view – scholarship and research, history and economy, local and global politics. However, the editors and authors of the *Handbook* are well aware of the truisms and clichéd approaches which Irish Studies has often been prone to and which can still arise in research devoted to Irish material and especially touching upon such topics as Irish-English and Irish-American connections – centeredness on diaspora studies, immigration, or Ireland's colonial past, to name just a few. That is why, the *Handbook* insists on diverting from well-known paths, on broadening and reshaping the concept of Irish Studies, and in doing so, renewing its discourses and methodology. The chapter that proves this point and is crucial to the volume is "Irish Studies in the Non-Anglophone World" in which Michael Cronin insists on the necessity of shifting from "diasporic to diffusive perspective on Irish culture" (33) and moving towards "transnational and translational reading of Irish experiences" (38). The chapter also draws our attention to the importance of breaking the monopoly and stepping outside the well-established realm of Anglophone scholarship. Indeed, research and material existing in languages other than English, and concerning the reception of Ireland in non-Anglophone countries remains mostly an unknown territory.

The publication of the *Handbook* is very well-timed. Being overtly self-reflective, the collection perfectly resonates with the pandemic world focused on revisionism and re-evaluation. By exploring various aspects of Irish culture and society, addressing the notions of identity, and asking questions about what "Irishness" is, each chapter tries to approach the question of what Irish Studies as a discipline is. The editors of the *Handbook* claim that "the central function of this collection is to consider how, why, and to what ends Irish Studies has changed in the years since the economic downturn" (8). However, the volume does not search for any definitive conclusions or offer a fixed paradigm of Irish Studies today. On the contrary, ending on a meditation over the pandemic and its far-reaching consequences which we cannot fully predict, but which inevitably influence the way Irish Studies will be evolving in the nearest future, the collection courageously leaps towards the next turn of the gyre. It raises new questions and opens new trajectories for the discipline, inviting further discussions, which, it is to be hoped, will soon follow.

Department of Russian and Foreign Literature   **Alla Kononova**

CORRESPONDENCE: Dr Alla Kononova, Department of Russian and Foreign Literature, University of Tyumen, Ulitsa Volodarskogo, 6, Tyumen, Tyumen Oblast, Russia, 625003. @ a.v.kononova@utmn.ru

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Tihana Klepač. *Dancing in Red Shoes: Barbara Baynton and the Australian Myth.* **FF Press, 2020. 293. ISBN 978-953-175-798-0.**

Dancing in Red Shoes: Barbara Baynton and the Australian Myth is a rare study of Barbara Baynton, a critically neglected Australian author of the turn of the twentieth century, and of her place in the Australian canon. The monograph's title reflects the key argument of Klepač's manuscript: an analysis of the ways in which women's writing from the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries made a transgressive step forward (that is, "a dance step in red shoes") into the then exclusively male canon of writers. This male canon not only marginalized women: it frequently represented them as passive observers of social and historical events while it utterly ignored women writers. Baynton,

who wrote in this age of disregard for women's writing in Australia, did not attempt to find her place in Australian literature by mimicking male writers as many of her fellow women writers were forced to do either by focusing on recognizably female themes and genres that would interest contemporary readership, or by making her transgression subtle, and therefore perceptible, so to speak, only to certain women readers. Instead, Baynton engaged in a head-on attack against the machismo myth of the articulation of Australian national identity in the period when the said Australian identity was being formulated. Her attack was so explicit that her texts could not be published in Australia, but instead had to be published in Britain. What is more, this attack laid bare the nation-making myth of this brave new world to such an extent that Australian audiences were unable to accept it until the 1970s.

The fact that even in the twenty-first century Baynton is taught exclusively within the frames of feminist criticism and women's writing, and not in the context of Australian authors that every Australian citizen should read, shows that in her writing there are still a number of provocative arguments that ruffle the feathers of Australian criticism.

Klepač's monograph includes all of Baynton's oeuvre, ranging from short stories published in the later edition of *Bush Studies* (1902), over the author's only novel *Human Toll* (1907), to her poems published in the famous Australian magazine *Bulletin* and in the only collection that gathers most of her poems, *Portable Australian Authors. Barbara Baynton* (1980). In her analysis Klepač relies on postcolonial theories, feminist criticism in the broadest sense of the term, and cultural materialism, which enables the reader to become acquainted with the socio-historical context in which Baynton wrote and to recognize her influence on the extremely patriarchal (literary) world of Australia.

Dancing in Red Shoes consists of six chapters, a preface, an introduction, and a conclusion. In To bring both Baynton and the problem of the articulation of a nation closer to the contemporary reader, Klepač's first three chapters present contemporary theories of nation and narration, as well as the ways in which these theories were adapted to the Australian context, which tended to privilege male survival in the Australian bush. The first chapter provides an overview of the contemporary theory of nation as a discursive construct, while the second chapter engages with the mythopoeia of the Australian nation and its key elements: the Great Australian Dream, the Australian type, the spell of the bush, mateship, and egalitarian democracy. The Myth's negative tendencies are discussed as well: racism and the reduction of women to the role of mothers of the nation. Both the positive and negative tendencies are also discussed in the light of the strong influence of British imperial culture and society at the end of the nineteenth century. The third chapter provides the historical, economic, racial, ethnic, gender, and other contexts that played a role in the articulation of the Australian Myth, whether they were privileged or filtered out, such as the already mentioned reduction of women and marginalization of other races.

The following two chapters, in a detailed and methodical manner, problematize the inscription of the female body into the national myth and the conditions under which the female body is semiotically shaped into almost grotesque marginal forms whose only function is to ensure male survival. The fourth chapter detects and describes the presence of the feminine in the Myth in two ways: as a woman only in the role of "God's Police," but as the "Damned Whore" when the landscape is identified as feminine. This strategy enables the "female incorporation into the Myth under the terms set out by its male proponents" (Klepač 24).

Even though the whole study revolves around Baynton, the last two chapters, in their systematic analysis of Baynton's oeuvre, reveal quite clearly the reasons for the deliberate disregard of Baynton's opus in the Australian context, despite its unquestionably high aesthetic value. It also becomes apparent why it was ignored not only at the time when it was created but also almost a century later. In the fifth chapter, Klepač traces the historical context which generated the stereotypes of femininity in Australia, concluding with the claim that women were "muted in the questions of national identity in both their lived and their written experience" (24). In the sixth chapter, Klepač juxtaposes the works of Baynton and Henry Lawson to show how they function with regard to the Myth/Counter-Myth binary and how their counter-positioning in the last decade of the nineteenth century "becomes paradigmatic of the process of formulation of national identity" (276).

Klepač's study is a valuable contribution to Australian studies because so far there have been only three studies on Baynton even though contemporary critics agree that the literary voice of this author is of the highest importance for the understanding not only of the formation of Australia but also of its present moment.

Department of English   **Vanja Polić**
University of Zagreb

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Martina Domines Veliki and Cian Duffy, Editors. *Romanticism and the Cultures of Infancy*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. xv+273. ISBN 978-3-030-50428-1

Published in 2020, the chapters making up the volume *Romanticism and the Cultures of Infancy* focus on "cultures of infancy" and their diverse manifestations in the late eighteenth andthe early nineteenth centuries. The volume's editors set the general tone by stating in their Introduction that it was during that period that "the concept of 'infancy' became across Europe a central topos in a range of different areas of enquiry, genres of cultural productivity, and national contexts" (2). Considering the generally accepted scholarly notion that childhood has been the invention of Romanticism, the inherent dynamics between the cause and the consequence of that notion, as well as its literary and non-literary appearances, is open to debate, which is the governing principle behind the chapters in the book under consideration. Furthermore, the volume's objective is not so much to clarify "the extent to which late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century cultural texts conform to either a stadial (Enlightenment) or a genetic (Romantic) configuration of infancy, but rather the extent to which such texts tend to blur or even reject that kind of dichotomy" (Domines Veliki and Duffy 13). Also, the volume aims to explore the cultural investment in infancy during the Romantic era as a way of crossing boundaries between genres and distinct contemporary disciplines and areas of enquiry, which in turn leads to a discursive and figurative embodiment of a specific epistemology of Romanticism.

Endeavouring to present an "adequate understanding of 'Romanticism'" (Domines Veliki and Duffy 14), the chapters in the volume approach the time's "cultures of infancy" as fields of heterogeneous cultural practices. The volume's first chapter, "'A detached peninsula': Infancy in the Works of Thomas De Quincey," by Domines Veliki and Duffy tracks the engagement with infancy in the autobiographical writings of De Quincey where it plays an important, albeit subversive, role. The topic of disruptive practices of infancy and the crossing of genres and disciplines are being further developed in the chapter on William Blake and infancy, "William Blake's Infant Joy," by Robert Rix. In her chapter, "The Infant,