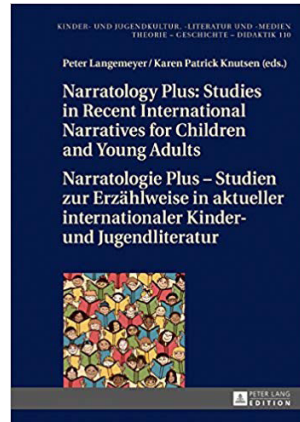


Review/Recension

PETER LANGEMEYER &
KAREN PATRICK KNUTSEN
(RED.)
**NARRATOLOGY PLUS /
NARRATOLOGIE PLUS**
**Studies in Recent
International Narratives for
Children and Young Adults
/ Studien zur Erzählweise
in aktueller internationaler Kinder- und
Jugendliteratur**

Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2017 (388s.)



Born from and building on the Russian Formalist approach, modern narratology has moved on from printed “Literature” to include different narrative forms. These forms require their own form-specific narratological approach, which is not identical from one narrative to another but instead originates from the narrative itself. As such, children’s literature requires its own narrative theory to account for the different elemental structures of this field as opposed to general literature. In their introduction to *Narratology Plus: Studies in Recent International Narratives for Children and Young Adults/Narratologie Plus: Studien zur Erzählweise in aktueller internationaler Kinder- und Jugendliteratur*, the editors Peter Langemeyer and Karen Patrick Knutsen lay out the history of both narratology and children’s literature studies, presenting current scholarship and making a case for the need for their collection: “The contributors are particularly interested in applying narratological categories in concrete textual analyses, and our common goal is to shed light on these texts in other and perhaps new ways, using the tools of narratology to develop a better understanding of the text (or medium) itself” (24). This aim is hardly revolutionary as narratology is not a new concept and has been used in children’s literature scholarship for some time. They also claim that foreign language teaching is a common interest across

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all contributors, which may be the case but is not reflected in the essays themselves.

Nevertheless, this collection provides a broad and interesting overview of narratological approaches applied to children's literature. The first part, "Narrative Strategies and Identity", demonstrates the importance and impact of the narrative strategies involved in children's literature on teaching and the construction of identity. The second part, "Narrative Transformations", moves beyond the classic text-based narratology of part one and thus shows the potential of postmodern narratology and its applicability on narratives of any kind. The only thing missing from this volume is a chapter on video-games, which despite their important role in young readers' audio and visual literacy and lives remain under-researched. Such a chapter would have been a great addition to part two and would have demonstrated not only how narratology has adapted to new narratives, but also how children's texts themselves change over time.

The collection's main strength is its high level of internationality: the essays discuss narratives written in German, Norwegian, Greek, Polish, Swedish, English, and Spanish. This wide range demonstrates the adaptability and applicability of narratological tools to literatures in different languages and from different cultural backgrounds. While part of the essays are written in English, others are written in German, which unfortunately mean that some essays are not accessible to all readers. The volume also demonstrates the range of scholarship in the field of children's literature studies, bringing together scholarly traditions from many different countries, and engaging them in dialogue with each other. Particularly valuable is that this collection brings forth scholarship from the "minority" languages of children's literature research, minority in the sense that Anglophone research is dominant in the field. Whereas these scholarly traditions may in the past have been isolated from one another, this collection demonstrates the breadth of children's literature scholarship and of narratological studies, and suggests previously unthought-of connections.

The contributors come from different disciplines such as linguistics, translation, and literary theory, and therefore employ different methodologies within the field of narratology, creating a cross-disciplinary approach to the collection as a whole. The narratives discussed are mostly contemporary, and cover many different genres, forms, and nationalities, offering a current and wide-ranging view of both children's literature and the applicability of narratology. The editors have gathered sixteen essays covering a myriad of topics,

which they have subdivided into two parts. The first part, "Narrative Strategies and Identity", includes essays on different printed narratives for young readers, ranging from fairytales to nonfiction collections of interviews. The second part, "Narrative Transformations", branches out to different forms of children's narratives such as film, songs, and websites. There are several chapters which miss the mark. Both Konstantinos Kotsiaros and Corina Löwe, for example, rely heavily on the outdated Proppian functional analysis. Löwe does, however, use this approach to form an argument about structural functions in DDR detective novels, whereas Kotsiaros' chapter is descriptive. Both Wladimir Chávez Vaca and Anastasia Parianou set out with interesting arguments but unfortunately lack focus, particularly on narratology, which hampers their ability to go into depth in their analyses.

Chapters which stand out in this collection include Peter Lange-meyer's analysis of "protocol" narratives, a new term for Angloglone narratologists: narratives based on nonfictional interviews. He analyses immigrant texts and their negotiation of Turkish-German identity using voice, narrator, and diegesis (which would be called discourse analysis in social sciences). Angela Marx Åberg's chapter is also worth mentioning. This essay is specifically pedagogical in its approach, analysing the role the genre of suspense can play in engaging young readers reading in a foreign language. Britt W. Svenhard's chapter is also well worth reading, as it applies cognitive narratology (unfortunately referencing only one scholar) to film to argue that fantasy and animation offer complex readings and meaning-making.

Overall, this collection is worthy of your time if you are comfortable reading English and/or German, and are interested in a broad overview of how narratology can benefit children's literature research. The volume is well structured and offers approximately the same amount of English and German essays. It also demonstrates the scope of both narratology and children's literature scholarship as much broader than linguistic barriers may lead one to believe. As is always the case with a collection of essays, some are of higher quality than others, yet almost all have something of interest to offer. This collection is suited for those who are interested in discovering the scholarly traditions of other linguistic cultures, and those who are newly introduced to the concept of narratological studies in children's literature and are keen to see the wide range of concepts and narratives fitting for this approach. For those who are already engaged in depth with narratological approaches to children's literature,

the volume does not provide new insights, yet they, too, can gain from the multinational scholarly traditions brought together by the contributors. This reviewer is grateful for having read the collection, most particularly because it has broadened her scholarly horizons previously limited by the Anglophone dominance in children's literature research.

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