

Costellazioni

Proposal for a Monographic Issue on Children's Literature

Contemporary Children's Literature in Italy (1980-2020)

Authors, Genres and Texts

When children's literature was established in Italy in the years following the country's unification its strongest and most distinctive characteristic was an explicitly pedagogical approach. In spite of the fact that in the course of the following century it appears to have gradually detached itself from this charge, for many years critics continued to classify children's literature as a quite distinct kind of production, namely one removed from literature and restricted to education.

However, once properly analysed through the lens of literary criticism and historically assessed by studying an individual work's original cultural context, children's literature reveals its own compelling complexity; this is the critical approach we consider inherent to this particular issue, dedicated by *Costellazioni* to the subject of children's literature.

This number intends to investigate the chronological period beginning with the death of the eminent children's author Gianni Rodari in 1980 and ending in 2020. Rodari, the author who more than anybody else contributed to the renewal of Italian children's literature, marks a meaningful divide between two very different eras. The 1980s mark a strong divergence in the publishers' output, with the birth of some important series, such as Salani's extraordinary successful "Gl'Istrici" for younger readers, setting forth Dahl's works. Right at the turn of the century Bianca Pitzorno's leading ladies came to the forefront, presenting an eager and energetic female model, soon followed by the Harry Potter phenomenon, generating a strong editorial push towards fantasy fiction.

Currently children's literature represents a leading branch of the Italian publishing industry with a growing and impressive body of work of variable literary value. A substantial part of contemporary production, particularly the young adult genre, is mostly determined by mere commercial criteria. Notwithstanding, this does not mean there are no notable titles.

With the help of the forthcoming contributions, this monographic issue intends to investigate the authors, genres and trends in contemporary children's and teenage literature. The idea is to outline its evolution over the last forty years, whilst also taking into account the impact of translated works and the possible effects they have had on Italian children's collective consciousness.

The body of translated works is definitely rich and numerous: from Dr. Seuss' rhymes to Bernard Friot's amusing tales, from illustrated comic books (*Una zuppa di sasso* by Anaïs Vaugelade, *Sono io il più forte!* by Mario Ramos) to graphic novels (*Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *Heimat* by Nora Krugh), from children's horror (*Coraline* by Neil Gaiman, *Improvvisamente ho avuto gli occhi azzurri* by Paul van Loon, *Il principe della nebbia* by Carlos Ruiz Zafón) to dystopian fiction for teenagers (*Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins and *Divergent* by Veronica Roth).

The critical inquiry, beyond the more representative texts and authors (Bianca Pitzorno, Roberto Piumini, Beatrice Solinas Donghi, Donatella Ziliotto, Silvana Gandolfi, etc.), could concentrate on:

- quality publishing plans and innovative series
- girls as protagonists (children oriented female representation)
- fantasy trends

- children's horror
- illustrated comic books and silent books
- graphic novels
- emergence of serials
- transmediality and crossovers
- novelty as portrayed for children
- adaptation and manipulation in translations
- historical novels
- change in the collective consciousness
- contemporary fairy tales (rewrites and appropriations)
- poetry for children
- critical reception of works of translation
- children's literary illustrators

Abstracts to be sent before September 30th to:

rivistacostellazioni@gmail.com

francesca.bernardini@uniroma1.it

mariarosa.rossitto@gmail.com

Following Anvur regulations essays will be subject to double blind peer review. Editorial rules at:

<https://www.rivistacostellazioni.org/norme-redazionali>

Ensuing deadlines:

- November 30th, 2020: acknowledgment of approval or exclusion of the abstracts submitted
- July 30th, 2021: handing in of the essays completed and drafted according to the received editorial rules

Essays must not exceed 40,000 characters including spaces.

Accepted languages: English and Italian