

Local Literature in a Global World?

Catalan Literature for Children and Young People*

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This paper is part of a wider project being carried out by the Research Group Literary Education, Culture and Society, which has been subsidised by the Ministry of University of Spain. Our project's main aim is the close study of three closely interrelated phenomena, globalisation, exclusion and multiculturalism, in order to determine the influences on the children and young people Literature. We intend in this paper to show the results of a first research made in a smaller corpus in order to better draw up the entire project.

Keywords: multiculturalism, exclusion, globalisation, children and young people literature

Introduction

Catalan cultural environment is not unconnected to the problem of immigration since a lot of the immigration is concentrated on the autonomic communities which share this co-official language, that is, Catalonia, Valencia Country and Balearic Islands. From our point of view, literature for children and young people, as it is a cultural product bonded to an education (Bassa i Martín, 1994, p. 391), should reflect those phenomena and probably offer paradigms for its treatment in the classroom. Anyway, Catalan literature, as a minorised literature, would reasonably show some peculiarities that do not appear on more normalised literatures.

At any rate, it should be clarified that Catalan literature is a marginal literature, since in the latter years, the editorial industry has suffered a process of concentration of the capital, that has given rise to the creation of massive publishing companies, such as Grup 62 (Enciclopèdia Catalana), that embraces about 60% of the publishing companies in Catalan and some in Spanish, and with turnover similar to the big publishing companies that publish their materials in Spanish. Anyhow, we can still find plenty of small publishing companies, with stronger ties to the political treatment of the Catalan language than to the financial outcome.

We shall start our paper by trying to define in general terms these three concepts.

Globalisation

Globalisation is basically an economical phenomenon and as such it is pointed out by different authors (Estefanía, 2002, p. 186; Levitt, 1983; Shariff, 2003, pp. 163-178). A further definition is that of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) "the growing independency of the countries in the world, prompted by for the rise in the volume and variety of the flow of capitals, as for technology's fast and general spread" (as cited in

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Scholte, 2002). But it is not unknown to anyone that this word has other uses. If we follow Scholte (2002), we can see that the word “globalisation” usually is ascribed to four different phenomena: Internationalisation, liberalisation, universalisation and westernisation. From this writer’s point of view, the term “globalisation” does not add anything to those concepts, because they are redundant to their meanings. But, we also speak of globalisation to refer to the intuition that some situations in our environment are different and tend towards a word which is different from the one we know.

Scholte (2002) preferred to stick to the term “globalisation” for the notions of supraterritoriality and transplanetary relations.

This approach identifies globalisation as the spread of transplanetary—and in recent times more particularly supraterritorial—connections between people. From this perspective, globalisation involves reductions in barriers to transworld contacts. People become more able—physically, legally, culturally, and psychologically—to engage with each other in “one world” ... In this usage, globalisation refers to a shift in the nature of social space. (pp. 13-14)

From this point of view, the definition of globalisation makes sense, because it is related to a new phenomenon or at least to a phenomenon that has taken a different dimension in the latter years. The blurry of the spatial limits, as it was known half a century ago, influences citizenship strongly. It also influences our way of life, the conception of a reality and the production modes, including the cultural production modes.

This phenomenon can be seen as having two aspects related with children literature. One is linked to the productive methods, as some works have reflected formerly (although there are still too few of them, in our opinion). So, Lluç Crespo (2002, pp. 44-54) in Spain or Bainbridge (Bainbridge & Thistleton-Martin, 2001, p. 15) in two far away countries such as Canada and Australia, spoke about standardisation of children’s books (transnational literary phenomena, as *Harry Potter* or Disney productions; the standardisation of contents and paratexts; literature as a merchandise, not as a cultural item, etc.). Without any doubt, this perspective is very interesting and it opens a line for further investigation that will bring some indispensable results in order to understand contemporary literature for children. But our point of view is different.

What we are interested in is the globalisation of children literature as it is reflected on its contents, that is to say, how plots, characters, localisations, etc., do acknowledge this globalisation or if, on the contrary, stay aside.

In this way, we can speak about a double hypothesis. Catalan literature for children and young people has developed in a framework where defence of Catalan language and culture is of core importance in the educative environment (Bassa i Martín, 1995, p. 175; Colomer, 1998, p. 347; Valriu i Llinàs, 1994, p. 252). This being so, it is probably that the vindication of the own language in the younger readers’ literature plays a more important role and so the reflection of the globalisation phenomenon is lessened. We would then expect to find a representation of the real Catalan linguistic field which is rather idealised.

Exclusion

In other way, Catalan sociologist Castells (1998) gave a definition of exclusion that has become a classic, “The process by which certain individuals and groups are systematically barred from access to positions that would enable them to an autonomous livelihood within the social standards framed by institution and values in a given context” (p. 73).

For Castells (1998), exclusion is a phenomenon linked to the word’s evolution in the 1960s and 1970s. On the one hand, the world has experienced a rise of information technology that has revolutionised production. On the other hand, global capitalism is more flexible and is no longer attached to past bureaucracies and power

structures. Finally, many of the social and cultural movements of the late 1960s, such as women's and civil rights movements, continue to affect the social structure at the end of the millennium. Nevertheless, exclusion can be easily related to the consequences arising from economical globalisation.

But exclusion, in a broad sense, is not solely related to social exclusion, but it has to do with the sense and the perception of difference as pointed out by Sibley (1997):

Exclusionary discourse draws particularly on colour, disease, animals, sexuality and nature, but they all come back to the idea of dirt as a signifier of imperfection and inferiority, the reference point being the white, often male, physically and mentally able person. (p. 14)

When Kristeva (1997) spoke about the apparition of laws, she explained that:

Purification rights whose function is to separate this or that social, sexual or age group from one another, by means of prohibiting a filthy, defiling element. It is as if dividing lines were built up between society and a certain nature, as well as within the social aggregate, on the basis of the simple logic of excluding filth. (p. 256)

Being this so, it is easy to find the term "exclusion" associated to different mechanisms of "search for purity". We then speak of women's exclusion or ethnic and sexual minorities exclusion. In this sense, it is related to other concepts, such as xenophobia, racism, stereotypes, etc..

We would like to introduce a term coined by Adela Cortina which arose recently and that is affiliated to that of exclusion: It is *aporophobia* (Cortina, 1997).

Feeling of refusal is towards poor people, towards those who do not have a way out of their situation. It breeds on the prejudice that poor people are to blame for their own misery. This feeling subdues many behaviours that are essentially racist, xenophobic and it makes difficult not only integration, but also some politics involving realistic aid to immigrants (Martínez, 2002, pp. 17-23).

As pointed out by Cortina (1997), "we don't marginalize the immigrant because he is rich, nor the black if he is a basketball player, nor the retired with patrimony, we marginalize poor people" (p. 70).

This new word bonded Kristeva's ideas to Sibley's and explained how complicated any kind of exclusion is. In our work, we will try to explore complexity and contemplate all of the modalities within exclusion from a broad perspective.

As it was the case with globalisation, we believe that there are at least two aspects from which to study exclusion in children literature. On the one hand, we would have exclusion of authors, topics and collectives in the publishing process. We would then be speaking about a book that reflects the majority's values in a society. So, we could check the percentage of authors that come from excluded backgrounds and that are published or their protagonism in this kind of literature. In our case, the link between globalisation and multiculturalism makes us focus on immigrant population, and as noted in former works (Mínguez, 2000), the volume of publication of immigrant collective in our country is very short, and it is not tied to any process that we could point as proper from multicultural societies, since its production is really limited¹.

That takes us to another perspective of exclusion in children literature, as it might be exclusion as an integrative part in the contents, topics, and characters that reflect exclusion, plots that deal with this topic, etc.. This is the option we took for our investigation. There is a large number of investigation in the genre or children literature, we could cite Consol Aguilar (2004) in Spain or a very interesting collection from Clark and

¹ The case study of gypsies, the most representative community in the Spanish State, would carry a study that would require more time and space than what we can dispose of in this paper.

Higonnet (1999). As regards, social exclusion in general terms minorities exclusion in particular, we would refer to bibliography dealing with multiculturalism.

We can also venture a hypothesis about this phenomenon and its treatment in Catalan children literature. As a literature addressed to a public in a training process may be comprehensive with those phenomena, but may mainly show the medium class values, including the most conservative ones. That is, although there is an open-minded attitude of toleration and an educational will about exclusion in general, probably Catalan literature cannot overcome it in depth and stays within some parameters of political correctness but does not show a deep understanding of the phenomenon.

Multiculturalism

The third term in our investigation is also rather confusing. For a start, the very term to use is a complicated issue. In Europe (particularly in France, Spain and Italy), the word “interculturality” (*interculturalité*, *interculturalità*, *interculturalitat*, *interculturalidad*...) is widely used. It is usual to find this word in Irish and British bibliography, but not in American one.

Thus, Abdallah-Preteceille (2001) spoke about the differences between what she called interculturality and multiculturalism from an Anglo-Saxon origin.

There are two management models in cultural diversity: The Anglo-Saxon multiculturalism, that brings the possibility that every individual might belong to a community different from the State-Nation; and the intercultural orientation, from French influence, that has not yet given rise to official positioning or organisations, not in politics nor in education, but that represents a solid alternative to the multicultural flow. (pp. 22-23)

Abdallah-Preteceille (2001) defined multiculturalism in base to some postulated more or less agreed: The priority of the membership to a group (patchwork society), spatial localisation of differences, a complex jurisdiction that guarantees the rights of every individual, an acknowledgement of cultural relativism and the expression of differences in the public arena (pp. 22-23). Thus, following Banks (1997), a program of multicultural education that includes the following points is developed: (1) Acknowledgement and respect for ethnic and cultural diversity; (2) Social cohesion development for the principle of participation of ethnic and cultural groups; (3) Promote equality of opportunities for every individual and group; and (4) Develop and build a society on the base of dignity for every one and each of the individuals and on the basis of democracy.

Multiculturalism has been doubted about because it implies the isolation of the group, and stresses the rejection and the exclusion. A lot have been written about the simplification of a cultural fact, its reduction is some threads that cover the internal changes occurring in those cultures. But, most of all, it has been criticised because of the over-determination of cultural variables. For multiculturalism, culture is a static concept, whereas we know that cultures are dynamic, they are evolved in, interacting with the environment, and they take part in the society as a whole (Abdallah-Preteceille, 2001; Jiménez, 2004). Therefore, our conception of education is closer to what became known as “interculturalism”.

Intercultural education is, in reality, not a theory on its own, but a paradigm. It embraces diverse focuses that have three axes in common: (1) Epistemological axis: It is based on a philosophy of the individual. The person is not absolutely defined by his ethnic identity; (2) Methodological axis: The intercultural methodology tries to understand, rather than to explain; and (3) Ethic dimension axis: It poses an ethic of the otherness: everybody is different (Jiménez, 2004, pp. 131-132).

On the other hand, multicultural situation in Spain is unequal to the situation in the United States,

quantitatively and in terms of social presence. Multiculturalism, as a presence of diverse cultural groups, established with their own clear identity marks, is still rather scarce. Groups are too heterogeneous among them and with diverse motivations. Interculturalism, as a methodology, allows for a holistic approach to the other, more than the mere accumulation of facts about cultures with which we live. The ethics of otherness is in fact the approach on which we focus, where the meeting with the other is one of the fields that we try to deal with in this investigation.

Thus, we find a new dilemma for the treatment of multiculturalism or interculturalism, in the children literature, CAI (2002, as cited in Norton, 1999) put it like this: "Literature about racial or ethnic minority groups that are culturally and socially different from the white Anglo-Saxon majority in the United States, whose largely middle-class values and custom are most represented in American literature" (p. 12).

CAI's approach is not useful when it is applied to Catalan for obvious reasons. It can be, indeed, an adaptation for which multicultural literature is that one shows a polymorphic reality in our society by means of focusing on the treatment of ethnic minorities and other peoples, and cultures also acquire a broader focus respect all kinds of minorities that do not match the standards ("the white, often male, physically and mentally able person" and we may add heterosexual): women as a collective, homosexuals, elderly people, etc.. As Rochman (1993) said, "Multiculturalism means across cultures, against borders, and multiculturalism doesn't mean only people of colour" (p. 9).

We must insist on the fact that we will call multicultural literature that one specifically focuses on difference. Therefore, the apparition of an immigrant character or the words of a character about multiculturalism are not suffice as to be able to say that certain book is multicultural. These must treat the topic in a specific way and as an essential part of the plot.

This should help us to develop a first classification of multicultural books in Catalan, since we consider it of great help for most librarians and teachers, as pointed out by CAI (2002, pp. 13-15).

But from an academic point of view, we think that his approach about "reading multiculturalism" is much more interesting. We think that it shares the major part of our own methodology. CAI (2002) referred to reading multiculturalism (interculturalism, we would say) when he referred to read a book focusing specifically on cultural differences or cultural implications arising from those. So, it can be generalised with Fishman (Fishman, 1995) in that "all literature is multicultural literature" approach that opens up new perspectives, according to CAI (2002), "The view that all literature is multicultural and should be read multiculturalism opens new channels for multicultural education. Reading multiculturalism enhances our multicultural awareness and helps us see multicultural issues which were not previously apparent" (p. 14).

The multicultural stance provides the reader with an instrument, a magnifier if you will, to expose the assumptions about race, class and gender hidden in a story.

For the analyses of the works that we intend to carry, the possibility of reading interculturalism opens up the path to many didactic applications, but it also deals with the interpretation of reality offered to the reader, as we will see.

Hence, our hypothesis in this section are two: (1) Multicultural literature is actually not very relevant in the amount of Catalan books; and (2) A multicultural reading shows many interesting possibilities to re-interpret.

Our Study

To carry on this research, we analysed 20 books for children and young people published during the year of 2005, from any age range from first readers to older than 15. Our selection criteria tried to combine many

different criteria from critics and media. To achieve this goal, we selected awarded books, specially the most prestigious ones. We also selected books that appeared in major critic publications with a positive review. But finally, we had to incorporate personal criteria to complete the list of books, because the crossing of awards with good critics was not enough to offers an acceptable list of books. We tried that the books selected were selected by two different agents at least (award and critic, two different reviews, etc.). We only selected books originally in Catalan, not translations or adapted books.

We can say that the results of our first approach are quite satisfactory. In fact, all of the books studied exploit some of the items of our work or can be easily read multiculturally. But as we expected, we found very few books that can be considered multicultural literature according to our definition. This is the case of *El darrer manuscrit (The Last Manuscript)* a science-fiction book which shows a multicultural society with people from different planets sharing cities and spaces, as a metaphor of new societies. Even though the author does not speak directly about our multicultural society, the conflict between races (and the top class creatures) is a fundamental feature for the plot.

The other two books that can be considered multicultural literature do not speak neither about cultural conflicts nor about minorities, and both about elder people. *Jo, el desconegut (Me, the Unknown)* (Dalmases, 2005) speaks about a widower who was part of the Spanish resistance to Franco's dictatorship whose memory is starting to fail because of Alzheimer. A young sceptical helps him to find his older brother, lost after an action against fascists. *La història d'En Robert (Robert's Story)* (Anguera, 2005) speaks also about the Spanish civil war and the exiled Spanish people in France. Robert comes back to Catalonia and shares the experience with his grandson, born in France, who is very disappointed with his parents' decision about moving to Barcelona.

As we can see, those two books can be called multicultural if we consider the minorities as a particular culture that has to be vindicated. But, the treatment of the plot points out the loss of historical memory (especially the historical memory related with the oppression of republicans after the war) more than the elderly people dignity.

We could check only three books that pass off in a multicultural environment. But two of them do not present actual or real society, for instance, *El darrer manuscrit (The Last Manuscript)* (Galícia, 2005) (a science-fiction book) or *Un riu d'espigues (An Ears of Corn River)* (Ballart, 2005). These books are historical ones and show the culture of Iberian people (the people living in Iberian peninsula before the Roman occupation), in the middle of a very multicultural society with Romans, Carthaginian, Phoenicians, Iberians, etc.. It shows the difficult position of Iberian tribes, struggling to keep their own identity against the Carthaginians and Romans' threat. As we will discuss afterwards, they can be considered as a metaphor of Catalan people.

The third book showing a multicultural society, *Història d'amor a Sarajevo (Sarajevo's Love Story)* (Benavente, 2005), does not pass off in Catalan speaking countries neither. As we can guess by the title, it is located in the Bosnian city during the war. Jews, Muslims, Christians and Germans, Serbians, Albanians, etc., live together in a besieged Sarajevo. To understand the other is a fundamental idea for the author of this harsh novel.

There are many books with immigrants characters. In *El misteri de les quatre punyalades (The Mystery of the Four Stabs)*, the main character's friends comes from Africa though he, a professional detective, uses them as a source of information. Usually, they appear as secondary characters or as isolated phenomena with whom it is necessary to interact. For example, the protagonist of *El somni d'un cavallet de fusta (The Dream of a Wooden Horse)* is the wooden horse, but at the middle of the story, an immigrant coming from a Pacific Island

(for the author, his nationality does not matter) appears and both start to look for their dreams. The boy is losing his memories, and in his dreams, fights against the shadows to recover them.

Immigrants appear in many books but are rarely the main character. At least, we may say that they do not appear as an evil character at all. We did not find any book with an immigrant as antagonists and they usually do not play a negative role.

For topics related with the project, we selected a list of 13 (acculturation, identity, globalisation, racism, xenophobia, etc.) that could appear in books. Among them, the most used one is without a doubt, acculturation and identity. That would not be surprising in a minorised culture like the Catalan one. In fact, many books represent a vision or revision of the acculturation process suffered by Catalan speakers, naturally in a symbolic way. Actual literature differs from 1970s and early 1980s productions. Probably, that is not a searched feature but we cannot help, for example, reading *Un riu d'espigues*, and the threat of Romans and Carthaginian as a metaphor of the advance of Spanish culture over Catalonia and the other Catalan speaking countries.

Very often the identity vindication, showed by the opposite way, means that we call the “overcatalanisation” of contents. Spanish features are somehow hidden or ignored: All the characters have a Catalan name, they speak Catalan and Spanish only appears anecdotally. We can notice also the creation of an ideal world very Catalan (or Valencian). In *La història d'En Robert*, the story is partly based on a small village in the Pyrenees and the author tries to recreate accurately the customs and uses of this time, specially the language that is used by country people. It gives a good value to the book but seems to be like a lost paradise (Catalan paradise).

Another kind of paradise is showed in *Les costures del món (The World Sewings)*. It is set in a small village in the heart of Valencian country. The Quasis, small creatures, who live under the ground, are in danger because they have to sew the world's sewings and their tailor runs away with their special and luxurious needles. Anyway, what we would like to stress on, is that everything happens in a world without Spanish, immigrants or language conflicts at all. Children eat traditional food cook by the grandmother and follows traditions like having picnic in Easter holidays. Of course, that is neither unreal nor impossible, but is quite curious to find very often this kind of treatment of daily life in Catalan literature for children and young people.

As we said before, more than 90% of names are Catalan names (it is very usual to have a Spanish name in Catalan speaking countries), all the characters speak Catalan (Spanish is the main language in big cities and towns), characters rarely use non-standard words or expressions, and their Catalan is always perfect.

That is a very important point, because we are also speaking about standard. The language's standard, by instance, is an actual struggle in Catalan, Valencian and Balearic societies. The conquer of pure Catalan has been a main scope from the beginning of “Renaixença” (the starting of Catalan language vindication as a national language). So, it is important to use and show (mainly for children) a language without barbarisms, and other kind of mistakes. In the same way, but literally speaking, it is important to find a literary standard for Catalan literature. Nobody is surprised when an exotic character speaks English in an English novel, because the standard is fixed and normalised. An exotic character speaking Catalan seems strange for Catalan readers, probably because the real society is different, and normalisation of Catalan language is not still complete. Usually, the narrator gives some explanations about why this foreigner can speak perfect Catalan.

In any case, we think this peculiarity of Catalan literature for children probably can be related with globalisation. Concretely with the opposite reaction to globalisation, what some authors call “glocalisation” (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2001; Castells, 1998) or in a slightly different meaning (Featherstone, Lash, & Robertson,

1994). For the first authors, “glocalisation” means a reconsideration of local in a global world, whether for most sociologists the word refers to a necessary interrelation between global and local. We mostly refer to a tendency to look and recreate the local instead of the global. But the local is not real; nor the global, both coexist and interact.

Overcatalanisation is some kind of hypertext created over the real world which surpasses the borders of likeliness, and probably creates in the reader a feeling of falseness. We may go deeply in this topic to assure our statements, but nowadays, we have checked many times the distinction among children and young people between *Book of Catalan* (standard books, compulsory in school) and other books, which can be in Catalan or in Spanish.

Apart from this particular way of treatment, globalisation hardly appears in other books. The only book which speaks directly about the science-fiction *El darrer manuscrit (The Last Manuscript)*, speaks about multinationals and their power in future societies. Besides, some characters or plots show very tangentially features of our modern world: the worldwide demonstration against Iraq war (*Jo, el desconegut*), the international intervention in Bosnian war (*Història d'amor a Sarajevo*), and so on.

Changing to another subject, we would like to focus on the “encounter with otherness” as a crucial point of view in order to read literature multiculturally. “Otherness” is a common resort in literature for children and young people, especially as an embodiment of evil. Consequently, it appears almost in every book we studied.

In general, we could say that this encounter is positive and collaborative for both parts in our corpus, probably because of the relationship between children literature and education we spoke about before. There is a positive negotiation, but usually the dominant part imposes its values upon the dominated part, the dominant descend from its tower of power and collaborate with the dominated part.

That is also the case of novels about old people, where young people decide to help the elder as a result of a good knowledge of their livings. Also in a situation of cruel war, Selma, the Bosnian girl, starts his relationship with the Serbian Petar with indifference and finish with love. *Història d'amor a Sarajevo (Sarajevo's Love Story)* is plenty of stories of dangerous encounters and with this background the love story between Selma and Petar becomes more valuable.

In other cases, the excessive infantile representation of the other can become a sign of charity, not a sign of understanding of diversity. In *Mei-Mei vol ser rei (Mei-Mei Wants to Be a King)* (Viana, 2005), we find a princess (not a prince) looking for the parents' crown who was stolen by a dragon (Mei-Mei) some years ago. To defeat Mei-Mei, the princess uses some tricks like tickling him behind the ears, dancing ballet or singing a lullaby. The ferocity of dragon is reduced to a joke, and he seems a child rather than a ferocious beast. After the princess' victory, the dragon admits he wanted to be the king “of something: clouds' king, hairdressers' king, beauty's king, butterflies' king”. In this case, the searching for a politically correct solution shows a vision of the other quite humiliating. Finally, the real king decides to lend the crown to Mei-Mei for the time he is living in the palace.

In *El mur i el dragó (The Wall and the Lizard)* (Prats, 2005), a lizard decides to help a wall to relieve its loneliness. He attracts a lot of people to the wall which looks much better with children, bugs and paintings. But this friendship seems to be superficial, because at the end the lizard goes to another wall to help it in the same way.

On the other hand, we also found books who show an “integrative interculturality”, like *L'herència (The Heritage)* (Cela, 2005) where a cat living alone, has to take care of a couple of mice, his enemy's children. In a long letter, the mouse explains that he has always thought that he was not a bad cat, and because of that, he decided to send his sons to the cat house. The cat has to learn to live together with a different culture: mice eat different, act different, and above all, are the natural food of cats!

Very often, encounters are a source of disapproval and confrontation. In *Volem que tornin les vaques*

boges (*We Want the Crazy Cows Back*) (Arbat, 2005), the happiness of cows is misunderstood and his shepherd decide to leave the village. In *El somni d'un cavallet de fusta* (*The Dream of a Wooden Horse*), the wooden horse is abandoned by his owner, after a short adventure. The wooden horse is looking for the dream of running fast to the horizon and nobody understands him.

It is also worth mentioning the meeting with women, especially in young people's books. In many instances, those women respond to the stereotype of "femme fatale", as an instance, the women in *El darrer manuscrit* (*The Last Manuscript*) who dominate the protagonist thanks to their attractive personality. Generally speaking, male protagonists (the vast majority, including animals and fantastic beings, all of them being male), react clumsily when there are women involved, as if the relation with the other gender could never be natural. Sometimes, the vision of gender relations is extremely sexist as in the case of *Capità i el gos orgullós* (*Capità and the Proud Dog*) where the main character tries to convince his handicapped friend not to try to become friends with a female dog of upper class because that relation could never work. She is out of his reach. Then he recommends to try an uglier dog, which would be more suitable and more realistic given his possibilities. At the end of the book, his friend finds a girlfriend (dogfriend) "quite ugly, with one dropping ear and the other one right, but more friendly than a mushrooms omelette". A handicapped dog, just can be happy with a handicapped dog. This is not only about to treat women as an object, but also of disdain of human characteristics of handicapped people, that is to say, handicapped person as a human being and not as the carrier of a handicap.

We would like to finish this part of analysis with a reflection about illustration. We found a few features to speak about from the point of view of globalisation, exclusion or multiculturalism. But there is a topic that, probably, can not be rejected. We will be speaking about two books that represent opposite problems as regards of illustration. In the case of *Ens barregem* (*We Mingle*) (Juanolo, 2005), the book's contents show a multicultural society where people mingle with each other. However, to show this mingling the illustrator uses stereotyped images of these different people: Catalan or Andalusian people with folkloric dresses, Arabian with turban, black people with long hair and African dresses, etc.. Of course, illustration needs special mark to denote the cultural features of characters, but the final result is a stereotype.

On the other side, we found *El nen que feia pondre el sol* (*The Boy Who Made the Sun to Set*) (Pastor, 2005). This dull story with any multicultural content, shows foreigners in illustrations of all pages what give a multicultural touch to the book. Comparing the treatment of illustration in both books, we can suspect that pictures can be dealt in two opposite directions: books with a multicultural content that loss part of this multicultural worth because of bad illustrations, and books without multicultural content that can gain it by good illustrations.

Conclusions

This paper is only a first approach to the topics we showed previously, but we think it is possible to suggest some provisional conclusions about globalisation, exclusion and multiculturalism in literature for children and young people.

About globalisation, we can state that Catalan literature lives in a process of localisation. Instead of speaking about the global world, writers prefer to write about their own world and the life-style we are losing (probably because of globalisation). That also means that writers show an overcatalanised world when looking for a literary standard. But it is almost inevitable that this resource clashes with reality. We have the impression that the way Catalan writers want to speak about globalisation is, in fact, to ignore it and to go on in landscape, ways of living, etc., that are disappearing step by step.

In the case of exclusion, Catalan literature for children and young people is interested in exclusion, as it was predictable. This literature is still related to the school and exclusion is part of the curriculum. However, it shows medium class values, including the most conservative ones. Exclusion is interesting but not as a main subject of books that prefers to deal with other easier subjects closer to the theoretical children sensibility. Sexism and gender exclusion appear usually not in the traditional but in a subtler way. As we saw before, male characters are the majority and women appear in their role of seductress people who becomes the guide of men.

And finally, multicultural literature is actually not relevant to the amount of Catalan books. Only some characters, usually in secondary roles, come from other countries or can be taken as a representation of a minority. That is probably connected with the localisation we speak before. It is more interesting for Catalan writers to write about the country they would like to have, than about the country they are having. In contrast, a multicultural reading shows many interesting possibilities to re-interpret the plot, specially the encounter with otherness. Any kind of otherness is represented in a positive way. We think the research from this point of view can give very interesting results in the future.

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