

Monika Woźniak

Sapienza University, Rome (Italy)

Coming out: LGBT topics in the Polish literature for young adults

Among many changes that have taken place in Polish literature for young readers after the political turn in 1989, one must point out its opening up to the topics considered difficult and mostly avoided in the communist period: illness, homophobia, child's abuse, trauma etc. Nevertheless, up to this day remarkably few Polish authors have been willing to measure themselves up with LGBT themes in the books for children and teenagers. It may be related to the fact that in spite of slowly changing social norms, the taboos and prejudices related to LGBT issues are still quite strong in Poland and the attempts to introduce them into the literature for young readers, especially within educational context, have provoked several times a negative, or even aggressive reaction among outraged parents, educators and politicians. The controversy is certainly more prominent as far as the books for children are concerned, but the shortage of Polish LGBT novels for teenagers indicates that the problem lies also with the writers who find it difficult to change their own mental attitude to the tabooed issues. Putting the LGBT topics into the context of audience studies, I will consider different channels of access to them, open to young readers in Poland (translations, foreign fiction, internet, fanfictions, manga). I will then examine novels: *Musisz to komuś powiedzieć* by Barbara Ciwoniuk (2010), *Koniec gry* by Anna Onichimowska (2012) and Natalia Osińska's *Fanfik* (2016), *Slash* (2017) and *Fluff* (2019), looking into different ways these books deal with LGBT theme. These differences, in my opinion, reflect the struggle to overcome the traditional approach to the "controversial" topics in the literature for young readers.

Keywords: LGBT, young adult novel, fanfic, audience studies, taboo

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Monika Woźniak is Associate Professor of Polish Language and Literature at the University of Rome “La Sapienza”. Her research has addressed several topics in Literary Translation, Children’s Literature and Translation as well as Audiovisual Translation. She has co-authored a monography of Italian-Polish translations of children’s literature (*Przekłady w systemie małych literatur*, Toruń, 2014), has co-edited a volume on Cinderella *Cenerentola come testo culturale. Interpretazioni, indagini, itinerari critici* (Rome, 2016) and another one *Cinderella across cultures* (Wayne University Press 2016). She is a translator herself, and has translated Moravia, Eco, Camilleri in Polish and Polish classics for children, such as Jan Brzechwa, Julian Tuwim, Kornel Makuszyński and Bohdan Butenko in Italian. Recent publications:

1. *Imagining a Polish Cinderella*, in: *Cinderella Across Cultures. New Directions and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. WUSP, Detroit 2016, p. 296-316.
2. *Never ending Cenerentola: una fiaba, un meme, un'icona pop*, in: *Cenerentola come testo culturale. Interpretazioni, indagini, itinerari critici*. Lithos, Roma 2016, p. 11-28.
3. *The function of paratextual elements in Umberto Eco's "The Name of the Rose" and "Foucault's Pendulum"*. In: *The Power of Intellect. Umberto Eco: Reception and Reminiscences in Poland*, A. Gołkowski (ed.), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2015, p. 239-258. (versione aggiornata del saggio del 2012).
4. *Uno specchio deformante: le illustrazioni delle fiabe come la lettura dell'altro*, in: *La lettura degli altri*, B. Ronchetti, M.A. Saracino, F. Terrenato (eds.), Sapienza Università Editrice, Roma 2015, p. 123-142.
5. *Polishing the Grimms' Tales for a Polish Audience*, in: *Grimms' Tales around the Globe*, Vanessa Joosen, Gillian Lathey (eds.), Wayne State University Press, Detroit 2014, p. 39-58.
6. *The strange case of Kubuś Puchatek and Fredzia Phi-Phi: Polish translations of Milne's „Winnie-the-Pooh”*, in: *La Retraduction en littérature de jeunesse /Retranslating Children's Literature*, Virginie Douglas & Florence Cabaret (ed.), Peter Lang, Bruxelles, Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Oxford, Wien 2014, p.179-192.