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Landscapes of Childhood in Modernist Short Story

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Introduction

This volume of *in esse: English Studies in Albania* collects papers presented at the 14th ESSE conference held in Brno, the Czech Republic, between 29 August – 2 September 2018, within the seminar with the title “Landscapes of Childhood in Modernist Short Story.” Depending on their thematic scope, they are divided into two sections, titled *British and Commonwealth literature* and *American literature*.

The first section contains three contributions which focus on stories of children and/or with children written by modern British writers, namely H.H.Munro (Saki), Katherine Mansfield and Graham Greene.

In her article, Armela Panajoti from the University of Vlora “Ismail Qemali”, Albania, writes about Saki’s short story “The Toys of Peace,” which is concerned with children’s education, that is, with how to teach them peace, as approached by a mother and an uncle, the mother’s brother, through their peace toy experiment. Despite their effort to “indoctrinate” the kids with peace, the kids outwit them by proving that the history of mankind has more stories of war to tell than stories of peace. By declaring the experiment a failure, the two adults admit that the child world is wiser than they think it is and that the question of how to teach children is still a moral dilemma.

Janka Kascakova from the Catholic University in Ruzomberok, Slovakia, and Palacký University, Olomouc, Czech Republic, in her paper “Eating the banks away”: The Conflict between the Traditional and the Modernist in Katherine Mansfield’s New Zealand Stories’ explores the relationship between Kezia, an unconventional child with an artistic drive appearing in several of Mansfield’s New Zealand stories, and her unmarried maternal aunt, Beryl, and reads it symbolically as a representation of the conflict between the modernists and the traditional writers.

The contributions in the second section explore mainly issues of race from the innocent child perspective. Two of the contributions discuss stories by William Faulkner and one a story by Kay Boyle.

Šárka Bubíková from the University of Pardubice, Czech Republic, focuses on the issue of race in some of Faulkner's short stories of coming of age and loss of innocence, as an important factor for young teens entering adulthood. This process is set against the Southern traditional background governed by the codes of honor and Christian morality.

In her paper, Nina Moroz from Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia, takes another view of the representation of children in Faulkner's fiction, that is, fantasy. It discusses *The Wishing Tree* (1927), making use of biographical elements and also of the parallels the work allows for from other works of fantasy in literature. It ends by looking into the opposition between desire and renunciation in *The Sound and the Fury* and *The Wishing Tree*.

Amy D. Wells from Université de Caen Normandie, France, resumes the interest in discussing racism from a child's perspective. It focuses on Kay Boyle's short story "White as Snow" and draws on the symbolic dichotomy black-white to uncover through the episode of entry ban to the cinema of nanny Carrie all the implications related to her skin colour. Narrating the story from a child's perspective helps the author denounce racism and draw attention to inequality.

In the end, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all our contributors for sharing their views and ideas in this volume. Special thanks also go to our reviewers for their tireless work in selecting and reviewing the contributions for this volume.

Armela Panajoti and Janka Kascakova, co-editors