

provide them with the correct rhythm, pace and the combination of sounds and syllables needed for accurate pronunciation – which everyday communication may lack.

The third and final part of the book deals with the practical use of fingerplays and gives some didactic advice for those who plan to use them in their work with children. The authors make a classification of fingerplays and indicate in exactly what way they could be used. The main idea of the authors seems to be that if a chant gives children joy and happiness, then it is easy for the children to repeat it many times and thus spontaneously practise language patterns and pronunciation.

There are 53 rhymes/fingerplays in the book altogether. Each fingerplay has its own page, with explanations on how to use it with children. A photo follows almost every rhyme, which is generally helpful to show what kind of movement is required. A DVD comes with the book, containing all the fingerplays in the order they appear in the book, sung by an adult and shown by children. This is a particularly useful and valuable part of the book.

In sum, this book is an asset to the specific area of oral literature used for practical purposes and language learning. It is the only such specific collection of fingerplays in Croatia, and so makes an original contribution to the field. The theoretical parts can be easily understood by readers who are not so knowledgeable in the field of research of speech development.

I would recommend this book to adults or parents who wish to guide children in their speech in a spontaneous and non-threatening way, to kindergarten teachers who can include these fingerplays in their everyday communication with children and prepare them for school, and to lower primary school teachers who can use these rhymes and chants with children who might have some problems with speech, pronunciation or intonation.

*Martina Grilek*

## Two Croatian Comics Sixty Years Later

**Čukli, Marcel, Borivoj Dovniković and Mladen Bjažić. 2011. *Izgubljeni Svijet* [The Lost World]. Zagreb: Art 9 52 pp. ISBN 978-953-56196-2-8**

*Izgubljeni svijet* [The Lost World] is a hardcover book created by the ART 9 group, edited by Veljko Krulčić. It was published in 2011 as a dedication to three very important figures in the Croatian comic scene: Borivoj Dovniković (Osijek, 1930), Marcel Čukli (Zagreb, 1921-1996), and Mladen Bjažić (Zlarin, 1924).

The book *Izgubljeni svijet* contains reprints of two comic series, *Izgubljeni svijet* – [The Lost World] and *Mali prijatelj* – [The Little Friend], originally published in 1951 and 1952 respectively, issued in the Croatian children's magazine *Pionir* [Pioneer]. Both comic series were written by Čukli and illustrated by Dovniković, one of the leading comic book and cartoon artists and animators in Croatia, who is still active. These series were later

published as separate comic books in 1952 by the editor Mladen Bjažić, who was at the time working in *Pionir* magazine.

The comic *Izgubljeni svijet* is based on the 1912 novel by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle with the same title (*The Lost World*), while *Mali prijatelj* presents an original story by Čukli. The importance of both comics lies not only in their artistic value, but in the interesting role they have in the comic scene in Croatia as well. *Izgubljeni svijet* was Dovniković's first comic book (his works were otherwise mostly serialized in magazines). With *Izgubljeni svijet*, he became one of the important names in his generation of Croatian comic book artists. Čukli and Dovniković contributed to a new way of perceiving graphic narratives as literature, since previously such narratives had been seen as "a western invention for brainwashing" as Bjažić puts it in his short text included in this book (p. 8). Reading this hard cover book reveals that the authors remained true to the original comic book, printing all pictures and photographs in black and white and depicting the original comic book cover on the dust jacket.

The book opens with a foreword by Veljko Krulčić that gives a short history of the comic and the circumstances in which it was created. It describes the first appearance of the comic series *Izgubljeni svijet* in *Pionir* magazine and its importance for present day comics in Croatia. The book continues with a preface written by Bjažić. He further describes the process of creating the comic book, but with a more personal approach.

On the following pages, one can see there prints of *Izgubljeni svijet* and *Mali prijatelj*, printed in high quality. Doyle's novel is adapted to its new, graphic form in a way that enables the reader to fully understand the story, which shows Čukli's proficient interpretation of the original dialogues and scenes from the novel, appropriately accompanied by wonderfully detailed illustrations by Dovniković. The characters and settings are drawn quite realistically and so seem as convincing as in Conan Doyle's novel.

*Mali prijatelj* is drawn in an equally realistic style, with many details. This story is particularly intriguing because of its setting in India, which is unusual for the Croatian context at that time, and which demonstrates Čukli's originality and probably his interest in English literature.

Both these comics present appealing reading material not only for readers who have already been introduced to the work of Dovniković and Čukli, but also for those who are experiencing this comic book for the first time.

*Izgubljeni svijet* ends with a historical overview entitled "Od knjige do stripa" [From book to comic book] written by Ivana Kukić Rukavina that makes a fitting conclusion to the book. Kukić Rukavina describes the path from the novel to its graphic version by Dovniković and Čukli. She starts by introducing the reader to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, his most significant works and characters, among which Sherlock Holmes is the most recognizable. Of course, the main focus is on Conan Doyle's novel *The Lost World*, describing the cultural context in which it was created and presenting a short summary of the novel itself. The overview continues by mentioning many adaptations of the novel in different media and is

accompanied by informative photographs and illustrations. This gradually leads to Kukić Rukavina's analysis of Dovniković and Čukli's comic. The overview is intended for readers who want to find out more about both the novel and the comic, and serves as an excellent source of information for readers who are not acquainted with the novel or for those who just seek to broaden their knowledge in order to be able to fully understand and appreciate this adaptation.

This book is intended for all those who appreciate this form of narrative, especially those who are interested in the Croatian comic scene. It is a valuable contribution to research of the history of Croatian comics that describes the circumstances and cultural contexts in which they were created.

Nikola Bijelić

## Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Text

**Mallan, Kerry & Clare Bradford, eds. 2011. *Contemporary Children's Literature and Film: Engaging with Theory*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. viii+188 pp. ISBN 978-0-230-23150-4**

Theory has seemingly always been woven into the thinking of scholars of literature and, depending on their work, theory reflects varying degrees of significance as it positions the work it is framing. Often, perhaps, it is taken for granted in that while theory may tacitly provide a particular stance for reading literature, it may not be identified in specific ways. Whether one identifies him/herself as a theorist from a particular theoretical paradigm or whether one employs a variety of theories to support insights to literature, *Contemporary Children's Literature and Film, Engaging with Theory* provides intriguing insights, perspectives on theory supported by useful examples of literature and film, and critical contemplations that have potential impact on how critics perceive and share children's literature with other readers to include scholars, educators and children.

Are we now in a 'post theory' age? Does theory matter any longer? Is it time for its obituary? These are the questions that introduce this book and while they are posed in a rhetorical manner, the editors continue by presenting their own response that focuses on the need for not one interpretation but the coexistence of different theories. With the current focus on critical theory, they describe it as an "encompassing term that gathers theories under its umbrella" and continue describing the offerings of critical theory to children's literature and film. Defined as a "close reading of text with attention to theoretical or ideological assumptions on which analysis is based" (2), critical theory provides the framework as this book "seeks to demonstrate how theory informs readings of children's literature and film"(2). With a brief history of the forms of critical theory in regard to children's literature as well as insights into detractors of critical theory, the editors draw attention to the changing voice of children's literature in contemporary times and the need to employ "novel combinations of theories and the adoption of new fields of enquiry as the