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Is the Holocaust Still a Controversial Topic? Limits of Representation in Contemporary Polish Children's Literature

In recent years, the number of Polish children's books dedicated to the Holocaust has increased significantly. One of the reasons may be the ongoing debate on Polish-Jewish relations during World War II – debate which began in 2000 shortly after Jan Tomasz Gross' *Sąsiedzi (Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland)* was published. Since 2007 – when *Kotka Brygidy* by Joanna Rudniańska was published – the Holocaust has not been losing its popularity in Polish children's literature. Considering the ongoing trend to include the Shoah in works aimed at children treating it as taboo topic is rather arguable. Nevertheless some issues are still marginalised: controversies concern especially representations of the negative behaviours of Poles, such as anti-Semitism, blackmail and theft of Jewish property, as well as moral ambivalence of attitudes. “Christian rescuer of the Jews [is] another privileged topic in literature for the young ... the untutored reader may ... conclude that ... Christians ... were inevitably disposed to rescue the Jews” – Hamida Bosmajian's comment seems to work well in the Polish context (2002: 144). Brief study focused on rare representation of aforementioned negative phenomena will allow me to show how 'adult' public discourse influence contemporary works for children, which shape young generation's memory of the Shoah. Aim of my paper is to find these negative images in Polish works for children, including *Kotka Brygidy* by Rudniańska, Marcin Szczygielski's *Arka czasu*, and Katarzyna Ryrych's *Bombka babci Zilbersztajn* among others, and analyse them in the context of ideology described by Peter Hollindale and John Stephens. Such analysis will allow me to share new light on the controversial issues considering representing the Holocaust and its limits in contemporary Polish children's literature.

Keywords: Holocaust, Second World War, Polish children's literature

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