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Janusz Korczak as a Freemason

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***Abstract:** In this article, we will discuss Janusz Korczak's relationship with Freemasonry and various ideas in his work that were inspired by them. According to our research, Korczak's ideas can be understood only by compare them with the ideas of the masonic and esoteric organizations to which Korczak was associated to, specifically the ideas of French freemasonry and Theosophy.*

Keywords: Janusz Korczak, freemasonry, pedagogy, educational activities

Introduction

Janusz Korczak is the literary name of Henryk Goldsmith - a Polish-Jewish doctor, writer and educator. Korczak studied medicine at the University of Warsaw, and in addition to the medical profession he acquired, he was a writer.

He has written large number of books, some of them for children. The most famous of which is "King Matthew the First". His literature mainly engaged in his educational teachings.

In 1912, at the age of 34, Korczak was appointed to run a new orphanage on Krochmalna Street in Warsaw. The orphanage was run from a democratic concept in which Korczak advocated. When children exceeded the rules of discipline in the orphanage, a "peer trial" was conducted by the children themselves. In addition, in order to bring to the students the feeling of responsibility Korczak let the students to manage a newspaper of the orphanage by themselves. He believed that these educational activities develop the concept of partnership and of equality that leads one to take responsibility for one's life and for one's environment.

Over the years, Korczak became known throughout Poland as a great educational thinker, original in his unparalleled approaches. He was invited to lecture on his educational outlook across Poland and distributed his teachings on radio programs. With the rise of anti-Semitism in Poland, Korczak was removed from his various positions as a publicist and as a radio commentator. He remained in his central role: The director of the Jewish orphanage. However, till this day, his educational writings are well known throughout the world and in Poland and Israel in particular.

In Poland many events are promoted in memory of Korczak and his teachings. In Israel, schools are influenced by his writings. And several institutions, which deal with Holocaust research and educational theory, conducted extensive research and documentation of his writings.

In 1940, following the Nazi occupation of Poland, Korczak's Jewish orphanage was transferred to the Warsaw ghetto complex. On August 4, 1942, Janusz Korczak organized the children of the orphanage, all dressed in clean, ironed clothes and carrying blue pods on their backs. For the first time in his entire educational career, he lied to the children and did not tell them where they were going. The group marched to the train station (from which the death trains departed), arranged in four columns, with Korczak at the head holding two children. On the next day Korczak was murdered with his students in Treblinka extermination camp (Israeli Ministry of Education and Culture, 2014) (Lifton, 1989).

His educational writing

Janusz Korczak created a pedagogical theory that recognizes the autonomy and dignity of the child. Its essence is to look for guarantees of human freedom, child freedom and the meaning of human life. The two basic principles of this pedagogy are respect for the child as an evolving entity thanks to its activities and the principle of child partnership in the education process.

Korczak believed the child had the same rights as an adult, so he repeated in his work the phrase "It is a mistake to think that pedagogy is a teaching about a child and not about a person". He believed that every student should learn how to give and receive the very basic human values: justice, dignity, beauty, truth, respect, love for thy

neighbor, self-determination, secrets, etc. He expressed these values in books, articles and conversations on Polish radio. For this reason, he is regarded in Poland as a unique precursor for the idea of basic rights of children. He introduced the idea of student selfgovernment. He founded the first magazine to issue children and pioneered socializing activities for children with behavioral problems (Lifton, 1989).

Janusz Korczak's views became an integral part of Polish pedagogy. In 1946, the Korczakowski Commission was established, and Korczak's birth date is recognized by UNESCO on the calendar of memorable dates (Women's Lodge in Warsaw, 2012).

The Order of Freemasonry – Background

The Order of Freemasonry is a global fraternal organization that originally started as a guild of professional builders in the Middle Ages and over the years has become a secret organization of "speculative masonry", meaning an organization with human philosophical ideas that help a man to improve himself and his society.

Until 1717 the order was very scattered and disorganized. The members held their meetings and rituals in places called "lodges" and every lodge had its own rules and regulations.

In 1717, in the United Kingdom, it was decided to bind a number of lodges under a "Grand Lodge" (national leadership of lodges that will make one set of rules and regulations for all lodges), the Grand Lodge of England was the first Grand Lodge in the world. The founding of a one national leadership for all lodges effectively transformed all lodges into an organized body called the "The Order of Freemasonry".

The order of freemasonry was established during the time of the European Renaissance. Its purpose was to educate human beings in the spirit of "Renaissance humanism" and sought to develop the virtues of citizens under the humanistic principles of liberty, equality, fraternity, education, justice, charity and truth (Önnerfors, 2010).

Since 1717 till today, the order of freemasonry has been one of the most successful organizations in the world. The number of members in the Order stands at 6 million and some of the most influential people in the history of human society were among its members (The United Grand Lodge of England, 2018).

The International Order of Freemasonry for Men and Women "Le Droit Humain" ("Human Rights")

In addition to the official Masonic Order operating in the British way of masonry since 1717, there are a number of masonic orders operating in other rules and regulations invented in France and Italy (Because of the different rules of masonry, there are internal disputes between different masonic orders). The largest of them is the "Grand Orient of France" (also called "European Masonry Continental"). It is a Masonic Order which chooses to focus more on developing the ideals of education and the Enlightenment. Another order is a Masonic order called "MemphisMisraim" which places more emphasis on the mysticism ideal of masonry. And another order is The International Order of Freemasonry Le Droit Humain (Human Rights), a Masonic Order that views equality as the supreme masonic value (Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry – Revised version, 2013).

The International Order of Freemasonry Le Droit Humain is a global Masonic Order that emphasizes the idea of equality between all men. In this order, in contrast to the British masonic rules, membership is available to both men and women. Acceptance to the Order is made completely equitable regardless of nationality, religion or ethnicity. The Order is based on Freemason's teachings and traditions, using Freemason's rationality and symbolism as the search for truth. On a personal level, the purpose of the Order is to "advance the advancement of personal value, without imposing the example, or imposing the abandonment of cultural or religious ideas" (Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry – Revised version, 2013). On a collective level, it works "to unite men and women who agree on humanistic spirituality while respecting personal and cultural differences" (Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry – Revised version, 2013). Work for the benefit of society and influence the moral value of the world. Topics those were very important for Janusz Korczak.

Janusz Korczak as a member of the International Order of Freemasonry "Le Droit Humain"

According to the literature on this subject, Janusz Korczak joined the "Sea Star" masonic lodge in Warsaw that is under the International Order of Freemasonry "Le Droit Humain" during the 1920s (Wójtowicz, 2000). The "Sea Star" masonic lodge was influenced by meditative - Gothic philosophy that dealt with liberal ideas such as liberty, equality, and fraternity and ideas of man's mystical transcendence. The lodge met at 4 Muryshki Street. Among the gatherers were Countess Casimira Bruel-Pelter and future colonel general Michael Tuczewski - Kraszewicz who played an important role in the Polish War of Independence and later became deputy commander of the Polish army in exile in his fight against the Nazis.

Once a year, Korczak would visit the Mezzanine estate in Pudlicia. The place was bought in 1925 by the Polish Theosophical Association. The idea was to establish an agricultural cooperative there and to distribute new farming methods to the nearby villages. The owners of the place were members of the Theosophical Society of Poland and also members of the International Order of Freemasonry "Le Droit Humain".

Every year at the end of June, the members organized several-days of conference in Menzynin. Informal meetings were held in the Great hall of the order and various political and social issues were discussed. According to the literature, Korczak liked to come to the meetings of Masonic lodges that follow the ideas of theosophy. There he created one of his books, "Kaytek the Wizard" which has various mystical ideas.

However, until recently, very little was known about Korczak's activities in freemasonry, especially in the literature available on him in Hebrew. This happens perhaps because most of the writers, although some of them knew Korczak personally, knew nothing about his involvement in freemasonry. In addition, although all the serious works on Freemasonry in Poland mentioned Korczak as a freemason, the subject is rarely mentioned in his biographies in Polish, Hebrew or English. Perhaps also because of the negative connotations of freemasonry in Poland as an anti-Catholic organization due to his opposition to the Catholic Church's complete control over human knowledge.

Only in the biography of Ioanna Olcher - Runicade this subject is mentioned in detail (Olchik-Roniker, 2013). In another biography however, written by Hannah

Mortkovich-Olchka, she notes that he was interested in theosophy, specifically in the teachings of Mrs. Blowocki inspired by Far-Eastern teachings and modern metaphysical teachings (Mordkovitsch-Olchakova, 1961).

Korczak did not believe in the death of the body and always sought to find universal truth in that regard. He also was greatly inspired by the teachings of the poet Tagore who wrote that death is not the absolute end but a journey to another existence. At the end of his life on July 18, 1942, a few days before the liquidation of the orphanage, he made sure that Tagore presented as a play in the orphanage. The show was important for the children because it presented a sick child with an incurable illness that learned how to cope with his expected death and receive it as a transition from this life to others (Doron, 1998).

Presumably, Korczak was well acquainted with the ideas of mystic educator Rudolf Steiner. Steiner was an anthroposophist who created an educational theory that emphasized on being open to the child's talents without imposing on him rigid educational principles and restrictive discipline.

Korczak was somewhat reluctant to teach this, or at least did not accept it in its entirety. In his letter to Joseph Arnon, he writes "I read modern education books with hypocritical authority. No education exists in anthroposophy" (Korczak, 1939, 180). But even if he did, he certainly knew and perhaps was inspired by anthroposophy. In other words, instead of punishments there should be order, instead of coercion there should be good will and instead of preaching morality there should be self-work.

The Influence of Masonic Ideas in Korczak's Educational Doctrine - Masonic Rituals in the Orphanage

Methods and technics from the rituals of Freemasonry were used in the orphanage with the clearest analogy – for example the expression of a gradual rise in learning and self-improvement. First a child should become acquainted with the rules governing the institution under the care of an older member. A month later a similar referendum gave the new member a degree in the orphanage. A "member degree" was the highest rank under which he was a "resident" and the lowest was a "suspicious

rookie." The boy could change his degree if he showed effort and demonstrated a goodwill and responsibility in his education.

The children who qualified for it were led through symbols of a symbolic tower and received the title of "Knights of the Green Order". In the institution each degree in the tower had an additional level of knowledge and skills. Moreover, every degree had its own secret signs, oaths and tokens known only to the children that were accepted to the degree. (Korczak, 1939, 180).

We first encountered the mention of the influence of freemasonry teaching techniques in Korczak's two orphanages in a Polish right-wing press of the 1930's (OlchikRoniker, 2013, 275). There was an "incident" that occurred in the "Our House" orphanage. A journalist of a right-wing Polish newspaper visited Korczak's orphanage and called it a "Masonic nest". We can conclude that the journalist was quite right. Korczak's orphanage did use masonic-like rituals, but in light of the negative publicity, it seems to have stopped. But not completely, we believe.

We can also assume that when Navarli wrote the book in Communist Poland in the late 1970s, where freemasonry was banned (as in all of communist Eastern Europe), he saw a vital need to underestimate the importance of Korczak's role in freemasonry, because of the Communist censorship.

In later date, we came across evidence of this only in a book written by Korczak's assistant - Igor Navarli, which was translated in later years into Hebrew. This book is presented as a hypothetical conversation with children about Korczak's life, which is based on real details and events. In that book, Navarli confirms that the orphanage is regarded in some circles in Poland as "a nest of freemasons". Navarli confirm in his book that the reason for this image was an alleged incident that took place in Korczak's second orphanage that oversaw Non-Jewish orphans. According to Navarli, Korczak would retire to the workshop with his children after a ceremonial dinner in the courtroom to mark the holiday in a 12-hour masquerade (Navarli, 1978, 63).

Navarli then explains that they had three different degrees of secrecy and three groups of friends: a camper, apprentice, and the artist. They held their nightly gatherings with candles lit in a special outfit and working tools. These assemblies were solemn and full of Jewish prayers (Navarli, 1989, 65). Navarli goes on to say that Korczak and his children then created a ceremony, in ritualistic aprons, that was devised for new trainees

to be accepted into a fraternity. It is clear from Navarli 's description that the ritual is an equivalent to the Masonic ritual of initiation (Navarli, 1989, 66).

But in one of the dinners at the orphanage there was a journalist from a farright Polish newspaper. He intrigued by the strange noises and sights in the room that included campers' candles. He was amazed to see that the ceremony was very similar to the initiation ceremony of freemasonry. He posted an article about it that said that "Korczak's non-Jewish orphanage was a "Masonic nest." (Navarli, 1989, 65).

An expression of Masonic ideas in Korczak's writings - a new future for all of humanity

Janusz Korczak had a religious conception that was not related to Judaism or Christianity. He himself was born into an "assimilated" Jewish family (that is, unrelated to the Jewish community). He did not grow up in the framework of institutionalized religion for its practices and commandments and did not think such a religion should be passed on to others. But he sought spiritual peace and thought it could be reached with the absolute value "of the love of others", or in his case "the love of children". He thought that children without religion could get a secular education but they had to convey the concept of God, in the way that every child is interpret and defined it on his own way. He wrote, "It is possible to educate children without religion, but not without God. How is it possible to explain birth, death, the course of generations?" (Korczak, 1939, 97). He supported the idea faith education in children's homes under supervision not of practical reasons but because of the atmosphere that a child has at home (A very common idea in Freemasonry and Theosophy). That's why he made sure that there were prayers in the orphanage, including public prayers where he participated with the children. (Shevach, 2000, 93).

Korczak said that these rituals expressed an individual search for God because it gives the child a religious experience without institutionalized religion. (Korczak, 1922). He personally believed in the afterlife as a kind of reincarnation. In a letter to friends in Ein Harod in British Mandate Palestine on 30 March 1937, he wrote:

“However – I will believe – if I do not come to you as a tired old man (experienced in pain) to share with you the responsibility of my strength – I will come to you, again as a child, and I will start from the beginning my wanderings in life – reincarnation – metaphysics? No – for me they are real truths, which these evening hours in the Land of Israel have merged into one” (Korczak, 1939, 203).

He supposedly adds the clarification: “A land that seeks God – perhaps he will say who: and India and China? It is possible – however here – in longings – in submission, in loneliness, in disgrace, we will needlessly fail, not a wish, but the recognition of the reality of the very universe and its purpose – your restlessness and the feeling of lack of satisfaction are – are the request. I am sorry that I am sharing thoughts that did not fully reach maturity, they are answers” (Korczak, 1939, 203).

It is doubtful the recipients of his letters understood what he meant and he did not bother to explain to them. He defined all of these ideas as "wild thoughts" that he had. The scholars who researched Korczak generally dismissed these ideas as "not serious".

Thus, researcher Yitzhak Perlis wrote that it "seems puzzling, incompatible, even contradict to his attitude and expectations toward Israel as we know them" (Perlis, 1996, 56). But in our opinion, these wild ideas were far more serious than what they had so far understood from Korczak's acquaintances and scholars. These ideas reflected Korczak's ideals that were common in the theosophical society in Poland at that time. These ideas inspired to create a new and better future for all of mankind.

But those ideas were not known to his friends from the Zionist movement. He may well have believed, like Freemasons and theosophists, that humans can develop their own mighty powers that allow them to develop their spiritual lives above and beyond what conventional religion doctrine allows. Arguably we believe that he tried to create such people in his orphanages under his supervision.

The role of the Land of Israel

Korczak's mind came up with all sorts of mystical messianic ideas inspired by the mass and theosophical groups he was in contact with. He was known in Poland for

his deep Polish patriotism. But the Zionist concept has also greatly influenced him in the 1930s when he seriously considered immigrating to Israel (Sharshevsk,1990).

But alongside these two concepts, there was also a third "international" view that considers Poles and Jews as a part of the entire human race with uniformly and equally. Such ideas, for example, come up in his letters to some of his friends in Israel who did not really understand their meanings. For example, in a letter to Joseph Arnon from May 1933, he wrote: "The world does not need work and golden apples but a new belief. The future life must connect with the child, as the source of the hope, if I wanted (and I do want) to come to the Land of Israel, then (and I do want) to come to the Land of Israel, then not since I have an illusion, but since it is necessary to tell people, since only God (but a new one, not the one from 2000 years ago) is what will give to the Land of Israel the right to exist and hope" (Korczak, 1939, 211).

On the same day, Korczak wrote: "If I want to come to Eretz Yisrael (Land of Israel – The Jewish name for British mandate Palestine), for a conversation with God and the past, a new Bible is needed for the people" (Korczak, 1939, 211).

He explains his universal ideas in the same letter: "It is a mistake to think that only Jews suffer. It is bad for everyone, life in expectation, both those who deprive and those who are deprived" (Korczak, 1939, 213).

Korczak tried to explain his Masonic ideas in a more detailed and practical way in a letter to Joseph Arnon of March 30, 1937: "If I am not mistaken for a second nationalist, Geneva is a parliament for regulating material affairs, Jerusalem should Being the individual life spirit, destiny and right of existence" (Korczak, 1939, 207).

That is, Korczak seized the Zionist enterprise in a mystical concept that presents the most widespread human moral goals. He saw in Eretz Israel an expression of a new world society that should be created, that will be a more moral and just human society that would bring salvation to all of humanity and children in particular, and not only for the redemption of the Jewish people.

Mystical ideas in Korczak's book "Kaytek the Wizard" - an antithesis to Nietzsche's Zarathustra

Based on our acquaintance with various Masonic teachings and writings, it is our opinion that Korczak's "Kaytek the Wizard" was an antithesis to Nietzsche's Supreme Man theory and its later supporters such as Hitler. He expressed his position through a story about a child, who searches for mystical power and on a journey around the world, finally finds out the answer to Nietzsche's various claims.

That is, he came to the realization that he can't use his mighty powers to the serve his own selfish interests while causing harm to others. This is in contrast to the concept of a Nietzsche's book, since Kaytek's powers were given to him to help others and come to the aid of all mankind, not to serve his personal desires. In his book, Korczak introduced a new idea of superheroes to children's literature. Thus, the character of Kaytek is a response to the idea in Germany at that time that describe a superhero as a person who is able to reach a high level of physical power (Eshed, 2012). In 1933 while Korczak was busy completing the story of "Kaytek the Wizard", Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany. Hitler and his followers, who were greatly influenced by the "superman" ideas of the philosopher Nietzsche, spoke explicitly about the idea that the future belonged to the supreme (German) man and that the supreme man had to conquer his surroundings and the world. Janusz Korczak called Nietzsche's "Zarathustra" a danger and a "false prophesy" regarding the future of mankind.

The character of Kaytek was meant to fight the deleterious effect of "Zarathustra". Korczak despised Nietzsche so much so that at the end of his life in the summer of 1942, shortly before he was taken with the two hundred orphans to Treblinka, Korczak wrote on his memoir: "I intend to give an answer to the lying book of the false prophet (Nietzsche). This book has caused considerable damage. I have discussed, I have had the privilege of talking with Zarathustra. His secret sermons, the heavy, difficult ones, led you, the poor philosopher, to behind the dark walls and the dense bars of the mental hospital".

And thus this was in black and white:

"Nietzsche died in fight with life – madness!"

In my book I want to prove that – in a saddening fight with the truth. Zarathustra himself instructed me in another doctrine, perhaps my hearing was better, perhaps I was more attentive.

On one issue we are of the same opinion: "the way of the rabbi and my way, of the student – they were exhausting. The falls were more frequent than the successes, and the curvature is great ... and therefore time and effort to in vain, it would seem in vain" (Korczak, 1942, 77).

It seems that quite a bit of what he wrote in that memoir can be interpreted as a reaction and an antithesis to Nietzsche's philosophical teachings.

It could be presumed that Korczak keep referring to Nietzsche's writings several times always out of reluctance and disgust. However he probably also felt an interest from which he feared. As he writes: "I have discussed, I have had the privilege of talking with Zarathustra ... Zarathustra himself instructed me in another doctrine".

Korczak could not agree with Nietzsche's central idea that the desire for power is the driving force in human life – meaning a man is nothing but a system of instincts that clash with each other and try to overpower one another as the strong overpower the weak for enslavement, or elimination. Nietzsche's gives a model of what a "superman" or a "super-hero" should be. Korczak believed that the real "super-hero" should be someone who strives to experiment with everything he encounters in life and does not shy away from talking and thinking, as describe in the character of Kaytek the Wizard (Cohen, 1989, 52).

Korczak believed that his lifestyle and educational method were the antithesis of the idea that desire for power is the primary motive of man (Baron, 1996, 67). But it seems that a touch of his personality can be found in the early stages of Kaytek journey as a Wizard. Korczak admits that there was a time when he was fascinated by Nietzsche's teachings, but eventually he found it to be wrong and distorted. And so, he started to believe in a more humanistic teaching.

Clearly, one could argue that the book also served as an unofficial criticism of Nazi ideology that came to power in Germany in the same year the book was published, and Korczak already understood very well what a threat it posed to Poland and to its

Jews. One can also argue that in the chapter of "Kaytek the Wizard" that deals with an international committee of German and Polish representatives that examine the strange and mysterious aspects of "Kaytek the Wizard", is a representation of the political tension between Germany and Poland in those years. In retrospect, it seems that the threats that were given from the German representative to the Polish one expressed an analogy of the threats that were made from Germany to Poland in that time.

Korczak predicted World War II years before it occurred. In a conversation that took place in 1937 with an emissary from Israel, the poet Zrubavel Gilad, Korczak stated: "... Europe after Hitler and the war he will bring – certainly it will come! All the signs indicate about this ... yes after Hitler Europe will face profound mental emptiness that it has not yet known. And then. Nu, nu, I do not ask to prophesize but certainly I, I also dreamed about this, I will even say this one hundred and one times: the land of the prophets, the land of the prophets is renewing! This is in essence the special meaning of Zionism for me”.

The last days in the ghetto

The last organized action of the children of the Warsaw orphanage was to put on a show by the well-known Indian Theosophist and poet Rabidnat Tagore called "The Post Office". A mystical play that deals with the idea of the continuation of life beyond death in another existence. A play that could be a reflection of Korczak's views and ideas (Doron, 1998).

When he felt the end is near, his theosophical ideas echoed in his writings: “Even if you do not believe in the mind, then make sure your body is living like a green grass, like a cloud, since you are nothing but water and dust” (Korczak, 1942, 90). In the last pages of his journal he writes: “For me it has been many years that I have not blessed the world, tonight I tried – the attempt failed. I do not know even what I made a mistake in, the purifying breath succeeded somewhat, but the finger remained loose, and the energy did not flow in them, do I believe in the outcome? I believe, but not in my India! Holy India!” According to Korczak writings, he appears to describe here an experiment in yoga or meditation which he studied with his Freemasonry or Theosophical circles.

On August 5, 1942, Korczak, his teachers and the orphans were deported to Treblinka. In the last day he writes a page in his diary, on August 4, 1942, where he is trying to get details of what had happened to the postal director Estherka who had been kidnapped several days earlier by the Nazis. On August 4th, the last day for on his diary, he writes in his diary: "Maybe she didn't fall into the trash but we (since we stayed)" (Korczak, 1942, 171).

Conclusion

After his death, Korczak became an icon in Israel, Poland and in the rest of the world at large. But his influence from the mystical circles of Freemasonry and Theosophy are almost forgotten.

It should be noted that recipients of the letters to Eretz Yisrael found these thoughts puzzling and even delusional. One can assume that he never bothered to tell them everything he really thought regarding these ideas, perhaps because he did not expect them to understand them (Because they were without masonic knowledge).

Although in 1938 freemasonry was outlawed in Poland, all lodges were closed and Korczak's relations with the freemasonry officially ended, he continued to reflect and applied their ideas and methods in his educational teachings. Contrary to the usual British style of Freemasonry that is striving to distance itself from many elements of mysticism, Janusz Korczak was a member of the Freemasonry order of "Le Droit Human" ("human rights") which operates in a French style of freemasonry that seeks to elevate one's spirituality.

This style, that was heavily influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution, emphasized the principles of equality among all human beings above all other principles. An expression can be seen in Korczak's educational theory in which encouraged an equitable concept between the teacher and his student (similar to the relationship between the Worshipful Master of a masonic lodge and ordinary brothers of the lodge).

For example, one of his former students testified in an interview in Israel in 2015: "I, at the end of 1939, fled from the Ghetto to the Russian border because I could not endure these persecutions and humiliations, since I got an education that I am a human

being, that I am an equal human being, that I am a proud human being" (Interview with Yitzhak Belfer, 2015).

In addition, Korczak's writings and letters can be understood as an attempt to create a new a better man, by the development of children and their talents, with an understanding of their limitations. The main characteristics of this new person are to have a moral conscience and the abilities to spread morality to the society around him.

His literary characters are a model of the idea of the "new man", as Korczak saw him – a man who is very different from Stalin's "new man" or Nietzsche and Hitler's "super-man"; a person who reflect the ideas that Korczak learned in the Order of Freemasonry and Polish Theosophical Society i.e. a man who lives his life on ideas of curiosity and thinking.

Another motif that can be seen in the stories of Korczak is the figure of the educator who helps his students to discover their concealed powers. Thus, for instance, one of his stories in the collection *Wonderful Events* described Professor Z, an astronomer, on the planet Rho, who is helped by his telescope that describes to him in pictures what happens throughout the universe. Through the device, the “astropsychomicrometer”, he receives the feelings on other planets. He discovers that on Earth different negative emotions are dominant. He asks himself whether he should broadcast to this miserable planet spiritual peace rays. However, perhaps the miserable creatures do not want to be happy. Should he truly force upon them a way that is beyond their achievement? Is this work that is beyond their strength and a lofty purpose that they cannot understand? Here there is a moral dilemma for the alien and Korczak in his story does not resolve it. He summarizes: “Perhaps she did not fall into the trap but I did (since we remained)” (Korczak, 1942, 144-146).

It can be hypothesized that different motifs in Korczak’s life and ideas influenced the creation of the successful comic series "The X-Men", which in recent years has also been made into blockbuster movies. This series was created in the 1960s by the Jewish comic creators Stan Lee and Jack Kirby and was developed in the 1970s by the author (also Jewish) Chris Claremont. This series tells the story of mutants, who discover in their teen years that they have different supernatural powers, which inspire fear and dread among people. However, an idealist educator assembles these mutants in a home

under his supervision, where he monitors their development and ascertains that their diverse powers and abilities are used for good and in the service of humanity.

It can be hypothesized that from this perspective the authors of the X-Men only repeated the basic idea of Korczak in "Kaytek the Wizard". In fact, the character of Professor Charles Xavier, the humanist headmaster and teacher of Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters, whose aim is to integrate them into the human species, who hate them and are afraid of them, is greatly reminiscent of Korczak, even in his external appearance (although Professor Xavier does not have a mustache and beard like Korczak did, he otherwise he looks like a young Korczak). At a certain stage, Professor Charles Xavier is described as coming after the war to Israel to work with Holocaust survivors, like an alternative life story of Janusz Korczak, in which he is not living in Poland but in the United States.

To a large degree, it is possible to see Professor Xavier, the teacher and leader of groups of mutant children, who teaches them to use their power for the good of humanity, as continuing in Korczak's footsteps. Were the Jewish creators of the XMen series aware of Korczak when they created and wrote the stories of the series? Perhaps he was not necessarily in their awareness, but there is every reason to think that they had heard of him and about his attempt to create a new environment using new methods for a new type of children who are better and more aware of the needs of their environment. It should be assumed also that the very known story of Janusz Korczak is found in the list of sources of inspiration for the comic series and the successful movie films that were made afterwards and describe an educator like Janusz Korczak, who attempts to create in his modest way a better and more tolerant world also for people who are different.

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