕ К ДЕТЯМ, ИЗУЧАВШУЮ ДЕТСКУЮ ЖИЗНЬ И ПСИХОЛОГИЮ – С ДРУГОЙ АРТИСТЫ И ХУДОЖНИКИ. ТОЛЬКО ПРИ ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИИ ЭТИХ ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫХ ЭЛЕМЕНТОВ ДЕЛО МОЖЕТ БЫТЬ ПРАВИЛЬНО ПОСТАВЛЕНО И НОСИТЬ ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННО-ВОСПИТАТЕЛЬНЫЙ ХАРАКТЕР БЕЗ ПРИСУЩЕЙ ПЕДАГОГАМ СКЛОННОСТИ К ТЕНДЕНЦИИ И МОРАЛИ[...]ИСПОЛНИТЕЛИ ЖЕ, РАЗУМЕЕТСЯ, ДОЛЖНЫ БЫТЬ ВЗРОСЛЫЕ, А НЕ ДЕТИ].
23. The full list of Bakhtin's works on children's theatre until 1915 is contained in: *Katalog izdanij N.N. Bakhtina*, Saint Petersburg, Sinodal'naja tipografija, 1915. The catalogue includes also

*Children's Theatre (Detskij teatr)*, edited by N. Novicha (a pseudonym of N. Bakhtin), and some reviews on the plays are included.

24. "If the source of gradual progress of mankind is imitability, the most complete manifestation of imitability can be seen in the dramatic instinct" [ЕСЛИ ИСТОЧНИКОМ ПОСТЕПЕННОГО ПРОГРЕССА ЧЕЛОВЕЧЕСТВА СЧИТАТЬ ПОДРАЖАТЕЛЬНОСТЬ, ТО НАИБОЛЕЕ ПОЛНОЕ ПРОЯВЛЕНИЕ ПОДРАЖАТЕЛЬНОСТИ МОЖНО ВИДЕТЬ В ДРАМАТИЧЕСКОМ ИНСТИНКТЕ]. N. Bakhtin, "Obzor p'es dlja detskogo i shkol'nogo teatra", *Russkaja Shkola*, n° 10, 1911, p. 16. See also: N. Bakhtin, "Obzor p'es dlja detskogo i shkol'nogo teatra", *Russkaja Shkola*, n° 11, 1911, p. 33-47 and N. Bakhtin, "Obzor p'es dlja detskogo i shkol'nogo teatra", *Russkaja Shkola*, n° 12, 1911, p. 40-57.

25. See N. Novicha (N. Bakhtin), *Detskij teatr, Serija p'es*, Petrograd, Tip. M.M. Stasjulevič, 1915, p. 5-9.

26. N. Bakhtin, "Vospitatel'noe znachenie teatra", in: P.V. Petrova (ed.), *Sbornik pedagogicheskikh statej v chest' redaktora zhurnala "Pedagogicheskij Sbornik" A. N. Ostrogorskogo*, Saint Petersburg, 1907, p. 345. [ПРИНИМАЯ ВО ВНИМАНИЕ ЕГО ВОСПИТАТЕЛЬНОЕ ЗНАЧЕНИЕ, ТЕАТР ПО СПРАВЕДЛИВОСТИ МОЖНО НАЗВАТЬ ШКОЛОЙ ЖИЗНИ].

27. "A man [...] wants to survive dozens of lives with his body and nerves: he plays for this purpose, gives free rein to his imagination and, making his own organism an obedient instrument of fantasy, simulates, fulfils life through the theatre, which is the ecstasy of creation for the actor and the performance, i.e., the increased and ordered image of life, for the viewer" [ЧЕЛОВЕК[...]ХОЧЕТ ТЕЛОМ, НЕРВАМИ СВОИМИ, ПЕРЕЖИТЬ ДЕСЯТКИ ЖИЗНЕЙ: ДЛЯ ЭТОГО ОН ИГРАЕТ, ДЛЯ ЭТОГО ДАЕТ ВОЛЮ ВООБРАЖЕНИЮ И, ДЕЛАЯ СОБСТВЕННЫЙ ОРГАНИЗМ ПОСЛУШНЫМ ОРУДИЕМ ФАНТАЗИИ, - ЛИЦЕДЕЙСТВУЕТ, ЖИЗНЬ ДОПОЛНЯЕТ ТЕАТРОМ, КОТОРЫЙ ЕСТЬ УПОЕНИЕ ТВОРЧЕСТВОМ ДЛЯ АКТЕРА И - СПЕКТАКЛЬ, Т.Е. ПОВЫШЕННОЕ И УПОРЯДОЧЕННОЕ ИЗОБРАЖЕНИЕ ЖИЗНИ, ДЛЯ ЗРИТЕЛЯ]. A. Lunacharskij, "Vmesto vvedenija", *Igra*, n° 1, 1918, p. 2.

28. "Child's strive to play, at the core of which, we should admit, lies the *theatrical instinct*, is the purest spring of the game, continuously and cheerfully beating" [ЧИСТЕЙШИМ РОДНИКОМ ИГРЫ, БЬЮЩИМ НЕПРЕРЫВНО И ВЕСЕЛО, ЯВЛЯЕТСЯ ДЕТСКАЯ ЖАЖДА ИГРАТЬ, СТЕРЖЕНЬ КОТОРОЙ НАДОБНО ПРИЗНАТЬ ТЕАТРАЛЬНЫЙ ИНСТИНКТ]. *Ibid.*

29. A. Z. Jufit (ed.), *Sovetskij teatr. Dokumenty i materialy*. Vol. 1: *Russkij sovetskij teatr 1917-1921*, Saint Petersburg, 1968, p. 456.

30. V. Gudkova, "Detskij teatr strany Sovetov: ot burzhuaznogo udovol'stvija k proletarskoj pol'ze", *Neprikosnovennyj zapas: Debaty o politike i kul'ture* [online], n° 2 (58), 2008, p. 166-178, url: <http://www.zh-zal.ru/nz/2008/2/gu14.html>. [ОДНИМ ИЗ НАИБОЛЕЕ СУЩЕСТВЕННЫХ ЯВИЛСЯ ВОПРОС О СОВРЕМЕННОСТИ И ЕЕ ТРАКТОВКЕ В ТЕАТРЕ ДЛЯ ДЕТЕЙ]. See also "Disput o detskom teatre", *Vestnik teatra*, n° 83-84, 1921, p. 20.

31. A. Z. Jufit (ed.), *Sovetskij teatr. Dokumenty i materialy*, op. cit., p. 492. [ПОСТАНОВЛЕНИЕ О ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННО-ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОМ НАДЗОРЕ ЗА РЕПЕРТУАРОМ].

32. B. Glagolin, *Detskij teatr*, Odessa, Vseukrainskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1921, p. 4.

33. Marshak writes a short essay on this experience: see S. Marshak, *Sobranie sochinenij v 8-i tomach*, vol. 2, Moscow, Hudozhestvennaja literatura, 1968-1972, p. 464-467.

34. Among them, it is important to mention the collaboration with the critic, poet and expert of anthroposophy Boris Leman (pseudonym of Boris Diks, 1882-1945), who went on to write the introduction to the collection *Teatr dlja detej*. Actors Dmitrij Orlov and Anna Bogdanova were also crucial figures in setting up the first theatre for children. See Bogdanova's account of the Krasnodar experience and friendship with Marshak in A. V. Bogdanova, "Detskii gorodok", in: B. E. Galanov (ed.), "Ja dumal, chuvstvoval, ja zhil..." *Vospominanija o S.I. Marshake*, Moscow, Sovetskij pisatel', 1971, p. 128-146.

35. The information comes from the State Archive of Krasnodar Territory (f. r-365). See S. Marshak, "Teatr dlja detej 1920-1923", in: B. Galanov, I. Marshak, M. Petrovskij (eds.), *Zhizn' i*

*tvorchestvo Marshaka*, Moskow, *Detskaja literatura*, 1975, p. 349-486. [ДО ОТЪЕЗДА МАРШАКА И ЕГО ТОВАРИЩЕЙ ИЗ КРАСНОДАРА, ТЕАТРОМ БЫЛО ПОСТАВЛЕНО БОЛЕЕ 20 НОВЫХ ПЬЕС, ДАНО БОЛЕЕ СОТНИ СПЕКТАКЛЕЙ, КОТОРЫЕ ПОСЕТИЛО НЕСКОЛЬКО ДЕСЯТКОВ ТЫСЯЧ ЧЕЛОВЕК. ГОРОДКОМ БЫЛО ОХВАЧЕНО ОКОЛО 750 ДЕТЕЙ, В ЕГО БИБЛИОТЕКЕ БЫЛО ВЫДАНО ПОЧТИ 2 ТЫСЯЧИ АБОНЕМЕНТОВ, В НЕМ БЫЛИ СОЗДАНЫ КРУЖКИ СЛЕСАРНОГО И СТОЛЯРНОГО МАСТЕРСТВА, ЛЮБИТЕЛЕЙ ПРИРОДЫ, ЮНЫХ ГЕОГРАФОВ И ИСТОРИКОВ, МУЗЫКАЛЬНЫЙ, ПЕНИЯ, ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ, РИСОВАНИЯ, ПЛАСТИКИ, ГИМНАСТИКИ И СПОРТА И Т. Д., НАСЧИТЫВАВШИЕ ОТ 15 ДО 140 УЧАСТНИКОВ].

36. S. Marshak, E. Vasil'eva, *Teatr dlja detej*, Krasnodar, Kubano-chern. otd. narod. obraz., 1922. See also I. Kucenko, *S. Ja. Marshak v Ekaterinodare-Krasnodare (1918-1922)*, Krasnodar, 1997, p. 474-520.

37. See S. Marshak, "Teatr dlja detej", *Prosveshhenie*, n° 3-4 (7-8), January-March 1922. Marshak worked on the editorial board of the journal *Prosveshhenie*.

38. S. Marshak, "Teatr dlja detej", *Zhizn' iskusstva*, n° 38, September 26 1922, p. 5. [ТОГДА ЖЕ У МЕНЯ ВОЗНИКЛА МЫСЛЬ О ТЕАТРЕ ДЛЯ ДЕТЕЙ – С БОЛЕЕ РАЗВИТОЙ СЦЕНИЧЕСКОЙ ФАБУЛОЙ, НО НА ОСНОВЕ ВСЕ ТОЙ ЖЕ ПРОСТОЙ И ЧЕТКОЙ ХОРОВОДНОЙ ИГРЫ, СОЕДИНЯЮЩЕЙ В СЕБЕ ДРАМАТИЧЕСКОЕ ДЕЙСТВИЕ, МУЗЫКУ И ПЛАСТИКУ].

39. B. Glagolin, *op. cit.*, p. 4. [ОБОСНОВАНИЯ ТОГО И ДРУГОГО ТЕАТРА ОДНИ: ОБЩЕЕ УСИЛИЕ В ДЕЛЕ СОЗДАНИЯ ТЕАТРА, КАК ЗРИТЕЛЕЙ, ТАК И СЦЕНИЧЕСКИХ ДЕЯТЕЛЕЙ; ТОТ ЖЕ СОТВОРЧЕСКИЙ ПРОЦЕСС, ВЫРАЖАЮЩИЙСЯ ВО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИИ КОЛЛЕКТИВОВ СЦЕНЫ И ЗРИТЕЛЬНОГО ЗАЛА].

40. S. Marshak, "Put' k detskoj poezii", *Detskaja literatura*, n° 21, 1937, p. 66. [ПЕРВЫМИ МОИМИ ПИСЬМЕННЫМИ ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЯМИ ДЛЯ ДЕТЕЙ БЫЛИ ПЬЕСЫ ДЛЯ ДЕТСКОГО ТЕАТРА].

41. Marshak was very fond of English nursery rhymes; he translated most of them in Russian for the first time. See S. Marshak, *Sobranie sochinenij v 8-i tomach*, vol. 2, Moskow, *Hudozhestvennaja literatura*, 1968, p. 79-195.

42. S. P. Sorokina, "Petrushka v detskom teatre pervogo poslerevoljucionnogo desjatiletija (dve p'esy S.Ja. Marshaka)", *Studia Litterarum*, vol. 3, n° 3, 2018, p. 255.

43. S. Marshak, "Skazka pro kozla", in: S. Marshak, *Sobranie sochinenij v 8-i tomach*, *op. cit.*, p. 232. [А ТЕПЕРЬ СОВЕТ ТАКОЙ: / ПООБЕДАВ – НА ПОКОЙ. / ВЫ ПОСПИТЕ НЫНЧЕ ВСЛАСТЬ. / Я ЖЕ ТИХО БУДУ ПРЯСТЬ. / Я ЗА ПРЯЖЕЙ ВАМ СПОЮ / БАЮ-БАЮШКИ-БАЮ]. All the following translations are literal without any attention to rhymes, rhythm or metric structure. "Baju-bajushki-baju" is a typical refrain of Russian lullabies.

44. S. Marshak, "Volshebnaja palochka", in: S. Marshak, *Sobranie sochinenij v 8-i tomach*, *ibid.*, p. 510. [ИЗВИНИТЕ ВЫ МЕНЯ / РАЗ, ДВА, ТРИ, ЧЕТЫРЕ, ПЯТЬ. / ДО СЕГОДНЯШНЕГО ДНЯ / НЕ УМЕЛ Я ТАНЦЕВАТЬ, / РАЗ, ДВА, ТРИ, ЧЕТЫРЕ, ПЯТЬ. / РАЗ, ДВА, ТРИ, ЧЕТЫРЕ, ПЯТЬ].

45. See *Ibid.*, p. 78-80.

46. S. Marshak, "Petrushka", in: *Ibid.*, p. 529. [КТО НЕ БОГАТЫЙ, САДИСЬ НА НОМЕР ДЕВЯТЫЙ].

47. For a full analysis of the play and the comparison with *Petrushka the foreigner* (1927), see S.P. Sorokina, *op. cit.*

48. The fairy tale was written at the end of 1922, right after *Teatr dlja detej* was published. See S. Marshak, *Sobranie sochinenij v 8-i tomach*, *op. cit.*, p. 532-545; 591-592.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 538. [ПОСЛЕДНИЙ ЧАС РАЗЛУКИ / С ТОВОЙ, МОЙ ДОРОГОЙ].

50. *Ibid.*, p. 542.

51. S. Marshak, *The Absentminded Fellow*, translated by R. Pevear, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999. For an in-depth analysis of this figure, see M. Petrovskij, *Knigi nashego detstva*, Saint Petersburg, izd. Ivana Limbaha, 2008, p. 25-35.

52. The poem appears with the title *An Event on the Tram (Sluchaj v tramvae)* in the journal *Ersh* (n° 21, November 1928). The full text appeared for the first time as a book in 1930.



53. S. Marshak, "Vot kakoj rassejannyj", in: S. Marshak, *Sobranie sochinenij v 8-i tomach*, vol. 1, *op. cit.*, p. 100. [ОДНАЖДЫ НА ТРАМВАЕ / ОН ЕХАЛ НА ВОКЗАЛ / И, ДВЕРИ ОТКРЫВАЯ, / ВОЖАТОМУ СКАЗАЛ: / - ГЛУБОКОУВАЖАЕМЫЙ / ВАГОНУВАЖАТЫЙ! / ВАГОНУВАЖАЕМЫЙ / ГЛУБОКОУВАЖАТЫЙ!].
54. S. Marshak, "Petrushka", in: *Ibid.*, p. 528. [ТРАМВАЙ НОМЕР ДЕВЯТЫЙ! ПОСТОЙ ВАГОНОВОЖАТЫЙ! Я СОВСЕМ БОЛЬНОЙ, ОТВЕЗИ МЕНЯ ДОМОЙ. НЕ ПОСТОЮ ЗА ПЛАТОЙ, ГЛУБОКОУВАЖАЕМЫЙ ВАГОНОВОЖАТЫЙ, ВАГОНУВАЖАЕМЫЙ ГЛУБОКОВОЖАТЫЙ!].
55. "Labour school and theatre of authentic art[...]keep the right for individual to develop in his own way" [НО ТРУДОВАЯ ШКОЛА И ТЕАТР ПОДЛИННОГО ИСКУССТВА[...]СОХРАНЯЮТ ПРАВО ЛИЧНОСТИ НА СВОЕОБРАЗНЫЙ РАСЦВЕТ] В. Glagolin, *Detskij teatr*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
56. [СОВРЕМЕННОСТЬ НЕИЗБЕЖНО ВОЙДЕТ В СТЕНЫ ДЕТСКОГО ТЕАТРА; СЛЕДУЕТ, ОДНАКО, ДАВАТЬ ЕЕ ДЕТЯМ В СКАЗОЧНОМ АСПЕКТЕ]. This was one of the conclusions of the dispute over the topic "What should the children's theatre look like" that took place on February 7, 1920, at the House of the Press (Dom pečati) under the chairmanship of N.I. Sats. See *Ibid.*, p. 15.
57. S. Marshak, *O nasledstve i nasledstvennosti v detskoj literature*, in: S. Marshak, *Sobranie sochinenij v 8-i tomah*, vol. 7, Moscow, Hudozhestvennaja literature, 1971, p. 309.
58. S. Marshak, "Teatr dlja detej", *Zhizn' iskusstva*, n° 38, 26 September 1922, p. 5. [ДАТЬ ДЕТЯМ ЭЛЕМЕНТЫ ПОДЛИННОГО ИСКУССТВА].
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## ABSTRACTS

In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, theatre in Russia rapidly develops. Particular attention is devoted to children and to the use of theatre as a didactic-pedagogical tool. At the same time various experts focus on the importance of a theatre for children, instead of plays where children are both viewers and actors.

The Russian Revolution brings along epic changes, but most ideas and issues about a theatre for children had been put forward in the years before 1917. In such context poet and translator Samuil Marshak starts his literary career with a collection of plays for children, thus paving the way to future great works in this genre of children's literature. His use of folklore and stylistic procedures are to be found in his masterpieces of the following years.

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**Keywords:** theatre for children, Russian revolution, Samuil Marshak, teatr dlja detej

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