The Graphic Novel: Aesthetic Whitewash or Today’s Avant-Garde?


Originally written in Spanish by comics author Santiago García, *On the Graphic Novel* is a scholarly and compendious study of the graphic novel; the presentation of this volume for an English-speaking readership fully justifies the translator Bruce Campbell’s endeavours. García’s study came out in 2010, at a time when the graphic novel had become entrenched in the popular imaginary as an art form and was often perceived as antithetical to the lowbrow medium of comics. Suspending value judgements, García merely classifies graphic novels as “another, different formulation for comics” (ix). This may lead comics studies scholars to expect an updating of the critical genealogy established in Will Eisner’s *Comics and Sequential Art* (1985) and Scott McCloud’s *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (1993). García himself appears to offer a precedent for such an expectation. He notes that at the time of his writing, the cultural legitimacy granted to the graphic novel had also somehow influenced the steadily growing presence of comics in high culture, including the literary and artistic worlds – both in traditional centres of comics production, such as the United States and France, as well as in newer sites, including countries such as Spain.

Currently, the elevation of comics to a status of cultural legitimacy has implied that the medium has been frequently viewed as a pedagogical tool: reluctant readers are encouraged to appreciate difficult texts such as Shakespeare’s plays through comics adaptations, for example. But for García, attempts to rescue comics from cultural damnation along these lines do injustice to the peculiar excellences of this multimodal medium. For García, comics are more than a mere “hybrid of word and image” (182) whose forte lies in the rich experience offered to the reader. Concurrently, he notes that the term graphic novel is seen by many comics artists as nothing more than a linguistic attempt to dignify the medium. García, however, is not one to opine, in the spirit of Shakespeare’s Juliet, that the term graphic novel is nothing but a mere name. Nevertheless, his intention is not to offer an authoritative “definition” (ix), earmarking certain formal features that might pitch the graphic novel against other varieties of comics. For him, such theorisation would be premature, given that the medium is still in a nascent state and as such “has no a priori” (x) stylistic features. Hence, instead of dwelling on the ontological issues of what comics or graphic novels are *per se*, García proposes to assess empirically what socio-cultural “functions” (x) comics may have performed over time, and where the graphic novel may be situated in this respect.

Chalking out comics “inside a functionalist history” (x) therefore, García apprehends the comic primarily as an art form. However, he also pays attention to the economic history of the medium, taking in, for instance, the respective publishers of comics, their distribution networks, the popularisation of cheap comic books through newsstands, the eventual decline of sales through newsstands and the replacement of sales through other venues such as specialist bookshops, which worked in tandem with the rising culture of comics collectors who frequented comics festivals. Undertaking to “re-write the history of
comics from the point of view of the graphic novel” (24), García proposes to analyse if a certain variety of comics produced today differs significantly from the varieties of comics produced in the past, and if this endpoint deserves to be named the graphic novel. Thus, the author pleasantly subverts readers’ expectations of a possible “definition” (x), as set up in the study’s title.

García’s historical account turns out to be encyclopaedic in scope, spanning the United States, Europe, and Japan – the three major centres of comics production which have undeniably impacted this cultural field at an international level. In his chronologically calibrated account, García focuses each chapter on a major era in the development of comics, while an abundance of images sampling each era lends visual credence to his readings. Borrowing from but also interrogating former histories of comics written by David Kunzle, David Hajdu, Thierry Smolderen, and Paul Gravett, García recapitulates the 18th- and 19th-century pictorial traditions of European caricature. Pointing to the Saturnalian impulse in satirical prints and illustrations by William Hogarth in England, Honoré Daumier’s mocking sculptures of parliamentarians, and the absurd histoires en estampes of the Swiss writer and educator Rodolphe Töpffer from the 1820s onwards, García demonstrates that comics, from their very inception, were tainted with associations of frivolity and excess characteristic of popular rather than high culture. Nevertheless, the author ascribes the provenance of comics conclusively as a version of mass media in print to the development of newspaper comic strips in New York in the late 19th century. The strips in the Sunday colour supplements of newspapers featured, for example, the recurring character of the Yellow Kid drawn by Richard Felton Outcault, who produced single strips that told the “the joke of the day” (51).

As García reveals, Outcault’s use of speech balloons and tendency towards “sequential narration” (47) in the newspaper strip presaged the future development of comics. However, the conditions in which these strips were commonly produced appear to have prefigured the exploitative aspects of the later comics industry: newspaper publishers usually owned the series and their characters, while the artists occupied the status of “mere wage workers in relation to their own creations” (43). In the humorous series which emerged in the 1920s, self-contained narratives appear to have been eventually jettisoned and replaced by longer narratives in which stories continued from one day to the next in successive newspaper issues. Thimble Theatre by E.C. Segar instances such a series, in which Segar brought in the evergreen figure of Popeye the Sailor and his rambunctious adventures at some point. In the 1930s, various series of adventure comics based on larger-than-life figures, including Tarzan and Flash Gordon, took over; Milton Caniff’s Terry and the Pirates inaugurated an aesthetic of “realistic effects” on the visual layout of the page, echoing the “narrative model of continuity” in Hollywood cinema (67; emphasis in the original), which would become the defining style of artwork in American comic books. Soon afterwards, publishers of pulp novels appear to have transplanted their assembly-line production systems to the comic book, in which different people specialised in the tasks of drawing, writing, lettering, colouring, and inking, leading to the emergence of mass-produced comics for children, premised commercially upon tried-and-tested formulae. García relates an infamous vignette from this era: DC Comics acquired the rights to the character of Superman from creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster for a measly $130, shanghaiing the artists’ labour and setting in place the dominant model of the American comics industry for decades afterwards.
At this point, García’s history turns from readings underpinned by mass culture theory to a neo-romantic concept of the comics artist as an author, which he sees as foundational to the eventual rise of the graphic novel. In the 1950s, although EC Comics continued to produce cheap, mass-produced comic books, their artists also, unusually for the comics industry, used to sign their own work, and the practice may well have translated into greater personal investment in their productions. According to García, the figure of the author appears to have blossomed, however, with the dawning of the Underground Comix movement in the Swinging Sixties with Robert Crumb as the figurehead. Underground Comix artists produced their works entirely on their own in contrast to the assembly line system of the industry, working at their own pace rather than meeting deadlines set by employers, and did not answer to either editors or the censorship of the Comics Code Authority. Publishing their works themselves or through independent publishers, these artists retained rights to all their works and collected royalties from sales. García points out that some “elements of the underground philosophy” (120) appear to have seeped into the policies of the industry giants as well: in the 1970s, DC finally acknowledged the rights of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster as the authors of Superman.

From the late 1970s onwards, the position of the author appears to have been accentuated by the emergence of alternative comics: the magazine Raw, edited by Art Spiegelman & Françoise Mouly in the 1980s, boldly showcased new and young artists whose work displayed originality. The focus on the author appears to have flowered into a preoccupation with the genres of memoir and autobiography in the graphic novel. Graphic novelist Chris Ware’s works such as Jimmy Corrigan, the Smartest Kid on Earth (2000), for instance, unabashedly plumb desperate depths of human emotion. Concurrently, the maturing of the graphic novel as an art form appears to have been accompanied by the authors’ assembling of a comics canon through the reclamation of landmark productions in the history of comics. Such productions – or reproductions – include the humorous newspaper family series Gasoline Alley (1918) by Frank King, republished with a new design by Chris Ware in 2005. García thus posits the graphic novel as the culmination of “a process through which the artistic form of the comic has managed to break away from the mass medium of comics”, and has “found[ed] a new tradition based on literary and artistic values of its own” (184; emphasis in the original).

The supreme achievement of García’s account may lie in his historiographical technique, which adroitly skirts the teleological trap of reading the transition from comics to graphic novels as inevitable. His narrative remains aleatory in construction, accommodating sources for graphic novels in worlds far removed from those of mass-produced comic books, which include the picture novels/wordless novels/wordless books of the 1920s–1930s. Printed in woodcut and engraving, these wordless novels shared some formal elements with silent films of the era. Such wordless novels included those of Belgian artist Frans Masereel whose symbolic and allegorical content critiqued the socio-political ills of his time, and works such as his may have a current descendant in Shaun Tan’s The Arrival (2006).

A less satisfying aspect of García’s study, however, may be his seeming conviction that the graphic novel is a “kind of modern adult comic” (3). Children’s literature scholars may well take exception to his position in view of recent publications such as Graphic
Novels for Children and Young People, edited by Michelle Ann Abate and Gwen Athene Tarbox (2017). Altogether, however, despite having been published a few years ago, On the Graphic Novel remains a highly informative study. Although García professedly addresses himself to comics scholars, specialists and practitioners as well as general readers, his dazzling erudition, enounced in a multilingually sourced bibliography, also makes this study a perfect textbook for university courses in comics and graphic novels.

Malini Roy

Journey through Magic and Imagination


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Throughout its history, the development of children’s literature has been significantly influenced by various works of the fantasy genre. Nowadays a wide-ranging genre, written not only for children, fantasy literature stems from works which were created for or accepted by a child audience. Although it has always been an important part of children’s literature, there are not many theoretical works related to it. Sharing their extensive knowledge of the topic, Michael Levy and Farah Mendlesohn have made a relevant contribution to the study of this field with their monograph Children’s Fantasy Literature: An Introduction. Published in 2016 by Cambridge University Press, the book is a result of the continuing collaboration of the authors, their colleagues, and students. As the authors state in their introduction, the aim of the book is to link the criticism of fantasy literature and children’s literature in general, because of the strong interrelation of the two genres.

Levy and Mendlesohn have succeeded in finding a manner of expression which can easily be understood by scholars and experts, but also those whose knowledge of fantasy is not yet extensive. Children’s Fantasy Literature gives a broad and detailed overview of the development of fantasy literature in the English-speaking world, but its language is still quite accessible to the general reader. In nine chapters, the authors present the most prominent authors and works, as well as the social and political background of the times they belong to. The focus is mainly on the works from British and American literary traditions, but the legacy of the most influential writers of other nations (such as H.C. Andersen and C. Perrault) are also included. The book highlights information about certain influential authors in separate sections.

Although the study of fantasy literature is not highly developed, there are many classifications and categorisations within the genre. In one of her earlier works, Rhetorics of Fantasy (2008), Mendlesohn proposed four subdivisions of the literature of the fantastic: the portal-quest fantasy, the intrusion fantasy, the immersive fantasy, and the liminal fantasy. In the portal-quest fantasy, the everyday world and the fantastic exist separately, connected by magical portals, whereas in immersive fantasy the primary world is the fantastic one. In the intrusion fantasy, the fantastic interferes with the everyday. Liminal fantasy does not include a clear distinction between what is considered fantastical by the protagonist or
by the reader. Along with some other descriptions and classifications, *Children’s Fantasy Literature* relies on these four types of fantasy. They are presented in the introduction, which also includes an overview of the most important segments of the book, which thus helps the reader work through the rest of the book.

As mentioned above, the core of the book encompasses the development of children’s fantasy in a historical context. The first chapter, “How fantasy became children’s literature”, explains that the first works of what is today considered to be children’s fantasy were actually not intended for a young audience. The 15th-century publication of Aesop’s *Fables*, beside its moral perspective, is well known for providing social critique. Perrault’s fairy tales were created as an amusement for French salons. Only later were those stories accepted by children, usually after adults had started using them for educational purposes.

Britain in the 17th century believed that children were in need of serious moral instruction, which made fantasy literature of the time not always easy to defend. Many authors pointed out that their magical characters were created to teach what is right. On the other hand, the 18th century introduced the question of national identity. Folktales and traditions became a source of inspiration for authors such as the Brothers Grimm. The Romantic Movement gradually revealed a new perspective which defended imagination. The fantastic began to be seen as a way of perceiving the transcendental, an awakening of, as Coleridge said, “a love for the Great and the Whole” (quoted in Levy & Mendlesohn 2016: 25) in both young and adult readers. As explained in the second chapter, Victorian fascination with childhood led to a crucial change: the child became the protagonist whose innocence, so greatly emphasised during the period, made the child stand out as a moral actor in the world.

Although the works under focus are mainly British, the third chapter explores American fantasy, which had a different beginning. European immigrants brought their folklore with them, but the Puritan spirit appreciated the rational. Apart from some adaptations of myths and legends (such as those of N. Hawthorne), or fantasy stories appearing in magazines (which were usually not very highly appreciated and were known as pulp), the realist tradition prevailed until the 19th century and the appearance of authors such as L.F. Baum, and later E.B. White.

Chapters 4 and 5 describe some of the most relevant periods of children’s fantasy: the inter-war and post-war period. Even though there were fewer possibilities to produce children’s literature because of the wars, there were still authors whose work provided an outline of what children’s fantasy should be. At the beginning of the war period, Edith Nesbitt laid the foundation for what Mendlesohn calls intrusive and portal-quest fantasy, as her characters discover the fantastic in everyday life. Something impressive was created by J.R.R. Tolkien, when he wrote *The Hobbit*. It was the first text with a world of its own, without any link to the world of the reader.

Levy and Mendlesohn describe the years after World War II as the golden age of children’s fantasy, where the general forms of the genre were outlined. The role of the child faced another change: once expected to be innocent and kind, and as such a standard of morality, the child protagonist now becomes an active, responsible change-maker. The most outstanding representative of this idea was C.S. Lewis, whose characters in *The
Chronicles of Narnia are often entrusted with saving the world they are sent to. There was another surge of interest in folklore and indigenous traditions (as explained in Chapter 6), not only in Britain, but in some other English-speaking countries. All these concepts reflect the consequences of the difficult war years: many fantasy works show the world’s need to overcome evil, restore peace, and put trust in the younger generation.

Though much of children’s fantasy was inspired by what had already existed in tradition and folklore, new ideas, introduced by C.S. Lewis, directed fantasy towards mythopoeism – the creation of secondary fantastical worlds with their own culture, their own stories, completely apart from our own. This notion is explored in Chapter 7, which highlights Tolkien’s Middle Earth as an excellent example. This chapter further explains the concept of medievalism, gender issues (the position of women), and inspiration found in non-European cultures.

In the last two chapters, the authors bring us to contemporary fantasy literature, marked by J.K. Rowling, Phillip Pullman, and the rapid development of the teen literature market. From the early 80s or 90s up until today, fantasy authors have created their works in response to issues relevant to contemporary youth, such as relationships and the search for one’s own identity. By analysing many fantasy works problematising such concerns, the authors clearly explain the distinction between children’s and young adult fantasy.

The development of children’s literature, as well as literature in general, can always be seen as a reflection of the changes in a certain sociohistorical context. Children’s Fantasy Literature offers thorough analyses of every important period in creating children’s fantasy, and presents not only influential names, but also details which explain the general perspective of the time. A close study shows the shift in the notion of childhood, from its neglect and a belief in its need for moral guidance, through praise for its innocence, to trusting its independence and individuality. This all goes to show how fantasy actually reflects reality – sometimes criticising it, sometimes deriding it, and sometimes promoting belief in a better world.

The historical overview offers a good balance between British and American works, depicting their relationship, as well as the influence of other nations. However, even if we take into account the rapid and rich development of fantasy in recent years, parts of the book which describe contemporary fantasy can be seen as a minor drawback. Numerous plot summaries can sometimes make it difficult to distinguish the main (and valuable) ideas.

As Levy and Mendlesohn state in their introduction, children’s fantasy is an enormous field of literary study, with many influential names, interpretations and categorisations, which cannot be covered in a single volume. Nevertheless, thanks to its many explanations and easily comprehensible language, Children’s Fantasy Literature is likely to leave an important trace in the study of this immense, but still insufficiently developed, part of children’s literature. The combination of a thorough historical paradigm and contemporary perspectives presented in this work may serve as a solid foundation for a deeper, more specialised study of this fascinating genre.

Katarina Kralj
Cinderella across Disciplines

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Cinderella across Cultures: New Directions and Interdisciplinary Perspectives is a collection of papers situated at the intersection of fairy-tale and translation studies, edited by Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère, Gillian Lathey, and Monika Woźniak, and published in the renowned Wayne State University Press Series in Fairy-Tale Studies. In line with the editors’ expertise in the fields of translation and literary studies, the selection of papers included in the collection is reliable, the organisation of papers in the book motivated, while the introductory chapter is both informative and innovative. The approaches adopted in this book are best summarised in the editors’ wish to avoid two possible pitfalls of a study of a world-famous fairy tale such as “Cinderella”: the ideologically and politically problematic cultural, national, and linguistic reification of the fairy tale, and “equally questionable universalizations of the Cinderella story erasing all differences” (14).

Abandoning the idea of an Urtext, the articles included in the collection refer to versions rather than variants of “Cinderella”, and seek difference rather than authenticity or an imaginary origin of a particular text of the tale. Following Homi Bhabha’s concept of cultural translation, the editors call for an understanding of the fairy tale that will go beyond the idea of Cinderella/“Cinderella” as a fixed or universal character/text. According to them, the tale in focus is above all transculturally defined and inherently on the move, i.e. constantly transposed, repurposed, reconceived. Following that premise, the studies included in Cinderella across Cultures offer readers interpretations of a variety of forms, genres, cultural and historical contexts, ranging from book format to film, from national to cross-cultural perspectives, from Poland to France, from socialism to consumerism.

The collection consists of eighteen studies framed by and supplemented with a rich peritext: foreword, introduction, illustrations, lists of colour plates, short biographies of contributors, and a detailed index. It should be noted that the studies included in this collection are based on papers initially presented at the 2012 international conference “Cinderella as a Text of Culture” held in Rome at La Sapienza. In the collection, they are assembled in three sections. The first section, entitled “Contextualizing Cinderella”, brings together articles on different aspects and specifics of various linguistic, historical, and cultural distributions of “Cinderella”. Often starting with the translation or comparison of the two most famous versions of “Cinderella”, one written by Charles Perrault and the other included in Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s renowned collection, and/or their ancestors and successors, the studies published in this section discuss topics such as the influence of individual translators, the dissemination of the fairy tale in penny print, adaptations of fairy tales for children, controversial motifs, etc.

The second section, entitled “Regendering Cinderella”, focuses on gender and genre transformations of “Cinderella”, i.e. literary rewritings, adaptations of the story written by Margaret Atwood, Angela Carter, Emma Donoghue, Donna Jo Napoli, David Levithan, Babette Cole, etc. Sometimes following new but sometimes also known pathways, this
section addresses important topics of the submissive and subversive potential of fairy tales and literature in general. The third and final section, “Vizualizing Cinderella”, deals with the rich tradition of visual representations of “Cinderella”, convincingly broadening the field of research beyond the verbal and the textual. Illustrations, as well as film, theatre, and poster versions of “Cinderella”, add analytical scrutiny to the studies in this section.

The studies gathered in this collection predominantly discuss “Cinderella” within a socio-historical vein, but also include the perspectives of other disciplines, such as art history, studies of material culture, etc. This stepping away from the often intriguing but sometimes also predictable argumentation, foci, and themes developed within the socio-historical branch of fairy-tale studies makes this collection relevant beyond the analysis of this specific fairy tale. It can be assumed, too, that this venturing outside the given context generates a shift away from the sometimes mechanical and merely ornamental taking over of grand concepts and theories, which appears as a side effect of the broadening of interest for one particular approach or field. Contrary to such practice, the studies in this collection primarily base their arguments on microtextual interpretation and engagement, while theoretical pillars are included mostly with a critical eye, sometimes directly in opposition to the findings of the interpretation of literary texts. Therefore, and despite its many famous ancestors, ranging from Alan Dundes’ now classic collection of essays and articles about “Cinderella” to canonical monographs such as those by Marian Roalfe Cox or Anna Birgitta Rooth, this collection will certainly find its readers and a place in this rich research field.

Marijana Hameršak

Changes in Children’s Literature


The 19th century was a period of great transformations in the British world. The Industrial Revolution brought massive changes in manufacturing techniques, and Charles Darwin fundamentally altered the way of thinking in natural science. Such major developments brought shifts in social engagement for human rights, and, consequently, educational reform. The recently published monograph *Evolution and Imagination in Victorian Children’s Literature* combines interdisciplinary findings and the advancement of scientific fields in the Victorian period to explain children’s literature of the time. The author, Jessica Straley, is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Utah with a special interest in Victorian studies – specifically, how evolutionary theory made an impact on literature about and for children.

*Evolution and Imagination in Victorian Children’s Literature* is divided into five chapters in which Straley chronologically explains the evolution of children’s literature in accordance with new discoveries in natural science, and the subsequent cultural transformation. Each chapter includes several examples from 19th century children’s literature, such as works by Margaret Gatty, C. Kingsley’s *The Water Babies*, L. Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, R. Kipling’s books about the jungle, or F.H. Burnett’s
novels, as well as a theoretical part which gives reasons for the emergence of this type of literature and the historical impact of the analysed books. What is more, Jessica Straley discusses how the authors under study created miniature evolutions for their protagonists in the midpoint of the cultural changes of the time.

Following the acknowledgments, the introductory part (“How the child lost its tail”) provides a detailed historical overview of the theory of evolution by natural selection in connection with children’s literature, and opinions on how and why children of the era should have been educated – whether on scientific or literary foundations. The introduction presents a large number of pedagogical debates by writers, scientists, and philosophers such as Darwin, Spencer, Locke, and Rousseau, numerous problems concerning child labour, and a discussion on laws on the compulsory elementary school system.

In the first chapter, “The child’s view of nature: Margaret Gatty and the challenge to natural theology”, Straley writes about Gatty’s famous Parables from Nature (1855–1871), a collection of stories released in five series about the natural world of animals and plants. Although the publication of Charles Darwin’s The Origin of Species (1859) altered the concept of children’s literature and education, Margaret Gatty decided to protect the tradition of natural theology in her writings. This chapter explains how literature for children, based on natural theology, invited readers to observe nature in order to discover the supremacy of God and His creations. This stood in stark contrast to evolutionary theory which explains the existence of species through the stages of their progression.

The next chapter, “Amphibious tendencies: Charles Kingsley, Herbert Spencer, and evolutionary education”, presents the effect of Kingsley’s The Water Babies: A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby (1863) in the mid-19th century, along with Spencer’s theories of self-motivated learning and education as a whole in relation to evolutionary theory. Charles Kingsley embraced the theory of evolutionary recapitulation in which an individual imitates the evolution of a species, and, contrary to Margaret Gatty, accepted evolution as an addition to natural theology. Under the influence of various child-centred pedagogies of the time, Spencer pleaded for self-motivated education through the most universally applicable subject – science. He believed that the educational system should mimic the evolutionary pattern of growth from simpler to more complex forms.

Straley also writes about Lewis Carroll’s contribution to Victorian children’s literature and culture by bravely criticising the educational system that promoted the useless storing of texts and facts that were almost impossible to remember and use when or if needed. Carroll advocated education that is closely connected to literature and grammar, but focused on nonsense and language games rather than pure literary memorisation or Spencer’s science. There are many examples of scientific nonsense and literary parody from Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There, which show the author’s persistent emphasis on the importance of play, which is essential to human nature.

Chapter 4, “The cure of the wild: Rudyard Kipling and evolutionary adolescence at home and abroad”, discusses the emerging concerns relating to the possible fading of British Imperialism and its significance in the colonies around the world in the latter part of the 19th century. Kipling shifted attention to the educational system that cared less about science and literature, and more about extracurricular education. His novels signalled a shift
towards literature for adolescents, predominantly boys, who could transfer their knowledge and abilities to the colonies in the future.

The last chapter of the theoretical discussion (“Home grown: Frances Hodgson Burnett and the cultivation of female evolution”) presents the Victorian attitude to the unequal position of women in evolutionary theory and their involvement in literature. Here, the reader can follow changes in the perception of female nature and the impact of Burnett’s novel *The Secret Garden* (1911).

In the conclusion, the notion that the theory of recapitulation shaped the history of children’s literature is reaffirmed. There is also a short summary of contemporary trends in children’s literature related to modern evolutionary theory, and a few examples of 21st-century children’s books that evoke the original theory (*His Dark Materials* by P. Pullman, *The Last Wild* by P. Torday, *The Secret Series* by an anonymous author, *The First Drawing* by M. Gerstein, etc.).

Evolution and Imagination in Victorian Children’s Literature is a highly detailed book about British 19th-century children’s literature and the impact of Darwin’s evolutionary theory. The said theory caused major changes in attitudes towards children, literature for young people, and the education system of the time. The book is intended for historians, literary scholars, teachers and students of literature, as well as curious enthusiasts who would like to expand their knowledge of fascinating social changes in the Victorian era.

*Helena Horžić*

Radical Children’s Literature in the 20th Century


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*Left Out: The Forgotten Tradition of Radical Publishing for Children in Britain 1910–1949* is overall a satisfactory and penetrating read which offers new insights into children’s literature during a very turbulent and war-torn period. The author succeeds in explaining the radical publishing of literature for children and how it was defined by the social and political context of the time. In doing so, the author analyses some of the most influential radical books of the age.

*Left Out* is written by Kimberley Reynolds, Professor of Children’s Literature at the University of Newcastle, who specialises in 19th century juvenile fiction; she obtained a doctorate in this field from the University of Sussex. She was also awarded the Queen’s Prize for Further and Higher Education 2000–2004.

The book itself is divided into six main chapters, with two additional chapters that serve as an introduction and conclusion. Each chapter is further divided and denoted by subsections that range from 1 to as many as 6. Whenever possible, Reynolds provides in-depth pictures or sketches that serve to explain the complex areas of her research. At the beginning of the book, she provides a list of definitions and abbreviations to further facilitate the reading.
To start, Reynolds provides a detailed introduction in which she explains what radical literature is and how it all came together – from the very foundation of the ideas, to the authors, and to the sheer purpose of radical works. Here, the term “radical literature” is used to highlight the extreme change (both political and aesthetic) the books sought to promote in people, especially distancing them from the old and the traditional. She begins by mentioning World War I and the Georgian period as key examples of political and aesthetic radicalism. Works of literature are mentioned as a template for Reynolds’ study, the first and most important being Naomi Mitchison’s *An Outline for Boys and Girls and Their Parents*, published in 1932. This book is both the starting and end point of Reynolds’s research because it is the culmination and end result of some of the most prominent authors of that era. It was published by Gollancz, an influential left-wing publisher. According to Reynolds, this work served as a vision or a look into the future and laid the foundation for future radical publishers. She continues to provide further details on how radical literature guided and helped form young readers.

The first chapter, “War and Peace in Radical Writing for Children”, offers insight into works that mostly oppose war and criticise politicians for their errors. It also tackles the multiple problems that everyone, not just children, faced: arms dealers, military conflicts, drug lords, etc. This chapter provides examples of radical literature that combines scientific and psychological knowledge that influenced society of that era (e.g. *Little Wars* by H.G. Wells). It shows how authors tried to bring war closer to the young, giving them a sense of what war felt like, and often making the choice for them of who “the bad guy” was.

The second chapter, “Moscow Has a Plan!”, explores the Soviet Union and its influence on radical children’s literature. Often in that period, Russia was depicted as “the most exciting adventure in the history of the world” (74), and authors participating in that propaganda used literature to create a desire in young readers for Britain to become a socialist state. It was a tall order, but one that was achievable due to the belief that children and childhood in general were the centre of attention of Russian politicians. This chapter provides insight into the era by using examples of how the Soviet Union tried to manipulate young readers through books centred on heroes living in the USSR.

The chapter that follows, “Aesthetic Radicalism”, is another culmination of Reynolds’s work. Here, she expresses how subtlety can work better than public proclamations. This chapter provides examples of Avant-Garde and Modernist books which encourage children to think about life – how its fabric is different for each individual. Such books prepare their young readers to face changes that may or may not come to pass in the future, by making them imagine it themselves: “Aesthetic radicalism does different but complementary kinds of work in preparing young readers for the future […] it is striking that these works have been so thoroughly forgotten” (103). This chapter seems to be the one Reynolds is most passionate about as she believes the analysed books are highly successful in educating young minds.

Chapter four, “Radical Ruralism”, demonstrates the significance of the relationship between people and the land they live on. Often enough, radical works addressed a wide array of “different” children, whose “difference” is expressed as their wealth and status, or the land their parents own and where they own it. Many of such books use stories and illustrations to show the benefits of living in the countryside, perceived as the centre of
“individual and social transformation” (131), as opposed to living in the city. Books like the Crusoe series or Four Stowaways and Anna clearly illustrate how people undergo radical changes when they are stripped and thrown into a new environment, one more “primal” than what they are used to. Ranging from the complete wilderness (the Crusoe series, 1942–1946) to the beautiful Welsh countryside (Hermit in the Hills), these environments bring about deep, spiritual changes in the protagonists.

Chapter five, “Making Better Britons”, is largely concerned with the defining feature of radical writing – the desire to improve people’s lives through literature. The focus shifts from politics and the social surroundings to health, fitness, and sex education. Books like Blackie’s Boys'/Girls’ Annual (1920–1940, Blackie and Son) and Warne’s Pleasure Books for Boys/Girls (Frederick Warne, 1932) were the true epicentre during the 1920–1940 period. In contrast to the spiritual changes of the past, this period is all about “physical transformations through social regeneration” (151), i.e. books depicting the pleasures of the body that actually promote better (physical, social) health.

The final chapter, “Rebuilding Britain through Radical Children’s Books”, focuses on rebuilding Britain through literature. Literary works of that time addressed pressing issues, primarily rural poverty and the housing shortage. In This England and Other Things of Beauty (1932), F.J. Gould uses essays for children to depict the poverty children were living in and to bring about change. Most of the books of this era are filled with pictures and illustrations that show what kind of housing would be acceptable for young people, e.g. Mary Poppins, Garden Cities of Tomorrow, and Architecture for Children.

Finally, in the conclusion, Kimberley Reynolds briefly discusses the legacy of radical literature and the future it has sought to create. She also emphasises the importance of the previously mentioned An Outline for Boys and Girls and Their Parents as a key element in her research.

One of the shortcomings of the book might be that some of its aspects are difficult to comprehend. The sheer quantity of facts and dates is simply too much to remember, which makes reading a more onerous task than it should be. The topic itself may demand such content but at times it becomes toilsome. Nonetheless, the author complements the “dull” parts with dynamic and interesting details of the periods in focus, which helps create a balance.

This book can be helpful to a wide array of scholars, politicians, and even teachers who are looking to improve their knowledge of the history and development of children’s literature. Its most powerful aspect is the depth and precision of the research conducted to make the book historically and factually accurate. The book’s content ranges from the influence of war on literature to rebuilding Britain with the pen rather than with guns and shovels. Overall, it serves as a formidable tool and provides readers with ample food for thought. At times one may feel overwhelmed by the facts, for which Reynolds might be excused. After all, it takes great effort to put 30 years of work into fewer than 300 pages, along with in-depth analyses of literary works and their respective authors/publishers.

I believe this book is extremely important, especially for the times we live, shedding light on a long-forgotten period when people tried to improve the lives of others rather than focus on themselves. It is an exciting project, filled with in-depth analyses and vivid interpretations that make up for the previously mentioned more tiring elements. The structure itself is very reader friendly. Large chunks of text are cleverly divided into chapters and
subsections that help readers keep track of the content without becoming smothered. The topics are wide-ranging and the facts seem accurate. Overall, it represents something radical in the best possible way, and for the best purpose.

Domagoj Kostanjšak

The Glocal World of Fairy Tales


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As the world becomes more connected through the process of globalisation, many aspects of one culture begin to take on certain traits of other cultures. The same thing happens in literature and the world of fairy tales. These processes are the main interest of Anna Katrina Gutierrez, professor at the Macquarie University in Australia. Using cognitive narratology, she compares several retellings of the same stories (for example, *Beauty and the Beast*) in order to see the influence of globalisation on the stories and their adaptations in local surroundings. Encompassing famous fairy tales, anime films, local stories and fables, her research examines how these narratives are shaped by the culture they belong to and how they are adapted to other cultures.

Gutierrez’s monograph *Mixed Magic: Global-local Dialogues in Fairy Tales for Young Readers*, published by John Benjamins Publishing Company as the eighth instalment in the *Children’s Literature, Culture, and Cognition* series, provides the author’s contemplations and conclusions on the relationships between the East and West, and their representation in children’s literature. Besides the introduction and the conclusion, the book has six chapters. Although each chapter has a different focus, they all deal with the same central issue: glocalisation, described as “a negotiation between domains considered global, local, East, or West that enriches realities and counters cultural uniformity” (xv). This common focus makes it easy for readers to immerse themselves into the fantasy world, and make connections and conclusions based on the presented information.

In order to set the framework for the research, the first chapter offers explanations of the most important terms used, such as fairy tales, cognitive narratology, globalisation, glocalisation, glocal, etc. Through these explanations, the reader is introduced to the main focus of the book – how global and local principles and beliefs intertwine and blend, thus creating glocal images in literature. Furthermore, these descriptions prepare the reader for further research presented in the second chapter with an analysis of several narratives (e.g. *Angelfish* by Laurence Yep, *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang, *Tall Story* by Candy Gourlay). In order to make the text more comprehensible, short summaries of the stories are provided, accompanied by explanations of their origin and meaning. With this approach and thorough analysis, it is easy for the reader to become aware that these stories are mutually connected through their basic premise, and that they share the same story script.

The next chapter deals with two famous fairy tales – *Beauty and the Beast* and *Bluebeard*, and their differences and similarities. It includes 19th- and 20th-century retellings
from the USA and the United Kingdom, based on the 18th-century notion of the Orient. The most prominent resemblance between the retellings of the two stories is their intertextuality which creates different concepts and perceptions of the East or West, depending on their place of origin. For this reason, the chapter contains several illustrations from the retellings, which, for example, show how European versions orientalised Bluebeard’s palace to show his strangeness. The illustrations are very helpful as they show how this orientalisation was achieved and how it evolved over time.

The fourth chapter presents the world of anime films. After a short introduction to its history and main characteristics, Hayao Miyazaki’s anime are presented as films set in glocal spaces – the main events happen in Western landscapes, seen through Eastern eyes. They celebrate Japanese traditions, connection with nature, and nostalgia, but at the same time they share some elements with fairy-tale scripts. Plot summaries of select anime, such as *Kiki’s Delivery Service* (1989) and *Porco Rosso* (1992), are enriched with several illustrations, which show the beautiful world of anime films. They are very interesting to examine, and enable and encourage readers to do some research on their own.

The central characters of the next chapter are mermaids, creatures on the border between human and undersea worlds. Several Asian retellings mentioned in the book are based on *The Little Mermaid* by H.C. Andersen as well as the Japanese folktale *Urashima Taro*, for instance *The Mermaid in the Whirlpool of the Pasig River* by Severino Reyes. In the retellings, mermaids represent a desire for change and crossing the borders which constrain them. Through concise analyses, the stories are compared and their common features highlighted. One of them is the glocalisation of mermaids, achieved by setting traditional and well-known stories in a local (Asian) environment. As a result, these stories have glocal elements on two different levels: one is the undersea world, which is compared to its human counterpart, and the other is the place of origin of the story, which is contrasted with the place of its retelling.

The last chapter in the book gives the sense that it has come full circle because it returns to *Beauty and the Beast*, only this time the Beast is in focus. Besides this fairy tale, the chapter also mentions other stories which contain a character represented as a beast. Putting the beast at the centre of the analysis creates a new perspective, which stands in contrast to earlier research that mostly focused on female characters. This provides an insight into how beast characters are presented, how their nature is shaped, and what their (physical or mental) transformation represents.

Although each of these chapters deals with different types of characters, and even different types of media, they all consider the same central question of how globally known fairy tales, and their heroes, are transformed and adapted to local cultures. This process of glocalisation is demonstrated with several examples of stories gathered from different parts of the world, and accompanied by numerous illustrations. Additional effort was put into gathering the translations of stories from Japanese, German and Korean. The Filipino story included in the book was translated by the author, which also adds to the scope of the research.

*Mixed Magic* is an important contribution to the study of children’s literature, and as such will be equally interesting to everyone involved in this field: experts and teachers, as well as students. It provides new insights into the world of children’s stories, especially fairy
tales, and the ways they transform and adapt to different cultures. It shows how the world becomes more connected with each day and how this is reflected in children’s literature. It is important to recognise this sense of unity that globalisation creates, and this can be done by simply reading fairy tales and thus becoming better acquainted with the cultures that surround us.

Josipa Hotovec

Picturebooks and Problem Solving


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Introducing elementary students to mathematical word problems has always been a challenge for teachers, considering students’ initial difficulties in reading, writing, counting, adding, and subtracting. One way teachers could facilitate this process and motivate students is to use children’s literature as a context for word problems. The book Using Children’s Literature to Teach Problem Solving in Math written by Jeanne White confronts this challenge and successfully connects mathematical concepts, children’s literature, and classroom practice.

The focus of the book is on problem solving, which is usually described as students’ capacity to respond to non-routine situations and find their own solutions. Since the author examines elementary school levels, children’s literature which promotes mathematical ideas is presented as the context for problem solving. The book provides a list of about fifty picturebooks which could be used in mathematics education from kindergarten to the fifth grade.

Each chapter of the book is dedicated to one of the eight US Standards for Mathematical Practice. These are: “Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them”, “Reason abstractly and quantitatively”, “Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others”, “Model with mathematics”, “Use appropriate tools strategically”, “Attend to precision”, “Look for and make use of structure”, and “Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning”. In each of these chapters, the author presents 6 to 8 picturebooks which may be used to encourage problem solving and meet the particular Standards requirement. With each presented picturebook, the author suggests a detailed teaching scenario for communicating with students about mathematical ideas from picturebooks and using problem solving in discussions with students. These ideas are related not only to the textual aspect of picturebooks, but also to illustrations, and are meant to encourage students’ creativity and imagination.

Since mathematics, literature and classroom practice meet in this book and make a solid unity, it provides three important reading aspects: the mathematical aspect, the literary aspect, and the didactical aspect. Each aspect interacts with the other two because of the interdisciplinary nature of teaching mathematics and teaching in general.

The mathematical aspect of the book refers to selected mathematical topics, activities, and ideas presented in various picturebooks. Most of the suggested picturebooks deal
with arithmetic ideas, which is in line with curriculum requirements (namely, arithmetic covers most of school mathematics in elementary grades). The arithmetic in the suggested picturebooks mainly refers to understanding place value, counting natural numbers and their addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. In picturebooks provided for grades 3 to 5, it also encompasses dealing with fractions, percentages, and decimals, as well as proportionality and interpreting remainders in division. Picturebooks with geometric concepts include reasoning with shapes, classifying geometric objects, understanding concepts of angle, comparing and composing shapes, and plotting points on the coordinate plane. Many suggested picturebooks involve measurement requirements, e.g. understanding the concepts of length, area, and perimeter, activities with time and money, converting measurement units, and estimation. Some picturebooks develop ideas from the field of descriptive statistics, such as representing and interpreting data. The author also analyses several picturebooks which promote pre-algebraic thinking by exploring properties of operations or analysing patterns and relationships. These different mathematical concepts found in children’s literature indicate that the author wanted not only to provide a long list of mathematical picturebooks, but also to describe the broad and diverse offer of mathematical competences in them.

The literary aspect refers to encouraging children to read literature and use picturebooks. It is important to note that the literary aspect does not refer to the literary style of the analysed books, but to the author’s intentions to increase the importance of literature in education. Text and illustrations in mathematics picturebooks may help young students to enhance abstract mathematical concepts: reading text may facilitate learning new and unfamiliar vocabulary, while illustrations help the visual experience which is very important in mathematics. The fact that picturebooks are often used for multiple re-readings by children also facilitates problem solving and understanding mathematical ideas. Furthermore, both text and illustrations make a new artistic whole which encourages readers’ imagination and creativity.

The didactical aspect of the book refers to ways of using children’s literature in the mathematics classroom in light of new US curriculum standards. Therefore, the discourse throughout the book is oriented towards teachers. Since the meeting of mathematics and literature in this book happens in the classroom, the didactical dimension is with good reason very emphasised. This is reflected in the author’s numerous recommendations to teachers concerning the use of picturebooks for strengthening problem solving skills in mathematics lessons. The author’s numerous comments for teachers and suggested questions for students all promote this aspect. These comments and questions provide rich outlines for teaching scenarios which might be helpful to teachers, particularly for dealing with new curricular requirements. In this way, teachers can gain insight into the curriculum via interdisciplinary activities.

The three aspects mentioned above are all intended to encourage problem solving: children’s literature provides a well-based context for problem solving, mathematics is used as a tool and medium of communication in the problem-solving process, while didactics provides the opportunity to develop problem-solving skills in schools. This is an inspirational and motivating way of approaching problem solving in contemporary mathematics education. In traditional lessons, problem solving (if present at all) is
presented through intra-mathematical tasks without context, which is inappropriate and demotivating for many students, especially in the lower grades. Therefore, using mathematics picturebooks as a context for problem solving may help young students grasp the basics of word problems. Although dealing with word problems in lower grades follows a strict procedure (also featured in this book), the suggested questions provide a variety of opportunities for encouraging students’ creativity – in the field of mathematics, literacy, communication, arts, etc.

The book ends with the chapter titled “Next steps”, in which the author recommends math teachers to collaborate with other teachers and use picturebooks (and other resources) in mathematics education, all with the aim of improving the culture of problem solving. The author’s last sentence in the book, intended for teachers, addresses one of the crucial challenges of mathematics education: “Please persist in teaching your students the importance of the process of problem solving rather than simply focusing on which student can provide the correct answer” (167). Using open-ended questions that promote creating connections and placing emphasis on the process of reaching the solution (and not exclusively on its correctness!) are some of the aims of contemporary mathematics education. They encourage creativity in expressing mathematical ideas, building critical reasoning, abstract thinking, and communication skills.

Although the picturebook market is vast and rich, teachers do not often come across recommendations for about 50 mathematics picturebooks in one book, accompanied by didactical comments and guides on how to use these picturebooks in mathematics education. The book Using Children’s Literature to Teach Problem Solving in Math helps fill this gap.

Dubravka Glasnović Gracin

Novi pristup književnoj povijesti


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Vinko Brešić u „Predgovoru“ svoj pristup hrvatskoj književnosti 19. stoljeća definira kao „historiografsku konstrukciju“ književne strukture koja se sastoji od nekoliko slojeva. Ti slojevi nisu samo književni žanrovi kao oblici i postupci s vlastitim logikama razvoja, već su to i one sastavnice književnoga života koje čine nezaobilaznu i neophodnu infrastrukturu književnoga djelovanja.

Književne povijesti najčešće pristupaju pojedinomu razdoblju preko književnih opusa autora, književni se opusi raščlanjuju, a njihovi vršni dijelovi uspoređuju i valoriziraju, potom se srodni književni opusi uspoređuju i rangiraju. Pritom se u ime zaokruženosti autorskih opusa ponekad gubi ono što je najzanimljivije, a to je istinski izvorni doprinos djela u odnosu na tradiciju vrste koje je dano djelo dio. Ili, pak, povijesti književnosti prate događaje u sumi svakoga pojedinoga kronološkoga sloja, a tada je vrlo teško pratiti autore koji pripadaju dvama ili većemu broju razdoblja.

Brešić će, nasuprot takvim praksama i žrtvujući uobičajene načine prikaza cjelovitih autorskih opusa kao i manje ili više zaokružena književnopovijesna razdoblja, prikazati
pojedine književne žanrove onim kronološkim redom kojim su ostvarivali dominantnu ulogu u 19. stoljeću, što je razvidno iz naslova poglavlja: „Lirika“, „Drama“ i „Proza“. Prozne su vrste koje se razmatraju: novela, roman, putopis, biografija, autobiografija, memoari, esej i feljton. Slijede tri epitekstna ili metatekstna poglavlja koja se bave kritikom, polemikom i historiografijom, a posljednja trećina Povijesti književnosti 19. stoljeća posvećena je književnoj infrastrukturi i uključuje poglavlja: „Mediji“, „Institucije“, „Europski pisci i prevoditelji“ te „Nakladništvo, knjižarstvo i čitatelj“.

Brešić u prikazima pojedinih žanrova daje široke, pastozne preglede rezultata prethodnih bavljenja predmetom, ali im ne robuje, već vukući iskustva iz širokoga spektra svojih profesionalnih interesa (od periodike do dječje književnosti) daje i vlastiti doprinos. Dobar je primjer za to poglavlje o romanu. Tako će govoreći o početci romanima krenuti i dalje i dublje u prošlost od Požeškoga đaka Miroslava Kraljevića, a prikaz razdoblja dugoga 19. stoljeća završit će Čudnovatim zgodama šegrta Hlapića 1913. te romanima u novinama ili pak u zasebnim svescima Marije Jurić Zagorke. Brešić će, uz razne aspekte visoke književnosti, također uzeti u razmatranje i trivijalnu književnost od Higina Dragošića do nakladničkih praksi Nikole Andrića ili Jaroslava Merhauta. Ipak, u poglavlju o prijevodima mogla se spomenuti pomama na kraju stoljeća za romanima u svescima čiji su autori bili Xavier de Montépin, Alexandre Dumas, Arthur Conan Doyle, Jules Verne ili naslovima Hansa Christiana Andersena, Edmonda de Amicisa, braće Grimm, ako se govori o dječjoj književnosti.

Baveći se pak onime što se još uvijek smatra marginalnim, ali time valjda još neizbježnim za život književnosti, Brešić s pravim pripovjedačkim osjećajem za realistički detalj daje egzaktna podatke o nakladama, cijenama, književnim honorarima, nakladnicima, knjižarima, preuzimanjima poslova i sl. Konačno imena poput Hartmana, Kuglija, Divalda nisu više samo tehnička imena iz bibliografskih jedinica već agensi s vlastitim namjerama i djelovanjima. Brešić živo i napeto iznosi činjenice o pretplatama kao načinu za pribavljanje sredstava za tiskanje knjiga i generiranom osjećaju poniženja koji je takav način objavljivanja za književnike predstavljao, o munama uspostave slobodnoga knjižarskoga tržišta krajem 19. stoljeća, prvim bestsellerima, honorarima književnicima zbog kojih je cijela profesija bila smatrana profesijom siromaha. Tako čitatelj ima prilike uroniti ne samo u interpretacije podataka ili neke opće sudove koji se temelje na prekrivenim i nedostupnim podacima, već u živo tkivo, u živu pragmu književnoga života. No osim tih živopisnih podataka redovito popraćenih faksimilima izvornih tekstova, Brešić nas podsjeća i na neke posve zaboravljene i za našu kulturu izgleda izgubljene vrijednosti, poput umjetničke prirode knjigoveštva. Naime, knjigoveštvo je danas samo zanat, a ta degradacija nekoć cijenjenoga umijeća dogodila se u ne tako davnim vremenima kada je svaki zanat smatran tek prevladanim oblikom proizvodnje. Umijeće u knjigoveštvu novostvorene elite toga vremena nisu bile u stanju poniženja u Hrvatskoj Brešić glasno upozorava.

Nama koji se bavimo dječjom književnošću Brešićeva knjiga može biti zanimljiva iz barem još jednoga razloga. Naime, i hrvatska dječja književnost ima svoju povijest gotovo jednogona naslova – Hrvatska dječja književnost do kraja XIX. stoljeća. Autor joj je Milan Crnković, a objavljena je 1978. godine. Poučne su, izazovne i inspirativne usporedebih tih dviju knjiga. Dječja književnost izrazito je žanrovska književnost i to iz dubokih strukturnih razloga. Naime, kako i sam Crnković ističe u dječjoj književnosti, žanrovi ugrubo
odgovaraju tomu kako je svaki od njih namijenjen pojedinoj dječjoj dobi. Tako Crnković razmatra hrvatsku dječju književnost XIX. stoljeća raslojenu na vrste, što potvrđuju naslovi poglavlja: „Dječja poezija“, „Priča“, „Pripovijetka“, „Basna“ i „Igrokaz“. No, usredotočen na mukotrpnu borbu za zadobivanje umjetničkoga statusa hrvatske dječje književnosti, Crnković će biti prilijen posve izostaviti njezin društveni aspekt i njezinu uronjenost u kulturne, političke i povijesne aspekte života razdoblja, a upravo je prikaz te uronjenosti nakladničke prakse, medija, povijesnih izučavanja, polemika onaj aspekt književnosti na kojemu Brešić s pravom inzistira. U kasnije objavljenoj Povijesti hrvatske književnosti do 1955., napisanoj u suautorstvu s Dubravkom Težak, Milan Crnković odustaje od žanrovskega prikaza povijesti dječje književnosti i priklanja se onomu tradicionalnomu koji se temelji na periodizaciji i autorskim opusima. Obje povijesti, i Crnkovićeva i Brešićeva, nisu samo knjige koje nastoje objasniti jedan segment prošlosti, već su i živi svjedoci vremena u kojem nastaju. Vinko Brešić odgovara zanimljivom, tečnom knjigom (pa se i autoru ovoga prikaza nekoliko puta omaknulo da govori o pripovjedačkim osobinama Vinka Brešića umjesto o znanstvenim, iako mu je namjera bila upravo suprotna).

Na kraju treba posebno istaknuti i likovnu opremu knjige (s više od 450 ilustracija) koja pruža ne samo vrlo zanimljivu vizualnu nadopunu sadržaja, već često i živopisni komentar teksta.

Berislav Majhut

U čast Joži Skoku


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toga časopisa u kajkavskoj postmoderni („Između tradicije i subverzije“). Pojedinačnim antologijama iz osamdesetih godina bave se i Saša Vereš, Josip Pavičić, Cvetko Milanja, Stjepko Težak, Alojz Jembrih, Rafo Bogišić, a onima iz devedesetih Mirjana Juršić i Miroslav Šicel. Posebnu cijelinu vrijednu pažnje čine radovi posvećeni značenju Miroslava Krleže u tom kontekstu jer se Baladama Petrice Kerempuha i J. Skok godinama vraćao i dao im prepoznatljivo mjesto u izborima lirike, kao i u cjelovitim studijama. Ante Stamać ovdje govori o baladičnosti Balada, Josip Vončina o korijenima Krležina Kerempuha, a Mladen Kuzmanović o tome koliko je J. Skok otvorio novih pitanja i jedan drugačiji pogled na Miroslava Krležu.


Četvrti dio naslovnosti je „Dječja književnost i autorove lektirne interpretacije“. Dubravka Težak u radu „Joža Skok / posvećenost i dječjoj književnosti“ prikazuje važnost autorove doprinosa tomu dijelu hrvatskoga književnoga korpusa. Najprije uvodom u kojemu navodi sve segmente i planove na kojima je J. Skok u tome smislu djelovao: kao predavač iz kolegija o dječjoj književnosti na Pedagoškoj akademiji u Čakovcu i Zagrebu te na Filozofskome fakultetu u Zagrebu; kao autor prve kritičko-metodički koncipirane studije o Ivani Brlić-Mažuranić; kao promicatelj razvitka kritičkoga mišljenja o hrvatskoj dječjoj književnosti; pokretač časopisa za estetski odgoj, dječje stvaralaštvo i društvene probleme mladih Umjetnost i dijete i njegov glavni i odgovorni urednik; kao glavni urednik ilustriranoga književnoga lista za djecu Radost; kao književnik i sastavljač udžbenika i čitanaka. Potom slijedi intervju s J. Skokom, povezan sa svim tim segmentima. Muris Idrizović govori o kritici i kritičarima hrvatske dječje književnosti u radu posvećenom Joži Skoku, a Josip Pavičić, Stjepan Hranjec i Zvonimir Bartolić o Skokovih pet antologija književnosti za mlade. Potom se teme radova kreću oko interpretacija i studija J. Skoka, naročito o


Na kraju ove pozamašne knjige (510 str.) nalazi se „Bibliografija“ Jože Skoka tematski raspoređena po vrsti radova, od knjiga studija, eseja i kritičko-teorijskih rasprava, preko antologijske kajkavske književnosti i hrvatske dječje književnosti, do metodičkih eseja i priručnika i hrvatskih čitanki za osnovnu i srednju školu. Na kraju knjige nalaze se abecedni popis autora priloga i priređivačke napomene.


Diana Zalar

Roman o kojem se (još) uvijek ima što reći


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Studija Berislava Majhuta U carevoj misiji ili sto godina čudnovatih nezgoda posvećena je najpoznatijemu i najčitanijemu romanu hrvatske dječje književnosti – Čudnovatiom zgodama šegrtia Hlapića Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić. Unatoč činjenici da je roman bio u središtu interesa mnogih književnih teoretičara i povjesničara, on i dalje ostaje zanimljivim izvorom proučavanja, osobito u novim kontekstima koje donosi suvremeno vrijeme u kojem se redefiniraju stari stavovi i u kojem se na djelo i njegovu recepciju u kontekstu suvremenih čitatelja i medija gleda na nove načine.
Majhutova studija ima četnaest poglavlja koja obuhvaćaju vrijeme od nastanka romana i konteksta njegova nastanka do puta koji je prelazio tijekom stoljeća svojega postojanja, a obuhvaća prikaz i revidiranje iščitavanja romana u različitim ideološkim i književnotoerijskim ključevima, prikaz prenošenja u druge medije, analize ilustracija i ulogu koju Hlapić danas ima u hrvatskoj kulturi i društvu. Jedno od važnih vrela za donošenje zaključaka Majhutu je bogata korespondencija koju je Ivana Brlić-Mažuranićvodila i iz koje izvlači korisne informacije i zaključke. Autor naglašava da je studija oblikovana modularno kako bi se obuhvatile različiti aspekti proučavanja romana, a čitati se može s obzirom na fokuse zanimanja.

U prvome poglavlju autor istražuje obiteljske, društvene i povijesno-političke okolnosti 1912., godine u kojoj je roman napišan. Svoje zaključke temelji na korespondenciji Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić s članovima obitelji iz koje rekonstruiira političku, ali i obiteljsku okolinu 1912. godine.

U drugome poglavlju analiziraju se književnopovijesne i nakladničke aktivnosti objavljivanja Čudnovatih zgoda šegrta Hlapića. Majhut i u tom poglavlju iz autoričine korespondencije rekonstruiira pisanje i dovršavanje romana te obiteljske okolnosti koje su to pratile (nedostatak vremena i briga o kućanstvu koju Brlić-Mažuranić nastoji naglasiti). Iz njezinih se pisama vidi da Hlapića smatra dobrim djelom i nagađa da bi mogao biti dobro prihvaćen. Prikazi nakladničkih i književnopovijesnih okolnosti u godinama pisanja i objavljivanja romana vrlo su bitni jer su promjene koje su se zbile zbog smrti Tomislava Ivkancia 1912. i dolaska Josipa Škavića, koji je smatrao da dječci treba nuditumjetnički vrijedan literaturu, te rekonstruiira pisanje i dovršavanje romana te obiteljske okolnosti koje su to pratile (nedostatak vremena i briga o kućanstvu koju Brlić-Mažuranić nastoji naglasiti). Majhut piše o značenju tih prvih recenzija, prije svega Matoševe, a piše i o podacima o prodaji, koji upućuju na veliku popularnost djela odmah nakon izlaska.


Majhut u četvrtome poglavlju proučava povijest recepcije Čudnovatih zgoda šegrta Hlapića i razlikuje tri razdoblja recepcije romana: 1. Matoševo ocjenu, 2. preispitivanje Šegrta Hlapića u književnim kontekstima od 30-ih do 60-ih godina 20. stoljeća i 3. Crnkovićovo smještanje Šegrta Hlapića u kontekst dječje književnosti kao dječjega romana. Tek Crnkovićevim smještanjem Šegrta Hlapića u dječju književnost i tezom da je to prvi hrvatski dječji roman (što će se kasnije revidirati), Hlapić dobiva svoje mjesto u pravome kontekstu. Majhut navodi da devedesete godine 20. stoljeća, iako protkane izvankniževnim
događajima i promjenama, ne donose novosti po pitanju znanstvene recepcije Čudnovatih zgoda šegrti Hlapića, osim promatranja romana i u religijskom kontekstu. Navodeći daljnje „nezgode“ koje su se događale u vezi s istraživanjem i recepcijom Šegrti Hlapića, Majhut u petome poglavlju proučava načine na koje se Hlapić vrsto određivao i zaključuje da se pravo vrsto određenje može dati njegovim smještanjem u kontekst vremena nastanka i otkrivanjem književnih postupaka i repertoara koji su autorici u to vrijeme bili poznati.

U šestome poglavlju naslovljene „Šegrti Hlapić i književni srodnici i susjedi“ Majhut predstavlja poticaje za pisanje Čudnovatih zgoda šegrti Hlapića o kojima je autorica pisala češkomu nakladniku 1931. U tom se poglavlju analiziraju sličnosti i razlike s Hlapićevim prethodnicima, a navode se i romanvi koji su mogli nastati po uzoru na Čudnovate zgrade šegrti Hlapića, odnosno oni kojima je taj roman bio inspiracija i koji donose varijacije Hlapićeve teme. Godina 1913. važna je za hrvatsku dječju književnost jer su tada objavljena dva važna djela – Čudnovate zgrade šegrti Hlapića Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić i Bijeli jelen Vladimira Nazora. Usporedbom tih djela Majhut zaključuje da su potpuno različita vrijednostima i odnosom prema tradiciji.

Analizom dobi čitatelske publike Čudnovatih zgrade šegrti Hlapića u sedmome poglavlju prikazuje se na koji se način tijekom povijesti određivala namjena romana implicitnim čitateljima s obzirom na kritičare i uredničku izdavačku politiku. U osmome se poglavlju grafičkim prizorom predočava kojim se predlošcima koristilo za izdanja Šegrti Hlapića nakon autoričine smrti. Majhut analizira i hrvatska i inozemna izdanja te zaključuje da je naviše izdanja nastalo prema Kuglijevu izdanju iz 1922. Ujedno i grafički prikazuje učestalosti izdanja, što nas upućuje na recepciju djela tijekom stoljeća njegova postojanja.

Na svojem stogodišnjem putu Hlapić je prolazio preinake i cenzure, što se analizira u devetome poglavlju monografije. Preinake se mogu vidjeti od prvoga izdanja urednika Škavića u kojemu ima 1500 izmjena u odnosu na rukopis, do preinaka koje nisu bile vrijeđana zaživota Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić i u čijem je nastanku i ona sama sudjelovala. U tom poglavlju donose se kritike i osvrati na izvedbe Strozzijske adaptacije Čudnovatih zgrade šegrti Hlapića i autoričine reakcije na navedenu dramatizaciju.

Nakon razmatranja prvih dramatizacija, Majhut u desetome poglavlju proučava pojavnost Šegrti Hlapića u drugim medijima za života Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić, na primjer neuspjeli pokušaj filmske ekranizacije i proboja Hlapića u svijet. Dva su poglavlja monografije, dvanaesto i trinaesto, posvećena proučavanju ilustracija, a zasebno se proučavaju novčani izdanja objavljenima za života Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić i u kasnijim izdanjima. Iz korespondencije se tako otkriva koliko je autoričina bila važna ilustracija u Šegrtu Hlapiću te koliko se brinula zbog činjenice da se ilustriranje nije odvijalo po njezinoj volji i zamisli. Majhut analizira i omota knjiga koji određuju smjer kojim valja uputiti čitateljima očekivanja i rješenja kojima su se neki ilustratori koristili i koja su utjecala na neformiranje Hlapićeve vizualnoga identiteta u prvim izdanjima za autoričina života, a koja su utjecala i na kasnije ilustratore Čudnovatih zgrade šegrti Hlapića.

Proučavajući ilustracije u izdanjima nakon smrti Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić, Majhut zaključuje da Hlapić nije uspio ostvariti svoj vizualni identitet i osigurati trajnu
prepoznatljivost svojega lika, ali to može biti i prednost pri proučavanju različitih ilustratorskih rješenja i praksi. Upravo proučavanje ilustracija daje komentar na tekst i samoga ilustratora, urednika i nakladnika, ali govori i o čitatelskoj publici. Uz ilustracije u romanu Majhut analizira i omotne ilustracije i pripovjednu liniju koju žele naglasiti: onu pustolovnu ili priču o izgubljenome djetetu. Analizira se i problem citiranja ilustracija, smještaj i problemi konzistencije lika, ambijenta i rekvizita. Rekviziti i pogreške ilustratora u iščitavaju teksta i razlike teksta i ilustracija. U posljednjem poglavlju koje nosi naslov „Hlapić 2013.“ govori se o stanju i mjestu Hlapića u suvremenoj kulturi, uzimajući u obzir samo neke vidove te kulture. Proučavanjem pojavnosti sintagme „šegrt Hlapić“ u hrvatskom tisku proširuje se kontekst razmatranja šegrt Hlapića na cijelo hrvatsko društvo.

Ova studija rasvjetljava mnoga mjesta u romanu i njegovoj recepciji te redefinira starija viđenja, kao i čitanje Hlapića u kontekstima koji do sada nisu istraživani, što ju čini vrijednim prinosom proučavanju konteksta nastanka romana i puta koji je prešao u stotinu godina svojega postojanja.