

HALF A CENTURY OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN POLAND

Texts for a young audience in the context of cultural production and power: the recipient of literature – literature as a recipient

The aim of the project is to create a multi-faceted, holistic description of Polish children's literature written in the first half of the 20th century: its leading tendencies and cultural functions, as well as the influence it had on subsequent literary works for children. The methodological approach underlying the project is an idea derived from Pierre Bourdieu's theory that literature (also for children) is determined by a number of socio-cultural phenomena. The period covered is 1896–1951, although one has to be fully aware of the fact that these dates are conventional and that the periodization of children's literature history does not necessarily coincide with the periodization adopted in general literature studies. This is an important area of Polish culture, discussed in few cross-sectional studies, analyzed mainly from the perspective of the works of selected writers and writers, rarely explored with the use of new methodologies.

The starting point for the research are historical and literary conclusions on the following issues: children's literature by Polish authors and translation activities (and the relationships between them); para-literary texts (popular-science prose and applied texts in literary form); the art of book (the history of illustration, pop-ups, comic-books, etc.); dramatic literature, children's publications and magazines, radio broadcasts, scripts. The first stage of the research will undertake a reconstruction of the way in which the subfield of modern Polish children's literature was constituted within the field of literary production and the field of power with particular emphasis on the publishing market, the magazine movement, radio programmes, media, translation, literary criticism and changes taking place within the capital in the first half of the 20th century. Reader's depiction is going to be reconstructed on the basis of culture and literary life. An important area of observation will be the range of texts translated from the canon of world literature (including prominently the so-called "policy" of their assimilation). Against such a background, in the second stage of the research we will study the evolution of literary articulations in connection with the ideological aspect of the texts, revealed in the design for the young addressee. The most important objectives of the project are:

1. Analysis of the varieties of prose characteristic for the period in question, especially outlining the evolution of fairytales and the category of fairytales and analysis of popular-science children's literature, as a reflection of the epoch's state of knowledge;
2. A take at children's poetry from a new research perspective (e.g. study of the influence of political, economic and ideological factors on the formation and development of the subfield of poetry for children) and description of the implied reader of poetry for children; classification of the analyzed work from the perspective of this category;
3. Analysis and description of genres, themes and conventions of dramatic works, constituting the playwrights' repertoire, with particular emphasis on collage forms, the poetry of Polish romantics poets, and children's own works. Analysis and description of Polish children's literature against the background the development of radio-broadcasting and cinematography;
4. Reconstruction of the subfield of Polish translation for children in the years 1896–1951, taking under consideration the diversification of languages from which translations were made and the relations between translated literature and local writings; characteristics of a children's literature translator in the chosen period in various relations with the text and a reader;
5. Analysis of the activities and market offer of publishers and of the selected illustrators and children's books designers' activity; a take on the development of typography in Polish children's books through the prism of the partitioning of Poland between three partitioning powers;
6. Analysis of journals addressed to children and children's press readership's range and accessibility; an outline of publishing geography, classification of children's magazines;
7. Creation of a comprehensive depiction of juvenile literary criticism, an in-depth description of its transformations and its role in shaping the subfield of children's literature; analysis of potential traces of unprofessional reception of critical texts for children and youth.

Therefore, the effect of the present project will be the study that will cover all the problems related to the Polish children's literature in the period under discussion. The monograph book, which is going to be written as a result of the research, will be an innovative study filling the existing research gaps and constituting an important starting point for further studies on the development of children's literature in the subsequent periods.