

section addresses important topics of the submissive and subversive potential of fairy tales and literature in general. The third and final section, “Vizualizing Cinderella”, deals with the rich tradition of visual representations of “Cinderella”, convincingly broadening the field of research beyond the verbal and the textual. Illustrations, as well as film, theatre, and poster versions of “Cinderella”, add analytical scrutiny to the studies in this section.

The studies gathered in this collection predominantly discuss “Cinderella” within a socio-historical vein, but also include the perspectives of other disciplines, such as art history, studies of material culture, etc. This stepping away from the often intriguing but sometimes also predictable argumentation, foci, and themes developed within the socio-historical branch of fairy-tale studies makes this collection relevant beyond the analysis of this specific fairy tale. It can be assumed, too, that this venturing outside the given context generates a shift away from the sometimes mechanical and merely ornamental taking over of grand concepts and theories, which appears as a side effect of the broadening of interest for one particular approach or field. Contrary to such practice, the studies in this collection primarily base their arguments on microtextual interpretation and engagement, while theoretical pillars are included mostly with a critical eye, sometimes directly in opposition to the findings of the interpretation of literary texts. Therefore, and despite its many famous ancestors, ranging from Alan Dundes’ now classic collection of essays and articles about “Cinderella” to canonical monographs such as those by Marian Roalfe Cox or Anna Birgitta Rooth, this collection will certainly find its readers and a place in this rich research field.

*Marijana Hameršak*

## Changes in Children’s Literature

**Jessica Straley. 2016. *Evolution and Imagination in Victorian Children’s Literature*. Cambridge University Press. 272 pp. ISBN 978-1-107-12752-4**

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The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of great transformations in the British world. The Industrial Revolution brought massive changes in manufacturing techniques, and Charles Darwin fundamentally altered the way of thinking in natural science. Such major developments brought shifts in social engagement for human rights, and, consequently, educational reform. The recently published monograph *Evolution and Imagination in Victorian Children’s Literature* combines interdisciplinary findings and the advancement of scientific fields in the Victorian period to explain children’s literature of the time. The author, Jessica Straley, is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Utah with a special interest in Victorian studies – specifically, how evolutionary theory made an impact on literature about and for children.

*Evolution and Imagination in Victorian Children’s Literature* is divided into five chapters in which Straley chronologically explains the evolution of children’s literature in accordance with new discoveries in natural science, and the subsequent cultural transformation. Each chapter includes several examples from 19<sup>th</sup> century children’s literature, such as works by Margaret Gatty, C. Kingsley’s *The Water Babies*, L. Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, R. Kipling’s books about the jungle, or F.H. Burnett’s

novels, as well as a theoretical part which gives reasons for the emergence of this type of literature and the historical impact of the analysed books. What is more, Jessica Straley discusses how the authors under study created miniature evolutions for their protagonists in the midpoint of the cultural changes of the time.

Following the acknowledgments, the introductory part (“How the child lost its tail”) provides a detailed historical overview of the theory of evolution by natural selection in connection with children’s literature, and opinions on how and why children of the era should have been educated – whether on scientific or literary foundations. The introduction presents a large number of pedagogical debates by writers, scientists, and philosophers such as Darwin, Spencer, Locke, and Rousseau, numerous problems concerning child labour, and a discussion on laws on the compulsory elementary school system.

In the first chapter, “The child’s view of nature: Margaret Gatty and the challenge to natural theology”, Straley writes about Gatty’s famous *Parables from Nature* (1855–1871), a collection of stories released in five series about the natural world of animals and plants. Although the publication of Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* (1859) altered the concept of children’s literature and education, Margaret Gatty decided to protect the tradition of natural theology in her writings. This chapter explains how literature for children, based on natural theology, invited readers to observe nature in order to discover the supremacy of God and His creations. This stood in stark contrast to evolutionary theory which explains the existence of species through the stages of their progression.

The next chapter, “Amphibious tendencies: Charles Kingsley, Herbert Spencer, and evolutionary education”, presents the effect of Kingsley’s *The Water Babies: A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby* (1863) in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, along with Spencer’s theories of self-motivated learning and education as a whole in relation to evolutionary theory. Charles Kingsley embraced the theory of evolutionary recapitulation in which an individual imitates the evolution of a species, and, contrary to Margaret Gatty, accepted evolution as an addition to natural theology. Under the influence of various child-centred pedagogies of the time, Spencer pleaded for self-motivated education through the most universally applicable subject – science. He believed that the educational system should mimic the evolutionary pattern of growth from simpler to more complex forms.

Straley also writes about Lewis Carroll’s contribution to Victorian children’s literature and culture by bravely criticising the educational system that promoted the useless storing of texts and facts that were almost impossible to remember and use when or if needed. Carroll advocated education that is closely connected to literature and grammar, but focused on nonsense and language games rather than pure literary memorisation or Spencer’s science. There are many examples of scientific nonsense and literary parody from Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*, which show the author’s persistent emphasis on the importance of play, which is essential to human nature.

Chapter 4, “The cure of the wild: Rudyard Kipling and evolutionary adolescence at home and abroad”, discusses the emerging concerns relating to the possible fading of British Imperialism and its significance in the colonies around the world in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Kipling shifted attention to the educational system that cared less about science and literature, and more about extracurricular education. His novels signalled a shift

towards literature for adolescents, predominantly boys, who could transfer their knowledge and abilities to the colonies in the future.

The last chapter of the theoretical discussion (“Home grown: Frances Hodgson Burnett and the cultivation of female evolution”) presents the Victorian attitude to the unequal position of women in evolutionary theory and their involvement in literature. Here, the reader can follow changes in the perception of female nature and the impact of Burnett’s novel *The Secret Garden* (1911).

In the conclusion, the notion that the theory of recapitulation shaped the history of children’s literature is reaffirmed. There is also a short summary of contemporary trends in children’s literature related to modern evolutionary theory, and a few examples of 21<sup>st</sup>-century children’s books that evoke the original theory (*His Dark Materials* by P. Pullman, *The Last Wild* by P. Torday, *The Secret Series* by an anonymous author, *The First Drawing* by M. Gerstein, etc.).

*Evolution and Imagination in Victorian Children’s Literature* is a highly detailed book about British 19<sup>th</sup>-century children’s literature and the impact of Darwin’s evolutionary theory. The said theory caused major changes in attitudes towards children, literature for young people, and the education system of the time. The book is intended for historians, literary scholars, teachers and students of literature, as well as curious enthusiasts who would like to expand their knowledge of fascinating social changes in the Victorian era.

Helena Horžić

## Radical Children’s Literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

**Kimberley Reynolds. 2016. *Left Out: The Forgotten Tradition of Radical Publishing for Children in Britain 1910–1949*. Oxford University Press. 255 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-975559-3**

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*Left Out: The Forgotten Tradition of Radical Publishing for Children in Britain 1910–1949* is overall a satisfactory and penetrating read which offers new insights into children’s literature during a very turbulent and war-torn period. The author succeeds in explaining the radical publishing of literature for children and how it was defined by the social and political context of the time. In doing so, the author analyses some of the most influential radical books of the age.

*Left Out* is written by Kimberly Reynolds, Professor of Children’s Literature at the University of Newcastle, who specialises in 19<sup>th</sup> century juvenile fiction; she obtained a doctorate in this field from the University of Sussex. She was also awarded the Queen’s Prize for Further and Higher Education 2000–2004.

The book itself is divided into six main chapters, with two additional chapters that serve as an introduction and conclusion. Each chapter is further divided and denoted by subsections that range from 1 to as many as 6. Whenever possible, Reynolds provides in-depth pictures or sketches that serve to explain the complex areas of her research. At the beginning of the book, she provides a list of definitions and abbreviations to further facilitate the reading.