

PLAYING PATTERNS IN LITERATURE FOR YOUNGEST READERS

Alicja Ungeheuer-Gołąb

Rzeszów University, Poland

The article pays attention to anthropological and cultural contexts associated with the development of literature for the youngest readers. The author states that the culture play theory of Roger Caillois can become the source of interesting conclusions concerning the reception of literature by children. She draws attentions to the existence of playing patterns of kinetic character rooted in the anthropological theory which can have an archetype basis resulting from their genealogy.

According to the author especially interesting are short simple texts originating from pre-literary forms when the essence of the story was not the neat content but the way of its transmission. On the example of Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina chain stories from the collection *Wesołe historie (Funny stories)* she points to the linear pattern determining the character of literature reception by a child. She gives examples of selected texts whose structure follow kinetic pattern of plays as for example snake or train.

Texts of folk origin appeared and will appear in collections of literary works for children, together with texts taken from literature for adults and adapted for children and texts written according to didactic patterns⁴. The diversity of such texts (mętowania - rhythmical scansion of rhymed words, counting-out rhymes, playing in a circle, quizzes, lullabies etc.) points to the need of their classification and the variety of motives determine the examination of role they fulfill in child perception. Especially interesting are short simple texts originating from pre-literary forms when the essence of the story was not the neat content but the way of its transmission. Looking back at the development of culture we can notice that the first "texts" were transmitted by pictures (picture writing, Lascaux paintings) and movement (dances and rituals). Spontaneous expression connected with rituals of first human tribes⁵ manifested in plays that Johann Huizinga assumes to be the source of culture [6, p. 11–47]. So movement, kinetic and gesture forms can be assumed to be the first forms transmitting content. The reality containing the activities similar to primitive culture activities is the reality of a little child. Before we can transform the expressive, spontaneous forms of behaviour into a play or game it is unlimited pure expression called by the sociologist Roger Caillois *paidia*. Caillois distinguished four elements that constitute the essence of play⁶: *agon* (competence), *alea* (fate), *mimicry* (imitation), *ilinx* (stupefaction). The researcher puts them between two extremes "one end with the prevailing rule of debauchery, free improvisation and carefreeness manifesting in unlimited flourishing imagination called *paidia*" and the other end - spontaneity disappearing in favour of "growing need to conform spontaneity to certain arbitrary conventions (...) this other tendency is called *ludus*" [4, p. 22]. Transmitting this theory to

⁴ Jerzy Cieślowski suggested to classify the literature for children within the framework of the inspiration of folk culture [5].

⁵ Playing in the circle until you feel dizzy, so called mill circle used by the inhabitants of Polinesia is described by B. Malinowski in his book *Życie seksualne dzikich* [5, p. 69].

⁶ Caillois uses a French word *jeu*, that in Polish language can be understood as both game and play. In this work I use the meaning "play" as the most proper one [4, p. 15].

child literature you can notice how certain types of texts and connected with them receptive activities match with this theory. Alicja Baluch, the researcher and expert in child literature undertook such transmission pointing that certain types of play distinguished by Caillois determine certain literary activities. The author calls them *ars* and mentions that “they originate from clear paidial sources, that through *ludus* aim at developed artistic forms – *ars*” [2, p. 115]. *Ludus* contains in itself human playing activities, dances, pranks and capers that can become patterns as many other forms of culture. In *ars* area we find literary texts of various origin genetically connected with play patterns such as chain stories, fables, didactic rhymes, songs.

Plays described by Caillois lead to playing patterns of kinetic character rooted in the anthropological theory which can have an archetype basis resulting from their genealogy. Linear pattern originating from plays classified according to Caillois typology is one of them. It contains plays in which kinetic pattern has the shape of a line such as a snake or train. In case of *alea*⁷ it appears in counting-out rhymes where the quirk of fate decides about the essence of play and the rhythmical construction gives the impression of marching ahead. In *agon* it appears as a constant running forward to stay the best what is visible not only in sports contests but also in mind involving plays (draughts, chess). It is presented in early forms of verbal folklore such as tongue twisters, mocking rhymes and riddles. In *ilinx*⁸ form movement forward is a free non-restricted running forward very often accompanied by shouting as aloud as possible giving the effect of stupefaction (for example running on the sloping area). It can be represented by texts of song type with linear character with repeated refrains. The pattern of snake features is mostly matched with imitation i.e. *mimicry*⁹. As the motif of “wandering for” appears here and the necessity to follow the pattern that is situated “in front of” the child. It happens in the play *Ojciec Wergiliusz (Father Wergiliusz)* in the kindergarten period and earlier when the child unconsciously imitates her mom, dad or siblings and in the later period when the same age friends become the centre of interest. This ability is illustrated by first rhymed forms repeated by a child, texts connected with imitating plays and short rhymes and didactic stories that contain “pattern to follow”.

As time and place of this presentation is limited I would like to present only the considerations concerning the linear pattern and I would like to add that some other patterns based on the structure of circle or spiral exist.

The icon sign illustrating life in the best way the essence of is line what is illustrated by a well known metaphor “life line”. This line can be noticed in the kinetic patterns of dances of procession character, rituals or for examples pilgrimages to holy places and simple child plays. Little children wander step by step following the wooden toy put on the stick or pull a car on the rope. Their route is determined by wandering line. When a bit older children while playing create a “rope”, row, chain or “snake” that moves in the room or in the garden we call it the imitation of line sign in child plays. Such arrangements, originating from the wandering of folk motives, came to the simplest texts for children such as counting-out rhymes and chain stories¹⁰.

⁷ The word *alea* means playing dice. The author borrowed it to call in such a way all plays where winning depends on lot not on the skill or intelligence of the player but on lot (dice, roulette, lottery etc.) [4, p. 25].

⁸ *Ilinx* means in Greek “water whirl”. Caillois suggests to use this expression to call various kinds of exultations [4, p. 30].

⁹ The word *mimicry* originates from biological sciences, where it means change. Caillois means the change to pretend someone else and escape from reality [4, pp. 27–30].

¹⁰ Alicja Baluch paid attention to the existence of play patterns of kinetic character [3, p. 564].

Looking for the origin of linear pattern we can look back as far as Paradise reality when the first people came away from God and then they tried to come back to him [3, p. 564]. Religious rituals originating from this fact such as pilgrimages and processions have the same linear pattern. Probably they went back to the period long before Christ. Before the history of Adam and Eve was recorded, in many cultures the myth of “lost paradise” appeared, paradise where people lived in close everyday contact with deity”[1, p. 17]. Losing safe shelter near God determined later eternal human longing for everything connected with paradise. So people try to get back to the place where they will be happy. Their wanderings have various forms. One of these forms is a line.

In the first myths concerning ascension we can meet a shaman who starts a mental journey [1, p. 25]. The shaman comes back changed. He undergoes the metamorphosis that is the result of the covered route and the goal of the journey he reaches. In prehistoric times we talk about, the hunters left their homes to look for food. Such expeditions were dangerous and men risked their life during them. They started their journey hoping to come back and their routes later became roads. So in schemes related to mythology or fairy tale we can find the situation of departing from home, leaving the nest that can be connected with the fate of every human. According to Karen Armstrong, the writer and the researcher of myths “the wandering of a shaman is, just like a dangerous trip of a hunter, the confrontation with death” [1, p. 27–28]. Human life, the route a person follows is such a confrontation as well.

In genological considerations the symbol of snake, in the anthropological context, has the non-trivial meaning as well. Andrzej Wierciński, anthropologist and religion specialist reaches the time of upper Paleolithic Age and he tries to find there the first picture symbols: basic symbol – the figure of a woman and the additional symbols such as moon, toad, snake, bee, butterfly and axe. The researcher presents the analogizing associations resulting from the attributes of natural snake form. For the needs of this paper it is important to associate the unusual vitality, diversified mobility and the possibility of quick moving of a snake with the symbol of indestructible power and live energy [12, p. 203], that can be illustrated as the energy moving “forward” – its graphical picture a line. It is interesting that among these associations we can find others that can be the origins of graphic and kinetic representations of playing patterns. They are as follows: circle (circular movement), spiral, braid (interlacement and unity of opposites in movement), stupefying activity connected with strong emotions of desire, anger, hatred, greed and envy [14, p. 203]. These symbols and activities and emotions originating from them are connected with playing theory of R. Caillois, where competence, submission to fate, stupefaction and imitation seem to emerge from the anthropological sources of the development of prehistoric societies.

So the archetype picture of playing pattern of line shape generated by the simplest types of literature for children have deep hidden meaning. It is the manifestation of the synchronicity between movement and word common for humanity and preserved by word.

Simple folk and child counting-out rhymes contain the counting-out motive that penetrates into literary texts (12, p. 114). It is visible in poems and prose. We can find linear pattern mainly in rhymes containing arrangement scheme resulting from the necessity of classification and systematization of the world. The first attempts to classify the reality by humans can be noticed in primitive civilizations as the attempts to define and create rules of time, architecture and rituals. These first attempts are illustrated as well by rhythmical elements occurring in music, fine art, architecture and literature. In case of a child it is manifested by the desire to put things in lines and series (a child playing with cars puts them in a line or arranges in a block train etc.)¹¹.

¹¹ I wrote about the arranging function of counting-out rhymes [12, p. 77–84].

One of the features of folk counting-out rhymes is, apart from repetitions, matching the mentioned elements as in the play about a magpie that cooked gruel. The words *Temu dała do miseczki, temu dała do garsteczki* (*this one got in the bowl and that one in the hand*) etc. can be matched in the chain story with the fragment in which every animal is matched with the proper feature: *Rak – ciach! Nożycami/ Kot – drap! Pazurami/ Pies – cabas! Zębami* (*Crayfish – crash! With seassors. Cat – scratch! With claws! Dog – snap! With teeth!*) [9, p. 74].

This way the value of order was added to the content of the poem as each hero does what it can do. We can find similar arrangement in the text of Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina *Zabawa myszek* (*Playing Mice*), where.

Tup-tup-tup... wyszedł z norki pan Gryź (Mr Gryź went out of the burrow).

Dryp-dryp-dryp... wyszła z norki pani Gryzina (Ms Gryzina went out of the burrow).

Szur-szur-szur... wyszły z norki panny Gryzianki, a było ich pięć (Gryzianki maids went out of the burrow and there were five of them.) [11, p. 76].

In the story *Goście w glinianym dzbanku* (*Guests in the Clay Jug*) counting-out is included in the text:

Kupiła raz baba na jarmarku dzbanek gliniany. Nic ten dzbanek nie robił, tylko nosił wodę. Nosił dzbanek wodę rano, nosił w południe, nosił wodę wieczorem. Nosił dzbanek wodę w poniedziałek, nosił we wtorek i środę, nosił w czwartek, piątek i sobotę. Nawet w niedzielę nie stał próżny

Once a country woman bought a clay jug at the fair. This jug did nothing but it carried water only. It carried water in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. It carried water on Monday, on Tuesday, on Wednesday and Thursday, Friday and Saturday. It even worked on Sunday [10, p. 86].

In such a description the picture of the jug carrying water is replaced by the situation of permanent character lasting for seven days of the week.

The graphic representation of the text of the type: *Raz, dwa, trzy/ wychodź ty!* (*one two, three/ you leave*) and many texts starting with numerals placed one after the other is a line and during play it is movement along line. Line and movement are as well connected with the dynamic verbal incipit of counting-out rhymes such as: *it goes, it walks, it swims* e.g.:¹²

Jedzie rowerek na spacerek... (the little bicycle is going for a walk)

Jedzie karetka, dzwonek dzwoni... (the carriage is going, the bell is ringing) [8, p. 63].

Idzie woda do ogroda... (water is going to the garden) [8, p. 69].

Mknie po rzece mała łódka... (little boat is scudding along the river) [7, p. 119].

Moreover the rhythmicity of the counting-out rhyme as its obligatory feature causes the images of moving, covering the distance, marching: *Raz, dwa, trzy, cztery/ maszeruje Huckelberry...* (*One, two, three, four, Huckelberry is marching*) [7, p. 102]. These rhythmical motives arranging themselves in a line penetrated into literary texts poems and prose from folk literature. We can find them in the poetry of Jan Brzechwa, Danuta Wawiłow, Joanna Pollakówna, Anna Kamieńska, and in *Wesołe historie* (*Funny Stories*) by Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina.

A short story helping to catch the attention of a baby *Idzie rak, nieborak...* (*A crayfish, poor creature is going*) can become the beginning of a longer story, for example the beginning of a chain story in which the heroes, and there are many of them (usually the titles of texts present the number of heroes e.g. *Bajka o gęsim jajku, raku Nieboraku, kogucie Piejaku, kaczcze Kwaczce, kocie Mruczku i o psie Kruczku* [*Story about the Goose's Egg, about Nieborak Crayfish, Piejak Cock, Kwaczka Duck, Mruczek Cat and Kruczek Dog*]), walk ahead.

¹² I wrote about the role of movement in the reception of literature by a child [13].

Similarly counting-out, one, two, three, four, is developing in the chain story in longer motives that create the chain structure of a text. According to Alicja Baluch such action means “following something... reflected in building various types of series e.g. a train, thread, snake” [3, p. 564]. Such systems can be found in more complicated texts as structural elements interwoven in the more complicated plot or into the artistic means enriching the values of work. Similar images following one another, one originating from the other, present the linear play pattern. The wandering usually starts because of a certain reason and very often it has an affective character, independent from the figures appearing in the text and its main reason is to follow something (someone) very interesting.

In the *Bajka o gęsim jaju... (Story about the Goose's Egg...)* of Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina the wandering was initiated by the Egg who started to roll. The rolling motive can be found in the counting out rhymes: *Toczyła się torba/ z wysokiego orla (the bag was rolling from the high eagle)*¹³. The movement of an egg is connected with the oval shape, so rolling is its genetic feature. The egg is soon accompanied by other heroes to wander together through the world. A little child behaves similarly - when she notices a moving object she instantly gets interested, she follows the rolling ball, escaping cat, jumping frog¹⁴.

In the chain story the animals (the crayfish, cock, duck, cat and dog) follow the egg just like a kid would do it. This typical for a child and at the same time simple folk dependence can be found in more complicated works (the heroine of *Alice in Wonderland* of Lewis Carroll follows a bit thoughtlessly the running rabbit). The one that is followed by the others becomes the guide, so their role is important and it is important who they are. So wandering is the main subject of a fable and at the same time it is its compositional element.

The fables of Zarembina are not the only texts of this type that a little child can become familiar with. The elements creating the linear construction of the text can be found in fables of Julian Tuwim (e. g. *Rzepka [Turnip]*), in fables with pictures of Włodzimierz Sutiejew (e.g. *Kogucik i Kaczorek [Young Cock and Young Drake]*), *O trzech kotkach [About Three Kittens]* in the stories of Janosch (e. g. *Ach! Jak cudowna jest Panama! [How wonderful Panama is]*), in the fable of Hanna Januszewska about wandering Pyza (*Jak polska Pyza wędrowała [How Polish Pyza was Wandering]*) or a story of Helena Bechlerowa (*Kolczatek*). These works determine the model of the reception of literary text such as linearity, going forward, movement ahead. They provoke the question: What is going to happen later? and expectation that probably the same will happen again. They start, within the process of the reception of literature by a little child, the predisposition to accept the pattern. In the wider cultural aspect this means choosing going ahead and wandering as the metaphor of life. The wanderer is the one who is looking for her place in life during permanent wandering, someone who discovers herself in wandering and tries to find her life truth in it as well. She is going ahead and, as *alea* points, she believes in what the lot will bring. In the literature for elder children, young people and adults the analyzed scheme can be found in the timeless motive of the eternal wanderer.

1. Armstrong K., *Krótką historią mitu*, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 2005. 2. Baluch A., *Od ludus do agora*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Pedagogicznej w Krakowie, Kraków 2005. 3. Baluch A., *Wzorce zabawowe w literaturze. Od zabawy do medytacji*, “Wychowanie w Przedszkolu” 1999, nr 8. 4. Caillois R., *Gry i ludzie*, Oficyna Wydawnicza

¹³ Simonides gives more variants of this counting-out rhymes: *Toczyła się torba/ z wysokiego korba...*, *Toczyła się torba/ z wysokorba...*[8, p. 66].

¹⁴ Kurt Lewin, the representative of structural psychology, notices that objects determine appealing and repelling affects. According to the researcher „every object appeals to the child to touch it, take it to her hand, feel it or just the opposite - not to touch it”. This is so called the determined directive character of an object [15, p. 17].

Wolumen, Warszawa 1997. 5. Cieślowski J., *Wielka zabawa*, Wydawnictwo im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1985. 6. Huizinga J., *Homo ludens. Zabawa jako źródło kultury*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1985. 7. Pisarkowa K., *Wyliczanki polskie*, Wrocław 1989. 8. Simonides D., *Współczesny folklor słowny dzieci i nastolatków*, PWN, Wrocław – Warszawa 1976. 9. Szelburg-Zarembina E., *Bajka o gęsim jajku, raku Nieboraku, kogucie Piejaku, kaczcze Kwaczce, kocie Mruczku i o psie Kruczku*, (in:) the same author, *Wesołe historie*, (in:) *Przez różową szybkę*, Nasza Księgarnia, Warszawa 1974. 10. Szelburg-Zarembina E., *Goście w glinianym dzbanku*, (in:) the same author, *Wesołe historie*, (in:) *Przez różową szybkę*, Nasza Księgarnia, Warszawa 1974. 11. Szelburg-Zarembina E., *Zabawa myszek*, (in:) the same author, *Wesołe historie*, (in:) *Przez różową szybkę*, Nasza Księgarnia, Warszawa 1974. 12. Ungeheuer-Gołąb A., *Poezja dzieciństwa czyli droga ku wrażliwości*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2004. 13. Ungeheuer-Gołąb A., *Ruch jako kategoria dziecięcego odbioru literatury*, (in:) *Problemy kształcenia literackiego w edukacji wczesnoszkolnej*, edited by J. Kidy, Rzeszów 1997. 14. Wierciński A., *Magia i religia. Szkice z antropologii religii*, Zakład Wydawniczy „Nomos”, Kraków 1997. 15. Wygotski S., *Wczesne dzieciństwo*, (in:) *Dziecko w zabawie i świecie języka*, edited by A. Brzezińskiej i in., Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 1995.

ІГРОВІ МОДЕЛІ В ЛІТЕРАТУРІ ДЛЯ НАЙМОЛОДШИХ ЧИТАЧІВ

Аліція Унгегер-Голонб

У статті розглянуто антропологічні та культурні контексти, пов'язані з розвитком літератури для наймолодших читачів. Автор стверджує, що теорія культурної гри Рожера Кайюа може стати джерелом цікавих висновків, які стосуються сприйняття літератури дітьми. Вона звертає увагу на існування ігрових моделей кінетичного характеру, що своїм корінням сягають антропологічної теорії, яка, можливо, має архетипну базу як результат їхнього родоvodu. На думку автора, особливо цікавими є короткі прості тексти, що походять з долітературних форм, коли суть оповіді – не чистий зміст, а спосіб його передання. На прикладі оповідань-ланцюжків із збірки Єви Шельбург-Зарембіни “Веселі історії вона демонструє лінійну модель, яка визначає характер літературного сприйняття у дитини. Дослідниця наводить приклади вибраних текстів, структура яких відповідає кінетичній моделі ігор, як-от змія чи поїзд.

Ключові слова: ігрова модель, оповідання-ланцюжок, теорія культурної гри, лінійна модель, кінетика.