

SHAVIT, Zohar. *Poetics of children's literature*. Georgia, 1986. 200p  
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Shavit (Tel Aviv University) confronts the literary limbo in which children's literature has traditionally been placed because of the expectations of adult society. Children's books must provide wholesome moral nourishment for the young, with no complicated narrative structures, difficulties in language, or adult ambiguities and complex ironies. Shavit, concerned with typical literary strategies of writers for children and how these techniques respond to adult social pressures, does not attempt a full history of the literary reputation of children's literature, yet she provides a broad and illuminating social context for the particular examples chosen: *Little Red Riding Hood*, Roald Dahl, Lewis Carroll, the Enid Blyton and Nancy Drew series, translations of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Hebrew children's literature, and 18th-century chapbooks. Shavit does not supplant Gillian Avery (*Nineteenth Century Children*, London 1965) nor John Rowe Townsend (*Written for Children*, 1967), but she pinpoints the theoretical issues that earlier scholars have only alluded to. Though Shavit's critical terminology is at times ponderous and repetitive, this is a coherent study, with thorough documentation, and bibliography. It will be useful for graduate students and upper-division undergraduates.—C. Rees, *University of Connecticut*

