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Fantasies and Engaging with Fiction from the Perspective of Multi-addressee. In the Context of Hanna Dymel-Trzebiatowska's Book "Philosophical and Translatological Wanderings in Moominvalley" (2023)¹

Abstract: The article is based on the review of the book by Hanna Dymel-Trzebiatowska *Philosophical and Translatological Wanderings in Moominvalley* (2023). Interdisciplinary considerations concern the issue of the multi-addressee nature of works intentionally aimed at a young audience, and their basis is the analysis and interpretation of Tove Jansson's series on Moomins, deeply rooted in philosophical contexts. In the interpretation of the saga of the Finnish writer, Dymel-Trzebiatowska refers to various aspects of the theory and practice of reception as well as to selected issues belonging to the area of theory and practice of translation. In interpretative contexts, the researcher also distinguishes psychoanalytical critique, cognitive poetics, existential philosophy, the broadly understood philosophy of ethics and childhood anthropology, thanks to which her book fits perfectly into contemporary discussions on the function, place, role and status of children's literature, its meaning in the wider cultural literary circuit and - potentially - also its presence in the field of Polish language education.

Keywords: multi-addressee; children's literature; theory and practice of translation; psychoanalytic critique; childhood anthropology

Hanna Dymel-Trzebiatowska's book *Philosophical and Translatological Wanderings in Moominvalley* (Peter Lang 2023, Studien zur Germanistik Skandinavistik und Übersetzungskultur, Herausgegeben von B. Sommerfeld, S.H. Kaszyński, A. Kątny und M. Krysztofiak, Band 24) fits in very well with contemporary

¹ This text is a modified and expanded version of the article: D. Michułka, *Multiplikowanie adresata utworów intencjonalnie skierowanych do młodego odbiorcy – szansa czy zagrożenie? W kontekście książki Hanny Dymel-Trzebiatowskiej "Filozoficzne i translatoryczne wędrówki po Dolinie Muminków (2019). "Educatio Nova", Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska Lublin, Volume VI, 2021, pp. 487–496.*

discussions on the function, place, role and status of children's literature, its significance in the broader circulation of literary culture and the scope of international interdisciplinary research on this literature, undertaken mainly from literary, philosophical and translational perspectives, especially as translations and adaptations of children's literature have been stirring up discussions, controversies and polemics for many years.

The author's discussion focuses on the issues of fantasy as a narrative strategy and literary convention, as well as in a broader research perspective – on engaging in reading, getting to the deeper meanings of the work (also through psychoanalytic approaches), through existential-ethical contexts, with a particular focus on the philosophy of values, axiology and humor, which allows a special kind of perception for both child and adult audiences of Tove Jansson's work.

Its worth to emphasize that the child is a reader who is inexperienced in literature, but "fresh" and curious about the world, which is why the remarks on translations and adaptations of a literary work in the field of literature for a young reader are now highly relevant in contemporary child and adolescent reading and in the light of literary studies (among other things due to the multitude of translations, abundance of works *re-told*, read differently, repeated or 'rewritten' in a different way [*re-telling, re-writing, re-reading*]) (Cornis-Pope 1992; Woźniak 2013).

The author's reflections revolve around a literary phenomenon, masterpiece one-of-kind work – Tove Jansson's nine-volume series/saga about the Moomins. Dymel-Trzebiatowska rightly emphasizes that Tove Jansson's famous multi-volume saga treated in the study chronologically, shows a peculiar picture of the evolution of characters, the process of personality maturation, and should be analyzed as a whole.

Dymel-Trzebiatowska's analyses and interpretations of Jansson's works are extremely insightful and deeply rooted in interdisciplinary research. Apart from explorations of a literary, philosophical and translational nature, they are also clearly inscribed in the problems of human existence, aesthetic experience, the influence of the artist's biography on the artistic creation of his works, and they refer to various concepts of the "nature" of the child and the "essence" of childhood, to the creation of a socio-cultural image of childhood and its experience – captured in the work also from an adult perspective – and, above all, to "show" the image of the child who becomes the specific recipient of a literary work.

An important role in Dymel-Trzebiatowska's research, with regard to the Moomin saga, is played by the issue of the work's 'multiplied' addressee, so to speak, which can be a reader of different ages (for example, a child, a teenager or an adult), as well as the theory and practice of reception (Nikolajeva 2014). This researcher's book has a solid and precise structure, and the composition of the argument is convincingly well thought out. The monograph is distinguished by a clearly stated scientific thesis, a clear layout of the research problems and a clear

order of the discussed issues. The study is 228 pages long and includes an impressive bibliography and a personal index.

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Hanna Dymel-Trzebiatowska's dissertation is divided into two parts, the subject matter of which is determined by the title of the monograph. These are philosophical wanderings and translational wanderings, and within them there are clearly structured chapters.

In the section *Philosophical Wanderings* for Example, prepared in the context of the broad intertextuality of analysis and interpretation, the researcher refers to the notions of hypotexts, explicite and implicate, that can be found in the series about the Moomins, and in the ten subsequent chapters assigned to this section there are references to research: Oswald Spengler, Ortega y Gasset, Socrates, Henri Bergson, Parmenides, Edvard Westermarck, Mikhail Bakhtin, Karen Horney, Antoni Kępiński, Carl Gustav Jung, Sigmund Freud and Norman Holland. In the philosophical part of the discussion, the author evokes the following issues in turn, which are also the titles of the clearly developed chapters: *Catastrophism*, *Vitality and Freedom*, *Beauty*, *Art and Artists*, *Searching for Justice*, *Life is a Dream*, *The Triumph of Life over Death*, *The Invisible*, *There is no Life without Fear*, *Crisis*, *Farewell*.

The philosophical and intertextual context so thoroughly outlined in the interpretation of the Moomin saga also allows us to refer to the broadly understood perspective of engaged humanities (children and adults) and humanistic education of young readers.

The content of the book (concerning, among other things, aspects of psychoanalysis or the theory and practice of reception) allows for the inclusion of Jansson's famous series in the context of reception by an experienced children's audience (prepared, as it were, to understand broader anthropological or existential contexts) and, of course, an adult audience.

Dymel-Trzebiatowska wonders, and consequently considers in the second part of her study, how this 'double turn' (multi-addressee) has also been taken into account in the translation of the series about the Moomins. The phenomenon of double-addressing (child and adult) and multi-addressing (multi-addressee) of a work intentionally aimed at younger readers, as the researcher signals, has already been discussed in theoretical literary studies and reveals a rather wide range of concepts related to this issue. Literary studies dealing with the issue of the reception of this type of text have identified, among others, the following terms: *ambivalence* (Shavit 1986), *triadic taxonomy*, *dual*, *double* and *single addresses*, i.e. *double*, *single* and *double turn* (Wall 1991), *shadow text* (Nodelman 2008), *multiple address* (O'Sullivan 2005) or *crossover literature* (*transgressive literature*) (Beckett 2009, 2012).

The reception of a literary work and the dialogue between the text and the reader have been discussed for many years. In the broader context of literary studies, the question of reception of a work of literature has become a problem considered, among others, by the sociology of literature (cf. the concept of literature from the perspective of the reader as seen, for example, by Harald Weinrich [1972]) and by representatives of the German aesthetic school of reception (cf. the terms: *horizon of expectation* and *the implied reader*) (Iser 1978; Jauss 1999; Weinrich 1972).

It is worth noting at this point of consideration also the aspect of the ‘real reader’ (Maryl 2007). Zofia Budrewicz, a literary scholar and didactician of literature, discussing the issues of reception of a literary work from the perspective of Polish language education, notes:

The situation of reception of an artistic work is [already] derived from the anthropology of literature and cultural theory of literature [...]. Authors of many works [moving towards experiential cognition] link the operational usefulness of the figure of the subjective sensual-mental experience to the possibilities of ‘insight’ of the recipient-student (Budrewicz 2012: 6),

the emotional involvement of the real reader, empathetic reading and affect (Koziołek 2016; Miall 2006; Opdahl 2002; Paivio 1971, 1991). The Moomins saga seems to fit perfectly into this context of consideration, as it both incorporates vivid psychological portraits of characters that, as it were “invite” the young viewer to empathise with them, as well as presenting figures of literary characters with whom the child reader can ‘emotionally’ identify. The challenge for the young reader becomes is also to see and understand the broad perspective of the existential-ethical considerations undertaken in the Moomins saga.

Dymel-Trzebiatowska, emphasising in her dissertation the psychoanalytic aspect of the reception of a literary text and ‘inscribing’ the Jansson saga in this area of consideration, cites Norman Holland’s publication *The Dynamics of Literary Response* (1989).

Holland, a literary theorist and expert in psychoanalytic criticism and cognitive post-ethics, according to the author, reveals “a psychodynamic interpretation of the literary perception. Availing himself of Freud’s selected psychological concepts, Holland explains the interaction between readers and books as reproducing the pleasure experienced by suckling infants in the oral phase” (Dymel-Trzebiatowska 2023: 91), arguing that the naturalness and freshness of the process of reception of literature makes it possible to conclude that ‘we become [then] children’ (Holland 1989: 80). The researcher of reception theory and practice adds that

the writer infuses his/her works with his/her fantasies which reader will recognize. When it happens, readers feel gratified and fulfilled while reading, and these responses are rooted in their unconscious. It is with a view to experiencing

this pleasure that people suspend their disbelief again and again when engaging with fiction (Dymel-Trzebiatowska 2023: 91),

which makes it possible to feel not only pleasure, but also satisfaction and fulfilment reaching subconscious states. Holland refers here to the issue of the defence mechanisms that characterise the human psyche and writes:

The text, however, does not present us with the original fantasy, but rather a version of it modified and shaped by manipulations that are referred to as 'form' in literature, and which resemble defence mechanisms in the human psyche. Ultimately, it is the author who, in the act of experiencing and writing down the fantasy, places it in the text in a defensive form [...]. He or she seems to have two types of relationship with the text. On a conscious level, he is actively involved in perceiving it and giving meaning to his perceptions. Unconsciously, the text confronts him with fantasies and defence mechanisms, the same as those in his mind. (Holland 1989: 62).

To be exact, a defense is unconscious process of the *ego* which the ego puts into action automatically at the signal of danger from the external world, the *id*, or the *superego*. Such a thing of course, happens in a mind rather than a literary text. What we have found, though, is that just as literary works embody fantasies familiar from psychoanalytic experience so they handle these fantasies by techniques that resemble familiar defensive and adaptive strategies. (Holland 1989: 57–58, quoted in Dymel-Trzebiatowska: 92).

According to Dymel-Trzebiatowska, the Muminki saga fits very well into this area of reflections on interpretative contexts, including the inner worlds and psychology of literary characters.

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In the second part of the monograph – *Translator's Wanderings* – the author makes insightful references to the study of Polish translations of selected linguistic issues, which she considers to be most relevant to the poetics of the entire saga. In this context, she mentions: anthroponyms [in the part of text connected with Piżmowiec (Musk Deer)], comedy (for example, in the parts of the book concerning images of Paszczaki (Hemulens) and culinary habits (according to the researcher, these are connected, among others, with the character of Mummy of Moomin, the figure of the nurturing mother who, thanks to her involvement in the preparation of meals, contributes to building good relationships in the family and to creating a positive atmosphere in the home). As Dymel-Trzebiatowska writes:

Having already discussed the “anatomy” of humour and the challenges it poses in translation elsewhere, I would only like to restate here that, as a result of its inherent ontological ambivalences, the comic is a highly complex phenomenon in that it is simultaneously and artistic property immanent to a text and

an aesthetic quality that is actualised in reader's individual perceptions. With a young readership we must address an even greater complexity, because children's perceptions are difficult to assess due to the shortage of reliable tools, and, given this, we tend to rely on certain presuppositions underpinned by isolated observations. When a readership comprises both children and adults, the complications multiply because the translator must not only estimate children's competency but also sometimes prioritise adults as readers of children's literature, which continues to be regarded as a risky practice. Besides, any comprehensive exploration of the comic in translation must also take into account the idiosyncratic nature of the sense of the humour and the extra-textual and diachronic factors, such as culture that affect it [...] Starting with second volume Moomin series is deliberately infused with the comic which imprints itself on the depictions of the protagonists, the construction of episodes and the language its self, both in the narrator's voice and in the idiolects of the characters. The characterization of the protagonists employs a broad spectrum of classical comedy – generating mechanisms, such as hyperbolisation, exaggeration, caricature, foregrounded, contrasts and highlighted disparity between dreams/theory and practice (Dziemidok 2011; 68, 82–83). The humour is pointedly devised for the experienced readers is at its most conspicuous in the *Moominpappa's Memoirs* which parodies the male writing style and abounds with intertextual allusions to *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini Written by Himself*, an early classic of autobiography (Dymel-Trzebiatowska 2023: 155–156).

In the translator's part of the essay, she thoroughly analyses terms that are significant for this field of science, for example she discusses philological translation, the notion of transference and its hybrids, issues of transcription and substitution, while at the same time reflecting on the issue of faithfulness and unfaithfulness of a translation or adaptations of literary works. In a broader metadological context, Dymel-Trzebiatowska refers to publications by Scandinavian scholars that are of importance for the theory and practice of translation, such as Göte Klingberg's *Children's Fiction in the Hands of the Translators* (1986) or Riitta Oittinen's *Translating for Children* (2000), in which, among other things, the model of the default reader or the concept of the *child image* is defined.

Representatives of the two Scandinavian strands of translation theory for children, natively called the 'infidelity and fidelity school' (Nikolajeva 2003), Riitta Oittinen and Göte Klingberg, build their concepts on the assumption of the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the child as a different reader. [...] The image of the child is a central factor of the translation of children's books: according to their ideology, translators direct the words to a certain type of child. (Oittinen 2006: 41, quoted in Dymel-Trzebiatowska, 2023: 216).

From the perspective of comparing the addressee of the source text and the target text, in the course of her analyses Dymel-Trzebiatowska discusses the

notion of lexemes or phrases, addresses the issues of translation technique and the question of semantic and/or formal shift. The logical construction of the considerations allowed for the formulation of synthetic and problematising conclusions on individual issues in the work's conclusion, together with a deeper reflection related to the implications of multiliteracies for translation studies.

The book *Philosophical and Translator's Wanderings in the Valley of the Moomins* encourages a broader discussion on the multi-impression of translations of literature for young readers and the status of texts written for young readers. The author concludes her reflections with important questions or challenges for the future, for example:

Can the increasing multiple-address mode undermine the paradigm of the child reader as a distinguishing element of children's literature and abolish the traditional dichotomous taxonomy in which literature is divided into that for children and for adults? Should we multiple-address mode be taken into account in translating any children's book, or is it rather a typical feature exclusively of artistic, award-winning books described as quality literature? (Dymel-Trzebiatowska 2023: 217).

Furthermore, Dymel-Trzebiatowska's analyses and interpretations of existing translations of Scandinavian literature point to a clear thesis, which takes the shape of a convincing postulate. It is the need for a higher coherence competence of translators. The researcher states:

All these examinations yield a common insight, one that is highly relevant to the translation of children's literature. Namely, translators need a better coherence competency. I understand coherence competency as a variety of cognitive competency, that is, an ability to accumulate "knowledge that the reader acquires as he/she reads a text" (Pisarska, Tomaszekiewicz 1996: 68). This natural process automatically unfolds while reading with understanding, and it means discerning how facts hang together in the diegetic worlds of the text. I propose a separate term to capture, specifically, translators ability to associate, recognise and remember information and language forms that convey this information throughout the text and then to perform consistent and deliberate re-expression of them (Dymel – Trzebiatowska, 2023: 208–209).

To conclude, Dymel-Trzebiatowska's monograph on Polish translational studies is not only an exceptionally mature study, philologically convincing, logically, clearly and lucidly structured, but also a novel, innovative and extremely erudite work in the analytical and interpretative parts. It can be used both in scientific explorations by literary scholars, researchers of the theory and practice of translation, as well as in the reading practices of teachers in the field of Polish school education. After all, the Muminki saga has been a popular school reading for years.

As a literary scholar *and* researcher of translation theory and practice, the author of *Philosophical and Translatological Wonderings in Moominvalley* is exceptionally thorough and insightful – she conscientiously discusses in footnotes the broader contexts of the scientific definitions she uses, referring to a very rich literature on the subject. The author’s methodological background of the book, the internationality of the approaches, their interdisciplinary character, and also great care and attention to the precision of understanding the terms introduced in the book, as well as the editorial and editorial design of the study, are all very impressive.

Hanna Dymel-Trzebiatowska uses a mature scientific language and a clear and lucid style. The book confirms the author’s excellent substantive preparation, is characterised by reliability, insight and innovation, and was written with great expertise, commitment and passion. In her considerations, the researcher skilfully combines detailed analyses of the material with a broader perspective of scientific literary studies, competently and professionally “integrating” her historical-literary interpretations with translation theory, philosophy and ethics, anthropology of literature, psychoanalysis and aesthetics, as well as literary criticism, presenting a multi-faceted and multi-level, but at the same time complete, coherent and synthetic picture of the problem posed in the title of the book.

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