

the avant-garde, that Boris Ender illustrated Osip Mandelstam's picturebook *Dva tramvaja* [Two Trams] in 1925. Osip Mandelstam, one of the greatest Russian poets of the 20th century, although better known as a writer for adults, also wrote for children for a certain period: "Primus" (1925), "Šary" [Balloons] (1926), "Kuhnja" [Kitchen] (1926).

Pankenier Weld does not forget to mention other significant poets of the avant-garde era, such as Vladimir Mayakovsky, a writer who earned the title of revolutionary poet, as well as representatives of the OBERIU group (*Ob'edinenie real'nogo iskusstva* – The Association of Real Art). The name is misleading, as the members of OBERIU were not "realists"; on the contrary, they opposed realism and canonical literature and visual art, advocating principles of absurdity. The group, which was quite diverse, operated in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) and brought together prominent figures such as D. Harms, A. Vvedensky, N. Zabolotsky, and others. They all wrote children's verses on various everyday topics (about food, play, animals) in a memorable and fast-paced rhythm.

The inspired poetic of the avant-garde, which proved to be highly imaginative in the creation of children's picturebooks and successful in playing with censorship, begins to reach its end in the 1930s. The author refers to Boris Groys and his article "Roždenie socialističeskogo realizma iz duha ruskogo avangarda" ("The Birth of Socialist Realism from the Spirit of the Russian Avant-Garde"), which indicates that by the late 1930s, even in Maršak's poetry, a decline in avant-garde power was evident. During that time, revolutionary ideology and avant-garde poetics were converging, and the era of totalitarian Stalinist art emerged. In children's publishing, it is evident how censorship and ideological pressure narrowed aesthetic possibilities and dulled the edge of avant-garde provocation. The journey from avant-garde capriciousness and imaginative text and illustration to the extinguishing of avant-garde innovation and merging into proletarian art is well illustrated by Maršak's poem "Počta" [The Post] in the 1932 and 1937 editions about a proletarian postman carrying a heavy bag, visiting residents from door to door to deliver necessary letters or packages. The picturebook was illustrated by Lebedev's student, Mikhail Chekanovsky, and the 1937 edition presented it in the new style of artistic drawing. This already represents the style of socialist realism, completely distant from the playful avant-garde of the 1920s.

In any case, *An Ecology of the Russian Avant-Garde Picturebook* by Sarah Pankenier Weld, an American professor of Slavic literature, is an interesting and scientifically grounded book primarily intended for experts in the field of literature. The book will also interest a broader audience beyond the narrow scope of philology, as it offers insights into the innovations of Russian avant-garde art in the 1920s and 1930s.

A Comprehensive Guide to Picturebooks

Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer, ed. 2018. *The Routledge Companion to Picturebooks*. London and New York: Routledge. 525 pp. ISBN: 978-1-138-85318-8.

Željka Flegar

The Routledge Companion to Picturebooks is dedicated to the importance, influence, and scope of picturebooks in today's literature and culture. In the introduction headed "Picturebook research as an international and interdisciplinary field", the editor, Bettina

Kümmerling-Meibauer, highlights: “Every year, innumerable picturebooks are newly released, whose variety of topics, genres, and artistic styles is compelling” (1). The techniques, strategies, formats, artistry, intertextuality, metafictionality, cross-mediality, and context have gradually raised the status of this genre; more recently, the appeal of picturebooks to a very diverse audience of readers has made them a crossover genre and a cross-disciplinary area of study. Picturebooks invite research in different disciplines, and in the case of *The Routledge Companion to Picturebooks*, “children’s literature research, literary didactics, art history, media studies, linguistics, education, developmental psychology, and picture theory” (3). In its over-arching, transnational theoretical approach, this volume is a collection of picturebook studies that seek to define and showcase a number of approaches to observing and analysing picturebooks. Along with discussions of what all picturebooks are, this collection primarily addresses the key terminology, ideas, and issues in picturebook research.

The volume consists of five thematic sections with contributions by some of the most notable scholars and experts in the field. The first part, “Concepts and topics”, begins by addressing the complex issue of “author-illustrator” as well as picture-text relationships. Some chapters focus on the technical, material, and structural aspects of picturebooks, such as layout, collage and montage, paratexts, materiality as a theoretical concept, metafiction, hybridity, interpictureability, and seriality. Furthermore, important aspects of the production and reception of picturebooks through cultural, cognitive, social, and ideological topics are discussed in chapters on emotions, gender, canon processes, and ideology. Part one lets readers in on the complexity and layers of sophistication involved in the creation, production, and intentionality of picturebooks.

The second part groups and categorises picturebooks according to their style and intended audience. It starts with early concept books and concept books aimed at the youngest readers, wimmelbooks (textless picturebooks with elaborate panoramas), ABC books, and technically astounding pop-up and movable books. Encompassing a wider audience, the collection includes chapters on wordless, postmodern, and crossover picturebooks, and even focuses specifically on picturebooks for adults. Content-wise, some of the chapters deal with informational picturebooks, poetry in picturebooks, and multilingual picturebooks. How picturebook content is mediated in the digital era is discussed in the chapter on digital picturebooks as “multimodal narratives delivered on reading devices” (270).

The third part of the collection is dedicated to interfaces, modalities, and relationships between picturebooks and other art forms and types, such as illustrated books, artists’ books, photography, comics, and movies. This section shows how other art forms have influenced the levels of artistry in picturebooks from early-concept books to avant-garde inspired sophisticated picturebook formats, while some chapters elaborate specifically on the style, layout, narrative, and pacing of picturebook stories to the present day.

The fourth part presents an array of domains and contexts surrounding the picturebook genre(s), such as “[T]he education of a picturebook maker” (339) and research on picturebooks. Picturebooks, which “inhabit a complex social, cultural, and intellectual ecology” (451) are observed in the context of childhood, literacy studies, developmental psychology, cognitive studies, linguistics, and narratology – all showing the cross-

disciplinarity of the field through a variety of theoretical frameworks and disciplines. Several analyses are applied to picturebooks in this section, specifically multimodal analysis as well as those related to art history, picture theory, media studies, and translation studies. All these approaches and interrelations position picturebooks at the intersection of disciplines as an intricate art form and a vibrant field of study.

Part five focuses on the thriving picturebook market and transformations of picturebooks, for example, as adaptations of fairy tales, world literature, and film – and their adaptive aspects of quality, fidelity, and relevance. The final chapter is dedicated to the merchandising and franchising of picturebooks that “are often designed and distributed as part of multimedia franchises that may include film and television adaptations, online fan clubs, video games, and a range of affiliated merchandise such as clothing, accessories, and toys” (505), which proves just how big a business and a trend, globally, picturebooks are, with potential for additional research into the transmediality of picturebooks for context, range, and consumer engagement.

This impressive collection leaves very little unanswered – it provides access to a variety of approaches, perspectives, and picturebook types. Populated with chapters by heavy hitters in children’s literature scholarship and beyond, it is a valuable overview of all that has been accomplished in the investigation of this highly complex and diverse genre. It shows that picturebooks are all but simple and that they are meant for a wide audience. However, *The Routledge Companion to Picturebooks* also invites us to consider what comes next and what venues for future research there might be. For readers interested in the picturebook genre and academic research on picturebooks, this is a good place to start as well as to delve deeper into the exploration of this lively and sophisticated genre. Finally, this book is an excellent resource for the upcoming Picturebook Conference 2023 in Osijek, Croatia, organised by the European Network of Picturebook Research (ENPR) and the Croatian Association of Researchers in Children’s Literature (CARCL), as well as many more scholarly meetings and discussions about picturebooks in the future.

Children’s Literature in a Time of Change

Carrie Hintz. 2020. *Children’s Literature*. London: Routledge. 198 pp. ISBN 978-1-138-66794-5.

Kristina Riman

The editors of the Routledge series *The New Critical Idiom* consider the field of children’s literature as one that has changed sufficiently in the last decades of the 20th century to require an updated, clear, and well-illustrated account of its growth and transformation. Carrie Hintz’s book is consistent with the series’ goal of evolving histories of the changing use of the term children’s literature. It is a clear, concise, but informative account of the field, presenting it by describing fierce theoretical debates framed within different cultural contexts, as well as ideological and political movements. It also addresses contemporary perspectives and developments such as globalisation, ecocriticism, postcolonial literature, animal studies, and issues related to race, gender, and sexuality. From a methodological