Panel 11: Versions of Anne

Tuva Haglund, Diana Barry 2.0: Reimagine the Bosom Friend in Anne with an E and Its Fandom

L. M. Montgomery’s books about Anne Shirley are classics among girls’ literature. Throughout the twentieth-century new generations of readers have found their ways to engage with her fictional world. How a story resonates differently in different times is partly captured in adaptations. In the case of Anne of Green Gables there have been several, and my paper will discuss the latest, namely the Netflix-production Anne with an E (2017–2020). Like many other tv-shows for young adults a significant part of the storytelling in Anne with an E takes place within fan communities in social media. In fanfiction and fanart the audience transform and add content to the original story, often with contemporary interests in focus. The narrative strategies fan-readers use to expand on the storyworld, have influenced today’s media and popular culture, and Anne with an E is a good example of this. Creator Moira Walley-Beckett adds new elements and characters to, in her own words, “explore important, contemporary themes” that will resonate with the intended audience. Topics such as queer identities, genderfluidity, racism and women’s rights are addressed explicitly, often in obviously anachronistic ways. I will use the context of fandom to examine the chain of transformation from book to adaptation to fan work (more exactly fanfiction from Archiveofourown). The analysis will focus on Diana Barry, one of the original character that is radically rewritten in the tv-show. Walley-Beckett expands on the traditional “good girl” that Diana represents, by exploring themes like class, education and empowerment, a negotiation that continues in the fandom. Looking at these different interpretations of Diana, I hope to show how a contemporary audience make Diana relevant for them.

Tuva Haglund is a PhD student at Uppsala University. Her research project focuses on the fandom surrounding The Engelsfors Trilogy (2011–2013), a Swedish fantasy series by Mats Strandberg and Sara Bergmark Elfgren. Of particular interest to her work is the fans’ own creative works, which constitute a significant part of their social interaction.

Irina Levchenko, Formula and Feminist Impulses in the Russian Translations of Anne of Green Gables

Many classic Anglo-American stories for girls, including the internationally beloved Anne series by the Canadian author L.M. Montgomery, were first published in Russia only in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union when translated literature was used to build new identities and a new literary canon (Hellmann 2012). This included introducing new literary role-models for girls, which would be different from those of the Soviet times (Batishcheva 2005).

Montgomery writes about a woman’s place in society in a complex way: working within the restrictive formula of the genre domestic romance she had to conform to the conventional
expectations of her publishers and audiences, but she also subtly employed feminist strategies to challenge the patriarchal authority and traditional views (Rubio 1992).

The six Russian translations of *Anne* deal with these tensions between the traditional formula and feminist impulses in totally different ways: Batishcheva (1995) translates as literally as possible while remaining ambivalent about the position of women, Bobrova (2000) emphasises Anne’s rebellious spirit, Enas (2008) includes *Anne* in their series of girls’ books to promote “eternal” values, Ezdra (2013) rewrites Anne to preach a religious lesson, Ranok (2017) adapts the novel for younger girls and two 1990s publishers even sell sequels about the grown-up Anne as trivial romances.

I analyse this variety of interpretations within the framework of Descriptive Translation Studies. According to Andre Lefevere (1992), translation strategies are determined by two factors: the translator’s ideology and the poetics dominant in the receiving literary system at the time the translation is made. Using this approach, I explore how the different ways of translating and marketing *Anne* reflect the tensions between conservative and feminist values in post-Soviet Russia as well as different perceptions of the genre girls’ books and its function in the Russian literary system.

Irina Levchenko is a PhD candidate at the University of Vienna and a literary translator. In her doctoral thesis she explores the translations and reception of Montgomery’s work in Russia, focusing on ideological and poetical reasons behind various translation strategies and reception patterns. Her main professional interest lies with translating picturebooks and children’s fiction. She works with various Russian publishers and has translated several children’s books and other titles from German and English into Russian.

**Natália Dukátová, Meaning of “Girlhood” in Slovak Children’s Literature of Communism**

Being a small country, Slovakia always depended not only on domestic book production, but also on translations, which over the years formed and completed the picture of Slovak children’s literature. When a translation of a book such as *Anne of Green Gables* arrives in the literary world, its readers cannot remain the same as before. In 1959, a Slovak literary journal criticized children’s literature for girls, depicting the lack of any patterns and “treasures.” In the same year, the first treasure appeared in *Anne*, a book that led the way for other gems, this time finally written in Slovak, as if the authors of literature for girls suddenly knew what this concept encompasses and what it should look like.

In 1963, four years after the release of *Anne*, one of the Slovak popular books, called *Jedina* (*The Only One*), was published. This book is about a 15-year-old girl hitting puberty who talks about her everyday experiences and troubles. It uses first-person narrative and depicts a girl who is sensitive, a little unbalanced, talks back, sometimes misbehaves, and is opinionated, yet caring and smart. The novel was a huge success, which demonstrated the equal position of children’s literature for girls; a positive heroine is necessary, important, and does not have to exist only in the background.
A lot changed after this book and the new era of children’s books began. Works about girls stopped being taboo, and many excellent books were written. In 1967, the only publishing house in Czechoslovakia funded a new imprint called “Čajka (Dove),” (Schmidova-Hornisova, Bibliografia prudukcie vydavatelstva Mlade leta za roky 1950–1969, 517-21) specializing in girl’s literature. While the generations before Anne did not read anything that would help them to move forward, the generations after Anne grew up in the boom of quality girls literature.

Natália Dukátová is a PhD candidate at the Institute of World Literature, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, 2014–present.

Anette Svensson, Politicizing Anne: Literary Adaptations and Girls’ Literature

Anne of Green Gables by L. M. Montgomery is a classic piece of youth literature often referred to as girls’ literature. Anyone who has read the novels about Anne from Avonlea has been introduced to a beautiful Canadian landscape. First published in 1908, the story has been adapted into films and tv-series several times, most recently into the tv-series Anne with an E, currently on its third season. Taking a closer look at various fan productions, Jenkins (1992) claims that they are created not only in relation to a source text, but also in relation to other fans. Though not a fan production, the tv-series Anne with an E, shares traits with fan productions since this adaptation is created not only in relation to the source text, Montgomery’s series of novels, but also in relation to numerous fans of these novels. Discussing fan fiction in particular, Jenkins describes fans’ treatment of the source text as “stretching its boundaries to incorporate their concerns, [and] remolding its characters to better suit their desires” (1992, p.156). The aim of this study is to analyse the most recent adaptation of Anne of Green Gables, the tv-series Anne with an E, in order to see how the story, produced for an audience in 2017–2019, is, in Jenkins’ words, ‘stretching its boundaries to incorporate their concerns’ by providing the audience with representations of stronger women and by re-claiming a place in the literary tradition for homosexual characters who have been marginalized or silenced in classical literary texts including Montgomery’s Anne of Green Gables. Using a theoretical framework of transmedia storytelling and a close-reading method of analysis, the study shows that Anne with an E, though following the basic plot of Montgomery’s novel, contributes to a more politicized version of the story as it brings up themes of women’s fight for equal rights and homosexuality.

Anette Svensson is Associate Professor in Literature Teaching & Learning and Senior Lecturer in English Literature at The School of Education and Communication at Jönköping University. Her current research projects concern Literature Teaching and Learning with a specific focus on the use of multimodal narratives in Literary studies.