

MARY POPPINS: THE SUBVERSIVE EDUCATOR OF HER AGE

Renáta MAROSI¹

ABSTRACT

Mary Poppins has become popular because of her exceptional personality and extraordinary teaching methods. P. L. Travers's Victorian governess can be decoded as a rebellious female educator, who subverts the traditional teaching methods of her age. Since the twentieth century, drama pedagogy has been making similar efforts to popularize a student-centred education, and to ensure a connection between art and education in order to improve the latter's quality and to facilitate learning success among students as far acting, dancing and singing in the classroom are concerned. In this sense, Mary Poppins with her educational approach prefigures not only a twenty-first century teacher of drama pedagogy but also a successful positive psychologist and educator of experience pedagogy. The aim of the work is to examine Mary Poppins's teaching methods from the perspective of these scientific fields and connections between art and education.

KEYWORDS

Mary Poppins, education, drama pedagogy, experience pedagogy, positive psychology, art, subversion.

INTRODUCTION

Gaining students' attention and interest has never been an easy task. Yet, for centuries, pedagogy has been making efforts to effectively and actively involve students in the lessons. The previous years have been proven even more difficult when due to the COVID-19 pandemic, "the virtual and the real world in education intertwined in the phenomenon known as teaching online" [22: 239]. Taking into account an optimal teaching environment, a number of methods and aids help to maintain the learners' interest. For example, using audio-visual media and a story-based (or "fictional narrative-" based) video game in education might be fruitful approaches [30: 233; 31: 117]; furthermore, making use of digital technology and portable devices such as "the Internet, the interactive whiteboard, tablets and smartphones" is also a popular way of activating learners [23: 57]. Last but not least, art such as literature, fine art and performing art easily connects with education as well. Since "the use of arts in subjects will make it possible to teach students more coherently and effectively" [5: 59].

A result of this cooperation is for example drama pedagogy, which has been defined by many scholars. First of all, drama can be explained as a blanket term covering "a wide range of oral activities that have an element of creativity present" [6: 87]. Furthermore, in Susan Holden's opinion, "drama is concerned with the world of 'let's pretend'; it asks the learner to project himself imaginatively into another situation, outside the classroom, or into the skin and persona of another person" [6: 87]. Drama activities "increase self-expression and creativity, they provide a framework for communication and they develop confidence and are motivating.

¹ Renáta Marosiová, Mgr. J. Selye University, Komárno, Faculty of Education, Department of English Language and Literature, marosiovar@ujs.sk

Drama provides space for physical involvement and gives learners the chance to be actively involved in learning – not just mentally, but also emotionally and physically” [21: 41].

Drama activities however differ from theatrical performance in a way that students make use of its technique for educational purposes. Accordingly, singing, dancing (as forms of performative art), and fine art aim at teaching something – be it a specific grammar rule on an English lesson, a particular way of thinking on ethics or literature, and a certain way of solving problems and releasing tension within homeroom.

Literature has always reflected on the current happenings of its period: on politics, philosophy, social conditions, popular culture and last but not least on actual educational trends. As far as the focus of the present work is concerned, the *Mary Poppins* books offer a literary example of how children should be taught in a funny and entertaining way. Thus the book joins a literary tradition that depicted progressive teaching methods – differing from their own ages. Literary (mostly maternal) characters that teach with non-traditional ideas have been found in children’s literature since the seventeenth century.

The Depiction of Educational Theories in Children’s Literature

“Mitzi Myers argues that a new type of protagonist had arisen at the end of the Enlightenment: the mother as an educating heroine...These educating heroines are piercingly intelligent, benevolent, stern, and emotionally distant figures of authority, and they appear in a wide range of genres, from poetry and epistolary fiction to novels and didactic drama” [20: 27]. These texts depict a mother and a daughter/a son who take a walk together, and the mother uses the child’s interest in the world around her/him as an opportunity for teaching. Among the examples are Anna Barbour’s *Lessons for Children* (1778) and Maria Edgeworth’s “The Purple Jar” (1796). All in all, the eighteenth-century pedagogy assumed that “children are physical creatures whose habits and sensibilities develop through interactions with their environment, and the best way to shape a child’s development is by manipulating and carefully structuring this environment. The importance of the mother as an inculcator of the child’s first sense impressions is undeniable” [20: 28]. Play became an important teaching strategy and was recognized as such in works of education throughout the long eighteenth century [20: 30]. For example, in “The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes” (1765), Margery Meanwell teaches reading to children by having them play a game in which they create words out of wooden alphabet blocks. Also, Dorothy and Mary Ann Kilner’s *Poems on Various Subjects, for the Amusement of Youth* (cc. 1783) opens with a long poem depicting children who amuse themselves by playing a word game.

In the nineteenth century when children’s literature flourished, the Victorians continued spreading progressive ideas about children and education. As Colin Manlove explains, “traditional and the literary fairy tale gradually became accepted over the nineteenth century as a source of imaginative enrichment” [17: 18]. Interestingly, fantasy literature as a genre was not known at that time, and such works were simply called fairy tales. Indeed, the female characters of these fantasy literary works emphasised the importance of imagination, and they educated their charges. Among such guiding figures were: George MacDonald’s North Wind (from *At the Back of the North Wind*, 1868), Charles Kingsley’s Doasyouwouldbedoneby (from *The Water Babies, A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby*, 1863) and Dinah Mulock’s godmother from “The Little Lame Prince and his Travelling Cloak” (1874). Whilst making the heroes explore their environment, the wise but strict mother figures aid in getting to know themselves, enrich their personality, and live their lives to the fullest.

Mary Poppins, the magical governess, as the Banks children’s tutor and guide, could be considered as the ‘daughter’ of these female characters. As the reader will see, she shares the eighteenth-century educational theories about experience-centred teaching methods, and at the

same time emphasises the importance of imagination, creativity and personality fulfilment. She does that by incorporating various forms of art (dancing, cooperating with works of art that come alive) in her nursing. Before taking a closer look at her methods, the following sub-chapter introduces Mary Poppins and her connection with art in short.

A Brief Overview of Mary Poppins

Mary Poppins's character has been known worldwide since Walt Disney's film adaptation, which was released in 1964, and its reputation has only been risen since its sequel, *Mary Poppins Returns* came out in 2018. Despite its popularity, as Travers said of the first film, although "it was a colorful entertainment, it was not true to their meaning" [16: 51]. Mary Poppins's character has thus been relegated into a simple fairy godmother or entertaining magical governess. Nevertheless, what both the films and the original novels shed light on is the magic governess's valuable presence in the family as a subversive educator, whose teaching methods both entertain and educate her charges and make order in the family.

Mary Poppins was created by the Australian author, poet and essayist, P. L. Travers (born as Helen Lyndon Goff). All in all, the author wrote eight books of the magic nanny from 1934 to 1988. In order of publication, these are the following: *Mary Poppins* (1934), *Mary Poppins Comes Back* (1935), *Mary Poppins Opens the Door* (1943), *Mary Poppins in the Park* (1952), *Mary Poppins from A to Z* (1962), *Mary Poppins in the Kitchen* (1975), *Mary Poppins in Cherry Tree Lane* (1982), and *Mary Poppins and the House Next Door* (1988). *Mary Poppins from A to Z* includes twenty-six vignettes one for each letter of the alphabet whereas *Mary Poppins in the Kitchen* shares recipes. All the books were illustrated by Mary Shepard, the daughter of Ernest Howard Shepard, the illustrator of the *Winnie-the Pooh* books and *The Wind in the Willows*. Travers's editor was Peter Llewelyn Davis, who was one of the Lost Boys befriended by J. M. Barrie, the writer of *Peter Pan*, one of Travers's favourite children's books [9: 190].

With her full and at once empty carpet bag and with her talking and flying parrot-headed umbrella, the austere, strict, distanced and mysterious governess pops in to 17 Cherry Tree Lane, to the home of the chaotic Banks family in order to educate and raise the noisy, curious and imaginative Jane and Michael, the twins John and Barbara and later the little Annabel Banks, who are the children of the "fragile and hesitating" Mrs Banks [16: 4] and the always complaining, busy and dreamy Mr Banks. The journeys and adventures that the children – mostly Jane and Michael – undergo and experience with the magic governess can be classified according to three categories.

On the one hand, they get to know the world and characters of fairy tales and nursery rhymes from the tales told by Mary Poppins (e.g. in chapters such as "The Dancing Cow," "The Cat That Looked at the King" and "Robertson Ay's Story"). On the other hand, in the magic nanny's presence, the children's either primarily (everyday world) or dream world is occasionally subverted and featured by unexpected and extraordinary adventures and characters in stories such as "Happily Ever After," "Full Moon," "High Tide," "Balloons and Balloons," "Mrs Corry" and "Peppermint Horses."

The purpose of these journeys is always the same: to teach the children. More exactly, to help them to get to know their world, to enrich their personality, develop their imagination, to ease their boredom through practicing their artistic skills or making use of art. Mary Poppins artistic attitude runs in her exceptional family, so "stepping over the boundary into the world of art" is a common theme in the books [2: 65]. The nanny's cousin Arthur Turvy (who does everything the other way round on his birthday because of his godmother's spell) mends broken pieces of fine art, and once the protagonists even dance with him upside down. Fred Twigley, Mary Poppins's cousin (and Methuselah's grandfather!) is a piano tuner with whom

Mary Poppins and the children shrink and dance on a music box. Finally, Samuel Mo, her uncle, is himself embodied the children's one of favourite works of 'art' as he is made of plasticine ("Park in the Park"). It is Jane who builds Mo's plasticine park, which then comes alive and in which they take part in a party, where they are dancing and singing. Furthermore, Mary Poppins and the children even undergo experience in a painting ("Day Out") or with works of fine art which come to life: with a marble statue ("The Marble Boy") and with ceramic figures ("Bed Wednesday"). Interestingly, besides Mary Poppins there are other characters who share her ideas about the children-and experience centred education. These are the Balloon Woman and Robertson Ay. The reader will find several pieces of information about their educational ideas as well.

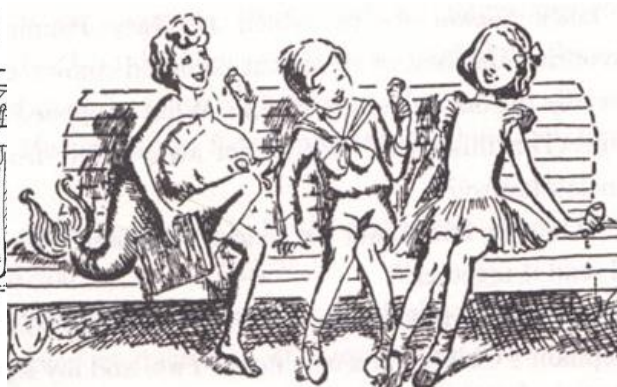


Figure 1- Dancing Upside Down with Mr Turvy Figure 2 - The Marble Boy with Jane and Michael after

Mary Poppins, the Rebellious Female Educator

Mary Poppins works with progressive methods of children's education by encouraging a child-and-game-centred teaching-learning process, which first became accepted in the late Victorian period. As Jill Barber writes, until the mid-nineteenth century, Victorian children were treated by the law as adults [1: 27], and "the free imagination was often frowned on as irresponsible and even socially dangerous" [17: 13]. In some sense, Mary Poppins maintains a traditional attitude towards children; for instance, the governess avoids spoiling her charges and makes no physical contact with them. When her protégés show any level of intimacy, Mary Poppins immediately judges their approach: "With a laugh of relief he sprang towards her, embracing her wet blue skirt. Don't grab me like that, Michael Banks. I'm not a Dutch Doll, thank you!" [25: 528]; "Is this a garden or a Jumble Sale? I'll thank you to let me go!" [25: 433]. This idea rooted in the Puritanical tradition which demanded that children should be treated with the utmost severity. It included silence during mealtimes and in bed, no playing on Sundays, the banning of illustrated books, the endless washing of bodies, and walking [25: 137-139]. Added to this, Poppins follows the concepts of Norland College School (a governess training school, founded in 1848) when she educates the children on precision, accuracy, purity and moderation. She never permits them to eat more than they need or play in dirty clothes, and the Banks children always spend their days according to a precisely planned routine.²

² read more about Mary Poppins as a subversive governess in MAROSI, Renáta's "Mary Poppins, a rendkívüli dada "felforgató" nevelési módszerei." In *Pannon Tükör*, 22//01, 2017, pp. 84-87.

The turn of the century brought changes in the way of thinking about children. For instance, in literary-artistic terms, more and more “writers and artists [such as William Blake, William Wordsworth, Charles Dickens] were producing increasingly sentimentalized images of children, emphasizing their angelic, adorable qualities [8]. Moreover, in an educational sense, from the late eighteenth century, prominent figures such as the Genevan Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose theory of education was dominated by the importance of individual experience and practical knowledge, had brought new perspective of the child and his education [18: 61-97].³ Finally, from the early twentieth-century onwards, childhood was considered a “special time”, and it was voiced that “children should be treated differently” from adults [1: 27].

Mary Poppins represents educators that supported progressive childrearing based on the intention to nurture children’s imagination. In the chapter “The Day Out”, Mary Poppins spends her day off with her friend, Bert. They step inside his picture which thus comes alive; they go on a merry-go-round and drink tea and eat cookies. When Mary Poppins returns, she says to the children that she has been to Fairyland. Jane and Michael cannot comprehend her statement as she met neither Cinderella nor Robinson Crusoe. Mary Poppins explains that it is because “everybody’s got a Fairyland of their own” [25: 29] thus pointing out the importance and individual richness of imagination.

Rousseau further stressed: “Don’t give your students any oral lessons! Do not teach other than experience!” [18: 86]⁴ or in Travers’s Balloon Woman’s words: “What’s the good of looking at a balloon? You’ve got to feel a balloon, you’ve got to hold a balloon, you’ve got to know a balloon. Coming to look! What good will that do you?” [25: 282]. Mary Poppins seems to follow this advice. The magic governess never teaches from books, but always lets Jane and Michael ask their questions about the world and find the answers through their own experiences. In this sense, when Michael wonders about the possibly existence of a celestial circus, and when Jane wants to know “What makes the star shoot” [25: 254], instead of introducing the composition and nature of celestial bodies from a book, with the help of a shooting star, Mary Poppins leads them to a celestial circus, where, within a special Geography lesson, Michael is able to take a closer look at the moon and even hold it in his own lap whereas Jane has a chance to get to know particular constellations. Similarly, when Michael is interested in “what happens in the Zoo at night, when everybody’s gone home?” [25: 104], Mary Poppins does not show the children textbooks on ethology, but with the help of an invisible voice, she leads them to the zoo, where Jane and Michael learn that everything is upside down there at night: animals are behaving like humans; they are selling tickets, talking, writing poems whereas people are spending the night in cages. Moreover, an ordinary game in the Park ends in flying on balloons and peppermint horses, their tea-time, in the sea or in the ceiling; and their regular days in the Park results in meeting fairy tale characters. Travers’s governess thus encourages playfulness and experience-centred learning. By all means, it should not be ignored that these educational methods cannot be paralleled with realistic educational situations (since in real-life, a nanny cannot produce dreams and fairy lands to raise her protégés), but her methods play a significant role in promoting and emphasizing the principles of experience-centred education and practical knowledge and in questioning the educational usefulness and effectiveness of serious Puritan textbooks.

Finally, as far as Mary Poppins’s other progressive teaching methods are concerned, as a modern storyteller, she is completely aware of the psychologically beneficial effects of fairy tales and thus consciously uses them. At the beginning of “The Dancing Cow” and “The Cat that Looked at the King,” Mary Poppins starts to tell stories in order to distract Jane’s and

³ translation is mine

⁴ translation is mine

Michael's attention from their temporary earache and toothache. The former tells the story of a cow who when dreaming about an interesting life starts dancing "wildly and beautifully and in perfect time" [25: 53]. The latter story is about a wise cat that teaches humbleness to the king and helps regain his true self. Mary Poppins knows well that old, traditional tales "for children are universal, ageless, therapeutic, miraculous, and beautiful" [29: 1]. Even if Zipes by 'therapeutic' might have suggested a psychological cure, Mary Poppins guarantees physical regeneration and enjoyment to the children of the nineteenth century hence by the end of her tales neither of the children feel pain.



Figure 3 - The Dancing Cow



Figure 4 - Inside Bert's painting

Teaching about the Wholeness of Personality with Dancing

Mary Poppins also makes use of psychological tenets in her profession – combining it with artistic elements – in order to draw the children's attention to the importance of cooperation and individuation, a psychological process, which also should be constituted an important part of education. In order to understand Mary Poppins's aim, it is a must to clarify two Jungian terms, that is Self and individuation.

The Self is the totality of the personality which embraces both conscious and unconscious personality [13: 481]. "The self, as the symbol [archetype] of wholeness [and order], is a coincidentia oppositorum, [the unity of opposites] and therefore contains light and darkness simultaneously" [13: 368]. As for the second term, in Kelly Bulkley's words, individuation is the "most important developmental process of human life, namely, the uniting of consciousness and the unconscious in a healthy, harmonious state of wholeness" [3]. Jung called it the "complete actualization of the whole human being" [13: 160]. This life-long process – alleges Marie Luise von Franz – takes place in the unconscious; it is a process by which man "lives out his innate human nature," and in which one must repeatedly seek out and find something that is not yet known to anyone. Finally, the individuation process is a unique and individual process; each individual has to achieve it by different means [26: 162-165].

As far as the significance of cooperation in the *Mary Poppins* books is concerned, Erich Neumann elaborates on the relationship between the Self and others. The psychologist notes that

The group is a living unit in which all members are connected ... [and] emotionally bound to one another through common experience, initiations, and so forth ... The unconscious psychic wholeness of the collective is experienced in the person of the Great Individual, who is at once the group self and the unconscious self of each member [19: 421, 427].

In other words, the individuation process can be considered completed only if the Self submits itself to the Whole, only if each individual cooperates and coexists with his own commu-

nity. Education and classroom-wise it means that a learner's personality can be mastered and improved to the fullest only if s/he simultaneously develops his/her social skills and learns to work in a micro society, that is when s/he is able to cooperate with his/her classmates, children of his/her own age.

As for the Banks' children's cooperation with their environment, one can find a number of events in which Jane and Michael have the opportunity to experience wholeness and unity with their community – by all means, in their dream-world initiated by Mary Poppins. Considering that the special guests of these events are the Banks children, one might draw the conclusion that to Travers wholeness is related to a pure child-like state, and thus it is also assigned to angelic attributes – which echoes the Romantics' view of childhood. This perspective corresponds to the Jungian's concept of dream according to which

[t]he main task of dreams is to bring back a sort of “recollection” of the prehistoric, as well as the infantile world, right down to the level of the most primitive instincts... That “original mind” is just as much present and still functioning in the child as the evolutionary stages of mankind are in its embryonic body [11: 98-99].

In this stage, man feels the ungraspable experience of unity with humanity and with the whole cosmos. Accordingly, the young Banks children “experience an intimate, immediate bond with the natural world whose language is by no means alien to them” [15: 94]. John Banks is complaining to the Sun that it is right in his eyes, but the star answers that this is its task, to move from East to West; Barbara and Anabel Banks are enjoying the feel of the sunshine. Annabel even gets curly hair from the Breeze, and John is complaining to the Starling that his growing teeth hurt so much. Both Barbara and Annabel give crumbs to the bird, while they all talk about everyday things and behave in a casual way with each other. In the Zoo, in their dreams, Jane and Michael “learn that animals, people, imaginary characters, and stars are all made of the same substance, and that all elements in the world can in fact communicate with and understand each other” [15: xvii]. Their teacher here is Mary Poppins's cousin, the lord of the animals' world in the Zoo, the Hamadryad who reveals to them that

[w]e are all made of the same stuff, remember, we of the Jungle, you of the City. The same substance composes us – the tree overhead, the stone beneath us, the birds, the beast, the star – we are all one, all moving to the same end. Remember that when you no longer remember me [25: 117].

Wholeness is further depicted in rituals like dancing in a ring. Jane and Michael are having fun under the sea by dancing the Sailor's Hornpipe as the fish swam round Mary Poppins in shining rings. Furthermore, in the Zoo in the so called ‘Grand Chain’, animals are singing their Jungle songs, “all forming themselves into a ring round Mary Poppins” [25: 116]. This Grand Chain (in Theosophy, an eastern branch of occultism and religion, the ‘Great Chain of Being’) symbolises the development from the least conscious to the highest consciousness [28: 108], which can be interpreted as the process of the individuation, which leads to a conscious discovery of the unconscious. Furthermore, in the celestial circus the magic nanny and the Sun, the “lord of the Stars ... King of the South and North ... and Ruler of the East and West” are waltzing with arms outstretched, opposing and mirroring each other as representatives of the earth and heaven. Mary Poppins and the children also dance in a ring when they celebrate with celestial creatures at Midsummer's Eve (in *Mary Poppins in Cherry Tree Lane*). Finally, they dance with their shadows on Halloween, which hides an important step of individuation. The Shadow is the hidden part of our personality, and in order to live happily,

one must reconcile to it [26: 168]. That is what Mary Poppins and the old candy shop owner Mrs Corry teach the children here.



Figure 5 - Dancing at Midsummer's Eve with Orion and his friends the Bear (Ursa Minor), Fox (Vulpecula), Hare (Lepus) and Gemini



Figure 6 - Mary Poppins and Mrs Corry are dancing on Halloween. Around them are other characters with their shadows.

Ex
pe-
rie

ncing the Flow with Dancing

Mary Poppins uses not only Jungian psychology to educate her charges, but she also precedes her age by sharing in advance the thoughts of positive psychology and experience pedagogy. Positive psychology is the scientific study of what makes life most worth living, focusing on both individual and social well-being. In more detail,

The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about valued subjective experiences: well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present) ... At the group level, it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic [24: 5].

As for experience pedagogy, “it is an opportunity for education and development that can bring about a positive change in people on a practical level. It relies on action and its evaluation. In experience pedagogy, experience is a tool, so learning, development is the goal of all experiences, and the feeling of joy follows.” One of the main drivers of adventure pedagogical activities is the “flow-flow experience”, as Csíkszentmihályi explained, the joyful and adventurous immersion in the activity [4: 172].

During adventures and artistic activities with Mary Poppins, Jane and Michael Banks have numerous opportunities to be ‘lost’ and immersed in the moment. They feel content about their life, and they hope that they could stay in that happy moment for ever. To mention a few examples, Jane and Michael are both enthusiastic when flying with balloons. Their wish to ride forever up in the air is also announced: “Oh, I wish we need never go down!” cried Michael; “I wish we could ride all day!” cried Jane [25: 433]. Furthermore, when dancing and celebrating the New Year with their favourite fairy tale and nursery rhyme characters which come alive in the Crack (an ungraspable place and time between the first and the last stroke of twelve before midnight), Jane happily admits that for that moment she knows that it is true that she is happy for ever [25: 472].

Jane and Michael Banks practice experience pedagogy at a group level as well. When dancing together with animals and celestial creatures and feeling oneness with them, their responsibility, civility and tolerance towards their environment has been cultivating. For example, in the Zoo, Michael, who prior to the adventure used to mistreat animals in the Zoo, learn to respect them and feel empathy for them. In a similar way, during the marine adventure, Jane reconsiders the life of sea animals and all the danger a fish has to endure under the sea.

Robertson Ay: another rebellious educator in the Mary Poppins books

It is worth mentioning that Travers dedicated the tale of “Robertson Ay’s Story” to further undermine the dominant one-sided book-based teaching of the nineteenth and of the previous centuries. Robertson Ay, the male counterpart of Mary Poppins in education and the Banks family’s caretaker, is also known in Fairyland as the Dirty Rascal whose task is to entertain and educate the king with his singing and dancing. His seemingly foolish conduct must be interpreted in a positive way when it is associated with wisdom. “Donkeys were the jester’s symbolic beast” and the donkey, “the stupidest of the beasts turns out to be the wisest according to the logic of the stories” [27: 141, 137]. Thus, foolishness and wisdom cannot be unequivocally separated from each other. When the unwise King of the Castle meets the commoner Dirty Rascal, he burns his books and begins to dance and sing. The Fool with his playfulness, lightness, practical knowledge, ingenuity and creativity helps the king open his heart and mind to a new and well-functioning learning process (singing, writing poems and stories and doing physical activities). Through singing, he gets to know the importance of identity and uniqueness (dare to be yourself!): ““A black and white Cow/Sat up in a Tree/And if I were she/Then I shouldn’t be me!””; and geography (the Earth is round): ““We won’t go round//The World, for then//We’d only come//Back Home again!”” [25: 245]. The King also learns the difference between learning and thinking, practical and factual knowledge: “Oh, I could learn/Until I’m pink,/But then I’d have/No time to think” [25: 245].

With the help of the Dirty Rascal’s methods, in a short time, the king could wisely answer the questions such as “How deep is the Sea?” – “Deep enough to sail a ship on” [25: 243]. He even criticizes professors in a song: “Chief Professor all should be Drowned in early Infan-cee” [25: 245]. Through the King’s story, Travers sheds light on further issues of education: that is the importance of focus on practical skills and the use of visual aids. More specifically, on the one hand, King Ethelbert favours playfulness and practical knowledge over dull instructions and books; in the tale, the former one was the Fool’s method whereas the latter one was used by acknowledged professors. On the other hand, the importance of using visual aids in education is emphasized, when the King admits that when saying the Multiplication Table over to himself, “while he was looking at the book everything went well, but when he shut his eyes and tried to remember them everything went wrong” [25: 240].

CONCLUSION

Theories of education have been constantly changing and improving since the age of enlightenment, when the need to look at the learning children in a new way first appeared. Literature reflected on this change throughout history. It depicted mothers as educators, other female relatives as guardians or portrayed wise governesses as P. L. Travers’s Mary Poppins. The Australian author’s magic governess enriches the life of the Banks children (Jane, Michael John, Barbara and Anabel) with her exceptional personality and subversive teaching methods. While protecting and caring about them, as a traditional governess, she plays a great role in Jane and Michael’s education. Instead of emphasizing passive knowledge acquisition,

Mary Poppins provides them with the opportunity of gaining an individual experience about their environment either on earth or in water and in the sky. Further, they learn about astronomy, ethology and geography in an interactive and exciting way. Mary Poppins, as a modern educator, knows that education can be whole only if it contributes to her charges' personality fulfilment and development of social skills. With her act of involving Jane and Michael Banks in various artistic activities and getting them acquainted with several works of art, Mary Poppins opens up the world to them. The more they cooperate with their environment, the deeper they can get to their own psyche, and the more effectively they can achieve personality enrichment and fulfilment. Therefore, Mary Poppins's teaching could be explained as a combination of education working with drama techniques and practices of positive psychology and experiential education because each care about/focus on the individual's/learner's well-being, cultivation of his/her mental, intellectual condition and emotional health, and on his/her relationship with (micro)society. To sum it up, with her progressive teaching methods, Mary Poppins as a rebellious female educator is able to help Jane and Michael Banks live 'happily ever after.'

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The paper/article was written in the framework of KEGA grant project Improving creativity and teaching English as a foreign language creatively at primary and secondary schools (Rozvoj kreativity a kreatívna výučba anglického jazyka na základných a stredných školách) Project no. 006UJS-4/2019 at the J. Selye University, Faculty of Education.

LITERATURE

- [1] BARBER, Gill. *Children in Victorian Times*. Evans Brothers Limited, 2007. 32p. ISBN 0 237 530422.
- [2] BERGSTEN, Staffan. *Mary Poppins and Myth*. Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1978. 79p. ISBN 91-22-00127-1.
- [3] BULKLEY, Kelly. "Jung's Dream Theory." In *The Encyclopedia of Sleep and Dreaming*. Edited by Mary A. Carskadon. London: Macmillan, 1993. <http://www.dreamresearch.ca/pdf/jung.pdf> Accessed 4 March 2016.
- [4] CSEHI, Agáta, KANCSZÉ NAGY, Katalin, TÓTH-BAKOS, Anita. "Experience Education to Alleviate Fears of Educator Candidates in their University Studies," pp.46-51. In *Ad Alta. Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*. 10/02, 2020. 378p. DOI: www.doi.org/10.33543/1002
- [5] CSEHIOVÁ, Agáta. "Interdiszciplináris vonatkozások a művészeti és a zenei nevelés területén," pp. 59-67. In *A SJE Nemzetközi Tudományos Konferenciája – Medzinárodná vedecká konferencia UJS. Oktatás és tudomány a XXI. század elején. Vzdelávanie a veda na začiatku XXI. storočia*. Komárom, 2014. CD-ROM. ISBN 978-80-8122-103-3.
- [6] DAVIES, Paul. "The Use of Drama in English Language Teaching." In *TESL Canada Journal/Revue TESL Du Canada*. 8/01, 1990. <https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v8i1.581>
- [7] GILLI, Giorgia. *Myth, Symbol and Meaning in Mary Poppins*. Translated by Jennifer Varney, Routledge, 2007. 178p. ISBN 978-1-138-85610-3.
- [8] GUBAR, Marah. "The Victorian Child, c.1837-1901. Representing Childhood." *Historical Essays*, www.representingchildhood.pitt.edu/victorian.htm. Accessed 15 September 2020.
- [9] HUNT, Peter. *An Introduction to Children's Literature*. Oxford UP, 1994. 241p. ISBN 9780192892430.
- [10] MAROSI, Renáta. "Mary Poppins, a rendkívüli dada "felforgató" nevelési módszerei." In *Pannon Tükör*, 22/01, 2017, pp. 84-87. epa.oszk.hu/03300/03335/00119/pdf/EPA03335_pannon_tukor_2017_1_084-087.pdf. Accessed 17 March 2017.

- [11] JUNG, Carl G. "Approaching the Unconscious," pp. 18 -104. In JUNG, Carl–VON FRANZ, Marie-Louise–Henderson, JACOBI, Joseph L., JOLANDE–JAFFÉ, Aniela (eds.) *Man and His Symbols*. New York–London–Toronto–Sydney–Auckland: Anchor Press Doubleday. 1988. 319p. ISBN 0-385-05221-9.
- [12] JUNG, Carl G. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Edited by Aniela Jaffé. Translated by Richard Winston–Clara Winston. New York: Vintage Books. 1965. 300p. ISBN 9788520932193. <https://archive.org/details/MemoriesDreamsReflectionsCarlJung/Memories%2C%20Dreams%2C%20Reflections%20-%20Carl%20Jung/page/n491/mode/2up?view=theater>. Assessed 15 May 2021.
- [13] JUNG, Carl G. "The Dual Mother." In *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, Vol. 5. 2nd edition. Edited by Herbert Read–Michael Fordham–Gerhard Adler. Translated by R. F. C. Hull. London: Routledge–Kegan Paul, 1986, pp. 306-393. ISBN 9780415136372.
- [14] JUNG Carl, G. "The Practical Use of Dream-Analysis." In *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, Vol. 16. 2nd edition. Edited by Herbert Read–Michael Fordham–Gerhard Adler. London–Henley: Routledge–Kegan Paul, 1966, pp. 139-161. ISBN 9781138135932.
- [15] GRILLI, Georgia. *Myth, Symbol and Meaning in Mary Poppins. The Governess as Provocateur*. Routledge, 2014. 178p. ISBN 978-1-138-85610-3.
- [16] LAWSON, Valerie. *Mary Poppins She Wrote. The Life of P. L. Travers*. Pocket Books, 1999. 401p. ISBN 978-1-4767-6473-3.
- [17] MANLOVE, Colin. *From Alice to Harry Potter. Children's Fantasy in England*. Cybereditions Corporation, 2003. 250p. 1-877275-54-9.
- [18] MÉSZÁROS, István, NÉMETH, András, PUKÁNSZKY, Béla, *Neveléstörténet. Szöveggyűjtemény*, 2003, pp. 61-97. https://regi.tankonyvtar.hu/hu/tartalom/tamop425/2011_0001_520_nevelestortenet/pr01.html. Accessed 1 August 2021.
- [19] NEUMANN, Erich. *The Origins and History of Consciousness*. Reprint, Translated by R. F. C. Hull, Marsefield Library, 1989. 493p. ISBN 978 0 94643 972 0
- [20] RUWE, Donelle: "Barbault and the Body-Part Game: Maternal Pedagogy in the Long Eighteenth Century," pp. 27-45. In Lisa Rowe Fraustino and Karen Coats (eds): *Mothers in Children's and Young Adult Literature. From the Eighteenth Century to Postfeminism*. University Press of Mississippi/ Jackson. Children's Literature Association Series. 2016, 270p. ISBN 9781496806994.
- [21] PUSKÁS, Andrea. *Improving Creativity in the EFL Classroom*. 1. vyd. Brno: Tribun EU, 2020. 164p. ISBN 978-80-263-1605-3.
- [22] PUSKÁS, Andrea. "Teaching during the Pandemic in Higher Education: an Online Drama Course for Teacher Trainees of English as a Foreign Language." In *Ad Alta: Journal of Interdisciplinary Research* 11/01, 2021, pp.239-244. www.doi.org/10.33543/1101
- [23] PUSKÁS, Andrea. *Teaching Young Learners. A Textbook for EFL teacher Trainees*. bymoon, 2018. 177p. ISBN 978-80-972711-1-4
- [24] SELIGMAN, M. E. P., & CSÍKSZENTMIHÁLYI, M. (2000). "Positive psychology: An introduction." In *American Psychologist*, 55 (1), pp. 5-14. doi:10.1037/0003-066x.55.1.5
- [25] TRAVERS, P. L. *The Complete Mary Poppins*. HarperCollins Children's Books, 2010. 767p. ISBN 978-0-00-739855-3.
- [26] VON FRANZ, Marie Louise. "The Process of Individuation," pp. 158-230. In JUNG, Carl–VON FRANZ, Marie-Louise–Henderson, JACOBI, Joseph L., JOLANDE–JAFFÉ, Aniela (eds.) *Man and His Symbols*. New York–London–Toronto–Sydney–Auckland: Anchor Press Doubleday. 1988. 319p. ISBN 0-385-05221-9.
- [27] WARNER, Marina. *From the Beast to the Blonde: on Fairy Tales and their Tellers*. Vintage, 1995.458p.
- [28] WENGER, David H. "A New Look at Theosophy. The Great Chain of Being Revisited". *The International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, vol. 20, 2001, pp. 107-124, doi: 10.24972/ijts.2002.20.1.107. Accessed 14 March 2016.
- [29] ZIPES, Jack. *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2006. 458p. ISBN 978-0-099-47951-2.

- [30] ZOLCZER, Peter. "Using Video Games as Sources for Story-based English Classes," pp. 231-241. In Bukor József, Simon Szabolcs (eds.) *11. International Conference of J. Selye University: Section on Language - Culture - Intercultural Relationships: Section on Language - Culture - Intercultural Relationships*. Komárno: Univerzita J. Selyeho, 2019. DOI 10.36007/3310.2019.231-241.
- [31] ZOLCZER, Peter. "The Integration of Translation and Audiovisual Media into Language Learning," pp. 446-455. In *Zborník medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie Univerzity J. Selyeho - 2016 = A Selye János Egyetem 2016-os "Korszerű szemlélet a tudományban és az oktatásban" Nemzetközi Tudományos Konferenciájának tanulmánykötete - Pedagógiai szekciók: "Súčasné aspekty vedy a vzdelávanía" - Sekcie pedagogických vied*. Komárno: Univerzita J. Selyeho, 2016. CD-ROM. ISBN 973-80-8122-187-3.
- [32] <https://themarypoppinseffect.com/tag/fairy-tales/>
- [33] https://jimhillmedia.com/editor_in_chief1/b/jim_hill/archive/2008/06/20/mary-poppins-photo-essay.aspx