



Beyond Babar: The European Tradition in Children's Literature

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All too often, attention is paid only to those children's novels that were written in English, with non-English-language works being passed over and neglected. *Beyond Babar: The European Tradition in Children's Literature* examines eleven of the most celebrated European children's novels in substantial, critical essays written by well-known international scholars. This approach provides a comprehensive discussion of the selected works from a variety of theoretical perspectives. Each essay offers a critical introduction to the text that can serve as a point of departure for literary scholars, professors of children's literature, primary and secondary school teachers, and librarians who are interested in texts that cross languages and cultures. *Beyond Babar* is especially meant to assist instructors of children's literature who would like to use these texts in the classroom, in order to begin to redress the English-language dominance of many children's literature courses. This volume will also be of interest to the general public, as its ultimate aim is to bring to the attention of all English-speaking readers the literature from other parts of the world, in this case from Europe. *Beyond Babar* helps to facilitate the border crossings of these European masterpieces of children's literature into the English-speaking world.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

In the late '80s, the Children's Literature Association, a group of academicians and scholars, published three volumes of essays concerning titles proposed as a literary canon in children's literature. Except for the recognized classics *Heidi* and *Pinocchio*, the books considered in Perry Nodelman's *Touchstones: Reflections on the Best in Children's Literature* (1985–'89) were all written in English. This new title is intended to complement *Touchstones* by presenting essays on outstanding works of European children's literature that have been translated into English. The articles cover books familiar to most American librarians: Astrid Lindgren's "Pippi Longstocking" books (grievously mistranslated, according to Nikolajeva); Tove Jansson's Moomintroll stories; Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*; and Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story*. Other titles that may be less familiar are introduced by scholarly advocates: Janusz Korczak's *King Matt the First*, Gianni Rodari's *The Befana's Toyshop*, Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World*, and others. Nikolajeva's illuminating essay on translation of children's books is alone worth the price. While this collection is aimed at a scholarly audience, it is also essential background reading for librarians and teachers who seek to promote international understanding through children's books.—Margaret A. Chang, *Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, North Adams*

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Review

...essential background reading for librarians and teachers who seek to promote international understanding through children's books. (*School Library Journal, February 2007*)

...a top pick for children's librarians or any teacher or parent regularly working with kids....A top pick, especially for college-level children's literature studies collections. (*The Bookwatch, February 2007*)

Highly recommended. (*CHOICE, Vol. 44, No. 09 (May 2007)*)

Beyond Babar is meant to be used as a text in college courses in children's literature, but with its thoughtful, engaging essays, blessedly free of academic jargon, it should have an appeal far beyond that. (*Green Man Review*)

Providing valuable insights into landmark works of European children's literature, this volume will prove a valuable source for scholars, teachers, and librarians. (*Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature, Vol. 45, No. 4, 2007*)

Beckett (modern languages, literature, and culture, Brock U., Canada) and Nikolajeva (comparative literature, Stockholm U.) present this collection of 12 essays with the intention of expanding the canon of commonly studied European children's literature to include 11 notable non-English language novels. Of interest primarily to literary scholars and professors of children's literature, and secondarily to librarians and teachers, the essays offer a variety of theoretical perspectives on children's novels from Poland, Norway, France, Italy, Sweden, Germany, Belgium, and Denmark. The texts discussed include the Pippi Longstocking series, *The Little Prince*, *The Neverending Story*, and the novel-cum-introduction to philosophy's history *Sophie's World*. In the concluding essay, Nikolajeva discusses approaches, challenges, and lessons of translation into English. (*Reference and Research Book News*)

About the Author

Sandra L. Beckett is Professor of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at Brock University in Canada. She is the author of numerous books, including *Recycling Red Riding Hood* (2002).

Maria Nikolajeva is Professor of Comparative Literature at Stockholm University (Sweden). She is the author of numerous books and articles on children's literature, including *Aesthetic Approaches to Children's Literature: An Introduction* (Scarecrow, 2005).

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