

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

perspective, the author relies on carefully selected case studies to support the main chapters and themes.

The main ideas and concise listing of crucial topics are organised throughout the introductory chapter, the five thematic chapters, and the conclusion, all supported by an impressive 15-page bibliography section (287 bibliographic references). This information alone indicates the impressive undertaking to produce a relatively concise but information-rich work printed on 187 numbered pages (198 pages in total).

In the introductory text, after considering examples such as Laura Miller's *The Magician's Book: A Skeptic's Adventures in Narnia* and Lev Grossman's *The Magicians* trilogy that explore the complexities of childhood reading and its effects on adult maturation, Carrie Hintz concludes that the concept of children's literature raises questions about the definition of childhood, the cultural boundaries of literature, and the role of children as literary producers. While children's literature is typically produced by adults for children, recent criticism has recognised the literary productions of children themselves, including their own books and digital fan fiction.

In the first chapter, entitled "Definitions", the author aims to examine various conflicting interpretations that drive the field of children's literature, focusing particularly on what is left out of these interpretations. The boundaries of this field are constantly being redefined and challenged, sometimes in significant ways. The chapter is supported by a case study of E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*. The case study discusses the enduring popularity of E.B. White's children's book, *Charlotte's Web*, which explores the relationships between children, animals, and adults. The book's ability to appeal to both children and adults is attributed to its ability to evoke the physical and emotional sensations of a sheltered childhood. The narrative embodies both the continuity of life and the inevitability of change. It is also seen as a narrative of someone facing mortality, which makes it a useful tool for talking to children about difficult issues. Other themes in the book are also discussed, including the differences between children and adults and the interconnectedness of all living things.

In Chapter 2, "Children's literature: early and global histories", the author explores how the study of scholarship related to earlier periods, such as the Middle Ages and the early modern period, as well as global children's literature, can provide new and insightful perspectives on the history of children's literature. This chapter is supported by the case study of Edward Lear's *A Book of Nonsense*, published in 1846. Lear's nonsensical stories were considered subversive because they challenged strict Victorian social conventions, which made them appealing to both children and adults. However, the author points out that Lear also presents severe punishments for bad behaviour, which is similar to traditional cautionary tales. In addition, Lear's use of poetic forms and rhyme reminds children that despite wild experimentation, there is still a pattern and order to literature. Lear's work is seen as a precursor to restless anxiety in 20th century literature. Carrie Hintz points out that Lear's nonsensical stories are not only playful, but also contain an element of unease that contributed to their appeal.

The third chapter, entitled "Children's literature and the political", addresses the issue of politically engaged children's literature, recognising that children's literature has frequently been perceived as a means of communicating political, social, or religious ideology to its juvenile audience. This chapter is supported by a case study of Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little*

House series. This case study discusses the ideology and controversial representations of Native American people in this series, which has been embraced as a classic in American literature for decades. The book's portrayal of the "Vanishing American Indian" has been criticised by feminist and Native American critics alike. The historical fiction in this children's literature is criticised for serving the ideological purpose of explaining and interpreting national histories that involve invasion, conquest, violence, and assimilation. In 2018, the American Library Association changed the name of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award to the Children's Literature Legacy Award due to the author's "outdated cultural attitudes" toward indigenous peoples and people of colour.

In chapter 4, entitled "Theories and methodologies", the author explores newer critical approaches to children's literature, such as cognitive approaches, childhood studies, and recent research on race, gender, and sexuality. This chapter is supported by a case study of Cece Bell's *El Deafo*, which is a partially fictionalised memoir of a young girl, Cece, growing up with profound hearing impairment in the 1980s. The story focuses on her school experiences, friendships, and use of hearing aids. The graphic novel uses bright colours and depicts the characters as rabbits, emphasising the long rabbit ears, which draws the reader's attention to Cece's disability. The speech bubbles also indicate deafness, sometimes appearing garbled or fading out depending on the battery of her hearing aid or her ability to hear. *El Deafo* explores Cece's social development and her empowerment by creating a superhero character, El Deafo, who is often seen reprimanding or punishing her social enemies. The story normalises Cece's experiences, focusing on the hearing people around her who misunderstand her, rather than her own limitations. Cece's refusal to learn American Sign Language, relying instead on lip-reading and hearing aids, is highlighted, acknowledging the different positions in the Deaf community.

The fifth chapter, "Children's literature and the global and natural world", examines how literary works intended for children address some of the most pressing challenges of the twenty-first century, such as issues of global justice, ecological dilemmas, and the complex relationships between humans and animals. This investigation draws on innovative theoretical perspectives from the fields of postcolonial theory, ecocriticism, and animal studies. Supporting this chapter is the case study of Kate DiCamillo's Newbery Award-winning *Flora and Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures* (2013). The story centres on Flora Belle Buckman, a young girl still struggling with her parents' recent divorce and her devotion to a comic book hero. Flora's life changes when a squirrel named Ulysses gains human consciousness and a flair for writing poetry on a typewriter. The story explores themes of children's agency, animal studies, and relationship skills as Flora and Ulysses form a deep bond and change each other's perspectives. The book also addresses issues of femininity, unconventional behaviour, and the ethics of caregiving.

In her concluding remarks, Carrie Hintz points out the paradoxical phenomenon of children's literature, which aims to introduce young readers to the adult world while preserving their innocence. It immerses children in the normative ethos of the dominant culture, but it can also provide a space for transformative social change and the cultivation of young people's rebellious instincts. Despite these contradictions, children's literature has always responded to the cultural and social needs of young people, producing works that sometimes convey very conflicting messages. The novelty of developments in this field is at

the heart of the entire book and is also the main point of the author's concluding remarks. While adults are trying to create their own literary and cultural space for young people in the face of profound cultural and technological change, children's literature continues to register and, to some extent, drive cultural change. It can offer insights into new ways of being human, and new developments promise to unsettle the established contours of the discipline. Finally, Carrie Hintz points out that children's literature scholars must view the works they study in the context of broader cultural concerns, with the study of children's books becoming all the more urgent and rewarding for that fact.

This is a refreshing and accessible but well-thought-out summary of the historical and cultural aspects of children's literature studies which also offers information on new developments in this dynamic field with its rapidly changing landscape of narratives, motifs, themes, characters, values, and evaluations, which makes it an invaluable resource for anyone studying children's literature, especially students of literature and educational studies.

Mythical Beasts and Children's Literature

Katarzyna Marciniak, ed. 2020. *Chasing Mythical Beasts: The Reception of Ancient Monsters in Children's and Young Adults' Culture*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter GmbH. 646 pp. ISBN 978-3-8254-6995-8.

Marija Paljuši, Nikola Novaković

As Katarzyna Marciniak, the editor of *Chasing Mythical Beasts*, states in the introduction of this collection of essays on mythical beasts, the creatures from mythology are present even nowadays and are found "in books and Hollywood blockbusters, in the childhood tales told by our family members and in the Internet" (28). Considering the relevance of mythical beasts, the authors of this volume wanted to examine "the reception of the mythical creatures in the evolving youth culture" (38), and they did so by analysing not only literary works "but also other spheres of human artistic activity, mainly movies, TV-series, and comics" (39). The volume is divided into five parts and gives a wide range of examples of the reception of mythical creatures in children's and young adults' cultures.

Sheila Murnaghan and Deborah H. Roberts' two essays serve as the introductory chapters to the first part of the volume, dedicated entirely to the Minotaur who is known as "the most famous monster of Greek mythology" (41). In the first essay, they analyse Nathaniel Hawthorne's books of mythology and his depiction of the "relationship between literal myth and the figuration of a spiritual condition" (59), as Hawthorne paints the Minotaur as having two sides, human and animal, which shows the author's empathy concerning the monster. This complexity of the Minotaur's dual nature is further analysed in the second essay by Murnaghan and Roberts, which examines the duality in terms of illustrations in collections of mythology for children. Whereas some illustrators reduce or remove the Minotaur's monstrosity by focusing on his animal part, others focus on his humanity, which serves "as an allegory for both human corruption and for the misery it brings the corrupt" (91). Other chapters in this section investigate the Minotaur and male identity formation in British young adult fiction (Liz Gloyd); mythological hybrid creatures in Ovid's metamorphoses