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**Review of Elena Paruolo, *Le letterature per l'infanzia: ne parlano Peter Hunt, Jean Perrot, Dieter Richter, Jean Foucault, Anne Fine, Sandra Beckett*, Roma, Aracne, 2014**

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One of the books that rolled off the academic presses as the millennium approached was Susan Ang's *The widening world of children's literature* (Palgrave Macmillan). Over the course of the fifteen years which have since elapsed, that «world» has continued to expand. Groundbreaking critical studies and trailblazing university courses have opened it up for us more and more, and moved it from the margins to the centre.

The world of children's literature has its Atlases, therefore, to preserve it from all that otherwise might press down upon it; and some of them are showcased in the new volume of Elena Paruolo's. What it remains very much in need of, as its width goes on increasing, are atlases to map it; and Paruolo's book performs precisely that function.

To help it do this, the book has a northern and a southern hemisphere. The first part attempts to define key terms, to sketch genealogies, skilfully circumnavigating the masses of material now available to students of children's literature. These chapters are allowed to find their own length, and are as succinct when running to fourteen pages as when limiting themselves to one page only. They interlock, too, to make this first part of the book a useful reference work.

That interlocking carries over into the second part of the volume, made up of six substantial and absorbing contributions (four interviews and two prepared submissions)

from leading figures in the field. This enables positions which were discussed in the opening chapters, such as that of Paul Hazard (32-4), to be put here to the likes of Peter Hunt (192), Dieter Richter (258-9), and Sandra Beckett (311-12). Their perspectives, and those of the other scholars featured, combine into a rich and revealing picture of the critical investigation. Paruolo's sharp but sensitive questioning, in all of the transcribed interviews, is such as both to bring out some key differences between the various contributors and to stake out some very firm common ground from which research in children's literature can now confidently expect to move forward.

Even though the kind of resource which has been assembled here would seem to deserve an index, and this lacks that, the in-text cross-referencing is scrupulous; the first mention of Tolkien's «eucatastrophe,» for example (50-51), duly directs the reader to the more detailed discussion which follows eight chapters later (106-8). Thanks to Paruolo's careful signposting, therefore, here is a widening world which – like Pope's mighty maze – is not without a plan.