

Call for contributions

International seminar, 5 and 6 November 2015 (Paris)

La Revue des livres pour enfants is 50 years old A window on reviewing in children's literature

An international seminar organised by the Bibliothèque nationale de France/ Centre national de la littérature pour la jeunesse and the Sorbonne Paris Cité University, with the support of the Association française de recherche sur les livres et objets culturels de l'enfance (Afreloce).

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of *La Revue des Livres pour enfants*, the Centre national de la littérature pour la jeunesse (BnF), in collaboration with Afreloce and the Sorbonne Paris Cité University, questions the role and place of reviewing in children's literature.

Defined by a dissymmetrical communication between adult producers and mediators, and a young recipient, children's literature indeed exists only by the functions we assign to and the esthetical or educational values we associate with this specific communication. In other words, children's literature cannot exist without an accompanying discourse defining its limits, characteristics and issues. However, this reviewing is not homogenous because it illustrates the formulators' position. The point is not to question only the reviews made by the journalists or the academia, but to look into that made for instance by artists, teachers, librarians, booksellers and more and more frequently those of bloggers, of the reading communities made possible by the internet. All these areas of reviewing are built on assumptions and definitions that are so different that they often seem opposing one another. Nevertheless, the diversity in the approaches and the conflicts that may rise among them highlight the importance of the critical discourse in the definition of its scope, uses, limits and hierarchies.

In a time when children's literature continues more than ever to be the object of discourses and speeches that exploits it according to political and social debates, evaluating the issue of reviewing based on crossover approaches does not seem superfluous in 2015. This seminar will be an opportunity to retrace the history of reviewing in children's literature from an international and namely European perspective, and to investigate the diversity of its forms and functions as well as its actors in the XX et XXI centuries. *La Revue des livres pour enfants*, which dedicates a very large space to it, bears witness to the sustainability and vitality of a discipline that is more than ever necessary.

The call for contributions is thus oriented towards the following topics:

- Professional reviewing: the progressive specialization of librarians, in the 1920s, has aroused, favoured and conditioned the emerging of a critical discourse destined to the professionals of children's literature, whose history, the particularities of different countries and the current issues may be investigated. The question of the interactions with other forms of reviewing, and their ideological and institutional logics, should be addressed too.
- Academic reviewing: based on the general orientations of contemporary academic reviewing, epistemological approaches may be developed in order to understand its orientations, its specificity when compared to other forms of reviewing but also its connections with other academic works. We will intent to show how the organisation of the various disciplines (literature, history of art, education, sociology, psychology) favours the development of concurrent discourses.
- Journalistic reviewing: how do the media take over and have taken over children's literature? Why some media rather than others? Is there one form or are there many forms of journalistic reviews? What are the privileged analytical criteria? How does this reviewing position itself compared to other fields of cultural journalism? What relationship does it have with the editorial field?

- Authors' reviewing: Albert Thibaudet showed the importance of this reviewing form on the definition of legitimacies on the long run. More and more artists talk about their practices, comment on their pairs' work or refer to models, thus offering a critical discourse that assumes its partisan nature in the creative game. What is the function of this type of discourse? Does it play a role in the artification process of children's literature? Doesn't it also reveal the dominated character of productions for children in the cultural field? Is it homogeneous or does it vary based on the genres, expression modes and the medium in which the authors distinguish themselves?
- Amateur reviewing: with the development of the internet, amateur reviewing is becoming increasingly important. The amateurs become prescribers and their work is sometimes recognized by a large audience. They can be parents, young readers or older readers. They may or not be organized in interpretive communities, but in all instances, they use different expertise systems, with their own logic and hierarchies. The objective is to study these contributors' status, the sociability logics associated with them, the networks they belong to and the evaluation, description and prescription systems they put forward.
- An effort will be made to confront these different reviewing forms. An attempt will be made to determine their respective contribution to the cultural and social field. Which concurrent criteria are used? Do they lead to different hierarchies? How do they interact with each other? What is the balance of power between these different speech forms? In other words, we will seek to understand how to determine a paradigm of reviewing through competing discursive series.
- Finally, for the sake of comparative studies, reviews made in different countries may be compared. The means by which reviewing takes into account cultural globalisation, international domination, (namely Anglo-Saxon) and the place it gives to dominated cultures will be addressed too.
- The seminar is open to academics as well as professionals in children's literature, both French and foreign.

Scientific committee

Michel Defourny (Université de Liège)
 Marie Lallouet (BnF)
 Matthieu Letourneux (Université Paris-Ouest Nanterre La Défense)
 Mathilde Levêque (Université Paris 13)
 Francis Marcoin (Université d'Artois)
 Serge Martin (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3)
 Virginie Meyer (BnF)
 Isabelle Nières-Chevrel (professeur émérite, Université Rennes 2)
 Marine Planche (BnF)
 Jacques Vidal-Naquet (BnF)

Participation terms

The seminar will be held at the BNF Paris on Thursday 5 November 2015 and at the Sorbonne Paris on Friday 6 November 2015.

Languages: French, English.

All communications will be recorded in order to be put later on the BNF's website. Communications are limited to 25 minutes.

Submission deadline: communication proposals (title and a 1000 sign abstract), and a short bio-bibliographical presentation should be emailed before the 15th of May 2015 to: Marion Caliyannis: marion.caliyannis@bnf.fr