

MARIJANA HAMERŠAK

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb

HISTORY, LITERATURE AND CHILDHOOD: ENCOUNTERS AND DEPARTURES

The paper presents and interprets the reception of the history of childhood in literary studies. More specifically, it discusses the circumstances and the principles of accepting Philippe Ariès' study in the works on the subject of children's literature. Special attention is given to the approval with which literary scholars dealing with children's literature have treated Ariès' deductions and conclusions. Possible theoretical foundations for this approval are examined on the example of Zohar Shavit's article, which deals with the relationship between several variants of the *Little Red Riding Hood* and the historically different concepts of childhood. The paper discusses the problems of treating the context as a stable and clearly delimited element of literary analysis, the problems of understanding literature as an illustration of the social norms, the problem of a cause-effect understanding of the relationship between history and society. Finally, the paper discusses the problems of understanding literature as an entirely produced rather than a productive social force.

Keywords: the history of childhood, literary history, children's literature, fairy tale, Philippe Ariès, Zohar Shavit

The beginning of the historiography of childhood is usually associated with Philippe Ariès' book *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous L'Ancien Régime* (1989; 1973).¹ Although this is not the first work on the history of childhood, many agree that it is the first systematic study of the changes in the notion of childhood over an extended time period and in a wide socio-cultural space. Although epistemologically and methodologically close to the production of the so-called second and third generation of new French

¹ The book *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous L'Ancien Régime* was first published in 1960. In 1962 it was translated into English, in 1968 into Italian, and in 1975 into German. This paper is based on the second French edition (Ariès 1973), and its translation into Serbian (Ariès 1989) and Slovene (Ariès 1991). The text will refer both to the second French edition as well as its Serbian translation, which is significantly abridged and not always accurate, but is still most readily available in Croatian public libraries.

historians, Ariès' book has, for a number of reasons ranging from editorial (Vann 1982) to institutional (Hutton 2001), become well-known only after it had been translated into English in 1962 under the title *Centuries of Childhood*, which I shall be using in the remainder of the text. After it had been embraced by American sociologists, psychologists as well as pediatricians, after – as Ariès will have written in the mid 1970's – they had taken it their separate ways (1989:15, 1973:9), and after it had become required reading inside as well as outside American university walls (Heywood 2001:12; cf. Vann 1982:286) it drew – chiefly from historians – first criticism. The criticism concerned Ariès' uncritical use of the material (cf. Wilson 1980), his lack of interest in the practices of the lower social classes (Davis as quoted in Ariès 1989:17-20; 1973:11-15), his lack of sensitivity for the universal tendencies in the history of art (cf. Burke 2003:110-113), his presentism (cf. Ashplant & Wilson 1988), etc. At the same time, numerous micro-historical studies questioned Ariès' theses, including the one that "in the medieval society, which we regard as our starting point, the idea of childhood did not exist" (1989:176; 1973:178). These studies pointed out that children in the Middle Ages had, for example, separate books, dress, toys and furniture (cf., e.g., Orme 2001), that childhood then had the status of a distinct life period (cf., e.g., Ross 1974; McLaughlin 1974), and that "parents invested both material and emotional resources in their offspring" (Shahar 1990:1; cf., e.g., Herlihy 1985:125-127; Orme 2001). Despite these objections (which we shall not elaborate further) and despite the fact that Ariès' book is just one representative of one of the current historical approaches to past childhoods (Anderson 1994), it has for several decades been synonymous with the history of childhood in general especially outside its parent discipline, together with – tentatively speaking – related works (cf. de Mause 1974; Stone 1979; Shorter 1977). Its conclusions have been, as it is very often pointed out, integrated as a new impetus into the majority of cotemporary constructivist anthropological, sociological and psychological theories of childhood (Jenks 1996:62; Lesnik Oberstein & Thomson 2002:45-46). The beginning of their adoption in these disciplines has, however, been marked by an entirely different kind of relationship, which could be deduced from Ariès' abovementioned comment about the reception of his book. That is to say, Ariès' insights were referred to as historical facts (Heywood 2001:12; cf. Vann 1982:286), and not as an innovative and inspiring, but nevertheless highly risky, interpretation of history.

Several decades later, Ariès ideas received a somewhat similar and, with some major (cf., e.g., Tucker quoted by Lesnik-Oberstein 1994:15) or minor exceptions (cf., e.g., Reynolds 1994:16), a virtually unreserved reception in the study of children's literature – especially in its North-

-American and British versions.² It should also be mentioned that among Croatian scholars Ariès has, to my knowledge, been referred to only by Berislav Majhut (2003) in his recently defended doctoral dissertation on the Croatian children's novel up to 1945. Ariès' – to put it mildly – lukewarm reception in the Croatian literary studies literature cannot be explained by a lack of interest for the problem of the relationship between childhood and literature, since it has been occupying a number of scholars. However, these scholars do not mention Ariès' insights even when introducing new topics into the field, such as the articulation of the idea of childhood in literary texts (cf., e.g., Benčić 1997), or when giving overviews of the history of Croatian children's literature (cf., e.g., Crnković 1978; Crnković & Težak 2002; Idrizović 1984). Therefore, it seems that the explanation of Ariès' invisibility in Croatian literary (history) studies should be sought not so much in their lack of interest for the problems of children's literature but rather in their focus on somewhat older foreign criticism of children's literature and in their chiefly propaedeutically-pedagogical orientation. To these reasons we should also add those which led transatlantic children's literature scholars to adopt Ariès' ideas relatively late in comparison with their fellow historians and sociologists. Their reception in America has been slowed by the dependence of the discipline on mostly non-constructivist discursive constructs of the child (explained in great detail by Karin Lesnik-Oberstein (1994:101-164)), and also by its – as Zohar Shavit observes – focus on the aesthetic evaluation of the texts and the assessment of their educational appropriateness (Shavit 1994:9). Research with such starting positions and aims meant that the attempts of examining the subject matter of children's literature and the principles of its study without a pragmatic impetus were individual ventures rather than disciplinary trends until the previous decade.

A noticeable, although perhaps not an enviable affirmation of the field in the institutions of higher learning in the 1980's and especially in the 1990's opened up the way for Ariès' book, undoubtedly assisted by the increasingly interdisciplinary character of the existing scholarly fields and the formation of new ones, as well as by the theoretical topicality of the interest for subaltern groups in the broadest sense. If not discernible from the first notes (cf., e.g., Nikolajeva 1996:3; Tatar 1987:xiv) or the first pages (cf., e.g., Galbraith 1997:1; Rose 1984:7) in the studies of children's literature, this affirmation started occupying entire paragraphs of both

² In the first edition of his work *The Child and the Book* (1981), Nicholas Tucker does not debate with Ariès' book, which is not the case in the second edition (in the body of the text quoted after Lesnik-Oberstein). The first edition does not even mention *Centuries of Childhood*, which is another indicator that as late as the 1980s it has not yet become an inevitable reference of informed critical texts of children's literature. However, in the 1990s the situation changed drastically, which will be further discussed in the body of the text. In this period, Tucker did not only mention Ariès' work in the second edition of his book, but also debated with it in a separate article (Tucker 1993), where he promoted the hypothesis of an emotional continuity between the modern and the past hygienic and educational practices, basing it on psychological culturally relativist arguments.

problem-oriented (cf., e.g., Kincaid 1992:61-63; Reynolds 1994:1-17; Shavit 1986) and propaedeutic monographs in the field (cf., e.g., Nodelman 1992:17-22), often serving as the central theoretical driving force (cf., e.g., Lesnik-Oberstein 1994). Its reception in the study of literature was marked by a recurring pattern – for the abovementioned authors it was, at least from the literary-historical perspective, an unproblematic study. Even when they referred to its critics, they did not dwell on their arguments nor did they join them. If, as Lesnik-Oberstein writes, "there has been some disagreement between historians with respect to the existence of the child in history, then children's books historians have at least narrowed down the field somewhat with reference to children's books. Children's books, they say, were not around as such until the eighteenth century" (1994:37). Such approval of the literary theorists' for Ariès' theses was based, among other things, on a particular view of the relationship between history and literature, which will be further elaborated on the example of a study from the field of children's literature, possibly one which focuses most closely on Ariès' history of childhood.

Although studying children's literature from the point of view of the history of childhood has only been established in the last decade of the twentieth century, the first encounters between the children's literature and the (Arièsian) history of childhood took place considerably earlier, and they were perhaps most focused on Ariès' conclusions. The first one was initiated by Ariès himself. In *Centuries of Childhood*, on the basis of Heroard's diary notes on the childhood of the future French King Louis XIII, he wrote several paragraphs on the relationship between the history of childhood and literature, especially the fairy tale. Ariès returned to the interlink between the history of the fairy tale and children's literature some ten years later in his article *At the Point of Origin* (1969), where he studied the mechanisms of the downward shift, in social class and then in age, of Perrault's collection of fairy tales. By contrasting the "margins" (attributions of the author and the audience) of Perrault's collection with the more general literary-historical and socio-historical trends he attempted to determine why Perrault's fairy tales had not become the model examples of children's literature until the eighteenth century. According to Ariès, it was then that children – at first merely as fictional addressees – and in accordance with the demands of the increasingly pervasive new concept of childhood, were recognized, or perhaps generated, as the reading audience. A similar fate befell the fictional author of Perrault's collection, his sixteen-year-old son, who, by the standards of the age in which the collection was first printed, was too old to be considered a child. He too, however, under the influence of the new concept of childhood, literally entered his second childhood. Thus Perrault's fairy tales became, as Ariès concludes in the last sentence of his

article "the source of the image which the adults of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries created of childhood" (1969:23) only after a double infantilization – that of the author and that of the addressee.

The other, chronologically later text in its entirety devoted to the interconnection of Ariès' history of childhood and children's literature, was written, judging by its bibliography, independently of Ariès' article. Nevertheless, this text seems like a continuation or an elaboration of Ariès' article. Not only does it juxtapose the fairy tale and different concepts of childhood, but it also studies the very same aspect of the relationship that Ariès touched upon at the end of his article. This text by Zohar Shavit, a literary theorist and historian (of children's literature), was published in two variants (1989; 1986:3-32).³ Adopting Ariès' outline of the history of childhood with a minimal, chiefly geographical shift, Shavit examines the connections between children's literature as a comparatively new phenomenon and historically different concepts of childhood. Without going into a detailed elaboration of Ariès' work, but nevertheless debating with the newly published study by Linda Pollock (1983) – to this day perhaps the most well-known opponent of *Centuries of Childhood* – Shavit points out that the starting point of any work interested in the connections between history, literature and childhood must be Ariès' thesis according to which the notion of childhood in the West underwent radical changes during history. Following Ariès' argumentation, Shavit points out that the new concept of childhood developed prior to the processes such as the industrial revolution and lower mortality rate, i.e., that the new attitude towards children – that took shape during the Renaissance and Enlightenment – preceded the economic conditions that allowed for its expansion (1986:4-6).

With the development of the notion of childhood as a separate life period there appeared – notes Shavit, partly following Ariès – separate children's toys, dress and finally children's literature, especially children's fairy tales. Shavit points out that fairy tales, prior to taking refuge within the covers of children's books, especially in the late seventeenth and during the eighteenth century, had been frequent guests in the drawing rooms of the nobility. A precondition for this drawing room reception was, as Shavit emphasizes, the view according to which fairy tales were literature for the

³ Shavit published the first version of the text in 1983 (reprinted in 1989), which was almost simultaneous with the appearance of several important texts for the socio-historical approach to interpretation on the academic market, including two crucial books by Jack Zipes (1983; 1988) and an article by Robert Darnton (1999). In the second, expanded version of her text which was published three years later in the book *Poetics of Children's Literature*, Shavit refers to these authors and does not fail to mention that only some scholars still approach Perrault's work with an intention of describing it or contextualizing it within the folk culture, while an increasing number of scholars see it as part of a process of adaptation of an oral fairy tale to the socialization requirements of a strong bourgeoisie (1986:12). The younger variant, published in *Poetics of Children's Literature*, will be considered as the final one and as such only it will be referred to in the body of the text.

children and the lower classes. Adult nobleman and noblewomen could thus enjoy reading and listening fairy tales only under the pretext that they were in fact intended for children.

Shavit, unlike Ariès, did not stop at Perrault, but turned to the Grimm brothers' *Little Red Riding Hood* and later to its twentieth century versions.⁴ She compares different *Little Red Riding Hoods* in order to demonstrate that their differences are a consequence of historically different notions of childhood. More specifically, she assumes that the differences between Perrault's and the Grimm brothers' *Little Red Riding Hood* were literally caused by a different attitude of the society towards childhood, and in keeping with that she connects Perrault's *Little Red Riding Hood* with the concept of coddling, the Grimms' with instruction, and their other randomly selected twentieth-century namesakes with protection.

Different *Little Red Riding Hoods* are, thus, compared by Shavit in order to connect the variants of the fairy tale with Ariès' outline of the historical changes of the concept of childhood. The only drawback of this method and the associated approach she sees in the risk of oversimplifying the interpretation of the discovery of childhood which Ariès describes in *Centuries of Childhood* to a statement claiming that it had been simultaneously witnessed by all Europeans (ibid.:5). However, it seems that several other objections, perhaps more substantial for the force of her argumentation, could be addressed to Shavit's approach in juxtaposing literature and history (i.e., juxtaposing the fairy tale and concepts of childhood). The first objection would, of course, refer to Shavit's reading of Ariès' study as a collection of historical facts, that is, to Shavit's unconditional adoption of Ariès' – as mentioned at the beginning of this text – sometimes theoretically, methodologically and empirically fragile outline of the history of childhood. Leaving aside the elaboration of the blind spots of Ariès' book that were indicated in the introduction (cf. also Hameršak 2004), in the following passages I will concentrate on the moot points of Shavit's approach to (literary) history and literature, more precisely to the history of *Little Red Riding Hoods*.

Shavit's analysis of different *Little Red Riding Hoods* is an example of the kind of literary analysis that would, in a rough binary division, be characterized as a contextual or extrinsic history of literature. Its task is to determine the social and cultural forces that have motivated and shaped a literary text or have been imprinted on it (Patterson 1995:250). According

⁴ The ideological residues of the *Little Red Riding Hood's* historical extensions were also exhaustively discussed by Jack Zipes (1983). For more on other aspects of tales of this kind see, e.g., the book by Marianne Rumpf (1989) and the collection by Alan Dundes (1989).

to the division into encyclopedic and narrative histories of literature Shavit's interpretation can be identified as one of the subcategories of the narrative history of literature – the conceptual history of literature (cf. Perkins 1992:49-51). Her explanation that she studies *Little Red Riding Hoods* because she believes that some of its numerous varieties "**reveal** most clearly the diverse ways in which childhood was **perceived** by society in different periods" (1986:8 – emphasis added) is nearly a model example of the task of the conceptual history of literature. In very simple terms, it is the variety of literary history that studies the ways in which various literary texts illustrate changes in certain concepts or systems of concepts (Perkins 1992:49-51, 121).

Some of the moot points of the conceptual literary history go back to its defining characteristics, primarily to its limitation of the context to a certain concept or a set of concepts on the one hand, and to the reduction of the text to an illustration of that concept, on the other. Let me start from limiting the context to a concept. By concentrating exclusively on the search for different concepts of childhood in literary texts from different periods, Shavit has entirely legitimately restricted her research in order to meet the scholarly requirement of a clear focus. However, in her studying the concepts of childhood she has also stifled the polyphony of the past and sidestepped the issues of the relationship between *Little Red Riding Hoods* and, for instance, the concept of the nation, the concept of oral literature and even the concept of a distinct children's literature. These, candidates for the hero of the history of the *Little Red Riding Hood* (mentioned only in passing) remind us that the act of writing a contextual history is inevitably based on the choice of a certain context or – in the case of conceptual history – a certain concept. This choice implies bounding an otherwise boundless context,⁵ or more precisely, defining and consequently molding a certain concept. Shavit solved the problem of choice by taking over the definitions of different concepts of childhood from Ariès' *Centuries of Childhood* and, for the periods that Ariès did not study, by extracting them from the fairy tale texts. In doing so, she situated the text as a phenomenon that calls for interpretation, and the context as a given that directs the interpretation of which it is itself independent. History and the history of literature were thus conceived as two autonomous phenomena (for a similar approach see Fowler 1991), of which the former is more effective as well as more reliable than the latter.

By focusing on tracing the concepts of childhood in the *Little Red Riding Hoods* Shavit favors the interpretation of the relationship between

⁵ As Jonathan Culler points out elaborating Derrida's remark that "no meaning can be determined out of context, but no context permits saturation" (quoted according to Culler 1982:123), context is boundless in at least two senses. "First, any given context is open to further description" because "there is no limit in principle to what might be included in a given context" and second, "any attempt to codify context can always be grafted onto context it sought to describe, yielding a new context which escapes previous formulation" (Culler 1982:123-124).

literature and society that Jan Mukarovsky describes as the least difficult but also the most dangerous because, among other things, it "misleads to an oversimplified view according to which the forms of social life, shown or implied in the works of literature, are without evidence equated with the actual state of society" (1986:140). However, inasmuch as Shavit's analysis heavily relies on Ariès' book – at least when studying Perrault, and partially the Grimm brothers – it cannot be criticized for equating the forms she finds in the works of literature with social forms without evidence. On the contrary, I see the moot point of her analysis in her heavy reliance on evidence, or, to use more contemporary terms, in her understanding of the context as a stable and unproblematic entity onto which the literary analysis can literally "be affixed". This understanding the context as "rock onto which literary interpretation can be securely chained" (Greenblatt 2001:313) has been significantly eroded by, for example, now not even so recent readings of advertisements (cf., e.g., Eco 1973), cock fights (cf., e.g., Geertz 1998) and ethnographic writings (cf., e.g., Clifford 1986) as (literary) texts. Therefore it seems that instead of taking the context and the text as two clearly delimited phenomena connected through reflection, it would be more appropriate to discuss – to paraphrase Montrose's (1989:20) well-known programmatic motto – the contextuality of texts and the textuality of the context. The contextuality of texts would imply that texts are embedded in the context, and that a clear distinction between these two levels is primarily an analytic construct. The textuality of the context would mean that the context, especially historical context, is necessarily based on the reconstruction of a certain set of texts. Inasmuch as it is still possible to discuss the textuality of the contemporary everyday life we should not, it seems, doubt the tenet according to which we always communicate with the past on the basis of texts (whether these are letters, documents, reports or life narratives, i.e., texts in the usual sense of the word; or whether they are paintings, sculptures, films, i.e., texts in the sense of any system of signs). We, according to Montrose, "can have no access to a full and authentic past, a lived material existence, unmediated by the surviving textual traces of society in question" (ibid.:20).⁶

The way in which the text and the context can be understood will also determine researcher's strategies in resolving two inevitable problems facing any historical study of literature, including the contextual one. The first problem is defining the mechanisms and the processes through which

⁶ The textuality of the context also implies that the knowledge about the past is organized in textual form. For more on the complicated issues of representational qualities and the mechanisms of historiographic discourse, which shift this type of writing dangerously close to literary discourse (an issue which has been disregarded in this paper) see, e.g., Biti 2000; Zammito 1993.

the text and the context are interlinked (Perkins 1992:131-133). This problem was addressed by Ariès and Shavit in their respective articles in completely different ways. While Ariès is interested in the mechanisms through which Perrault's fairy tales had become children's literature, Shavit studies fairy tales as illustrations of social forms. Starting with the assumption that literature is subjective and history objective, she finds in literary works, like so many others (Patterson 1995:251), facts which have already been historically established. Like many others, she compares the literary fact with the social fact, considering the latter as a cause of the former (ibid.:132). For her, different *Little Red Riding Hoods* are literally **determined** by various concepts of the childhood (Shavit 1986:7-8 – emphasis added), in other words, they are "the **direct result** of the way childhood was perceived by society" (ibid.:17 – emphasis added).

The cause-effect relationship between literature and society is not only attributed to *Little Red Riding Hoods*. For Shavit, they present one of many examples of the relationships which characterize the history of (children's) literature since its beginnings. The connection between the beginnings of children's literature and the discovery of childhood is for Shavit, "neither random nor insignificant" because "the creation of the notion of childhood was an indispensable precondition for the production of children's books and it **determined to a large extent** the development and options of development for children's literature" (ibid.:3 – emphasis added). In other words, "the society's new perception of childhood created for the first time both the *need* and the *demand* for children's books" because "in the same way that people assumed a child needed different dress, toys and games, it was also assumed that a child reader differed from the adult" (ibid.:7 – italics by Shavit). It should, however be pointed out that Shavit did not derive her thesis, according to which the new perception of childhood created the demand for children's literature, from Ariès' conclusions, because Ariès does not interpret different children's toys and dress as a **result** of the new concept of childhood but rather as neutral, if not formative, historical phenomena with regard to the cause-effect relationship (cf. Ariès 1989:78-141; 1873:75-140). Moreover, since her work does not consider the mechanisms of mediation between literature and the society, Shavit's hypothesis about the beginnings of children's literature was not based on her own research. It seems, therefore, that the origins of her thesis should not be sought so much in any single study but rather in the tacit assumption that literature is a secondary form of social reality, its reflection and not its essential part.

Shavit's interpretation of the beginnings of children's literature as a reaction to an idea created independently of literature is certainly not a solitary one. This thesis, sometimes even without the qualification allowing for the influence of other factors (which Shavit does include (1986:26)) is maintained by a wide range of very different authors considering their familiarity with the topic, from Valerie Krips (1998:42) to John Rowe Townsend (quoted by Shavit 1986:4) to Maria Nikolajeva (1996:3).

Mentioned authors do not elaborate on this thesis – partly because the beginnings of children's literature are not the subject of their interest – but rather, similarly to Shavit, usually only refer to it in passing. In contrast to them, Kimberley Reynolds does make the thesis somewhat more specific when, writing about the literature for working class children, she concludes that "undoubtedly for this reason [without an established concept of childhood, there can be no literature for children], and not simply because of lack of time and education, no working-class tradition of children's literature had evolved by the end of the nineteenth century" (1994:18). However, since the relationship between society and literature is described as a relationship of action and reaction, her representation of the disputed thesis stifles the dynamics of this relationship, and consequently precludes the possibility for literature to be seen as an active social factor. This possibility has been examined in numerous analyses, which – as their critics indicate – also have their empirical and/or theoretical weak points. Instead of following the usual practice starting with, according to Zdenko Škreb's recommendation, "an exhaustive critical outline of the social reality within which literature has developed as its part" (1976:134), these analyses attempted to regard literature not only as – I shall once more draw on Montrose – a socially produced but also as a socially productive phenomenon (1989:23; cf., e.g., Patterson 1995:260). Some of them insisted on reporting the ways in which the canonical literary works of the Western literature have been shaping the image of the colonies and their inhabitants as inferior beings (cf., e.g., Said 1993). The others pointed to the mechanisms by means of which, somewhat later, the novel in the same part of the world played the role of a technical device for the representation of the type of an *imagined community* known as nation showing that there was nothing more beneficial or giving a stronger impetus to the search for the means of meaningfully integrating fraternity, power and time than "**print capitalism** which made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways" (Anderson 1990:41 – emphasis added).⁷ The third studied the reading practices of a sixteenth century Friulian miller, insisting on the conclusion that it was not books as such, but rather "the confrontation of the written page with the oral culture that produced in Menocchio's head an explosive mixture", which in the end cost him his life (Ginzburg 1989:96, 190). A less tragic fate, but one which also seems closely connected with the books they were reading befell female readers in the English language in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. They were, according to Nancy Armstrong (1987), molded by manuals and novels as modern individuals, persons whose identity (normally gained through love within the walls of their home) and value are linked to their feelings and personal qualities rather than their social position. Interpreting novels such as *Pamela*, *Emma* and *Jane Eyre*,

⁷ Translated according to the Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, pp. 36.

which were described by other critics as a reflection of a complete and gender-defined self, Armstrong considers them a form which played a part in creating this concept of an individual, in this way outlining the complex processes through which these novels produced "oppositions that translated the complex and competing ways of representing human identity into a single binary opposition represented by male versus female" (ibid.:253).

Armstrong's approach is illuminating for the discussion of the history of the fairy tale as a children's genre inasmuch as its starting point is not an analysis of the novels but rather an analysis of the etiquette and household manuals which preceded them. Showing the home as a world governed by a special kind of social relationships and as distinctly female territory this type of literature, notes Armstrong, changed the very foundations of cultural semiotics and enabled the formation of a coherent notion of the middle classes. In other words, the etiquette and household advice manuals implied the presence of a defined middle class at a time when, if judged by other representations of social life, it did not yet exist (ibid.:63). Similarly, even before Perrault's collection, and thus before written and oral fairy tales were at least fictively addressed exclusively to children, a whole range of texts (in French) connected fairy tales specifically to children. Treatises on education and lexicographic works are some of them. Perrault himself, for example, in his 1694 foreword to *Le Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, that is three years before publishing his renowned collection, described fairy tales as "ridiculous fables, such as those which old people tell to amuse children" (quoted according to Perrot 1996:718). A year earlier John Locke in his work *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (or, in case of its French translation, a year later) wrote that children should be protected from stories about ghosts and elves which they were so often told by servants. Before Perrault and before Locke, François Fénelon, a cleric and an educator, himself an author of children's fairy tales, in his 1687 treatise on the education of girls wrote the following: "If you see that it [the child] is willing to listen to you, tell it a few short but agreeable fables.⁸ Choose a fable from the animal world, but let it be instructive and innocent. [...] As far as pagan fables are concerned, the girl will be lucky if she never hears them, for they are unclean and full of profane follies. If you cannot conceal them from the child, try to make them repulsive" (1880:105). Fénelon's, Locke's and Perrault's remarks open up, it seems,

⁸ Quoted according to Ivan Širola's 1880 translation. According to the relatively standard translational practices of children's literature in the second half of the nineteenth century in Croatia, Širola has translated the word *conte* as *pripoviest* ('story'), and the word *fable* as *basna* ('fable'). In this century the term *bajka* (also *fabula*; 'fairy tale') was, apart for fairy tales, also sometimes used for narratives in which "animals speak", some of which would today be termed *basna* or *priča o životinjama* ('a story about animals') (cf., e.g., Tomić 1866).

the possibility for fairy tales to be considered literature that had been, before being intended exclusively for children in printed or in oral form, a reference point for the discussion on the childhood.

If, on the other hand, Grimms' *Little Red Riding Hood* is viewed in relation to, say, some of the texts (in German) that preceded it, a possibility is raised for her supposedly characteristic origins of the educational concept of childhood to be discerned inside, and not only outside literary practice. In this situation texts by some poetically and ideologically different but very influential authors in certain periods of literary history, such as, e.g., Joachim Heinrich Campe (1746-1818) and Christian Felix Weiße (1726-1804) are particularly amenable for analysis. Their texts are, either in their outline or in their entirety, structured so as to mediate to the educators, and not only to the children, the knowledge of the world as well as the knowledge of themselves. Campe's famous adaptation of Robinson, which was available in Croatian translation by Antun Vranić (Campe 1796) several years after its publication (Dijanić's timely translation of several issues of Weiß's *Der Kinderfreund* magazine was published several years ago, i.e. 1994), addressed both adult and children readers and explicitly asked them to position themselves as adults and educators, on the one hand, and children, on the other. Thus positioned they participated in the ritual of group loud reading which moved them away – differentiating them according to their age and educational roles – but also brought them closer, because the children, on the basis of what they read, acquired knowledge about, for instance, zoology, and parents learned about the children and their special needs and thoughts.

These, only cursorily above mentioned texts seem to promote such an examination of the fairy tales and related writings and practices that would question the assumption according to which children's literature is no more than an independently formed reaction to a concept of childhood. This course of research is also promoted by Ariès' remark that from the end of the sixteenth century the issue of children's reading is devoted special attention and that from that time on authors like Terentius are no longer recommended to children. In this comment Ariès, as Lesnik-Oberstein notices, referred to the process of the affirmation of a new concept of childhood and to the inseparability of that process from the literary practices, including the notes about the appropriateness of reading for a certain age (1994:72). Finally, following Lesnik-Oberstein's reading of Ariès, I would like to side with the thesis according to which writing, prescribing, describing, interpreting, marking, commenting, translating, editing, printing, distributing, selling, reading or retelling something like children's literature means becoming involved in the construction of the notion of childhood. Viewed from this perspective, Ariès' study is brought to light not as a reliable source of historical facts, but rather as an exceptional impulse for an interpretation of the relationship between history, literature and childhood that is not necessarily more resistant to criticism, but nevertheless different.

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POVIJEST, KNJIŽEVNOST I DJETINJSTVO: SUSRETIŠTA I MIMOILAZIŠTA

SAŽETAK

U članku se prikazuje i interpretira recepcija povijesti djetinjstva u području proučavanja književnosti, odnosno, raspravlja se o uvjetima i načelima udomaćivanja studije Philippea Arièsa u radovima o dječjoj književnosti. Pritom se posebna pozornost posvećuje blagonaklonosti proučavatelja dječje književnosti prema Arièsovim izvodima i zaključcima. Na primjeru članka Zohar Shavit – zaokupljenog odnosom između nekoliko inačica *Crvenkapice* i povijesno različitih koncepcija djetinjstva – propituju se moguća teorijska uporišta te blagonaklonosti. Problematizira se odnos prema kontekstu kao prema stabilnom i jasno odredivom elementu analize književnog fenomena, shvaćanje književnosti kao ilustracije društvenih formi, zatim uzročno-posljedično poimanje odnosa

između književnosti i društva te, konačno, razumijevanje književnosti kao isključivo proizvedene, a ne i proizvodne društvene snage.

Ključne riječi: povijest djetinjstva, povijest književnosti, dječja književnost, bajka, Philippe Ariès, Zohar Shavit