

obok takich dramatów, jak F. Dürrenmatta Die Physiker, R. Walsera Der Schwarze Schwan, w których szpital dla psychicznie chorych jest symbolem wężenia, tłumaczonego rozwój jednostki w burzliwym społeczeństwie. Motyw "Irrenhaus" działa tutaj również "egzotycznie".

w brechtowskim znaczeniu tego słowa /por. "Vertremdungs-Effekt"/: pojęciem tym zajmuje się Peter Weiss również w swoim Notizbuch. Przy pomocy tzw. "V-Effekt", innymi słowy poprzez odebranie pewnym faktom, procesom czy też pojęciom ich codziennego, zrozumiałego, zwykłego znaczenia i dzięki przedstawieniu ich w sposób całkowicie nowy, niejednokrotnie bulwersujący i szokujący czytelnika lub widza, starał się Peter Weiss, podobnie jak Bertolt Brecht, nie interpretować jedynie rzeczywistość nas otaczającej, ale ją zmieniać. Hasło: "Nicht interpretieren, sondern verändern" /nie interpretować, ale zmieniać/, które Peter Weiss skierował w r. 1965 do swych kolegów po piórze, stanowi motto jego twórczości, a zarazem określa miejsce tego pisarza humanisty we współczesnej literaturze niemieckiego obszaru językowego.

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LUBELSKIE MATERIAŁY NEOFILOLOGICZNE — 1981

Franciszek Iyza

Louisa May Alcott's Polish Here +

The bloom of the domestic novel provoked Nathaniel Hawthorne's famous grumble about his having "no chance of success" as long as the public was occupied with the trash of "a damned mob of scribbling women". Mercifully, untimely death in 1864 spared him further disappointments, for the bloom soon produced a rich crop of popular fiction that he might have considered a literary junkheap. In due time, however, the heap dwindled a few gems, and the literary pap of the genteel tradition has become the object of respectable scholarship. Some historians and critics even regard the secondary literature of the post-Civil War era as a key to the understanding of the nineteenth century.¹

Among the female writers scorned by Hawthorne, none seems to have benefited more from the interest than Louisa May Alcott - excepting Harriet Beecher Stowe. The popularity of Little Women /1868-1869/ which Edward Wagenknecht declares, may next to Tom Sawyer "well be the most beloved American book", is now dignified by serious analysts, modest as its scope still is. Studied by Ladeleine B. Stern, Sarah Elbert, Eugenia Kaléidin, Judith Fetterley and a few others prove that the earlier critical neglect of Louisa Alcott can no longer be justified by her artistic limitations. Their nature was partly diagnosed by Eugenia Kaléidin: "What becomes apparent as we study Louisa Alcott's life and her work is that her acceptance of the creed of womanly self-denial as much as her willingness to buy success by catering to middle class ideals abhorred the premise of her art and led her to believe her most deeply felt values".²

¹The article is a modified version of a paper read at the Popular Fiction Workshop of the European Association for American Studies Biennial Conference, Paris, March 30 - April 2, 1982.

The betrayal consists largely in Louisa Alcott's endorsement of Mrs. March's ideal of femininity, in the progress of so - the second of the March sisters from tomboyism toward middle class motherhood, and in the development of Laurie from a potential rebel into a conventional do-gooder.

Mrs March's idea of womanhood vests in rigorous respectability. In her petty world of a small New England town, norms of conduct are prescribed by narrow codes of behavior to be strictly observed through self-discipline and will power. She has definite notions about her girls: "I want my daughters to be beautiful, accomplished, and good; to be admired, loved, and respected; to have a happy youth, to be well and wisely married, and to lead useful, pleasant lives, with as little care and sorrow to try them as God sees fit to send. To be loved and chosen by a good man is the best and sweetest thing which can happen to a woman; and I sincerely hope my girls may know this beautiful experience."³

Unlike Harriet Beecher Stowe, Louisa Alcott enlists the Victorian cult of motherhood in the conventional cause of the patriarchal status quo.⁴ Here, March's world is totally self-contained. She lives in an Emersonian universe which, according to Ivor Winters, is "a universe of amiable but perfectly unperceptive imbeciles."⁵

The March girls wage the moral battles with various degrees of success depending on their different tempers. While Meg and Amy and Beth progress on their road to perfect womanliness with relative ease, Jo's journey turns out to be bumpy, for she has the least self-control, and had hard times trying to exorcise the fiery spirit which was continually getting her into trouble.⁶ As an adolescent Jo revolts against the conventional segregation of the sexes. As a young woman she craves independence, got by yearning for public recognition and praise of those she loves, she commiserates her aspirations as an independent writer. But the main reason for her compromise is the fear of spinsterhood, a dread in the Victorian female universe. "An old maid, that's what I'd like to be. A literary spinster, with a pen for a spouse, a family of orphans for children, and twenty years hence a novel of twenty paragraphs. I dare say, old maids are very comfortable when they get used to it; but..." and there follows a supposition which is probably the most pathetic apology of the single woman and the most touching plea for respect for the spinster in American literature.⁷ Committed to love the Marches, Louisa Alcott could not betray

either Harnee or her daughters, to deprive them of the "best and sweetest thing which can happen to a woman". In a dramatic gesture she makes Jo "pick up her inkstand" giving her in matrimony to Professor Iriza Bhaer, an amiable but sentimental moralist - to the great disappointment of readers who expected Jo to marry Laurie Laurence. Louisa Alcott has endowed him with qualities that make him the most attractive male character in the world of *Little Women*. "There is probably no woman today who cannot remember falling in love with Laurie when she was a girl and first read the story of the March sisters" - declares Marjorie Worthington.⁸

Laurie was born of an Italian mother, has "curly black hair, brown skin, big black eyes, handsome nose /this feature is considered particularly important by the girls/ fine teeth, small hands and feet,... very polite for a boy, and altogether jolly".⁹ He is an accomplished piano player, good dancer, delightful host seldom showing the moody side of his character. An orphan from early childhood, he is raised by his opulent bourgeois grandfather who at first gives the impression of having a gruff personality, but soon turns out to be the embodiment of Victorian kindness. Laurie will, of course, some day inherit his wealth unless he forfeits his inheritance through bad behavior. To his grandfather's taste, Laurie is not an ideal boy. He displays instincts normal for any sixteen-year-old upper class teenager with understandable inclinations toward pranks and innocent mischief. Laurie goes dutifully to college to please his grandfather, "getting through it in the easiest possible manner to please himself".

With such attributes young Laurence is regarded as a most eligible "parti" by the community's mammas, is smiled upon by their daughters, and flattered enough by ladies of all ages to make a coxcomb of him. Though "a universal favorite, thanks to money, manners, much talent, and the kindest heart that ever got its owner into scrapes by trying to get other people out of them" /note the sequence in which the author enumerates his attributes/ he stood in great danger of being spoiled... Being a glorious human boy, of course he frolicked and flirted, grew dandified, aquatic, sentimental, or gymnastic, as college fashions ordained;

hazed and was hazed, talked slang, and more than once came perilously near suspension and expulsion".¹⁰ At this point in his life, Laurie is close to becoming Huckleberry Finn's older brother. The very thought would have outraged Louisa Alcott. "If Mr. Cicemans cannot think something better to tell our purblind lads and lassies, he had best stop writing for them".¹¹ Twain was delighted upon hearing her advice.

Laurie probably would have been spoilt, like many another promising boy of his class, if he had not possessed a tallisman against evil in the memory of the kind old man who was bound up in his success, the motherly friend who watched over him as if he were her son, and last, but not least, the knowledge that four innocent girls loved, admired, and believed in him with all their hearts. Mrs. March domesticates him making sure he does not become a threat to her girls, and with the sweet prospect of securing a future son-in-law, she transforms him into a perfect Victorian gentleman. Louisa Alcott knew how to insinuate him into the female idolatry of the gentlemen in western culture.

Thus Little Women may be said to be as much a book about perfect Victorian womanliness as ideal Victorian manliness. In the male dominated culture of the second half of the nineteenth century, Louisa Alcott's artistic conformity coaxed her into making Laurie the central character in the book. Even the structure of the novel emphasizes quite effectively his centrality. The longest sustained tension in the novel arises from the flawlessly constructed evolution of the relationships between Laurie and the March girls in general and Jo in particular. As long as she deals with them as children, the narrative based on the memories of her own childhood is flat. She set to work on the book reluctantly - mainly because her father and Thomas Niles, partner in a publishing firm, talked her into writing it, seduced by the promise of money. "So I plod away", she confided in her journal, "though I don't enjoy this sort of thing. Never liked girls or knew many, except my sisters; but our queer plays and experiences may prove interesting, though I doubt it".¹² The story acquires momentum when Jo as an adolescent girl begins to assert her unconventional spirit derived partly from Louisa's memory of her own childhood and partly from accumulated experience of a tormented thirty-six year old spinster preoccupied self-sacrificially with the improvement of

the lot of her family, and when it becomes clear that all the girls are in love with Laurie. Louisa Alcott's literary skill shows itself best in the way she concluded the first volume of Little Women: Meg, the oldest of the March sisters, is betrothed to be married to Laurie's teacher, while Laurie demonstrates symptoms of erotic love for Jo. Louisa's statement at the end of the first volume that the continuation of the story depended upon the reception of the "first act of the domestic drama called Little Women" proved to be rhetorical in retrospect. The public clamored for the second volume largely because they wanted to see Jo marry Laurie. It is a credit to Louisa Alcott's art that she did not yield to the readers' sentimental expectations, her domesticating both Jo and Laurie into conventional middle class New England marriages notwithstanding.

After the publication of Little Women, the author was repeatedly called upon to identify what was autobiographical and what was feigned. While everybody readily accepted the prototypes for the members of the Marches, Laurie's model has provoked controversy despite her unequivocal explanation of his origin. /This controversy may be taken as yet another measure of the significance of the protagonist/. Her readers "thirsted" for information about Laurie, they were puzzled by the fact that upon visiting Concord, where the action of the novel takes place, they did not find the Laurence house.

As a travelling companion of Anna Weld, in the autumn of 1865, Louisa was boarding for several weeks at Pension Victoria in Verey, Switzerland. There they met a young Pole, Wladyslaw /Ladslaw/ Wisniewski, a participant in the January uprising of 1863. He had been imprisoned, his health impaired. His parents, he told his American female friends, had persuaded him to come to Verey to save his health and to separate him from a young woman he loved. "All this - comments Martha Saxton, Louisa's latest biographer - complete with coughing and peculiar English, was too much for Louisa. She loved the romantic boy with his wild, colorful stories and jumped at the chance to trade French for English lessons".¹³ Being a true Pole, he entertained them with jokes explaining that they were necessary to his health. With Louisa's

own experience in the Civil War,¹⁴ their encounter quickly developed into a platonic relationship, while Laddislas, or Laddie and Laurie, as she began calling him in her journal, was flirting with Anna Weld, the more physically attractive of the two women. Martha Saxton speculates that Louise may have wished to preserve the illusion that she and Laddie shared more than a mild friendship. If Wisniewski stirred her emotions, she expressed them, given her natural reserve, common sense, repression and age/she was his senior by twelve years/, and in a sacrificial gesture so typical of her, left him to the neurotic Anna. Harjorie Worthington, her earlier biographer, maintains, however, that Wisniewski was in love with Louise, not saying anything about his supposed infatuation with Anna Weld.¹⁵

A few months later they met again in Paris, this time without Anna. These may have been Louise's most delightful two weeks in her adult life. Wisniewski acted expertly as her cicerone through the wonderful city. "The days spent in seeing sights with my Laddie, the evenings in reading, writing, hearing 'my boy' play, or resting" she recorded in the journal. And in a letter she self-consciously assured her family: "My twelve years' seniority made our adventures quite proper".¹⁶

Louisa parted from her friend with genuine sadness cherishing for the rest of her life the memory of a charming experience. She wrote about him in two shorter pieces Life in a Pension and My Polish Boy, and made him the prototype of the protagonist of the story The Baron's Gloves which tells about an American who participates in the January uprising.

Twelve years later /1877/ she sent her younger sister May to Paris to continue art studies, and to look for Wisniewski. May found him indeed, a mature man now, living with his mother. He did not appeal to her though, and she soon stopped mentioning him in her letters home.

As soon as Little Women came out, several young men began claiming the privilege of being the original for Laurie. Escaped-rated by the endless questions concerning Laurie's prototype, Louise declared on one occasion that Laurie was four boys in one, and to a young fellow, who had lived with the Alcotts for some time and who was particularly anxious to get into literature

through the kitchen door, she wrote with barely concealed irritation: "Laurie is you and my Polish boy jointly. You are the sober half, and my Ladislas /whom I met abroad/ is the gay, whirligig half, he was a perfect dear".¹⁷

But Franklin Benjamin Sanborn, friend and follower of Bronson Alcott, teacher of the children of Emerson, Hawthorne, Horace Mann, John Brown, Henry James, Sr., self-appointed historian of the Concord sages, good New Englander that he was, had a different opinion: "...as for Miss A's statement that Laurie was wholly Ladislas - that must have been to escape annoying hints and questions... no Polish lad could have sat for the distinctly American traits of that composite and glorious boy".¹⁸

It is preposterous to argue about Laurie's national traits. Suffice it to say that they are neither "distinctly American" nor Polish but simply universally bourgeois as cultivated in the second half of the nineteenth century. Louise Alcott's identification of Wladyslaw Wisniewski as Laurie only proves the deep impression he made on her. In denying his American roots and asserting his Polish origin, she deceived herself as an artist but protested her feminine character. "Laurie is not an American boy, though every lad I ever knew claims the character. He was a Polish boy, met abroad in 1865".¹⁹

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LUBELSKIE MATERIAŁY NEOFILOLOGICZNE — 1981

Leszek Mikrut

Grzegorz Daniłewski i Iwan Turgeniew

/Z dziejów kontaktów literackich/

Grzegorz Daniłewski należał w dziewiętnastym wieku do bardzo piórczych i poczytnych beletrystów rosyjskich, jego utwory przetłumaczono na wiele języków. Za życia pisarza i wkrótce po jego śmierci znaczny dorobek literacki tego prozaika wywoływał ostre polemiki, z upływem lat uległ on wszakże zapomnieniu. Współczesny czytelnik kojarzy nazwisko Daniłewskiego przede wszystkim z interesującymi powieściami historycznymi, takimi jak Mirowicz, Spalona Moskwa czy Księżniczka Tarekówna, jednakże za życia pisarza nazwisko jego — jako autora utworów również o tematyce obyczajowej /Zbiedzy w Noworosji, Swoboda, Nowe niemieckie/ — niejednokrotnie konfrontowano z nazwiskiem Iwana Turgeniewa. Literaturoznawstwo radzieckie nie podjęło problematyki kontaktów literackich obu tych pisarzy, a i w krytyce drugiej połowy dziewiętnastego wieku nie spotykamy oddzielnej publikacji poświęconej temu zagadnieniu. Niewiśka autora Mirowicza i twórcy Rudina poświęcały się we wzajemnym kontakcie bardzo rzadko, będąc jedynie tłem szerszej problematyki. Trące te rzadko wyczerpującego studium należy bliżej zająć się, wpływem prozy jednego z głównych przedstawicieli panteonu pisarzy rosyjskich na prozę Daniłewskiego, formami i rezultatami tego wpływu,