FEATURED ARTICLES

Surviving the Storm: Trauma and Recovery in Children's Books about Natural Disasters
Pathways' End: The Space of Trauma in Patrick Ness's Chaos Walking
Hearing the Voices of “Comfort Women”: Confronting Historical Trauma in Korean Children's Literature
Representations of Trauma and Recovery in Contemporary North American and Australian Teen Fiction
Resistant Rituals: Self-Mutilation and the Female Adolescent Body in Fairy Tales and Young Adult Fiction
Death Row Everyman: Stanislas Gros's Image-Based Interpretation of Victor Hugo's The Last Day of a Condemned Man
Would you like to write for IBBY’s journal?

Academic Articles

ca. 4000 words

Bookbird publishes articles on children’s literature with an international perspective four times a year (in January, April, July and October). Articles that compare literatures of different countries are of interest, as are papers on translation studies and articles that discuss the reception of work from one country in another. Articles concerned with a particular national literature or a particular book or writer may also be suitable, but it is important that the article should be of interest to an international audience. Some issues are devoted to special topics. Details and deadlines of these issues are available from Bookbird’s web pages.

Children and their Books

ca. 2500 words

Bookbird also provides a forum where those working with children and their literature can write about their experiences. Teachers, librarians, publishers, authors and parents, short articles discussing the ways in which you have worked with children and their literatures, or have watched children respond to literature are welcomed. Articles concerned with a particular national issue are of interest, should be written in a manner that appeals to an international audience.

Postcards and Letters

ca. 300 or 1000 words

Bookbird publishes reviews of both primary and secondary sources. Brief ‘postcards’ (ca. 300 words) on individual works of children’s literature, or extended ‘letters’ (ca. 1000 words) introducing the work of a particular author or illustrator are welcomed. In addition to the full publication details, please comment on whether the works are available in translation.

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Our forthcoming issues:

- April 2012, HCA 2012 Award Nominees
- July 2012, IBBY Congress Issue
- October 2012, HCA 2012 Award Winners
- January 2013, Literature from the British Commonwealth
- April 2013, Open Themed Literature
- July 2013, Multilingual Literature
- October 2013, GLBTQ

Hans Christian Andersen Awards

Every other year IBBY presents the Hans Christian Andersen Awards to a living author and illustrator whose complete works have made a lasting contribution to children’s literature.

The Hans Christian Andersen Award is the highest international recognition given to an author and an illustrator of children’s books. Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark is the Patron of the Andersen Awards.

Nominations are made by the National Sections of IBBY and the recipients are selected by a distinguished international jury of children’s literature specialists.
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Scribbling Women: True Tales from Astonishing Lives by Marthe Jocelyn

Focus IBBY
Dear Bookbird Readers,

As the incoming editors of Bookbird, we want first to thank everyone who has made our transition into this work much easier than it might have been. Outgoing editors Sylvia Vardell and Catherine Kurkjian have been unfailingly available and gracious as they have guided us into our new tasks. Valerie Coghlan, former editor and now President of Bookbird, Inc., has been both informative and patient as she has ushered us into our roles. The rest of the Bookbird, Inc. Board has been equally welcoming and supportive, offering guidance and assistance, as has the IBBY Board along with its executive director, Liz Page, and her assistant, Luzmari Stauffenegger.

As instructors and researchers who work with children’s literature, we are deeply committed to and passionate about our work as editors of Bookbird. In turn, we recognize that we are one part of IBBY’s international mission and Jella Lepman’s lasting legacy of providing children, especially those in developing countries, with access to books. Our primary concern is those members of IBBY—the teachers and scholars, publishers and booksellers, authors and librarians, parents and caregivers—worldwide, who read this journal. We will follow the fine editorial teams who precede us in maintaining Bookbird as a forum for new and provocative scholarly
work on international texts for children. Like Sylvia and Cathy, and Valerie and Siobhán before them, we will combine the features of a journal with the highest academic standards with those of a magazine appealing to the entire community of readers who care about international children’s literature.

One of the main attractions of Bookbird is its diversity, and not just in readership. This is a journal where everyone interested in good quality literature for children can contribute and hear what others have to say. We are interested in receiving papers from people from a variety of different backgrounds, and therefore have made a few adjustments to Bookbird’s various sections. The “Feature Articles” section now has an expanded word limit in order to give contributors the space for fuller discussions. “Children and Their Books” is a new section that provides a forum where those working with children and their literature can write about their experiences. Teachers, librarians, publishers, authors and parents are invited to contribute entries describing how you work with children and their literatures, or have watched children respond to literature. So much valuable work that people do is not recorded and shared, and we wanted to provide a space where people could share their experiences.

We were sorry to learn that the International Youth Library (IYL) in Munich no longer has the resources to produce the “Books on Books” column. However, we have introduced a more traditional Reviews section, and we are delighted that Christiane Raabe and IYL will still be able to contribute to this section and that Hasmig Chahinian and her team at the National Center for Children’s Literature, Bibliothèque Nationale de France have also agreed to contribute. We warmly invite our readers for their contributions to this section as well. In addition to the reviews of critical works and the postcards on recently published individual works of children’s literature, we have also introduced “Letters.” These are slightly longer reviews which introduce the work of a particular author or illustrator, or consider a particular theme. We offer fuller details on these sections in our submission guidelines at the end of the journal.

Because we are both committed to endorsing literature for children and adolescents, and have taught and published extensively in this area, we are aware of its potential for healing and for helping young readers to cope with matters they find difficult. We learned that we had become the editors of Bookbird 2012–2014 not long after the earthquakes that shook New Zealand and Japan. Many children were still suffering from earlier natural disasters in Pacific Asia and Haiti, and many other children have been traumatized by the effects of human disasters such as war. Even in countries which are not suffering from such obvious problems, children may be traumatized by varying events and incidents. These are issues that concern many IBBY activists. For instance, Indian BBY/AWIC is organizing International Conference on Book Therapy—Reading is Healing in New Delhi next month. We also wanted to address these issues and children’s books that respond to them, and so have chosen the theme of trauma for our inaugural issue of Bookbird.

The “Feature Articles” section is filled with
academic articles by scholars from around the world. All these articles have been reviewed by experts to ensure that they are of a high standard, and we publish only the very best that have been submitted. For the Trauma Issue, we have included articles that examine various kinds of trauma suffered by children, from different parts of the world and in different time periods. With

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the natural disasters in Japan and New Zealand very much in our minds, our first article by Paula Connolly examines children’s texts that depict the devastation of natural disasters. Representations of death and massive destruction can be a controversial enterprise in literature for children, and Connolly focuses on animal picture books, eye witness accounts, and young adult fiction to explore how children’s and young adult literature can navigate these difficult issues.

We have also included a number of articles on human disasters such as war, and other atrocities. Adrienne Kertzer, the daughter of someone who survived a death camp, examines how the Holocaust emerges in a fantasy trilogy: Patrick Ness’s Chaos Walking. Kertzer examines the ways in which Ness uses the conventions of speculative fiction to probe the relationship between the language of choice and the experience of trauma and how he asks contentious questions about trauma and healing. Looking at Asian texts focusing on the same era, Yoo Kyung Sung offers insight into a form of trauma that seems especially difficult to present to a young readership: the systematic sexual abuse of women by armed forces. Her paper on Korean “Comfort Women”—women forced into prostitution to serve the Japanese army—provides an overview of how adolescent literature for Korean teenagers has represented this atrocity.

Our fourth article tackles issues of trauma in contemporary young adult fiction from North America and Australia that depicts teen protagonists enduring a range of symptoms as a consequence of trauma experienced earlier in their lives. Kate Norbury draws from Cathy Caruth’s theorizations of trauma to analyze four key literary devices: a fragmented narrative voice, the role of memory and ghosts, repetition, and allusion. As she uncovers how these features serve to depict the protagonist’s traumatic state of mind, Norbury analyzes the way in which these texts offer the possibility of recovery from trauma.

Our final two articles discuss historical texts in the terms of contemporary responses to trauma. Cheryl Cowdy argues that despite its history as an unintelligible activity in Western society, self-mutilation entered the discourse of childhood as a motif of feminine experience the moment children appropriated the fairy tale. Suggesting that this motif provides an opportunity to identify the different ways traumatic subjects are treated based on the target audiences of texts, Cowdy argues that in Cinderella and The Little Mermaid, self-mutilation functions as an act of self-sacrifice to romantic hetero-normative narratives. In a study of Stanislas Gros’s graphic novel adaptation of Victor Hugo’s The Last Day of a Condemned Man, Amelia Fedo points out that comics work well in introducing young readers to literary classics, and that this adaptation is particularly well-suited to a young adult audience given that young adults and Romantic writers often share similar sensibilities and values, including a passion for justice, a love of humanity and the natural world, and a fascination with the macabre.

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Children and Their Books
In the inaugural run of “Children and Their Books,” Meg Fargher provides an account of how she worked with diaries and *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker to help girls in a South African school come to terms with personal and cultural traumas. And our colleague from the Japanese version of *Bookbird*, Kimiko Matsui, has contributed a piece describing the trauma of the recent earthquake and how she and others involved with children’s literature sent out reading materials to those worst affected.

Reviews
Our reviews section includes Postcards that discuss recent works for children from several continents, Letters that offer a more in-depth view of authors/illustrators and their work, and reviews of recently published scholarly books about children’s literature. We have included reviews of two books specifically on trauma in texts for children and young adults and three others on more general books, and the Postcards discuss a variety of books for children, most of them touching on traumatic events. Our Letters this month both focus on the issue’s theme; Samantha Christensen discusses Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, whose pioneering depictions of traumatized children worked to change social codes in the nineteenth century. Finally, Fengxia Tan has provided us with a fascinating overview of how Chinese fiction for youth has represented the traumatic era of the Cultural Revolution.

Focus IBBY
In her regular column, IBBY Executive Director, Liz Page, brings us up to date on IBBY activities around the world, including a report on the International Children’s Book Day 2012, the Hans Christian Andersen Awards 2012, and the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award 2012. Liz also provides information about new members and the upcoming IBBY Congress (London 2012). In keeping with our theme of trauma, Liz concludes with a report from Haiti and how literature is helping children in the aftermath of the earthquake.
This article examines literature for children and young adults that depicts the devastation of natural disasters, particularly the 2005 hurricane Katrina which hit the eastern United States and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Especially for audiences of young children, representations of death and massive destruction can be a controversial enterprise. Focusing on three types of narratives—animal picture books, eye witness accounts, and young adult fiction—this study explores how children’s and young adult literature navigates such difficult issues by retelling stories of large-scale disasters as scenarios of trauma and recovery.

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The devastation wrought by recent natural disasters—including the 2011 earthquake in Japan, the 2005 Hurricane Katrina in the United States, and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami—directly affected hundreds of thousands of people. The death toll of the 2004 tsunami, for example, has been estimated at over 175,000. In the changed circumstances of their post-disaster world, survivors, who have suffered the loss of loved ones and witnessed what had otherwise been unimaginable destruction, must also contend with the collapse of the community infrastructure that had marked the regularity of their lives. Living in the midst of such devastation means that survivors must face, not only the disaster as it occurs, but a new world—often a frightening and dislocating one.

The psychological toll on survivors of such large scale disasters is often considerable, ranging from depression, nightmares, guilt, anxiety, and anger to more chronic symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Although the traumatic effects of natural disasters upon children are not studied as frequently as the effects upon adults (Shahinfar et al. 145), children form a sizable population of those affected by such disasters. In the case of Hurricane Katrina, for example, it has been estimated that “one third of the population of Orleans Parish was under the age of 18 when Katrina struck” (Shahinfar et al. 145). Moreover, children in all natural disasters face specific challenges. Their vulnerability is perhaps most evident in those who are orphaned. In those and other situations, children may experience the same symptoms of trauma as adults. Yet many children also often reveal a resiliency that helps them move through trauma to regain psychological health (Hodgkinson and Stewart 18-20).

In this article, I discuss three types of books that portray recent natural disasters: animal-pairing picture books, eye-witness collections, and young adult fiction. In different ways, each of these texts attempts to confront issues of representing death and trauma to young audiences. They also similarly address the resilience necessary to survive catastrophic disasters.

Animal Stories
Using animal stories to describe natural disasters often has the two-pronged effect of providing child readers with a means of sentimental identification while simultaneously removing the focus from human tragedy, and thus emotionally distancing the young reader from descriptions of human death. Animal stories that narrow the scope of the disaster by synthesizing its effect on one or two animals often traverse the geographical and situational boundaries of their respective natural catastrophes to speak to universal emotions.

Each of these picture books focuses on an actual event that received media attention: *Owen & Mzee* (through photographs) and *Mama* (in nearly wordless illustrations) retell the story of a baby hippopotamus (“Owen”) that was orphaned during the 2004 tsunami, then rescued by local residents and taken to an animal sanctuary where he bonded with a 130-year old giant tortoise, “Mzee,” who seemed to function as a surrogate parent. *Two Bobbies* features a dog and blind cat that were abandoned during Katrina but managed to survive both the disaster and several months following it until they were rescued and found a new home. The animals’ actions and implied emotions suggest feelings with which young children could identify. So, too, do their vulnerabilities. The representations of vulnerable animals unable to survive on their own—the orphaned “baby” hippopotamus that has lost its mother and the blind cat separated from and perhaps abandoned by its caretakers—evoke children’s keenest fears of loss. Yet, these are also stories that offer solace, showing that despite the loss of parents or caretakers, families can be reconstituted in new, even unexpected ways.

It is the unlikely pairings of these animals that seem to offer young readers the most hope of recovering an optimistic perspective following a natural disaster. Of *Owen & Mzee*, its authors admit that “Wildlife experts are still puzzled about how this unlikely friendship came to be. Most have never heard of a mammal […] and a reptile […] forming such a strong bond”; nonetheless, they argue that “science can’t always explain what the heart already knows. Our most important friends are sometimes those we least expect” (Hatkoff et al. np). In describing a 130-year old turtle and a “Cat’s seeing-eye dog” caring for their more vulnerable “friends,” these stories ultimately address the trauma of disasters, particularly of being abandoned and orphaned, by reassuring children of the reparative power of friendship and love. By focusing on the bonding not only between animals of different species, but between animals not expected to be companionable, they also offer lessons in diversity. The conclusion to the sequel *Owen & Mzee: The Language of Friendship* (2007), for example, tells readers that “No matter how things turn out, the story of their friendship will always remind the world that when you need a friend, one will be there for you. And that best friends come in all colors, shapes, and sizes” (Hatkoff et al. np).

**Eye-witness Accounts**

While animal-bonding stories typically synthesize the disaster event by narrowing it to a single story and avoiding direct discussions of human trauma, by contrast, firsthand accounts from children reveal the myriad experiences that make up a large scale disaster. In practical terms, they more closely approximate the vastness of disaster by showing multiple viewpoints, as one child after another recounts his or her personal experiences of the disaster. These accounts also serve as testimony to the fact that children do suffer anxiety and trauma as a result of natural disasters. *The Storm: Students of Biloxi, Mississippi, Remember Hurricane Katrina* (2006), compiled by Barbara Barbieri McGrath, situates the centrality of children’s experience. A 64-page collection in picture book format, *The Storm* offers the verbal and visual accounts of ninety students from kindergarten through twelfth grade who variously describe themselves as witnesses, victims, and survivors of Hurricane Katrina. Their combined accounts present a collectively shared experience of disaster as well as a record of the psychological and physical stresses of natural catastrophes on children.

Whatever emotional buffer is provided in stories about animals surviving disasters is
removed here. Instead, the number of varied first person accounts presents an almost unrelentingly personal narrative of pain. These entries are often raw in their expressions of fear, confusion, and loss. One after another, these accounts reveal the emotional landscape of potential trauma amid the devastating effects of a large-scale natural disaster. Several drawings show their radically changed worlds as seemingly fantastical landscapes of submerged neighborhoods. The drawing by third-grader Viet Tran, for example, depicts water covering all but the very rooftops of houses. Against a darkened blue sky, the violence of the storm is played out as objects fly chaotically about, from a boat and tree to a descending airplane trailing black smoke. In contrast to the movement and violence of the air, a house with flowers on its front stoop seems placidly contained in lighter blue, the water a shield from the turbulence above. Yet amid the otherwise empty blue water, a small human stick figure faces an oncoming shark many times its size. Beneath a dialogue bubble exclaiming “Ahh,” the stick figure is defenseless and seems to have little chance of survival.

Showing how in catastrophes the “fabric of everyday existence is torn away to reveal danger and risk” (Hodgkinson and Stewart 1), these accounts record the loss of homes and all that home signifies—effective caretakers, optimism, and an expectation of a stable existence. Here, children witness adults unable to protect them and lost in their own grief, and they record the environment of death that surrounds them. From a son who unsuccessfully tries to save his mother from drowning (47) to the “stench” of dead bodies along the coast (48), these accounts narrate the “corruption of innocence” faced by many survivors of catastrophes (Hodgkinson and Stewart 1).

The collection seeks to impose an assurance of recovery as entries are organized in consecutive chapters that move from “Evacuation,” “Storm,” and “Aftermath” to “Hope.” While, for example, a frontispiece drawing from a second grader carries the declarative caption “Things are not where they should be,” near the close of the collection, sixth grade Danielle Johnson imagines a hopeful future, writing that “Hurricane Katrina has changed me… I see things differently… My neighborhood didn’t make it… I was mad at first. Then I thought it could be a new beginning” (60). Yet taken as a whole, the collection resists such simple assurances of recovery. Despite the narrative trajectory that suggests a corresponding emotional recovery of these children, many individual entries do not end with a promise of recovery, but are instead cut off in the midst of pain…

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Kimberly who writes while living in a FEMA trailer in the aftermath of the storm that “I felt hurt and positively horrible. [Katrina was...] devastating” (38). Moreover, the fact that the accumulated narratives and pictures of the disaster fill nearly four times as many pages as those describing recovery also heightens the focus on the disaster itself. While one could argue that *The Storm* tells of disaster and recovery, the entries do not show the process through which children emotionally recover. Nor does the collection explain the personal and social attributes that help children deal with trauma. That is to be expected, since here children report rather than analyze their feelings. When managed by teachers who have experience counseling disaster victims (Snider 42-43), providing opportunities for students to write or draw their experiences may allow them to “be more able to accept their feelings and move forward towards a sense of normalcy” (Dunston 64). Thus, while collections such as *The Storm* may not discuss how children process through trauma, it may provide them with the opportunity to begin to do so. Its strength is not in its weakened promise of recovery; its strength ultimately lies in its testimony to children’s experiences of disaster.

**Young Adult Fiction**

In contrast to the animal stories and eye witness accounts discussed here, Jewell Parker Rhodes’s *Ninth Ward* (2010) both deals directly with human fatalities and also investigates essential ways in which one’s individual make up can provide the necessary outlook—the resilience—to face traumatic events, and in their midst, to believe in one’s own agency and retain a necessary sense of optimism to face a changed world. In that way, *Ninth Ward* effectively provides a paradigm of coping with trauma; in a sense Rhodes provides a psychological roadmap for developing healthy children who can face, and surmount, even catastrophic events in their lives. Psychologists note, for example, that children’s resilience to trauma can be affected by their own temperament; the influence of family, teachers, and peers; as well as their cultural and social beliefs (Kilmer and Gil-Rivas 7). It is the totality of a psychologically healthy child—his or her sense of self-esteem, belonging, competence, belief in the future, and resilience which signals an ability to adapt to new environments (Pfefferbaum et al.)—that can help a child withstand or recover from the potential trauma of natural disasters. More than the other books noted here, moving to novel-length fiction and an older audience allows for a more encompassing exploration of how individuals cope with potentially traumatic events.
Here, Rhodes’s move to novel presents a fictional African American protagonist Lanesha who has survived earlier events that could have proven traumatic: the death of her mother at protagonist, Lanesha’s, birth and her presumed abandonment by her father and his family. Alone in the world, she is taken in and raised by Mama Ya-Ya, a conjuring wise-woman in the community who also has no living family. What the stories of Owen & Mzee and Two Bobbies teach young readers—that loss can be healed by the creation of new families—is thus something Lanesha has known since birth. It serves as the grounding for her optimism in life and the psychological strength she summons to face continued loss. Because of economic poverty, when Katrina is bearing down on New Orleans, Lanesha and Mama Ya-Ya are unable to evacuate, and when the hurricane arrives, it and subsequently floods destroy their home and neighborhood. Lanesha’s loss is immediate, for Mama Ya-Ya dies during the storm and, in order to survive, Lanesha and a young friend must retreat to a rooftop suffering thirst and blistering heat for days, waiting for rescue crews that never arrive. Although she eventually reaches others who will presumably help her, as the novel closes, Lanesha acknowledges “I don’t know what’s going to happen to me” (217). Although Lanesha does not know much about the specifics of the new life she will have to enter, she knows enough from her life with Mama Ya-Ya to be certain that she will be all right.

While animal stories offer hope and a sense of gentle solace in the assurance that victims will be cared for, and The Storm provides testimony to the real anguish suffered by children, Ninth Ward demonstrates, perhaps most directly, the ways adults and communities can arm children with the necessary means to survive even assaults of natural disasters and seemingly catastrophic personal loss. While Mama Ya-Ya’s unconditional love, encouragement, and validation of Lanesha’s talents prove important to Lanesha’s self-esteem, the novel moves beyond that more typical prescriptive of mother figures to explore the implications of history, culture, and faith on a child’s view of the world and on her ability to cope with loss. As a woman who reads signs in nature, has dreams that portend the future, and sees ghosts, Mama Ya-Ya has taught Lanesha that the world is full of wondrous possibilities despite sometimes difficult circumstances. Although the gift of “sight” may allow Mama Ya-Ya to see the future, when she tells Lanesha that “even with sight, the world surprises you” (141), she posits a hope in the impossible and a readiness to accept the unknowable. Surprise and change become constants, and in that expectation and acceptance of change, Mama Ya-Ya and Lanesha are less likely to be traumatized by new—even frightening—situations.

Mama Ya-Ya’s spirituality also provides Lanesha with a rich cultural context for survival in the way that it accepts ambiguity and invites resolution of oppositions. Blending voodoo and Christianity, Mama Ya-Ya’s faith marks her as coming from a line of conjure women who have drawn strength, wisdom, and power from their African ancestry although they were taken as slaves and brought to the Americas. In this, Rhodes argues that spiritual strength comes in breaking open sometimes violently created national borders and rigid stratifications to retain
the strength of one’s culture. She offers a transnational perspective that honors the retention of African faith despite the assault of slavery. Rhodes’s portrayal of Mama Ya-Ya’s blended faith implicitly places the coming natural disaster of Katrina against the historical trauma of slavery. That Mama Ya-Ya’s power derives from personal and cultural survival despite slavery, shows African American resilience to catastrophic assault. Moreover, her faith keeps alive an African past that could be otherwise lost to those kidnapped from Africa centuries earlier. Here the power of the past and one’s ancestors remains influential, despite continued assault. Her melding of faiths shows an ability to adapt to new situations, taking what is useful from a new, even violent world, while still retaining the authenticity of one’s identity and past. Resistance to slavery and historical trauma here becomes a sign of individual power, a power that is passed onto Lanesha and ultimately helps her survive Katrina’s effects. Mama Ya-Ya’s faith thus offers a belief in self-agency despite overwhelming odds while also giving Lanesha a sense of the collective power of her culture.

Because of the spiritual world that Mama Ya-Ya inhabits, Lanesha has accepted change as a familiar and necessary part of life. Like Mama Ya-Ya, Lanesha can see ghosts. They linger in her home, around the neighborhood, and at school, and although one might imagine ghosts to be frightening, in Lanesha’s experience, they are a protective, other-worldly presence wishing well to those still alive. Their presence seems a symbolic harbinger of the deaths to come, but they also remind Lanesha that those who die will remain, in spirit, with those who survive. Seeing ghosts requires an acceptance of change and the transitory nature of life—people die. It also bespeaks a faith that death does not extinguish one’s love. It is a spiritual belief that balances notions of life and death; here, it has and will continue to help Lanesha survive the death of loved ones. It further argues a collective power; the dead are not fully gone, and one must believe in possibilities far beyond the obvious.

As in the final illustration of Jeanette Winter’s Mama, which shows the faint outline of the deceased mother hippopotamus standing over her baby hippo and the huge tortoise, Ninth Ward argues that the blessings of those who have died remain with us. In Rhodes’s more complex schema, those spirits remain active amongst us to provide an extended community; they also provide a means of coping with disaster. Psychologists argue that trauma survivors often need to give meaning to their experience, to understand why one has survived and how the disaster has changed who one is (Hodgkinson and Stewart 8-10). Although Lanesha has always seen her mother’s ghost, it has been incommunicative. That changes during the flood. When Lanesha nearly drowns, her mother’s ghost calls Lanesha by name then helps her to the surface, giving her daughter another chance to live. Lanesha believes that her mother “has been waiting all this time to say my name; I have been waiting just as long to hear it” (208).

Lanesha’s experience with her mother’s ghost gives meaning to the tragedy, not as a reason for why the hurricane happened, but as an explanation of how and why Lanesha survived. In this story of her mother helping her to the surface, Lanesha has recovered a mother lost to her. And although Mama Ya-Ya dies during the flood, in her spiritual world of ghosts and faith, Lanesha can never fully become an orphan. Indeed, once Lanesha returns to the surface of the water, the ghosts of Mama Ya-Ya and her mother appear and speak to her. Mama Ya-Ya tells her “You’re going to be fine, Lanesha” and the two women tell her “We love you.” When the ghosts fade,
Lanesha thinks, they are “gone. Yet not. They’ll always be together and always be with me” (211).

Readers do not know what will happen to Lanesha at the close of *Ninth Ward*. Yet Lanesha has used her signs—from Mama Ya-Ya’s foretelling to skills from math class—to work her way to safety. She has blended worlds by breaking apart and reframing expected boundaries.

She prepares for the flood, she remains rational in the midst of its chaos, she is determined to “Solve problems” and “Survive” (178, 179). Mama Ya-Ya has taught her to be “Not just any strong…but loving strong” (144) and Lanesha shows that loving strength as she cares for Mama Ya-Ya in her final hours and also protects a friend. It is the collective strength she has received from Mama Ya-Ya, her faith, her culture, and her community that has created in Lanesha a girl who believes she will survive this disaster. When, at the close of the novel, Lanesha acknowledges, “I don’t know what’s going to happen to me,” she adds:

I just know I’m going to be all right.
I’m Lanesha…Interpreter of…signs. Future engineer.
Shining love.
I’m Lanesha.
I’m Mama Ya-Ya’s girl. (217)

Trauma researchers have found that “Hope is both a necessary means and an end to recovery […] adaptability, flexibility, and belief in a positive future” (in Snider 36-37). These books—from *Mama, Owen & Mzee*, and *Two Bobbies* to the eye-witness collection *The Storm* and Jewell Parker Rhodes’s *Ninth Ward*—provide testaments to the violence, loss, and trauma endured by those who suffer large-scale natural disasters. But they also show that children can recover from trauma; they model ways in which their worlds and their sense of themselves can be healed. There is—they promise—a new world beyond the devastation of disaster.

**Further Reading**


Work Cited:

Children's Books


Secondary Sources


Pathways’ End: The Space of Trauma in Patrick Ness’s Chaos Walking

Patrick Ness’s Chaos Walking is a trilogy of ideas obsessed with the experience and healing of trauma. Using the conventions of speculative fiction to probe the relationship between the language of choice and the experience of trauma, Ness frames his representation of Holocaust-like trauma through his depiction of the collective memory and governance of the Land (the planet’s indigenous inhabitants). As a result, Chaos Walking differs from many realist historical novels for young people that focus their narrative energy upon trauma as an individual psychological disorder. The trilogy’s growing interest in its final two volumes upon the place of traumatic memory in the mind of the sole indigenous survivor of what is repeatedly referred to as genocide enables Ness to ask contentious questions about the healing of trauma, and how individual trauma differs from cultural trauma.

by ADRIENNE KERTZER

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Recognizing that “[e]veryone agrees [Patrick Ness’s] *Chaos Walking* is a great read,” Matt Hilliard asks, “but what exactly is it about?” (Hilliard 2011). This essay proposes that *Chaos Walking* is a trilogy of ideas obsessed with the experience and healing of trauma. The quotation from George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* that serves as the epigraph to *The Knife of Never Letting Go* (2008), the first volume of Ness’s trilogy, provides a fitting introduction to the circumstances of the male settlers of the planet they have named New World. “[We] should die of that roar” is an apt description of how the settlers are initially tormented by the Noise—the telepathic transmission of men’s thoughts and memories—that deprives them of the ability to keep anything private. In keeping with Roger Luckhurst’s (2008) description of trauma as “violently opening passageways between systems that were once discrete, making unforeseen connections that distress or confound” and Sigmund Freud’s (1920) speculation in “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” that the trauma occurs when “an extensive breach [is] made in the protective shield against stimuli” (Luckhurst 3; Freud 303), the male settlers appear to be suffering a collective trauma produced by a lack of boundaries between the self and the group as a whole.

Todd Hewitt, the adolescent narrator of the first book, born ten years after the colonists first landed, regards Noise as the “mess” of men’s minds: “It’s what’s true and what’s believed and what’s imagined and what’s fantasized and… even tho the truth is definitely in there, how can you tell what’s true and what’s not when yer getting *everything*?” (*Knife* 42). Todd’s definition points to the trilogy’s title: “The Noise is a man unfiltered, and without a filter, a man is just chaos walking” (*Knife* 42). Todd’s language not only alludes to the absence of a Freudian protective shield—a filter—but also to the absence of women in his town; he has been told that all the settler women died when the indigenous inhabitants of the planet “released the Noise germ during the war” (*Knife* 14). While references to indigenous inhabitants and germ warfare obviously remove the fantasy world of *Chaos Walking* from the realist setting of Eliot’s novel, the novel’s epigraph announces Ness’s desire to situate *Chaos Walking*...
Walking beside Middlemarch, the novel that Virginia Woolf (1925) called “for all its imperfections...one of the few English novels written for grown-up people” (Woolf 172). Including Middlemarch in his list of “unsuitable” books that adolescents should read (2011), Ness has no interest in rigid distinctions between young adult reading and adult reading. Young adults can and should read what adults are reading, and what Ness provides in Chaos Walking is a dystopian fantasy version of Middlemarch for the 21st century: a novel of ideas that addresses numerous topics of contemporary concern to readers of any age, including genocide, indigenous histories of conquest, terrorism, torture, ecological disaster, and media-induced information overload.¹

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All of these topics relate to trauma. Using the conventions of speculative fiction, Ness probes the relationship between the language of choice and the experience of trauma. Because he frames his representation of Holocaust-like trauma through his depiction of the collective memory and governance of the Land (the planet’s indigenous inhabitants), Chaos Walking differs from many realist historical novels for young people that, despite their reference to events that might traumatize a collective group, focus their narrative energy upon trauma as an individual psychological disorder. In so doing, such books reflect the tendency John Stephens (1992) generalizes is characteristic of children’s fiction as a whole. In contrast, the trilogy’s growing interest in its final two volumes—The Ask and the Answer (2009) and Monsters of Men (2010)—in the place of traumatic memory in the mind of 1017, the sole indigenous survivor of what is repeatedly referred to as genocide, enables Ness to ask contentious questions about the healing of trauma, and how individual trauma differs from cultural trauma.

According to Jeffrey C. Alexander (2004) and Neil J. Smelser (2004) both individual and cultural traumas are related to concepts of identity. “I am Todd Hewitt,” Todd reassures himself when Noise overpowers him (Knife 17). The concept of identity is more complicated for 1017 who takes on different names that situate him in relation to his personal trauma: called the Return when he escapes the settlers and has returned to the Land, he becomes the Sky when he is chosen by the Land to succeed the former leader, also called the Sky.² But at the novel’s end, this multiply-named character has not resolved the relationship between his traumatized identity as 1017 and his trauma-free identity as the Sky. As a sign of this conflict and his remorse over the apparent death of Todd, he refuses to take the cure for the festering wound—the physical trauma—produced by the band that numerically marked him as a Holocaust-like victim. Ness leaves open whether 1017/the Sky’s murderous attack upon Todd, the settler that he most hates, is produced by his ongoing trauma, or whether that trauma prompts him to mistake Todd for the villainous David Prentiss. After he
has attacked Todd, Viola reads the doubt in his Noise as proof that he acted deliberately, but the ambiguity surrounding his agency in this attack foregrounds the fraught relationship between individual choice, the compulsive symptoms of trauma, and its resolution.

References to choice appear throughout *Chaos Walking*. In book one, Todd explains to a settler that he and the newly arrived settler, Viola Eade, had “no choice” but to blow up a bridge so that they could avoid capture by Prentiss, only to be told, “there’s always choices” (*Knife* 157). In book two, *The Ask and the Answer*, numerous characters echo Mistress Coyle who tells Viola “We are the choices we make” (98). Coyle is leader of the mainly female opposition to Prentiss, and a survivor of an earlier female opposition to his tyranny, yet Ness emphasizes the resemblance between her and Prentiss when Prentiss uses the same words about choice in speaking to Todd (*The Ask* 18). Viola frequently chastises herself for starting the planetary war between the Land and the settlers (*Monsters* 523) just as Todd constantly berates himself for choosing to kill an indigenous inhabitant whom he is shocked to encounter, given that he has been led to believe that all of the indigenous inhabitants were killed years before. When Prentiss subsequently tells Todd he may have no choice in leading armies in a new war against the indigenous inhabitants, Viola also insists, “There’s always a choice” (*The Ask* 459) to which Prentiss replies, “Oh, people like to say that…It makes them feel better” (*The Ask* 459). Given that writing for young people often encourages them to believe that there is always a choice, *Chaos Walking* is not just about the choices characters make; it is also about the debilitating experience of trauma. What the novel never clarifies is how a traumatized person can make choices. The contradiction between choice and trauma can be traced throughout the latter term’s history. Originally derived from the Greek word meaning wound, a physical trauma nullifies choice. When bodies react to the trauma of a wound, they respond automatically. In the late nineteenth century, trauma shifted from its dominant meaning as a physical wound to a new meaning as psychological disorder. What puzzled

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Freud as he considered the nightmares that characterized psychological trauma was the absence of choice. In psychological trauma, the victim does not choose symptoms such as suffering repetitive nightmares that do not distinguish between past and present, a symptom that currently dominates fictional accounts of trauma as it does in *Chaos Walking*. The conviction that traumatized soldiers during World War One were choosing to imitate such symptoms led to accusations of malingering; the accusation assumed that a non-traumatized person could choose whereas a traumatized person could not.
The more we use the term trauma, the harder it is to be precise. As psychologist Richard J. McNally (2005) notes, the widespread use of the word “trauma” does not indicate clarity about what exactly it is: “trauma might be defined by the objective attributes of the stressor, by the subjective responses of the victim, or by both” (79). Cathy Caruth (1996) in her rereading of Freud’s theories of trauma similarly blurs the distinction between trauma as event and trauma as subjective response: “trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (11). Consistent with a fundamental uncertainty about whether trauma is the catastrophic event or the uncontrolled response to the event, Chaos Walking shifts from one definition to the other, and for this reason proves far better at explaining how characters recover from physical trauma than from psychological trauma. 3

It is also striking that in a novel where so many characters are traumatized, either physically or psychologically, the word “trauma” appears only once. Presumably because the word has become so commonplace, the term is never defined. This assumption of knowledge is in sharp contrast to the introduction of trauma in American children’s literature in the 1990s, when authors were conscious that they were introducing a new vocabulary to their readers. 4 Rather than provide a definition, Ness takes advantage of readers’ expectation that characters who have witnessed death, whether it is parental death or genocide, and either as victims or perpetrators, are likely to be psychologically traumatized. Assuming that we can recognize trauma, he subverts our confidence that we really do know what it is. The only time that the word “trauma” is used occurs when Viola realizes that her inability to hear Todd’s thoughts may not be evidence of war-induced trauma, as she had assumed (Monsters 255). She suddenly realizes that the absence of Todd’s Noise is the result of Prentiss’s ability to control the male settlers through a combination of hypnosis and telepathy, an ambiguous power that not only constructs parallels between him and medical professionals accused of using hypnosis to implant false memories in their patients, but also paradoxically associates him with healing, since his power helps Todd deal with his own traumatic memories: “it makes the screaming of the war disappear…makes it so I don’t gotta see all the dying over and over” (Monsters 108). What Viola had mistakenly assumed was a symptom of trauma is a way of reducing its symptoms.

Further complicating Ness’s exploration of traumatic memory is the place of trauma in the representation of the Land. Literary scholars routinely assert that “one of the main features of trauma is the difficulty of verbal communication” (Higonnet [2008] 117), refer to the inability of “integrate[ing] the traumatic event into consciousness” (McMaster [2008] 57), and trust that “repetitive, intrusive forms of visualization” (Vickroy qtd. in McMaster 57) are key symptoms of trauma. In Chaos Walking we may well assume the effects of trauma as soon as we learn that an enslaved group of the indigenous inhabitants have lost their
The ability to communicate telepathically because of the actions initiated by Prentiss, and this is further supported when we learn that the indigenous language that Prentiss destroyed was visual, not oral. But the trauma of the enslaved group is quite different from the trauma-free visual communication system of the Land who have not been enslaved. The visual in *Chaos Walking* is thus presented as both symptom of trauma and also as “true language” (*Monsters* 81). Just as Viola has to learn to distinguish between symptoms of trauma and Prentiss’s telepathic control of Todd’s mind, so too are readers encouraged to question their assumptions about the relationship between the visual and the traumatic.

Readers are also encouraged to read *Chaos Walking* as a Holocaust novel. Although the Library of Congress cataloguing data does not classify it as such a novel, Holocaust parallels are plentiful: they include but are not limited to the enslavement of a targeted group, their numeric branding, the sadistic medical experiments inflicted upon them, the mass shooting that only 1017 survives, and the humiliation that he subsequently experiences as he broods upon the group’s lack of resistance to their oppressors. When the Sky refers to “Crimes Against the Land” (*Monsters* 359), the phrase clearly echoes crimes against humanity, a phrase popularized during the Nuremberg trials of the Nazis, just as Neville Chamberlin’s infamous defence of the 1938 Munich Agreement is an intertext of the mayor’s speech: “PEACE IN OUR TIME” (*Monsters* 334).

Certainly the tension between the discourse of choice and the experience of trauma in *Chaos Walking* is similar to patterns evident in Holocaust fiction for young people. One recurring challenge of such fiction is the conflict between the genre imperative of giving young readers reassuring stories about choice and the historical reality that for the victims of the Holocaust, the space for choice was severely limited (Kertzer 2002). However, Ness deviates from the patterns that dominate Holocaust historical fiction for young people in a narrative that keeps demonstrating how easy it is for victims to become perpetrators. All three adolescent protagonists—Todd, Viola, and 1017—are both traumatized and in danger of becoming perpetrators. In contrast, eliding the distinction between victim and perpetrator is rarely an issue in 1990s children’s fiction about the Holocaust; for example in 1990s time-travel fiction, young people tempted by neo-Nazi activity normally learn to abandon their admiration for perpetrators when they are transported into the bodies of Jewish characters during the Holocaust. But twenty years later, perhaps because we live in a post 9/11 world that the novel alludes to in the way Prentiss oversees episodes of torture by waterboarding, the distinction between victim and perpetrator blurs. The men who torture may have been traumatized by their exposure to Noise and thus more vulnerable to Prentiss’s control, but when they torture, they are perpetrators.
Furthermore, because the Land possess a collective mind, the “Never forget” imperative of Holocaust fiction for young readers resonates differently. Ness’s treatment of the Land’s concept of leadership implies that memories of personal trauma threaten ideal leadership precisely because leaders who are traumatized are more likely to repeat the past. Although trauma victims are often portrayed as incapable of action—too traumatized to act—Ness’s use of speculative fiction allows him to highlight the consequences when trauma victims have political power. In the final volume of the trilogy, the elder Sky (the current leader of the Land) constantly exhorts 1017 that in order to become a proper leader, he must master the rage and desire for personal revenge that torment him. He attempts to reassure 1017 that memory of the enslavement and massacre will persist, since in the collective memory of the Land, “nothing is forgotten,” but 1017 responds that the memory of an event differs from the experience of it: “A memory is not the thing remembered” (Monsters 119).? The Sky acknowledges that this distinction may be valid and it is one often drawn in Holocaust memoirs when survivors insist that those who did not experience the death camps can have no real idea of what they were like.

In addition, the need to enclose trauma in a separate space is evident when the Sky asserts that leadership requires secrecy: “the Land must sometimes keep secrets from itsf. . . . It is the only way to make Hope possible” (Monsters 272). Immediately following this statement—which as a metacritical comment about how hope is produced in young people’s writing might be compared to Prentiss’s observation about why people want to believe in choice—the Sky reveals that in the circle of the Pathways’ End, a space guarded by Pathways (members of the Land dedicated to protecting such secrets), the Sky has hidden and healed Todd’s stepfather, Ben. Defining Pathways’ End as the space “where the Sky leaves thoughts that are too dangerous to be widely known,” the Sky reveals that Ben has recovered from the physical trauma that should have killed him (Monsters 273).

Not just Ben but Todd too is placed within Pathways’ End in order to recover from his severe wounds. Does the healing within the space of Pathways’ End imply that 1017 might also place the rage produced by his personal trauma within this recuperative space? Ness never clarifies whether Pathways’ End is also a place for healing psychological wounds. What he focuses on instead is the contrast between the elder Sky’s view of the need for setting apart dangerous thoughts and Ben’s post-recovery conviction that the future of the planet lies in evolving in the direction of the Land. Certain that if all the settlers can learn to speak as the Land do then there will no longer be any conflict, Ben embraces the concept of open communication—essentially a world without trauma; the Sky seeks to isolate it.

In the conclusion of Chaos Walking Viola watches Ben and wonders if “every man [and perhaps every woman if the female settlers can learn to access Noise] will eventually give himself over so totally to the voice of the planet” (Monsters 590). While Ness provides no answer, we might consider how different Ben’s faith in transparent, honest communication is from the Sky’s advice to 1017. Characteristic of a novel of ideas, Ness does not indicate whose views are correct. Instead, he stresses that the true leader can govern wisely only if he is not driven by traumatic memories that he is unable to control. The Sky teaches 1017 that some personal memories endanger the good of the whole, and that the true leader has as little choice as the victim of trauma: “being called ‘the Sky’ is the same exile as being called ‘the Return,’ and more, not an exile be chose” (Monsters 268). The Sky has no choice when other members of the Land choose him as leader.

Although Chaos Walking might be read as gesturing towards contemporary practices of truth and reconciliation, a major difference between the conditions governing those practices and the conclusion of the novel is that 1017 is the sole survivor of the genocide. Only because there are no others is the relationship between his personal trauma and the collective memory of the Land so crucial. The ending of Chaos Walking is hopeful to the degree that it implies that the settlers and the Land have avoided cultural trauma because 1017 has chosen to “act like the Sky” (Monsters 539). This conclusion supports Jeffrey C. Alexander’s
thesis that cultural trauma is not the inevitable and natural result of a horrendous event (8). Insisting that “Events are not inherently traumatic,” Alexander emphasizes that the construction of an event as a cultural trauma requires that “members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (8, 1). Alexander and also Neil J. Smelser stress that cultural trauma requires group agreement that their collective identity has been altered in a fundamental and negative manner, but this is not the case in Monsters of Men. Despite the settlers’ discovery that some of them are natural “Pathways” able to transmit neural messages just as the Land Pathways do, there is little evidence in the novel’s conclusion that the Land’s identity has been permanently altered, and if it has been altered, the change is hopeful, not negative.

The story of 1017’s uncertain transformation from traumatized survivor/witness of genocide to the Land’s new leader exemplifies how Alexander and Smelser distinguish between individual and cultural trauma. As 1017, he is a traumatized witness, unable to escape repetitive visual flashbacks of the massacre of his fellow beings and of his “one in particular” (Monsters 271). To be an effective leader of the collective, to be the new Sky after the old Sky dies during the apocalyptic war with the colonists, he must (somehow) set aside his personal trauma in the way he abandons his earlier names. Just as Alexander connects cultural trauma to concepts of collective identity, when 1017 is told to act like the Sky, he is implicitly being advised that his personal memories threaten the Land’s “sense of its own identity” (Alexander 10). The Land has experienced Holocaust-like events, but moving forward requires that the Sky shield his memories of personal trauma—he is after all the sole survivor—and control how they affect the memories of the collective.

In focusing the trilogy’s final volume upon 1017, Ness raises several issues about Holocaust representation in young people’s writing: not just the role of genre in affecting that representation but also the implications of Maurice Halbwachs’s (1992) sociological thesis that social frameworks control what individuals remember. Consistent with the growth of genocide studies (in which the Holocaust is examined as one of many genocides), Chaos Walking depicts the Holocaust as a dominant but not unique genocidal event, and invokes Holocaust analogies that suggest that the Holocaust, like the word trauma, has entered popular discourse. Like Ness, Thomas Buergenthal (2009) in his memoir, A Lucky Child: A Memoir of Surviving Auschwitz as a Young Boy, is as interested in what comes after the Holocaust as he is in depicting its horrific details. Although he believes that his years in post-war Germany enabled him to “overcome hatred and desire for revenge” (192), in a Reading Group Guide included with his memoir, he admits that had he written his memoir earlier “the book would have dwelt too much on all the cruelties I witnessed and been hate filled” (2). And elsewhere in his memoir, Buergenthal is much vaguer about how long it took him to get beyond “the cycle of hatred and violence” (163). Both Buergenthal and Ness’s interest in getting beyond the cycle of hatred and violence may signal how Holocaust representation in young people’s writing may soon focus more on getting beyond the event than on the event itself. Our desire for stories that tell us that there is always choice even when the historical record and the experience of trauma suggest otherwise is hard to quench, and it is quite likely that one function of Holocaust-inflected speculative fiction will be to satisfy that desire.
Notes
1 Library of Congress cataloguing data states that social problems, telepathy, and space colonies are examined in all three books. Human-animal communication appears as an additional topic in *The Knife of Never Letting Go*, and war leads the list of subjects in the final volume, *Monsters of Men*.
2 Although I refer to the indigenous survivor as 1017 in the context of his personal trauma and as the Sky when he succeeds the former Sky to become leader of the Land, his uncertain identity means that I also refer to him as 1017/the Sky.
3 Although Prentiss appears to be one of the few characters who are not traumatized, we might read his ultimate destruction by the planetary Noise he has tried to control as trauma.
4 See Virginia Euwer Wolff’s (1991) *The Mozart Season* where the heroine’s father must spell trauma for her and illustrate its use through several examples (Wolff 66).
5 Ness conveys this visual language by having the Land “show” their thoughts rather than “speak” them.
7 Ness uses different fonts to distinguish the voices of his characters, including the voices of the animals that communicate with the settlers. He also uses italics to signal the non-verbal communication of the Land. The shift from italics to non-italics communicates 1017’s uncertain identity; because of his traumatic experiences, he is both haunted by visual traumatic memories and unable to communicate fluently in the visual language of the Land.

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Children’s Books

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During the period of Japanese colonization (1910-1945), especially during World War II, thousands of young Korean girls were forced to work as sex slaves in so-called ‘comfort stations’. The silenced voices of Korean girls who were victimized and abused in this way have recently become an important topic in Korean children’s books. This paper examines attempts to break that silence and to give voice to the young Korean victims of this atrocity in Korean children’s literature. The teenage girls in these picture books and novels describe the trauma of their forced journeys, their systematic abuse and the difficulties they faced reintegrating into society afterwards. In this article, the concepts of dark secrets and therapeutic, authoritative, and critical voices are used to examine literature which confronts historical trauma and depicts the violation of childhood.
Historical Background: The Japanese Colonization of Korea

From the Japanese invasion of Korea in 1910 until Japan’s defeat in 1945, Korea was a colony of Japan. During this thirty-five-year period, Japan, like many Western colonial powers, took full advantage of its colonies. During the Second World War, Japan expanded its colonizing governance and imperialism in administrative and economic policies throughout Asia. As the war approached its end, Korean youth became human resources for the desperate Japanese military. Young Koreans were conscripted into a wide range of labor battalions including military sex slavery, the so-called “comfort women” (Dudden, Horsley, Taylor). Soh notes that the term “comfort women” is an “English translation of the Japanese euphemism ianfu, and refers to the tens of thousands of young women and girls of various ethnic and national backgrounds who were pressed into sexual servitude during the Asia Pacific War” (xii). Most of the male victims of forced labor were aged between 19 and 45, whereas the majority of comfort women victims were under 20, many younger than 15 years old (Tanaka, Kim-Gibson). From 1932 until the end of the Second World War in 1945, most Japanese military camps had “comfort stations.” These were actually a network of “officially-sanctioned rape camps” (Horsley). The number of victims of the comfort stations is estimated to be between 40,000 and 300,000, of whom 80-90% came from Korea (Kwon). These extreme variations in the figures arise from the differing definitions of comfort women used by field researchers.

Like many other countries, Korea’s involvement in the Second World War continues to create international and internal tensions around the consequences of the war and the on-going victimization of the colonized. International calls for an official apology and admission of guilt from the Japanese government and compensation for Korean victims of military sex slavery have not been resolved. Internally, the Korean government has been criticized for its passivity in dealing with these issues. Moreover, a double standard toward victims of the Second World War within Korea has been observed by the media. For example, the Korean Liberation Association—a group comprised mostly of male war veterans—has opposed the opening of a memorial museum in honor and recognition of the comfort women’s suffering on the grounds that it would result in a “defamation of character” for the other patriotic independence movement fighters (MBC). This double standard among the victims of the Second World War indicates that comfort women still need to fight to recover their lost human rights. Nevertheless, former comfort women and their advocates are determined to make their voices heard. By narrating the atrocities of the past, these women contribute to global education about historical violence.

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and, hopefully, will deter its repetition in the future.

Although the majority of the victims of the comfort stations were teenage girls, the explicitly sexual nature of the abuse and the extreme violence of the stations make the experiences of the comfort women particularly difficult to narrate for an audience of the same age. Authors need to find a way to present the events realistically, but will not wish to inflict trauma on their young readers. In the following section, I introduce a small selection of picture books and novels about comfort women that have recently appeared in Korea. These are the first picture books to illustrate the sexual nature of the atrocity in relation to the comfort women and the novels are also new. Earlier, symbolic poems that cried out for the lost sovereignty of Korea had been written, but books telling the stories of actual comfort women are a relatively recent phenomenon. These books are semi-biographies that are based on ianfu testimonies, but some fictional elements (e.g. additional characters and details about the settings) have been added to make the stories more accessible to young readers.

Children’s Literature about Korean Comfort Women

In Korean children’s literature, most of the stories about the Second World War are biographies of fighters in the independence movement. The Korean War (1950-1953) has been the most common historical war in Korean children’s literature, even though the period of Japanese colonization is one of the darkest eras in Korean history. And anti-communist education has drawn even more attention than the Korean War because of Korea’s political division into the North and the South (Zur).

In children’s literature published in the United States, books on the Second World War tend to focus on Japanese-American interment centers and the Jewish Holocaust (Norton). The bombing of Hiroshima is another theme in American Second World War children’s literature. Examples include The Bracelet (Uchida and Yardley 1993), Weedflower (Kadahota 2009), Under the Blood Red Sun (Salisbury 1995) and My Hiroshima (Morimoto 1992). Faithful Elephants (Tsuchiya and Lewin 1997) and Hiroshima No Pika (Maruki 1982) have been translated from Japanese into English and published in America. However, the stories of Asian victims who suffered under the occupying Japanese forces are rarely heard in books published in English. None of the texts I discuss here are available in English; the translations are my own.

When My Name Was Keoko (Park 2002) portrays two young Korean protagonists during the Second World War and Year of Impossible Goodbyes (Choi 1991) and So Far From the Bamboo Grove (Watkins 1986) focus on the end of the war and its aftermath. These books address the same political oppression and international politics as the books I discuss, but the experiences of comfort women receive scant attention. Lee argues that “the absent historical context is the much more sustained crime against humanity in sexual slavery and enforced prostitution committed by the Japanese Empire against many thousands of young Korean women amongst others during World War II” (92). Thus, it is important to examine recent attention to
the depiction of comfort women’s experiences in Korean children’s literature. Four books, three of which were published in 2010, are examined here to explore the nature of trauma as a “dark secret.” The books give voice to women who survived the comfort stations.

Secrets and Voices

Gabarino’s concept of trauma is defined in terms of three dark secrets (Garbarino, Garbarino and Bedard) which are helpful for understanding the young Korean girls’ fear as they faced confusing and unpredictable circumstances. The “Three Dark Secrets” that society keeps from children that Garbarino and Bedard (2001) discuss are as follows: 1) Showden’s Secret that the durability of the human body is challenged; 2) Dantrell’s Secret that adults cannot protect children; and 3) Milgram’s Secret that severe pain can be deliberately inflicted by adults. Comfort women were exposed to these secrets as adolescents and pre-adolescents when they were taken from their families and forced into sexual slavery. They were denied the opportunity to be childlike, to be “dynamic, imaginative, experimental, interactive and unstable” (Hollindale 46). They were robbed of their innocence and severely traumatized.

Children’s books about comfort women give voice to experiences that have so far been silenced, and in doing so they reveal “dark secrets” to the Korean children who read these books today. In this way, the authors, like those collecting testimonies from military sex slaves, seek “ways to bring previously unheard voices into conversations for giving voice to the voiceless” (Thomson 3). The stories of the comfort women in these four books are based on interviews and the testimonies of the victims of military sex slavery, and so they give voice to genuine victims.

Hadfield and Haw suggest that each individual uses more than one voice and they list three types of voices: Authoritative, Critical, and Therapeutic. The stories of Ianfu victims all contain these three voices. The therapeutic voice is a voice that supports people who have suffered and enables them to deal with difficult experiences by speaking and discussing those hardships in safe spaces. This is the most important voice that can be heard in the four books, and the one to which I pay most attention. All four books offer Therapeutic Voices as the comfort station survivors reflect on their lost youth and their contemporary battles for political justice from a safe space that enables them to express themselves. The therapeutic voices evident in these comfort women’s stories are not simply about the individual women coming to terms with their traumas, they are also a way to draw national and even international attention to the comfort women’s suffering and marginalization which continues today.

In addition to the therapeutic voice, the protagonists in these books also speak with authoritative and critical voices. Thompson defines an Authoritative Voice as “a representative voice intended to speak on behalf of a group … It is exercised politically” (4). The Critical Voice questions established opinions. If we understand “Authoritative Voice” to mean testifying on behalf of peer victims and “Critical Voice” to refer to voices calling for social justice and contributing to “knowledge-producing communities”, such as schools where these stories are to be read, then all of the stories about comfort women can be said to contain all three voices. In telling their stories, comfort station survivors face their traumas and reveal their secrets to a new generation of Korean adolescents in an accessible manner that invites empathy and understanding. By listening to these voices, these young readers can play an important role in calling for justice.

New Books on Comfort Women

The four recently published books on comfort women discussed in this paper are the two picture books - 꽃할머니 [The Flower Granny] (2010) and 끝나지 않은 겨울 [Never Ending Winter] (2010) - and the two novels: 모래시계가 된 위안부 할머니 [The Human Hourglass] (2010), 붕선화가 필 무렵 [The Season of Balsamina] (2009). Even though these stories have different characters and story plots, the central themes are similar to those found in Holocaust literature. A central concern for both kinds of story is the need to emphasize
their historical truthfulness. A common way of revealing their authenticity is to include author’s notes in which the author explains her personal involvement with former comfort women and what motivated her to write their stories. For instance, Kwon ends *The Flower Granny* with the comment “This book is written based on the statements by Ms. Sim Dahl Yeon who was abducted to serve at the Japanese military as a comfort women when she was just 13 years old in 1940 ” (end page). These explanations clearly show that the authors consider themselves to be advocates for increased historical awareness.

The Holocaust literature scholar, Lydia Kokkola, notes “The hesitancy with which most authors approach this subject implies that they feel that the only people who have the right to speak are those who were empirically, rather than imaginatively, affected by the events” (6). The nature of literature about comfort women and the Holocaust are different, but the significance of truthfulness and authenticity in representing such events and experiences is honored similarly. Truthfulness is important to Korean authors but comfort station survivors have so far found limited channels to tell their stories. The authors of these books provide a vehicle to give voice to the voiceless survivors and reveal the truth to the public.

Koreans do not seem to concerned about whether or not the author was a comfort woman, but they are clearly concerned about the many challenges involved in writing a story on such a sensitive topic for young readers, and not all these problems are related to the writing process. For example, Yoon-Duck Kwon, the author of *The Flower Granny*, has discussed the difficulties of getting her book published through the Peace Picture Book Project (Heo). The Peace Picture Book Project is a cooperative international picture book project in which children’s literature publishers from three nations—South Korea, China, and Japan—publish books together. The rationale of the project is to develop historical awareness and an appreciation for peace by recognizing the sufferings of youth during the many wars in the region. However, even these well-intentioned publishers were unable to remain politically neutral, and the topic of publishing books on the comfort women was challenging (Heo).

The books that did manage to find publishers follow a similar “grand narrative” as they organize the trauma the comfort women have experienced into a form that adolescent readers can understand. All of them start by indicating that the woman telling her story eventually found a safe space, that is, all of them start with a therapeutic voice. In the next section, I shall show how all the stories begin with a therapeutic voice, but end with authoritative and critical voices.
Understanding Korean Comfort Women’s Trauma: From Therapeutic Voices to Advocacy

Although each victim’s story is individual, all four books follow a similar pattern. They all begin in contemporary Korea, which reassures their young readers that the protagonist found a safe space. Holocaust literature often uses a frame story like this as they provide “reassurance that time is now past and life continues” (Kokkola 155). The stories then move to the time when the protagonist was the same age as the reader and recall memories of a normal day prior to their abduction. After their abduction, the women recall the physical and mental violence they endured during their time in the comfort stations, and their continued difficulties immediately after the war as they made their way home. Each of the books comments on the protagonist’s continued suffering as they lived silenced under a veil of shame. The books conclude with a call for greater social awareness.

When I Was Young: Indication of a Safe Space

As already noted, all the books start in contemporary Korea, which fulfils the necessary condition for a therapeutic voice in that the protagonists recall their traumatic experiences in a safe space. This contemporary setting is also important for the expression of critical voices at the end of the books. While the two picture books—The Flower Granny and Never Ending Winter—briefly indicate the existence of a safe space through their use of the present tense, the two novels—The Season of Balsamina and The Human Hourglass—imply the existence of a safe space through their incorporation of additional characters from the present. In The Human Hourglass, a 6th grader, Eunbi, moves to a new home where she encounters the mysterious old lady, her neighbor, Geumju Hwang. Eunbi’s presence in the story indicates that the novel is set in the present. When Eunbi sees Geumju protesting about the plight of the ianne on the TV, her curiosity and concern develops into a friendship despite community indifference. In The Season of Balsamina, the story starts off with a rumor about a “prickly” old lady known as “Granny Hedgehog.” Unlike the protagonists in the other books, Granny Hedgehog (whose real name is Soonyi) remains unable to tell her story directly to another person. Instead, her stories about her experiences as a comfort woman are made into an animated film for children. After the film has been shown on television, the people in Soonyi’s community are reminded of the sufferings of the comfort women and pledge to do better by them.
Memory of My Normal Day
The protagonists’ recollection of a normal day prior to their abduction signals how dramatically their life changed as a result. In Never Ending Winter, the protagonist was 15 years old and The Flower Granny was just 13 years old when they were separated from their families and experienced their last day of normal childhood. The two novels are more detailed in their descriptions of the girls’ normal years and this normalcy includes their poverty. In The Season of Balsamina, Soonyi leaves home to work as a nanny. In return, her father is not called up for military service and her food allowance can be shared amongst her family. Geumju, in The Human Hourglass, volunteers to be a foster child to earn money to pay for her father’s medication. This initial separation is caused by poverty, but results in a forced journey into sexual slavery. They learn what Garbarino and Bedard term Dantrell’s Secret: that adults cannot protect children from abduction or the harshness of life. Eventually their role as breadwinner is subverted as the young protagonist is forced into prostitution.

The End of Childhood
The girls’ abduction is depicted as an abrupt end to childhood. Unexpectedly and forcefully the protagonists join other girls and are transported to unfamiliar places and lodged in military camps. Separations from their co-kidnapped friends and siblings violate the last comfort they have on their journeys. Their anxieties and fears are worsened by rumors of destinations and untold “job” descriptions at the comfort stations. The girls are treated with such extreme physical and mental violence that they are unable to offer even the slightest resistance. In addition to the physical and mental violence of the sex crimes, they are also traumatized by the war itself (i.e. from bombs exploding nearby and shooting), physical pain (beatings, injections administered without a reason, and diseases), as well as the mental shock of violating the cultural moral codes surrounding prostitution and the loss of friends who commit suicide.

Unexpected and Undesired Changes in My Childhood
The girls in The Flower Granny, Never Ending Winter and The Season of Balsamina are all abducted. The suddenness of being abducted is a major trauma in its own right: the girls anxiously listen to rumors about what is going to happen to them, which only increases their fears. The protagonist in The Flower Granny is kidnapped while she is picking wild greens with her sister. The girl in Never Ending Winter is offered a ride home, and the truck drops her at a comfort station instead of home. Attracting a protagonist with a false promise is another method for abduction. In The Human Hourglass, the Japanese authority tells Geumju’s family that “She will get paid every month for working in an ammunitions factory or in hospitals. She will save a lot of money within just three years” (Lee 59). Geumju thinks she
can earn money from this job and so pay for her father’s medication. She volunteers to go to Japan to become a foster daughter in a Japanese family. Deceit was the most common method used in Korea: false promises of employment in Japan or in other Japanese occupied territories were frequently used to lure young girls away from home (Tanaka). This was particularly effective as many Korean families were desperately poor as a result of the war (Garbarino). Once they were abducted, the girls’ lives changed forever.

Physical and Mental Violence
When the young girls arrive at the comfort stations, they are repeatedly raped. In The Flower Granny, the author draws attention to the efficient routines that surround these authorized rapes at the comfort stations. The protagonist is assigned a cell where she is routinely raped until she accepts that this was the “job” to which she has been assigned. All of the protagonists in all of the stories are assigned to similar small cells, where they experience similarly violent inductions into their lives as sex slaves. The protagonist in Never Ending Winter recalls “The solder ran at me undressing his pants” (Kang and Lee np), and in The Flower Granny, the protagonist recalls seeing another victim: “A thirteen-year-old girl’s bottom was suffused with blood” (Kwon np). Soonyi simply states “My clothes are all torn apart and I am no longer the same person…” (Yoon 69). The traumatic experiences grow worse as groups of soldiers are “lined up…after one left, another one entered the room. …It was hard to count how many soldiers entered this room (and raped me)” (Kwon np). After their induction period, the girls still serviced many soldiers every day. In Never Ending Winter, the protagonist reflects, “When I had too many soldiers in a day, I could not even walk. Every week, they gave me an injection against disease. On those days, I could not even move an inch from the pain after the shot” (Kang and Lee np). They learned the dark secrets that their human bodies were not durable, that adults willingly inflicted this harm upon them and that no one would protect them (Garbarino and Bedard). In addition to the suffering of these young girls as individuals, these systematic rapes are a form of cultural violence: 80-90% of the young girls who were violated in this way were Korean. The attacks were motivated by the desire to obliterate Korean cultural values.

Surviving from a Life-Threatening Time
In addition to the constant physical violence, the girls were controlled by their fears and their isolation. The war-filled the atmosphere with noise of bombs, shooting, screaming, moaning, and loud attacking aircrafts adds the young protagonists’ trauma. In The Season of Balsamina, Soonyi fights to overcome her fears caused by the noise from the war as well as her more intimate fears arising from her constant physical and sexual abuse. The protagonists’ realization that they are imprisoned in the comfort station and prohibited from even holding a conversation with the other women results in a profound depression. Some women committed suicide and others died from the physical violence, which left those who survived even more traumatized.
Post War Trauma and Shame

The protagonists assume that their suffering will end when the war ends. They assume they will be able to return home and be reunited with their families immediately. Instead, however, they are forced to continue fighting for their lives. As the Japanese military withdrew, the women from the comfort stations were caught up in the onslaught of the attacking American forces. In *Never Ending Winter*, the protagonist explains “Finally Japan was defeated. I had barely survived, and still I did not know what to do. I heard about a ferry heading to Chosun [previously Korea]. When I was on the board, I learned that I had been imprisoned at an island, Okinawa” (Kang and Lee np).

Once the girls finally make it home, there is no return to normalcy. They suffer from extreme post-war trauma, and respond as though they were still in a comfort station. They are filled with guilt and shame about the things they were forced to do. And they are not always welcomed home. In *The Flower Granny*, the protagonist is shunned by the people in her hometown after her parents pass away. The prospect of returning home was the girls’ only hope while they were trapped in the comfort station, but after the war they were forced to realize that their lives would never be “normal” again; “home” turns out to be a fantasy.

With no family to talk to and an often unwelcoming community around them, the *ianfu* in these books grow old, keeping their traumatic stories a secret until something happens that urges them to tell their story. “The flower granny could not tell anybody about her scars. She buried the fact she was one of the comfort women deeply in her heart... She felt people whispering, gossiping about her and saying that she made her body dirty” (Kwon np). The decision to speak is not solely a therapeutic act. The women all stress that they were not the only victims, and they offer their stories as a way of advocating for greater social awareness.

Critical and Authoritative Voice: Advocacy of Social Awareness

Kokkkola notes the most popular endings in Holocaust literature focus on either the moment when the camps were liberated or the end of the war. The four comfort women stories end with critical and authoritative voices advocating for social awareness and justice. Korean *ianfu* victims’ true liberation happens when they can finally be open about being survivors from the comfort stations. Their liberation involves overcoming their personal shame, self-consciousness and feelings of guilt, but also having their experiences acknowledged by their community. Most of the comfort station survivors hid their trauma and scars and kept their secret for a long time until they were prompted by other comfort women to provide witness testimonies.
Finding other comfort women who had suffered in similar ways has been important for the real survivors. In the four books, the protagonists each mention how hearing about other comfort women’s experiences helped them to tell their own stories for the first time. They speak with authoritative voices, offering a “representative voice intended to speak on behalf of others” (Thompson 4). In *Never Ending Winter*, the protagonist explains that “I left my hometown. I had no family. I moved to different places. One day I saw an elderly lady talking on TV. She was one of the comfort women like me. When I heard her story, I couldn’t help crying. For the first time, I cried aloud for a long time. I came to realize that I shouldn’t be blamed for what happened, you should. You started the war and robbed me and my country of freedom and peace” (Kang and Lee np). Realizing that they are not to blame for their suffering is a moment of spiritual liberation for each of the protagonists. All four books offer closure by suggesting that the comfort station survivors are healed by the therapeutic act of telling their stories in the present time. At the same time, the women offer critical voices which advocate for greater historical awareness of their sufferings. The communities in the stories are depicted as showing remorse for failing to recognize what the women have been through and a willingness to learn more about this great injustice. The women’s voices are thus therapeutic, authoritative, and critical.

Recently, Korean children’s literature has included a number of stories set during the Second World War with particular emphasis on young victims. By re-examining this time period, authors have drawn attention to traumas that have been silenced from cultural memory and forgotten by the national and global communities. Although these stories risk opening old wounds, they also contain meaningful potential to challenge our ways of understanding history and to help children today learn about the stories of everyday people. History is not only the stories of famous people and political events; it should also reflect the stories of ordinary young people whose lives were affected by world events. Literature about the Korean comfort women enables young readers to vicariously experience some of their fears and so resist becoming passive. Moreover, thinking about what these women experienced and how it has been kept a social secret should develop more critical thinking. This is particularly important as contemporary Korean children’s reading is often driven by their ability to perform well on tests, which makes them passive. For such children, the need to become more critical in their reading is most urgent. These stories invite Korean children to experience history as it was lived and so develop the authentic historical awareness needed to engage in social activism. Each of these books offers more than the story of a survivor; each suggests ways of living as a responsible member of society.
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Several recent examples of teen trauma fiction from North America and Australia depict teen protagonists enduring a range of symptoms as a consequence of trauma experienced earlier in their lives. Each protagonist is represented as experiencing his or her own individual trauma, but they share a similar range of symptoms, such as disturbed sleep patterns, a lack of control over their lives, shattered social relationships, indirection and, at times, a seemingly inexplicable inability to act. The past is represented as intruding on the present either in the form of “ghosts” and memories, or in the form of “memory traces.”

Total psychological recovery is presented as being impossible, although all four protagonists are in a better mental state at the close of each novel than they were at the beginning. The protagonist is assisted by someone outside the family, who guides them towards recovery and enables them to strengthen his or her sense of self.

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Trauma is usually defined as a life-threatening experience or one that transgresses bodily integrity. Its impact when experienced by a child or adolescent is even more acute, as trauma affects parts of the self that are not yet fully formed, causing lifelong repercussions. Trauma has been variously conceptualized by theorists such as Judith Herman as an experience that impacts the very essence of the self. Originally, the word trauma was used to describe physical wounds, which usually heal fairly well. When used to describe a psychological wound or injury, the damage is more resistant to cure. Cathy Caruth has observed that, “The wound of the mind—the breach in the mind’s experience of time, self and the world—is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that...is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known” (Caruth 4). The term trauma fiction signals the application of the critical category of trauma from medical discourses to the field of literary studies. As Caruth’s comment implies, the inability to heal from psychological trauma is foregrounded in many of these stories.

In contemporary trauma fiction written for teen readers and including teen protagonists, certain literary features tend to recur across a range of texts. This article looks in detail at four key literary devices and features in recent teen trauma fiction: a fragmented narrative voice, the role of memory and ghosts, repetition, and allusion. In combination, these features serve to depict the protagonist’s traumatic state of mind as well as the process of recovery from trauma. Not all works of trauma fiction include all four features, but at least some of them are likely to occur within each text. The challenge for the novelist is to represent the impact of trauma whilst staying true to its symptoms and consequences and, simultaneously, to represent a fictional world that is recognizable to its readers.

All four novels represent the psychological process of recovery from trauma, and reveal the protagonists’ need for an outsider’s perspective to help them reflect on their own abnormal responses.

The challenge for the novelist is to represent the impact of trauma whilst staying true to its symptoms and consequences and, simultaneously, to represent a fictional world that is recognizable to its readers.
This paper explores four key literary features which tend to recur in contemporary teen trauma fiction and are used to convey the protagonist’s traumatized state of mind. To illustrate these features, I have chosen four recently published novels from the U.S. and Australia. Two of the novels feature male protagonists, and two have female protagonists. All four novels represent the psychological process of recovery from trauma, and reveal the protagonists’ need for an outsider’s perspective to help them reflect on their own abnormal responses. The novels suggest some of the changes necessary for recovery, although none of the novels imply that the characters will be able to recover fully.

Contemporary North American and Australian Teen Trauma Fiction

In the four realist novels discussed here, each of the teen protagonists functions in a contemporary, “familiar” setting. Each of the texts portrays a resilient teen protagonist who survives and partially recovers from at least one traumatic experience. Sebastian, in Catherine Ryan Hyde’s novel *Chasing Windmills* (2008), lives in Manhattan. Aaron Rowe, in Scot Gardner’s *The Dead I Know* (2011), lives in a caravan park near the beach somewhere in Australia. Pip, the protagonist in Nicola Keegan’s *Swimming* (2009), spends much of her childhood in Kansas and her adolescence in California. And in Rebecca James’ *Beautiful Malice* (2010), Katherine has moved from Melbourne to Sydney just prior to the beginning of the narrative. The social world represented in each novel may be “familiar,” although it is immediately clear to readers that something about the way the character experiences his or her environment is seriously awry. Readers notice that these protagonists do not process their worlds or interact with others “normally.” All four novels depict the possibility of recovery and conclude on a hopeful note. In this way, they satisfy expectations that teen fiction is fundamentally optimistic. However, as there is the tendency for repetition, indirection and especially for trauma to re-surface during periods of intense emotional crisis, the possibility that the character will experience similar symptoms and difficulties at some later stage in their lives remains.

Michael Rothberg argues, in another context, that trauma fiction articulates a “different” form of reality and thus enacts a new mode of realism. He has devised the term “traumatic realism” to suggest the range of devices used in trauma narratives to try to reconcile how the
ordinary and extraordinary aspects of traumatic experience intersect and co-exist (9). In extreme or even unfamiliar contexts, as Grishakova suggests, the roles of common-sense frames may be misleading. The teen character does not necessarily behave in ways that conform to stereotypical knowledge and/or “rule-based behavior.” In addition, traumatized teens may not process the world or other characters’ behavior according to more conventional frames and scripts. If readers are to empathize with these traumatized characters, they need to be able to share, or at least partly share, the characters’ point of view. At times, writers of trauma narratives push realism to its limits in order to communicate that “traumatic knowledge” cannot be directly recalled or expressed without distortion. As readers, we need to interpret the texts in ways that are both stereotype-consistent and stereotype-inconsistent. For instance, in The Dead I Know, Aaron’s initial interactions with the woman he calls Mam do not immediately make much sense. At the supermarket, she buys dish-washing detergent, toilet paper and an orange for dinner, and muddles up his name, calling him David. But very quickly readers become aware of her memory issues, and learn to differentiate between her dementia and Aaron’s inability to recall certain aspects of his early childhood. We recognize the effects of trauma on the protagonists and, using our own knowledge of the world, we can adjust our own interpretation of events to take their perspectives into consideration. Equally, we can see some of the changes necessary in order for them to begin the process of recovery.

At the outset of Chasing Windmills, seventeen-year-old Sebastian happens to meet a girl called Maria on the subway, and experiences such a powerful, instant connection with her that he is unable to ignore it. His trauma is that he has spent the last ten years completely isolated in the almost exclusive company of his father, who has lied to him, telling him that his mother and maternal grandmother are dead. Sebastian’s powerful attraction to Maria is never fully explained, but, as she is already a mother of two young children (she had a son called C.J. at the age of fifteen and a daughter called Natalie at the age of twenty), perhaps he responds to her as a maternal figure.

Aaron, at the outset of The Dead I Know, has recently left school at the age of seventeen. The novel begins on his first day working for John Barton, who owns a funeral parlor. Aaron’s work means he is literally surrounded by death, but he seems unperturbed by this to the extent that readers may wonder whether he is deliberately seeking it out. On the other hand, he is troubled by recurring nightmares and sleepwalks. Towards the novel’s conclusion, Aaron is finally able to recall the exact nature of his trauma. When he was five years old, his father murdered his mother, and then threatened to kill Aaron, but instead turned the gun on himself.

The first chapter of Swimming introduces Pip, or Philomena, as a baby. Her desperate parents sign her up for aqua classes as a way of encouraging her to sleep more. Swimming quickly becomes the only activity which soothes her and, as an adolescent, she is selected to train for national and then, later, international swimming competitions. Her childhood includes at least two significant traumas. Her older sister, Bron, is seriously ill and then dies from leukemia, and, shortly afterwards, her bat-loving academic father, Leonard, is killed in an airplane crash. Her mother understandably struggles to recover, and Pip and her three younger sisters are mostly left to fend for themselves.

The brief opening to Beautiful Malice represents Katherine as a twenty-one year old. She regrets not attending the funeral of her former best friend Alice, not because she is grieving for
her but because she seems haunted by Alice’s memory. The majority of the novel depicts Katherine in Sydney, trying to recover after her younger sister Rachel has been raped and murdered, and the whole family is given no peace by local and national media. It makes matters worse that Katherine feels that she is to blame: she was responsible for her sister at the party the night she died.

Although the sources of trauma are very different in each of the four novels, the consequences and the road to recovery bear great resemblance. Before any of the protagonists can begin to heal, they need to be offered a markedly alternative view of the world. For each of them, this comes through an encounter with someone from outside their family, someone who is not personally affected by the trauma the protagonist has experienced.

Outsiders’ Perspectives: The First Step Towards Recovery

All four protagonists have families, but during the course of each narrative it becomes clear that each needs someone outside the family to help them begin the psychological process of recovery. At the outset of each text, all four teen characters are socially isolated, Sebastian (Chasing Windmills) and Aaron (The Dead I Know) dramatically so. Grishakova argues that we use stereotypes in our spontaneous, semi-automatic interactions with others. Stereotyped knowledge helps maintain social connections (Clark 2007). The teen protagonists in these novels do not have enough experience of others to have formed solid stereotypes (Grishakova 189). Sebastian’s only friend is a middle-aged woman, Delilah, who lives in the same apartment building, and Aaron appears to have no friends at all. The lack of friends is a symptom of the trauma these characters have experienced. There are also practical problems: Sebastian has not attended school since he was seven, and Aaron has attended five schools in as many years. Both characters are unable to interpret people’s emotions and behavior accurately, presumably as a result of the trauma they have experienced.

Readers share the perspectives of the traumatized boys as much of the text is focalized from the characters’ point of view. Nevertheless, readers are also reminded of how “normal” people behave (i.e. “stereotype-consistent knowledge”) through sections of the novel which are focalized through the outsiders who help the protagonists to recover. In Chasing Windmills, Delilah offers another, more conventional point of view. In The Dead I Know, alternative perspectives are provided by John Barton, his wife, and Skye, their young daughter, amongst others. These outside perspectives offer the first step towards recovery. The trauma itself is represented through the four key literary tools mentioned above: a fragmented narrative voice, the notion of haunting and ghosts, repetition, and allusion.

The trauma itself is represented through the four key literary tools mentioned above: a fragmented narrative voice, the notion of haunting and ghosts, repetition, and allusion.
male characters, who seem unable to protect themselves from potential danger or harm. For instance, when a murder takes place on the caravan site in *The Dead I Know*, Aaron is picked up and questioned by the police. They pursue a line of questioning during which Aaron inadvertently suggests that he might have been capable of committing the crime. He is open about the fact that he cannot remember what happens while he is sleepwalking. Readers know him well enough by this point to be sure he is not guilty of the crime and, in the end, the situation is resolved, but the episode suggests that Aaron has not yet developed a sufficiently robust sense of self-preservation.

### Trauma Surfacing: Memories, Ghosts and Hauntings

Cathy Caruth (1995) discusses the intrusion of the past into the present as a form of “possession or haunting,” which is embodied in the concept of the “ghost.” This second literary feature is present in all four texts considered here, but is particularly powerful in Nicola Keegan’s novel, *Swimming*, where Pip narrates her own story. *Swimming* is a coming-of-age novel, which ends with a long section titled “Just Tell Me What I Am and I’ll Be It.” By this point, Pip has retired from international swimming, having won eight Olympic gold medals at Los Angeles and Seoul. She would still be training and competing if not for two accidents. Now in her twenties, her life is characterized by indirection and unhappiness. In Paris, she experiences what appears to be some sort of personal crisis, in which she hallucinates about Leonard and Bron: “I close my eyes; a variety of cakes are spinning on a fast-moving cakewalk...There is need and with the need there is yearning. Bron’s got her eye on the Black Forest because she’s always liked the mixture of chocolate and cherry...Leonard says: Observing bats, like observing all natural phenomena, demands as much luck as skill and as much skill as patience. Many species hide away so successfully by day as to elude all order of pursuit” (Keegan 275; italics original). Even though Leonard and Bron died when Pip was a child, she still feels their presence haunting her mind. Even her former arch-rival, the East German Berliner swimmer, Fredrinka, continues to haunt Pip in strange ways.

In a discussion of similar details in contemporary adult trauma fiction, Anne Whitehead refers to these “ghosts” as “the traces of unresolved past events, or the ghosts of those who died too suddenly and violently to be properly mourned, possess those who are seeking to get on with the task of living” (6). Pip’s father, Leonard, died in a light airplane accident, but by that point, the whole family was already devastated by the death of Bron, and Pip wonders whether he crashed his plane deliberately. Pip’s life experience is so atypical that at times it sounds almost implausible. Grishakova suggests that the more “shared” and the more
compactly “mapped” human frames are, the more real they seem to be. Pip’s universe is represented as being highly idiosyncratic, she is only able to shape it and give it meaning through her swimming routines. Although not directly stated, the text also hints at unresolved anger towards her older sister, which remains unprocessed. Finally, in Paris, Pip begins her recovery with the support of a psychiatrist.

In Scot Gardner’s novel, *The Dead I Know*, memory is represented as partial and unreliable. Aaron cannot account for his own North American accent, nor can he explain the erratic and unpredictable behavior of his Mam, who turns out to be his grandmother. The nature of his trauma is not fully explained until very near the text’s conclusion, although some chapters begin with a fragment from a dream, separated from the rest of the text and written in italics. Since Aaron tells his own story, readers experience the world through his eyes, although not in ways identical to him. His dreams terrify him, and his sleepwalking is also distressing. Readers empathize with him but simultaneously affirm the otherness of his experiences. The memory traces which re-surface during his dreams initially sound bizarre and make no sense, for instance he recalls an “arc of toenail painted orange” (Gardner 31). Over the course of the narrative, however, a pattern starts to form and readers start to build an understanding of the traumatic event that Aaron has repressed in his memory. The toenail belongs to a foot, then a body, and the orange of the nail polish turns into a “pink sheet” and marks of red on the wall. Gradually, Aaron recovers enough memory to piece together the facts and remember the death of his parents.

Since the trauma of his parents’ death, his paternal grandmother has been responsible for his upbringing in Australia. However, the recent onset of Aaron’s grandmother’s dementia further complicates his world and leaves readers struggling to interpret it, as simple everyday things do not always make sense. Mam’s memory and her sense of where she is in time are unreliable. She sometimes calls him David, which is his middle name, but she does not seem perturbed by her inability to call him by the right name. Eventually, she is diagnosed as having dementia. The novel distinguishes between Aaron’s own incomplete and unreliable memories and the erratic nature of his grandmother’s behavior, which is determined by a very different memory disorder. Aaron does not remember anything that occurs while he is sleepwalking, and appears to have no memories of his life before he was five.
The role of memory is foregrounded in all of these texts, and can be regarded as another significant feature of teen trauma fiction. Memory is represented as being strongly associated with a sense of place, and trauma seems to disrupt this organic connection between memory and place. In all four texts, the protagonists move away from the site where they experienced the traumatic event, and attempt to re-establish themselves within a new landscape or cityscape, or a landscape that is associated with life before the original trauma took place. In Hyde’s novels, the original trauma occurs on the East Coast in more than one novel (Chasing Windmills; Becoming Chloe), and the protagonist is more likely to recover on the West Coast. Certain landscapes may offer a sense of security, or the opportunity for recovery. Sebastian in Chasing Windmills remembers times spent with his family in the Mojave Desert before the age of seven. In Swimming, one of the last family holidays before Pip’s father Leonard and her sister Bron die takes place in Paris. At the end of the novel, Pip returns to Paris in a deliberate attempt to re-organize her life and find new purpose and direction. Both Pip and Sebastian return to places associated with family and life before the traumatic events, and so repeat previous experiences. As the texts conclude with Sebastian in the Mojave Desert and Pip in Paris, it is not clear whether they will repeat aspects of their traumatic experiences.

Doomed to Repeat Their History?
A third prominent literary feature is repetition, which is evident in all four novels. Repetition may arise at the level of diction, imagery or plot, and, if the latter, the narrative is likely to abandon a more conventional linear sequence and develop a disrupted plot pattern. In Beautiful Malice, Katherine tells her story predominantly in the present tense, but she also flashbacks to different times in her past, including the shocking episode when Rachel was raped, which Katherine witnessed before making her own escape. It also includes flash-forwards to scenes that take place about four years in the future when Katherine is twenty-one. These future scenes confirm that Katherine survives and that her recovery is linked to her loving relationship with her boyfriend, Mick. Readers also learn that Mick has since died leaving her with a daughter called Sarah who is now four years old.

As a “framed totality,” Beautiful Malice offers its readers a strange experience of chronology and time. Linear time is interrupted, and the traditional plot pattern is disrupted. The narrative reflects on the difficulties the protagonist faces and will continue to grapple with in her future, even though Katherine is recovering. Rachel’s rape and murder have traumatized Katherine so
severely that she will never recover fully: “what I’m starting to understand is that there is no real end to this, there can be no complete absolution...The best I can hope for is that I can learn to forgive myself for being a less-than-perfect sister” (James 233).

Cathy Caruth’s understanding of trauma, based on Freud’s conception of the non-linear temporal relation to the past, informs my reading of Beautiful Malice and is also applicable to the three other texts already mentioned. The past intrudes into the present in the form of echoes and memories, to the extent that the initial trauma appears to generate further trauma. It is difficult to establish narrative progression, as chronology is constantly disrupted as the past re-surfaces. For instance, in Beautiful Malice, one of the perpetrators of the original crime, that is, one of the boys involved in Rachel’s murder, turns out to be the brother of her former best friend, Alice. Alice seeks revenge for the treatment of her brother, who, after being found guilty of being an accessory to murder, has been sent to prison. The original trauma re-surfaces when Katherine’s boyfriend, Mick, drowns while trying to save Alice from the ocean. Having recovered from the trauma of her sister’s death, the pregnant Katherine is now faced with the trauma of the death of her boyfriend. In other novels, repetition is built into the story through the use of allusions. Readers pick up on allusions to well-known stories, and expect the protagonists to repeat these actions.

Textual Echoes: Allusion and Memory in the Representation of Trauma

The fourth feature which characterizes some contemporary teen trauma fiction is a strong association between acts of memory and allusions. As Peter Middleton and Tim Woods note in Literatures of Memory, “traces of the past emerge in the present as textual echoes, determinations and directions” (84). In returning to certain highly familiar texts, especially those by Shakespeare, writers evoke the Freudian notion of the “repetition-compulsion,” making their characters subjects of the “plot” of another’s story. Or, in more Freudian terms, characters are unconsciously “compelled” to repeat the symptoms and effects of their traumatic experiences in a way that ostensibly gives them mastery over the trauma. This idea is highly suggestive, and indirectly communicates the idea that the teen character is controlled by a plot which is pre-ordained. Hyde’s Chasing Windmills alludes to Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet, in which both lovers die, and to the film of the musical West Side Story (1961), which itself is a re-working of Shakespeare’s play, in which Maria dies but Tony survives. Allusion does not require the writers to follow the original narrative, and often the allusion is used to provide a new twist on the familiar story. Sebastian and Maria, together with her daughter Natalie, escape Manhattan and travel to the Mojave Desert. Meanwhile, readers know but Sebastian is not yet aware, that she also has a son called CJ. Once in the desert, Maria decides she cannot abandon her son, and Sebas-

The past intrudes into the present in the form of echoes and memories, to the extent that the initial trauma appears to generate further trauma. It is difficult to establish narrative progression, as chronology is constantly disrupted as the past re-surfaces.

Hyde’s novel is a very up-to-date version of even the more recent retellings of Romeo and Juliet. Both central characters seem intent on sharing a future together, in spite of all the obstacles to their relationship, namely Maria’s abusive and jealous husband and her two children. She is the one who calls Sebastian “Tony,” in a clear allusion to West Side Story (Tony is the name of
Maria’s lover in the musical). But, shortly before the end of the novel, Maria consciously changes the script, and decides she needs to find herself and live on her own with her two children before committing herself to a serious relationship. From Sebastian’s perspective, her decision comes out of the blue. For the reader who is familiar with Romeo and Juliet and West Side Story, the narrative ending is also a surprise. The two lovers do not end up together, nor do they end up dead. This time, there is no tragedy or suicide, and the novel’s conclusion is surprisingly realistic. Sebastian goes ahead with his plan to stay with his grandmother at her motel. Maria will live with her two young children. The conclusion represents the possibility of hope in that both characters have survived their experiences of abuse and have managed to escape, even though they will live on opposite sides of the mountain. Sebastian does not choose the outcome of the plot, but he has stopped feeling numb and has begun to feel alive.

In the four teen trauma texts discussed above, trauma is represented in both the content and the form. The narrative structure reproduces some of the symptoms of trauma so that readers experience the ways in which trauma impacts upon the individual character. The two female protagonists, Pip and Katherine, are haunted by ghosts from their past. The two male protagonists, Sebastian and Aaron, suffer a wide range of symptoms including night terrors and an initial reluctance or inability to act. All four protagonists, who have suffered a diverse range of traumas, are nevertheless emotionally numb at the outset of their narratives. At times, they seem confused and out of control, and, as Grishakova has suggested in another context, “readers may find themselves in a similar situation when they do not have any clues (contextual or textual) for adequate interpretation of the text” (195). This is where the perspectives of people outside the immediate family, particularly those of more mature and caring adults, can mitigate the effects of trauma on these protagonists’ lives and help them on their road to recovery.

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Works Cited:

**Children’s Books**


Secondary Sources


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A boy named Hamid strives to get from Afghanistan to Ukraine since his father’s, mother’s, and sister’s lives are threatened by the Taliban. It turns out that his father is a native Ukrainian and after being captured by the Taliban was forced to become a Muslim during the Soviet War in Afghanistan. Additionally, his father’s relatives do not even know he is alive and has a family since he never had the chance to return to his homeland. Hamid understands that his Ukrainian relatives might not help and also protect and provide shelter for his family. Thus the boy is ready to overcome any obstacles on his way to Ukraine. He even accepts the possibility of living in a German foster family just to be a few steps closer to his longed-for Ukraine. Taking huge risks, Hamid finally reaches his goal with the help of his friends: a Ukrainian girl Nastya and a Lebanese boy Antuan. Through his thrilling, realistic narration, the author relates his experience in Afghanistan and raises a number of messages regarding multiculturalism, physical and emotional trauma, racism, and postcolonial memory.

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In spite of its history as an unintelligible activity in Western society, self-mutilation entered the discourse of childhood as a significant motif of feminine experience the moment children appropriated the fairy tale. Since then, it has functioned as a complex motif in literature, offering scholars an opportunity to identify the different ways troubling or disturbing subjects
are treated based on the target audiences of texts. Taking “Cinderella” and “The Little Mermaid” as representative, this paper argues that self-mutilation functions as an act of self-sacrifice to romantic hetero-normative narratives. Meanwhile, cutting in the Canadian young adult novels As She Grows by Lesley Ann Cowan (2003, 2009) and Cheryl Rainfield’s Scars (2010) is represented ambivalently, exposing both the potential for violence and for agency in self-mutilative acts. In their refusal of pathologization, representations of self-mutilation in YA fiction offer readers a ritualistic occasion for their own empathic resistance to the hegemonic incorporation of symbolic demands, encouraging the development of creative strategies for self-expression within dysfunctional societies.

In spite of its history as an unintelligible activity in Western society, self-mutilation entered the discourse of childhood as a significant motif of feminine experience the moment children appropriated the fairy tale into the corpus of their literature. I am thinking, of course, of the stepsisters in the Grimms’ “Cinderella” who willingly cut off a toe and a piece of heel in a vain attempt to fit the glass slipper. More horrific is the little mermaid’s willing submission of her tongue to the sea witch’s knife; and while it is a noxious potion that converts her tail into human legs, the mermaid’s transformation subjects her to pain “like a sharp sword going through you” (Andersen 226). As a motif in the fairy tale, self-mutilation is a graphic and discomfiting reminder of the symbolic demands Western culture makes of the female adolescent body. In psychiatric literature, as Armando Favazza notes in his Preface to Bodies Under Siege, self-mutilation disappears as a subject of therapeutic inquiry from 1938 until the publication in 1979 of two books on the subject. Favazza surmises that the subject is unintelligible to a lay audience who “invariably thought it to be a grotesque act” (xiii).

Likewise, protagonists who deliberately engage in acts of self-mutilation have only recently been represented in literature specifically intended for young people. “Cutting” in particular is an activity that is generally associated with troubled female adolescents. In psychiatric discourse, it has conventionally been treated as pathologically destructive behaviour; only recently has the therapeutic community and general public begun to recognize, as Angela Faillier observes, that “for those who practise it, self-harm serves as a means of survival in the wake of psychical trauma” (12). Since the publication of Favazza’s text, cutting has gradually come to be acknowledged also as a means of “expression” and as a “unifying gesture” according to Janice McLane (110-1). For the purposes of this paper, I offer Armando Favazza’s definition of self-mutilation as “the deliberate, direct, nonsuicidal destruction or alteration of
one’s body tissue” (“Introduction” x). I would, however, like to open up this definition by noting, as Favazza does, that the source trauma is not limited to experiences of the individual body; self-mutilation will be considered as the adolescent body’s expression of the dis-ease of the communal, social body as well.

As a complex motif with a relatively recent representative history, self-mutilation offers scholars of literature an opportunity to identify the different ways troubling or disturbing subjects are treated based on the target audiences of texts. In children’s and young adult fiction, parental fears and anxieties understandably condition the way the activity is depicted. As Jennifer Miskec and Chris McGee observe in their article on self-mutilation in young adult fiction, “It is naturally difficult for any novel about this subject to in any way condone cutting as proper behavior” (172). However, in spite of our ostensible reticence, cutting is emotionally over-determined in the popular media and in cultural texts (consider, for example, its recent treatment in Darren Aronofsky’s 2010 film *Black Swan*), eliciting affective responses such as revulsion, fear, and panic. Its infrequency in literature for young people since the fairy tale can likely be accounted for if we consider the fear of so-called “copycat” behavior that self-harm engenders in parents and adults. Our anxieties continue to be strong, prompting a “self-injury warning” as a paratext in Jolene Siana’s 2005 *Go Ask Ogre: Letters from a Deathrock Cutter* that alerts readers to the possibility that “content could be triggering” ([4]). As Lydia Kokkola observes, recent examples mitigate this fear by complying with an emerging telos or “master narrative” of self-harming that moves toward healing, “suggesting that the self-harming individual will recover” (35).

Given our reticence and the risks involved in representing self-mutilation in literature for young people, it seems fruitful to ask why we do so. Are there important symbolic and cultural functions of literary self-mutilation that are more than simply didactic? Taking “Cinderella” and “The Little Mermaid” as representative texts in children’s culture, I argue that self-mutilation functions as an act of self-sacrifice to romantic hetero-normative narratives, expressing the violent demands patriarchal culture can require of the young woman as she takes her place in the competitive market of marriage. Meanwhile, cutting in the Canadian young adult novels *As She Grows* by Lesley Ann Cowan (2003, 2009) and Cheryl Rainfield’s *Scars* (2010) is represented ambivalently, exposing both the potential for violence and for agency in self-mutilative acts, and graphically communicating young women’s resistance to the symbolic demands revealed in the fairy tales. These contemporary representations of self-mutilation continue the critical
work of the fairy tales, transferring the locus of pathology from the expressive female adolescent body to the diseased communal social body. Armando Favazza’s reconceptualization of self-mutilation as nonsuicidal, ritualistic, and expressive behaviour provides us with an opportunity to reconsider its function in literature for young people, while Victor Turner’s work on liminality in the ritual process provides a compelling methodology. Ultimately, a reconsideration of self-mutilation in YA fiction allows a functional reading of the praxis, one that moves toward its recuperation as a transformative act. In their refusal of pathologization, representations of self-mutilation in YA fiction offer readers a ritualistic occasion for their own empathic resistance to the hegemonic incorporation of symbolic demands, encouraging the development of creative strategies for self-expression and healthy reaggregation within dysfunctional societies.

Nineteenth-century fairy tales “Cinderella” (as published by the Grimm brothers in Kinder-und Hausmärchen in 1812) and Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Little Mermaid” (1837) have complex relationships with children’s literature, implicated, as Maria Tatar makes clear, “in the complex, yet not impenetrable, symbolic codes that permeate our cultural stories” (xii). The social functions of fairy tales, Tatar observes, are equally complex, “whether critical, conservative, compensatory, or therapeutic” (xi). Jack Zipes tells us that an important social function of folk tales is “communal harmony”: “A narrator or narrators told tales,” he explains, “to bring members of a group or tribe closer together and to provide them with a sense of mission, a telos” (333). Among scholars, it is generally agreed that fairy tales serve to socialize child readers into the dominant values of their culture (Tatar, Zipes). In her discussion of the related tales “Cinderella” and “Donkeyskin” or “Catskin,” Tatar calls attention to the function of the narrative within patriarchal culture: “What these stories demonstrate, perhaps more forcefully than anything else,” she argues, “is the way in which the path to happy heterosexual unions depends on a successful transfer of filial love and devotion from a father to a ‘prince,’ on a move from a false ‘perfect fit’ to a true ‘perfect fit’” (105).
Cinderella’s stepsisters represent graphically the violent lengths to which a young woman might willingly go to become the “perfect fit”; we are told that the first sister “sliced off her toe, forced her foot into the shoe, gritted her teeth, and went out to meet the prince” (121). When her deception is exposed by two doves in a hazel tree who call out “bloods in the shoe: / the shoe’s too tight” the prince returns her to her home, giving the second sister an opportunity to make the fit (121). Likewise, the second sister slices off a piece of her heel, forcing her foot into the shoe while gritting her teeth, only to be exposed by the doves (121). In these tales, self-mutilation functions as an act of self-sacrifice to the dominant romantic narrative. The sisters violently alter their bodies, marking them with their vain hopes for acceptance and approval by the prince. Significantly, it is the mother who hands her daughters the knives, instructing them to mutilate their feet with the consolation that “Once you’re queen, you won’t need to go on foot any more” (121). Her instructive role is an astonishing demonstration of the perceived complicity of mothers in transmitting messages of feminine renunciation, filial duty, and self-sacrifice when young women enter the marriage market.

Hans Christian Andersen’s mermaid ritualistically mutilates her body as she initiates herself into adulthood and preparation for marriage, but her act is represented also as a means to spatial and social mobility. As a young child, the little mermaid’s ocean environment fails to stimulate her imagination. Experiences that will engage all of her senses are what she is after, and she desires the freedom to explore the opportunities offered by the land up above, to “hear the music of the waves or see the lovely flowers and the red sun” (224). Like Cinderella’s step-sisters, the mermaid is taught by the female characters around her that ritualistic physical pain and sacrifice are the cost of sensuous aesthetic experiences: “one can’t have beauty for nothing” her grandmother instructs as she painfully affixes eight oysters to the mermaid’s tail to adorn her first visit to the surface (220). The mermaid’s wish to leave the constraints of her father’s oceanic home becomes fixed once she encounters the prince, who will become the object of both her romantic and geographical desires, for winning him requires that she sacrifice her ability to inhabit her element (water), for his (land). Mobility comes at a high cost: as the sea witch transforms her tail “into what humans call ‘pretty legs,’” she warns the mermaid that “it’ll hurt; it’ll be like a sharp sword going through you” and that “every step you take will feel as if you were treading on a sharp knife, enough to make your feet bleed” (226). “The Little Mermaid” demonstrates graphically as well the suffering required of the adolescent female body by romantic narratives. The mermaid must submit to one further act of mutilation—the cutting of her tongue—in exchange for her aspirations. In the economy of the tale, the mermaid’s voice is extracted as a fair exchange for the witch’s contribution of blood to the transformative potion. It is with a ritualistically self-mutilating gesture that the witch “scratched her breast and let her black blood drip down into the kettle” (227).

“What is carved in human flesh is an image of society” Mary Douglas tells us (117). Favazza asserts that “the individual human body mirrors the collective social body, and each continually creates and sustains the other” (322). Moreover, “symptoms we associate with personal mental illness defy understanding without reference to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical integrity of the communal ‘body’” (322). While the fairy tales tend to represent self-harm as ritualistic acts of self-sacrifice, for the protagonists of contemporary YA fiction, self-mutilation
is often a response to traumatic experiences stemming from the dysfunction and dis-ease of the socio-cultural spaces around them. “The self-mutilator attempts to make the necessary reflexive structure of self, other, and world, all within the boundaries of herself” asserts McLane (116). While mainstream representations of self-harm such as Black Swan continue to pathologize the behaviour, conflating it with a simplistic will to self-destruction, YA fiction has shifted toward a more positive depiction of self-harm as a means of physically expressing both pain and agency. Jennifer Miskec and Chris McGee argue that such texts raise interesting questions about “how the body operates within structures of power, particularly in a commodity culture” (176). As young women, Cowan’s and Rainfield’s protagonists struggle against the inequities of class and/or gender, their bodies viscerally exposing the effects of less visible forms of societal violence. In As She Grows, Snow is a young, economically-disadvantaged woman being raised by her alcoholic grandmother in one of the many apartment buildings that are an ignored part of Don Mills, a suburb of Toronto. Her fractured, dysfunctional community is the antithesis of a nurturing environment, particularly for teenagers. Snow describes her street, The Donway, as “a big paved moat surrounding all life’s necessities” (13), and for her, “it’s like living in the stomach of someone’s decaying suburban dream” (14). In Scars, Kendra’s cutting is an important part of a process to recover memories of childhood sexual abuse and the identity of her abuser. As painful as this process is, it is integral to her personal healing and to the restoration of a healthy relationship with her family and with the broader community, as is signified by her gradual movement toward allowing her scars to be visible (231).

Like other examples of cutting in YA fiction, these Canadian texts “draw less from psychological models and more from what we might call culture-bound models that see the body as text” (Miskec and McGee 173). Given the absence of formal, meaningful rituals and rites of passage in their cultures, protagonists in YA fiction must enact their own. “Cutting” functions as what psychologist Edith Sullwold calls “spontaneously created ritual action” (111). Moreover, as Favazza reminds us, the powerful “result of skin cutting is blood, a precious substance that throughout human history has been associated with the
cure of illness, preservation of health, salvation and resolution of social conflict” (272). What these texts offer then are “culture-bound models” of cutting that invite readers to bear witness to an activity we may find unintelligible or gruesome, but which is nevertheless representative of a functional ritual praxis. Victor Turner identifies a tripartite ritual process that has compelling applicability for theorizing the function of ritual self-mutilation in literature. The ritual subject’s separation from, and later aggregation with, a “social structure” or “set of cultural conditions” frames the process (RP 94). Evident in the process is a conceptualization of a ritualized, psychical state as culturally and spatially experienced, mirroring adolescence as a phase when social status is indeterminate: “liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony” explains Turner (RP 95).

The liminal phase is particularly useful for theorizing cutting as a ritual practice closely associated with adolescence, itself a state “betwixt and between” childhood and adulthood. The liminal is a phase during which “the characteristics of the ritual subject…are ambiguous” when she “passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state” (RP 94). Ambiguity presides during this time: “since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space” according to Turner (RP 95). Already regarded as marginal in their societies, adolescents, like liminals “have no cultural assurances of a final stable resolution of their ambiguity” (DFM 233). Theirs can be a desperately dangerous and tentative sojourn in the liminal phase of the ritual process. It could be argued that much of the reactionary panic to depictions of ritual self-mutilation—while ostensibly articulating a fear of copycat behavior—also reflects our collective discomfort with liminal uncertainty and ambiguity.

Cowan and Rainfield mitigate readers’ affective responses by depicting acts of self-mutilation not as brutal acts of self-violence, but as expressive gestures made intelligible as ritual praxis. Snow and Kendra describe the sensation that results from their actions as a physical release from the anxiety of living, or as a means of coping with the sensation that their bodies are exploding, which they experience as a literal transgression of their corporeal limits. For Snow, it is “the unexpected cracks” in her broken skin that enable her to feel like she can breathe (51). When
threatened by painful memories, Kendra anticipates the moment when she can be alone to “cut my arm until I could breathe again” (15). Skin is the “place where the self meets the world” according to psychologist Scott Lines. It is “a canvas or tabula rasa on which is displayed exactly how bad one feels inside” (qtd. in Strong 29). Cutting functions as a frantic attempt to communicate distress to the cultures and societies that inflict subtle or hidden acts of violence on young bodies. Snow carves the words “mother,” “slut,” and “ugly” into her arms. Hiding her scars, she tells us, is like “a constant battle to bury truths that keep surfacing from under my skin, rising from some unknown depth in me” (81). She experiences her body as a mirror of environment, comparing the surfacing of her body’s scars and truths to a story she heard of the surfacing of “an entire prehistoric village in a farmer’s field” in England (81). For Kendra, there is a ritualistic aspect to cutting that simultaneously repeats while also countering her experiences with what Rainfield refers to as “ritual sexual abuse” (234). While Kendra’s father-abuser teaches her to cut as a self-disciplinary activity that will ensure her silence and complicity in the protection of his identity, it nevertheless functions as an expression of her agency; her scars are visceral, visual signs of the insistence of remembering and of her need to communicate her emotional pain. As her girlfriend Meghan observes, Kendra’s scars are “something visible, something you can point to, to show how much you hurt” (140). Pain, as Elaine Scarry emphasizes in The Body in Pain, is defined by its unsharability, its resistance to and destruction of language (45). Through ritualistic acts of self-mutilation, however, the body becomes text, “bestowing visibility” on a pain that defies verbal expression (Scarry 7).

Scars is compelling for the ways it allows both cultural and individual pathologies to mutually account for Kendra’s self-harm. In its depiction of incest and its parallel function as a coming out narrative, the novel provides a bridge between nineteenth-century fairy tale representations of self-mutilation in relation to romantic narratives, and representations like Black Swan that continue to rely on psychological-bound models. Kendra begins cutting when memories of childhood sexual abuse begin to surface; what is interesting is the novel’s movement away from pathologizing her need to cut. She is insistent throughout her narrative that cutting helps her to breathe, to think, and to stop “the memories when nothing else will” (176). The novel’s depiction is complicated, however, by Kendra’s recovery of abuse memories; more specifically, Kendra is distressed when she discovers not only that her father is her abuser, but that it was he who taught her to cut her skin as a means of ensuring her complicity in her own silencing. In this respect, Scars returns to the function of self-mutilation as a motif in the fairy tale that exposes

Snow and Kendra describe the sensation that results from their actions as a physical release from the anxiety of living, or as a means of coping with the sensation that their bodies are exploding, which they experience as a literal transgression of their corporeal limits.
RESISTANT RITUALS

the complex, at times violent demands patriarchal culture and hetero-normative narratives make of the young female body. Kendra's story complicates the narratives of the protagonists of “Cinderella” and “The Little Mermaid,” for whom marriage requires the mutilation of their bodies and their silence concerning their experiences with violence. It returns to this narrative by reinstituting the father to the position of the prince as both the object of the romantic narrative and the perpetrator of sexual demands. Kendra refuses the romantic, hetero-normative demands of her culture for her story is simultaneously a coming-out story, narrating her romantic attraction and developing relationship with another young woman.

Acknowledging the stories that surface on skin represents a critical recognition of the diseased social and communal body, enabling a movement toward healing and the sublimation of the need to communicate into artistic, creative forms of expression. In many respects, Kendra’s narrative follows the “master narrative” Lydia Kokkola identifies in cutting literature. The telos of her story is certainly the movement toward healing; what prevents it from becoming a kind of “self-help manual” for readers, however, is its depiction of the ambivalent emotions experienced by young women for whom cutting is an expressive act, enabling her to cope until she learns to sublimate her emotional experiences into more productive, empowering outlets such as visual art. Similarly, when Snow’s cutting is discovered, she explains to her social worker that “the words are meant for me to read.” She interprets her self-mutilation as an act of uncovering rather than of writing words, “The way a sculptor claims his hands only release the shape from stone” (282). Snow’s letters create her “own language of blood and skin” (283). In art therapy classes, Kendra also learns to communicate her past emotional pain into visual artistic expressions. She compares the recovery of painful memories to “painting with only two primary colors before, and now I have the third” (155). Art becomes the sublimated and “successful expression of pain,” enabling the protagonist to “externalize, objectify, and make sharable what is originally an interior and unsharable experience” (Scarry 16). “If I couldn't paint,” Kendra tells us, “I’d be a girl without a mouth. I say things through painting that I can’t say any other way. It’s how I pull up hidden truths” (28).

Favazza reminds us that cutting has “a symbolic association with the mutilative rites of adolescent initiation” and that self-mutilative acts are “pacts, unconscious and sealed with blood, indicating the adolescent’s desire to be reconciled with society” (281, 282). Translating an otherwise unsharable pain into art also benefits readers and the broader society, extending to us the opportunity for empathy and healing when we read the stories as expressions of agency rather than as “triggers” for copycat behaviour. Scarry reminds us that “the imagination is bound up with compassion” (325). If self-mutilation can be interpreted as an attempt

Translating an otherwise unsharable pain into art also benefits readers and the broader society, extending to us the opportunity for empathy and healing when we read the stories as expressions of agency rather than as “triggers” for copycat behaviour.
intelligibility to resistant rituals of self-harm in children’s culture and YA fiction is an integral part of that process, initiating us vicariously into experiences of empathic transformation and collective catharsis.

Notes
1  First published as adult fiction in 2003 by Penguin Books, Cowan’s novel was re-published in 2009 and marketed as YA fiction. Its publication history reflects mainstream society’s discomfort with representations of self-mutilation and at-risk youth in their literature.

2 Rainfield is careful to represent Kendra’s and Meghan’s attraction to each other as mutual and as more than a response to Kendra’s experiences with sexual abuse. When her father asks her if “this lesbian thing could having anything to do with” the sexual abuse, Kendra’s response is to question his representation of her sexual identity as a “problem” (127).

3 Kokkola observes that the master narrative in cutting literature frequently resorts to providing a “rational explanation for a seemingly irrational activity.” Furthermore, “the presence of such ‘explanations’...gives these texts something of the quality of a work of nonfiction, more specifically a self-help manual” (35).

Works Cited:

Children’s Books

Secondary Sources
Temple Built of Stone, Seokguram is a beautifully illustrated children’s book featuring a UNESCO World Heritage Site: a stone temple that rests facing the Pacific Ocean on the tip of a Korean peninsula. This lovely book’s first charm is its stimulating pictures, which allow the reader to vicariously experience this beautiful historic site. The illustrations—largely in black and white—play with light and shadows as a mother and her child make a pre-dawn trek along a winding path to visit the shrine. The book’s second charm lies in its narrative. Poet Kim-Mi hye’s bright and affectionate narrative tells the story of a child who is waiting for his father to come back from a long journey. As the mother and child plod up the winding mountain path, the possibility of their wish coming true seems as uncertain as the wispy morning fog. They make their way through the temple to find the granite Buddha statue, where they make an offering and pray for the father’s safe return. As the sun rises, the Buddha is brilliantly illuminated, bringing hope to the mother and child. Although we often expect children’s books to be bright and bursting with color and energy, this story about a silent interaction between a child and a Buddha deserves our attention. Temple Built of Stone received a mention in the fiction category at the 2010 Bologna Children’s Book Fair, where an American editor noted, “I was deeply moved by the mysterious beauty of this unmoving stone Buddha, and by the dignified child who moved the Buddha’s heart.” Temple Built of Stone will not only please an audience familiar with Korean culture but is equally worthy of international praise.

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In countries with a high readership of graphic literature, such as France, comics serve as a crossover medium, bridging the gap between genres and age groups. France has exploited the versatility of the medium, in the service of profit and, more notably, of cultural capital, with comics being used to initiate young readers into literary classics, mostly from the Western canon. The most striking example is the collection “Ex-Libris,” published by Delcourt and directed by the comics writer Jean-David Morvan, which includes an adaptation of Victor Hugo’s The Last Day of a Condemned Man, a work particularly well-suited for a young adult audience given that young adults and Romantic writers often share a similar sensibility and values: a passion for justice, a love of humanity and the natural world, and a fascination with the macabre. Stanislas Gros, the writer and illustrator of the adaptation, does not shy away from the darker aspects of Hugo’s work, creating a work that is both engaging and authentic.

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Comics, or bande(s) dessinée(s) as they are known in French, are a crossover medium. They are both visual and verbal, both graphic and textual, both an art form and an accessible form of literary entertainment. This duality—or plurality—extends into its readership. Because comics—especially in the francophone world—can vary infinitely in subject matter and graphic style, the audience for comics contains as broad a cross-section of ages and tastes as the audience for books in general. Albums of bande dessinée can initiate young readers into literacy in much the same way as picture books, but comics are equally popular with adolescents and adults. Comics tell stories about every conceivable situation, written in every conceivable style, in every conceivable genre. Many comics are adaptations; since the medium is as widespread and ubiquitous as any other medium, such as film, television, or video games, their potential for media franchise is cheerfully exploited. To this effect, a wide variety of media in comic form (in French, “en BD”), from the short stories of Guy de Maupassant to the songs of Serge Gainsbourg, are a common sight in the windows of French bookstores.

Famous works from the French literary canon are no exception. The comic adaptation that is the subject of this essay, The Last Day of a Condemned Man, is a one-shot (single-volume) adaptation of an early Victor Hugo novel and was published in 2007 by Delcourt in a collection dedicated to literary classics, called “Ex-Libris,” that also includes adaptations of Molière’s Tartuffe, Voltaire’s Candide, and Franz Kafka’s In the Penal Colony. When comic artist and writer Stanislas Gros adapted and drew The Last Day of a Condemned Man, his adaptation was embraced as part of a rich tradition of illustrated classics; the Ministry of Education (l’Éducation Nationale) recommended it, it is used by teachers to introduce their students to Victor Hugo, and it was listed as one of the year’s best first albums in the magazine Le Point. Gros was even invited to speak to a class of middle school students who had read the comic as a part of their literary education.

The source text for this comic adaptation is Victor Hugo’s 1829 novel The Last Day of a Condemned Man (French: Le Dernier jour d’un condamné). It is fitting that a text used to introduce students to Hugo, one of the great giants of France’s literary patrimony, would be adapted from what is considered Hugo’s first mature work. Although not nearly as complex as his later novels, it reflected his burgeoning social consciousness, and was about a controversial topic that had the power to ruin his career. (His son Charles would later run into trouble with the law for his own anti-death penalty activism.) The novel particularly resonated with Dostoyevsky, who declared it Hugo’s “masterpiece,” and drew inspiration from it for a sequence in The Idiot. For a book about the death penalty to have been so well-received by Dostoyevsky, who was
actually subjected to a mock execution (after reading it), is a testament
to its artistic verisimilitude, or at least how well-written it was. The
novel still rang true even for someone who had actually been through
the experience—true enough for him to use it as a literary reference for
his own ordeal, quoting a line from the book in his first letter after the
event.

The subject matter of the book is also appropriate for (mature) chil-
dren and young adults because the natural sensibilities of children are
similar to Romantic sensibilities. In Romantic literature in general,
and Hugo in particular, there is a strong undercurrent of naïveté and
idealism, an earnest love of humanity and the natural world, and, most
pertinently, a horror of injustice. Although the topic of the book is too
disturbing for young children, it is appropriate, and even well-adapted,
for teens and mature pre-adolescents. Children and adolescents gravi-
tate towards, and have a natural fascination with, stories of adversity,
injustice, abuse, and even trauma. Part of this fascination is macabre,
but there is also a deeply Romantic interest in the plight of one indi-
vidual against greater forces, as well as the catharsis that comes from
seeing others in pain and/or fantasizing about

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The novel is structured like a journal, composed of 49 short chapters,
or “journal entries.” There are really only 48 chapters, however, since the
47th chapter, which is supposed to contain the unnamed protagonist’s life
story, is “missing.” The novel was originally published anonymously, as
much to preserve the illusion that the book was nonfiction as to protect
Victor Hugo from political repercussions; and a hand-written manu-
script, ostensibly the “real journal,” was made available. The journal
chronicles the last six weeks in the life of a Parisian man sentenced to
death by guillotine, although the actual time the writing of the journal
takes place in is about one week, with the rest being flashbacks.

Perhaps one of the most noticeable is the fact that Gros has chosen
to forego the narrative form that structures the novel: the idea that the
book is a series of journal entries written by a man sentenced to death.
Gros foregoes this structure because he can. Hugo was obligated
to structure the book that way because it was the most practical and effec-
tive way of allowing his protagonist to voice his thoughts and express
himself in such a discursive way. Hugo’s protagonist is shut up in a
dungeon with no one to talk to, so the only way for us to hear him at all
is if he talks to himself; and what better way for him to talk to himself
than through a medium with a built-in audience? His diary serves a purpose in-story (“Why should I not try to chronicle all the violent, unknown feelings fomented within me by the desolate situation in which I find myself?...In any case, the only means of suffering less where these torments are concerned is to closely observe them, and to chart them will distract me” [translation from French mine, throughout]), allows the protagonist to control the flow of the narrative and the topic of the discussion, gives us access into his head, and is ideal for Hugo's political purposes, because it is a testimony meant to be read (the protagonist himself declares that he hopes what he writes will help prevent others from being sentenced to death).

Gros, on the other hand, is writing a comic; and because he is in command of his craft, he knows he has no need of Hugo's device. His medium is a visual, not a verbal, one, and he does not need an excuse to present the events of the book to us in images, to "show"; and as for the "telling," the first-person descriptions of the protagonist's thoughts, the comic medium also allows him to place thought boxes tangent to the images, again without explanation. The thoughts of the protagonist exist on the same plane as the visual depictions of him, his surroundings, or illustrations of those thoughts, and the reader takes them in more or less simultaneously.

For instances of mise en abyme, or a story within a story, Gros uses visual cues as well. At the Conciergerie, the protagonist meets a bagnard, a former galley convict, who has been sentenced to death for recidivism; this character looks strikingly like what Jean Valjean, the protagonist of Victor Hugo's Les Misérables, would have become if he had not met the bishop. With surprising alacrity, the convict tells the protagonist his life story and attempts to befriend him. In Hugo's original text, this autobiographical narrative is long enough to be considered a story-within-a-story. It also has a fixed beginning and end: beginning, “What can you do? Here's my life story,” and ending, “There you go, mate.” It is a picaresque tale, dense with criminal argot. In Gros's adaptation, the story is presented as a literal comic within a comic. The tale of the bagnard is encapsulated completely within a speech bubble; but instead of only containing text, the speech bubble (which is enormous, and is split over two pages) contains a graphic narrative, combining text and images. This mini-comic uses a different style of drawing: although it is still recognizably Gros's style, the images are much cruder and less detailed. The bagnard's story is told in a specialized idiom, with a unique voice that is a little rough around the edges, while still being part of the general reality of the condemned man's narrative; this is reflected in the imagery within the
speech bubble, which is cruder and yet still obviously related to the other visuals in the album.

In an interview with sceneario.com, Stanislas Gros said that the task of adapting a Hugo novel into a comic book was made easier by the fact that Hugo’s work is replete with powerful images, and he takes a straightforwardly literal and yet still highly symbolic approach when illustrating the many metaphors in the text. Gros says, “I practically took the book literally, my primary concern being not to alter the work. Each time I would ask myself, ‘What would Victor Hugo have done to illustrate this passage?’”. He said he knew he needed to make the imagery dark and dirty, using ink to make it dark and pencil to make it dirty (“Stanislas Gros à l’Escale du livre”). Gros’s semiotic, “literal” approach carries over to the many metaphors in the book. In the first chapter of the novel, the protagonist personifies the threat of his execution as “a leaden specter at my side, lone, jealous, driving away all distractions, face to face with my wretched self and shaking me with its two icy hands whenever I try to turn away my head or close my eyes,” but this specter is not a simple symbol for death; rather, it is a metaphor deepened and crisscrossed with other metaphors, such as the toxic atmosphere of prison that taints the innocent and beautiful, or the protagonist’s “condemned man’s breath” that withers everything and will not allow him to enjoy his last meal. Because his is a work of literature, it is possible for Hugo to drop a metaphor in the first chapter and have readers still integrate this conceit into their reading and understanding of the work as a whole, especially when the motif of death reverberates throughout the book; however, the experience of reading a comic book is different, and Gros recreates the effect that a well-placed metaphor has in literature by visualizing the figurative alongside the literal: the specter of death, a Grim Reaper-like figure, haunts nearly every frame.

Other metaphors, which occur only once in Gros’s work but contribute to its tone, exemplify the literal approach Gros takes to Hugo’s many visual metaphors and symbolic imagery. For instance, Gros illustrates this passage from Hugo’s text: “In the crowd of heads that will cover the square, there will be more than one that is fated to follow mine, sooner or later, into the red basket. More than one who will come today for me, tomorrow for themselves. For these doomed beings the place de Grève verges on being a fatal place, a center of attraction, a trap. They circle around it until it has them,” as a guillotine with a mass of seething, silhouetted people spiraling towards it in narrowing filaments. He represents the protagonist’s declaration that “Between then”—his childhood and youth—“and the present there is a river of blood;
He represents the protagonist’s declaration that “Between then”—his childhood and youth—“and the present there is a river of blood; the blood of another, and my own,” as a long crimson banner of blood that courses down between two pages...
hallmarks of *ligne claire*—uniform, crisp line weights and the use of bright primaries and pastels—are not present, the relationship between character and background common to the style is: the use of cartoonish characters against a realistically-drawn background. Similarly, Gros avoided drawing the environment as purely nineteenth-century (for instance, mixing Haussmannian architecture with medieval timber framing) in an attempt to preserve the sense that the story could take place anytime (Legoffe).

Gros’s unique inking style manifests itself in curvy, flowing lines of black, which are especially noticeable on characters in close shots; these lines are used, when forming facial features and hair, to minimalistic effect. He could have given our hero his own complex physiognomy, but chose instead, wisely, to convey an idea with a few lines. The main character definitely has a distinct nose, a distinct hairstyle, and colored eyes—blue (used only in closeups, and shorthand for family resemblance, as his daughter has the same colored eyes—but he remains, like one of Hergé’s creations—or Sempé’s, or Quentin Blake’s—in the realm of the simple, stylized, and accessible. Gros’s choice echoes Hugo’s characterization of the condemned man. He has no name, and we never learn the details of his crime; he is a sort of Death Row Everyman. He is, as Hugo says in his 1832 preface, “an unspecified condemned man, executed on an unspecified day, for an unspecified crime,” a man whose story he crafted to be as broad and general as possible, not only so that the reader might better empathize with Hugo’s exemplary placeholder of a protagonist by “filling in” the details himself, but also so as to encompass all the stories of all the people ever put to death. When Gros designed the character’s physical appearance, he relied mostly on cues from the text, such as the mention of the beard grown in prison, or the description of the character’s clothing; other details are used more to enhance background or minor characters, and to leave Gros’s own stamp on them, than to shape the mien of the “unspecified condemned man.”

If the protagonist can be said to physically resemble anyone, it is a young Victor Hugo, a fact that Gros confirms (*Littexpress*), and this, too, is a wise choice, because in many ways the protagonist can be read as being an alter ego of Hugo himself. He writes in Hugo’s voice (because the narrative is epistolary, it is not only first-person but also diegetically written and hence literary); he is a young man, and Victor Hugo was 27 when he wrote the book; he has a beloved daughter whom he considers his *raison d’être*, and at the time Hugo already had three children; like Hugo, the
The protagonist is bourgeois, educated, mildly Catholic (more sentimental than deeply religious), and has liberal politics (professing sympathy for the four sergeants of La Rochelle, who were executed in 1822 for opposition to Louis XVIII); and it would not be out of line to suggest he has Hugo’s tastes, aesthetics and temperament. Furthermore, there is evidence that the imaginative process of writing the book was deeply personal: Hugo divulges in his 1832 preface that on execution days he could not help but imagine every step of the process in real time, and was thus forced to stay inside with the windows shut until the hour of execution had passed (usually, 4:00 P.M.), after which time he could breathe freely again.

Outside of the general stylization, Gros’s treatment of the main character further reflects Hugo’s literary mode in that his design is simple and cartoonish, but still dark and dramatic; this fits perfectly Hugo’s abolition-oriented drama, a story of universal feeling written with sincerity and passion, but one whose portentousness he was well aware of. This self-consciousness is evident, not in Hugo’s preface, which remains tied to his modus operandi of direct, straightforward argument, but in an afterword called “A Comedy by Way of a Tragedy.” In this brilliant coda, Hugo satirizes the readers offended by his novel’s content and agenda, high-society types who embrace a “Romanticism lite” aesthetic, and who criticize the impertinent author for taking his imagination into such dark places—while all the while some among them are, naturally, secretly fascinated by it. The “darkness and drama” stem not only from the subject matter, but also from Hugo’s exalted register and Romantic diction, which make the documentary sublime, the personal account an elevated literary experience.

Gros channels Hugo’s darkness, melding it with his own dark, ink-heavy style. He has rendered, true to Hugo’s form, a world that is sordid and oppressive, yet still beautiful, that is somewhat ambiguous in terms of era, despite having a nineteenth-century flavor. His fluid lines, florid detail, and stylized characters mirror the high romanticism of Hugo’s writing, while preserving what is “dark and dirty.” By preserving Hugo’s words and tone as much as possible, he visually recreates Hugo’s world, and allows the reader to interact with the story on a deeper, more visceral level than simply reading the book could provide. This refusal to tone down the darkness is what makes this adaptation a particularly compelling read for young adults already engaged by the injustice in the world.

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The renowned Slovene poet, writer and dramatist, Bina Štampe Žmavc, has won a number of awards for her book of fairytales, *The Emperor and the Rose,* including the highly valued Slovene literary awards Vecernica and Desetnica. The book has been ranked among White Ravens and the author is also the Slovene candidate with it for the IBBY Honour List 2012. The language of her fairytales is luxurious and flexible, and she creates picturesque images that easily rise and come to life in front of the reader and evoke the most varied feelings. The author not only approaches the fairytales with enthusiasm towards their creation but goes a step further and looks at them from a critical distance, which enables her to be ironic towards and modernize some classical fairytale motifs and themes (in the story *The Frog and the Prince* the frog does not change into a prince, for example) and thus provides an original reading. Conventionality therefore blends with innovation, naivety with critical distance, the traditional with the contemporary and the expected transforms into the unexpected. The texts are supplemented by the remarkable illustrations of Alenka Sottler. The illustrator received the Hinko Smrekar Accolade for this work at the 9th Slovene Biennale of Illustration and is the Slovene candidate for the Andersen Award 2012.

Gaja Kos

**Bina Štampe Žmavc**

*Cesar in roža / The Emperor and the Rose*

Illustrated by Alenka Sottler

*Dob pri Domžalah, Slovenia: Miš, 2009 80 p.*


(Fairytales, 10+)
Growing up is hard to do in any society, but adolescents in acutely fluid or politically immature societies face greater challenges than those growing up in stable societies. As a result of the major social and political changes that took place in South Africa in the 1990s, the country is still in a state of flux and adolescents receive decidedly mixed messages about what is expected of them. School culture, including the curriculum, continues to promote Western views, but the pupils’ home lives are more profoundly affected by African views. When these attitudes collide, many teenagers feel unable to express their feelings, especially those related to cultural dissonance and trauma. In this paper, I will describe a literary journal-writing project that enabled sixteen-year-old girls to express their feelings of cultural dissonance and to confront personal traumas. My hope is that it will encourage other teachers to incorporate journal writing into their literary classes.

“I am so used to not talking that I have forgotten how to think.”

Meg Fargher is the former Headmistress of St Mary’s School in Johannesburg where she also taught English. Prior to moving to St Mary’s she taught at Roedean School (SA). At present she is involved in research, consults broadly in the education field, and also with parents. She is the co-author of two books published by Penguin: The Adolescent Storm: A Handbook for Parents and How Children Experience Trauma and How Parents Can Help Them Cope. Her novel, Tossie, available on Kindle, is set during the Anglo-Boer War and speaks to issues of reconciliation, land and gender.

Meg Fargher

Journal Writing about Literature: A Journey towards Selfhood

by MEG FARGHER

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The project took place in a medium-sized, multi-cultural, independent girls’ high school. The 77 sixteen-year-old girls who took part in the study were in their penultimate year. They had been set Alice Walker’s novel, *The Color Purple*, to read for an examination. In addition to the formal literature classes, the pupils were required to keep a journal about their perceptions as they read the novel. The concept of journaling and dialoguing with the teacher through a reflective journal was not entirely new to them; the previous year they had worked with Ngugi’s *A Grain of Wheat* in a similar way, although submission of the journals was voluntary. For the study of *The Color Purple*, however, the submission of reflective journals was made compulsory.

During their formal English literature lessons on *The Color Purple*, the girls were taught the novel in the usual ways. For instance, they were given worksheets on the themes, characters and style as well as listening to a brief presentation on feminist theory. Each lesson ended with a discussion on the topics covered in the worksheet or presentation. Feminism and its merits often caused heated debate!

At home, the girls were expected to write a personal response to the novel in their journals. The instructions we gave them emphasized that there was no “right” way to keep the journal, although they were encouraged to include additional material, and told to restrict their entries to a single page. The page limit was intended to help the teacher cope with the workload. The girls were encouraged to submit their journals at least once a week for the entire 10-week term, but most of them ignored the page limit and also submitted their journals more often. The task of reading 77 (or more) journals each week in addition to a normal marking load was daunting, but was offset by the remarkable insights into the girls’ worlds the journals offered.

The girls were told that they would primarily be evaluated on a self-assessment task at the end of the project. They were asked to produce a report that included their reflections on how they had engaged with and understood the novel, and whether their reflections had enabled them to think differently.

It soon became clear that the reflective journals had become a catalyst for many of the students to explore questions about self-identity and even trauma. The journals offered a safe place where the girls could express themselves without the fear of feeling uncomfortably different from their classmates or ill at ease in what was supposed to be their own culture. Research on cultural dissonance and feelings of dislocation or “outsiderness” by Gilligan indicates that the inability to articulate these difficult emotions results in psychological isolation (Gilligan *Making*198). Because some girls felt marginalized by the dominant culture of the school, the journals were an attempt to provide a space
where their authentic voices could be heard and where issues pertinent to their worlds could be expressed. The journals were an attempt to bridge silences that often arise in multicultural spaces

The journals were an attempt to bridge silences that often arise in multicultural spaces where the dominant culture determines the norm and often, albeit inadvertently, silences the many but different voices that exist.

where the dominant culture determines the norm and often, albeit inadvertently, silences the many but different voices that exist.

We hoped that the journal writing would help the pupils to articulate their thoughts and feelings and, in so doing, would reduce their sense of psychological isolation. We anticipated that this would have a positive impact on the girls’ academic performance and their social integration since the journal offered them the opportunity to reflect on these matters. The journal entries confirmed our views. As the girls became comfortable using the journal as a form of dialogue, they began to articulate their thoughts on womanhood, race and culture; particularly when their home culture was perceived to be promoting different ideas and values from those prevalent in the school.

Walker’s novel provoked the girls to think about race, feminism and religion more deeply. Many of them, like Celie, used their writing to deal with their fears and attitudes to the world around them. At the end of the study, a pupil who had been severely traumatized in her own home wrote:

I really enjoyed doing this journal. I felt in this way I didn’t feel that I could not answer. I found it a lot better that dealing with it in class because like this, my ideas are not in the least bit modified by what others may say. This has helped me think for myself without anyone’s help. I liked the journal because we worked one-on-one, just you and me. And I felt I could be honest and it would be fine. I found something in English I enjoy doing. I am grateful in every way.

(Please note that all journal entries are quoted verbatim)

Clearly this pupil felt empowered by the freedom afforded her by the journal to express herself. She acknowledges her previous self-imposed silence and articulates how journal writing helped develop her voice. Her idea that others may “modify” her thoughts in class discussion indicates her desire for her ideas to stand autonomously and be valued. The teacher’s responses were most often framed in the form of questions so that the sense of contradiction or othering of the ideas expressed could be avoided, and also so that a dialogue could be developed along with mutual understanding.

These sixteen-year-old girls were not only dealing with the challenges of adolescence in a fluid society, they were also dealing with what
it means to be women, and the attendant para-
doxes of being women in a society which often
overtly states one thing while believing and
valuing another. Although 50% of South Africa's
parliament is comprised of women as a reflection
of the emerging democracy’s overt commitment
to gender equality, some South African girls are
subjected to virginity testing, arranged marriage,
and other practices which do not reflect the stated
commitment to the rights of women. The honesty
and exuberance of the younger girls in the school
is often lost when they reach adolescence and
realize that their desire to be independent may
contradict what Piper refers to as “their need to be
feminine; between their status as human beings
and their vocation as females” (21). Many of the
journal entries reflected the dissonance these
young women were beginning to sense in their
worlds. Adolescents, and particularly adolescent
girls, often become what they think others want
them to become. By trying to fit in, they may
lose sight of their own potential and lose access
to their own voices as they suppress their ideas
and feelings in order to be accepted into a society
with specific beliefs about women and in partic-
ular about how “good women” should behave.

One black pupil, Nonhlanhla, tentatively
explored dissonance in her culture. She wrote
about “the disease to please” amongst all girls
and then extrapolated that into a comment on
virginity testing:

I am not too worldly on all black culture
…but I do know that most [black] people
believe you should do as your elders desire so
as not to anger your ancestors. One example
which perpetuates this desire to please is the
Zulu custom of virginity tests. Zulus strongly
believe that girls should remain pure until
marriage. I think that is for monetary gain
because there is higher lobola [bridal price]
paid for virgins.

Girls who are part of the dominant culture
often have to deal with contradictory messages
about their gender from that very culture. For
example, girls are expected to avoid exuber-
ance, be non-confrontational, self-composed yet
self-effacing. And yet, these are the very quali-
ties that may prevent them from becoming more
than simply well schooled help-mates. Taylor,
Gilligan and Sullivan suggest that these contra-
dictions result in pressure on adolescent girls as
they choose between silence and acceptance or
voice and rejection:

Girls are under pressure from without and
within to shape themselves in accordance
with dominant cultural ideals of femininity
and womanhood or of maturity and adult-
hood. This creates a tension when the ideals
of womanhood and femininity are those of
“selflessness,” and the ideals of maturity and
adulthood are those of separation and inde-
pendence. Girls experiencing this initiation
into dominant cultural ideals and values
often believe that they will have to give up
their voices to others and learn to think, feel
and say that which will be appropriate in
the given cultural context. By giving up on
their real selves, they remain in communion
or relationship with the broader community
and so silence that which is authentically
part of who they are. (23)
In her journal, Jane writes about being told that they are as valuable and important as boys but then asks in her journal, “Why do you think it is so important to be beautiful and thin? Boys can get ready to go out in three easy steps…but we have to spend hours getting ready.” After a tirade about the shallowness of expectations around beauty, Jane segues to a topic that concerns her directly:

*An issue which touched me in the novel is the theme of religion and spirituality. It is a touchy subject. At 16, I don't know which way to turn. You see my mother is Anglican and my father is Jewish. It's almost as bad as if they were black and white. The way in which people try to determine my religion really angers me. My mom just says I must choose but I don't want to choose…My friend Leo died two weeks ago. He was only 17. His death was like a slap in the face. All over again I question religion and God and Jesus.*

By the end of the journal process, Jane did not suggest she had resolved her thoughts about religion, but the expression of her concerns suggests that she is thinking through her dilemmas. Articulating them to another person makes them less burdensome for her to manage.

To survive, a girl must often relinquish or suppress potentially powerful aspects of her selfhood. In trying to become a “good girl,” many girls ignore their potential strengths. If girls do not speak up about these contradictions, the valuable contribution they have to make to society will be lost and the implications for individual girls are profoundly disturbing. One marginalized pupil wrote, “I am so used to not talking that I have forgotten how to think.” Her words are painfully telling: how many women on the verge of adulthood find it easier to lose their sense of self, and to stop thinking in order to survive? The journal offered a potential space for them to come to terms with that which they may be suppressing or losing in order to fit into the surrounding culture.

The most extreme and unexpected outcomes of the journal-writing project resulted from the entries of Chloe and Angel (pseudonyms they chose themselves). Both girls had been quiet in class, and Angel struggled to analyze texts. They used the journal format to come to terms with personal trauma. Chloe’s journal entries were punctuated with poignant drawings and graffiti-like words such as fear, rejection, and anger. She wrote:

*I wish I could have the strength of Celie. All my life I have been seeking attention from people. From ANYONE. I don't respect myself, no one can respect me. I can’t respect myself.*

Through the journal and her drawings, Chloe began to make sense of herself and the trauma of rejection and how that rejection is played out in the school system even though she is part of the dominant culture.

In the first tentative stages of her journal, Angel wrote of being aware of racism because, as a Cypriot, she is from a minority group. The link

"I am so used to not talking that I have forgotten how to think."
that she makes to the novel is tenuous but nevertheless served to enable her to express a far greater trauma she shared with Walker’s protagonist, Celie:

>Celie has to learn to deal with abuse from her father. I’ve had to learn to deal with the same [type of sexual] abuse and the consequences of losing a father as a result. I have to learn that life goes on after every problematic situation.

Her entries go on to explore her desire to move away from the victim status of being abused. Once Angel made the connection between her own life and that of Celie, her writing became clearer. By the end of the academic year, her grades had increased by 30%. This was an unexpected, but highly welcome consequence of journal writing. Many silences were broken as some girls began to express their thoughts and describe the traumas they had suffered.

If journal writing can help pupils to articulate their thoughts about very private matters, it can enable these emerging adults to deal with discrepancies between their public and private selves. Writing to an interested ‘listener’ about their lives and knowing that it will be valued and respected validates their own understanding of both the literary text and themselves. In multi-cultural arenas, these understandings are vital to the growth and development of the emerging adult.

The pupils used Walker’s novel to set their own agenda. The teacher responding to the journal played the role of an interested reader/listener who simply poses questions to help them develop their thinking and reach their own conclusions. As a result, “the all-knowing adult” can adopt a “not-knowing” position in relation to the adolescent’s life. This clearly defined shift in the power balance between pupil and teacher validates the adolescent’s experience. She speaks as the expert on her own life and thus raises the status of her own thoughts. She also practices articulating those thoughts to others.

The task of reading and responding to the journals is onerous and may prove impossible for busy teachers. However, the rewards are significant and it may well be worth introducing journals in classrooms where there have been high levels of trauma and where voices have been silenced. The mediator or reader of the journal could be the catalyst for positive intervention and the increased engagement of a traumatized student. The positive potential inherent in the process is noteworthy, but the reader must be cautioned about responding carefully so as not to re-traumatize survivors. If for example, a girl, like Angel, writes about being violated by her father, it would be inappropriate to ask questions that may seem invasive and disrespectful. It is better to applaud her courage for choosing to survive. For example, an affirming response used was, “It is remarkable how you have been able to achieve the things you have in the light of your experiences. I am in awe of your courage.”

Even though literary journals demand a great deal of the teacher’s time, and may even exacerbate situations requiring long-term therapy, I would encourage others in similar positions to consider using journals
to mediate the adolescent journey. I strongly believe that the journals provide a means for adolescent girls to become who they want to become, rather than settling for so much less.

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This anthology in picture book form will inspire Australians and readers in other countries with the best of Indigenous education. It includes many true stories of childhood by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, some from Elders who are community leaders, and some from young students who live modern urban lives but remain connected to tradition. There are accounts of getting bush tucker, going fishing and taking part in ceremonies of playing games and building cubbies. Nadia Wheatley, the compiler, is richly experienced in the two-way model of education, so principles such as the centrality of country, valuing the knowledge children bring from home, and collaborative learning shine through this book, as do the love of family and the strength of community. Photographs and paintings by leading Indigenous artists appear among Searle’s original landscapes and decorations in this beautifully designed treasury. *Playground* is a book to dip into, enjoy and learn from.

Robin Morrow IBBY Australia

Nadia Wheatley

*Playground: Listening to Stories from Country and from Inside the Heart*

Illustrated by Ken Searle
Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2011
96 p., ISBN: 9781742370972

(Anthology/Picture Book, 6+)
Like many people, I became more aware of the importance of books for children when I had a child of my own. Around me, I could see that many Japanese children did not enjoy reading. They preferred to play computer games or surf the Internet. Even infants as young as two or three years of age would sit watching TV alone, without talking to anybody. I wanted to tell other parents how important it is for children to read and to converse with other people. At that time, I had been working for a major publishing company for 15 years, and I wanted to use my editorial knowledge to help build a better future for children, starting by improving their reading environment. As a result, I established my own publishing company, Mightybook, in 2004.

I joined IBBY and attended their World Congress in Denmark in 2008. There, in Copenhagen, I took the opportunity to talk to IBBY’s Bookbird editors and attended a meeting with them. As a result, in 2009, I started to publish Bookbird Japan: the Japanese version of IBBY’s Journal of International Children’s Literature. I did this because I thought that knowing about children’s books from other countries would be important and would motivate people to choose interesting books for their children, and to remind people of the importance of reading to children. Bookbird Japan has gone over well, and I was proud to compile a readers’ opinion report of

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Cheering ourselves up through children’s books: Bookbird helps quake-hit North Japan

by KIMIKO MATSUI

Kimiko Matsui is the director of a publishing company of children’s books Mightybook Co.,Ltd. The company has published the Japanese edition of the IBBY journal of Bookbird with chief-editor Yuriko Momo since 2010 (www.bookbird.jp). She is a writer and illustrator of children books.
Bookbird Japan for the IBBY World Congress in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, in 2010. Many librarians commented that they appreciate the Japanese translation. Many mothers’ networks also promote Bookbird Japan: they say it provides the kinds of information they need.

My staff and I held a party to celebrate the first anniversary of Bookbird Japan, Volume 5 on 7th March 2011, a week before it was due to go on sale at bookstores. We felt very happy to be enabling Japanese people to learn how the world has been thinking about securing their children’s future through children’s books.

Just four days later, on March 11th, at 2:46pm, I was in my Tokyo office preparing for a JBBY children’s book fair launch the following day. Suddenly I felt a shaking that I was not used to. Then there was an awful shuddering noise as books fell from the bookshelves. The shakes came in two or three continuous waves. It felt too dangerous to stay in the building. Images of Christchurch, New Zealand with its many destroyed buildings were in my mind as I escaped from the office building. Outside I could see the tall buildings bending like rubber sticks. A wall surrounding the neighboring building fell down.

All the public transportation in Tokyo stopped. Once everything had calmed down, I walked home. It took me nearly four hours; normally it takes just 40 minutes by train. I got there at half past nine at night. Some of my employees said I should not have left my office, but should have stayed in a safe place. I had to go because my son, Taiga, is still very young, just in the 6th grade at primary school. I thought he would probably be at school, but could not be sure because the telephone lines were down after the earthquake, and no one knew how much damage each area of the city had suffered. Luckily he was safe and waiting for me alone in the house.

All over the house, drawers had been opened and broken glass and dishes were spread over the floor. Taiga was sweeping the floor when I arrived. I couldn’t stop my tears. He said that he had remained at school for a while after the earthquake, and then went to his friend’s house to eat dinner. He realized I would not be able to
find him there, so he returned to the house by himself. Like me, he was also scared when we lost contact by mobile phone. The next morning, my husband came home from his office. It had taken him more than five hours to walk. I was so happy and relieved to be reunited with my family, but at that time we did not realize the full extent of the damage in Tokyo and North Japan.

Even though we are used to earthquakes here in Japan, I have never experienced anything like this before. At least I didn’t lose my son or husband. Afterwards there were further shocks as we saw the full extent of the damage on the television. The tsunami that swept over the land swamped cars and houses; it was a living nightmare. Many families lost children or parents suddenly.

Through the activities of IBBY and articles in Bookbird, I had learned about the diaspora of people from Uganda, about children working in Pakistan, and about the war in Afghanistan. Now that I had experienced a catastrophe for myself, I really wondered what books could do to help people. To be honest, when the tragedy of the earthquake happened to me, I thought that children’s literature did not matter anymore. I could not see any point in the work I was doing when I was surrounded by people who had lost everything. I was not one of the worst affected: I did not lose my son or my family or my home. But I lost confidence in my work, and was depressed for several weeks. I was not the only one to feel this way.

Then one of the Internet distributors, Fujisan Magazine Services, urged me to send books to Northern Japan. The director of Fujisan Magazine Services, Mr. Shinichirou Nishino, said he had received requests from people in refuges asking for the sense of hope and future that they
can get through reading. He teamed up with his partner publication house and another Internet distributor, Ehon-navi, which specializes in children’s books sales, to create a delivery network. This magazine and picture book delivery project became a large network and brought more than 30,000 magazines and 15,000 children books to about 1,000 refuges on April 7, 2011.

When I heard about the project, I thought that the people living in the refuges would not be interested in the world children’s literature magazines like Bookbird, but Mr. Nishino said that, on the contrary, now they really wanted to read and see the real face of the world. The problem was that the funny and conventional magazines were not really helping them repair the damage and focus on the future. I decided to send Bookbird Japan and other Mightybook art magazines with a total value of ¥2,600,000. I will be happy if just one person feels better after reading Bookbird Japan, even if they do not see the value of the contents straight away.

Bookbird does more than simply provide information or describe books depicting fantasy worlds for children. A reader in north Japan said, “Maybe children living through a war like that in the Middle-East are always frightened by what is going on around them.” Bookbird articles can provide insights and encourage empathy with children struggling under similar tragic circumstances far away. Through this project, I have learned to believe in the power of the books again.

At the time of writing (June 2011), quake-hit North Japan has suffered the loss of 25,000 people who are dead or missing, a further 5,000 are injured, more than 100,000 houses have been destroyed, and about 100,000 refugees still live in camps after two months. Japan is still struggling to repair the damage, and some things cannot be mended. We do not know the exact number of children who have lost members of their family or school friends; we just see many who are deeply sad. What can books do for them?

After March 11, I reconsidered my business in children’s books, including Bookbird. I believe children’s literature is necessary to enable children to dream of a better future. Why do I think books are better for children than the Internet and videos? I am not a psychologist, and so
I hesitate to say, but it seems to me that only stories enable us to truly empathize with others. Children cannot trust electronic text or images appearing in the virtual media that disappear when you switch them off. Children trust real things: real ink on real paper. The Internet and video have their role to play, but they function best as a supporting tool for children who already read stories. This can be seen amongst the children who suffered most during the earthquake. They need books to comfort them, books they can trust: books are an important source of solace.

Ms. Yuriko Momo, editor-in-chief of Bookbird Japan, recommended a particular book to read to children who were the victims of the earthquake, based on her experience of lecturing and teaching children’s literature at the university. This was *Ginga tetsudo no yoru* (*Night on the Milky Way Train*), a picture book by Kenji Miyazawa (translated into English by Roger Pulvers). In the story, a poor, isolated boy takes a journey on a space-train across the Milky Way with his friend. The beautiful story resonates well with children suffering from trauma. Bullying, accidents, and death are events that occur during the long, beautiful but difficult journey across the Milky Way by space-train. The author, Miyazawa, was born and grew up in poverty in Tohoku, the disaster area. His novel urges readers to pursue true happiness for every animate being and helps them understand the value of a young person’s self-esteem.

To get the materials to the refugee camps, we used publishing networks to help our project send magazines and children books to the North of Japan. Volunteers separated the books for each refuge at the delivery depots, and some boxes contained picture books and handmade bags with messages. The books were sent to 1,000 refuges in North Japan following the earthquake, through an office of the Liberal Democratic Party, which only has a delivery center. In one case, a volunteer driver took 7 hours to drive to North Japan. The area was still being affected by aftershocks. We know the Japanese never will forget 11 March 2011. However, the number 11 can be read “Hitori, Hitori” in Japanese, which means “every single person.” We have to take care of every single person: books can help us do that.

When I open the covers of a storybook like
CHEERING OURSELVES UP THROUGH CHILDREN’S BOOKS

An auction of original picture book art supports the Library Bus project.

Miyazawa’s, I feel a positive power. Children’s books are not only effective for helping children cope with trauma, the gentle words that a child understands also ease the raw feelings of adults. I hope the books we sent to North Japan provide a means for the people of the earthquake stricken region to dream and believe in a better world. Now I must prepare the next project “Drive to North Japan by Library Bus” with JBBY to deliver books to help traumatized children.

About Bookbird Japan

Bookbird Japan is a comprehensive children’s books information magazine that has a license from Bookbird: A Journal of International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY). Bookbird Japan provides complete Japanese translations from Bookbird and original Japanese editorial reports and articles. It describes what children’s books are being read in Japan today and reports on groups involved in children’s literature. We distribute 3,000-5,000 copies nationwide, and have a strong network of school and university libraries as customers. We welcome the support of advertisements placed by overseas companies.

For more details, please e-mail bookbird@mightybook.net, in English or Japanese.

The list of women Toronto author Marthe Jocelyn includes in Scribbling Women spans both history and the globe, from Sen Shogagon in 10th-century Japan to Victorian Mary Kingsley in West Africa, from Inuit Ada Blackmore in early 20th-century Alaska to North Vietnamese Dang Thuy Tram, a doctor in the jungles of the Vietnam War. Each of the eleven women in this volume tells a unique story of adventure and strength, and Jocelyn’s research and editorial work brings this information alive for the adolescent reader. Some of the works of these women have been published, and so will be available in their full complexity for readers to engage with later in life; some, however, Jocelyn has brought out of dusty archives and into our lives. Each concludes with a segue into the next which links these women’s stories across time and geography. Jocelyn tells the stories, but also lets these women speak for themselves, both in the often-difficult language of the poorly educated—‘hallowed madam with grent plusher I tak up my penn to a Quaint you’ (16)—and in translation for the young reader. Historical incidents, situations, and items are also glossed. While some complexities are necessarily lost in the simplification process, the historical picture Jocelyn paints is sufficiently accurate and always fascinating. She also interrogates questions regarding the motivations of these women, asking the reader to consider these other women’s lives more fully from their perspectives: “Why didn’t she go? Would the passage have cost more money than she could put together? Was she afraid of repeating that long, perilous journey?” (23) The answer is invariably that we cannot know but we can only conjecture; the reader is thus left thinking deeply of the lives of these women.

Kareen Huemerann, Simon Fraser University

Marthe Jocelyn

Scribbling Women: True Tales from Astonishing Lives

Toronto: Tundra, 2011
208 p.
ISBN: 978-0-88776-952-8

(Biography, 10-14)
Dear Bookbird Readers,

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, an American writer in the late nineteenth to early twentieth-centuries, is an influential figure in the history of children’s literature. Phelps was born in Massachusetts in 1844, and was a strong advocate for women’s rights and the abolition of vivisection in America. She supported herself throughout her adulthood as a writer, and her hunger for social change is inherently present throughout her writing. Phelps found great success as an author of adult fiction, but a large portion of her literature was written for children. She published regularly in children’s periodicals such as Youth’s Companion and Our Young Folks, and her children’s novels, such as the Gypsy Breynton series, were well loved throughout American Sunday schools. Phelps’ literature consistently reflects her own goals for her society, and she maintains a recognizable and instructive voice throughout her children’s narratives.

Phelps understood the inadequacies of late nineteenth-century American society, and sought to make progressive changes by encouraging young people to take action. Unlike many children’s authors in her period, Phelps does not conceal truths about subjects deemed uncomfortable to the upper classes, and she exposes her readers to the traumatic realities of street children and impoverished orphans. In “Bobbit’s Hotel,” a short story published in Our Young Folks in 1870, Phelps tells the story of Bobbit, “[a] little fellow, not much higher than a yardstick” (482), whose struggle for survival is cut short after a heroic attempt to provide adequate shelter to two orphaned Irish boys. The story takes place on a stormy night in Boston, where Bobbit is standing “in a little snow drift, up to his knees” (482). He had earned fifteen cents earlier in the day by doing odd jobs in the streets, so he sets out to buy himself a good meal from the bakery. At the bakery, Bobbit meets two Irish orphans and takes it upon himself to feed the boys and offer them shelter in his “hotel.” Phelps’ readers quickly learn that what Bobbit considers his “hotel” is actually “an old locomotive boiler, rusty, and half buried in a heap of rubbish” (484). The storm is relentless during the night, and Bobbit, determined to remain a hospitable host to his guests, freezes to death in his effort to keep the orphans warm and comfortable. Phelps exposes her young readers to the tragic reality
of Bobbit’s struggle for existence, and uses his trauma as a means of connecting young people to the real suffering of impoverished street children. In the instance of Bobbit, Phelps uses traumatic experience to spark empathy in more fortunate children, and Bobbit’s benevolence restores the forgotten humanity of impoverished street youth.

The protagonist of Phelps’s “One Way to Get an Education,” is as abandoned by social systems as Bobbit. The story, told by a female physician, centers on a boy who works in the mills; yearning for a better life, young Jake deliberately puts his hand into the machine in order to be let off work so that he may attend school while he heals. Phelps’s wrote several other narratives about children in the factories, including Up Hill; or, Life in the Factory, a proselytizing novel for children that pragmatically accepts the fact that some children must work in the mills, and The Silent Partner, a novel concerned as much with women’s rights as with labor laws. Both of these narratives depict the grim reality of life as a mill worker, and both sympathize with the plight of the mill-child. In the latter, Bub is a self-directed working boy very like Bob in “One Way to Get an Education,” who finds it “mighty hard on chaps as has to stay to work industrious” when his coworkers “get out” because of accidents. In the novel, while struggling for a plug of tobacco, Bub dies in the works when “life, like everything else, was quite too young for Bub. He has got so old, he has given it up” (215-16). With this fiction for children, Phelps explores issues of trauma through both the accidents that happened to such children and the trauma they undergo in their daily lives.

In “Mary elizabeth,” published in St. Nicholas in 1880, Phelps juxtaposes Mary elizabeth’s trauma as an orphan with her constant benevolence. Phelps was passionate about the right for women to have useful careers in American society, and she takes Mary elizabeth’s traumatic female experience and uses it as a means of working toward a successful future. Mary elizabeth “was poor, she was sick, she was ragged, she was dirty, she was cold, she was hungry, she was frightened” (316). Although she knew that many other street children stole when they were hungry, Mary Elizabeth chose to beg and was hopeful that since God made so many suppers, “there’d ought to been one for one extra little girl” (317). She comes across a hotel, and, believing there must be a great deal of suppers in the building, finds her way inside. After explaining that she hadn’t eaten all day, a lonely looking man tells her that he hasn’t eaten in three days, and, feeling like the man deserved the money more than herself, Mary Elizabeth gives him the only money she’d come across that day, and her only opportunity to eat. Her selflessness touches every man in the hotel, and each donates what he can in order to ensure that she will not go hungry.

In both stories, Phelps uses benevolence to work through the traumatic experiences of her orphans, but the different fates of Bobbit and Mary elizabeth mean that trauma functions differently in each story. Mary Elizabeth faced immense suffering throughout her childhood, and, like Bobbit, she maintains her benevolent nature despite her constant adversity. Unlike Bobbit, though, Phelps allows Mary Elizabeth to live, and she is able to work through her trauma with benevolence and selflessness. Bobbit, on the other hand, remains selfless and brave throughout the entire story, yet he dies a tragic death in order to save two other orphans. Phelps uses Mary Elizabeth, then, to prove that a child can work through and eventually overcome the trauma inflicted in early life through acts of kindness and selflessness, whereas Bobbit’s character is meant
to stir emotion and guilt within the more fortunate reader. Bobbit’s trauma is meant to reveal the real struggles that children face on the streets of Boston, and his death acts as a motivator for children to reflect on and take action against child poverty. Phelps allows Mary Elizabeth to work through her traumatic experiences by making selfless and benevolent choices, and provides her with a more fortunate destiny.

Many of Phelps’ stories deal with orphans and impoverished street children, and there are many Bobbits and Mary Elizabeths throughout her work. Childhood trauma, for Phelps, was an indicator of social standing, and she continually reminded her young readers that their perspectives on the streets of Boston were not the same as those of homeless orphans.

Samantha Christensen,  
University of Alberta—Augustana Faculty

Works Cited and Further Reading

Secondary Sources
Dear Bookbird Reader,

Adolescence is often regarded as a time of “crisis” during which the individual seeks his or her place in the world. Within historical Chinese juvenile fiction, however, the main crises appear to be located outside the individual inside the society. In this letter, I will outline the common features found in fiction for adolescents (and adults as well) depicting the events of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). This traumatic period in Chinese history marks the era when Mao Zedong, then Chairman of the Communist Party, urged the young to resist the “bourgeois elements” or “revisionists” he claimed were damaging the government and the society. The groups of Red Guards that sprang up in response to Mao’s call were mainly comprised of high school and college students. Their aim was to destroy the Four Olds: old ideas, old culture, old customs...
and old habits. The movement resulted in great social chaos throughout China, and was very traumatic for numerous individuals, adults and children alike. Juvenile fiction about this era tends to reflect either the traumas adolescents faced during that period or the guilt of those who perpetrated violent acts.

The Cultural Revolution provided an unparalleled “free” epoch for children and teenagers. The popular idea that education was useless meant that many schools closed and teachers were dismissed. In the midst of the social chaos, parents had no time or mind to discipline their children. Without these normal constraints, there was greater freedom for adolescents to become “wild.” In YA fiction about this era, this freedom is characterized as a period in which norms are dismissed and teenagers can become “beasts.” Su Tong’s short stories about teenagers’ turbulent lives during the Cultural Revolution, such as his anthologies Memory of Mulberry Garden, The Era of Tattoo, The North of The City and Xiangchun Street written in the 1980s and 1990s depict teenagers wandering in the streets to idle away their time. They imitate the political factional frictions and fight other gangs of teenagers. In Fierce Beasts by Wang Shuo (1991), the teenagers indulge in bullying weaker children, defeating their opponents and fighting for girlfriends. Eventually they commit so many errors that even they can see they are heading for disaster. It is also worth noting that, in Wang Shuo’s novel, parallels are drawn between the teenage perpetrators’ pursuit of power and that of the evil political authority. The children’s troubled world mirrors the troubled society. These texts depict teenagers as being disturbed by the social power and disturbing the society as a result; they are unable to judge and reject the political views promoted by the authorities in power.

During the Cultural Revolution, the political authorities persecuted millions of people. Children were also persecuted, especially by their peers. In Praise for Freedom and Leisure by Liu Heng (1989), the teenagers, abandoned by the political mainstream, hide in a deserted building. Initially they seem to have escaped the turbulence of the society, but soon life within the walls of the building begins to follow the same patterns as those outside. Eventually, some of the youngsters die as a result of conspiracies or assaults by their peers. Although presented as fiction, the novel accurately depicts the impact the Cultural Revolution had in nearly every corner of the country. Another typical text is The Way to Hometown by Ai Wei (2000), which depicts a boy whose father is arrested for being a “counter-revolutionary.” As a result, the boy becomes the victim of insults and bullying from other children, which ultimately results in his death. This novel shows that children who engage in political games can easily become the ignorant and ruthless accomplices of those in power.

Many families were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, not only by outside persecution, but also because of the tensions the Cultural
Revolution wrought within the family. Misled by the political mainstream or under the political pressure, children were inclined to disown parents who had political problems. In three recent novels, *Whom Did the Dog Bite in 1966?* by Shen Qiaosheng (2002), *Living in 1966* by Hu Tinmei (2005) and *Aunt in Qi Pao* by Li Cheng (2007), the young protagonists feel ashamed of and betray members of their family who come from so-called “black” class backgrounds. They even treat their family members or lovers badly as a result. In the end, these teenagers feel guilty about their active or passive involvement in harming people worthy of their love. These fictions uncover the inner shadows or scars inflicted on the young during this turbulent social era. Their constant need to confess their crimes is presented as a kind of mental torture or life sentence. As the title *Whom Did the Dog Bite in 1966* implies, children who were “bitten” by the irrational political “dog” during the Cultural Revolution, gradually turned into rabid “dogs” who bit others. Many of the teenage protagonists lose their childlike innocence, even their humanity. At the end of these novels, the teenagers seek rescue or redemption, but the texts stress that recovery from such a traumatic historical era is immensely difficult.

Many of the teenage novels discussed above try to reflect the collapse and rebuilding of the foundations of humanity following this historical disaster. In some of these texts, there are special characters that help children recover from traumatic experiences. In Ke Yunlu’s novel *Unenlightened* (2000) and Wang Gang’s novel *English* (2004), a beautiful female teacher and a gentle male teacher respectively represent the saviors who persistently behave with integrity, dignity and love despite the political chaos and persecution they witness. Their highly moral personalities and spirituality enlightens the teenage students. The teachers act as guides who, through intelligence, goodness and beauty, enable these misguided adolescents to adopt more humane attitudes and behaviors. In other novels, such as Su Tong’s *Walking for a Kilometer along the Railway* and *The Stained Glass*, teenage protagonists attempt to save themselves by refusing to take part in the disordered activities. By depicting leaving home as a solution, the authors draw on the well-established trope in which a journey (which symbolizes growth and change) can be used to address a crisis. Unlike dystopian stories such as *Praise of Freedom and Leisure* and *Fierce Animals*, which leave the teenage characters uncertain about their future, these novels depicting journeys indicate that recovery from widespread national trauma is possible.

Chinese juvenile fictions depicting the Cultural Revolution destroy the myth of a sweet and innocent childhood by exploring traumatic life experiences. These subject matters are mainly written by male writers whose own childhoods or adolescence took place during the Cultural Revolution. As a result, most of the protagonists are boys who are driven by the political movement to engage in rebellion so that they can consider themselves to be heroes like those historical war heroes. Nevertheless, they are a misled generation, since they grew up in a particularly
morally impoverished era without valuable spiritual resources. These fictions tend to be narrated from the teenagers’ perspectives, and so focus on their disturbed minds and the traumatic quality of the era. They provide a unique insight into the historical era and the damage done to the psyche. Although these Chinese novels are set in a specific historical context, the adolescents’ traumas also have universal significance. They convey a reminder about the dangers posed to adolescents by social or political turmoil, and of the need to support adolescents during disturbing or confusing circumstances.

Fengxia Tan, Nanjing Normal University, China

Notes
1 All translations of Chinese texts are the author’s.

Works cited
How Children Experience Trauma and How Parents Can Help Them Cope.


There are not many books available that address the topic of what parents can do to help their traumatized child. Even the Child Trauma Institute website (http://childtrauma.com/) lists resources, but no published books aimed specifically at parents and caregivers. Perhaps this is because childhood trauma is, of course, such a delicate issue for both the child and the adults involved, a point that the authors of How Children Experience Trauma and How Parents Can Help Them Cope are careful to point out. While it is important for parents to understand their children’s experiences and be given some specific ways to deal with their children’s traumas, and I would like to see a book aimed effectively at parents and caregivers, this is not that book. The intent of the text is laudable, but the result is less valuable than one could hope for.

The text is broken into a theoretical introduction and a number of case studies aimed at giving readers a more practical understanding of the various forms childhood trauma might take. While the authors explicitly assert that there is no standard scenario, that each instance of trauma is unique, many of the comments they make (for example, that “adolescents are invariably angry if they are attacked” [71]) over-generalize both the trauma and the child’s response to it. This is perhaps the result of a broader generalization the authors make about childhood development, asserting for example that “in middle childhood [children]…are exposed too early to their own internal bitterness on account of the destructive behaviour of the adult world” (27). Such an assertion cannot go unchallenged for a significant number of children. This comment is emblematic of an insufficiently structured approach to both childhood and trauma, or at least a poorly structured expression of that approach.

Throughout the introduction, the discussion circles inseparably through stages of development, types of trauma, and the style of clinical intervention, becoming both confusing and repetitious. The information underlying the discussion may be sound, but needs to be presented more simply, and with a voice that remains consistently aimed at the intelligent but non-expert parents, and that avoids the
use of specialist psychiatric terminology. The authors use a number of terms (such as “well-contained,” “disintegration,” and “latency age”) that stem from their training in Freudian psychoanalytic theory and clinical psychology. These terms should be used sparingly, with a stronger reliance on a more colloquial vocabulary for the non-clinical readership.

Once into the actual case studies, the structure becomes easier to follow, but the narratives seem excessively lurid; parents of traumatized children will perhaps not want to read such vivid descriptions of trauma. The “Aftermath” sections are theoretically sound, but list numerous case studies followed by an overarching discussion which does not sufficiently draw on the individual studies directly, and again leads to overgeneralization and confusion. A more powerful approach would be to present a smaller number of exemplary case studies individually, and discuss the theoretical and practical implications of each before moving on to the next study.

While the introduction speaks across cultural boundaries to trauma as a human experience, the case studies as well as the factual information included in the text are specific to a South African context. While this specificity renders the text more useful for its South African readership, it does diminish the universality of the authors’ message that is suggested by the introduction.

Overall, *How Children Experience Trauma* fails to achieve the admirable goals it sets forth. Rewritten with more careful attention to the needs of its target audience (that is, parents, not clinicians), this book could be quite valuable.

_Karyn Huenemann, Simon Fraser University, Canada_


*Brave New Worlds* is a careful selection of papers on European children’s literature whose leitmotif is the very issue of canon- icity (with)in the field. While pointing to the canon as a discursive formation, Paruolo claims in her introductory chapter that there are also clear advantages surrounding canonicity, including authors’ visibility and perceived legitimacy for researchers (9-28). In the light of this perception, the volume focuses on four different countries: Britain and three important literary polysystems, namely Germany, France and Italy, which are currently in various stages of the way towards a children’s literary canon.

The volume is divided into three main parts. Of these, Part 1, by far the strongest section in the book, looks at the texts themselves. First, Sandra L. Beckett discusses “crossover” classics, a rare status which the author somehow connects to works having been written in, or else translated into, English (31-44). An encyclopaedic list of both past and present-day classics rounds out this chapter.

The next contribution is Peter Hunt’s close reading of three
well-known British canonical works: Carroll’s *Alice* books and Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows*. Effectively deconstructing the notion of the canon, Hunt suggests that *Alice* remains a true children’s work that also appeals to adults, whereas Kenneth Grahame’s pastoral idyll is a novel that the adult world has systematically thought suitable for children (45-53).

Jean Perrot then considers the French canon. Although going back to the 17th century, the works he identifies as French classics are more recent, including Saint-Exupéry’s *Le petit prince* [*The Little Prince*] and Pergaud’s *La guerre des boutons* [*War of the buttons*]. The value of this chapter lies in the rich intertextual connections delineated between these and other works within and outside the French literary polysystem (54-66).

Anja Müller’s equally enticing chapter takes us to Germany. Following very much the same principles successfully used in previous chapters, Müller provides an extensive revision of German children’s literature since the 18th century, often considering the role played by extra-literary criteria in the creation of German children’s classics. As a post-scriptum of sorts, Müller argues that the realistic mode that has characterised much of Germany’s children’s fiction has not been entirely superseded by the recently successful fantasy works the country has produced (67-88).

From Germany the reader travels back to Britain and is invited to consider children’s poetry. Morag Styles’ account rejoices in the official recognition this subgenre receives in Britain whilst bitterly resenting the very little presence it has in British school curricula (89-103).

Part 1 comes to a close pointing to the future with Stefania Ciocia’s “*Vernon God Little*: A Future Crossover Classic” (105-120). Even if it has already found its place in British school curricula, the author convincingly argues, this novel may never become an established part of the children’s literary canon, mostly because it lacks two essential ingredients: it does not build empathy with the main character or a sense of catharsis.

Part 2 is devoted to the fascinating issue of the translation or adaptation of children’s classics. A strong point of this part is that the pieces of children’s literature the different chapters explore from this different perspective are works already analysed in Part 1: *Alice*, *La guerre des boutons*, and a staple of the German folk tradition compiled by the Brothers Grimm, namely “Hansel and Gretel.” However, it must also be said that Serpieri’s considerations on the translation of *Alice*, rich as they are in practical detail (and therefore of immense value for translation practitioners) lack the scholarly tone that has hitherto dominated the volume (123-139). This is equally applicable to D’Ajello’s chapter on the translation of *Alice* into Neapolitan Italian, which becomes more of a political vindication (considering the status of dialects within the greatly complex linguistic reality which is Italy) than a scholarly article. On a more positive note, D’Ajello felicitously points to the semiotically
complex nature of the literary text, stating that the visual component can be—and indeed has been—translated, bringing the magic world of Alice culturally closer to the Neapolitan reading public.

The next chapter, by Roberta Pederlozi, is a fascinating analysis of the different Italian translations of La guerre des boutons since 1929 and successfully demonstrates that literary translation, as well as publishing itself, is not exclusively driven by purely literary criteria: commercial and ideological factors also need to be taken into account (147-168).

Well-known illustrator Mauro Evangelista comes next, taking over from D’Ajello, and demanding recognition for the enormous responsibility undertaken by children’s book illustrators (169-173). In this regard, his contribution is highly valuable although—yet again—the volume might also have benefitted from a more academic approach to the topic.

The return to “academic mode” is provided by Laura Tosi’s thoroughly researched chapter (175-189). Tosi provides an insightful intertextual analysis of a classic popularised by the Brothers Grimm, successfully exploring how it has been adapted in different works produced in a period spanning the last three decades.

Finally, Part 3 pays homage to the visual component of children’s literary works, showcasing illustrations of two classics (Alice and Pinocchio), by Lello Esposito (Alice), Mauro Evangelista (Alice, Pinocchio), and Antonio Petti (Pinocchio). Such illustrations, originally part of an exhibition that ran parallel to the conference and that brought shape to this volume, are not only a visual delight but are also meant to illustrate some of the issues discussed in the book. Unfortunately, they appear in an almost completely de-contextualised manner, and they could have proved far more effective had they been commented on by their respective creators.

In spite of the shortcomings noted above, however, this remains a highly recommendable volume that should not only be of interest to a wide range of scholars (literature, cultural studies, translation and semiotics) but also contribute to the visibility and legitimisation of a rich area of both literary and scholarly output.

J. Igor Prieto-Arranz, University of the Balearic Islands


A symposium was held on the subject of young handicapped persons’ access to literature at the INS HEA (Institut national supérieur pour l’éducation des jeunes handicapés et les enseignements adaptés
These proceedings gather 18 of the 21 papers given during the symposium, including a transcript of the panel discussion. These proceedings address the topic from various angles and are organized into four sections. They deal with the role and the reception of children's literature by young handicapped persons, but they also tackle the figure of the handicapped person as a character in children's literature.

In the first part, “Questions of Access,” the many examples focus on concrete achievements, showing how children's literature can be made accessible to young, handicapped persons. The solutions range from adapting or simplifying classics to make them accessible to the intellectually challenged to using DVDs of folktales or picture books translated into sign language for the deaf and creating tactile books or books in Braille for the visually impaired, as detailed in the Korean contribution on “adapted publishing.” The Korean contribution also presents novels for young adults featuring handicapped protagonists. Finally, five specialized publishers, gathered for the occasion to exchange their points of view, explain their philosophy and speak of their achievements.

The second part, “Literature and self-construction,” presents an article by Evelio Cabrejo-Parra, a psychoanalyst and linguist, and various accounts by handicapped children on how reading has given them the means to develop, to find the strength to live their everyday lives and to deal with other people’s preconceptions about their handicaps. Sometimes, however, reading was a stumbling block—a young dyslexic woman realized, after becoming an adult, that, despite all her efforts, reading would never be a pleasure for her.

The third part, “Mediations,” presents certain strategies proposed by professionals in schools, to put children’s literature and “school” literature within reach of handicapped or ill children. These include a blog in the hospital to motivate the young to read, reading in a classroom of blind children, a case-study on teaching literature to deaf children, followed by a survey of deaf children’s reading. The last contribution is about the use of plays as an entry into literature for ill or handicapped children who have been hospitalized for a long period of time.

The fourth part, “Questions of Representation,” addresses the image of the handicapped protagonist in children's literature, with examples from different countries and language regions, including the Czech Republic, Italy, and Dutch speaking countries. Two books from France are presented in detail: the comic book La Bande à Ed [Ed's Gang], by Jak and Geg, which features several young handicapped people, and the Castor Poche series (Père Castor), which also contains several handicapped characters.

The absence of a final synthesis in the proceedings is disappointing; it would have helped to overcome the feeling that the book is merely a series of case studies. A general bibliography would also have been welcomed.
(although personal accounts are undeniably difficult to document, only 3 or 4 articles have a proper bibliography). Certain subjects, like psychological handicaps including autism, could have been addressed more thoroughly (neither of the two papers on this topic given at the seminar are part of the proceedings). Some of the abbreviations and medical terms could have been explained for the non-specialists. These matters aside, the positive aspects of this book largely overcome its flaws.

The contributors are specialists who have a thorough grasp of their subjects, be it through research or personal experience. The book is lively, filled with concrete examples that are usually followed by more general reflections. Furthermore, the seminar was intended to cover all aspects of this vast subject, and it has successfully provided a sweeping coverage of almost every type of handicap (sensory impairment, mobility impairment, psychic impairment, invalidating sickness, handicaps due to accidents or persons born with disabilities).

Above all, the fact that the seminar was held, that a reflection on the subject of handicapped children’s reading needs was conducted, is in itself remarkable. There seems to be a genuine realization, an initial pondering on the subject that might be continued through research projects that would go beyond examples of special achievements or individual life courses, and explore other facets of this problem. An article on the role of librarians as mediators would be welcomed, as well as a general article on the handicapped character in francophone children’s literature.

The seminar and its proceedings have made the necessary material available for future synthesis, and have begun the work of addressing the issue of fully integrating the handicapped into our society. The authors acknowledge the numerous difficulties inherent in this undertaking, but it is a topic that concerns each and every one of us, and I am delighted to see that it is being addressed. Congratulations to Françoise Hache-Bissette and to her team!

Marie-Ange Pompignoli,
translated by Hasmig Chabinian, Bibliothèque nationale de France

Notes
Four publishing houses were represented: Danger public [Public danger], whose “Les mots à l’endroit” series [Words in their right places] is meant for dyslexics; éditions Monica Companys that publish books for deaf children; Regard d’enfants [Children’s gaze] that develops a series of giant format books for the visually impaired, and La Fée des mots [The Fairy of words], specialized in the adaptation and simplification of Classics.

Historical Dictionary of Children’s Literature
Since the publication in 1984 of Humphrey Carpenter and Mari Pritchard’s groundbreaking *Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature*, there have been several overarching surveys of the subject, of which Emer O’Sullivan’s is the most recent. Some have chosen a thematic, essay based format, while others like Victor Watson’s *Cambridge Guide to Children’s Literature in English* (2001) and the four volume *Oxford Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature*, edited by Jack Zipes in 2006, have used a more easily interrogated alphabetical arrangement. O’Sullivan, whose Introduction acknowledges her debt to Zipes and Watson, has created her *Dictionary* as volume 46 of Scarecrow’s ongoing series of “Historical Dictionaries” of literature and the arts. This, the back cover blurb claims, “tells the story of children’s literature through a chronology, an introductory essay, appendices, a bibliography, and over 500 cross-referenced dictionary entries on authors, books, and genres.” This it does, though there is a single rather than the promised multiple appendices. Given the obvious restrictions dictated by the house style of the series, the 370 small pages of fairly large print of which this book is comprised provide a good overview of the history of English language literature written for young people. The first section of O’Sullivan’s Introduction briefly considers the question “what is children’s literature?” (1), outlining some of the ideological dilemmas which arise in attempting to define the texts which children read. She moves to a two-page account of “The Rise and Early Development of Children’s Literature” (7), in which she acknowledges the “Anglo-American” emphasis of the *Dictionary*, and concludes with a section outlining the possible effect of internationalism and globalisation on the future of children’s literature.

In the main body of the work, existing scholars of children’s literature are as likely to identify what has been omitted as what is included, and the Chronology that prefaces the author’s Introduction and the Dictionary itself cannot be all inclusive. Most of the major authors, publishers and titles of the years between 990 and 2008 are there, but the inclusion of more North American data than British-published reference works might result from the author being selective in her choice of people or books. Items that many may regard as significant in the history of this literature have been excluded. There is, for example, no reference to Ellenor Fenn either in the Chronology or the Dictionary, to Eliza Fenwick, nor to the Darton publishing house, all of which made a substantial contribution to the development of writing for young people in the long eighteenth century. In the Chronology, we find the major event of 1996 is the invention of *Teletubbies*, but nothing
there nor in the Dictionary about the development of broadcasting for children. Under the entry for 1969 we find Sesame Street, but 1964 sees no mention of Playschool, surely equally significant for preschool children in the UK and Canada. And if we are looking at the history of children’s literature, why is there no reference to the British television programme Jackanory, which has promoted stories and storytelling, and their writers, to children for nearly fifty years? The lack of a specific reference to the influence of broadcast media is another significant omission.

As O’Sullivan’s book is a dictionary, with the assumption that readers should be able to find anything by a simple alphabetical search, there is no index, and though there is heavy-type cross referencing within the dictionary section, it does not necessarily pick up references made elsewhere in the text. As a result, readers must search each section of text to find the totality of information on any subject. This inaccessibility is frustrating, for example when the Chronology mentions the institution of the Carnegie Medal in 1936 (xxii), the Dictionary elaborates on that entry (60), but readers are directed to the Appendix (278) to see who the recipients have been. It must also be noted that neither are all the recipients of that and the other awards noted in the Appendix, nor do all of those awards themselves appear within the Dictionary itself. There is also inconsistency in the extent of information provided about awards. The American Library Association’s prize for texts translated into English, the Mildred L. Batchelder Award, gets an entry in the Dictionary (174), with full details of the book, the author, the translator and the translated languages in the Appendix (284). By contrast, the British equivalent, the Marsh Award, has no Dictionary entry, and the Appendix (283) names merely names the books that have won it, and not the original author or the translator.

Although this is a “Historical Dictionary,” and it might be assumed that some readers would wish to research further using such a recommendation as a guide, there is no mention of awards for research into the history of children’s literature (such as those awarded to the Dartons). This shortfall is however addressed through the final fifty pages of O’Sullivan’s book, in which she compiles her Bibliography. Prefaced by an Introduction in which a brief history of the study of this literature is provided, reminding us that it is fewer than sixty years old as a recognised academic discipline, we are then provided with a bibliography in thirteen main sections dividing critical material into texts covering history and theory, as well as thematic, genre, geographical, intercultural and translated, and educational surveys, of children’s literature, together with a list of major journals and websites.

The Introduction is probably the most useful part of the book, but the academic nature of most of the recommended reading raises the question of the intended audience of the Historical Dictionary of Children’s Literature. For the existing scholar, the book holds little new, or easily accessible, material. Therefore we assume it is for the general reader, the
professional—librarian, teacher—or the prospective scholar of literature for children. Even so, its main contribution to a field increasingly well served by historical overviews of the subject must be in its inclusion of the latest (2008) information. It will be interesting to see how the *Historical Dictionary* stands up to the long overdue major revision of Carpenter and Prichard’s *Companion*, which is currently underway.

_Bridget Carrington, Editor, Journal of Children’s Literature Studies_


This work, coordinated by three Italian university researchers from Bologna and Macerata, regroups contributions in French, Italian and English on the subject of writing and translating for children. The volume is divided into three parts. For the purpose of clarity, I will honor this distinction, even though they are closely interconnected.

The first section is mainly dedicated to matters related to writing for children and young adults. The contributors (who include Jean Perrot and Jean Foucault) comment on how particular children’s books circulate from one country to another—whether or not they have been translated—and how this affects writing for children in the different countries. In the course of the discussion, the authors address the issue of adaptation. More specifically, adaptation is discussed in relation to adjusting the work to the youngsters’ reading competences, erasing certain culturally specific items and reinforcing a personal point of view, as in the case of Collodi, the translator of Perrault’s *Tales from Mother Goose* and the stories of Madame d’Aulnoy and Madame Leprince de Beaumont.

The second section is concerned with Translation Studies. Roberta Pederzoli, a specialist in this subject, reminds us that much of the evolution of research in the field of literary translation draws on studies of translations of works for children. These works have allowed critics to set out and clarify a number of problematic issues. These include: 1) How to translate pictures books and how to take into account the “iconic speech”? 2) How should culturally specific items be translated? 3) The place of the adult translator’s voice in a text for young readers 4) How can we find a balance between literary perspectives and educational perspectives?

The third section tackles the translation of audio-visual materials for children, for both the small and big screens. This largely unrecognised discipline has already become an important research subject for young researchers, as they address a variety of topics including film dubbing for children. Dubbing raises matters such as the context of reception (both linguistic and cultural) and the multiple functions of the audio-visual text (to amuse, educate, inform and socialize children). The never-ending debate on whether it is better to dub or use sub-titles when showing foreign works on television takes on new life when the viewers are children. This third part offers plenty of food for thought.

A great number of classics from French, Italian, English and German children’s literature are revisited in these 343 pages. The result is a stimulating volume that offers valuable insight into these milestones in classical European Children’s Literature.

_Chris Delahaye, translated by Hasmig Chabinian, Bibliothèque nationale de France_
The IBBY section of Mexico is the sponsor of ICBD in 2012. The colorful poster by Juan Gedovius shows characters from well-known children’s tales and is accompanied by a message to the children of the world by Mexican author Francisco Hinojosa. Copies of the poster and message are available from IBBY Mexico and the original message in Spanish is posted on the IBBY website under ICBD: www.ibby.org

Once upon a time, there was a story that the whole world told. In fact, it was not one story but many, and they began to fill the world with tales of disobedient girls and seductive wolves, glass slippers and love-struck princes, clever cats and little tin soldiers, and friendly giants and chocolate factories. They filled the world with words, intelligence, images and extraordinary
characters. They invited the world to laugh, to be amazed, to coexist. They gave it meaning. And ever since, these stories have continued to multiply, telling us a thousand and one times, “Once upon a time, there was a story that the whole world told…”

When we read, tell or listen to stories, we’re exercising our imagination, almost as if it needed training to stay in shape. One day, surely without us even knowing it, one of these stories will return to our lives, offering creative solutions to obstacles that we find along the way.

When we read, tell or listen to stories out loud, we’re also continuing an ancient ritual that has played a fundamental role in the history of civilization: creating community. Cultures, past eras and generations come together around these stories to tell us that we are all one, the Japanese, Germans, and Mexicans; those that lived in the seventeenth century and us today, reading our stories on the Internet; grandparents, parents and children. Stories fulfil all human beings in the same way because, despite our enormous differences, we are all, deep down, the stories’ protagonists.

Unlike living organisms that are born, reproduce and die, stories, overflowing with fertility, can be immortal. Especially those stories in the popular tradition that are adaptable to the circumstances and context in which they are told and rewritten. They’re stories that, when reproduced or heard, make us their co-authors.

And, once upon a time, there was also a country full of myths, stories and legends that were passed on for centuries, from mouth to mouth, sharing their idea of creation, relating their history, sharing their cultural wealth, sparking curiosity and bringing smiles to faces. It was also a country where very few citizens had access to books. But this history has already begun to change. Today, stories are reaching ever further corners of my country, Mexico. And, in finding their readers, these stories are fulfilling their role of creating community, creating family, and creating individuals that are more likely to find happiness.

Francisco Hinojosa

Hans Christian Andersen Awards 2012

Thirty-two IBBY sections around the world have nominated fifty-seven candidates for the 2012 Andersen Awards. The ten-member jury, under the leadership of Spanish children’s literature expert María Jesús Gil, is working on assessing the complete works of all the candidates and will select the winners at a two-day meeting in Basel, Switzerland in March 2012. Immediately after the close of the jury meeting the short-list will be released worldwide. The 2012 winners will be announced at the Bologna Children’s Books Fair during the IBBY press conference on Monday, 19 March 2012. We are very grateful to Nami Island Inc, from the Republic of Korea for their generous support of the Award.

The jury led by María Jesús Gil comprises Anastasia Arkhipova Illustrator and chair of the board of the Association of Moscow Book Illustrators and Designers, Russia; Françoise Ballanger former manager
of the publishing department of *La Joie par les livres* in Paris, France; Ernest Bond Professor of Children’s and Young Adult Literature at Salisbury University, Maryland, USA; Sabine Fuchs university lecturer in children’s literature and secondary school teacher in Graz, Austria; Ayfer Gürdal Ünal writer and critic from Istanbul, Turkey; Jan Hansson Director of the Swedish Institute for Children’s Books in Stockholm, Sweden; Eva Kaliskami translator and teacher in Athens, Greece; Nora Lía Sormani writer and journalist, critic and researcher, from Buenos Aires, Argentina; Sahar Tarhandeh independent researcher in children’s literature, freelance graphic designer and art director based in Tehran, Iran; Regina Zilberman children’s literature specialist and former director of the Instituto Estadual do Livro in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Two ex-officio members will join the jury for the meeting: Elda Nogueira from Brazil will represent IBBY and Liz Page as Jury secretary.

Each candidate will be highlighted in issue 2/2012 of *Bookbird*. Profiles of the winners and short-listed candidates will be included in later issues.

Together with TeachingBooks.net, an American online resource for promoting reading and library activities, IBBY has collected recordings from the 2012 Andersen candidates that demonstrate how to pronounce their sometimes-difficult names. Little snippets also tell us just where their names come from or what they mean. This is a great resource for anyone who ever has to announce a candidate, and it is also great fun to actually hear all these talented creators of children’s books speak about their names. Go to http://www.teachingbooks.net/pronunciations.cgi

The nominees for the 2012 Hans Christian Andersen Awards are as follows:

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IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award 2012
The high number of candidates for the 2012 Award has shown the importance of this Award and a very wide appreciation of the numerous reading promotion programmes around the world that are working toward bringing children and books together. The Award was first given following the 20th IBBY World Congress held in Tokyo in 1986 under the name of the Rising Sun Award. In 1989 it was decided to change the name to what we know today: the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award. The generous support and constant interest that the Asahi Shimbun newspaper company has shown IBBY and its work, has been warmly welcomed and very much appreciated throughout these years and we sincerely thank them. Through this award programme 23 projects have been supported since its inception. An article about the history of the Award was included in Bookbird issue 2/2010 to celebrate its 20th anniversary.

The 2012 winners will be announced at the Bologna Children’s Books Fair during the IBBY press conference on Monday, 19 March 2012. The 2012 nominations are in alphabetical order of the nominating IBBY National Section:

Grandmother Storytelling Programme in Argentina, nominated by IBBY Argentina; the “New Education” Kids’ Reading Promotion Plan in China, nominated by CBBY; SIPAR, Cambodia nominated by IBBY France with support from Swiss IBBY; the international organization Room to Read, nominated by IBBY Germany; The Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation and Library, in Pireaus, Greece, nominated by Greek IBBY; the PaanPoeve Vachanalay project in Pune, India, nominated by IBBY India; Give us Books, Give us Wings in Iran, nominated by Iranian IBBY; the Nati per Leggere / Born to Read programme running in Italy, nominated by IBBY Italia. Italy; the Nomadic library – Sod Nomun in Mongolia, nominated by IBBY Mongolia; Kelompok Pencinta Bacaan Anak / the Society for the Advancement of Children’s Literature in Indonesia, nominated by Dutch IBBY; the Institución Educativa Parroquial Cristina Beatriz in Lima, nominated by IBBY Peru; the Slovene Reading Badge: Crossing Boundaries to All Kinds of Minorities, nominated by IBBY Slovenia; Llibre Obert in Spain, nominated by Spanish IBBY; the White Elephant / Domrei Sor based in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, nominated by IBBY Sweden; the UK based international organization Book Aid International, promoting Book Corners in libraries in Kenya and Tanzania, nominated by British IBBY; the Dagdag Dunong project in Manila, Philippines, nominated by USBBY; the Lubuto Library in Zambia, nominated by USBBY with support from Zambian IBBY.

A full list with contact websites is available on the IBBY website.

News of New Members
Cambodia
Since 2008 there has been interest in establishing an IBBY section in Cambodia and the new section came into being in March 2011 with approval by the Executive Committee. Cambodia has been through long years of turmoil and horror, and has finally come through with a young population and with it an increasing enthusiasm for reading and looking outwards towards international contacts. The section has been established by a small group of members from NGOs—SIPAR, SVA (Shanti Volunteer Association), Room To Read, Damrei Sar, Tam Tam—publishers (Reading Book, Comic Art, Boeng Tonle Sap) as well as a representative from UNESCO. The section is generously being supported by IBBY Sweden.

IBBY Cambodia wants to build bridges between the national reading communities and the wider world. This will also provide a good opportunity for Cambodia to learn from other countries at a similar stage in their development about producing children’s books of high artistic and literary merit, as well as promoting reading and access to books for young people.
IBBY Congress 2012
London 23-25 August 2012
Registration is now open and the programme is fixed. The Congress will take place at Imperial College in the centre of London’s cultural heartland. Speakers include Shaun Tan, Patsy Aldana, Emer O’Sullivan, Aidan Chambers, Bart Moeyaert, Beverley Naidoo and Jamila Gavin. Storytellers from Wales, Mongolia and Palestine will participate. There has been a huge response to the call for seminar papers, so we shall be presented with a wide-reaching and fascinating programme. Visit the congress website for all the latest news and information: www.ibbycongress2012.org

“I Knew I Was a Muchacha Grande” reflections from Haiti 2011
Suze walked into our bookbinding class at Universitaire Caraïbe in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. She had trouble speaking at first, and showed us her prosthesis. We all tapped her new foot and marvelled at how graceful her walk was. She was quiet and diligent during the first class, carefully shaping her small book, choosing the cover and stitching the pages. She came back the next day, as all students did, for the second session. It was not easy finding the water to splash on one’s face in the morning, not easy to wear an ironed dress in the dust and heat of the day, not easy to ride in an open truck, crushed against others on important missions themselves, to be at Delmas 29 # 7 by nine o’clock in the morning. But there she was.

Portugal
2011 has seen the welcome return of IBBY Portugal. The new section was established and comprises authors, academics, illustrators, booksellers, teachers and librarians: all working in children’s literature. The section has its office at the Portuguese Association of Writers in Lisbon, with Eduardo Filipe and Andre Leitra as liaison officers to IBBY. Portugal is the guest country at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair in 2012 and so we shall expect increased activity from IBBY Portugal.

Serbia
IBBY Serbia was also re-established as a new section this year. The Serbian Publishers and Booksellers Association is hosting the section and they say that interest in and around children’s literature has been growing in the past few years. A Children’s Writer's Guild has been established and publishing houses are beginning to expand their lists for children. Several NGOs are also of significant importance, such as the Friends of Children of Serbia that organizes Children’s Week and give the Neven Award for children’s literature. The award for the best book of the year, the Dositejevo pero award, has a jury that they claim is possibly the one of the biggest in the world and includes children from many primary schools. Frequent seminars are organized with guests from the South East Europe region as well as international guests, who are invited to attend panel discussions involving children’s literature, as well as children’s rights, and art for children, amongst other topics.

For all contact details and information about all the 74 IBBY sections go to the IBBY Worldwide section of the website: www.ibby.org
“The books you made are only pieces of paper,” I said. “But today when you write your stories in them, they will become uniquely yours.”

“I was a muchacha grande baby (great girl),” wrote Suze. She was at the Universite Caraibe when the earthquake hit and it took many months to get the medical attention she needed, but soon after she returned to school. “I knew I was very smart, and wanted to know all about the world. I want to serve the world. My spirit is big and my experiences of my reading life are much.”

Suze’s reading life, and much of her education, has been at Universite Caraibe, the university branch of College Universitaire Caraibe, Jocelyne Trouillot’s school in Haiti—and the home of IBBY Section of Haiti since 2007. Jocelyne and her husband Antoine Levy, both native Haitians living in Florida, after completing their doctoral studies in Educational Administration at the Florida Atlantic University moved back to Port-au-Prince in 1988 and started the school with a small group of lower school students. The university was started a few years later. Today there are over 150 students, down from 300 before the earthquake, attending grades Kindergarten through twelfth grade, and 700 more taking university classes.

When the earthquake hit on January 10, 2010, forty teachers and students from the school were killed as the two five-story buildings collapsed in ruins. Other students and professors from the school were killed outside of the university. The library was destroyed and the books were later pulled from the rubble. Jocelyne and Antoine’s life work was gone. But instead of moving back to Florida to live in comfort with their grown children, they worked alongside thousands of other Haitians to rebuild a country, guided by their lifelong belief that even in chaos and grief, it was still possible to offer excellence in education.

The French Embassy helped them search and clear the debris. Teachers from the school helped to identify any bodies found. The Haitian Ministry of Education built temporary shelters for the school, which still stand. IBBY funded bibliotherapy for the students, and other supporting activities. “It was like starting from scratch,” said...
their daughter Lindja, now working at the school. “It was kind of heartbreaking.”

Today, children play around a plaque dedicated to those who lost their lives at the school. The murmur of children’s voices reading or working on math problems breaks through the heat. But once inside the door leading to the small courtyard, the patina of Jocelyne’s years of championing the best in the human spirit is still there, untouched by the earthquake. The library is again filling with colourful and validating children’s books in several languages including Creole (sixty carried down by my daughter and myself, thanks to publishers at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair, the IBBY Secretariat, a compassionate customs agent in New York, and Delta Airlines).

The last day of our class, another student, Rodney, himself a teacher, wrote in his book: A country without stories is a country without heart. Jocelyne Trouillot, as part of the IBBY community, is helping to ensure that Haiti’s stories, the heart of its people, will continue to nourish all Haitians in the rebuilding of their county and their lives.

*Trish Marx*
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For further information, please contact:

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- **July 2012**, IBBY Congress Issue
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