

SUMMARY

The 15th issue of “Children’s Readings” is dedicated to the theme of “Children’s Literature as Reflected in Critical Commentaries”. The editorial board of the journal has asked publishers and specialists of children’s literature to reflect upon the use of contemporary commentary as a device employed in literature for the young.

The main section of the texts dedicated to this issue’s theme begins with an article by *Guskov Nikolai*, “*The Topos ‘Animals in the City’: Interpreting Kornei Chukovsky’s ‘The Crocodile’*”.

Summary: Chukovsky’s article is dedicated to the topos of “animals in the civilized space (city, house)”, which functions as moral, social or historiosophical allegory in religious, didactic, and other types of narratives. In Kornei Chukovsky’s fairytale poem “The Crocodile”, this topos has several functions within the text simultaneously, manifesting as condemnational, utopian, and advisory themes. All these themes are presented to the reader as both serious and a parody at the same time. This duality could be explained through the genre specificity of the children’s poem, and it assists in a better understanding of this text.

Keywords: Russian literature of the 20th century, literature for children, topics, Kornei Chukovsky, animals in the literature.

Vali’eva Iulia, “*Commentary on Leonid Lipavskiy and Mikhail Tsekhanovskiy’s ‘The Pioneer Charter’*”.

Summary: This article provides a commentary on the book “Pionerskii ustav/Pioneer Charter” (1926) by Leonid Savelyev and Mikhail Tsekhanovskiy. “L. Savelyev” was a pen-name of Leonid Lipavskiy. “Pionerskii ustav” was his first published book. The research discussed in this article introduces new facts about L. Lipavskiy’s life and references his work at the school for troubled youth from 1923–1926.

Keywords: L. Lipavskiy, L. Saveljev, the OBERIU group, children’s literature of the 1920–1930s, archival material.

Kokorin Andrei, “*What Needs to be Commented on in Olesha’s novel ‘The Three Fat Men’?*”

Summary: This article explores systematized, generalized and augmented observations related to the commentary of Olesha’s fairy tale “The Three Fat

Men". Special attention is given to the poetics of characters' names, which leads readers to consider the reasons behind the conscious selections Olesha has made. Central to the discussion is the significance of the autobiographical nature of Olesha's narrative that influenced the choices of basic motifs and images in his story. The article concludes by presenting for the first time a draft of Olesha's letter to V. L. Grunzaid, to whom he dedicated his fairy tale.

Keywords: Olesha, *The Three Fat Men*, children's literature, fairy tale, commentary, autobiographical nature, textual criticism, V. L. Grunzaid, Russian literature, Soviet era literature, poetics of naming, onomastics, anthroponomy.

Lo Lan', "Two Editions of Isaiah Rahtanov's Novel 'Chin-chin-chinaman and Bonny Sidney': A Textual Commentary".

Summary: The article deals with the comparative analysis of textual and contextual changes in two editions of the first children's novel by Soviet writer, Isaac Rakhtanov. An attempt is made to explain the reasons behind these identified deviations. It is suggested that the second edition of the novel reflects the serious evolution of the author's ideology and narrative style.

Keywords: I. Rakhtanov, Russian literature of 20th century, Soviet literature, literature for children, Soviet prose for children, textology.

Mikhailova Ol'ga, "Following up on the Commentary to 'The Adventures of Dennis' by V. Dragunskiy: Stories for an Adult Reader".

Summary: The experience of preparing various commentaries on "The Adventures of Dennis" by Victor Dragunskiy revealed some important peculiarities in the poetics of this work that were hardly evident before. The aim of this article is to summarize these findings. Research of the cultural and historic realia surrounding the texts revealed that the writer, in most of his stories, explicitly or implicitly responded to events that were either important for him personally or played a significant role in the life of the State. This personal feature of his poetics was exploited by the editors of periodicals ("Ogonjok", "Murzilka", "Rabotnitsa", etc.), who published "The Adventures of Dennis" in special celebratory issues. This new context significantly altered the original meaning of the texts, since often the very fabric of the narrative was subjugated to the editorial demands of the moment. As a result, we as readers are faced now with different versions of "The Adventures of Dennis" that were published during the author's lifetime.

Keywords: V. Dragunskiy, addressing important issues, textological commentary, Russian children's literature of the 20th century.

Brykova Alexandra, "The Silly Little Mouse and The Vain Little Mouse: On the Possible Transformation of The Folktale Plot in Marshak's Fairytale".

Summary: This article deals with the origins of Samuil Marshak's fairy tale "The Tale about The Silly Little Mouse". Textual analyses reveal two possible folkloric sources for this fairy tale. One in particular is "The Vain Little Mouse" (Spanish: La Ratita Presumida), which exists in English and Spanish folklore and is considered to be a late variation of the story about the wedding

between a cricket and a mouse. A comparison of these different texts shows the transformation of the fairytale plot and structure as influenced by Marshak's intention, the time period, and children's needs, but also makes the folkloric roots of this fairy tale more explicit.

Keywords: *The Silly Little Mouse, The Vain Little Mouse, The wedding between a cricket and a mouse, pretext, folkloric motifs, cumulative type of the folktale, La Ratita Presumida.*

Kadlec Natasha, "When Reality Becomes Skazka: 'Pioneer Heroes' Series and the Heroic Narrative of the 1970–1980s".

Summary: Child heroes of the Great Patriotic War continued to serve as role models for Soviet children in the post-war decades. In the late Soviet period, these heroes received a decidedly mythological treatment, but narrative representations also continued to emphasize the factual reality of the children's exploits. Considering the series *Pionery-geroi* (1980–1982), this article discusses several characteristics of the late Soviet heroic narrative, such as its combination of mythologizing and realism, along with extensive description of the commemorative tradition surrounding each hero.

Keywords: skazka, Great Patriotic War, pioneer heroes, Soviet children's literature, heroic narrative, mass culture.

Maslinsky Kirill, Vidyayeva Alexandra, Dodonova Ekaterina, Kozhevnikova Yulia, Nikiforov Nikita, "From portrait analysis to template poetics: on stereotypes and gender models in representation of children in Soviet children's prose".

Summary: This paper presents methodological discussion of the analysis of stereotypical traits in the depiction of the characters in literary fiction using Soviet children's literature as a sample. The discussion is supported by a pilot study of gender stereotyping that adds to the existing literature an extensive discussion of gendered portrayal of children. We propose to treat stereotypical features in characters not as a simple reflection of social norms, but as an element of literary diction. We label as "template poetics" the analysis of these phenomena in fiction. Current study is based on the corpus of Soviet realistic prose for children and youth of 1930–1980s. Basing on a random sample of character body parts mentions in the corpus (N=2486), we were able to trace the quantitative differences in the rates of mentions of various body parts due to the character's gender and to discover a few characterization patterns that include reference to the character's body parts.

Keywords: literary corpora, Soviet children's literature, gender, portrait, character, body.

Ustinov Andrei, Loshchilov Igor, "The Songs and Legends of the 'Scythian' Futurism ('Budetlianstvo'): Nikolai Aseev in the children's magazine 'Protalinka'".

Summary: This essay reconstructs the history of Nikolai Aseev's (1889–1963) collaboration with the children's magazine "Protalinka" of 1914–1915. Here he published stories and legends from Russian and Polish chronicles retold for the children. His work for the "Protalinka" was related to his departure from symbolism and his transition to futurism, or "budetlianstvo" under the influence of Velimir Khlebnikov's pan-Slavic ideas. The authors demonstrate a direct correlation between Aseev's prose written for children and his own poetry that manifested in his collections "Zor" (1914), "Letorei" (1915) and "Oksana" (1916). His stories included songs and poems written in the manner of the futurist "Scythianism", similar to Khlebnikov and his followers. In this regard, Aseev appears as a predecessor of prominent Soviet poets that wrote for children, specifically Osip Mandelstam and the Oberiuty.

Keywords: children's literature, periodicals for children, Nikolay Aseev, symbolism, futurism, history of literature of the XX century, "Centrifuge", Budetljanstvo, Sergey Bobrov, retellings.

An article by *Yurii Shcherbachev*, 1891, is reprinted in the section *The Archive of Children's Readings*. In this publication, "*One More Fairy Tale by Andersen*", the author made the first attempts to provide literary commentary on the work of children's literature.

The *Essay* section opens up with an essay by *Ol'ga Bukhina* entitled "*Translator's Comments in the Information Age*".

This article describes the history and contemporary status of translator's comments in the texts for children and teens. The tradition of translators and editors commenting on texts for teens existed in Soviet publishing practices, especially in adventure books for children. In the post-Soviet era, this tradition continues. Translator's notes are now more personal and frequently offer comments not only about the meaning of words and terms, but also about the process of translation. In contemporary publishing, the translator's notes are part of the creative process, and they reflect the personality of their author, a translator. Thus, their importance did not diminish in the Information Age, and they continue to stimulate a reader's interest in new knowledge and new discoveries.

Keywords: translation, translator, translator's note, comment, children's literature, adventure literature, regional geography.

In the *Materials* section *Olga Chursina's* article "*Memoirs as comments to poems by the friend: memoirs of Vadim Prokhorkin about poet Valentin Berestov*" is devoted to Vadim Prokhorkin's memories of the childhood written as the comment to poems by the poet Valentin Berestov.

Keywords: comments to verses, the lyrical hero, memoirs, reflection of children's impressions in creativity, Valentin Berestov.

The traditional rubric led by *Ekaterina Asonova*, “*Children’s Books in the Circle of Adult Readers*” dedicated to this issue’s theme.

The *Review* section of the journal is offering *Ol’ga Miaots’s* evaluation of Erika Haber’s recent monograph “*Oz behind the Iron Curtain: Aleksandr Volkov and His ‘Magic Land’*”. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2017.

This issue presents its readership with two recent *conference reports*. *Larissa Rudova* provides the highlights of the conference “Russian German Cultural Ties in Children’s Literature”, June 2018, The Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkin House).

Cecile Pichon-Bonin, *Laure Thibonnier* and *Katia Cennet* reviewed the series of conferences on children’s literature that took place in France in 2018: “La culture enfantine en URSS, 1917–1941: objets, lieux et pratiques” (Colloque international — 5–6 April 2018 Maison des sciences de l’Homme, Dijon), “Discours et engagement politique: Les voies littéraires de l’éthique en Russie et dans l’espace est-européen slavophone depuis la fin du XXe siècle” (28–29 June, ILCEA4, L’Université Grenoble Alpes (UGA), and “Corps et corporalité dans la culture de jeunesse russe” (20–21 September, CELIS, Université Clermont Auvergne).