

in the book, with girls in the centre and many other photographs related to scenes from girl movies. Many viewpoints are brought together and the whole book draws on numerous sources listed in a long bibliography in the end. The author manages to show as many different girlhoods as possible, thus enabling the study to fully accomplish its set goals.

Finally, the book provides useful material to help girls understand their lives better and to broaden people's horizons. It provides a critical approach to the dominant media that give us only certain, selected images of girls. The dominance of white heteronormative girls is documented through empirical methods which eventually help the author highlight the existence of alternative girlhoods in media. The goal of the book is to turn the public eye and researchers' perspectives away from the dominant representation of girls by investigating alternative types of media and representations of actual girls. Girls can be expected to achieve success, but are sometimes obliged to stay within certain boundaries. This book manages to show that a girl can succeed by crossing them. *Spectacular Girls* is a well-written scholarly book which delves into the mass-mediated representations of girls. The author recommends the book to educators, parents, legislators and social workers in order for them to think about how they want girls to be represented in the future, and this reviewer wishes to extend the readership to include students in all these fields, thus supporting the goal of the book itself.

Mateja Lovreković

Human or Posthuman?

Victoria Flanagan. 2014. *Technology and Identity in Young Adult Fiction: The Posthuman Subject*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. viii + 205 pp. ISBN 978-0-230-22786-6

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Published in 2014, in the era of radical changes in children's literature, *Technology and Identity in Young Adult Fiction* focuses on two general critical approaches: humanism, which "rejects notions of the divine or supernatural, and instead perceives the human being as central" (12), and posthumanism, which, in contrast, "seeks to deprivilege the status of the human subject" (14).

Victoria Flanagan introduces us to posthumanism to show the unique relationship between youth subjectivity and technology. In order to do so, the author organises the book into eight chapters, together with an introduction and conclusion, and every chapter deals with a different subject of interest connected to the main theme. From its title, it is possible to guess what each chapter studies: "Posthumanism in Young Adult Fiction", "Narrating Posthuman Subjectivity", "Digital Citizenship in the Posthuman Era", "Reworking the Female Subject: Technology and the Body", "Surveillance Societies: Privacy and Power in YA Fiction" and "Subjectivity in Cyberspace: Technorealism and the Merging of Virtual and Material Selves". The titles provide enough to arouse the reader's curiosity without being too revealing. What serves as a great point of reference are the subchapters which also have their own titles and bring their own conclusions; this enables the reader to return to an earlier theme without having to read the whole chapter from the start.

The work challenges some of the most prominent issues in children's literature, particularly misconceptions about technology in young adult fiction. Addressing concerns such as the importance of virtual reality, the embodiment of female subjects and the development of digital surveillance, the author offers some fresh understandings about what it means to be human in today's world. The author does this by contrasting posthumanist and humanist assumptions, but does not negate the latter. In fact, Flanagan gives credit to both assumptions/approaches, claiming that the humanist point of view is reformulated in order to depict the evolution of human subjectivity in modern times. Nevertheless, she takes the side of posthumanism which, in its own way, celebrates the glory of technological advances. This is obvious almost from the beginning of the book, particularly in the acknowledgement part, where the author states that "children need to read books that celebrate, rather than demonize, technology" (viii). As mentioned previously, Flanagan gives credit to both approaches, but although she mentions the positive sides of humanism, she mainly talks about its fear of technological momentum which started in the 1980s and continued through the 1990s.

It is praiseworthy that the book includes numerous examples which illustrate the evolution and growth of human agency. The author encourages readers to explore and investigate parts of the texts and form their own opinions, but makes them see the enormity of technology and its positive sides, which is extremely important for a large number of people now belonging to an older generation, who do not see it as positive and liberating, but rather as negative and dangerous. Technophobia and distrust originate from a generational difference, because high technology was not present in our parents' and grandparents' time, so they are "struggling to keep up with technological momentum" (34), afraid of this new component of our everyday reality. On the other hand, young adults enjoy using technology and we can say their life is at least one part "tech". However, this does not mean that they are unaware of all its shady and dangerous aspects, as many seem to believe. The author includes texts that encourage and advise young adults to learn about their rights and to fight for freedom in the democratic world they live in. This danger is described only in the sixth chapter and this prevalence of celebrating technology is further evidence of Flanagan taking the side of posthumanism.

From chapter to chapter Flanagan implicitly advises us to read some of the novels she refers to: *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld (2005), *The Adoration of Jenna Fox* by Mary E. Pearson (2008), *Anda's Game* by Cory Doctorow (2008), *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (2008), *Little Brother* by Cory Doctorow (2008), *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card (1985), *The Silver Metal Lover* by Tanith Lee (1999). Such works take a stand not only through uncommon plots and twists, but also through various tools of postmodern narration, such as intertextuality and quotation, polyphony and focalisation through non-human agents.

It seems that a great number of problems occur when it is discovered that a character in a narrative physically differs from human beings. Flanagan devotes a whole chapter (mostly informed by feminist criticism) to embodiment. She is particularly concerned with the embodiment of female characters in children's literature, but also shows that the view towards this subject has modified in more recent works.

The above-mentioned novels addressed in the book belong to speculative fiction, with most of them being science fiction novels. As suggested by the title, Flanagan draws a large number of examples from young adult literature with some of them proclaiming humanist, and many posthumanist, points of view. The author selects quotations from the analysed novels to argue for or against technology, sometimes even focusing on words and sentences in the quotation or the way a sentence is formulated. After the work is analysed, it is also contrasted with another work, or two or three works are compared.

Flanagan presents both the positive and negative sides of technology. Although it may seem at first that she keenly opposes every pessimistic thought related to it, she does have a few words to say about its negative sides.

In conclusion, this text answers several questions raised around the globe. The book contains much we need to know about young adults and character development in young adult narratives and technology, offering advice and truths about high tech through the perspective of posthumanism.

Veronika Javor

Turtle Power!

Andrew Farago. 2014. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. The Ultimate Visual History*. San Rafael, California: Insight editions. 192 pp. ISBN 978-1-60887-185-8

Richard Rosenbaum. 2014. *Raise Some Shell. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: ECW Press. 133 pp. ISBN 978-1-77041-179-1

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Despite their long-lasting popularity and surprising malleability, the pop culture phenomenon known as the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (hereinafter TMNT) has been accorded little critical attention. With the exception of studies on children's/popular culture and/or television/movies/video games which dedicate a chapter or two to the "heroes in a half-shell" (e.g. Marsha Kinder's *Playing with Power in Movies, Television, and Video Games: From Muppet Babies to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, 1993), academia has, for the most part, remained uninterested in the adventures and incarnations of Leonardo, Donatello, Michelangelo and Raphael. Hopefully, two recent publications – *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. The Ultimate Visual History* by Andrew Farago, curator of the San Francisco Cartoon Art Museum, and *Raise Some Shell. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* by fiction editor at the Canadian magazine of underground arts and independent culture *Broken Pencil* Richard Rosenbaum – will spark a change in that particular trend.

The basic premise of the two books is more or less the same, as they both propose to provide an overview of the genesis and history, and discuss the social relevance, cultural impact and continuing popularity, of this globally successful transmedia franchise. The Turtles' "transformation from cult hit to cultural phenomenon" (Farago: 79) is traced from their humble beginnings as an independent black-and-white comic book created by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird (1984), through the incredible success of the 1987 animated series, as well as the more embarrassing chapters in the TMNT history such as the "Coming Out of Their Shells" tour (1990) and the notorious *Next Mutation* live-action series (1997),