

## The Children's Book as a Material Object

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On 10 May, a large international crowd of children's literature scholars gathered at Homerton College of the University of Cambridge for a truly fascinating symposium, covering the many facets of children's literature and various interpretations of what "materiality" truly means. It was organised through the collaboration of the Cambridge-Homerton Centre for Children's Literature, the Centre for Material Texts, and the Lucy Cavendish Children's Literature Society.

The opening keynote address – "How to Read Harold: A Purple Crayon, Crockett Johnson, and the Making of a Children's Classic" – was by Philip Nel, who also gave the talk "Is the Cat in the Hat Black?" at the Faculty of Education the previous evening. In his opening talk, he explored the background and details behind this classic picturebook, and how they might have been influenced by the author's social ideas.

After a brief refreshment break during which we enjoyed a wonderful selection of truly beautiful books which were on sale and on display in the auditorium, the parallel sessions began. The first panel was titled "Play and Interaction", and featured Jacqueline Reid-Walsh, who talked about historical movable books as "playable media", Sandra Williams, who talked about the *Ologies* as an object of play, and finally Anne Neely and Noelle Yoo, who talked about 3-D picturebooks. The second panel was titled "Materiality in Texts". All the papers dealt with the duality of books which in themselves possess a strong materiality, and also addressed objects that served as metaphors (here: mainly stones, embroidery, and yarn). First, Colette Slagle talked about crafting girlhood narratives as both texts and objects on the basis of the graphic novel *This One Summer* by Mariko Tamaki and Jillian Tamaki, then Karolina Rybicka talked about domestication through illustration, and how pictures make the same story strikingly different in the French and Polish versions of Uri Orlev's *Grandma Knits*. Finally, Magdalena Sikorska described and showed the very material nature of Iwona Chmielewska's picturebooks.

After a lovely lunch consisting of delicious sandwiches, another round of parallel sessions began. The third panel was titled "Touching and Transforming Texts". First, Debbie Pullinger and Lisa Kirkham used their background in both academia and graphic design to discuss the physical aspects of reading and how it changed with the digital age. Then Naomi Hamer talked about transmedia and picturebook exhibits, and finally Tyler Shores discussed the many difficulties and various approaches to creating digital versions of comic books and graphic novels. I was very sorry to miss the fourth panel, "Reading the Book as a Material Object", in which Petra Băni Rigler talked about materiality in books by Elsa Beskow, Susanne Reichl considered "scrolling down" in contrast to Bader's "drama of the turning of the page," and Katarzyna Smyczyńska explored the narrative potential of the *leporello*.

Following another refreshing break, we all gathered for another truly fascinating and entertaining session, this time even more focused on the materiality of books and book-like toys, as well as objects connected to books (such as medals). First, Sophie Defrance talked about the many peculiar and intriguing specimens bequeathed to the Cambridge University Library over the centuries. Then, Carl F. Miller presented a fascinating history of awards for children's literature, both in the tactile and digital format. Jen Aggleton, one

of the admirable organisers of the entire event, presented the results and anecdotes from her young-reader-response research into the reception of illustrated texts. Finally, Zoe Jaques presented a glimpse into the theory of “bookish, toyish, thingies” – beautiful, book-like artefacts which defy categorisation.

The final session was a plenary panel chaired by Philip Nel, in which Jessica Lim (the other indefatigable and commendable organiser!), Siddharth Pandey, Jason Scott-Warren, and Mary Anne Wolpert beautifully summed up all that was said during the Conference, taking both a historical and futuristic approach to the materiality of the children’s book.

After the summing up and round of thank-yous and applause, the Conference was over, and a large number of participants gathered to dine on some very tasty Italian food.

I would like to wholeheartedly congratulate Jen Aggleton and Jessica Lim on organising this truly fantastic event. All the papers in each panel fitted perfectly, as if the presenters were in cahoots (we were not!), and there truly was no dull moment (or opportunity for a snooze occasioned by a boring presentation). I came back from this one-day symposium with more knowledge, inspiration, and motivation than from many longer congresses.

*Karolina Rybicka*

## Sedma godišnja skupština Hrvatske udruge istraživača dječje književnosti Zadar, 12. svibnja 2017.

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Sedmu po redu godišnju skupštinu HIDK-a ugostilo je Sveučilište u Zadru, u prostoru dvorane za poslijediplomske studije. Skupštinu je obilježilo zadovoljstvo rekapitulacijom zbivanja tijekom 2016., ali i entuzijazam zbog planova i aktivnosti HIDK-a u narednome razdoblju.

Prethodnu, 2016., godinu obilježila je Međunarodna znanstvena konferencija „Stoljeće *Priča iz davnine* Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić“. Konferencija se održala pod visokim pokroviteljstvom Predsjednice Republike Hrvatske od 12. do 15. listopada 2016. u Zagrebu, u prostorima suorganizatora, Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti i Matice hrvatske. Svečano otvorenje Konferencije uveličali su predstavnici organizatora i obitelji Brlić i Mažuranić, a radni je dio započeo plenarnim izlaganjima Jennifer Miscec i Dubravke Zima. U tri radna dana Konferencija je okupila ukupno 153 izlagača, znanstvenika i stručnjaka iz Hrvatske i inozemstva, koji su svojim radovima dali važan doprinos istraživanju jednoga od rijetkih hrvatskih djela s tako bogatom međunarodnom recepcijom, koje je u sto godina svojega postojanja postalo nezaobilaznim mjestom hrvatske kulture. Posljednjega dana konferencije, 15. listopada 2016., organiziran je izlet u Ogulin, rodno mjesto autorice Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić.

Na uspjehu Konferencije, organizaciji programa, koordinaciji aktivnosti, izradi konferencijskih materijala, izgrađenoj mrežnoj infrastrukturi, opsežnoj korespondenciji te velikome trudu i uloženoj vremenu čestitalo se Andrijani Kos-Lajtman, predsjednici Organizacijskoga odbora, Tihomiru Engleru, dopredsjedniku Organizacijskoga odbora i Nadi Kujundžić, tajnici Konferencije. Veliko priznanje dobili su i zbog izrade projektnih prijedloga za natječaje na temelju kojih su Konferenciju financijski poduprli Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja, Ministarstvo kulture i Zaklada Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti.