

A Full-Bodied Study with Oaky Notes of Tobacco and Chocolate

Beth Marshall. 2024. *The Drinking Curriculum: A Cultural History of Childhood and Alcohol*. New York: Fordham UP. 135 pp. ISBN 9781531505233.

Jennifer M. Misceck

Elizabeth Marshall acknowledges the pink elephant in the room right away: alcohol, drunkenness, and children's culture are an unexpected cocktail. "Often assumed to be the soberest of spaces" (1), children's culture does not seem like a place where images of drinking and drunkenness abound. Marshall "investigates that paradox by bringing to light [...] a set of cultural lessons that rely on images of fictionalized childhood to animate adult anxieties and preoccupations about alcohol" (2–3). Because, as it turns out, alcohol is not the hard line between adulthood and childhood that we might believe it is (101). Instead, drinking culture is children's culture, and it is hiding right there in plain sight. This insightful, accessible, and often hilarious study looks at the history of drinking imagery as it appears alongside images of children in a variety of genres of texts. Through lessons and a final exam, Marshall takes us to school to learn to see what we have been conditioned not to see in popular culture. Marshall's sense of humour pairs nicely with this topic.

After a spritzzy aperitif, Marshall begins the curriculum with a stiff drink: "D is for Drunkard", a lesson on the *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*, the suffering child, and the temperance movement. Marshall points out that prior to the 19th century, children drank. Widely considered the first picturebook for children, the *Orbis Pictus*, for example, contains "instructional diagrams about making wine and brewing beer alongside of other daily activities like baking bread" (17). It is not until the Protestants claimed children's texts as a site of temperance activism that the "natural" hard line emerged and alcohol consumption – especially drunkenness – became pathologised. Images of drinking and images of alcohol functioned as a "multi-generational pedagogy of harm" (28), where children were taught the road-to-ruin narrative, and adults were reminded of how drinking hurt the children.

In Lesson Two, "No Pets, No Drunks, No Children", Marshall explores the slapstick humour of animation. The "impulsiveness, anger, lack of understanding, vulnerability, and disobedience" (34), Marshall points out, are traits associated with childhood, but these same behaviours inform depictions of intoxication, too. The likes of Warner Brothers and Disney play prominently in this chapter, Tiny Toons, Dumbo, and Micky Mouse (before he became associated with milk!) in particular. While gleeful boozing plays easily in children's programming, these images fall away from children's culture in large part due to Mothers Against Drink Driving activism in the 1970s and 1980s, which Marshall explores in Lesson Three, "Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk".

Lesson Three is largely about Steven Spielberg's blockbuster film *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, moral panic about teenagers, and Coors Banquet beer. A lot like a chilled can of Coors, this chapter is an easy-drinking look at how popular culture images, like a big-budget sci-fi family film, can offer deeply contradictory messaging about drinking and youth,

offering both a hilarious and endearing scene in which Elliot becomes inebriated through a psychic connection with E.T., and also using E.T. as the face of a serious anti-drunk driving PSA that encourages folks to “phone home” if they have had too much to drink. Marshall argues that this type of messaging requires a heady dose of cognitive dissonance built, as it is, on both pleasure and high-stakes caution.

Because, as Lesson Four acknowledges, our relationship to drinking is vexed, and the line between who should and should not drink, and what is and is not funny, is blurry at best. In this section, “It’s Funny When Kids Drink”, Marshall tackles the “politics of drinking child humor within the context and tradition of U.S. comics” (66), from the silly and the ridiculous in the pages of *MAD Magazine* to graphic novelist Lynda Barry’s satirical critique of how the drinking curriculum encourages male entitlement and female vulnerability. Like a peaty, smoky Scotch that makes you wonder if you actually like Scotch, this chapter invites you to wrestle with the drinking child as a figure in humorous texts.

Pour yourself some wine in a sippy cup because in Lesson Five, “Mommy Needs a Cocktail”, Marshall examines violence, alcohol, and mothering (86), the infantilised woman drinker, and parodies of boozy motherhood. Starting with 19th century alcohol-based “medicine” to contemporary images of wine-based “white women’s wellness culture” (92), Marshall points out how alcohol has long been a release valve for parenting.

For the final project, Marshall invites us to tease out culture’s obsession with “playfulness and pleasure” and its nostalgia for the fantasy of youth as “carefree and consequence free”, all of which is both tied up in drinking narratives and explains its “consistent proximity to childhood” (102). To be clear, Marshall is not talking about “how real children might respond to or be influenced by texts about intoxication, but rather how the categories of childhood and alcohol shape each other” (3). Instead, Marshall’s curriculum gives us the tools for “ongoing cultural pedagogy of the drinking curriculum” (12). Marshall moves us through the connecting elements of children’s culture and drinking culture, and she does so, rather than chronologically or linearly (where is the party in that?), in thoughtful thematic swigs. Like the most epic of nights out, you will finish *The Drinking Curriculum* with new ideas, new ways of seeing old ideas, and a smile on your face. Beth has brought the bubbles: Živjeli – cheers!

Unveiling Grimms’ Tales: Narrative Space Re-envisioned

Nada Kujundžić. 2020. *Narrative Space and Spatial Transference in Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s Fairy Tales*. Zagreb: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Turku: Faculty of Humanities. 275 pp. ISBN 978-951-29-8144-1.

Kristina Giacometti

As timeless and culturally significant narratives, fairy tales are insightful to numerous folklorists and scholars. One of them is Nada Kujundžić, a fairy-tale scholar whose monograph *Narrative Space and Spatial Transference in Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s Fairy Tales* deals with the research of narrative space and spatial transference in the seventh, final edition of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s collection *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* [*Children’s*