***A Companion to Soviet Children's Literature and Film*.** Ed. Olga Voronina. Brill's Companion to the Slavic World. Leiden: Brill, 2020. xiv, 507 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Plates. Photographs. $179.00, hard bound.

***Hans Christian Andersen in Russia*.** Ed. Mads Sohl Jessen, Marina Balina, Ben Hellman, and Johs. Nørregaard Frandsen. Odense, Denmark: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2020. 480 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Plates. Photographs. Figures. Tables. $48.00, hard bound.

***Translating England into Russian: The Politics of Children's Literature in the Soviet Union and Modern Russia*.** By Elena Goodwin. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. x, 256 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. $115.00, hard bound.

From its earliest use as an educational and civilizing tool to its eventual spread as a source of entertainment and enjoyment, children's literature has been at the center of discussions over cultural and religious values, the creation of bookstores and publishing houses, as well as the development of targeted journals, school curriculums, reading lists, and library collections. At stake in these discussions are the hearts and minds of the future populace of a nation. Thus, control and production of children's literature and reading, pedagogical approaches, and publishing methods have long been the source of controversy and debate because of their ability to shape future generations of citizens by creating and maintaining an educated and engaged society, open to the spirit of humanism and activism.

Perhaps nowhere has this battle been waged more fiercely than in Russia and the Soviet Union, where children's literature and culture have been used as a means of fostering national identity and building nationalism. Beginning with Mikhail Lomonosov's *Rossiiskaia grammatika* in 1755 that promoted the beauty and richness of the Russian language, as well as his writings on pedagogy that endorsed national traditions and advocated for the use of Russian over Latin in education, the focus of earliest Russian pedagogy had as its goal the creation of proud and patriotic Russian citizens.[1] In his reviews of children's books, published in the pages of *Literaturnaia gazeta* beginning in 1830, Vissarion Belinskii promoted creativity over pure didacticism, but also the importance and value of children's literature as a way of opening minds and influencing society.[2] Whether through foreign adaptations or native Russian versions, both Westernizer and Slavophile critics endorsed the idea

1. Mikhail Lomonosov, *O vospitanii i obrazovanii* (Moscow, 1991).

2. See the discussion by V.D. Razova in Fëdor Setin, Arina Arhipova, ed., *Russkaia detskaia literatura* (Moscow, 1972), 97.

Slavic Review 80, no. 4 (Winter 2021)

doi: 10.1017/slr.2022.16

that all children's literature should inculcate children from a young age with patriotism and love of homeland.[3]

Children's literature took on even greater importance in the early years of the Soviet Union since it was expected to help mold children into the new Soviet citizens and to create in them a revolutionary worldview. To facilitate these supremely important tasks, the People's Commissariat for Education was established in October 1917, but clashing personalities, ideologies, and approaches prevented the creation of a coherent and far-reaching program.[4] As a result, the twenties proved to be a particularly rich period for experimentation and innovation in Soviet children's literature. Under the restrictive demands of Socialist Realism, it attracted the efforts of talented writers and critics, who saw the intrinsic value and the relative freedom of writing for young people.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the control and creation of children's reading in Russia was still debated and managed at the highest levels. Conservatives in the Russian State Duma took up the discussion, which led to the passage of federal legislation in 2012, entitled "On the Protection of Children from Information Harmful to their Health and Development."[5] Sufficiently vague enough to cause apprehension about encroaching State censorship, the law caused parents and children's book authors/translators to worry about how the law would be implemented and what it meant for the future of Russian children's literature. Two years later, Vladimir Putin suggested that a reading list for children be created to promote Russian national identity.[6] As a result, the Ministry of Education and Science considered some 5,000 titles, and in 2013, published a list of "100 Books for School Children."[7] The list was hotly contested and debated in the media, and among parents, teachers, authors, and publishers. Today in Russia discussions over what children should read are ongoing and just as divisive as the debate rages on over reading high-brow vs. popular literature, and children more and more fill their time with social media rather than books.

The study of Russian and Soviet children's literature and film in western scholarship is a relatively young field that only began to get extensive attention with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent opening of the archives. In addition to historians, the field attracts researchers from across a myriad of cultural studies areas, including film, gender, fairy tales, and illustration, as well as leading scholars from theory, literature, translation,

3. See Marina Kostiukhina, *Zolotoe zerkalo: Russkaia literatura dlia detei XVIII-XIX vekov* (Moscow, 2008).

4. For a comprehensive discussion of the early years of Soviet children's reading, pedagogy, and personalities, see Irina Arzamastseva, *Vek rebenka v russkoi literature 1900–1930 godov* (Moscow, 2003).

5. Russian Federation Law#139-FZ: "O zashchite detei ot informatsii, prichiniaiushchei vred ix zdorov′iu i razvitiiu." Known as the Russian Internet Restriction Bill, the law was established as a means of protecting children from potentially harmful information on the Internet, including drug dosage, suicide methods, and child pornography.

6. Vladimir Putin, "Rossiia: Natsional′nyi vopros" *Nezavisimaia gazeta* (January 23, 2012).

7. To see the list of books, accessed April 12, 2021, at https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/100_книг_для_школьников.

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2022.16 Published online by Cambridge University Press

pedagogy, and genre studies, bringing a highly productive interdisciplinarity to the work that makes the research engaging and relevant far beyond the field of cultural production for children.

Now some thirty years later, the field is coming into its own with a slew of new edited collections and monographs that do not just break paths but also argue subtleties, create dialogues with and even contradict one another. As a result, the discipline has finally moved from the periphery to the center of Russian literary and cultural studies, marked by the participation of senior scholars, the inclusion of streams of interconnected panels at academic conferences, and the attention of scholarly presses. Although every new publication moves the field further along, each volume has a unique focus and particular target audience, as evidenced by the three books under review here.

A Companion to Soviet Children's Literature and Film (2019), edited by Olga Voronina, is one of the best and most comprehensive recent additions to the field. Its aim is to elucidate "the value of Soviet children's literature and film as the cultural foundation of the nation" (5). Addressing what she deems the little-known "ambiguous impact" of children's literature on both Soviet and post-Soviet society, Voronina explains that the "fear of historical analysis, or Russian society's perception of its past as fiction, slows down the post-Soviet project of replacing old Soviet children's books and movies with those that explore the harrowing outcome for the twentieth century and deal with difficult subjects of great importance such as state violence, historical trauma, and the impact of a totalitarian regime on people's thinking and behavior" (5). Additionally, Voronina argues, "nostalgia for the imaginary Soviet happiness" and "Russia's current national idea, with its reversal to the basics of Soviet ideology, such as political vigilance and loyalty to the state" provide the impetus for the "official endorsement and popular recycling of Soviet children's literature and film" (10–11). Thus, this work is both timely and valuable for its contribution to the ongoing conversation about the significance and impact of children's culture on the creation of Soviet and post-Soviet identity.

Divided into three chronological sections with four essays each, this sweeping volume of 507 pages brings together a stellar collection of scholars and provides high-quality, nuanced articles covering periods from the pre-revolutionary era to the end of the Soviet Union. Space limitations make it impossible to discuss all twelve chapters; instead, I will focus on a few chapters from each part that I hope will provide a sense of the scope and importance of the collection.

Entitled "Forging a New Children's Culture," the first section focuses on the experimental visual and literary arts in the pre-revolutionary and early Soviet periods. Its four chapters use the prism of children's literature and illustration to re-examine authors and works, thereby adding to our understanding of the Avant-gardists through an exploration of their work for children.

For example, Ainsley Morse's contribution examines the child-like aesthetic favored by Avant-garde and Association of Real Art (*Ob"edinenie real'nogo iskusstva* or OBERIU) artists including Elena Guro, Aleksei Kruchenykh, Velimir Khlebnikov, Vladimir Maiakovskii, Osip Mandel′shtam, Samuil Marshak, Kornei Chukovskii, Daniil Kharms, and Aleksandr

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2022.16 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Vvedenskii. Morse offers close readings of these disparate authors' texts and insightful discussions of their poetics that demonstrate how they developed an inventive and revolutionary poetics suited for the new ideal of the bold and creative Soviet child.

In his chapter, Oleg Minin discusses the OBERIU poets' brilliant word play and how it contributed to the high quality of the Leningrad children's journals *Ëzh* (1928–1935) and *Chizh* (1930–1941). He concludes that the works of Nikolai Oleinikov and Nikolai Zabolotskii are more politicized and that of Kharms and Iurii Vladimirov noticeably less so, but each contributes to the verbal artistry that made these both outstanding literary journals for children.

In part two, where the focus turns to "Constructing Socialism, Building the Self," Marina Balina's thought-provoking article, "Re-imagining the Past for Future Generations: History as Fiction in Soviet Children's Literature," traces the development of the historical fiction genre for children in tsarist Russia and then demonstrates how post-revolutionary models included the creation of fictional characters experiencing historical reality. According to Balina, this fictional blending of *Geschichte* and *Historie* allows "more freedom than perennially revised historical facts," and thus provides original, engaging, and educational historical fiction for children, reminiscent of the pre-revolutionary models (206).

Another contribution to the second section, Svetlana Maslinskaya's lengthy chapter analyzes child-hero narratives from the 1920s through the 1980s within their historical context to demonstrate their use of a "rigid plot structure" and a set of common poetic devices (251). With her comprehensive and detailed analysis, Maslinskaya definitively proves that there are different genres of child-hero narratives and that the paradigm is not linear, as previous scholarship has argued.

In dialogue with Maslinskaya's contribution, Tatiana Voronina and Polina Barskova's essay on Siege literature offers an analysis of what the authors call "a dissenting genre," and "the first more or less factual documentation of the Soviet war experience" (304). Voronina and Barskova present close readings of Siege narratives for children, showing that Siege children were either portrayed as weak and vulnerable, as innocent victims that needed defending, or else mythologized for their resilience and self-discipline. They conclude that the "traumatic complexity" of Siege literature "allowed them to investigate subjectivity on a more nuanced level" and thereby provide a more complicated and appealing model of the child hero (304).

Part three presents "New Approaches to the Avant-Garde" and offers a set of articles that examine other areas of creative activity for children, including translation, animation, and film.

Maria Khotimsky's chapter, "Children's Poetry and Translation in the Soviet Era: Strategies of Rewriting, Transformation and Adaptation" delves into the complex issues involved with translating children's poetry because of its ability to create "deep connections with cultural and generational texts," and its "dual address," that is "directed simultaneously at child and adult audiences" (341). She examines the translations and theories of Chukovskii and Marshak for their foundational role in the field in the twenties, then moves on to Kharms and Sergei Mikhalkov for the 1930s–50s, and concludes

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2022.16 Published online by Cambridge University Press

with an analysis of translations from the "Thaw" period by Boris Zakhoder and Genrich Sapgir.

Larissa Rudova's essay deconstructs the 1947 Soviet children's film, *Zolushka* (Cinderella), which was based on the screen play by Evgenii Shvarts and directed by Nadezhda Kosheverova and Mikhail Shapiro. Using Viktor Shklovskii's theory of *ostranenie* (defamiliarization), Rudova argues that the film manages to break out of the restrictive demands of Socialist Realism and instead harks back to a more playful tradition of pre-revolutionary and early Soviet Avant-garde, with a focus on entertainment and pleasure instead of didacticism and ideology. Her analysis of the screenwriter, the cast and crew, and especially the casting of Ianina Zhejmo as an unlikely Cinderella, prove that despite its subversive elements and unique subject matter, the film proved to be exceptionally popular with Soviet critics and citizens alike, because it reflected the joyful spirit of post-war Soviet society.

Although I have only briefly introduced roughly half of the contributions, the entire volume is well researched and presents penetrating analyses of children's writing and more. For example, the four articles in the first section create a natural dialogue with one another, examining all sides of the earliest Soviet efforts while simultaneously analyzing in depth the complex theories and works of the artists, which makes the section a must-read for scholars of the Avant-garde. In addition, at times, the essays in the volume engage with one another to agree, add detail, or contradict, and thereby provide finely nuanced portraits of the players. For example, one essay focuses on Ol′ga Berggolts as an author capable of "rare honesty" (309) and in another as a colleague who leveled accusations against Kharms and Vvedenskii for producing works of counter-revolutionary propaganda (162–63). In addition to the outstanding editing, it is this intertextuality, and especially the ability of these scholars to extrapolate their findings beyond the perimeters of children's culture that makes this such an indispensable scholarly addition to the field.

The next work under review, *Hans Christian Andersen in Russia*, edited by Mads Sohl Jessen, Marina Balina, Ben Hellman, and Johs. Nørregaard Frandsen, examines the legacy of Hans Christian Andersen's extensive and long-standing influence in Russian and Soviet literature and culture. Andersen's stories began appearing in Russia during the 1850s, and have been reprinted continuously since then, making his works obvious "children's classics" (77). In 2016, the Russian Book Chamber reported that Andersen ranked as the third most published children's author in Russia, after Chukovsky and Agnia Barto, which makes this study highly relevant and long overdue.[8]

A handsome volume, printed on glossy, high-quality paper, the study is divided into three sections. The first part, "Andersen and Russia in His Time," provides context and background regarding how Andersen and Danish culture generally imagined and perceived Russia. Mads Sohl Jessen contributes a double article that explains how Andersen's initial negative view of

8. Marina Obrazkova, "What Do Russians Read?" *Russia Beyond the Headlines* (October 5, 2016), accessed April 12, 2021, https://www.rbth.com/arts/literature/2016/10/05/what-do-russians-read_636025.

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2022.16 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Russia changed as he matured and came to appreciate the literature and culture through more personal exposure. Jessen also tells the story about the husband-and-wife team of translators, Peter Emmanuel Hansen and his second wife Anna, who produced the canonical Russian translations of Andersen that went on to influence all aspects of Russian culture. Next, Johs. Nørregaard Frandsen discusses Denmark's Princess Dagmar's efforts to improve relations between the countries, especially after 1866, when she marries the future Emperor Alexander III. Frandsen argues that the princess became "a crucial agent in the dissemination of Andersen's writings in Russia," because of her support—both moral and financial—of the Hansens' translation efforts (71).

The second and third parts of the volume present a chronological appreciation and analysis of Andersen's influence on Russian literature, literary criticism, music, media, and illustration. Part II: "Andersen in Russia's Cultural Contexts," is further subdivided into three chronological subunits that cover the prerevolutionary period, the Silver Age, and Soviet Russia.

Oleg Lekmanov's chapter on the Acemists' engagement with Andersen's tales provides close readings of the poetry of Innokentii Annenskii, Mikhail Kuzmin, Anna Akhmatova, Osip Mandel′shtam, and Nikolai Gumiliev, demonstrating their attention to the miniature material world and fragile characters found in Andersen's tales. He concludes that having assimilated Andersen's imagery from childhood, the Acemists, especially Mandel′shtam and Akhmatova, use quotations from Andersen's "miniature toy-world sympathetically" in their poetry (156).

Next, in her highly engaging essay, Karin Grelz analyzes Marina Tsvetaeva's affinity for Andersen's fairy tales and the impact they had on both her life and poetry, as she "modeled her poetic persona and imaginative landscape after his" (159). Grelz relies not only on Tsvetaeva's poetry and prose for her discussion, but also considers Tsvetaeva's diaries, notebooks, and letters.

Boris Wolfson's insightful article, "The Double and Its Theater," examines Shvarts's "appropriations and transformations" of Andersen's works in three plays: *The Naked King* (from "The Emperors' New Clothes"), *The Snow Queen*, and *The Shadow*. Wolfson focuses on "the largely unexamined theatrical rhetoric" of the plays and sees their vitality in their performative aspect (245).

Using the theory of cultural transfer, Ilya Kukulin, in "Hans Christian Andersen and the Soviet Biedermeier," profiles the various artists and writers who used Andersen's works as a means of creating their own innovative visions, "to counter political anxieties with domesticity, coziness, light humor, and sentimentality," despite the pressure to conform that held sway from the 1950s through the 1970s (282). His analysis of Liudmila Petrushevskaia's fairy tales is particularly perceptive.

The third and final part of the collection, "Visualizing Andersen in Illustration, Film, and the Digital Sphere," provides some of the most engaging chapters. Helena Goscilo, always a pleasure to read, offers two contributions. Her first chapter contrasts the traditional Russian *rusalka* and the little mermaid character conceived by Andersen. Here Goscilo wittily deconstructs the reasons behind the predilection for using Andersen's little mermaid model rather than the native *rusalka* in films by Vladimir Bychkov (1976) and Anna Melikian (2007), among others.

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2022.16 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Goscilo's second essay studies the brilliant Soviet and post-Soviet graphic art that has been inspired by the same tale. Here she turns her attention to eye-catching illustrations by Ivan Bilibin from the 1930s, the watercolors of Moscow conceptualist Viktor Pivovarov from the 1970s, and then discusses a plethora of contemporary efforts.

The final chapter in the collection offers a collaboration by Elena Gurova, Elena Krasnova, and Boris Zharov, who discuss the overwhelming influence of Andersen's tales on contemporary Russian culture in the commercial, electronic/digital/social network, sculptural/architectural, and educational realms of today's Russia. They attribute Andersen's ubiquity to "the fact that he is comprehensible and inexhaustible in any period, and for people of any age" (447).

In the Appendix, Inna Sergienko concludes the volume with an overview of "Anderseniana in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia," which includes an index of publications on Andersen from 1924–2017. In section two, Sergienko also provides an analysis of Andersen in Russian criticism, including a chronological bibliographical listing of 100 sources of criticism on him in Russia. These two contributions provide an indispensable resource for future further study of the subject.

Although space constraints do not allow discussion of the remaining chapters, the collection also includes other innovative contributions by Ben Hellman, Peter Alberg Jensen, Vladimir Orlov, Marina Balina, Yuri Leving, and Andrei Rogatchevski.

The goal of the volume is to demonstrate "both the unusualness and the diversity of the cultural patterns brought to life by the Danish writer's literary style and his personality" (17) and in this the contributors succeed handily. It is a treasure trove of information for any scholar interested in Andersen and the "Andersen myth" in Russia. Although the concept of Andersen's influence in Russia may seem like a narrow topic, of interest to a limited number of scholars, in fact the volume provides an abundance of interesting and original insights on Russian culture, its artists, and critics. The scholarship is a bit uneven between chapters and there is some repetition that could have been edited out, but overall, it offers a rigorous contribution to the study of children's culture by highlighting how well Russian, Soviet, and post-Soviet artists and writers have learned to borrow and refashion foreign sources to make them their own Russian or Soviet work.

Elena Goodwin's *Translating England into Russian: The Politics of Children's Literature in the Soviet Union and Modern Russia*, based on her doctoral dissertation, sets out to "analyze the literary transfer of images of Englishness" from classics of British children's literature to their Russian translations to determine how and why these works were translated and how the images were modified or preserved in the translations, as well as how they were chosen and received in Russia (5).

The first three chapters of the volume provide the theoretical and contextual scaffolding for the close analysis of five authors in the remaining chapters. Her case studies include works by J.M. Barrie, Kenneth Grahame, Rudyard Kipling, A.A. Milne, and P.L. Travers. Additionally, these five chapters include discussions of pictorial representations of Englishness.

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The first chapter, or "Introduction," familiarizes the reader with a variety of translation theories and explains Goodwin's concept of "Englishness" as sharing "Edwardian cultural features which are easily recognized as manifestations of 'Merry England' by readers around the world" (3). According to Goodwin, this includes political and ideological associations (class system, empire, traditions), cultural associations (landscape and places like village and home), and features of English national character ("tropes of the gentleman, the governess, and countryfolk") (9–10).

Chapter Two discusses the history of translated literature in Russia and puts the Soviet school of realist translation and children's literature into the context of censorship and ideology to explain what and who was chosen for translation. Here she addresses the inevitable self-censorship that authors and translators faced, and the tradition of Soviet translators becoming co-authors of the original text because of their choices to rewrite and Russianize works for ideological reasons.

To justify her selection of books for close analysis in the remaining chapters, Goodwin provides a broader context of British children's books translated into Russian in Chapter Three. She argues that Russian interpretations of Englishness demonstrate a "bipolar tendency" that either focuses on the social inequity and hardships caused by the country's imperialist past and rigid class system, often played up in Soviet literature, and the idealized image of English national character often "expressed in the form of the discourses of the fantastic and silliness" (54). She concludes that the construction of Englishness in Russian translations is affected by censorship and political ideology in the Soviet period and by commercial interests in modern Russia.

Goodwin's close readings of the translations of classic British children's stories provides insight into individual cases of translation, rewriting, and ideology. Some of her strongest analysis deals with the illustrations created for Soviet editions of British translations and how they differed from the originals. Likewise, her histories of the translations, and how they came to be, provide interesting and engaging reading.

Goodwin did exhaustive research and there is quality scholarship here, but it is overshadowed by the unnecessary repetition of ideas, lists without analysis, overuse of theory, and poor editing. For example, she repeatedly cites "commercial interests" as the motivator for translation choices in modern Russia, but never discusses the topic in any substantial detail (49, 75, and 175). Throughout the book, she provides paragraphs that contain only lists with no analysis: works that include the theme of England (17–18), prevailing themes in British children's literature (48), and reprinted fantasy tales (70). Likewise, front-loading theory is never a good idea, but Goodwin relies too heavily on other's ideas and theory for theories sake. In her discussion of *The Wind in the Willows*, she invokes Mikhail Bakhtin when describing the use of the "high road trope" as a way of depicting its "socio-historical diversity," but then does nothing further with the idea (154). Elsewhere, one translator's approach becomes the basis for a "tendency" (36). These problems distract from Goodwin's research and weaken her analysis.

Given the extensive historical context provided and the simplicity of the arguments, it seems that the intended audience for this book is more a general

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interest reader rather than a scholar, but then the prevalence of theory at every turn brings that choice into question. Goodwin attempts to forge new territory with this volume, but to accomplish that goal would require a more extensive revision of the dissertation, with a better idea of her intended target audience.

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