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ESSENTIAL PROBLEMS IN ART HISTORY

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ЗМІСТ
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THE SACRED ASPECT OF THE IMAGE OF THE CHILD IN THE EARLY 20TH-CENTURY POLISH AND WESTERN UKRAINIAN PAINTING: SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND LOCAL SPECIFICS

Yuliia Kizyma

Сакральний аспект образу дитини у польському та західноукраїнському живописі початку 20-го століття: соціально-історичний контекст та регіональна специфіка

Юлія Кізима

Кінець 19-го та початок 20-го століття позначені змінами у суспільних уявленнях про дитину та дитинство у США та країнах Європи. Це явище знайшло яскраве відображення пам'ятках культури, зокрема у творах живопису. Образ дитини та дитинства отримав нові позитивні конотації. Насамперед йдеться про багатозначну категорію "невинності", що пов'язувалась у тому числі зі здатністю дітей до отримання більш глибокого та інтенсивного релігійного досвіду, ніж у дорослих. Цей аспект ідеалізованого образу дитинства особливо підкреслювався у літературі, філософії, мистецтві. У рамках цього дослідження були розглянуті та співставлені роботи станкового та монументального живопису митців США та Західної Європи, з одного боку, і Польщі та Західної України, з іншого боку, де образ дитини з'являється у сценах релігійного характеру. Джерельна база охоплює як твори на суто релігійні теми, призначені для сакральних просторів, так і роботи світського характеру, що містять символи християнського походження та алюзії на сакральні сюжети. У статті розглядаються джерела появи сакралізованого образу дитини у культурі кінця 19-го та початку 20-го століття, особливості та варіанти його втілення у творах живопису (у тому числі — регіональні традиції). Особлива увага приділяється образам сільських дітей у творах митців Польщі та Західної України (Яцека Мальчевського, Властимила Гофмана, Казимира Сіхульського, Олекси Новаківського, Юліяна Буцманюка) на релігійну тематику як специфічному художньому явищу, тісно пов'язаному з соціальною структурою та політичною ситуацією у цих регіонах. У ході дослідження було застосовано методи мистецтвознавства (формальний, іконографічний, іконологічний), а також методи гуманітарних наук (контент-аналіз, семіологічний аналіз)

Ключові слова: *образ дитини у живописі, польське мистецтво початку 20-го століття, українське мистецтво початку 20-го століття.*

Artistic representation of childhood constitutes a relevant area of contemporary humanitarian studies. This field of research is of significant importance for art history, social history as well as history of representations. "Centuries of Childhood" (1962) by French historian Philippe Ariès is considered the seminal work establishing the history of childhood as a separate discipline. The author was the first to address the topic that had long been overlooked and, more importantly, use works of art as sources on family life in the past. Among other researchers who looked into representation of childhood in visual arts are Paula S. Fass, Hugh Cunningham, Michael Benton, Marilyn R. Brown.

By contrast, Ukrainian historiography of the subject only consists of few specified studies and lacks more thorough works. "Sacral character of child in Ukrainian artistic tradition" by O. Kvas (Kvas 2013) is one of several papers dealing with the topic. The author outlines major trends and changes in artistic representation of children based on examination of Ukrainian religious art as well as tombstone sculptures. In particular, O. Kvas mentions the term "sacralisation" in relation to the perception of children in Ukraine. However, the research is of an overview character and does not cover the period on which our study focuses.

Representations of children and childhood were the main subject of the exhibition "Children and Kids: Image of Child in Art XVII-XX centuries" which featured works by Ukrainian and foreign artists in Ukrainian museum's collections. The curators defined the typical ways of depicting children: formal portraits, similar to those of adults in style and composition; psychological portraits conveying the character, mood and age-related characteristics of a model; images of children playing or learning, misbehaving or even struggling with poverty and hard work. (Berehovska&Hulka, 2014) However, there has been little research into the sacred aspect of the imagery of the child.

In this paper, we will explore the sacralised image of the child and childhood in the Western and Eastern European cultures of the late 19th and the early 20th century. We will look at its influence on the representations of children in contemporaneous painting. Having analysed artworks by representatives of different countries, we will be able to make conclusions about the popularity of the image, local specifics of its representation, and possible ways of depicting it. In this study, we will consider both works of sacred and secular art, as they both contain religious imagery albeit interpreted in different ways.

The methodology of the research is based on art historian Erwin Panofsky's scheme consisting of three sequential stages: formal, iconographical and iconological analysis. Formal analysis will enable us to describe the primary subject matters of artworks studied. Iconographical analysis will be used for comparing the artworks with existing iconographical schemes and symbols. Finally, the aim of iconological analysis will be to consider the artworks in the context of cultural, religious and social phenomena of the period. In our case, the context will comprise the broad range changes in the perception of children and childhood which took place in Europe and the USA between the late 19th and the early 20th century.

In addition to Panofsky's scheme, we will employ other methods of humanitarian studies. For example, content analysis will allow us to distinguish the tropes (epithets, metaphors, and comparisons) most frequently used in relation to the "sacralised" child. Methods of semiotics, especially those proposed by Roland Barthes, will be used to analyse the image of the child as a form, a part of "the holy child" myth. (Bart, 2008)

The image of the child in the late 19th- and early 20th-century culture: innocence, femininity, sanctity

In his work "The Psychology of the Child Archetype" (1940), Carl Jung reveals strong associations between the image of "the divine child" in ancient cultures and the categories of "salvation", "future", and "cure". According to the psychoanalyst, the archetype combines helplessness and extraordinary strength. (Yung 2012, p. 221) Jung's conclusions have a lot in common with the Americans and European's perception of children and childhood in the 19th and the 20th centuries. It may even seem that the image of the child retained those connotations since ancient times, which had a positive impact on real children's lives.

However, new discoveries in social history refute this implication. Modern researchers argue that views on children and childhood varied across different communities and significantly changed with time. The concept of childhood as a separate and valuable period in life only

emerged in Europe in the 18th century. Prior to that, it had been seen merely as preparation for adulthood. (Cunningham 2021, p. 45)

These ideas developed and gained popularity in the 19th century (especially its second part). People started considering childhood not only a separate but also the best stage of life. Hugh Cunningham attributed the change to the gradual secularisation, which affected some aspects of social life. In particular, the 19th century marked the decline in belief in original sin, which had previously caused society to think of children as inherently corrupt and flawed. (Cunningham 2021, 48-49) Hugh Cunningham called the 19th-century society as "child-cantered". (Cunningham 2021, 59)

At the same time, the image acquired different religious connotations. The child came to epitomize innocence and simplicity. Children grew to be described "as angels, messengers from God to a tired adult world", (Cunningham 2021, 49) "embodiment of hope". (Cunningham 2021, 59) Childhood was "some recompense to mankind for the loss of Eden". (Cunningham 2021, 116)

The concept of "innocence" was at the core of the 19th-century image of the child. (Cunningham 2021, p. 51) The ambiguous word often denoted the freedom of behaviour and freshness of thought, which adults ascribed to children. Works by William Wordsworth and Charles Baudelaire, which we will cite further, bear evidence for such a perception of children.

However, the absence of sexual experience played an important or even the key role in the concept of "innocence". Sexual virginity was considered the "fundamental defining quality" of childhood, while its loss marked the beginning of adult life. To protect children's innocence was parents and custodians' main goal. This aspect of the idea of childhood came to be both sentimentalised and sacralised. Society regarded innocence as the condition and source of "sense of wonder, an intensity of experience and a spiritual wisdom lacking in the adult". (Bailey 2013, p. 192–194)

Some researchers maintain that the 19th-century notion of "innocence" was "a Victorian defence against advancing awareness of the sexual life of children and adolescents". (Brown 2004, p. 449) Others even see in it "a parallel eroticization" of the child. (Bailey 2013, p. 197)

Another aspect of the contemporaneous image of the child was femininity or genderlessness. According to Hugh Cunningham, people found it easier to picture the ideal child as a girl, for real boys' behaviour failed to coincide with romantic ideas of peacefulness and love for nature. The celebrated painting "Child Enthroned" by Thomas Cooper Gotch serves as an eloquent example of this phenomenon. The painter himself described that portrait of his teenage daughter as "the personification of childhood". (Cunningham 2021, p. 57)

Ukrainian studies in social and gender history contain more testimonies to the connection between the notions of "childhood" and "femininity". "In everyday culture, representations of women as some kind of "big children", whom one needs to permanently control, admonish and guide were quite common. Women were described as naive and emotional." (Cherchovych 2017, p. 34)

Hugh Cunningham maintains that the so-called Romantic concept of the child dominated Western world throughout the 19th and the early 20th century. It enjoyed the peak of its popularity between 1860 and 1930. (Cunningham 2021, p. 55)

Thus, the sacralised child became a myth (according to Roland Barthes's definition proposed in his work "Mythologies"). From the semiological perspective, an image of a child played the role of the singfier. All the associations it might have evoked (such as a model's personality or background) were reduced to the simplified form filled with a new meaning — the signified. In our case, it contained the historically contingent notions of "innocence" and "sanctity". As a result, a myth, or the sign, emerged. (Bart 2008, p. 275-277)

The image of "the holy child" exemplifies the process of "naturalization of a myth", as Barthes himself called it. For the philosopher, the main goal of any myth was to transform history

into nature; make values and ideas seem like facts. (Bart 2008, p. 289) Likewise, people believed that the extraordinary qualities ascribed to children were innate. Society saw the exceptional value of childhood as the reason for its romanticisation — not the consequence.

To illustrate this, social historians point to the blatant discrepancy between the idealized construct of childhood and real children's lives. M. R. Brown highlighted a paradoxical fact: in Europe and the USA, the heyday of "the holy child's" cult coincided with the unprecedented industrial exploitation of children. (Brown 2004, p. 453)

On the other hand, the romanticisation of childhood contributed to the rhetorics of factory movements which sought to improve the lives of working children and teenagers. The concept of "enjoyment of childhood" was among their major arguments against child labour. (Cunningham 2021, p. 118)

The image of the child in the late 19th and the early 20th-century literature

Positive representations of children and childhood were common in the 19th-century literature influenced by Romanticism. The Romantic concept of the child included the belief in their exceptional sensitivity to beauty and truth in comparison to adults. The Romantics idealised "freshness of childhood", describing it as "the spring that should nourish the whole life". (Cunningham 2021, p. 55)

"Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" (1807) by William Wordsworth (Wordsworth 1807) is one great example of this cultural phenomenon. The poet showed childhood as a stage in life when one is in contact with the heavenly realms ("Heaven lies about us in our infancy!", "Behold the Child among his new-born blisses…"). The Romantic child is naturally open to sacred knowledge inaccessible for adults ("Mighty Prophet! Seer blest! On whom those truths do rest, Which we are toiling all our lives to find…"). Wordsworth repeatedly juxtaposed the "light" of childhood against the "darkness" of adulthood ("Shades of the prison-house begin to close Upon the growing Boy, But he beholds the light, and whence it flows, He sees it in his joy").

Charles Baudelaire emphasized another aspect of children's innocence — their creative potential — in his essay "The Painter of Modern Life". The writer compared the curiosity and aesthetic sensitivity of a person recovering from an illness with that of a child. "The convalescent, like the child, enjoys to the highest degree the faculty of taking a lively interest in things, even the most trivial in appearance...The child sees everything as a novelty; the child is always 'drunk'. Nothing is more like what we call inspiration than the joy the child feels in drinking in shape and colour...But genius is no more than childhood recaptured at will..." (Baudelaire, 1863)

Russian writers of the 19th and the 20th centuries expressed similar views. A. Kozlova described the child in Dostoevsky's novels as "innocent and thus close to God, the adult being their complete opposite". The writer often used the image as an ideal or a metaphor. According to Dostoevsky, an adult is able to keep their "inner child" alive and incorporate it in their personality. The Symbolist notions were similar to that of Dostoevsky. However, A. Kozlova maintains, the movement introduced a novel view, with "the world of childhood" and "the adult world" being two separate realms. The former was associated with irrational thinking and immense creative potential. (Коzlova 2010, p. 97–98)

There has been little research into the imagery of the child and childhood in Ukrainian literature. The few studies into representation of children in specific literary works (Kovalska 2008) give the impression that writers mostly focused on psychological and social aspects of childhood instead of its metaphorical connotations.

The early 20th century ushered in alternative, rather controversial views on childhood. The changes were partly due to the growing popularity of Sigmund Freud's theories. In his "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" (1905) the psychoanalyst argued that one received sexual experience from the moment of their birth to the age of six, which was followed by the latency stage lasting until puberty. Thus, Freud debunked the Victorian construct of children's "innocence". However, the founder of psychoanalysis was neither the first nor the only one to voice doubts over that myth. Similar ideas were expressed by the means of art in the play "Spring Awakening" (1891) by Frank Wedekind, the painting "Puberty" (1894) by Edvard Munk, child and adolescent portraits by Egon Scheile and Oskar Kokoschka. (Brown 2004, p. 460)

Nevertheless, the idealised image of the holy, precious child continued to dominate European and American culture.

Fig. 1. Ford Madox Brown "Take your Son, Sir" (1851, 1856–1857). Tate. https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/brown-take-your-son-sir-n04429

"The Holy Child" in the art of Western Europe and the USA between the late 19th and the early 20th century

Just like literature, contemporaneous painting reflected the new perceptions of children and childhood. The connotations mentioned above — sincerity, innocence, creativity, secret knowledge, connection with nature and God — enabled artists to depict children in varying but usually positive roles.

"The Holy Child", as Michael Benton put it, is the focus of our research. The author linked the trope to the imagery of Infant Jesus. (Benton 1996, p. 57) The popularity of the type coincided with social phenomena mentioned above — the emergence of the "child-centred" family model and the "sacralization" of the child.

Artists represented the "sanctity" of children by the means of colours, attributes, and compositional schemes borrowed from Christian imagery. Thus, they established strong links between child pictures and religious subjects. Painters depicted "the holy child" alone or with their mother, again referring to the iconography of Jesus and Virgin Mary and sacralising motherhood as well as childhood.

"'Take your Son, Sir" by Ford Madox Brown (Fig.1) is among the earliest appearances of the trope. The artist showed a young woman with an infant on her lap in an elevated position. The placement of the models together with the frontal view of the woman evoke associations with the iconography of "Madonna

Fig.2. Mary Cassat. "Mother and Child" ("The Oval Mirror") (1898). Wikimedia. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cassat1.jpg

Enthroned". A mirror on the wall behind the woman surrounds her head like a halo and reflects a figure of a man standing opposite her — in a viewer's place.

Art historians proposed several interpretations of the subject. The woman was traditionally seen as a lover of a married man begging her patron to recognise their child. On the other hand, it is known that Brown used his wife, their son and himself as models for the painting. Furthermore, the man actually smiles as he looks at the infant. These facts hint that the artwork may as well be a family scene. Whatever Brown's original intentions were, the artwork contains explicit allusions to the imagery of Virgin Mary and Infant Jesus. (Benton 1996, p. 57)

The motif of a mirror as a halo is found in later paintings featuring "the holy child". Mary Cassat employed it in her work "Mother and Child" (Fig.2), also known as "The Oval Mirror". "Cassat positioned her models in the conventional pose of the Madonna and Child, the mirror behind the figures standing in as a halo. Modern motherhood is therefore equated with divinity in Cassatt's late works". (Albinson 2004, p. 134)

Artists substituted the mirror as a symbol with another object of a similar shape and texture. In particular, an American painter Frank S. Eastman in his painting "A little Sleep" (Fig.3) employed a compositional scheme reminiscent of that used by Madox Brown. However, in the place of the mirror he put a shining brass plate. His model's young age and dark red dress also link the scene to the iconography of Virgin Mary and Infant Jesus.

Fig. 3. Frank S. Eastman. "A little Sleep" (1906). Artuk.org. https://www.artuk.org/discover/artworks/a-little-sleep-90020

Fig 4. James Jebusa Shannon. "Purple Stocking" (1894). Wikimedia. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shannon,_Purple_Stocking,_1894.jpg
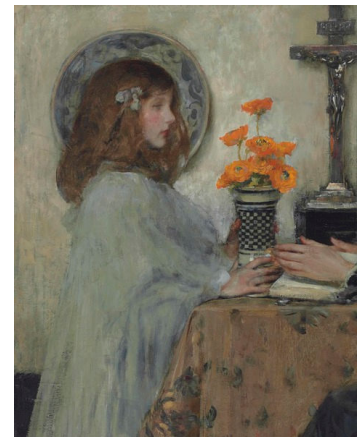
Fig 5. James Jebusa Shannon. "The Offering" (1897). Christies. https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5857480

Western European and American artists frequently featured the "halo" plates in their paintings. An Anglo-American painter James Jebusa Shannon (1862–1923) incorporated those ambiguous objects into his child portraits "Purple Stocking" (Fig.4) and "The Offering" (Fig.5). The religious connotation is explicit in the latter work, (Fig.5) for it contains several other Christian symbols: a crucifix on the wall, a book on the table, which suggests the Bible, the white colour of a girl's dress, probably a reference to First Communion. By contrast, the young protagonist of "Purple Stocking" (Fig.4) is engaged in the mundane activity of handiwork. And yet her face, also shown in profile, expresses the serenity and concentration reminding a viewer of a person in prayer.

All the artists cited above employed the same device. An utilitarian object, such as a mirror or a plate, acquired a symbolic function without losing the initial, practical one. Details of this kind

caused an artwork to transcend the limits of genre or portrait painting. Symbolic objects added a new semantic dimension to the primary one and allowed for multiple interpretations.

Fig. 6. Thomas Cooper Gotch. "Alleluia" (1896). Tate. https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gotch-alleluia-n01590

Another way of "the holy child" representation lay in the incorporation of child images into subjects and compositional schemes borrowed from religious art.

In particular, a British painter Thomas Cooper Gotch earned recognition for idealised portrayal of motherhood and childhood, which was the focus of his work. Characterised by exquisite ornamentation, his paintings made multiple allusions to religious art. Gotch drew inspiration from biblical imagery, specifically the 15th-century Christian iconography, which he re-interpreted his own work. (Virag, 2001)

"Alleluia" (Fig.6), one of his most celebrated paintings, depicts thirteen girls of different ages performing a Christian hymn. The number probably hints at Jesus and the twelve apostles. The artist separated the central figure — a portrait of his teenage daughter— from the others by placing her in a niche in an elevated position. Shell-headed Renaissance recesses, similar to the one in Gotch's paintings, were usually shown above Madonna and Infant Jesus as well as other saints in the 15th and 16th-century Italian paintings ("The Montefeltro Altarpiece" by Piero della Francesca and "The Novitiate Altarpiece" by Filippo Lippi are only a few examples).

Fig. 7. Thomas Cooper Gotch. "Child Enthroned" (1894). Wikimedia. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/50/Thomas_Cooper_Gotch_-_The_Child_Enthroned_189

The abovementioned painting "Child Enthroned" (Fig. 1894) also contains references to Christian, especially Renaissance iconography. First viewers even mistook the portrait of Gotch's teenage daughter for an image of Jesus Christ. (Cunningham 2021, p. 57)

The overall composition, however, has more in common with the iconography of "Madonna Enthroned". Unlike Brown, Shannon and Eastman, Cooper did not conceal a halo around the model's head. In "Child Enthroned", it takes an unambiguous shape of a shining golden disk devoid of weight or volume. A piece of dark blue fabric behind the protagonist's back is another borrowing from Renaissance imagery. Raphael Sanzio featured similar ornate fabrics in the same position in "Madonna Enthroned", while Bartolomeo Vivarini depicted them in "Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints". At the same time, a strictly frontal view of the figure evokes associations with earlier forms of Christian art, such as Byzantine mosaics and icons.

Maurice Denis, a French artist associated with Les Nabis, also tackled religious subjects. Many of his paintings are characterised by the merging of biblical imagery and modern life. As V. Kryuchkova put it, that device allowed the artist to "testify to the eternity of the divine revelation, its constant presence in human lives". (Kryuchkova 2008, p.15)

The image of the child plays a notable role in several paintings by Denis. In his "Catholic Mystery" ("Le Mystere Catholique"), (Fig.8) a scene of a church service merges with the conventional representation of Annunciation. A white lily, the common attribute of the episode, is depicted in the background. Put in a painted vase, the flower looks like an ornament of a

contemporary interior. Pale shadows on the blind take a seemingly random form of a cross. A priest takes the iconographic position of Archangel Gabriel. A golden halo underscores his dual nature. Two altar boys are standing between Virgin Mary and the archangel-priest. Thus, physically and perhaps symbolically they act as mediators between the two other people in the painting.

In "Nazareth" (Fig.9), Virgin Mary, Saint Ann and Saint Joseph are watching Christ Child preach to three girls of his age. The absence of halos as well as anachronistic ribbon hairstyles distinguish them apart from biblical characters. The subject matter of the painting is probably another hint at the children's openness to spiritual experiences; a clear illustration of their connection with God.

Fig. 8. Maurice Denis. "Catholic Mystery" (1889). Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maurice _Denis#/media/File:MauriceDenis- LeMystereCatholique.JPG

Fig. 9. Maurice Denis. "Nazareth" (1905). Artchive. https://artchive.ru/mauricedenis/works/34416 9~Nazaret

Fig. 10. Maurice Denis. Decorations for Collège Sainte-Croix du Vésinet (1899). Wikimedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mauri ce_Denis#/media/File:Maurice_denis ,_decorazione_della_cappella_del_c ollegio_di_sinte- croix_du_v%C3%A9sinet,_esaltazion e_della_croce_e_glorificazione_della _messa,_1899,_01.JPG

Denis featured children in a large-scale altar mural made for the Chapel of Sacred Heart in the town of Vesinet, France (Fig.10). The artist divided the composition into two parts. The lower one depicts a service conducted by angels and altar boys between columns against a blossoming garden. The upper one shows angels carrying the cross in the sky. Thus, in Denis's works the image of the child serves to unite the two realms (the earthly and the heavenly one) and the two times (the Gospel and the contemporary one).

Henry Oliver Walker underscored children's special sensitivity to the divine in his painting "The Morning Vision" (Fig.11). A young woman and a boy are meeting three winged angels. The child is reaching out his hand and almost touching one of them. The artwork lacks details which would help identify the characters with certainty. However, the boy's pale loincloth and the red colour of the woman's clothes once again evoke associations with Mary and Jesus.

"Four Corners to My Bed" (Fig.12) by Isobel Gloag addresses another aspect of "the holy child's" imagery — the sacralisation of children as part of a family. Three angels are surrounding an infant's crib, playing musical instruments. This is a reference to the popular old lullaby which inspired the painting and, at the same time, another

borrowing from the rich iconography of angels performing music. The fourth angel, distinguished by the different colours of hair and robes, is bending over the crib with his hands put together as if praying. In the painting, Isobel Gloag underscores not only the infant's ability to communicate with heavenly creatures, but also angels' role as guardians of children.

Fig. 11. Henry Oliver Walker. "The Morning Vision" (1895). Spellman Gallery. https://www.spellmangallery.com/artists/henry-oliver-walker

Fig.12. Isobel Gloag. "Four Corners to My Bed" (1904). Wikimedia. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gloag_Four_corners_to_my_bed.jpg

The imagery of the peasant child in the early 20th-century Central and Eastern European painting

At the turn of the 20th century, the image of "the holy child" spread beyond the Western Europe and the USA into Central and Eastern Europe. The device of uniting sacred and secular subjects in one scene entered the practice of local artists.

Fig.13. Alphonse Mucha. "Madonna of the Lilies'' (1905). Wikiart. https://www.wikiart.org/en/alphonse-mucha/madonna-of-the-lilies-1905

However, unlike their counterparts in the West, Central and Eastern European painters preferred to make idealised depictions of peasants instead of middle and upper class people. The phenomenon, which affected painting as well as other forms of art and literature, rooted in the structure of Central and Eastern European societies. While the 19th-century industrialisation ushered in the growth of cities and middle and working class in the West, other regions of Europe remained agricultural. Peasants constituted the majority of their population. Furthermore, most nations and ethnic groups in Central and Eastern Europe had little political or even cultural autonomy, which was also reflected in art.

"Madonna of the Lilies'' (Fig.13) by a Czech-born artist Alphonse Mucha is one example of "the holy child" imagery beyond Western Europe and the USA. The artist intended it as a preparatory painting for a church mural rather than a separate piece of art. In the foreground, Mucha depicted a teenage girl wearing a traditional embroidered Czech dress and a wreath of white flowers. Veiled in fog, a figure of Virgin Mary in white robes emerges behind her.

The artist conveyed the connection between the two through the similarities in appearance (the white colour of the

clothes, long blonde hair, and soft facial features) as well as the symmetrical placement of the figures. At the same time, the two women epitomise the two realms — the earthly (the Czech girl) and the heavenly (Virgin Mary). Mucha emphasized the difference between the two, using the characteristic Art Nouveau device — line. The contours of the girl's figure are clearly outlined, while the image of Virgin Mary is rather blurred. An edge of Mary's scarf touching the teenager's shoulder serves as a link between the two and the worlds they represent.

Halychyna, or Galicia, which enjoyed the status of the region's capital of culture (partly owing to The Krakow Academy of Fine Arts), was still one of the most economically depressed parts of Central Europe. Polish painters usually portrayed people from the three major sectors of the country's society — nobility, gentry, and peasantry. Furthermore, Poland lost independence in the late 18th century and since then was divided between three other countries. Naturally, national revival was the most urgent issue for Poles at that time. As peasants seemed most connected to land and, thus, national identity, their images came to be associated with that cause. (Cavanaugh 2000, 128-129)

Numerous Central and Eastern European artists, including the professors and students of The Krakow Academy, took part in the so-called "peasant-mania" movement. "…in the young artists' view, a peasant, closely tied to religion and land, became a symbol of the whole nation. The image was idealised and endowed with heroic qualities; it was seen as an embodiment of the national spirit…" (Ovsiichuk 1998, p. 43) Intellectuals regarded "peasant-mania" as a recreational movement and were eager to establish closer relationships with peasantry. The romanticised notions of children and villagers acquired similar connotations. A number of artists were "fascinated with the innocence and absence of artifice found in children, the qualities they were thought to share with peasants". (Cavanaugh 200, p. 144)

The Polish symbolist painter Jacek Malczewski often used the image of the child as a mediator between the two realms. A number of his paintings feature little shepherds communicating with supernatural creatures, which are typical of his work. A series made between 1901 and 1903 is dedicated to children's encounters with heavenly messengers. It is worth noting that Malczewski's angels are usually tall, strong and quite formidable as opposed to mild ethereal creatures found in contemporaneous and earlier Western art.

The triptych "Faith, Hope and Love" (Fig.14) comprises three scenes, each illustrating one of the Christian virtues. The picture of an angel appearing before a boy epitomises Faith, that of a little shepherd's talk with a heavenly messenger represents Hope. The last one, with an angel protecting a child from a storm with its huge wings, embodies Love.

Fig.14. Jacek Malczewski. "Faith, Hope and Love" (1901). Pinakoteka Zascianek.
http://www.pinakoteka.zascianek.pl/Malczewski_J/Images/Wiara_Nadzieja_Milosc.jpg

Malczewski executed other separate paintings similar to the parts of the tryptic: "Angel, I Will Follow You", "An Angel and A Little Shepherd", "An Angel and A Shepherd". In "To Fame"

(1903), a child is sitting on an angel's wing. "Following the Angel" (Fig.15) is another triptych depicting peasants' encounters with heavenly creatures. The central panel once again features a child meeting an angel.

Fig.15. Jacek Malczewski. "Following the Angel" (1903). Pinakoteka Zascianek.
http://www.pinakoteka.zascianek.pl/Malczewski_J/Images/Za_aniolem_tryptyk.jpg

Wlastimil Hofman (1881–1970) offers a different interpretation of "the holy child". A number of his canvases — namely "The Coronation of Madonna" (1908), "Madonna with a child and Saint John, or Madonna with a starling" (1909), "Madonna" (1910), "A Concert" (1911) — are based on the compositional schemes, which seem to have been borrowed from Western Christian iconography. A young woman with an infant occupies the central position. Children surrounding her substitute saints and angels. The peculiar feature of these paintings is that everyone is wearing peasant clothes — traditional festive costumes or simple winter coats.

Fig.16. Wlastimil Hofman. "The Coronation of Madonna". (1908). Muzeum Secesji. http://muzeumsecesji.pl/galeria_pliki/hofman/hofman1.html

Fig.17. Wlastimil Hofman. "Madonna with a Child and Saint John, or Madonna with a starling" (1909). Pinakoteka Zascianek. http://www.pinakoteka.zascianek.pl/ Hofman/Images/Madonna_2.jpg

"The Coronation of Madonna" (Fig.16) is a variation of the eponymous iconographical type ("The Coronation of the Virgin" by Diego Velázquez is one famous example of the subject). However, in Hofman's painting Mary is seated before a small wooden shrine instead of a cloud typical of Old Masters' paintings. The carved figures of Jesus Christ and God the Father are holding a crown over her head. A white shining dove representing the Holy Spirit is hovering above Mary.

Two peasant boys — one is dark-haired, the other is blonde — are standing on their knees honouring the saint.

Hofman's next painting "Madonna with a Starling" (Fig.17) alludes to Raphael Sanzio's "Madonna with the Goldfinch". A young woman in a light-coloured dress and a thick red headscarf is sitting on the grass, embracing a fair-haired boy. In her hand she is holding a little bird. The other boy, dark-haired and a little older, is kneeling by the woman's side. He is holding a thin wooden cross — an attribute of John the Baptist. The composition and symbolic details — the bird and the cross — link the painting to the numerous images of Virgin Mary with Jesus and John the Baptist as children. Furthermore, the two boys look extremely similar to those depicted in "The Coronation of Madonna" (Fig.16).

Kazimierz Sichulski (1879 – 1942) was another Polish artist who dealt with the imagery of "the holy child". He spent most of his life in Lviv and often took part in ethnographic expeditions to Hutsul villages. During those trips, Sichulski made numerous paintings and drawings of locals. (Kravchenko 2006, p.188) These artworks suggest that the artist was especially interested in Hutsul traditional clothes, which he depicted in minute detail. Later on, Sichulski started to incorporate folk motifs into his works on religious subjects.

Hutsul children are the protagonists of his triptych "The Palm Sunday" (Fig.18). The artist used the format derived from religious art, thereby building links between Christian imagery and depictions of children. Most children in the triptych are looking upwards intently as if seeing something beautiful and exciting. One girl is averting her eyes. The background of bright colourful spots and strokes creates the impression that the space around the children is flooded with light.

Fig.18. Kazimierz Sichulski. "Palm Sunday" (1906). Pinakoteka Zascianek.
http://www.pinakoteka.zascianek.pl/Sichulski/Images/Niedziela_Palmowa.jpg

A preparatory painting for a stained-glass triptych "Spring" (Fig.19) has a similar composition and also features village children. However, Sichulski placed the characters differently in comparison with the previous artwork. The central panel bears the image of a teenage girl holding a little boy by his shoulders. In the two other sections the artist depicted two younger teenage boys clasping their hands as if in prayer. Three children are gazing upwards. Only the youngest boy stares directly at the viewer. One can only suppose at what exactly the children in the two triptychs are looking. However, considering the romanticised notion of childhood and peasantry in Polish culture of that time, we assume that the view is most likely to be of spiritual nature.

Fig.19. Kazimierz Sichulski. "Spring" (1909). Pinakoteka Zascianek.
http://www.pinakoteka.zascianek.pl/Sichulski/Images/Wiosna_tryptyk.jpg

The trend of peasant child sacralisation continues in "The Hutsul Madonna" (Fig.20). Unlike the two abovementioned triptychs by Sichulski, this painting has an explicit rather than underlying religious meaning. Madonna is shown in the centre, sitting with Child Jesus on her lap. The two side panels bear images of kneeling angels in the guises of peasant teenagers, a boy and a girl. Everyone is clad in colourful, embroidered folk clothes. Despite the obvious differences in artistic techniques and colour palettes, the overall composition, placement of characters and their poses are very close to those found in "Spring". Therefore, the two paintings seem to be two representations of one subject, namely the sacralisation of peasant childhood and motherhood— or the "naturalization" of the religious figures.

Fig. 20. Kazimierz Sichulski. The Hutsul Madonna (1914). Pinakoteka Zascianek.
http://www.pinakoteka.zascianek.pl/Sichulski/Images/Madonna_huculska.jpg

In the early 20th century, a substantial part of Western Ukraine belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In particular, both Poles and Ukrainians populated Halychyna (Galicia) alongside other ethnic groups. Moreover, many Ukrainian painters obtained education at the Krakow Academy, where they familiarised themselves not only with artistic techniques, but also with trends in culture and philosophy. Although either retained their own identity, Ukrainian and Polish art of the time followed similar trends.

Fig. 21. Yulian Butsmaniuk. A fragment of the decoration for the Church of the Heart of Christ in Zhovkva. 1910-1911. Vzhovkvi.com. https://vzhovkvi.com/video/yulian-butsmanyuk-vojin-mytets.html

In particular, the decorations for the Church of the Heart of Christ in Zhovkva by Yulian Butsmaniuk contain the imagery of "the holy child". Between 1910 and 1911 the artist decorated a chapel of the church dedicated to Virgin Mary. Butsmaniuk showed her in two capacities — as the Mother of God, seated on the throne with Infant Jesus, and as Virgin. (Hakh&Sydor 2006, p. 19–20)

In the former painting, Mary and Jesus are surrounded by three children in folk clothes. Jesus himself is wearing a white "vyshyvanka" — a traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirt. A peasant boy is offering him a flower. Jesus is reaching out to take it. One girl took the praying posture, which characterised iconography of donors in both Eastern and Western Christian art.

One cannot call the depiction of children beside saints innovative. Many artworks, such as "The Portinari Altarpiece" (c. 1475) by Hugo van der Goes, feature whole families of donors, including their youngest members. By contrast, Butsmaniuk depicted peasant children rather than offspring of some patron or donor of arts. We suggest that his choice of subject testifies to the spread of "the holy child" imagery into Western Ukraine and, on a broader scale, changes in perception of peasant children in the society.

Oleksa Novakivskyi was another Western Ukrainian artist who dealt with the romanticised image of the child. Having graduated from the Krakow Academy, the artist moved to the nearby village of Mohyla, where he made numerous depictions of peasants and their daily life. Like many intellectuals of the time, Novakivskyi admired village people to such a degree that he married a local girl Anna-Mariia Palmovska.

Since his student days, the artist recurrently tackled themes and compositional devices associated with religious art. In particular, the idealised image of the child is the core of his series "The Awakening''. Novakivskyi worked on it for almost 25 years. According to Liubov Voloshyn, the artist produced 60 sketches and 17 paintings of the subject. The researcher maintains that in "The Awakening'' series Novakivskyi expressed his feelings about political events of his time as well as the fate of Ukrainian people. (Voloshyn 2007, p. 307)

Novakivskyi chose laconic vertical compositions, similar to those of Orthodox icons, which allowed to focus all the viewer's attention on the protagonist. At the same time, the researcher described symbolic details in these images as "masked" and "somewhat subdued". (Voloshyn 2007, p. 312) This remark reminds one of "hidden" religious symbols in the paintings by Cassat, Shannon and other Western European artists.

In the centre of every picture is a teenage girl (another example of "feminisation" of "the holy child"). She is standing with one hand behind her head, rubbing her eyes with the other one. The girl looks as if she has just woken up. The artist reinforced this impression by portraying her either in a nightgown or naked.

V. Ovsiichuk pointed out that Novakivskyi's depictions of nudity are devoid of eroticism. According to him, the protagonist of "The Awakening" is "characterised by purity and an [exclusively] aesthetic form of beauty". (Ovsiichuk 1998, p.50) The statement seems rather controversial (especially in the view of everything said about children's sexuality and "secret" erotization of children in the 19th-century Western culture). However, one can assume that nudity

in Novakivskyi's paintings was supposed to convey the girl's innocence and, therefore, was accepted by contemporaneous viewers.
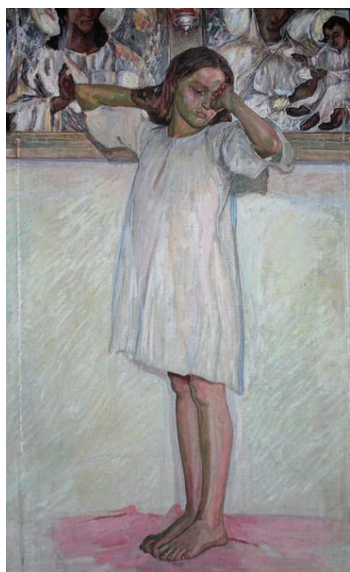

Fig. 22. Oleksa Novakivskyi. "The Awakening (against the icons)". The early 1910s. Photo-in-Lviv. https://photo-lviv.in.ua/probudzhennya-abo-muzychnyj-ukrayinsko-yaponskyj-vechir-v-muzeyi-oleksy-novakivskogo-ukrayinske-vidrodzhennya-vid-bortnyanskogo-do-skoryka/

Fig. 23. Oleksa Novakivskyi. "The Awakening" (1913). Photo-in-Lviv. https://photo-lviv.in.ua/sakralne-mystetstvo-oleksy-novakivskoho/

Fig. 24. Oleksa Novakivskyi. "The Awakening (against the Crucifix)"1914. Art.lviv-online. https://art.lviv-online.com/oleksa-novakivskyj/

"The Awakening" series is best known for two finished paintings and a detailed study. We will examine them further. The earliest one, "The Awakening (against the icons)", dates to the beginning of the 1910s. The young protagonist is clad in a short white nightgown. Just like in the painting by Mucha, the colour seems to emphasize her innocence. A wall decorated with icons behind her is painted in light pearly shades matching those of the clothes. In addition to amplifying the symbolism of the painting, it also reminds of a real interior (as opposed to the abstract backgrounds of the later versions of the subject).

As L.Voloshyn put it, in the first versions of "The Awakening" "the artist addresses solely philosophical, existential issues...He seeks to create an image of adolescence waking up for the wholeness of adult life". The researcher noted that the subject of transition from one stage in life to another (in this case, from childhood to puberty) was common in the contemporaneous art. (Voloshyn 2007, p. 309-310)

At the same time, the artwork contains solely religious imagery. Hanging on the wall are the icons of Crist Pantocrator and the Theotokos (the Mother of God) with Child Jesus. Partly obscured by the girl's back, their frames resemble the three rays of a cross. The fourth one is hidden completely. Thus, the overall composition of the painting alludes to the iconography of "The Crucifix".

Novakivskyi developed the theme in his next "Awakenings". In the 1913 detailed study he showed the young protagonist naked. A windowpane replaced the wall and icons in the background. Yet the overall composition remained almost unchanged and retained the parallel with that of the Crucifix. L.Voloshyn defined the artwork as "an allegorical image of the new art

being born at the turn of the 20th century; the art inspired by spiritual traditions of the nation and patriotic ideals". (Voloshyn 2007, p. 310)

Religious connotation became more explicit in the sketches from 1912 and 1913 (Voloshyn 2007, p. 311) and the next large-scale artwork in the series "The Awakening (against the Crucifix)" from 1914. The researcher argued that in the painting Novakivskyi expressed the strong emotions caused by the beginning of World War I. (Voloshyn 2007, p. 312)

The winged figure of a naked teenage girl is shown against an abstract light-coloured background. It seems to be radiating light, which evokes associations with shining halos around saints common in many traditions of religious art. A thin yet explicit nimbus surrounds the girl's head. Shown above her is a bust of Christ nailed to the cross — the upper part of iconographic type "The Crucifix" to which the artist referred throughout the series. The Crucifix is surrounded by bright light contrasting with the pastel shades of the girl's wings and halo. "The artwork has a character of a symbolic allegory — the image of Ukraine awakening permeated with mystic revelation". (Voloshyn 2007, p. 312)

Thus, the imagery of "The Awakening" evolved over the years. Novakivskyi gradually shifted from the hidden, ambiguous religious symbolism to open use of subjects and compositional schemes of Christian art. Placed in such a context, the image of the girl easily assumes the connotations of "the holy child". In particular, her innocence and closeness to the divine is underscored, albeit differently, in all the versions of the subject.

At the same time, the imagery of "The Awakening", simple yet powerful, has the potential to evoke multiple interpretations. The image of the child may embody transition to adulthood, modern art, or national resurgence. However, these connotations do not negate her role of "the mighty prophet" and "the precious child".

Conclusions

The late 19th and the early 20th-century art reflected the sacralisation of children and childhood in contemporary society. The trend originated in Western Europe and the USA and gradually spread to other regions, including Poland and Western Ukraine. The type of images called "the holy child" can be found in multiple works of secular and religious painting. Among the artists who dealt with the subject were James Jebusa Shannon (the USA), Thomas Cooper Gotch, Frank Eastman (the UK), Mary Cassat (France and the USA), Maurice Denis (France), Alphonse Mucha (France and Moravia, the present Czech Republic). Imagery of "the holy child" is found in the work of Polish (Jacek Malczewski, Kazimierz Sichulski, Wlastimil Hofman) and Western Ukrainian (Oleksa Novakivskyi, Yulian Butsmaniuk) painters.

The artists underscored the child's special status and exceptional abilities by the means of various artistic devices. One common way was to endow an everyday object with an additional meaning through its specific placement in the composition. A mirror or a shining platter, put above the protagonist's head as if by chance, evoked an obvious association with a halo. Thus, the work acquired a dual meaning. On the outside, the painting remained an interior portrait, and yet was permeated with sacred symbolism. Other ways consisted in the incorporation of children into religious scenes or borrowing compositional schemes from religious art to depict children. In all the cases, children were represented as mediums between the earthly and the divine, who retained a special closeness to God lost in adults.

In Central and Eastern Europe "the holy child" imagery was largely influenced by "peasant-mania". The movement promoted interest in the life of peasants and their idealisation. Intellectuals of the time endowed village dwellers with innocence and religiousness — the qualities which were also ascribed to children. At the same time, in cultures of colonized regions, peasants came to symbolise national identity and hope for a better future. Naturally, the image of the "holy" village child enjoyed great popularity with artists.

Jazek Malchewski produced numerous depictions of young shepherd's encounters with angels. Alphonse Mucha showed a teenager in folk clothes alongside Virgin Mary in "Madonna of the Lilies". Wlasmil Hoffman painted his Madonnas dressed in traditional clothes and surrounded by village children. And Kazimierz Sichulski used tryptic — a traditional format in Chistian art — to show young peasants.

Similar images of children can be found in Western Ukrainian art of the early 20th century. One example is a mural painting of Madonna with Child Jesus on the throne made by Yulian Butsmaniuk as part of the decoration for the Church of the Heart of Christ in Zhovkva. Three peasant children surround Mary and Jesus, a boy is offering Him flowers. The painting demonstrates the synthesis of traditional Christian iconography and modern trends in representation of children. A teenage girl is the protagonist of Oleksa Novakivskyi's series "The Awakening'' on which he worked for several decades. The artist invested this ambiguous image with religious as well as philosophical and political connotations, thereby broadening the limits of "the holy child's" imagery.

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The sacred aspect of the image of the child in the early 20th century Polish and Western Ukrainian painting: socio-historical context and local specifics

The late 19th and early 20th centuries marked significant changes in the social perception of children and childhood in Europe and the US. The phenomenon was vividly reflected in works of art, including painting. Images of children and childhood acquired new positive connotations. A rather ambiguous notion of "innocence" became one of the most important characteristics of childhood. The category was associated with children's ability to receive more profound and intense religious experiences in comparison to those of adults. Poetry, philosophy, and art of that time emphasized this aspect of idealised childhood. In this research, we examine and compare works of easel and monumental painting on religious subjects by American and Western European as well as Polish and Ukrainian artists which depict children and childhood. We address both works intended for sacred spaces and secular paintings containing symbols and allusions borrowed from Christian imagery. The article looks into the genesis of the sacralised image of children and childhood in Western cultures, its specific features and ways of its representation in painting, including local traditions. The study focuses on the portrayal of peasant children in paintings by Polish and Ukrainian artists (Jacek Malczewski, Kazimierz Sichulski, Wlastimil Hofman, Oleksa Novakivskyi, Yulian Butsmaniuk) on religious subjects. The sacralisation of village children in Central and Eastern European art constitutes a peculiar artistic phenomenon closely associated with the social structure as well as political situation in the region. In the course of the research we employed a range of methods—formal, iconographical, iconological analysis, content analysis and semiological analysis.

Keywords: representation of children in art, the early 20th-century Polish painting, the early 20th-century Ukrainian painting.

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