

A NEW LITERARY AID NOT ONLY FOR STUDENTS OR TEACHERS

Lukáš Holčák

In September 2007, the book stock was enriched with a new publication by Libri publisher. The book should be valued not only by students and teachers, but also by reader's public. We mean a *Dictionary of Children's Literature Authors, volume I*. This dictionary is the result of cooperation of a collective of authors. The collective is compounded mainly of university teachers and literary scientists from the Czech Republic and foreign countries as well. The mentioned publication was created under the direction of prof. Ivan Dorovský, DrSc. (Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Brno) and docent PhDr. Vlasta Řeřichová, CSc. (Faculty of Education, Palacký University, Olomouc). The first volume consists of a review of chosen foreign writers, especially from Europe and the U.S.A. The authors suppose that in the future they will concentrate on writers of children's literature from the Czech Republic. The dictionary is available either as a book or in electronic form (CD).

The first part of the dictionary offers a brief outline of a developmental phase of particular national children's literature. It represents gradual changes in the main trait of production reflecting development of the society, attitude towards children and their needs. While reading, one can realize that the books firstly focusing only on religious, moral or didactic objectives have been gradually obtaining genre and thematic diversity.

The majority of the space of the lexicon is dedicated to single entries. These are not focused only on writers but they also provide additional information about literary genres (eg. fantasy), significant literary awards (eg. AA - Hans Christian Andersen Awards) or literary magazines (eg. Barnboken).

In the biographical section of each entry, we can find also correct pronunciation of a particular writer's surname. In the final part of the dictionary, also alphabetically arranged, there is a list of the pronunciation of difficultly articulable first names. This list was created as a reflection to the fact that a lot of names is pronounced incorrectly (eg. Tolkien [tolki:n]). Therefore, we consider the transcribed pronunciation as a very important act popularizing such a kind of publication. Besides the dates and the places of writers' birth (possibly their death), in each writer's profile there is a brief summary of their

(often eventful) lives. As well as this, we can even find out the circumstances of particular writings creation. Contents of the writings is included as well. Each entry is followed by bibliographical compilation of writers' work with Czech translation of the titles. The writings having been translated into Czech and Slovak are highlighted by italics. Information about theatre or film adaptations is included as well.

The lexicon gives us information not only about intentional literature (meant to be written especially for children) but also about writers originally producing books for adults (eg. J. Verne, J. Swift) that, through the time, became the field of interest of young readers as well.

Owing to attractive introductory texts and readably approached entries we can realize that even children's literature had different purposes, such as religious, ideological, then it was propaganda, it had to be morally unoffending, and politically correct. It was also subordinated to censorship. On the other hand, it destroyed taboo and overcame the borders of fantasy.

We believe that this dictionary will be valued not only by experts or students but also by library staff, cultural institutions and various kinds of teachers. It might be them who will introduce this unique dictionary to their students and will lead them to an idea how to use it properly. After all, they were meant to be the main readers.

Mgr. Lukáš HOLČÁK