Bookbird

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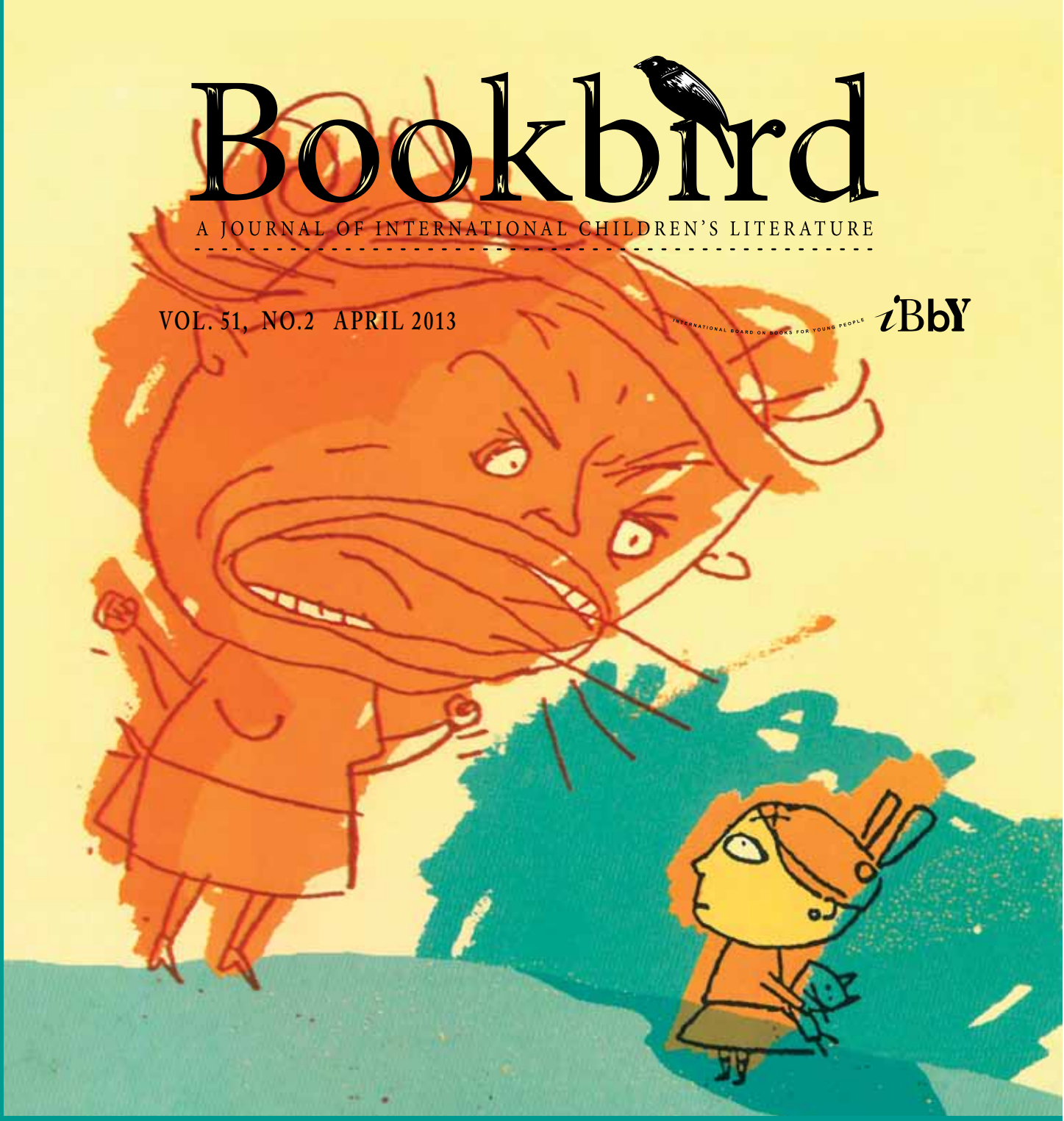

Feature Articles: Maternal Aggression as Women's Empowerment in Three Recent Picture Books • The Problem of Race in Australian Picture Books • Epiphany and the Sense of Wonder in *Childhood-49* • China's Patriotic Exposé • The Use of Literature in Multicultural Education in Finland **Children and Their Books:** Preschoolers Recommending Books • The Parent-Observer Diary • The Relationship Between the Picture Book, the Adult Reader, and the Child Listener • Picture Books Across Cultures

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The Journal of IBBY, the International Board on Books for Young People

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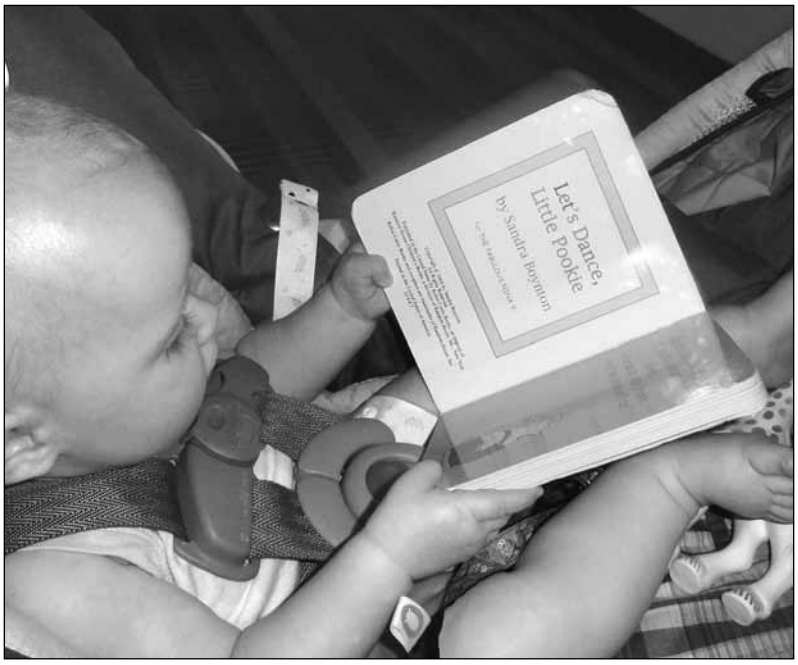
Reviews of Secondary Literature

Postcards

Editorial



Dear *Bookbird* Readers,

I write this editorial from the thick of an Albertan winter; we've been blessed with record amounts of snow for months now, and the bucolic little city in which I live looks like an especially pretty Christmas card. And though I'm preparing *Bookbird's* Spring issue for 2013, it is Christmas season and the contents of this issue have me wishing I could make all of the wonderful books discussed in this issue accessible to my granddaughter, pictured above. As is usual for *Bookbird*. Scholars, teachers, librarians, parents, and others concerned with books for children from around the world successfully bring their discussions in English to *Bookbird* readers. However, we are nowhere near widely spread translation of these texts into other languages to make them accessible to the world's children. I am reminded of two keynote addresses at the recent IBBY Congress in London (August 2012), in which Patsy Aldana made the compelling argument that we must give every child a voice by publishing in the dominant languages children's books from all minority cultures, and Emer O'Sullivan emphasized the importance of translating the best of children's literature from around the world into as many languages as possible.

Throughout the issue you will find postcards on appealing new children's books written in Spanish, German, Italian, Norwegian, and Persian, and you will read scholarly articles and columns that will make you hunger to read the texts they discuss, texts written in Estonian, Finnish, French, Norwegian, Swedish, Spanish, Russian, Turkish, and Chinese. I am saddened that my granddaughter will neither be entertained by these books nor taught by them. The articles in this issue delineate how texts for children reflect but also

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work to reshape the worldview of their readers. Guri Fjeldberg points out in her fine study that a number of international picture books rewrite the role of maternal aggression to free mothers, and perhaps their daughters too, from unrealistic expectations and conformist social pressures. Oksana Luschevska considers how Liudmila Ulitskaia uses a child's sense of wonder in her series of stories, *Childhood–49*, to depict the complex life of Russian post-war society with all its bitterness and hardship. Lijun Bi examines the first major work of modern Chinese children's literature, Ye Shengtao's *Daocao ren* [Scarecrow] as a crucial part of the effort of Chinese intellectuals to rejuvenate the nation by connecting social realism to patriotism. Juli-Anna Aerila and Lydia Kokkola examine an emerging body of multicultural Finnish literature for children; they trace the presentation of traditional minority groups alongside recently arrived groups of immigrants, as they consider how these books might serve to promote pluralism. In the only article focused on English-language books for children, Victoria Flanagan draws on theories of whiteness to examine two recent Australian picture books that explore the relationship between white and non-white identities.

The columns, Children & Their Books and Letters, also engage with a wide range of international books. In "Pre-schoolers Recommending Books," Raquel Cuperman shares her experiences with daily book discussions in her kindergarten classes. As a children's librarian in Bogotá, Colombia, Cuperman became interested in children's ability to build literary understanding through regular, casual "book-talks," and her daily discussion exercises encourage young students to continue reading at home. Virginia Lowe's "The Books We've Had Forever": The Parent-Observer Diary complements her column in *Bookbird's* recent special issue on literature from the Commonwealth. Lowe's column continues her discussion of her children's experiences with American and British literature, and how the beloved books of their childhood helped shape their own Australian national identity. Tamara Smith then details the relationship between the picture book, the adult reader, and the child listener—what she calls the "Vibrant Triangle." Penni Cotton provides the final Children & Their Books column with "Picture Books across Cultures: A Leap into the Unknown?" Cotton outlines strategies and techniques used by organizations aimed at making international literature available to children worldwide. In the two Letters, Zlata Philips's explores the influential yet mysterious career of European-American author and illustrator Charlotte Steiner. Finally, Tülin Kozikoğlu laments the lack of Western publishers investing in Turkish children's books.

I am deeply grateful to Christiane Raabe and Jochen Weber at the International Youth Library in Munich, Germany for providing the Books on Books column for this issue. Their work for *Bookbird* is only one small part of their many contributions to the field of international children's literature. Books on Books in this issue includes reviews of secondary literature on Ukrainian, Indian, and Colombian children's texts, as well as reviews of a book dedicated to the writing of Tomi Ungerer and a manual on Slovenian children's literature.

This month's Focus IBBY begins with María Jesús Gil's speech from the presentation of the Hans Christian Andersen Award this past August, and Wally De Doncker's report on the 3rd European Encounters on Children's Literature of IBBY France. Liz Page then reports on the initiatives undertaken by IBBY and IBBY Japan on the behalf of children in the parts of Japan hardest hit by the Tsunami, on Regional Conferences, and on the theme of the next IBBY Congress, in Mexico City, 2014.

I look forward to seeing this issue in print, in part because that will mean spring is on the way, and in part because it will keep me motivated to find ways to bring these texts to my granddaughter and all children, and to bring information about international children's books to a wide audience. As part of that audience, I hope you will enjoy this issue.

"You brat!": Maternal Aggression as Women's Empowerment in Three Recent Picture Books

by GURI FJELDBERG

Three recent picture books challenge the role of the impeccable mother. Their stories portray outbursts of irrational maternal aggression caused by limited mothering capacity. As these mothers depart from ideal stereotypes, they are shown to become monstrous in various ways. However, this paper argues that these narratives employ the monstrous towards what Jack Zipes envisages as "liberating potential": in making the maternal monster lovable, mothers can be freed from unrealistic expectations and conformist social pressure.

The first spread of *Pinnsvinmamma* establishes that five-year-old Ninni has spent the whole day building a tree house together with her mother. It is almost finished, and Ninni finds it intolerable that her mother insists on a break:

> "Now that's enough! Now I want some rest!" yells Mum.
> "You are STUPID who only wants to rest!" yells Ninni.
> Mammy rushes up from the sofa.
> "You BRAT!" screams Mum.
> Then she slams the door of Ninni's room shut. (unp.)[1]

Guri Fjeldberg is a Norwegian freelance journalist, lecturer, and literary critic with a Master's in Children's Literature from Newcastle University. She has also written the biography *Ikon Astrid Lindgren* (2010).

This single mother verbally attacks her daughter in a way characteristic of domestic conflicts, which stands in conflict with the traditional qualities of the ideal mother in the western world. In this article, I describe similar verbal attacks found in three recent picture books for preschool children: Kari Saanum and Gry Mourund's *Pinnsvinmamma* [Hedgehog-Mum] is a carnivalesque story from Norway (2006) about Ninni's frustrated mother turning into a hedgehog; Isol's *El globo* [The Balloon] from Argentina (2002) is a fantastic story about the little girl Camila who turns her yelling mother into a balloon; and Tove Appelgren and Salla Savolainen's *Vesta-Linnea och monstermamman* [Vesta-Linnea and Monster-Mum] is a realistic story from Finland (2004) about an exhausted mother who gets fed up with her strong-willed preschooler Vesta-Linnea.[2] I argue that these texts challenge maternal stereotypes through what Jack Zipes has called "liberating potential" (183).

Traditional picture books for preschool children seem to hold some of the most resilient images of the impeccable and reassuring mother, based on virtues which can be traced back all the way to Virgin Mary (Giese 46). When the traditional picture book mother occasionally does turn angry, the purpose is often educational: Beatrix Potter was not the first when in 1907 she has Tom Kitten scolded by his mother for not doing as he was told, and in 1963 Maurice Sendak even allows Max's mother to call her son "a wild thing" (9). Books like *Pinnsvinmamma*, however, represent a different sort of maternal aggression in which the Virgin Mary's everlasting kindness, courtesy, and humility are replaced by yelled accusations and slammed doors.

In 1994, Marina Warner addressed the monstrous female and stated that feminism cannot proceed "without facing women's crimes as well as their wrongs—the ills they did as well as those done to them" (8). The knowledge that a good mother is capable of evil can be disturbing to small children. However, with regard to liberating fairy tales, Jack Zipes defends such upsetting effects. Even if children resist change, he argues, "it is exactly this disturbance which the liberating fairy tales seek on both a conscious and unconscious level. They interfere with the civilizing process in hope of creating change and a new awareness of social conditions" (191). In this paper, I suggest that instances of maternal aggression provide upsetting effects to create such a new awareness around the role of the mother, and in doing so possess feminist potential.

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The writers and illustrators of these picture books are all female, and represent a cross-section of the western world. Two of the books, the Norwegian and the Finnish, are produced in countries ranked among the top three on the Global Gender Gap Report from World Economic Forum. They are made by women provided with months of fully paid maternity leave and government-funded day care centres. Strikingly, we never get to know whether their picture book mothers are working in

addition to their efforts at home. The question of whether or not a good mother can pursue a career or should stay at home is currently loudly debated in the US, but is not an issue in the selected books. In the Scandinavian countries this debate was higher on the agenda in the 1990s than at present (Giese 272). What these books challenge, and what seems to be equally relevant no matter if your country is ranked at the top of the gender equality list—or, like Argentina, quite far down—is the myth of how a perfect mother should behave towards her children.

The myth of the impeccable mother starts with the belief that "perfect" mothering is both vital and feasible. In the introduction of *The Mommy Myth* (2004), Susan J. Douglas and Meredith W. Michaels describe how the perfect mother is totally devoted and attentive; she has unlimited capacity; she is always calm and patient; she loves her children unconditionally and above everything else; and she enjoys her role as a mother even though it means always putting the children's needs and interests before her own. There is little difference between such descriptions and books on mothering from the 19th century (Giese 282). Douglas and Michaels identify the ways in which this unattainable ideal is advocated by the mass media through current TV shows, films, and advertising as well as on the news (14). A mother is always reminded to do better and to make the "right" choices for her child. Failed expectations, exhaustion, and guilt are common consequences. In addition, our individualistic era gives each person both increased freedom and increased responsibility for their own success. Consequently, when things go wrong, you only have yourself to blame. Instead of forming protest movements, mothers nowadays tend to seek counselling to improve themselves. Against this background, it is interesting to see how each of the selected picture books takes a broadly feminist approach to challenging the traditional image of the impeccable mother. In particular, they challenge the lack of acceptance for mothers' aggressive feelings and behaviour. My suggestion is that these books represent a new trend in representations of the aggressive mother character: these mothers do not meet the prevalent moral standards but prove to be "good enough" mothers after all.

What these books challenge… is the myth of how a perfect mother should behave towards her children.

As the conflict between Ninni and her mother escalates, the mother turns into a worm-eating hedgehog. The two other books also suggest that departing from the role of the impeccable mother involves facing the monstrous. In *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that all female characters in male-authored books of the 19th century can be categorized as either the "angel" or the "monster." Even in more recent stories, the pure, self-sacrificing, and submissive "angels" are brought into contrast with sensual, rebellious, and uncontrollable "monsters." Gilbert and Gubar note, "It is debilitating to be any woman in a society where women are warned that if they do not behave like angels, they must be monsters" (53). Separating out unwanted qualities and distorting them—so that outsiders turn into

monsters—is a traditional way to remind society of what is considered acceptable or expected behaviour. Monsters threaten the stability of the social order, and their presence thereby serves as a reminder of the nature and location of social boundaries (Cohen 12). However, the monstrous and grotesque mother characters in these books do not primarily function as warnings against aggressive verbal attacks. Instead, they work to revise views on accepted maternal behaviour. John Stephens has applied Bakhtin's notions of the carnival to children's literature, and he maintains that the "grotesque function is to bring down to earth all that is high and idealized" (136). I will show how this is particularly true for *Pinnsvinmamma*. Furthermore, I will use Zipes's work on modern fairy tales to show how the liberating potential of *El globo* is found in its revolt against dominant cultural patterns in both content and style. In contrast, *Monstermamman* has a more realistic narrative with one-liners demonstrating the conflict between mother and daughter in a more outspoken manner; this story will therefore serve as point of comparison for the other stories.

Verbal Aggression

In contrast to the angry outbursts in traditional picture books, which tend to have a corrective function, most anger in the books examined here belongs to a subgroup of verbal aggression labeled "expressive aggression," as opposed to "instrumental aggression." According to Anne Campbell, an expert on female aggression, expressive aggression has no specific purpose and is considered irrational and typical of women (213). However, the Finnish psychologist Kirsti M.J. Lagerspetz considers even such emotional outbursts to be instrumental, stating that their goal is "social communication" (230). Consequently, the verbal attacks in the three books can be said primarily to communicate these mothers' frustration.

The conflicts are all triggered by incompatible needs between mothers and daughters. The underlying cause for these mothers' outbursts, at least in *Monstermamman* and *Pinnsvinmamma*, seems to be lack of rest and of self-esteem. Vesta-Linnea's mum seems to be the weariest mother of the three, caring for a baby as well as her pre-school daughter, who is testing boundaries. Her failure to be the successful mother she wants to be adds to her burden. Ninni's mum, on the other hand, appears as the ideal of the modern single mother, filling the traditional roles of both mother and father. She is introduced with a hammer in her hand and nails in her smiling mouth. But even this "ideal" mother becomes frustrated after too much nagging when she needs to rest. The frustration of Camila's mum is presented more like an unfounded fact, but it is probably no coincidence that she too seems to be responsible for her daughter all by herself.

The liberating potential of these texts lies in their advocating a more realistic view of normal maternal responses to stress.

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In *Monstermamman*, the conflict starts as Vesta-Linnea refuses to put on her tights in the morning. Although her mother argues very calmly, she sounds "as nice as a hungry polar bear wedged in the ice" (8). Vesta-Linnea cannot accept being told to be quiet: "You are interrupting me! You are not allowed to interrupt. You have said it yourself and so it is!" (9) The resulting actions are easily recognizable on Murray A. Straus's "Maternal Verbal Aggression Subscale" commonly used to categorize domestic violence. "Verbal" is understood in a wide sense, including communication through action, and all the following qualify: the mother abruptly leaving the room, brushing her hair angrily and sulking (Moore and Pepler 91). The controversy culminates in Vesta-Linnea breaking a cup and her mother screaming: "Is this the way you handle your toys? Don't you know that there are children who don't have any toys and here you are breaking yours to pieces! What on earth are you thinking? Clean up the broken pieces at once! And throw them into the bin before somebody cuts themselves!" (20). Angry emotional outbursts are also present in *El globo*, although in this case, the child Camila presents them retrospectively, at the beginning of the narrative:

> The truth is that Mum yelled a lot.
> at the dog,
> at the oven,
> at me,
> at everything that moved. (8-9)

None of the emotional outbursts make complete sense within the daughters' understanding of wrongdoing and just consequences. Rather, they demonstrate the fact that there are limits to women's mothering capacity.

The Norwegian philosopher Arne Johan Vetlesen suggests that human beings have a primitive urge to transfer or project their pain onto others to relieve their own suffering. If this is the case, these mothers can be said to have at least a subconscious intention to cause harm. Vetlesen considers such replacements of pain immature (89). Two of the girls show similar verbal aggression towards their mothers, but as small children they are not capable of inflicting nearly as much pain, as projection and transference of pain only works down the hierarchy of vulnerability: "Only one who is just as receptive as me, and consequently just as vulnerable of what feels so painful to retain, will be suitable for my displacement" (90). These daughters seem to suit such a purpose.

Projection and Transformation

Distorting ill-behaving mothers into monsters is not only a result of conformist social pressure, but also something small children do

subconsciously. The idealized motherhood in both fairy tales and traditional picture books meets small children's need to see their mother as perfect in order to feel entirely secure. Since they lack the ability to understand nuances, the mother must be categorised simply as "good," because the alternative would be unbearable. Child psychologists like Bruno Bettleheim and Melanie Klein have observed how some children, particularly between three and six years old (the same age group as both the protagonists and the intended readership of the selected books), use fantasy to experience their mother as somebody else when she behaves in ways not compatible with the mother ideal (Bettelheim 67; Klein 134). The appearance of a mother-substitute may indicate the level of terror these girls experience from their mothers' verbal attacks: before Camila's mother turns into a balloon she is depicted with a monstrous head; Ninni's mother turns into a hedgehog; and Vesta-Linnea's mother appears briefly with the head of a wolf. Interestingly, this device is used without unambiguously demonizing the mother character and thereby jeopardizing the liberating potential of these stories. As I will show below, on the one hand Isol turns the monstrous into feminism by challenging the traditional concept of fairy tales. In Pinnsvinmamma, on the other hand, the liberating potential is mainly to be found in the carnivalesque, which will be discussed in the next section.

The beginning of *El globo* resembles a fairy tale: "One day Camila had a wish come true. Her mother turned into a balloon and didn't yell anymore" (3-5). The illustrations depict this yelling mother as a grotesque monster. In fairy tales like "Snow White," we are first introduced to the good mother before the girl has to overcome her replacement, the evil stepmother. In *El globo*, however, the bad mother exists prior to the good one, which questions whether a mother always begins as a good person. After the transformation, Camila plays pleasantly with her new "mother." The fragile nature of a balloon ought to make that rather risky, but the illustrations show that this "mother" is extremely solid, as the balloon also functions flawlessly as a space hopper. The biological mother has turned into what a modern child, and perhaps a single child in particular, may consider the perfect parent: a faithful, uncritical playmate.

Despite depicting both a maternal monster and magic, *El globo* probably does not work to project frustration in exactly the way Bettleheim argues that fairy tales do (69). Jack Zipes doubts that fairy tales ever have: "whether a fairy tale can actually provide the means for coping with ego disturbances, as Bettelheim argues, is yet to be seen" (174). Instead, *El globo* resembles a modern fairy tale of the type Zipes holds to have a liberating potential by suggesting alternatives to dominant cultural patterns (183). The final lines in *El globo* challenge the traditional interpretation of this story as a monstrous mother transformed into a maternal ideal. In the park, a girl with her mother approaches, and remarks: "What a nice balloon" (20). Camila replies: "What a nice mum" (20-21). The text then concludes: "And they both walk home thinking: 'well, sometimes you can't have it all'" (22-23). The balloon is thus shown not to be an entirely satisfactory mother. On the one hand, Isol seems to suggest that having no mother is better than having an abusive one, and that it is possible to manage adequately without. On the other hand, it is striking how Camila shows affection for the balloon. She defends it from a dog, and even as it floats upwards, she does not let go of the cord. The balloon might be the original, angry mother kept under magical control, with the cord perhaps symbolizing a bond of love.

Isol does not provide what Zipes would label a "so-called 'happy ending'" in which the norms of society remain unchanged (191): she does not, for example, bring Camila back home, and she does not give Camila her original mother back in a more caring version. In the final illustration, Camila jumps smilingly on her space hopper over the hillside, into what seems to be Zipes's liberating utopia: "a place nobody has known but which represents humankind coming into its own" (176). Her confident behaviour suggests that she is not suffering from a lack of motherly care; rather, she seems to have come to terms with the fact that no mother is perfect. Even though her angry mother may not have been permanently

banished, the transformation has ensured that Camila's fear is.

In contrast to *El globo*, the more realistic Monstermamman shows Vesta-Linnea crying herself to sleep after the verbal attack. As children mature, they no longer need to split the mother into "good" and "bad," but can comprehend the world in more nuanced categories. Just as Camila realizes that "you can't have it all," Vesta-Linnea finally reaches new insight: "Mum, I don't always like you, but I always love you" (32). Readers are shown how the bad can merge with the image of good without destroying it. The life-threatening element is overcome and room is made for a "good enough" mother character.

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Disintegration and Carnival

As already mentioned, the transformations in these picture books can be explained as the preschool child's solution to dealing with fear of an aggressive mother.[3] At the same time, however, and especially given that most picture books are shared between adult and child readers, these transformations may be understood as symbolizing the breakdown these mothers experience as they depart from the maternal ideal. For example, after her outburst, Vesta-Linnea's mother sobs in the arms of her partner Victor: "I shouldn't be allowed children! I'm a monster-mum" (30). Such disintegration from mother to monster makes up most of the plot in *Pinnsvinmamma*.

After her tired mother has gone to sleep, Ninni takes revenge by cutting off her mother's hair. In the morning the mother realizes that she looks like a hedgehog, and this is then literalized by her turning into one. Observing this transformation in the mirror, Ninni's mother faces her own disintegration as an ideal mother. However, in this case, the monstrous transformation is not unequivocally negative. The grotesque body forms an essential part of the carnival tradition and, as John Stephens notes, the "grotesque function is to bring down to earth all that is high and idealized" (136). According to Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "times of carnival temporally marginalize the monstrous, but at the same time allow it a safe realm of expression and play" (17), and this dual function can be seen when Ninni's mother's transformation continues until she is a small hedgehog. At this point, she is figured as having become non-civilized: "Instead of fingers, Mum's got small sharp claws" (16). Both author and illustrator allow hedgehog-mum to indulge in basic animal needs. As she walks out in the dark to collect "earthworms and flies, grasshoppers and beetles" (23), she briefly fits a description of Barbara Creed's "monstrous feminine." Furthermore, as she "gobbles down a huge earthworm" (22), she may even cause enough disgust to be approaching Julia Kristeva's conception of the "abject." However, this hedgehog "is so cute that Ninni has to place it in her lap," and has thus become comic rather than frightening (26). Ninni embraces this "wild and natural" mother and is no longer scared of her. The grotesque mother has become lovable and thereby liberated from conventional ideals.

The text suggests that all lack of motherly behavior can be excused as a result of the mother's natural hedgehog instincts. Going out in the dark is necessary, for example, "because hedgehogs are

nocturnal animals" (27). This carnivalesque narrative inverts the relation between Ninni and her mother. Stephens notes that carnival in children's literature often challenges the nurturing process (for example, in relation to greedy children) in order "to determine how far love is given conditionally or unconditionally" (134). In this case the mother is the one who has unconditional love granted to her. Ninni attempts to mother her by giving her a treat and watching over her out in the dark, and she finally allows her hedgehog-mum to gobble down all her gathered insects and a mouse in the kitchen. Even though her mother has become non-civilized, Ninni has learned to meet her mother's basic needs.

However, this attempt to provide the imperfect modern mother with love and understanding is not unambiguously liberating if it turns her daughter into a self-effacing mother substitute. The need for a father figure is proposed when Ninni receives unexpected help from the driver of a passing night-train. The driver explains: "It is a train for sleepless people. They sleep so well when they ride the train" (31). He then takes care of the hedgehog so that Ninni can sleep herself. The narrative suggests that a child should not be burdened with too many adult responsibilities. A similar suggestion can be found in *Monstermamman* when Victor takes care of Vesta-Linnea's sobbing mother.

With fairy tales like "Beauty and the Beast" in mind, readers would expect that love can break the spell and transform the monster back to its original form. Instead, when Ninni declares her love for this hedgehog, it only licks her cheek affectionately. Her mother has reached what Stephens identifies as the "crisis point" for the carnivalesque hero (133). Either she can stay a hedgehog forever, or attempt to change back. A traditional logic would be to discipline the mother by making her realize what is expected of her, so that she performs the role required of her to deserve being reinstated in the family. In the case of *Pinnsvinmamma*, however, her sudden transformation during a ride on Ninni's model railway is presented as a coincidence rather than as a reward for her corrected behavior. But at this point, she is in fact meeting the demand that caused the conflict in the first place, namely Ninni's need for her mother to keep playing with her. The mother returns to the playful ideal, and promises to finish building the tree house. Nevertheless, the ratio and balance of power between the two has changed during the transformation:

> "By the way, you've become very big", says Mum.
> "That's because I had to look after myself," says Ninni, "while you were out being a hedgehog." …
> "Sorry, Ninni," says Mum, "for saying such ugly things to you."
> "You are never going to do that again," says Ninni. (38)

Readers are thus implicitly told that Ninni deserves to be treated with more care. However, space is still made for a more realistic mother character, as Ninni understands that she is able to cope with both an aggressive and disintegrated mother.

Unconditional Love at Stake

According to *The Mommy Myth*, the perfect mother loves mothering. No matter how many sacrifices she has to make, she loves her children unconditionally at all times (116). However, if the ambition is to liberate mothers from this idyllic ideal, the limitless love between mother and daughter can no longer be guaranteed. Underneath the verbal attacks lies the threat of the withdrawal—at least temporarily—of the unconditional love between mother and child. A potential dilemma is how to balance such a theme between the child and adult readers; how to attack the maternal myth without scaring off young readers. The verbal attacks and the monstrous images of angry mothers may seem terrifying. However, the biggest underlying threat in these books is a question of interpretation and probably hard to detect for most child readers.

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After the attack in *Monstermamman*, Vesta-Linnea protests by crying "I don't want to live with you!" Her mother returns to ask "What did you say?", and after she has left again, Vesta-Linnea repeats her words. Her mother's return is described as follows: "'Oh, well.' She looks like she's about to say something more, but then she takes a deep breath. 'Oh, well,' she repeats, and leaves" (22). It is left for the reader to guess what the mother refrains from saying. Could it be, "I don't want to live with you either"? The threat of withdrawing unconditional love is implicitly present. In a similar way, an adult reader may even interpret the night train in *Pinnsvinmamma* as this tired mother's secret wish to ride away from it all. Camila's balloon-mum may even represent a longing to drift away. Motherhood is subtly figured as a state in which second thoughts may occur, and these possible interpretations challenge one of the remaining taboos in literature for preschoolers: mothers who abandon their children by choice.

Motherhood is subtly figured as a state in which second thoughts may occur…

Yet child readers are undoubtedly intended as the main audiences of these books. The threat from these angry attacks is lessened by the way in which the stories are framed. The illustrations in all three books share a naïve style, employing uneven lines and distorted angles in apparent imitation of children's drawings. They help to balance the harsher aspects of the content by presenting these in an obviously fictional frame. Although Zipes argues that an upsetting effect may be necessary in order to challenge social conventions, a child reader needs a certain level of maturity before learning that mothers are neither all good nor all bad. Frightening elements are therefore softened in order to communicate with the intended readership, and it is striking that all three books play down the potential for terror. The retrospective presentation of the

conflict in *El globo* also provides consolation, and even more consoling is the seeming permanence of the change from monster to balloon without any hints of a possible return. The illustrator of *Pinnsvinmamma* gestures towards a meta-level of the book by using a carnivalesque style and some childish squiggles in the illustrations, and thereby signaling the fantastic nature of the narrative and discouraging full identification with the protagonist. In *Monstermamman*, the illustrator keeps the reader at a distance during the most dramatic scene, granting the reader a perspective on the climax of the conflict from outside the window together with a squirrel. In all three books, the potential for fear is thus restricted in order to make the books suitable for young readers.

In addition to alleviating some of the fear present in these narratives, the pictures are aligned with a child's perspective.

In addition to alleviating some of the fear present in these narratives, the pictures are aligned with a child's perspective. They contrast the monstrous mothers with the more frightened and innocent looking girls, indicating that the mothers are to blame for the conflicts. The naïve, childish style also signals a narrative siding with the child protagonists. The attempt to better understand mothers' shortcomings is thus balanced with sympathy for the girls, suggesting that they deserve better treatment.[4] From an educational perspective, Besides, the picture book audience (like the audience of fairy tales) is accustomed to expecting a happy ending, which may give them a higher tolerance for dramatic incidents along the way, trusting that they will be reassured in the end.

The need to strike a balance between realism and fear can also be seen in that the degrees of certainty in the happy endings correspond to the age groups for which the books are suitable. Even though Camila in *El globo* realizes that "you can't have it all," she seems to take permanent control of her monstrous mother and demonstrates that monsters can be beaten and that anger can be controlled. Ninni, on the other hand, prefers to have her mother back in the "high and idealized" state prior to their quarrel. She has, however, experienced that she is able to cope with a more "down to earth" mother. It is left for the reader to guess how likely it is that the transformation into a hedgehog-mum will reoccur. Vesta-Linnea and her mother, on the contrary, seem to agree to disagree. Through the mother's reassuring and educational line, "I don't always like what you do, but I always love you," both mother and daughter in *Monstermamman* realize that neither of them has to be perfect to be able to both give and receive love.

Conclusion

The three picture books discussed in this article address what Marina Warner argues is essential for feminism to proceed: a stronger focus on "women's wrongs." In each story maternal aggression is portrayed as wrong: two mothers apologize repentantly, while the third is permanently "tamed." While these conclusions may warn mothers against aggression towards their children, these texts do not promote traditional ideals of the mother, but instead work to liberate mothers from unrealistic expectations. Even though the books do not embrace maternal aggression, they present emotional outbursts as normal, and anger is shown to be an acceptable feeling which has its natural place. These texts suggest that the divide between the incompatible needs of mothers and daughters is sometimes simply too large to overcome. They thereby reassure mothers and teach child readers that meeting children's every need with calm and patience is unrealistic.

While these conclusions may warn mothers against aggression towards their children, these texts do not promote traditional ideals of the mother, but instead work to liberate mothers from unrealistic expectations.

The verbal attacks in the books are depicted as frustrating life experiences, and to read about them may prove temporarily uncomfortable. However, this is precisely the kind of frustration Zipes advocates as the route to new awareness and change. After the verbal attacks and their complications, life goes on in reassuring ways. In *El globo*, life without a mother is portrayed as a tempting utopia. In *Pinnsvinmamma*, living with a disintegrating mother is experienced as hard yet manageable. *Monstermamman* suggests that emotional outbursts are likely to take place and are an acceptable part of future life. Particularly in a shared reading experience, the latter two books, through their dual address, open up a dialogue by emphasizing the similarities between mother and daughter in terms of anger: young girls are reminded that they too may grow up to become frustrated mothers one day.

More complex mother characters certainly enrich picture book narratives, but more importantly in this context, they form a cultural movement to liberate mothers from conformist social pressure. The liberating work is done by showing that modern mothers can turn irrationally furious without falling into the traditional, monstrous stereotype whereby those who are not good are condemned to being bad forever. Even after falling out of the role of the ideal mother and entering the grotesque, they still have the love of their daughters.

Notes

1. All translations of primary sources in this essay are mine.
2. *El globo* is made by the Argentinian artist Isol, but published by the Mexican branch of Fondo de Coultura Economica. *Vesta-Linnea och monstermamman* is written in Finland's minority language Swedish.
3. According to psychologist Dorothy Bloch, every child holds a subconscious fear of being killed by its parents. She points out that Freud ignored the beginning of the original legend in formulating his Oedipus complex, noting that the parents of Oedipus tried to kill him to defeat the prophecy that he would grow up to kill his father and marry his mother. In her opinion even Oedipus had more reasons to fear his parents than feel anger and jealousy.
4. However, in the German translation, "Vesta-Linnea and the Monster-Mum" has become "Josefine findet heute alles doof" (Oetinger Verlag, 2003), which translates "Josefine finds everything crap today" and changes the emphasis of her part and responsibility in the conflict.

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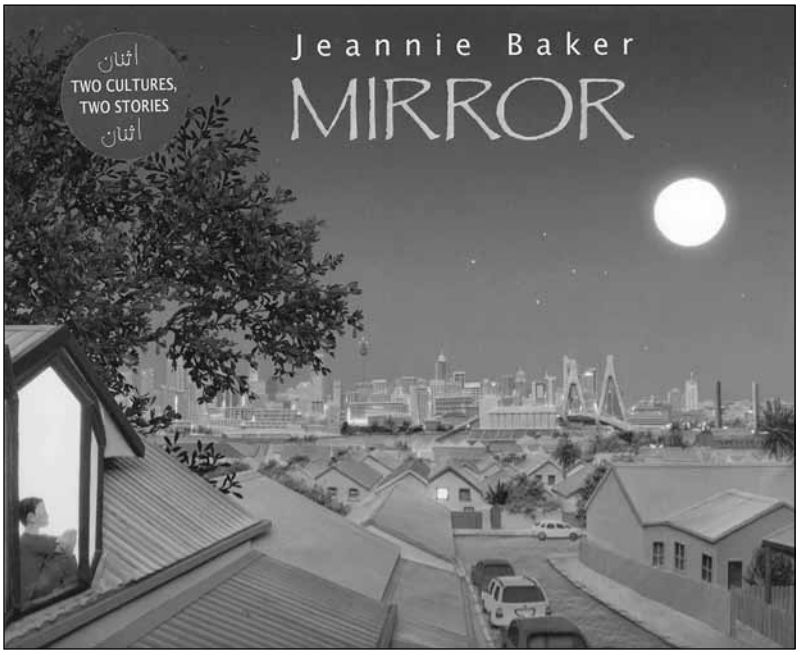
A family bedtime story handed down through generations has transformed into a vibrant picture book. In this retelling of an Armenian folktale, writer Lucine Kasbarian and illustrator Maria Zaikina introduce *The Greedy Sparrow,* a variant of the traditional trickster. Each page vividly depicts the sparrow and his conniving ways as he encounters a baker, a shepherd, a wedding party, and a minstrel—successfully duping them into giving him a prize possession. Does every trickster meet his match? Full-page illustrations add authenticity to the Armenian setting with costume and customs portrayed in full colour, while the backdrop to the picture book adds a personal dimension. The tale originates from the Armenian oral tradition, which was passed down to the writer by her father who, in turn, had learned it from his grandmother. As noted in the publisher's press release, "the author served as the model for the illustrator's [Zaikina] rendering of the bride's features" and "the bride's wedding costume…bears a strong resemblance to that of the author's own folkloric bridal gown." This delightful tale, although directed toward readers ages 4 to 8, would work well for any audience from 4 to adult. The large pages with bold illustrations are eye-catching, and the text is dynamic in its simplicity—a great authentic folk-tale for story-time. This tale is a win-win for both Lucine Kasbraian and Maria Zaikina.

Barbara Zimmer

Lucine Kasbarian
(Illus. Maria Zaikina)

The Greedy Sparrow : An Armenian Tale

Tarrytown: Marshall Cavendish, 2011., 32 p.
ISBN 0761458212
(Picture Book, Ages 6+)



A Similarity or Difference: The Problem of Race in Australian Picture Books

by VICTORIA FLANAGAN

The prevailing humanist ideology in fiction produced for children entails that thematic explorations of race usually pivot on the notion that humans are all created equal, regardless of race. However, this position fails to acknowledge the privileged status of whiteness as a racial category. This article examines two recent Australian picture books which explore the relationship between white and non-white identities in an Australian social context, arguing that the construction of whiteness as a normative standard of human experience must be interrogated before genuinely intersubjective race relations can be achieved.

The status of whiteness as a privileged racial category is often overlooked in Australian children's narratives that thematize race relations. As Clare Bradford argues, "most children's texts still treat as normative the experience of white, middle class children" ("They" 86). Such texts are most likely to espouse a liberal humanist ideology, suggesting that all human subjects should be treated equally, regardless of racial background. This ideological position is one that fails to acknowledge the history of white racial supremacy, and is thus rendered problematic because of its insistence

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that racial difference (and the social and political marginalisation that is associated with belonging to a minority racial group) is irrelevant or inconsequential. Within critical discussions of race and nationality in Australian children's literature, a similar erasure or elision of white racial history and privilege is evident, as such literature tends to focus on the issue of multiculturalism and the narrative strategies used to depict subjects from minority ethnic groups. Over the past 25 years, literary criticism has repeatedly called attention to the representation of cultural Otherness in Australia's children's literature (Bradford 2007; Dudek 2005, 2006; McCallum 1997; McCallum and Stephens 2009; Stephens 1996;), commenting on the types of strategies authors and illustrators can use to challenge the hegemonic status of white, British-oriented culture within Australian society. Bradford suggests that there are two different narrative paradigms that occur in children's books that explore ethnic and cultural difference: "first, that alterity is presented as a boon to white children; and secondly, that the ideal outcome is one in which difference is assimilated into whiteness" (86). My intention in this article is to further explore the textual construction of whiteness in Australian picture books, using Bradford's assertions (and the discourse of whiteness studies) as a starting point for the critical interrogation of representations of white and non-white subjectivity. The picture books that I have chosen for my primary corpus are texts that circumvent conventional paradigms

Jeannie Baker's Mirror ***and Elizabeth Honey's*** That's Not a Daffodil! ***…offer representations of white subjectivity that are textually and ideologically innovative…***

for the representation of race-relations. Jeannie Baker's *Mirror* and Elizabeth Honey's *That's Not a Daffodil!* demonstrate that such a process is in an incipient stage in Australian picture books, as both offer representations of white subjectivity that are textually and ideologically innovative, although each simultaneously functions as a reminder that the privilege of whiteness can be difficult to displace or even temporarily interrupt.

Whiteness largely functions as an invisible category of identity, as it is by remaining invisible that it instantiates itself as normative. Richard Dyer argues that a significant amount of power is attached to this normative status: "As long as race is something only applied to non-white peoples, as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norm. Other people are raced, we are just people" (1). The cultural hegemony of whiteness, which is particularly prevalent in a post-colonial country such as Australia that now has an extremely diverse multicultural population, can only be displaced if the privilege attached to this particular identity is revealed and dismantled. Picture books are an appropriate place for this process to begin because they play such a significant role in establishing the cognitive schemata for normative categories of identity and forms of behaviour. It will come as no surprise to those familiar with picture books that the genre is an ideologically conservative one. This conservatism is because of the target audience's youth and relative lack of linguistic and narrative sophistication, and the concomitant assumption that picture books are expected to be overtly educative. Ideological conservatism is particularly pronounced in picture books produced for Australian children. In a landmark study of Australian picture books published in 1994, John Stephens links traditional social values with the metonymic configuration of landscape in Australian picture books. He suggests that most Australian picture books employ "historical" (by which he means "the unbuilt landscapes of nineteenth century Australia" (98) or "country landscapes" (a classification within which he includes suburban settings) for the purpose of endorsing "a set of social and economic relations which seem to have little to do with contemporary Australian urban life" (100). Robyn McCallum's discussion of "cultural solipsism" in Australian picture books (a reference to Australian culture's failure to engage with the heterogeneity associated with multicultural

ideology), published in 1997, offers a similar assessment. She argues that the repeated use of iconic images, such as the Australian bushman in picture books, "indicates an underlying nationalist ideology in which an idyllic rural colonial past is implicitly opposed to and privileged over a contemporary urban age" (109). McCallum concludes by stating that "traditional versions of nationalism in Australia have tended to depict individual subjectivity as shaped within a physical landscape—the social landscape is important but it is conceived of in limited and culturally homogenous terms as an essentially rural, colonial, and masculine world that is an extension of the "natural" physical landscape" (114). Underpinning this assertion is a tacit acknowledgement that these values—"rural," "colonial," and "masculine"—are subsumed under the category of "whiteness." Although she never mentions the term—in a manner that clearly confirms what Dyer refers to as "the invisibility of whiteness as a racial position" (3)—"whiteness" is quite obviously the elephant in the room, particularly since McCallum argues that the aforementioned values constitute a problematic national identity in the context of emergent multiculturalism (both as an ideology and a contemporary social phenomenon in Australia).

Although Stephens and McCallum were both writing in the 1990s, very little real change has occurred in the past 15 years with regard to the represented racial composition of Australian society in picture books. Such books are still predominantly populated by white, Anglo-Celtic characters, a direct contradiction to figures collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2011 which reveal that over a quarter of Australia's population arrived in the country as migrants. After the UK and New Zealand, the top countries from which Australians migrated were China and India. These figures also indicate that almost one in eight Australians are of Asian ancestry, with the population of Asian-Australians currently standing at 2.4 million. Sadly, this cultural diversity is rarely reflected in Australian picture books. Of course there are a small number of picture book authors and illustrators who make a point of producing texts that seek to disrupt or interrogate conceptions of Australia as a predominantly white society. Shaun Tan's work frequently addresses this subject in a variety of innovative ways and *Ziba Came on a Boat* (2007), by Liz Lofthouse, is an important work because it is explicitly designed to evoke sympathy for political refugees, a group that has been demonized by a succession of Australian governments for a variety of conservative political purposes. It is especially noteworthy because it is a narrative produced for young Australian children that subverts the hegemony of whiteness as a racial category, as it does not contain any white characters.

Offering child or adolescent readers literary representations of non-normative racial or cultural subjectivity is undoubtedly significant, but as I indicated at the outset of this article, it is only by interrogating what constitutes racial normativity that the privilege and power attached to this cultural status can be deconstructed. Gender offers an apposite analogy here, as the effects of feminism on children's literature were initially only evident in relation to representations of female characters. To achieve a situation where both categories of gender are perceived as genuinely equal, critical attention must also be paid to masculinity—and the category itself must be reconstructed in order to divest it of its historical supremacy. A similar undertaking must now be performed in the context of race, with whiteness held up to the same scrutiny and skepticism as patriarchal constructions of masculinity.

Mirror and *That's Not a Daffodil!* are two recently published Australian picture books that eschew current trends regarding the representation of ethnic subjectivity in children's literature: while each promotes some variation of multicultural ideology, neither is focalized from the perspective of a minority ethnic group. Instead, each offers a complex vision of whiteness and how this category of identity functions within cross-cultural relationships in an Australian social context. Each text ostensibly seeks to teach its child audience an anti-racist message by revealing the benefits of cross-cultural relations. However, both *Mirror* and *That's Not a Daffodil!* demonstrate a certain naivety in their thematic

attempt to promote harmonious cross-cultural relationships—proving that the project of "racialising" whiteness is still incipient in Australia. Perhaps more importantly, these two picture books illustrate the difficulties that are associated with dismantling hegemonic discourses. The category of whiteness has underpinned the whole of Australia's brief history as a country and, as these two picture books so tellingly demonstrate, even the best intentions can be waylaid by implicit and unexamined assumptions about the hierarchical ordering of social relations in any given society.

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Jeannie Baker's *Mirror* is an ambitious picture book. It is comprised of two, wordless narratives lying side by side, which are meant to be read simultaneously (readers are specifically instructed to read the stories together). The left hand side of the book presents an Australian story, while on the right is a Moroccan story (to be read right to left, as Arabic reading convention dictates). The "Australian" narrative shows the Australian family waking up and preparing breakfast. The father and son then drive to a hardware store where they shop for materials to repair their fireplace, as well as buying a new ornamental rug. After returning home, mum orders take away for dinner, and the family then sits contentedly on the rug that has been placed in front of the newly repaired fireplace. In the Moroccan narrative, the family also wakes and eats breakfast together. The father and son then set off on a journey —although this time by camel, rather than in a car. They arrive at a market place where they presumably trade a handmade rug (money is depicted in the Australian narrative but is not evident here) for a computer. The father and son then return home on the camel, eat dinner with the rest of the family, and the men are then shown gathered around the computer (while the women sit as passive onlookers at the back of the room, drinking tea). The experimental (although at times unwieldy) structure of *Mirror* is designed to encourage child readers to see these two narratives as inherently analogous—and to read them in a way that actively identifies similarities, rather than seeking out differences or incongruities.

The white Australian family's relationships, experiences, and culture are to be viewed as commensurate to those of the Moroccan family. In a small passage of text, which functions as a prologue to the story (printed in both English and Arabic on the opening pages), readers are exhorted to find links between the two stories:

The lives of the two boys and their families
Look very different from each other,
And they are different.
But some things connect them…
Just as some things are the same for all families
No matter where they live.

Baker's humanist approach to race in *Mirror* is revealing for a plethora of reasons. Perhaps most problematic is the book's simplistic perpetuation of the myth that Australian society is white, in contrast to the non-white society of Morocco. *Mirror* does not engage with the ideology of multiculturalism by attempting to find meaningful ways to forge inter-subjective relationships within the diverse cultural and ethnic groups that constitute the Australian population. Instead, the reader's attention is deflected from Australian social reality, because the cultural Other is presented here as remote and exotic, separated from Australia by oceans and vast geographical distance. By choosing to construct cross-cultural relations in this way, *Mirror* ignores the multicultural reality of a city like Sydney (which is very obviously the city represented in the Australian narrative, as indicated by the presence of iconic Sydney landmarks such as the ANZAC Bridge, the Harbour Bridge, and Centrepoint Tower). For residents of this city to experience Arabic culture, however, it is not actually necessary to travel to Morocco—because in Sydney, Arabic is the most common language other than English spoken by families at home (ABS 2012).

A minor glimpse of Sydney's Arabic community is evident in the image of the boy and his father queuing at the cashier's desk of the hardware store: behind them in the line stand an Arabic family, their ethnicity recognizable because the man is wearing a white turban; the woman a pale grey hijab. The composition of this image is symptomatic of the narrative's simplistic ideological rendering of race. Instead of drawing the reader's attention to what might have been a pivotal moment of thematic significance (when the Morroccan culture of the alternative narrative suddenly becomes simultaneously evident in the multicultural Australian social landscape; metonymic of the cultural plurality of the Australian population), the image downplays such associations. The Arabic characters in the hardware shop are framed on each side by white characters, and the structural representation of the queue means that differences between the white and non-white characters are not especially noticeable. The focal point of the image is the converging vectors created on the right-hand side of the page—between the boy, his father, and the female cashier. These vectors—an eyeline vector between the father and the cashier, and an adjoining vector which connects the pieces of wood held by both the boy and the father—effectively diminish the importance of the represented participants on the left hand side of the page (which is where the Arab family is positioned). Kress and van Leeuwen contend that the conventions associated with the left-to-right organization of visual images dictate that, "the right seems to be the side of the key information, of what the reader must pay particular attention to" (2004: 186). The organization of Baker's image confirms this semiotic visual convention, as the significance of this image lies in the commercial transaction between boy, father and woman, which occurs on the right-hand side of the page. The importance of the Arab characters represented on the left-hand side of the page is diminished by their placement. As Western reading convention dictates, a reader's eye

moves from left to right over the page, so we are expected to see these Arab characters on the left but to pass over them as we arrive at the most salient part of the image (conveyed through the use of vectors), which involves the interaction between boy, father and sales assistant.

The humanist ideology that is so prevalent in *Mirror* (and most works of literature for children) is actually more detrimental than beneficial when it comes to the textual representation of race. This is because humanism intrinsically universalizes the human condition, effacing the privilege and status that has historically been afforded to whiteness as a social and political category. Jolanta Drzewiecka and Kathleen Wong (Lau) add a further dimension to discussions about the relationship between humanist ideology and whiteness in their suggestion that people who are white are rarely self-reflexive about their own racial status—and as such their own lack of awareness about white identity makes a humanist approach to race more appealing:

> What makes white identity different is its fleetingness and invisibility to those who are white. This fleetingness is what Flagg calls the "transparency phenomenon; the tendency of whites not to think about whiteness, or about norms, behaviours, experiences, or perspectives that are white specific (quoted in Lopez, 1996, p.2). Whiteness in this self-unconscious erasure can seem to disappear so that one's cultural practices are not seen as being white-specific but universal to all human beings. (1999: 198)

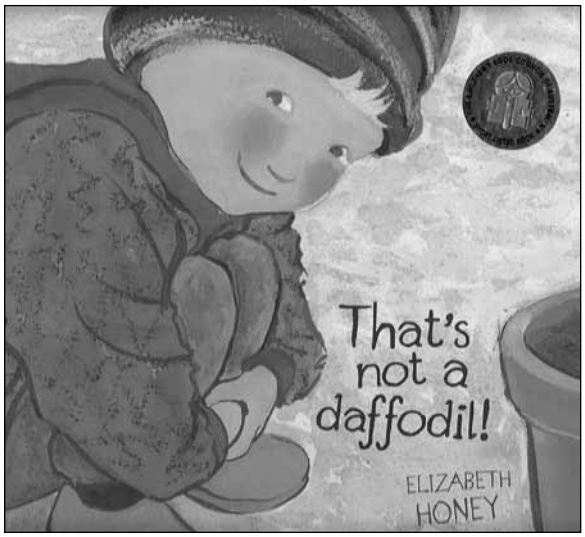
The "invisibility of whiteness" referred to here by Drzewiecka and Wong is prevalent in *Mirror*, where the representation of whiteness becomes a sort of "unraced" and universalizing standard against which to measure other (i.e. non-white) cultural experiences. Within *Mirror's* narrative structure—which traces a day in the life of two families—the experiences of the white Australian family are intended to act as a barometer for all other cultural experiences. The implied reader of *Mirror* is a white, middle class, Australian child, as is evident from the representation of activities and experiences that are commonplace for such a reader: a home situated in an urban environment, obvious signs of affluence and comfort, the normalization of activities such as shopping, and so on. Because of its placement on the left-hand side, this narrative of white experience is encountered first, while the story of the Moroccan family is necessarily compared to (and reshaped in accordance with) the normative depiction of whiteness. *Mirror* is actually quite an unwieldy book, and it is difficult to read the two stories "side by side" as instructed. A more obvious way of reading it is to view the white Australian narrative first (the left-hand story), then move on to the Moroccan one—a process which ensures that white experience is positioned as the originary point of the narrative. The Moroccan story is thus compared against the white one, and the result is that the white narrative implicitly functions as a narrative for all human experience.

Mirror's explicit thematic ideology—that "some things are the same for all families no matter where they live" (to quote from the prologue)—is nevertheless undermined by Baker's consistent (and presumably unintentional) use of images which affirm racial stereotypes and implicitly position whiteness as a superior and normative category of identity. Direct comparisons can be made between *Mirror* and *A Country Far Away* (1988), a picture book by Nigel Gray published almost a quarter of a century ago which employs a similar narrative and visual structure (images depicting a white boy and his daily experiences are presented alongside images of a black boy and his daily experiences, and these two visual sequences are accompanied by a single verbal narrative). *A Country Far Away* employs a slightly different structure than *Mirror*, whereby its dual visual narratives are presented horizontally across a double-page spread. The non-white visual narrative occupies the top half of the page, while the white visual narrative is placed on the lower half of each spread. This layout inverts the technique employed in *Mirror* and functions to destabilize whiteness because readers see and process the non-white visual narrative first. However, both *Mirror* and *A Country Far Away* depend

on contrasts between their white and non-white visual stories that necessarily invoke the "civilized/uncivilized" binary, a dualistic conception that is often employed in the construction and perpetuation of degrading racial stereotypes. Whiteness is visually equated with industrialization, urbanization and consumer goods, while non-white subjectivity is constructed in terms of lack (arid rather than green landscapes; a comparative dearth of possessions; and unsophisticated architecture). In *Mirror*, Australia is depicted as an urbanized and developed environment, replete with multiple signs of technological progress (cars, airplanes, skyscrapers, bridges, etc.), but Morocco is a desert land that is rendered empty and inhospitable. Donkeys provide the main form of transport, and instead of the huge and pristine hardware shop of the Australian narrative (impeccably organized and teeming with products), the Moroccan narrative presents a simple market, where merchants display their wares on the ground. Despite its humanist agenda, *Mirror* succeeds only in providing a gross over-simplification of how life in a first world country might equate with existence in the third world country of Morocco.

Although humanist ideology typically functions to efface racial difference in narratives produced for children, *That's Not a Daffodil!* is able to achieve a much more complex construction of race because it creates a dialogic and intersubjective relationship between white and non-white racial identities. Race is not an explicit thematic concern in *That's Not a Daffodil!,* and because it contains a depiction of an obviously "non-white" character, this makes it a somewhat unusual text within the broader realm of Australian children's fiction. (Australian narratives which include representations of non-white characters usually do so for the purpose of thematically exploring race relations.) *That's Not a Daffodil!* is therefore extremely unique: a work of fiction for young readers that simply represents the Australian social landscape as ethnically diverse. But this is not to say that Honey's text ignores the social complexity of race: its simple story of a friendship between a young boy and his older neighbor deftly subverts racist discourses in its restructuring of the power structures that are conventionally associated with racial hierarchies.

Tom, the child character, is the epitome of whiteness. He is blonde and blue-eyed, and therefore acts as a stark visual contrast to Mr. Yilmaz, whose dark, swarthy skin (and long grey/black mustache) is the antithesis of Tom's pale complexion. There are no other characters in the narrative (with the exception of Mr. Yilmaz's grandchildren, Leyla and Kaan). Tom's family is never portrayed, so that Mr. Yilmaz assumes the adult (and pseudo parental) role within the narrative. He is invested with authority, as it is he who shows Tom how to plant and care for the daffodil



bulb. Tom's role throughout the story is to doubt that the bulb/plant will ever grow into a daffodil (hence the title of the book), but Mr. Yilmaz functions as a sensitive adult teacher, patiently acknowledging all of Tom's observations about the young plant's appearance. It is also apparent that Mr. Yilmaz possesses genuine knowledge about plants, as every time he arrives at Tom's house he is bearing gifts from his garden, such as lemons, apples and a pumpkin. By strategically placing Mr. Yilmaz in the role of the adult teacher, while young Tom takes the role of child/student, *That's Not a Daffodil!* quietly asserts the value of cross-cultural relations. It is true that Tom, as the white child character, represents a point of alignment for child readers (the simple verbal text employs very limited focalization

strategies, so the story is not actually told from Tom's point of view), but Mr Yilmaz's role as guide, educator and parental figure is highly significant. Ultimately he is responsible for providing Tom with a life-changing experience, a little moment of joy when Tom first sets eyes on "the trumpet of gold": his daffodil.

The success of *That's Not a Daffodil!* in presenting an image of white subjectivity that sensitively challenges its privileged status is weakened, however, by the peritextual material (the front cover, the blurb on the back cover, and an insertion of a paragraph of text on the colophon). It is fairly safe to assume that an author or illustrator plays little role in the decision-making process that accompanies the design or composition of these elements of a picture book. Instead, such choices are made by the book's publishing company. In the case of *That's Not a Daffodil!*, this peritextual material reveals a much more conservative ideology about race. Although Mr. Yilmaz plays a critical role in the narrative, his presence has been erased from the front and back covers of the book, which only contain images of the blonde haired, blue-eyed Tom. A more deliberate effacement of Mr. Yilmaz's ethnicity is evident in the blurb that appears on the back cover of the book. Here, Mr. Yilmaz's name (itself a marker of non-Anglo ethnicity) has been omitted twice, and the terms "neighbour" and "gardener" have been substituted:

> When Tom's neighbour gives him a brown bulb, he can't believe it will flower.
> "That's not a daffodil!" says Tom.
> "Well," says the old gardener. "Let's plant it and see."

The absence of Mr Yilmaz on the front and back covers is countered, rather amusingly, by the insertion of a small line of text explaining the anglicisation of Mr. Yilmaz's name within the story. In very small print, adult readers (the text appears immediately before the publication details, and would therefore be typically ignored by a lower-primary aged child reader) are told:

> *In Turkey, where Mr. Yilmaz came from, the* i *in his name did not have a dot, and his name was pronounced* Yuhlmuz. *But when he came to Australia he found he had a dot over the i and the sound of his name had changed because the English alphabet is different from the Turkish.*

The juxtaposition of this explanatory text and the front/back covers (from which Mr Yilmaz has been excised) produces an ambiguous and contradictory ideological attitude to race—which in many ways is emblematic of race relations in Australia. On the one hand, the information printed on the colophon about the spelling of Mr. Yilmaz's name draws attention to his non-Anglo Turkish ancestry—an emphasis that is echoed in the actual narrative, which indicates that Mr Yilmaz is in Turkey at one point. In direct contrast, Tom's ethnicity is never mentioned. The effect of including this information on the colophon is to heighten the visibility of

Mr. Yilmaz's ethnicity-yet by omitting his image from the front or back covers, which contain images of Tom alone, *That's Not a Daffodil!* simultaneously asserts the centrality of the white subject.

When considering the representation of race in literature produced for children, one of the most significant issues to address is reader positioning. How does the text position readers in relation to their own community or cultural and ethnic group? And how are readers positioned in relation to cultural or ethnic Otherness? *Mirror* and *That's Not a Daffodil!* offer their young readers a very distinctive perspective on cross-cultural relationships between white and non-white subjects. The results of these textual explorations of whiteness and its relationship to other racial identities are divergent, however, because of rather crucial differences in the strategies each book uses to position its readers. In both books readers are strategically positioned as white: although there are two parallel narratives in *Mirror*, Western left-to-right reading conventions dictate that the left narrative (the Australian narrative) will be read first and used as a point of reference against which to compare the Moroccan narrative. Although there are only two central characters in *That's Not a Daffodil!,* one white and one Turkish, the child character is white and therefore functions as a more likely target for reader alignment than the adult Mr. Yilmaz. Once positioned as white, readers are then asked to evaluate non-white subjectivity and culture in startlingly oppositional ways. *Mirror* explicitly seeks to erase racial difference in its employment of a universalizing humanist ideology that asks readers to "read through" racial difference and simply evaluate the two narratives as analogous (despite a succession of visual images that reinforce racial difference through the employment of a "civilized"/"uncivilized" binary). Such an approach is simplistic and naive, as it ignores the vast differences that exist between families living in first world as opposed to third world countries. This superficial treatment of race denies the history of privilege attached to whiteness, and instead serves only to convey the banal platitude that all people should be treated equally (a position which is generally only adopted by individuals who are white and have never been subjected to racial oppression). *That's Not a Daffodil!* positions its readers very differently, inventively challenging normative depictions of racial hierarchies. The relationship between Mr. Yilmaz and Tom is not constructed as a grandiose metaphor for cross-cultural relations, but the ordinary interactions between these two people as they wait for a daffodil bulb to bloom is a small and fitting model for intercultural harmony. Mr. Yilmaz, representative of non-normative, non-Anglo ethnic subjectivity, is invested with power and cultural knowledge in his role as Tom's teacher. The events that take place throughout the narrative always occur in Tom's house or garden, suggesting a deprivileging (or deconstruction of the hierarchical values) of white space. Mr. Yilmaz moves freely within Tom's home, even bringing his grandchildren with him on one occasion. The

The results of these textual explorations of whiteness and its relationship to other racial identities are divergent, however, because of rather crucial differences in the strategies each book uses to position its readers.

historical privilege attached to whiteness is temporarily disrupted by Tom, whose function within the narrative is simply to learn from Mr. Yilmaz about the joyful experience of watching a plant grow—narrative closure that emphasizes the beneficial nature of cross-cultural relationships. Although these messages about race are covert, rather than direct, *That's Not a Daffodil!* cleverly undercuts the conventional construction of whiteness as superior to all other ethnic identities through its sensitive portrayal of Mr Yilmaz, in a manner that confirms Karyn McKinney's assertion that "until whiteness is recognized as a privilege by average whites, anti-racism will not become important to most white people. It will take a shift in these everyday whites' views before the racial status quo can be changed to a more equitable system…" (226).

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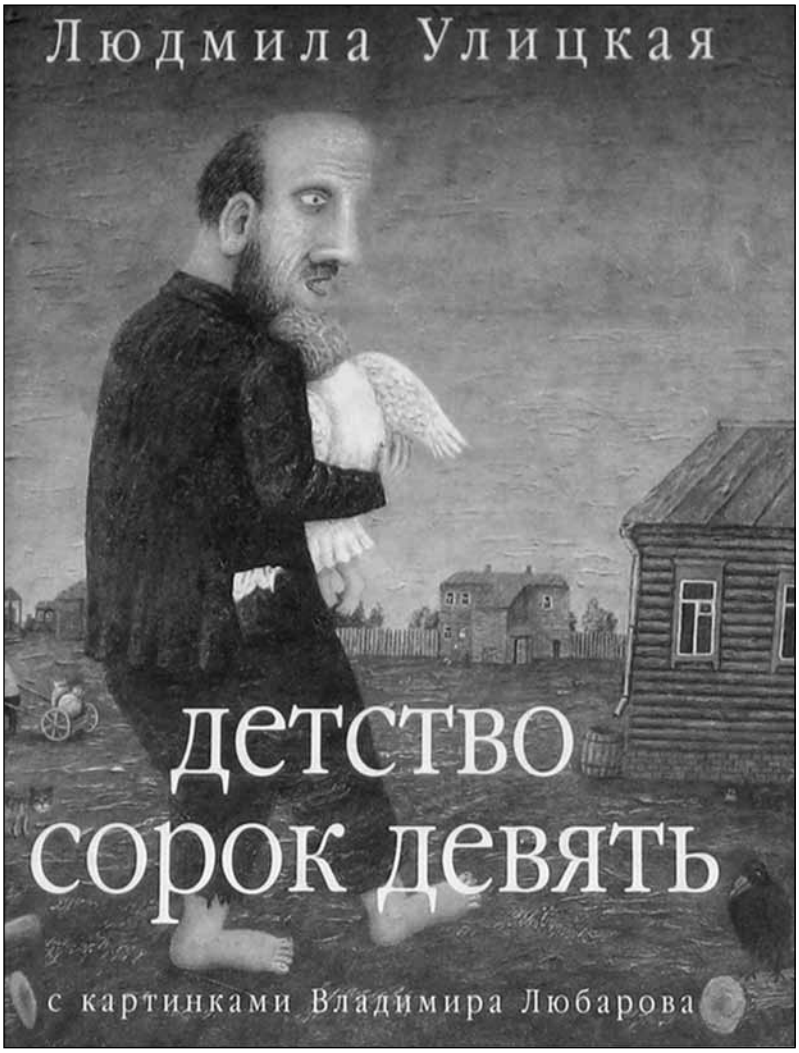

Ulitskaia's Writing for Children: Transcending limitations of the graphic novel genre

by OKSANA LUSHCHEVSKA

This article examines characteristic features of the sense of wonder in a childhood perspective, as well as introduces epiphany as a source of achieving the illustration of a child's character and viewpoint. The analysis focuses on the series of stories Childhood-49, ***written by Liudmila Ulitskaia, which creates an interconnected series of events that gradually as they depict the complex life of Russian post-war society with all its bitterness and hardship.***

Liudmila Ulitskaia creates an unforeseen feeling of happiness through her series of short stories *Detstvo-49* [Childhood-49], which vividly describe a fascinating sense of wonder. In order to fully understand the underlying concept, one

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should look at the research of Kara Elizabeth Wittman on the states of wonder, in which she argues that "wonder is immanent in the form" of the narrative (Wittman 1). The plot of the story should demonstrate both real experience and the world beyond understanding. Ulitskaia's stories persist in breaking the household day-to-day routine while conveying the delicate intimacy of enchantment. Consequentially, she effectively uses the notion of "epiphany" to increase and supplement the sense of wonder, allowing the reader to fully grasp the significance of the moment. Ulitskaia's stories, however, are not just about "fairy-tale" miracles. She masterfully depicts wonderful epiphanies within the complex cultural environment of devastated Russian post-World War II society.

In this essay, I examine characteristic features of the sense of wonder from a childhood perspective, as well as introduce epiphany as a source of achieving the thorough illustration of the child's character and viewpoint. My analysis focuses on the series of stories *Detstvo-49* [Childhood-49], which consists of six independent, totally different, and absolutely unique literary works that are strongly connected by brightly colored, absorbing emotions. Ulitskaia creates an interconnected series of events that gradually evolve and slowly develop in order to depict the complex life of post-war society, with all its bitterness and hardship.

Ulitskaia creates an interconnected series of events that gradually evolve and slowly develop in order to depict the complex life of post-war society, with all its bitterness and hardship.

Before I begin the analysis of Ulitskaia's writing for children, I would like to provide some background information necessary for the understanding of the concept of wonder and epiphany in the context of Soviet reality and author's interpretation of it. Andrew Baruch Watchel, in his book *The Battle for Childhood*, investigates two main approaches to Russian childhood. In short, he argues that "for the Russian imagination, childhood was a gigantic *terra incognita,* waiting to be discovered" (2) and developed into a model or "myth" for future generations. He presents the Tolstoyan myth of childhood with the characteristic of "happy irretrievable time" (2). This model becomes a sole reference point for several generations of writers who write about childhood in Russia. It develops around the notion of happy childhood, idealistic portrayal of youth, and representation of childhood as a golden age. Even unhappy moments do not prevent the first-person narrator from perceiving childhood as a positive and unforgettable experience. The Tolstoyan model of childhood is also closely related to the genre of pseudo-autobiography. In contrast, Watchel points to the "difficult and unhappy" Gorkyan model, which represents an opposite approach to childhood. It assumes that the hard and unhappy child is more likely to have an incentive to change something later in life than a happy one. Therefore, an unhappy childhood is considered to be a "proper" model of youth representation and upbringing. Both models comprise extreme approaches to the subject, since one symbolizes ideal utopian childhood, and the other a radical

anti-childhood. In Watchel's view, these are two fundamental bases for the depiction of childhood in Russian literature.

Liudmila Ulitskaia builds her own distinct approach to the subject. In contrast to the models described by Watchel, she chooses a balanced standpoint in shaping her individual model for childhood, which is neither utopian nor anti-utopian, but neutral in nature. Although, she is not a pioneer in applying such a model in her writing, Ulitskaia definitely makes strong progress in grasping a realistic picture of childhood. Thus, her stories derive their relevance from the notion of "epiphany," which represents "a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in memorable phase of the mind itself" (Joyce 211). She uses epiphany in describing the moments of enlightenment and revelation in the course of the ordinary lives of her characters.

Liudmila Ulitskaia is one of the most critically acclaimed Russian authors. Her first literary works began to appear right after the break-up of the Soviet Union. The main focus of Ulitskaia's writing is the bitter life experience and Soviet reality of ordinary Russian people during Stalin's era and thereafter. Throughout her literary career she was nominated and awarded with numerous national and international prizes, including the prestigious Russian Booker Prize. In addition, Ulitskaya is the author of the UNESCO "Other, Others, Otherwise" project for children, aimed at promotion of tolerance, multiculturalism, non-discrimination, and cultural diversity within children's relationships.

Most scholars who have studied Ulitskaia's literary works have mainly focused on her adult fiction. Interestingly, in his dissertation *Engendering Byt: Russian Women's Writing and Everyday Life from I. Grekova to Liudmila Ulitskaia*, Benjamin Massey Sutcliffe explains "four reasons for Ulitskaia's success with the intelligentsia and ordinary readers" (176). She becomes a remarkable example of the post-soviet Russian female writer whose distinct narrative, according to Massey Sutcliffe, involves: "subtle and nuanced engagement of the past, stylistic sophistication, artistic treatment of everyday life, and protagonists whose lives imply that one can live through difficult times while preserving ethical standards" (176). Ulitskaia's writing is unique in the way it presents characters and plot complexity. Some fairly simple stories bear significant meaning and unexpected relevance to the reader, who is often overwhelmingly captivated by the distinct details of characters and their lives, as well as Ulitskaia's use of sudden epiphany to force the reader into rethinking the entire situation.

While depicting Ulitskaia as an outstanding contemporary writer who writes evocative stories about human experience and creates dramatic realities of ordinary life in Soviet post-war times, scholars often overlook Ulitskaia's writing for young readers as integral to her literary works. Numerous series of Ulitskaia's realistic adult fiction consist of life drama, survival after the devastation of the late 1940s, heavy soviet ideology, and the destruction of material value. In contrast, Ulitskaia's children's corpus reveals the concept of epiphany with astonishing detail, often completely unnoticed by adult readers. This particular aspect

of her work demands more extensive research. Ulitskaia's children's worlds differ tremendously from those of her adults. She consistently refers to psychological aspects of the sense of wonder that constitute the emotions contained in the inner world of her characters.

Encyclopedia Britannica refers to the word "wonder" as "something extraordinary, surprising, and perfect in every detail" ("wonder" *EB*) Through her powerful authorial voice, Ulitskaia reveals herself as a magician who delivers wonder into children's hands through epiphany. She makes the reader believe everything that happens can happen only once in a lifetime. Thus, by virtue of individual experience, Ulitskaia articulates the unexpected "once upon a time" feeling that surely leads to long awaited "happily ever after." However, the epiphany itself is always hidden beneath the grayness of life, while reality is full of obstacles and disappointments.

The opening story "Cabbage Wonder" [Капустное чудо] illustrates breathtaking post-war reality, where two girls, Dysia [Дуся] and Olga [Ольга], face a family drama that affects their future. Their inner worlds are completely empty, as they have both lost their parents and must live with a distant relative—an old woman, Ipatieva [старуха Ипатьева]—who is displeased with the situation. She consistently appears irritated: "here they fell on my head [привезли, мол, на мою голову]" (444). This particular story does not depict the girls' appearance, though it does construct compelling descriptions of their personalities through attention to peculiar details. For instance, instead of playing with children of the same age, the girls prefer to stay at home with Ipatieva and watch her complete her home routine. Dysia and Olga are unexpectedly amazed by regular things: "their games were not understandable, it was much more interesting to sit close to the sewing machine, listening to its sounds and picking up the patches that were falling down [их игры были непонятны, интереснее было сидеть в комнате, возле швейной машинки, слушать её неровный стук и подбирать лоскутки, падающие на пол]." Ulitskaia contrasts the image of the vivid patches with the girls' lives, which lack material things. Another example is the picture of the Japanese man in Dysia's pocket, which she keeps as the most valuable thing in her possession.

The rubbish that the sisters observe in Ipatieva's home makes them appreciate their impending fortune. At last they have a real family, and their existence is becoming essential to Ipatieva. Consequentially, baba Tania, as the girls call the old woman, is changing her attitude toward them, and she trusts the adoptees to take the scarce money and buy cabbage, which was in extremely short supply during post-war times: "Take as many as you will be able to carry [Возьмите,сколько унесете]" (443). Unfortunately, Dysia accidentally loses the money. It becomes clear to both girls that they are on the brink of losing their new family; on one hand, they cannot get the cabbages, and on the other hand, they've lost Ipatieva's money. How can they return to the place they started to call home? The money is gone and finding it is seemingly impossible. At this point, Ulitskaia presents an unexpected epiphany—on that could be understood as pure coincidence, but which could also be treated as something rather extraordinary and supernatural. The cabbage truck makes a sharp turn, and suddenly two large heads of cabbage fall down at Olga's feet: "They stared at one another—two bright-blue amazed eyes looked into the other's, just as amazed [Они посмотрели на дружку—два светло-голубых изумлённых глаза смотрели в другие, точно такие же]" (447). The girls are overcome with splendor; they simply cannot believe their eyes. Ulitskaia makes the reader rethink the entire notion of wonder. The epiphany in itself is incredible, particularly in light of the strong descriptions of the girls' poverty and attachment to Ipatieva.

Ulitskaia makes the reader rethink the entire notion of wonder.

The second story "Wax Duckling" [Восковая уточка] can be grouped with the first story as a "dream come true." It demonstrates how the sense of wonder shapes the child's future. Each week, Valka Bobrova [Валька Боброва] waits for

the poor old man Radion [Радион] to come to their yard with an old horse hauling a carriage with an enormous trunk full of used goods. Rag-and-bone man announces his arrival, simply yelling out, "We take old stuff [Старье-берем]" (448). For Valka, he sounds like a mysterious miracle-worker with a tremendously strong voice and unlimited treasure. She anticipates the man's wonder show, as it is the only bright event in her simple life. Whenever the old man comes, Valka awaits with admiration, exploring each thing in his old carriage:

> The trunk was full of precious things. There were delicate earrings with red and green stones put inside the thin piece of cardboard, a bank of small rings in a sugar candy jar, slightly transparent painted wax ducklings rising in a slight heap, huge glass balls with floating fish and swans inside them glittering dazzlingly [Чемодан был полон драгоценностями. В тонкую картонку были вдеты легкие сережки с красными и зелёными камушками, маленькие колечки лежали навалом в банке из-под леденцов, воздушной кучкой вздымались чуть прозрачные раскрашенные восковые уточки, ослепительно сверкали большие стеклянные шары, в которых торжественно плавали рыбы и лебеди]. (448)

Interestingly, the various things in Radion's trunk are so unique that not solely Valka but all the children and adults in the neighborhood stare at them with great excitement. Though every child in the yard wishes to have even one of the numerous treasures, Valka Bobrova has a clearer vision: "She was choosing between the ring with the green stone and one duckling [Она выбирала между колечком с зеленым камушком и одной уточкой]" (449). Having a particular cherished item in mind, Valka is especially disappointed to learn that the rag-and-bone man only gives things from his trunk in exchange for other things. Being poor, Valka does not have anything to exchange.

Comparable to the first story, in "Wax Duckling" Ulitskaia avoids describing Valka's appearance; she also does not provide any information about her family. However, the author does describe Valka Bobrova's character in detail during the main scene with Radion's "trunk wealth." It is evident that Valka lives in a very poor family. Moreover, the world around her is sinking into poverty, and there is no way for the girl to acquire what she wants. While the old man is leaving the yard, a metamorphosis occurs in Valka's mind: the girl cannot let Radion carry away her "dream" in his huge trunk. Simultaneously, Valka's neighbor Matrena Klueva [Матрёна Клюева], who is cleaning a doormat, runs to her crying son, and at this point, Valka's dream seems as though it can come true: "Decisiveness and cold enveloped Valka. She approached quickly like a spring and grabbed the doormat without thinking even a minute, and then she rushed after Radion [Решимость и холод вдруг обрушились на Вальку. Она подобралась, как пружина, минуты не думая, схватила половик и понеслась вслед за Родионом]" (450). Valka does not know if the man will take her object for exchange, but she acts on her instincts. While Radion is digging in his trunk and looking for something to pick out for the girl, Valka wants to ask for the little wax duckling, but dares not to say a word. For Valka's courage, Ulitskaia presents an awe-inspiring surprise: Radion places the desired wax duckling into her palm. For a while, Valka loses her strength from the stunning epiphany: "She concealed [the duckling] between her palms and went home quietly. There was nothing left from the cold and decisiveness, her heart was thumping and she was extremely thirsty [Она спрятала её между ладонями и тихо пошла домой. От холода и решимости ничего не осталось, колотилось сердце и очень хотелось пить]" (450). Significantly, this elevated feeling from acquisition of the unexpected possession remains with Valka Bobrova all her life. It serves as her light in the darkness, brightening the road to success as she grows up and becomes a famous athlete. Despite her future trials, she often experiences a memory "about the tender wax duckling with a crumpled wing that melted away under her hot fingers many years ago [о нежной восковой

уточке с помятым крылом, которая давно растаяла под ее горячими пальцами]" (451).

The third story, "Grandfather-Whisperer," [Дед-шептун] and the forth, "Nails," [Гвозди] refer to old men as symbols of guiding wizards, who provide aid in inevitable moments of misfortune. In the first passage of "Grandfather-Whisperer," Ulitskaia reveals a particular feature of Great-Grandfather: "He speaks little, but is constantly whispering something in such a quiet voice that it is almost inaudible [Разговаривал он мало, но постоянно что-то шептал так тихо, что почти неслышно]" (452). The old man's mysterious behavior provides a metaphorical link between the known and unknown world for his great-granddaughter, Dina (Дина). She spends a great deal of time with her great-grandfather, listening to the one story he constantly tells and playing the only game he is able to follow. The whispering man is so elderly that he can hardly see and hear, nor can he move around the house. Dina does not know her great-grandfather well, and she associates him with sickness and infirmity. The one thing that Dina *does* know about the old man is his previous occupation, which she learns from the gift given to her brother: "When brother Alik turned ten, great-grandfather presented a watch to him [Когда брату Алику исполнилось десять лет, прадед подарил ему часы]" (453). The whispering man was a watchmaker before he grew old.

From the moment Dina sees the watch, it attracts her irresistibly. On one occasion, Dina takes the watch on purpose without her brother's permission. Before Dina takes the watch, her great-grandfather warns her symbolically: "Great-Grandfather shakes his head. He often shakes his head as if he were grieving [Прадед покачал головой. Он часто качал головой, словно о чем-то сокрушался]" (453). However, at this point, Dina is a girl of action. She performs the deed without thought of consequences. Her fearless Ego speaks inside her; Dina wants to demonstrate her identity. It is not surprising, of course, that Dina breaks the watch while playing. This horrible event means the end of the world as she understands it. The watch that was so beautiful now looks like "a lid of a coffin [крышка гроба]" (454). Dina struggles with the "unfair" consequence of her actions, and has no one to approach for help. Empathizing with the girl's sorrow, the great-grandfather repairs the watch, and this unexpected favor makes Dina look at the old man from a different prospective. She admires him for the enormous surprise, as if he were a miracle-worker or a secret-keeper: "Tell me, you aren't blind, are you? (Скажи, ты не слепой, да?)" (455). The great grandfather does not give an exact answer, but shares his significant life experience with his beloved grandchild: "Perhaps, I see something. But only the most important [Пожалуй, кое-что вижу. Но только самое главное]" (455). With these whispering words, the old man builds a spiritual and "magical" bridge for Dina to reach a higher understanding of human values.

In the story "Nails" [Гвозди], Seryozha's [Сережа] grandfather, who, at first meeting, resembles the old man from the Russian folktale

"Morozko,"[1] takes on the role of the wise old wizard. He is dressed in a sheepskin coat and his old house has many different odors: that of an old sheepskin, sour apples, and horse harness (455). The notion of the fairy-tale wizard is central to understanding the boy's feelings. Seryozha sees his grandfather as a warmhearted person, experienced and full of the necessary skills for everyday village life, and his abilities capture the boy's attention. When Seryozha find himself without anything to do, his grandfather relieves his boredom by teaching him to hammer and pull out nails. This process first evokes amazement in the child, but soon Seryozha grows tired of his new duties: "This is the job for the whole life, he thought [Это работа на всю жизнь, - подумал он]" (461). A transformation occurs: what is wondrous to Seryozha at the beginning now makes him feel miserable, and he is soon unwilling to help his grandfather with "nail-jobs." At this moment, Ulitskaia introduces another powerful detail: "Grandfather brought planks on a cart at the very end of the summer [Под самый конец лета деду привезли на телеге доски]" (462). He starts to make a large box that looks very strange to Seryozha. As it turns out, the grandfather is making a coffin for himself. By placing the image of a coffin in this story, Ulitskaia suggests that firstly, children often fear coffins, and secondly, they are easily shocked. Seryozha is astonished, and exclaims, "Now I see that the wooden box is a coffin! [Вот оно что, деревянный ящик был гроб!]" (462). He understands the grandfather's action in his own childish way, and this epiphany changes his summer routine to a unique and unforgettable experience. For now, Seryozha is unable to feel the consequence, yet when he visits his grandfather's house the next summer and his grandfather is gone, he feels emptiness. The memories of the incident and the overwhelming loss give Seryozha a surprisingly warm and strong emotion.

In setting up the episodes of the fifth and the sixth stories, Ulitskaia purposely refers to unexpected consequences of an event for which life reserves a marvelous reward. Interestingly, Rachel Carson refers to the fact that "there is the world of little things, seen all too seldom" (Carson 59). Similarly, Ulitskaia attempts to focus on details that seem completely unrelated, but later combines them to reveal a single poignant consequence. The story "A Fortunate Incident" [Счастливый случай] reflects on the ethical relationship between people through their acts based on insignificant possessions. The old woman, Kliukvina, [Клюквина] intentionally injures Khalima [Халима] while she is airing out her bedding on a folding bed below Kljukvina's balcony. The old woman invokes her evil nature by asking her grandson, Kol'ka [Колька], to throw down Khalima's things, and Kol'ka obeys the order with satisfaction. Khalima does not lose her patience as she puts the folding bed back. Interestingly, in the first scene, Ulitskaia narrates several actions connected with the folding bed as if she were providing clues for the reader. She highlights

…Ulitskaia attempts to focus on details that seem completely unrelated, but later combines them to reveal a single poignant consequence.

the fact that whatever Kol'ka does, Khalima puts the folding bed back, thus her action represents steadiness and equilibrium of character. Perhaps the folding bed does not provide any astonished wonder, but it has an extraordinary effect during the final episode of the story. From this point, whatever Kliukvina does, she wants the bed to be taken away. Hence she continues her deliberate actions: "… the old woman in a nimble, even somehow athletic move poured ashes from the window right on the folding bed [… старуха ловким, даже каким-то спортивным движением сыпанула из окна золу прямо на раскладушку]" (467). Ulitskaia makes clear that an unexpected consequence may happen despite the characters' expectations. While the old woman is trying to offend Khalima, her grandson falls from the roof into Khalima's folding bed: "… the folding bed, grunting, broke apart [… раскладушка, хрюкнув, развалилась]" (467). Kliukvina achieves her vile goal at a high price. Here, Ulitskaia depicts the moment through the use of light irony, since the tragic event teaches the old woman a proper lesson; the only thing that saves the boy is the folding bed that she obsessively tries to destroy. At this point, the old woman experiences the greatest epiphany of her life simultaneously with a deep understanding of spiritual values. Through this astonishing moment and life-saving opportunity, Kliukvina is blessed with two rewards: on the one hand, she can improve her ethical way of life within the world, and on the other, she is able to bring up the child with a pure understanding of spiritual values.

"The Paper Victory [Бумажная победа]" is the final story in Childhood-49, and it points out the crucial question: what kind of victory is it if it is a paper one? The concept of paper victory is greatly puzzling at the beginning of the story, and Ulitskaia magically reveals the "paper" miracle only in the final episode, which illustrates the main character, Genia Perepletchikov [Геня Переплетчиков], as a happy winner. He is able to capture the attention of his new friends and enchant them with his rare ability to make "paper toys [бумажные игрушки]" (469). In this story, Ulitskaia explores the tiny world of an ordinary child who is suffering from his constant tendency to attract misfortunes, which also become the obstacles on the way to a "bright boyish childhood."

The boy's last name is not chosen by accident. Ulitskaia specifically selects a name that has several meanings, each relevant to the main plot. On one hand, Perepletchikov means "someone who often gets into trouble," and on the other it represents certain type of gait, when the one's legs are constantly interlacing. Genia sees his last name as a humiliation, which directly reflects his disability. If Perepletchikov means exactly "someone who lags behind," then Genia is particularly linked to his name, as "he walked with the strange jumping gait [он ходил странной, прыгающей походкой]" (469). The boy constantly has a stuffy nose and dry lips, however the worst problem lies in the fact that Genia has no father, which is typical to many children whose fathers fought in the war, except "… [he] could not say that his father died in war: he does not have a father at all [… (он) не мог сказать, что его отец погиб на войне: у него отца не было вообще]" (476). Underscoring the complexity of Genia's unhappiness, Ulitskaia simultaneously depicts the boy as a classic Hans Christian Andersen-esque "ugly duckling," who is ashamed of himself until his inner beauty is revealed to the outer world. Self-discovery becomes a miracle for Genia; he changes rapidly, and, while making forfeits for the children, he is grows within. Genia fascinates the younger children with his "paper wonders [бумажные чудеса]" (475).

In her short article in *The Dictionary of Russian Woman Writers*, Helena Golscilo writes: "Ulitskaia skillfully balances poignancy and an understated intimation of life's seamier, more brutal aspects. Her compact prose, refreshingly free of bathos and purple patches, has a precision that creates the illusion of simplicity" (680). Such illusionary simplicity relates to the visible world, and, as Phillip Fisher puts it, "wonder is the outcome of the fact that we see the world" (11). In Childhood-49, Ulitskaia makes a strong connection between the beautiful reflection of the world as it is, and the inner emotional life of a child

who goes through a major epiphany that teaches ethical human values and spirituality.

Finally, by depicting epiphany in harsh postwar reality, Ulitskaia reaches the core of the fundamental influence of positive, miraculous childhood experience in ordinary life, which, paradoxically, often vanishes with aging. Throughout her stories, the main characters are often faced with the bleak realities of life, which influence not only their daily lives, but also shape their outlook of the world itself. In Childhood-49, the concept of wonder clearly influences the decisions of the main characters, who either experience epiphany through the possession of something material, or witness some miraculous event that takes place due to a material object. Therefore, only those who experience epiphany at a young age are able to understand how the adult world presents extraordinary feelings of wonder in aesthetic reality. Ultimately, these writing techniques distinguish Ulitskaia's style from the popular mass literature for children, and place her writing in the category of elite classic Russian children's literature.

Notes

1. See http://russian-crafts.com/tales/morozko.html

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China's Patriotic Exposé: Ye Shengtao's Fairytale, *Daocao ren* [Scarecrow]

by LIJUN BI

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In the early twentieth century, patriotism in China became closely linked to the exposure of social ills in literary production. This paper examines the first major work of modern Chinese children's literature, Ye Shengtao's Daocao ren ***[Scarecrow] (1923). It argues that the emergence of modern Chinese children's literature represents the rise of modern nationalism and the critique of the native cultural heritage. It concludes that stories like Scarecrow were created by Chinese intellectuals as part of their efforts to rejuvenate the nation.***

Introduction

In dynastic China, children represented the continuation of the family. They were subordinates, properties, and even slaves of their parents. Children's books were mainly language primers,

which introduced scripts and outlined Chinese history and social tenets. Modern Chinese children's literature, as an independent and identifiable branch of literature, emerged from the May Fourth New Culture Movement, which takes its name from a mass patriotic demonstration in Beijing on May 4th, 1919 against the national government's agreement with a term of the Treaty of Versailles after World War I that China cede Shandong Province, previously held by Germany, to Japan. When China faced the national predicament, children represented a new vigour for a revitalised young China. One of the important themes in the new children's literature was to tackle the issue of social ills, which their authors appear to regard as the roots of the nation's weakness—a kind of erosion of a waning and sick nation. In China, the ideological apparatus always creates positive feelings for the nation by emphasising its great achievements in children's books. In the early twentieth century, however, patriotism, in the modern sense of loving one's country, became closely linked to the exposure of social problems in literary production of China's May Fourth era. Emer O'Sullivan has found that the educational status of children's literature is particularly high at times when there are new values to be conveyed in societies in a phase of transition from tradition to modernity (62). This paper argues that the emergence of modern Chinese children's literature reflects the quest for emancipation from the traditional ethics of subordination, submissiveness and filial piety, and the acceptance of Western ideas of children's and women's rights. This paper further argues that the early modern Chinese children's literature represents the exigencies of social and political problems of the time—a conflict between the rise of modern nationalism and the critique of the native cultural heritage. It was created for the purpose of educating the future generation as a crucial part of the Chinese intellectuals' elaborate efforts to meet the enormous challenge of combining the external imperatives of national salvation—*jiuguo*—with the internal prerequisites of enlightenment—*qimeng*.

…the emergence of modern Chinese children's literature reflects the quest for emancipation from the traditional ethics of subordination, submissiveness and filial piety, and the acceptance of Western ideas of children's and women's rights.

Since books had been used to convey moral principles for the interests of social stability for thousands of years in China, in the eyes of the general public who were used to the traditional idea of the leading role of the literati, it would look "normal" that modern writers advocated a kind of modern ideology in a modern children's literature to educate them for social progress. In this context, advocacy of explicit ideology in children's literature would be taken for granted as being natural and rational by people in China. As a result, didacticism in children's books would not be as obvious to the Chinese eye as compared to China watchers in the West. In addition, the factor of time is important in the way people perceive what "art" and "propaganda" are. As Trevor Hay argues in the case of the revolutionary narrative and model theatre of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, from the perspective of the

twenty-first century, the ideology of the 1960s and 1970s may look less like "politics" or "propaganda," and more like "romance" or "legend," or even "national culture," "in precisely the way time has transformed propaganda of the more distant past into traditional art" (8).

The Story of Scarecrow

Ye Shengtao's *Daocao ren* [Scarecrow] (1923) is an example of the genre of patriotic exposé. It was the first major work of modern Chinese children's literature. This work depicts the scarecrow as a creature with human motivations and the ability to reason:

> The rural sceneries and occurrences in the fields by day have been described by poets in beautiful poems and painted by artists in lively pictures. At night, poets become a bit tipsy after drinking and artists, with exquisite musical instruments in arms, enjoy humming softly. None of them have time to spare for the fields. Is there anyone capable of telling what it is like in the fields and what really happens there at night? Yes, there is the scarecrow (13).[1]

The beginning of the story succinctly summarises the difficulties for children to see "what really happens there at night." The scarecrow becomes the author's spokesperson in revealing the extreme difficulties faced by the three women whose lives provide the story's narrative content. In the first account, the victim was an elderly peasant widow whose husband died eight years ago. It took her and her son three years of hard labour to pay off the funeral debt. Misfortune hit her again when her son also died of illness, and it took her another three years to pay the expense of her son's funeral. Floods in the following two years caused further agony. Now for the first time in eight years, there seems to be some hope for her to improve her living; however, insects begin to attack her crops. As the elderly woman begins to cry, the narrator notes, "Thinking of the tears running down the dry skinny face of the old woman once she witnessed the catastrophe, the scarecrow felt a pain in his heart as though a knife was piecing it" (15). The scarecrow longs to drive the insects away, but the breeze that comes from the scarecrow's shabby fan is not strong enough.

The second account is of a fisherwoman who is unable to look after her sick son because she has to catch fish in order to make a living. One day, while sitting by the river, she falls asleep from exhaustion. The scarecrow wants to sacrifice himself as firewood so she can make hot tea for the sick child, or be used as a quilt to bring some warmth to the shivering child, but he cannot: "I wish I could save all the people in misery, but I am rooted to the ground, like a tree, unable to move a step. I simply can't do as I wish. Please accept my apology. I am a weak useless person" (18).

The scarecrow.

The third victim of the night is a woman walking into the river to drown herself, leaving her child behind, because she does not want her husband, who is an alcoholic and an addicted gambler, to sell her the next morning. The scarecrow waves his fan even harder, but again, in vain:

> "Day, please break quickly! Peasants, please get up quickly! Birds, please fly quickly to spread the alarm! Wind, please blow away her desire for death!" As he prayed silently, all around was pitch-dark and not a sound could be heard (19).

Symbolically, throughout the course of the night, the darkness intensifies as the severity of the disasters increase. It is a clear night with twinkling stars when the scarecrow first sees the insects attacking the old widow's new rice shoots. It becomes cloudy and windy when the fisherwoman falls asleep and the sick boy's coughing becomes worse. Finally, all the stars disappear and it is pitch-dark as the last victim of the night walks to her death.

Ye Shengtao's style

Ye Shengtao's style of writing resembles Russian writer Alexander Pushkin's romantic treatment of the sea. In Pushkin's story "The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish" (1883), the sea becomes stormier and stormier each time the fisherman asks for a new item, until the last request, when the man can hardly hear himself. Ye Shengtao's contemporary, Zhu Ziqing, notes that the style of Ye Shengtao's early works is similar to that which is often seen in the Russian literature. Zhu Ziqing also praises Ye Shengtao's writings because of their "truthfulness" (235).

What Zhu Ziqing means by "truthfulness" is the type of social realism that was highly popular in the early 1920s. This social realism was aimed towards the uglier part of life. Its goal was not to amuse but instead to show the reader the evils of poverty, immorality and war. Ye Shengtao used romantic descriptions to more succinctly contrast the grim picture of harsh realities in Chinese society. Leo Ou-fan Lee maintains that the pathos of Ye Shengtao's stories is derived from his "compassionate concern with the social environment," and he is known for his "honesty," "sure craftsmanship," and "civilised sensibility" (174). C. T. Hsia commends Ye Shengtao for showing "a playful tenderness and a serious pedagogic concern, as well as an astonishing command of the juvenile mind" (61), but criticises him for being "unwarrantably didactic" (71). According to Michel Foucault, "the effect of truth" consists in "showing that the real is polemical," and he further states that he is not interested in "telling the truth" in his writing, but "in inviting people to have a particular experience for themselves" (michel-foucault.com).

The scarecrow embodies an image of a new man. To introduce the scarecrow, the author writes in the second paragraph of the story, "In Christianity, man is created by God. We are not questioning if this belief is valid or not, but we can imitate the pattern to say that the scarecrow is created by peasants" (13). Following this, the author provides a detailed description of what it was made of: bamboo for its skeleton, old straw for muscles and skin, a broken basket for a hat, and an old shabby fan tied to the arm as his tool to drive birds away. It is a very humble origin indeed, yet the author affords him a saintly ring by means of introducing the Christian allegory. Subsequently, in the third paragraph, the author describes the scarecrow's characters by comparing him to a hardworking buffalo: "even a buffalo is not as diligent as the scarecrow, because a buffalo sometimes would lie down to look at the sky" (13). The scarecrow then is compared with a loyal dog: "even a dog is sometimes very naughty and would wander around" (13). The scarecrow is presented as the only compassionate figure that empathizes with the suffering women in the story. It did not eat or sleep; it stood there at all times to fulfill its duty. Indeed, the scarecrow was portrayed as the only one who knew everything about anything in the fields at night. Although a non-human character, the scarecrow is depicted as being kind-hearted, always wanting to help, but only being able to offer little. However, the scarecrow "hated himself for being rooted to the ground like a tree, unable to move, not even just one step. Wasn't it a sin not to save people from death? This feeling of guilt hurt him more than his own death" (19).

Ye Shengtao's Social Concern

In Scarecrow, Ye Shengtao focuses on the destitute lives of peasant women and uses the figure of the scarecrow to express frustration about

the enormity of the problem. Many May Fourth writers advocate the liberation of women in their stories, and some of them, as Jonathan Spence points out, drew inspiration from Western "feminist critiques of society" to seek swift change by means of "radical activism" (313).

According to Lee, the women's liberation movement in China began at the turn of the century and reached its peak in the 1920s (168). Almost all early twentieth-century Chinese political and intellectual leaders spoke about the need to change ways of thinking about women and their social roles. The key issue in the early stage of the women's liberation movement was foot binding. With regard to this matter, the movement achieved a great deal. In a short period of time, women's seclusion and tiny feet went from being a source of pride in Chinese refinement to a symbol of embarrassment synonymous with China's backwardness, and by 1930, it was only in remote areas that young women still had their feet bound (Ebrey, Walthall and Palais 460). Ye Shengtao's enthusiasm for the cause of women's emancipation from the traditional patriarchy is evident in his 1919 article "*Funü de renge wenti* [The question of women's dignity]," in which he protests against the systematic assault on women's dignity throughout Chinese history. His main concern was with oppressed women at the bottom of society, such as the three peasant women whose lives he narrates in Scarecrow.

The main problem addressed by the author in the story is the systematic assault on women's dignity. This firstly manifested itself in the expensive funeral ceremony imposed on the widow, as her social and moral obligation; and secondly the practice of selling a wife, which was permitted in traditional Chinese society, where wives were regarded as being their husbands' property. Margery Wolf finds that, in traditional China, a woman's suicide was not only an individual act—a gesture of personal despair—but also an act that implicated others: for a woman in a society that required her respectful submission to her parents-in-law and husband, her suicide was "the most damning public accusation she could make against her mother-in-law and husband" (112). The character in Ye Shengtao's story, however, was not only accusing her alcoholic and gambling-addicted husband, but also making a protest against the system that refused to accord her any human dignity: "I am not a cow. I am not a pig either. How can anyone allow you to sell me like that?" (19).

The character in Ye Shengtao's story, however, was not only accusing her alcoholic and gambling-addicted husband, but also making a protest against the system that refused to accord her any human dignity…

Ye Shengtao's primary concern is the question of how to change the social environment; to make it treat oppressed women more humanly so they are able regain their dignity (*renge*). Many years later, the author (1982) wrote that the scarecrow was the embodiment of the Chinese intellectuals in the

1920s, who were conscientious, alert, and sympathetic, yet could not find a way to help to change the cruel reality. In 1921, Ye Shengtao wrote, "Pity for the weak is the most universal emotion of artists" (32). In the same essay on the creative process, Ye Shengtao insisted that sincere artists "profoundly recognise that the aim of a work of literature should arouse pity in its readers" and "to increase their understanding" (32). Mary Farquhar explains that Ye Shengtao's work "does not necessarily describe children but analyzes society *for* them" and he "does not separate the worlds of adults and children but sees them as integral parts of a social whole, whether it be the future dream or the present reality" (95).

The scarecrow and victims.

Conclusion

During the May Fourth era, the position of most Chinese writers became firmly entrenched as the quintessence of enlightenment. They stood in a privileged position, representing the scientific advancement of "new" knowledge, the moral conscience of society for a change, and the voice of the people's sentiment for a strong nation. Despite of their attack against the traditional literati elitism, they saw themselves as rejuvenator of the nation. The creators of early modern Chinese children's literature were convinced that their historical epic mission of saving China from extinction could only be accomplished through their moral task of saving the Chinese people from the spiritual lethargy derived from the traditional cult of ritualized subordinations, and first and foremost, they felt it was their responsibility to save the children—the future of the nation, hence, the creation of a new literature for them. Their literature shared a common goal: to ensure that children understood that the future of the nation was linked to the well-being of all Chinese citizens. The purpose of such a genre is to connect *social realism* to *patriotism* by exposing social ills to the young readers. With a sense of social consciousness, these writers of social realism focused on the ugly realities of society and sympathised with the poor, the exploited and the oppressed. They encourage children to challenge the status quo and look to the future. Poised between the hope of the bright future on the one hand and death of the retrograde darkness on the other, Scarecrow faithfully fulfils the duty of the author, a patriotic May Fourth enlightenment writer, who aimed to arouse children readers' sympathy for the weak and lead them through the gate of darkness to form an awareness of social ills. Without such awareness, how could the nation proceed towards modernity?

Note

1. The English translation is my own, and illustrations are used with permission.

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Multicultural Literature and the Use of Literature in Multicultural Education in Finland

by JULI-ANNA AERILA
and LYDIA KOKKOLA

This paper traces the presentation of these traditional minority groups in Finland and the emergence of literature incorporating the more recently arrived groups of immigrants in the history of Finnish language children's literature. We contextualize the development of multicultural themes in children's literature within the history of Finnish nation-building and the country's struggles for independence. We conclude with a brief consideration of how these less than ideal books might, nevertheless, serve to promote pluralism.

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Finland as a Multicultural Society

Compared to most Western European countries, Finland can be regarded as a fairly monocultural society, as only 3.6% of the population are immigrants (FSC). This figure hides Finland's history as home to several large cultural minorities including the indigenous Sami people (formerly known by the pejorative term "Lapp"), the Finnish Kale or Romani (formerly known by the pejorative term "Gypsy"), and Swedish-speaking Finns (known as Finland-Swedes) (Kolbe). Connections with Russia and the former Soviet Union, with whom Finland shares a border, have ensured a small but thriving population of Russians, Estonians, and Jews. When these established minorities are taken into account, a fuller picture of Finland's multiculturalism is revealed.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, immigration has increased substantially, with Estonians forming the largest group of foreign-born residents in Finland (FSC). Other foreign-born residents include refugees and asylum seekers, mainly from Somalia, former Yugoslavia, Iran, and Iraq (Kolbe). Since 2007, more than half of Finland's population growth has been from immigration, and this trend is expected to continue. First-generation immigrants and their Finnish-born children tend to live in urban areas. At present, almost half of the country's immigrants live in Helsinki (FSC). Since the traditional minorities also tend to inhabit geographically defined areas, it is not unusual for a child living in rural Finland to grow up without encountering someone from a cultural background that differs from their own. The implications of this are perhaps best illustrated through two anecdotes.

Whilst working in a nursery school in a small Finnish town in the early 1990s, Lydia was visited by a Tanzanian friend. One of the 5 year olds came over, said "Hello," and offered to shake hands. After this greeting, the girl looked at her hand puzzled and then pressed it onto the darker skin above the wrist and looked again. Then she turned to her mother to ask, "Doesn't it come off?" Variations in skin color were not something she had ever encountered, and her reactions were not ill intentioned, but they demonstrate the desperate need for multicultural education. Less than a decade later, Lydia was visiting a class of 13 year olds who were having an English lesson. One boy commented (in Finnish) that "It's good that I can speak English. Everyone else in this class speaks more languages than me." Although not accurate, as a monolingual Finn in a school where the pupils spoke over 90 different home languages (Turun Kaupunki), he sometimes felt as though he were in a minority.

Variations in skin color were not something she had ever encountered, and her reactions were not ill intentioned, but they demonstrate the desperate need for multicultural education.

Finland has transitioned rapidly, and it has been difficult for teachers to adjust to the pace at which parts of the country have diversified whilst other areas remain almost entirely monocultural. As a result, multicultural approaches to education are often haphazard, and the objectives,

content, and methods are not sufficiently clear (Räsänen). Moreover, many teachers have grown up in fairly monocultural environments and/or fail to recognize the traditional Finnish minorities as "multicultural." The term "multicultural" is often used as though it were a politically correct expression for contrasting white and "non-white." As Richard Dyer has observed, this tendency to apply the concept of race exclusively to "non-white" peoples results in the invisibility of whiteness (1). Dyer is primarily concerned with how white invisibility maintains prejudices against people of color, but we are equally concerned with how this invisibility disguises racism against white minorities, especially Russians. Although it is rare for Finns to use offensive terms to refer to people of color, pejorative terms are often used to refer to Russian speakers and Kale.

In many ways, the Finnish situation resembles that of other European countries in the post-war era when the dispersal of refugees and the need for workers resulted in great mobility. Only since the 1990s has Finland had to deal with issues as simple as ensuring that children will find books containing images that reflect their ethnic and cultural background. On a more positive note, Finland's anti-discrimination laws and multilingual educational policy have ensured that it will not have to undo the damage done by decades of discriminatory practices. But it is abundantly clear that more needs to be done.

Children's literature has a long tradition of promoting pluralism by providing vicarious insights into cultures and peoples with which the reader is not familiar (Agosto, Norton). Unfortunately, children's literature has an even longer tradition of promoting racial stereotypes and further stigmatizing minority cultures (Bernstein), and uninformed attempts at promoting understanding have been known to increase racial tension (Maxwell). This article examines the potential of Finnish-language Finnish children's literature to promote pluralism. Our main goal is to contextualize the development of multicultural themes in children's literature within the history of Finnish nation-building and the country's struggles for independence. We conclude with a brief consideration of how these less than ideal books might, nevertheless, serve to promote pluralism.

Becoming Finns: The Promotion of Unity

Finland was part of the Swedish Empire from 1150 to 1808. During this period, all formal education, administration, and legal matters were dealt with in Swedish. Finnish was a peasant language. Without an education system to support and promote it, the first Finnish-language novel did not appear until 1871. Literature for children was produced in Finland from the sixteenth century onwards, but mostly consisted of fairytales or religious and educational stories written in Swedish for educational purposes (Kuivasmäki and Heiskanen). Indeed, under Swedish rule, the position of the Finnish language was in many ways analogous to that of other colonized nations in Africa and South America from the sixteenth century.

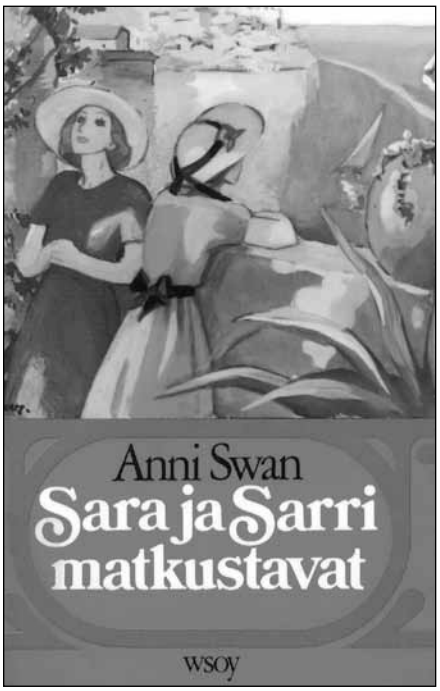
Following the 1808-9 Russo-Sweden War, Finland became an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian empire until 1917, when Finland declared itself independent. The terms of the cessation protected the Swedish language, and Finland remains an officially bilingual country. So not only has Finland's former motherland had far-reaching consequences on Finnish values, society and culture, it has also made multilingualism central in Finland's education policies.

In the early decades of the Grand Duchy, many Russian leaders imagined that Finland would gradually be absorbed into the Empire; they underestimated the Finns' nationalistic sentiment. A revealing slogan from that era is *Ruotsalaisia emme enää ole; venäläisiksi emme tahdo tulla; olkaamme siis suomalaisia* [We are no longer Swedes; we cannot become Russians; let us therefore become Finns]. Independence and self-emancipation was thus intimately connected with the rejection of "others." These attitudes found their way into children's literature and are especially evident in children's literature from the 1930s. In boys' adventure novels, the villains were usually Sami, Romani (Finnish Kale), or Russian. Novels that included a Black character and/or a predominantly Black culture, tended to present these visibly marked "others" as childlike and/or uncivilized (Hakala, Leppäniemi). However, because the Soviet Union was perceived as Finland's greatest threat, novels from the 1930s exhibit particularly negative attitudes towards Russians (Hakala). For example, Verneri Louhivuori's novel, *Samppa ja me* [Samppa and Us] (1936), begins with the following prologue:

> This story is to acquaint you, young reader, with the moods that prevailed among the Finnish people in the early years of this century, when Russian oppression threatened to strangle the freedom of our people... My hope is that after reading this story, you will gain some idea of the difficulties that your father and your grandfather had to face when defending our freedom against powerful Russia. (Louhivuori)

Although these nationalistic sentiments were understandable in 1936, it is testament to Finns' long held antipathy towards Russians that the novel was reproduced in 1966. Now out of print, it is still easily available in school and public libraries.

While the Russians were described negatively, the British, the Americans, and the French were described very positively in novels of the 1930s (Hyvynen). Children's literature in translation came from Britain, America, and Sweden—certainly not Russia. They included works such as Rosa Fitinghoff's *Mustalaisten käsissä* [Captured by Gypsies] (1936), which is focalized through a child kidnapped by "Gypsies." Filled with every possible negative stereotype of the Romani, this Swedish novel promoted fear and hatred of the Finnish Kale.



Similarly simplified stereotypes abound in Finnish novels set outside Finland. Anni Swan's *Sara ja Sarri matkustavat* [Sara and Sarri Travel] (1930) depicts two Finnish girls on a journey through Europe with their guardian, and their touristic gaze extends to the people they meet. Their arrival at a spa in Slovakia reveals the problems with this approach:

> Pistya is a small village in Slovakia… The host of the hotel was a thick and slow Slovak, who was all courtesy and humility… The concierge was a long, dark blackamoor, who smiled in such a way that his white teeth gleamed… The doctors of the spa were almost all Jews, shrewd business people and kind to patients who paid well. (Swan 86–87)

Although Swan came from a Swedish-speaking family, her father was influenced by the ideas of Snellman, and so adopted the Finnish language. Swan was thus politicized into taking an actively pro-Finnish stance from an early age. As with Louhivuori, Swan's use of stereotypes to promote Finnish identity was considered acceptable, and this novel was still being reprinted in the 1980s.

The continued need to bolster a sense of Finnish identity through the denigration of others can be partially explained, although not entirely justified, by the events of 1940-1945. During this period, Finland was engaged in three separate wars, the brief 105-day Winter War against the Soviet Union, fought with Germany's assistance, ended in victory, and Finland's borders briefly expanded. The ensuing peace was short-lived, and the Continuation War (1941-44), which Finland lost, followed. Finland then engaged in the Lapland War (1944-5) against its former German allies. Under the terms of the 1947 Treaty of Paris, Finland surrendered territory and agreed to pay massive reparations to the Soviet Union (Kolbe). These events inflamed Finnish antipathy towards Russia. In children's literature produced during and in the aftermath, Russians were by far the most common foreign characters, and were nearly always described in a derogatory manner (Hyvynen, Rajalin).

During the Continuation War, about 70,000 Finnish children were evacuated, mostly to private homes in Sweden (Korppi-Tommola). After the war, many foster parents wanted to adopt their Finnish children and many of the children loved their foreign parents, and could no longer speak Finnish or remember their birth parents. As a result, many children never returned, especially since the Finnish government did not formally demand their return (Korppi-Tommola). Those who did return often experienced a significant drop in living standards, while struggling to regain their first language and realign their affections.

Aili Konttinen's novel, *Inkeri palasi Ruotsista* [Inkeri Returns From Sweden] (1947), depicts Inkeri's reluctant return to her Finnish home after the war (Rajalin). Returning is not easy; Inkeri no longer speaks Finnish, and while in Sweden she has become accustomed to a higher standard of living. The evacuees returned to a war-torn country suffering from shortages of every kind, but especially housing. Entire families were often housed in a single room or in barns. However, for the young evacuees, relearning Finnish and the emotional turmoil of being reunited with parents they no longer knew were the greatest problems, and Konttinen focuses on Inkeri's difficulties in adjusting to her "new" home.

Those who did return often experienced a significant drop in living standards, while struggling to regain their first language and realign their affections.

The Finnish Outsider

The Finns have a saying—*Oma maa mansikka, muu maa mustikka* [One's own land is strawberries, another's land is blueberries]—an odd expression describing the land's reaction to the burning of stubble. One can see where the borders between your own land and the spaces of the forest lie by the berries: strawberries are cultivated after stubble is burnt, but blueberries grow in the wild forest and may be picked by anyone. The expression is used to describe cultural relations and provides an apt description of Finnish children's literature from the 1960s and 1970s. Home is associated with the cultivation and order of the strawberry patch. Away is associated with the wild wood. Different but equal is one of the main messages of the novels depicting Finnish children adjusting to new environments in this period.

In the 1950s and 1960s, migration from Finland to Sweden increased, mainly due to Sweden's relative prosperity, as it had remained neutral during the war and, unlike Finland, did not have to pay the costs of rebuilding or reparations. During this period, Finland also transitioned from being a mainly agrarian society into a technological society. This resulted in rural depopulation and the rapid expansion of urban areas. Children's literature reflected this transition in depictions of characters' alienation and adaptation as they build their homes in unfamiliar communities (Hakala, Heikkilä-Halttunen).

For those Finnish children whose family moved to Sweden, the issue of language was once again raised to the fore. The focus of Finnish children's literature of the 1970s is not on immigrants within Finland, but on Finns as immigrants. Examples include Antti Jalava's *Kukaan ei kysynyt minulta* [Nobody Asked Me] (1978), and Erkki Suomela's trilogy *Kesävieras* [Summer Guest] (1973), *Muu maa mustikka* [Home Sweet Home] (1976), and *Moi Suomi* [Hello Finland] (1977) (Heikkilä-Halttunen). The first book in Suomela's trilogy describes Janne's difficulties as he struggles to adapt to Swedish life. As the excerpt below shows, Janne's main barrier is language:

> "Look!" Janne cried out, but then he closed his mouth. After all, he could say nothing to her. He remembered an old man in Finland. The man peddled goods door to door. The man was a deaf-mute, and buttons, shoelaces, and safety pins were his main goods. If someone touched a shoelace, the man wrote the price on a pack of cigarettes and smiled. Now Janne felt pretty similar. He couldn't understand these people, and he couldn't say anything to them. Nor could his father. Should his father start selling shoelaces here in Sweden? (Suomela 17–18)

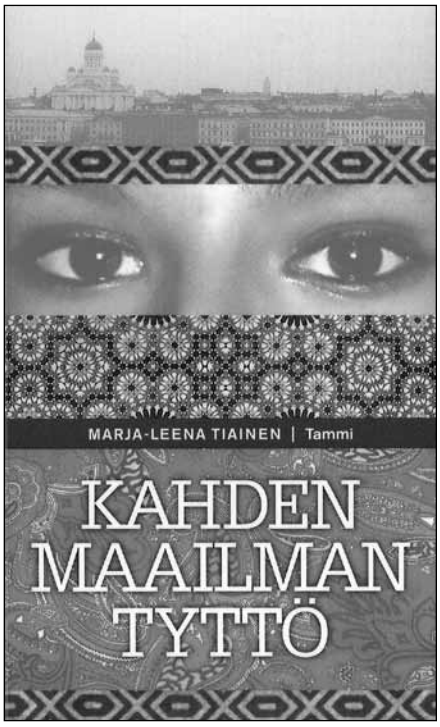
Janne's sense of isolation—like the evacuees a few decades earlier—is placed center-stage, and readers are encouraged to empathize with Janne and his plight. Unlike the evacuees, Janne is at least surrounded by his family, and together they do manage to make Sweden their home.

One would be forgiven for thinking that this tradition of depicting the difficulties Finnish children had adapting to strange environments would have led to sympathetic portrayals of the immigrants arriving in Finland from the early 1990s and onwards. Unfortunately, this was not the case. In the very few books to acknowledge these changes in Finnish society, we see old stereotypes or gross over-simplifications of racial difference.

Steps towards Pluralism

During the 1980s, Finland's successful ventures into IT, biosciences, and electronics, and the end of reparation payments, led to noticeably improved standards of living. This wealth was fairly evenly distributed, and so the average living standards of Finns at the start of the 1990s were amongst the highest in Europe. Much of this wealth was generated from the westward looking firms like Nokia, but Finland was badly hit when the Soviet Union collapsed. The recession of the 1990s hit Finland more harshly than the current global recession. So far, no Finnish bank has gone bankrupt, but several did in the 1990s. It was into this environment that the first quotas of refugees arrived. Originating from Iran, Iraq, Kurdistan, and Somalia, these visible incomers were viewed as threats to a society that was struggling with unemployment, inflation, and its first downturn in living standards since the war.

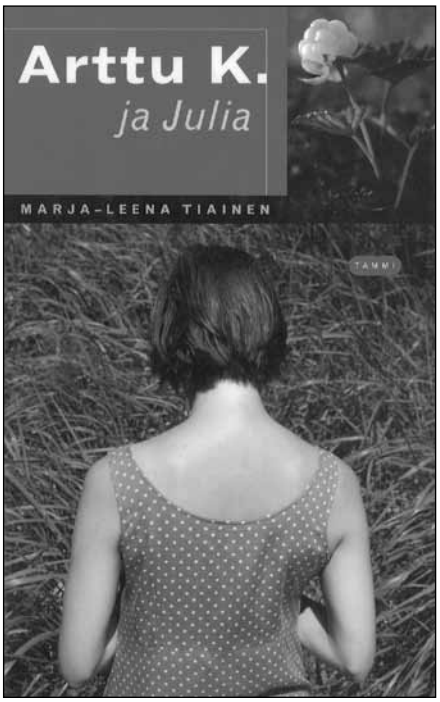
Only 15 of all the adolescent novels published in Finland from 1990 to 2007 have multicultural themes or incorporate characters with foreign backgrounds.



Although widely discussed in the newspapers, this cultural transformation has had relatively little impact on Finnish children's literature to date. Only 15 of all the adolescent novels published in Finland from 1990 to 2007 have multicultural themes or incorporate characters with foreign backgrounds. The number of such novels and the significance of the multicultural theme have increased markedly since then, and Tiainen's most recent novel, *Kahden maailman tyttö* [The Girl of Two Worlds] (2011), is the first Finnish teenage novel to have an immigrant protagonist. Tara, a 17-year-old Kurdish girl, has fled from Turkey to Finland and faces difficulties as she juggles two different cultures.

The most frequently mentioned nationalities are Russians and Somalis. The relatively frequent references to Somalis may, in part, be due to ignorance as the term "Somali" is sometimes used to describe all darker skinned characters (Aerila 116). Depictions of Russians continue to be stereotyped, but also reflect another change in Finnish society during the 1990s. President Koivisto was particularly keen to encourage those Finns who had remained in the land ceded to the Soviet Union to "return" to Finland. By the 1990s, these "returning Finns" no longer spoke Finnish and nor did their families. This increased the numbers of Russian speakers on the streets, which raised the hackles of a population trained to disparage their eastern neighbors.

Even today, negative stereotypes of Russians appear in Finnish adolescent fiction. In Tiainen's novel *Pikkuskini* [The Little Skinhead] (2002), Russians are described as thieves and as holding arrogant attitudes towards school. The whiteness of Russian speakers' skin seems to make such overt prejudice acceptable. Although in Tiainen's earlier novel, *Arttu K. ja Julia* [Arttu K. and Julia] (2000), the Russian speakers are depicted more positively, Russians are never treated as positively as refugees and asylum-seekers (Aerila).



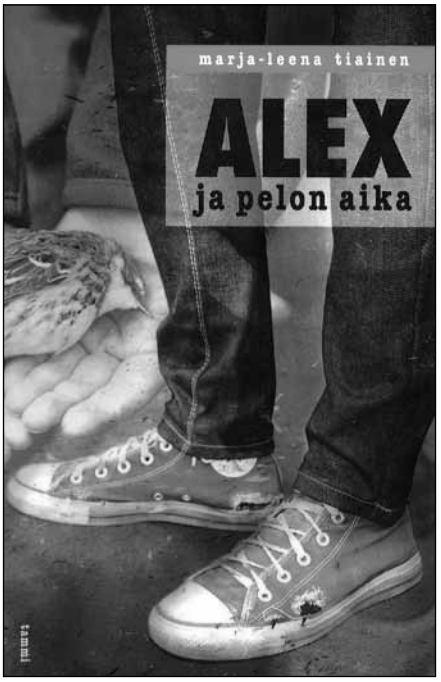
The above discussion outlines the books available to teachers who wish to use literature to address multicultural issues. As has become evident, the range of suitable materials is very small, and the risk that a single character will come to represent an entire community is high (Hyvärinen). Stereotypes are dangerous, but for children who cannot distinguish between skin pigment and body paint, some simplification may be justified, provided that it is followed up teaching which challenges the children to rethink those stereotypes (Aerila, Häggblom). The child in Lydia's nursery school had been read picture books containing diverse images, but this alone was not enough to enable the child to draw connections between characters in fiction and in real life. In the following sections, we consider how this less-than-ideal literature might, nevertheless, be used in Finnish schools to promote what Debra Dudek has termed "critical multiculturalism" (a self-reflexive form of multiculturalism) which, in the Finnish context, would take both the "exclusion and erasure" of non-white Finns and Finnish residents, as well as the impunity with which white-skinned minorities can be denigrated into account (1).

A Multicultural Education Program for a Multicultural Finland

As the above review demonstrated, there is a dearth of good quality literature containing Finland's ethnic minorities. According to Higgins's criteria for evaluating multicultural children's literature, educational literature has to be of high literary quality, and have characters with equal qualities and accurate dialogue. Furthermore, it cannot have distortions or omissions, derogatory or loaded words, or stereotypes. In addition, multicultural literature that is suitable for the classroom has to be such that nothing in the story would embarrass or offend a child whose culture is being portrayed, and the author must be qualified to represent the cultural group accurately and respectfully (Higgins). According to these criteria, Finland has yet to produce its first authentic multicultural children's novel, in part because none of our immigrant authors write for teenagers. The only novel that comes close to meeting Higgins' criteria is Marja-Leena Tiainen's novel *Alex, Aisha ja Sam* [*Alex, Aisha, and Sam*] (2007), which depicts young asylum seekers settling in Finland. Nevertheless, as the anecdotes at the beginning of this paper illustrate, there is no time to be lost in the task of supporting all Finnish children as they find ways of negotiating difference respectfully. And as for its problems, literature still provides great potential for enabling readers to vicariously experiment with other peoples' points of view and developing empathy.

Häggblom examines the impact of reading multicultural children's literature within the context of English studies. Although she found

that reading multicultural fiction with her class did raise awareness of cultural diversity and enabled children to engage empathetically with complex issues, this did not happen simply by leaving the children alone with the books. In private communication, she admitted that a few children used offensive language, and many regarded the cultures they were reading about as being quite far removed from their own lives.



The latter is not so surprising. Most of the books depicted characters from the Indian sub-continent living in Britain. For the Finnish children reading these books, both India and Britain were strange cultures. However, Häggblom's teaching approaches encouraged the children to rethink their views by drawing parallels with their own lives.

The teacher's role in cultivating empathy is important: the children in Häggblom's project had little or no contact with members of other minority groups. Like many Finnish children, their main routes of access to "others" come through media such as television, internet, and literature. The Finnish curriculum often approaches the subject of immigration through *diversity*: differences in language, ethnicity, and culture (Pantzar). However, in young adult literature, immigrants are also often characterized by their *similarities* with the Finns. These similarities revolve around such characteristics as socializing, the appearance of young people, and matters relating to money (Aerila 184). A delicate balance between these two needs to be found if an entrenchment of them-and-us thinking is not to follow. Moreover, all of the novels mentioned above treat the position of the white, Finnish-speaking Finn as the norm, and all other Finns and Finnish residents (not to mention stories set in other countries and places) as deviations for the norm. This may be an appropriately simplified starting point for children living in rural central Finland, but isolating for children in urban settlements who do not see their own lives reflected in the books they read. As Kathy Short emphasizes in her project concerning multicultural education in Texas, multicultural books that reflect children's own lives are essential to building multicultural understanding. When children find themselves in the books, they can find a position from which to develop deeper understandings of both their own culture and other cultures in their vicinity (Short). Short claims that only after that is achieved can educators introduce multicultural literature from a broader and more international perspective. This option is simply not available to Finns.

This was the starting point from which Juli-Anna began working with children aged 14-15 years. Fully aware that no perfect children's books on multicultural issues existed, she was guided by Barbara Lehman, who emphasizes teachers' and librarians' role in guiding young people to read critically and question textual messages. This enables one to work with less than perfect materials, so long as one enables the children to adopt an appropriately critically stance. The first step was to establish what the children already thought, and to do so in a non-judgmental way that did not focus on shaming them.

In Juli-Anna's study the children read fragments of contemporary Finnish children's novels with multicultural themes. The chosen fragments had different multicultural situations: In Olli Hakkarainen's *Enkelinkuvia lumessa*

[Angels in the snow], an ordinary Finnish boy sees how skinheads act violently towards a dark-skinned boy. He does not know how to help the victim, and it bothers him for a long time. The second fragment was from Kari Levola's novel *Dumdum*, (1998) and it describes the feelings of a young boy when he visits at a Turkish restaurant. His friend behaves in a racist manner and refers to the restaurant's employees in derogatory terms. He is distressed and ashamed, but does not stand up to his older friend. The third novel was Marja-Leena Tiainen's *Alex, Aisha ja Sam* [*Alex, Aisha and Sam*] (2007), and the fragment describes a young Somali girl's feelings when she finds herself attracted to a boy she meets at the reception center. Aisha is not sure how she should behave when they are left alone. The children were asked to complete these fragments. Although they were not specifically told to address the multicultural issues, they revealed their previously held values in the anticipatory stories they wrote. Using meaning cue analysis to determine attitudes in the children's anticipatory stories, certain patterns were found. When girls expressed negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities, they seemed to be motivated by fear. Boys, especially those who had little experience of immigrants, often associated minorities and violence. Gender differences were more significant than familiarity with immigration (personal or through classmates)

Having established the children's initial attitudes, it is possible to work with them toward a more critical understanding of multiculturalism. By reading the anticipatory stories of the entire group, and by comparing them with each other and the original text, children realized how their attitudes differed from others. In addition, it is possible to connect the anticipatory stories with other materials about the same issue. In this way, it was possible for the children and teacher and pupils to work together to form a richer understanding of diversity (Aerila). The teacher's role is central, as children need access to people who are more advanced in their multicultural thinking (Tappan). Juli-Anna's study demonstrated that even poor quality multicultural children's literature can produce anticipatory stories that enable teachers to assess their pupils' values before discussing them (Aerila).

As educators, we must try to correct some of the misunderstandings our pupils have, but even with discussion we cannot be sure of how students will act in the real world, or even whether or not they can verbalize their feelings (Häggblom). Changing attitudes and beliefs is difficult, but by connecting multicultural education with literature, children can move beyond the tourist perspective to recognize other worldviews (Short). Finnish multicultural children's literature has a long way to go, but it and our teachers have already come a long way in a very short time.

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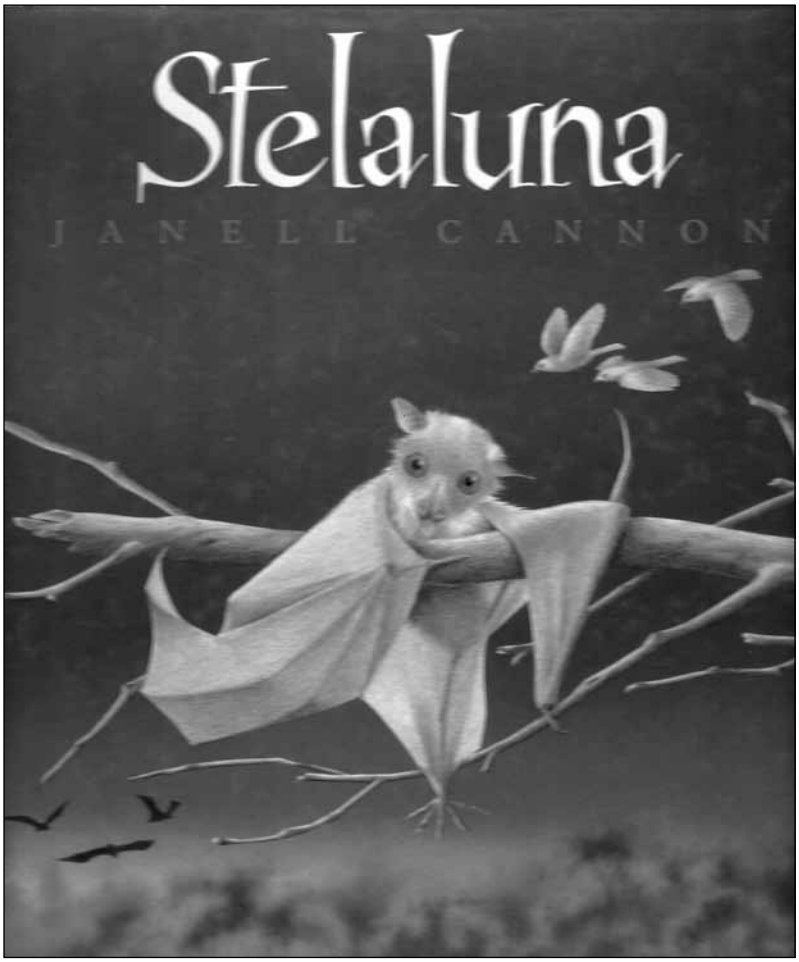
Preschoolers Recommending Books



by RAQUEL CUPERMAN

An inquiry stance, as suggested by Marilyn Cochran-Smith, proposes that teachers critically and dynamically question their daily experience. With her suggestion in mind, I started recording and registering evidence that could show how kindergarten students can build literary understanding through simple book-talks at the beginning of each class, and I would like to share my findings with you.

My workplace is an updated and modern library in a private school in Bogotá, Colombia. I am in charge of the elementary library where more than 500 children, pre-K to fourth grade, attend class weekly. During these sessions, students take part in storytelling and follow-up discussion, and they also have full access to the entire collection. Kindergarten students are free to take home two books, which must be returned the following week. Until three years ago, what students checked out had no follow-up. Obviously it was important for administrative statistics, but those loans were not followed for academic purposes. When books went home, whether they were read, shared, understood, or simply forgotten inside back packs the whole week had no relevance. However, I questioned whether or not the discussion of those books, when they were

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brought back, could motivate and encourage literary understanding. I started a routine in which the students, during the first 10 minutes of class, would talk about the books they had borrowed and read and recommend them to their peers. It was a simple idea for fostering book discussions, and has become a beloved routine among the students. Even though the school is bilingual, these discussions and recommendations are always carried out in Spanish, which allows the children to feel at ease in their modes of expression and vocabulary. Every so often the discussions are audiotaped and transcribed, but for the most part, the students' responses are written verbatim after the class in an evidence diary. In this column, I have transcribed all of the children's words.

Discussing books in the comfort of the library complements many educational skills that are enshrined in the elementary school curriculum, including listening, participating, taking turns, and mutual respect. Talking with peers about books allows children to clarify, restate, explain, and reflect on their answers, and thereby develop their literary understanding. This exchange can take the form of book-talks[1], small group discussions, large group discussions, or a combination of any of these three methods. There are many articles and studies that address the benefits of book talks with middle and high school students (Younker, Sloan, Silver and Westover, Erikson and Aronsson), but very few propose such methods with pre-school kids (St. Michael's Preschool Discovery Campus, Elster). However, the proposed strategy did not take the exact form of a book-talk; it consisted of allowing the students to talk about the books they had borrowed the week before and recommend them in front of the class.

The presence of a school librarian during that time and the inclusion of this strategy in the library's curriculum push the students to talk specifically about preferences, confusions, and patterns (Chambers). Other children who have read the book can help clarify these difficulties—in the process practicing respectful listening skills—and other children, along with the school librarians, are free to ask questions and provoke critical thought. In order to facilitate literary understanding, the school librarian in particular motivates and exemplifies connections to everyday life and other books. Making connections with these books is an important aspect of literary engagement; it means the books have most likely said something to the reader. Cochran-Smith distinguishes two types of intertextuality in pre-school book discussions: life-to-text and text-to-life connections.[2] Book-talks provoke these two types of connections, as I will point out, and both types of intertextuality are familiar and useful to the students.

At the beginning of these literary exercises, as Sloan has also noticed, the children's most common response is narrative—a retelling of

what the story is about. However, time and provocation from teachers lead the students to share more in-depth descriptions of the book. Casual teacher intervention consists of asking the student to qualify the story read as "great," "fun," or "awesome." Repeating these words, along with the empty critical thought that they evoke, seem to instigate a stand-still in critical discussion, so I tell the students that I have simply forgotten what these words mean and push them to search for other ways of expressing themselves. Slowly, their words begin to express deeper responses and the application of ideas (justifications of likes or dislikes; connections between stories and real-life experiences, and intertextuality) (Bloom).

Since I have not read some of the recommended books, it is often difficult for me to formulate specific questions based on texts' subject matter; therefore I provoke personal answers rather than information-based responses. Specific questions make the pre-schoolers recall their interpretations, doubts, and connections in the books they have read. Hancock and McGee state that young children often become emotionally engaged with the characters in a story, comparing them to their own actions and feelings (Galda and Beach). When these children have the opportunity to talk about books, listen to others interpret them, and connect different stories, events, characters, and places to their own lives, they start building and critiquing their own readings and the world around them. They seem to understand what types of books they will connect with most: which ones interest them or make them reflect more. Personal issues also come up frequently: experiences, similar stories, opinions, and dreams are often related to the stories under discussion.

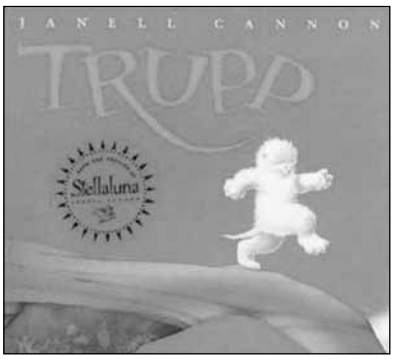
Growth in Narrative Descriptions

In the first example I discuss, the student advances from a simple opinion to a narrative description, and, pressed by the librarian, finishes his discussion with an interpretative response:

> The student said, "I want to recommend a book called *Los gatos en la luna* [The Cats on the Moon] by Castelli Jeannete, because it is great." I interrupted and told him that I do not know what "great" means, so he continued, "Because the cats were going to make a spaceship to go the moon, so a […][3] came, and asked them what they were doing, so he called some friends and they could go to the moon." I asked the students whether or not it is possible to go to the moon in a spaceship, and the student answered, "In the book you can." I then asked him if he would like to have a spaceship to go to the moon, to which he replied, "Yes, it would be great!"

In another instance, a student recommended *Un Tesoro para compartir* [A Shared Treasure] by Chris Conover, and besides developing a narrative

summary, the entire class interpreted the text through previous knowledge and relatable sensibility: "There was a lion, and they were enemies and they became friends." I asked the child how they become friends, and he answered, "It's that the king of the felines had a very large kingdom and he had a wife and …. Then a baby was born and that baby had a surprise that he had wings." I interrupted his response and asked him what a "feline" is. The other students informed me that lions, tigers, and cats are felines. The presenting student explained that in the story, there was a king of felines and a king of cats (he searched through the book and showed the page where the two images appear), and he informed the class that the king of the cats was bad. I asked him how he knew that this particular king was bad, to which he answered, "He has a mean face." I then asked him how else he knows that the king of cats is the mean king in the story, and he explained, "The color grey, it's not that nice." Finally, I asked all the children to think about which colors a "good cat" should have, and they began to brainstorm the vivid and natural colors of lions, like orange, yellow, black, and white.



Intertextuality in Children's Words

The following examples from the anecdotal reports express how the pre-school students make connections between books: either among the texts we have read during story time, or those that have been checked out and discussed by students independently.

A kindergarten student recommended *Trupp* (Cannon and Jannel), and explained that, like another book we have read called *Stelaluna*, this book tells the story of a mother's search for her lost baby. The student referred to the paratextual information in *Stelaluna* , which we had read and discussed a few weeks previously. During story time, in which we read *Max's Christmas* by Rosemary Wells, Jack said, "Look, he has red pajamas, just like in the book Sophie recommended." In this case, the student was interacting directly with a peer's book-talk.

Doris recommended *A Mother for Choco*, by Keiko Kasza, and explained that in this story, Choco goes around asking everyone if they are her mother. Andrew interrupted and explained that "in another book the same thing happens when a boy goes around asking everyone for his bellybutton." Andrew had previously checked out *The Boy Who Lost His Bellybutton* by Jeanne Willis, and began to reconstruct his own reading of that particular text.

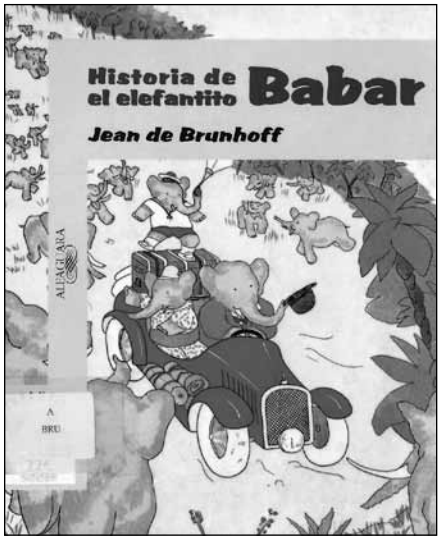
In another session, we chose to discuss *El traje azul de Papá Noel* [Santa's Blue Suit] by Tom Simon. One kindergarten student noticed that Santa crashed into an iceberg, just as in the book about the *Titanic* that a classmate had recommended at the beginning of the class. Although the anecdote occurred during the story time, it is interesting to note how the discussion held at the beginning of the class guided them, and was an important and special experience.

Connections to Life in the Kindergarteners' Recommendations

In this section, I discuss what are perhaps the most interesting experiences to come from the book-talk routine. The school librarian encourages the students to use the books in order to develop an understanding of their own lives. The children begin to relate to the books and build a deeper literary understanding.

One student presented *The Story of Babar* by Jean Brunhoff, and explained that there was one particular page that was very sad. He further explained that this sad page depicted the mother elephant being killed by a ruthless hunter. I asked him to explain to the class who Babar is, and he informed us that Babar is "the baby elephant." I then asked him what had happened to Babar after his mother had been killed, to which he

replied, after searching and showing the class the particularly sad page, "he had to go to the city." I commended the student for his bravery in recommending a story that includes a sad page, and he responded by explaining, "Babar was also



brave, because he cried but went to the city." I applauded him and said, "Yes, both of you are very brave." I consider this a touching example of the possibility of guiding a pre-schooler to make life connections with a story, and this particular experience expresses children's ability to identify with characters in the stories they read.

Peter recommended the book *Todas las noches la misma historia* [The Same Story Every Night] by Elisa Ramon, and he explained, "I want to recommend this book because it has a lot to do with me." This book narrates the experiences of a little boy who refuses to go to bed every night, and makes up excuses to avoid it. Peter felt that he was able to identify with the protagonist of the story, and in turn made a text-to-life connection.

Mary recommended the book *Jesus Betz* by Fred Bernard, and said, "This book left me with a lesson, but I cannot describe it, it just left something inside of me, it reminds me of how some have made fun of others." Although she had difficulty finding the words to express her feelings about the text, this particular anecdote functions as an ideal instance of a text-to-life connection.

In another session, a student talked about a book called *El rey listo y el rey fuerte* [The Ready King and the Strong King] by Moserrat Janer, and mumbled that the strong king wanted to be smart, like the other king, because he wanted to be a better person. When I finally understood what he was trying to say, I asked him why that the strong king wanted to be better, and he explained, "He thought he was the best." So, I asked him which was more important for him: to be smart or to be strong. This time, he replied immediately, without any doubt, "To be intelligent, because, for example, when someone is fighting, instead of hitting, you should tell him." An absolute text-to-life connection: this student most likely made a connection between the text and a newly-learned life lesson.

Conclusion

The theory and evidence described in this piece demonstrate the benefit of giving children, regardless of their age, the opportunity to talk about the books they have read. Each of the books that have passed through students' hands helped develop them as readers. Teachers, parents, and librarians must always act as mediators who promote the development of knowledge, and we must help children go further ahead in their comprehension, pushing them to interpret different types of connections.

This strategy encourages kindergarten students to think about books and share their literary impressions. The teacher's prompts allow students to develop deeper understandings of stories and reflect on their own personal

experiences. Although it is normal at pre-school-age to stay at a narrative level, many are able to go beyond. The routine dedication of a few minutes at the beginning of each class to book-talks and recommendations exposes the children to new books and areas of interest, and helps to build self-confidence by allowing students to express their feelings and opinions in a welcoming environment. Additionally, the recommended books are the ones that rotate the most within the collection, and the library sometimes must develop a reserve list for books in high demand.

This strategy helps children critically engage with their take-home books. Due to class time restrictions, it is sometimes difficult to choose the few students to talk during each class and still leave time for the other planned activities. However, these few minutes have shown that the kindergarten students are reading the books at home (by themselves or accompanied by an adult) and comprehending them well enough to be able to talk about them, to connect with them, and to critique them.

Notes

1. "Book-talks provide an opportunity to read and share, question and challenge and broaden and guide the reading of young children." The exchange of questions, feelings and reactions allow them to think seriously about the readings. (Silver and Westover 27). "Book-talks are a time to talk and interact with kids to see what interests them and what they enjoy reading" (Younker 39).
2. Life-to-text connections are allusions to real-life experiences that help readers understand the literature. Text-to-life connections involve using literature to make sense of everyday life. (Erikson and Aronsson 513)
3. Transcription is partial because the audio is unclear.

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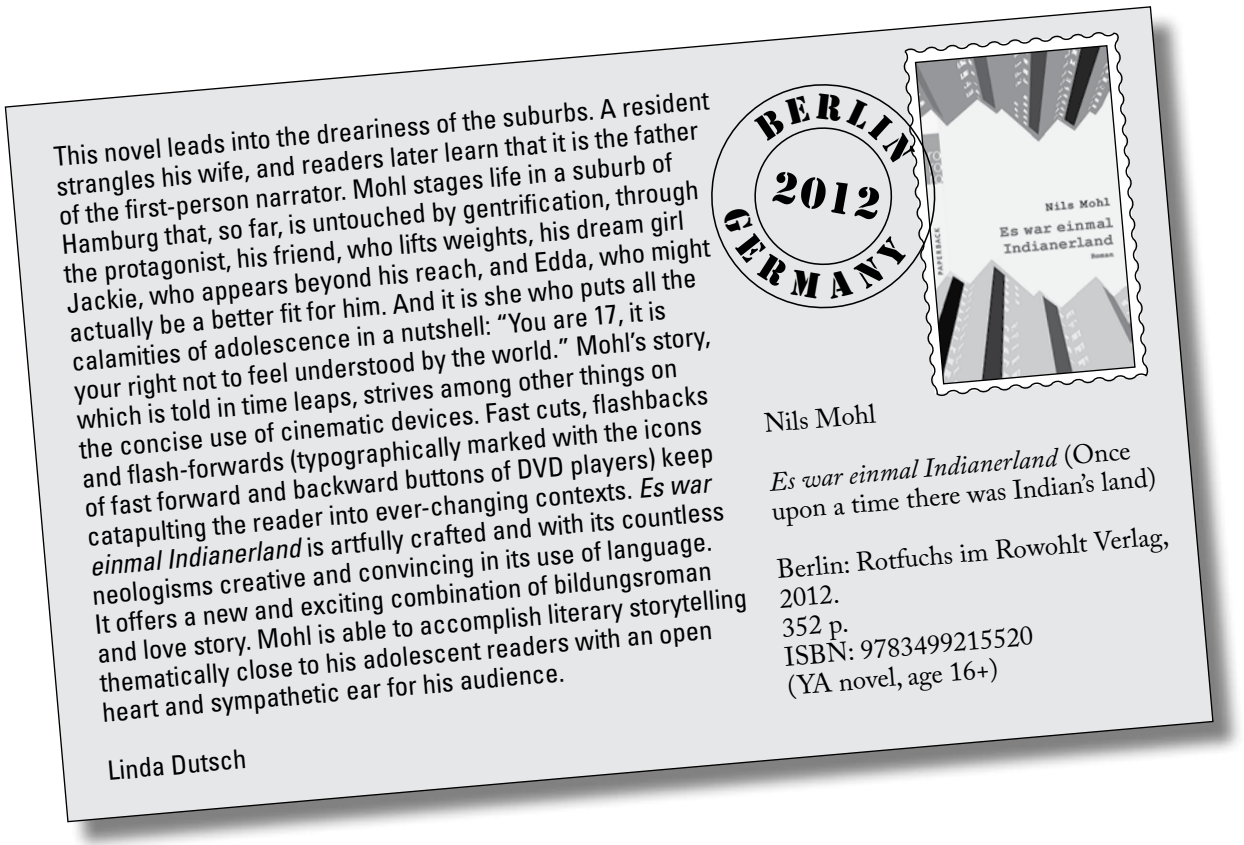


This novel leads into the dreariness of the suburbs. A resident strangles his wife, and readers later learn that it is the father of the first-person narrator. Mohl stages life in a suburb of Hamburg that, so far, is untouched by gentrification, through the protagonist, his friend, who lifts weights, his dream girl Jackie, who appears beyond his reach, and Edda, who might actually be a better fit for him. And it is she who puts all the calamities of adolescence in a nutshell: "You are 17, it is your right not to feel understood by the world." Mohl's story, which is told in time leaps, strives among other things on the concise use of cinematic devices. Fast cuts, flashbacks and flash-forwards (typographically marked with the icons of fast forward and backward buttons of DVD players) keep catapulting the reader into ever-changing contexts. *Es war einmal Indianerland* is artfully crafted and with its countless neologisms creative and convincing in its use of language. It offers a new and exciting combination of bildungsroman and love story. Mohl is able to accomplish literary storytelling thematically close to his adolescent readers with an open heart and sympathetic ear for his audience.

Linda Dutsch

Nils Mohl

Es war einmal Indianerland (Once upon a time there was Indian's land)

Berlin: Rotfuchs im Rowohlt Verlag, 2012.
352 p.
ISBN: 9783499215520
(YA novel, age 16+)

"The books we've had forever": The Parent-Observer Diary

by VIRGINIA LOWE

Virginia Lowe kept a record of her two children's book-responses for twelve years, on which she has published extensively, including her book *Stories, Pictures and Reality* (Routledge). As a children's librarian and a university lecturer, for the past fifteen years she has run Create a Kids' Book manuscript assessment agency (www.createakidsbook.com.au).

It was an old-fashioned wicker bassinette painted white; previously it had held not only my daughter, but myself as well. However when my infant son, Ralph, came home to be laid in it for the first time, there was something new. Around the edge there were books arranged by his sister, Rebecca, facing out for him to see the pictures. Yes, he was introduced to his home via books.

Three years later Ralph was puzzled. "Where did our books come from? The books we've had forever?" and, a week later, he was still asking about "the ones that the builder builded." It seemed that nothing could convince him that the house had once been bookless. Books surrounded him from birth.

I had been careful not to go over the top with the first child. *I* wasn't going to be one of those mothers who forced Beatrix Potter on the baby from birth! *I* didn't read Shakespeare to the babe in the womb. Even though I was all ready to record her book experiences, when she was thirteen weeks old, I still hadn't begun. As I stood in her father's library, leafing through a new atlas on a stand, holding Rebecca on my hip, I noticed that her head was following the pages as they turned. This was it! Readiness for books! So as soon as we returned home, I started with Wildsmith's *Mother Goose*. She clearly enjoyed the experience, and we continued from there.

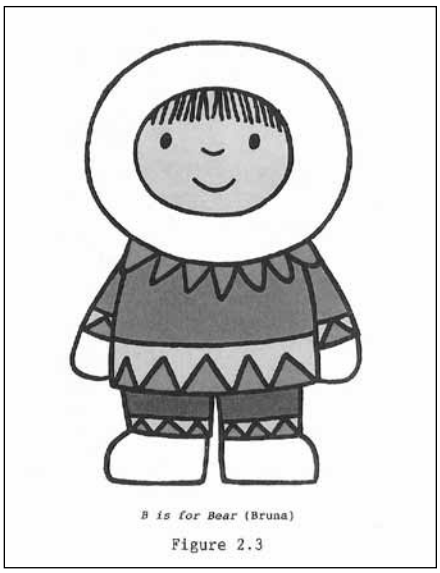
Some people could (and did) say, "Ridiculous! What can an infant, with no language and no recognition of pictures, gain from books, or tell you about them?" A great deal, as it transpires.

After *Mother Goose* (not the same day), Rebecca and I moved on to Bruna's *B is for Bear.* This was the first edition, which is larger than the one currently available, with some different illustrations and white instead of colored backgrounds. Almost at once, she expressed her enthusiasm for the lion. I had chosen Bruna expecting that his bright primary colors and strong outlines would appeal to babies, so I felt quite justified. The lion is yellow with Bruna's trademark strong black outlines and a wonderful spikey pattern for the mane. It was her favorite picture for at least six months, as she showed by vocalizing her appreciation and banging the book with her fists and hands. It was always this image, and that of the yellow bear, to which she responded.

B is for Bear (Bruna)
Figure 2.1

So I expected that this enthusiasm for the lion, or at least the pictures that were composed from strong blocks of color, would be universal with babies, and expected a similar response from her brother Ralph three years later. But how easily one is proved wrong!

Ralph was sixteen weeks old, and we were lying on the bed after a feed so that I could see his eye movements clearly. He had shown no interest in *B is for Bear* a week or so before when I had tried, but this time it was different. First his eye glanced at the picture and right away from the book, through Apple, Bear, Castle and Duck, and I was just telling myself that they were two different children and comparisons are odious when we came to the Eskimo. Here, there was a complete change. He started at it, his eye going from the feet up to the head, over and over, and he began vocalizing to it, then hitting with his fist in his excitement. He even smiled at it—and I had never seen him smile before at anything other than a real person. After some time I decided to see whether his interest carried over to the other pictures, so I went on—at about "Hammer" he grizzled so I turned back to the Eskimo, and he was happy again. But again I eventually continued—right past the Lion, with no particular notice, but when he complained again I returned to the Eskimo, and he was happy for a little, then restless, and I decided he'd had enough books for one day.



B is for Bear (Bruna)
Figure 2.3

This started me thinking. All the theorists at the time (this was some thirty-five years ago) said that children could not recognize anything in pictures until they were eighteen months or two years old. But this had seemed a definite response to the one pictured person we had met in Bruna's book. Ralph responded to it as he would an actual person. It made me think about Rebecca's responses, too. Obviously it was not the color and the outlines of her favorite Lion, which proved not to be a universal favorite—the Eskimo had multi-colored patterns on his clothes, and nothing like the lion's arresting spikes. So had Rebecca recognized a stylized cat, just as Ralph appeared to have recognized a stylized person? She was enormously fond of our Pinkle Purr, and the

Lion does have a cat-shaped face (as an aside, she also owned a bear of course). I have decided it must have been that—they both recognized their favorite thing from the book.

While studying at library school ten years before, I had met Dorothy White's *Books Before Five*, in which a librarian keeps a record of her daughter Carol's contacts with books from age two. I was impressed with how much more sophisticated Carol's responses were than the critics and theorists of the day led us to expect. I decided that when I had children of my own, I would keep a similar record, and produce a similar book. So I was ready with pen poised as soon as books were introduced to Rebecca. Fortunately their father, John, a librarian, was as enthusiastic about the project as I was. In the years to come he often recorded the details of a reading session he had taken alone, when I was out or had been reading to the other child.

I chose to use paper and pen, primarily because I'm not happy with a recording device; I find it an intrusion, and assumed the children would feel the same. Also, when they were babies, there would have been nothing to record except my voice. And pen and paper were ever to hand to make jottings during the day as needed. They were a natural part of the house, and I wanted the observing to intrude on our lives as little as possible. I wrote up the day's book-activities in the evening, after they were in bed—often taking several hours. Before Rebecca started school—and I had two children to record most of the day—I often had as many as twenty pages of a large foolscap ledger to write up.

I was determined, as far as possible, to record every comment and allusion, in conversation and play as well as in their reading sessions, so the tape recorder would have been inappropriate. Clearly there were not enough hours in the day to transcribe tapes or worry about recorders. And if I had extra time during their waking hours, I preferred to read to them. Like all children, they knew best how to get their parents' attention. By eighteen months both had a demand for stories in their vocabulary. They would follow me around holding a book crying "Wead wead" (Rebecca) or "Book book" (Ralph). In short, I favored inclusiveness over accuracy.

It is debatable how accurate my recordings of their comments are. I did train myself to remember their actual phrases, and on occasion I would jot them down on a nearby piece of paper.

On several occasions, these jottings went missing during the day, and in the evening I recorded the incident. Subsequently, days or weeks later, the pieces of paper turned up again, and I was able to compare what I had recalled at night with what I had noted at the time. In every case, I had the sense of their statement or question correct, but had put it into language which was simpler than they had actually used. I was very aware that I might overstate what they had said and thought, and my recollections typically took their language development back several steps. These examples make me certain that I have not overestimated their language development, though I may have underestimated it.

I did not want to make them self-conscious about the reading process and their comments, which was another reason for not using a recorder. It also meant that I didn't tell them what my book was about until comparatively late. They knew I was writing a book about children's books, and sometimes they helped me by telling me what they thought of a book—when I specifically asked. They did not realize that I was actually writing about them and recording what they were saying. By about four they both realized. Rebecca, by then, would report her little brother's reactions and sayings to the books she shared with him (though of course not reliably—still it gave me some feeling for their interactions).

Normally we tried not to influence their comments or questions at all. I was trying to garner unsolicited remarks. Consequently our reading style was rather different from the norm. We did not play the "labeling game," even when they were very tiny. Certainly that is a way of teaching vocabulary from "Look at the dog" to "Can you find the dog?" to "What is the dog doing?" are natural progressions as their skill with language develops. And of course we did play with pictures in this way, usually with books after we had actually read them—or sometimes in magazines and pictures in other places. But both adults felt that picture books are works of art, in which the words and the pictures belong together, so we basically read the author's words. We did not ask them what something meant—we assumed they would ask if they needed to know—and we were definitely not interested in testing their understanding. We didn't even gloss unfamiliar words and, if they asked us what a word meant and we could see the explanation coming in the next sentence, we wouldn't answer, but continue—or say "wait on—it tells you." This led them both to have an awareness and enjoyment of language, enjoying words for the sound and feel, especially if they were outside the family lexicon, such as "fortnight" and "mackintosh," or asking outside the reading session, "what does *but* mean?"

I was not able to record the adult's remarks, and I realize this could be a drawback. It was usually hard enough work to get their comments down, without adding ours as well. Usually, if I sought clarification from them (in other words, if they had made a comment I did not understand, for instance) the notation in the Reading Journal is just something like "V: ?". Although this could be seen as a problem, we were so careful not to ask leading questions—not to test out their knowledge—just to be guided by their spontaneous responses, that I sincerely believe this was not a significant problem.

With very young children, only the parent (or regular caregiver) can understand the language and allusions. You have to trust that I interpreted correctly the language and motivation of the children, especially before they were able to speak for themselves. For instance, there was an incident in a library when I was discussing Ezra Jack Keats's picture books with the librarian. We were talking about Keats's illustrative style, and had mentioned titles, but not mentioned the dog. However Rebecca on my hip began to urgently

say "uff, uff" and kept up until I answered her, "Yes, *Whistle for Willie* is about a dog." Here you have to trust me that "uff uff" was her word for "dog," that there was no visible picture of one, and no sound of barking—and that when I agreed "Yes, *Whistle for Willie* is about a dog"—she relaxed, and acknowledged that yes, that's what she'd been telling us (it was one of her favorite books at seventeen months).

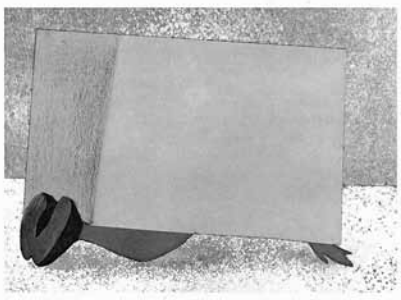


Figure 3.8

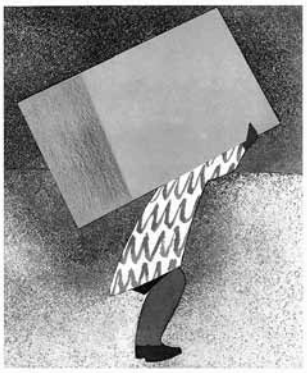


Figure 3.9

Similarly, when Ralph said "door" to Peter hiding under the box, with the book (*Whistle for Willie*) in front of him, what he meant is "open it"—which was what he used "door" to mean at eighteen months. Whether he really thought I could move the box in the picture, or whether he was just explaining that the box was covering Peter is impossible to know, but he did push at the edge of the box.

I had to make these kinds of interpretation of the children's language all the time. I also had to interpret the meaning of their non-verbal behavior, and of course I sometimes must have misinterpreted them.

There is another level of mistake possible as well, and this is my misinterpretation of the meaning behind an action. Rebecca, in her Afterword to *Stories, Pictures and Reality*, spells out one of these. When baby Ralph was only six weeks old, Rebecca cheerfully suggested we wrap him in playdough and make a roly-poly pudding out of him, as Samuel Whiskers and Anna Maria did to poor Tom Kitten. We compromised by wrapping him in a clean nappy. I had sensed no animosity towards her new sibling, but I had recorded the incident when writing the thesis, and my supervisor suggested that it sounded like a bit of sibling rivalry, especially as it was based on the incident in *Samuel Whiskers* where they definitely have evil intentions towards the kitten. I thought this sounded convincing, so I put it in the book. However Rebecca, in her piece, gives her own explanation (and as she has a spectacular memory—like her father, but unlike myself—I have no doubt that she remembers it correctly). She had been confused by Potter's picture of the two rats taking the rolling pin sideways across the kitten, and didn't see how it could work like this. She assumed it was because Tom was alive—so she wanted to experiment on Ralph, as he was also alive. There was no jealousy, just scientific curiosity.

A similar misinterpretation has come up in the last few months. I have been reading a book on gender roles and bias, and remembered how Rebecca at four played doctors and nurses with Ralph. Despite the fact that our GP was a woman, she chose the role of nurse and allocated Ralph to be the doctor. I spent a long time thinking about this, and ultimately decided that children need to absorb the society's norms before they can take up the family's peculiarities. However, when I mentioned this to the adult Rebecca, she explained that she thought doctors only

sat behind desks, whereas nurses put on bandages and gave injections and other interesting tasks. So she gave the boring role to Ralph.

I did not get hold of *Books before Five* again until Rebecca was well over two. Only then did I discover that White had not begun her record until Carol was two. Certainly Carol had been read books earlier, but they had been torn or "vanished along with lost dolls and feeding bottles" (1). By this age I already had a couple of exercise books full of notes, and knew that so much happened before the age of two that this record was vital. Later, I got to know Maureen and Hugh Crago, who did have observations of Anna from before she was two (*Prelude to Literacy*).

At the time, I intended to take the record just up to age five, as White had. I only had a few more years to go. It happened that before Ralph came (when Rebecca was three years two months) we used to make bread together. Afterwards there never seemed to be time. In answer to her plaintive question "When can we make bread again?" I usually said, "when the book is written." I had no idea that it would be thirty years before this actually happened!

Having started the record for Rebecca, it seemed only natural to continue the record of Ralph's book responses as well. It is good that I did, as he is still the only male child whose story contacts are recorded in book-form. The other published records (as well as White there are Butler, Crago, and Wolf and Brice Heath) are all of girls, and first children in the family, and each had a female sibling during the recording period, none of whom are observed and recorded to the same extent. Moreover, none of these studies consider the siblings' influence on each other.

At various periods during her childhood, Rebecca would ask me to read specific incidents from the Reading Journal. She was also aware of us proofreading articles by reading them aloud, so she understood the study, and often, as an older child, read and commented on the papers herself. She was very aware of the record and my writing about it. However when I began to index the Reading Journal by themes in preparation for my doctoral thesis, some twenty years from when it first began, it came as a complete surprise to Ralph, who could remember nothing about it at all.

I had indexed by author and title as I wrote it up, so that I could look back to establish when a particular book had been read last, for instance. But now I knew I needed thematic indexing as well, so I established subject headings, creating them as needed. At this stage, I discovered my interest in their understanding of the reality status of the stories and pictures ("Is this a real story?" "The man who drawed it was wrong." "Is the Wizard of Oz alive in the story?") and decided to make this the focus of the PhD. I certainly hadn't collected the material with this emphasis, so that all the other aspects of their behavior with books, are recorded (and indexed) as well, and can be mined whenever a new aspect interests me.

It was another ten years before *Stories, Pictures and Reality: Two Children Tell* was published by Routledge, and there have been two book chapters, twelve articles in academic journals, and some thirty in other professional publications (my list of publications is available on my website, at http://createakidsbook.com.au/bibliography.html).

Note: Images used with permission.

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Synopsis: One year has passed since an old woman's daughter has got married. Now the old woman is missing her. After procuring some gifts for her daughter, she leaves for the neighboring village. Along the way, she comes across a lion, panther and a wolf eager to devour her. She pleads to be eaten on her return to home. However, on her way to home she hides in a pumpkin to escape them.

This book is based on the Iranian fable Kado-Ghel-Ghelleh-Zan (Rolling Pumpkin). The author starts with the beginning of the folktale, but modifies the story in three creative endings. These three narrations attract children to the narrative itself. At the end, Abadi encourages children's involvement by asking them to guess another ending for this story.

Bahar Eshraq

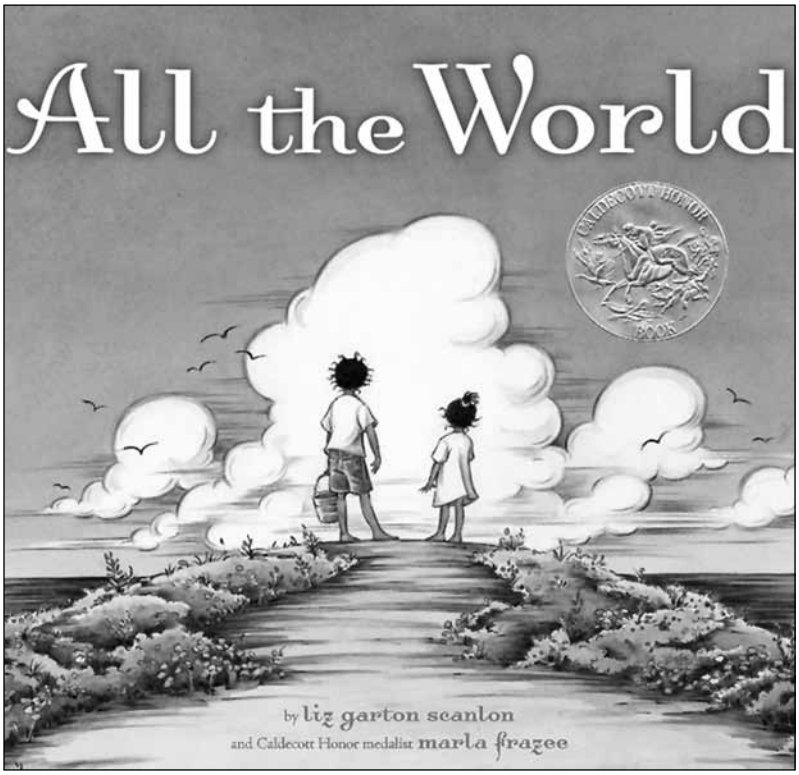
Ali Asghar Seyed Abadi

When did the Rolling Pumpkin return home?

Illustrated by Alireza Goldozian
Series: Sweet-rooted Stories; 2
Tehran: Ofoq Publishing Press, 2009
(Picturebook; ages 2-7)

The Vibrant Triangle: The Relationship between the Picture Book, the Adult Reader, and the Child Listener

by TAMARA SMITH



Just this morning, I sat with my three-year-old daughter, Tavia, and read aloud Liz Garton Scanlon's *All the World*. Tavia stood next to me on the couch, her toes tucked under my leg and her arm around my neck. As I read, Tavia pointed out familiar objects in the illustrations. "There's a shell," she said. "There's a truck. There's corn. I love corn." We went on like this, slow and quiet, Tavia recognizing both beloved words and their corresponding illustrations, until we got to a double spread toward the end of the book. "All the world is you and me," I read (32-33). Tavia stopped pointing at the book. "You?" she asked, pulling her hand out from under my neck and touching my face. "Yes," I said. "Me?" she said, pointing to herself. "Yes," I said again. She paused for a moment, and then, "Us?" she asked finally. "Yes." And then Tavia began to flip back through the pages of the book, her toes wiggling under my leg as she saw herself in the story. "I'm a cousin," she said. "I'm cold. I'm hot." And then she flapped her arms like they were wings. "I'm a bird."

A bird.

Tamara Ellis Smith is a children's book writer. Her middle grade novel *Marble Boys* won an honorable mention in the 2008 PEN New England Discovery Awards. Tamara received an MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts in 2007. She is a parent to three young children and lives in Richmond, VT. You can learn more about Tamara at www.tamaraellissmith.com.

Tavia and I and the picture book engaged together in a read-aloud experience, and through that process Tavia began to identify objects in her world, herself in the world, and the way the two are connected. Her imagination was fired up too—she was a bird after all!

I call this the "Vibrant Triangle": this experience that unfolds between the picture book, the child listener, and the adult reader. I believe picture books are a unique form of literature. They are words on a page, like a novel, or a poem. They are also art, like a painting or a sculpture. However they are also one more thing—they are *utteratures*. Sheree Fitch—Canadian children's book writer and poet—coined this word, which she defines as "all literature that is dependent on the human voice and a community of listeners to have its life" (qtd. in Lynes 29). These three elements, when woven together with a child and an adult, create the Vibrant Triangle.

Like its sister art form, oral storytelling, picture books are only fully realized in the presence of three requisite components—the story, the storyteller and the listener. In oral storytelling, the act of receiving the story often involves learning a lesson, which teaches a child a moral: something critical to the understanding of what is expected in life. Sheree Fitch takes this process a step inward. Her idea is that the "voiced, poetic language [of picture books] is participatory, communal and expressive of the child's *rite of discovery of his or her body*" (30). "Within any one child dwells a 'chorus.' That chorus of five voices contains a range of ideas and emotions" ("The Sweet Chorus" 53). The chorus—which Fitch defines as *I do, I think, I feel, I belong, I create*—leads directly to *I am*. It represents the different pieces that make up the whole child.

When Fitch speaks about books that nurture a child's rite of discovery of her body, she refers to those that can communicate with each of these voices. *All the World* is one such book. From its first pages, Tavia began to find her version of Fitch's voices. She first connected with activities she *does*: "A moat to dig" and "a shell to keep" (Scanlon 2-3.) She then *thought* about times she had been at the beach. She articulated her memories of how she *felt* there. She drew parallels from these personal beach memories back to the text and illustrations on the page and, in doing so, felt a sense of *belonging* or connecting back to the world of the book. This entire process was one in which Tavia was *creating* her sense of self. And this, in turn, led her to better understand *who she is*.

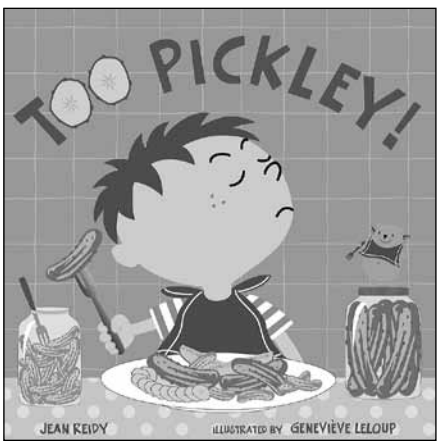
But not all picture books are equally capable of creating this multi-sensory experience, and so, after careful study, I have identified six characteristics that I believe are integral to the Vibrant Triangle model:

1. Language drives the story (such as repetition, rhythm, rhyme, call and response.)
2. There is limited text on the page (which helps to pace the reading.)
3. The story extends beyond the page (which leaves the child wanting/creating more.)
4. The story inspires thinking about and engaging with the world (because of good and rich storytelling.)
5. During the reading, space and time is left (for the child to insert herself and her imagination into the story)
6. There is a pure collaboration between text and illustration (so that the two create a whole.)

Although they are separate characteristics, picture books that resonate the most powerfully weave them all together.

A language-rich story creates a sensory experience for the listening child. The child listening to the story explores new places, new experiences and new kinds of people, through their smells and sounds and sights. Audrey Vernick's *Is Your Buffalo Ready for Kindergarten?* is a perfect example of this. The story's call and response format clearly and warmly invites children to reflect and interact with it. When Tavia's teacher reads the opening page to her pre-school playgroup, "Some people say kindergarten is no place for a buffalo. How crazy is that?" (2), she can barely finish the question before the group responds with an enthusiastic, "Yeah! That's crazy! That's silly! He belongs!" And subsequent questions in the text, such as "Is he feeling shy?" (3) and "Is he worried about being the only one who's not good with scissors?" (5) provide an opportunity for the children to chat about what they do when they are afraid.

Jean Reidy's *Too Pickley!* is another brilliant example of the Vibrant Triangle characteristics at work. With only two words on a page, Reidy creates simple rhymes and inventive sensory vocabulary such as, "Too crunchy, Too licky, Too stringy, Too sticky," (11-13) which are fun to read aloud and easy for a child to remember, so that by the second or third reading Tavia was chiming in. And, as is true in my house, the book prompts useful discussions about eating choices, and it even introduced Tavia to new foods.



Taking the time to sit with a child and read aloud a Vibrant Triangle picture book removes her and the adult reader momentarily from their everyday lives, and gives them a break from their immediate problems or pleasures. However they are still with the child, and so she will unconsciously incorporate them into the read-aloud experience. The result is deeply satisfying; it is both self-contained *and* connected to the child's life. Tavia, for instance, was completely engaged with the process of reading *All the World* and, at the same time, she made all of the connections to her own life that I have mentioned. The story is divided into locations and activities that are found in a community—playing at the beach, shopping and socializing at a farmer's market, eating dinner at a diner—and Tavia was inspired to imagine other similar community spaces.

The intersection of imaginary elements and real sensory experiences offers the child a safe and full way to participate in crises and celebrations, dilemmas, and resolutions. It expands a child's capacity for empathy and understanding. Tavia heard me read *All the World's* "slip, trip, stumble fall/tip the bucket, spill it all" (18) while she studied the full spread illustration of children caught in the rain—one slipping in her roller skates, one tipping his bucket of stones, one crying in his father's arms—and she felt the experiences of those children and was able to articulate those feelings to me. As Marie Tatar states, "For the child reading, the threshold between reality and fantasy can mysteriously vanish… [reading] flips a switch so that the child returns to the real world with renewed curiosity…not just about the world of fiction but also about the world they inhabit" (137.) As Jean Reidy says, children access a higher intelligence when they make connections between the fiction world and real world.

The last two characteristics are slightly different from the others, in that they are not about text on the page but are about, instead, the intentional spaces that are created and what happens within those spaces. Leaving *space and time* for the child within the text and illustrations is often found in "quiet" picture books. They have, as Jean Reidy says, quiet themes ("Personal Communication") and they are, as Liz Garton

Scanlon explains, not exclusively character/action centered, but are at least as much image/language centered. Their stories are just as much about the rhythms of their particular words and the spaces left between them as it is about their plots ("personal communication").

If there is space for children inside the books, then there is also a space for the books inside the children. On pages 2-4, *All the World* reads: "A moat to dig/a shell to keep/all the world is wide and deep." The illustrations first show close-ups of a brother and sister playing at the beach and then a double spread panned-back view of the ocean-side—the wide ocean and its waves, a dramatic cliff coastline, and a road heading into town. The text is quiet and the illustrations are still. But as the Vibrant Triangle gets activated—when Tavia snuggles into me on the couch and I read—Tavia begins to point and imagine, shout and wiggle, dance and sing and hope and dream. She is anything *but* quiet.

Finally, a Vibrant Triangle picture book must be a collaboration—in the purest form of the word—between the words and the illustrations. As Mo Willems said, "It is only right when both words and image need each other to make any sense" (12). Ultimately, the Vibrant Triangle experience is a collaboration between them all—the book (with its glorious text and illustrations) the child listening, and the adult reading.

When Tavia had her epiphany while we were reading *All the World*, when she immediately flipped the pages backward and asked me to re-read, she was making *new meaning* from the text. The words on the page stayed the same, of course, but their meanings changed. For example, the line, "All the world is cold and hot" (25) became a personal realization that sometimes Tavia was hot and sometimes she was cold. This falls into Louise Rosenblatt's reader response theory, which suggests that it is only when the reader enters the scene and makes meaning from the words running across the page that the book is fully realized. In essence, the book is not a finished piece of literature until it is read.

More recent theories about affect and reading as an embodied experience posit the same kind of idea. These theories suggest that reading is a sensual, intimate experience. Just as the child snuggles up tight to the adult—Tavia's toes under my leg and her arm around my neck—the child also, in essence, snuggles up close to the book. She lets the words touch her, the rhythms of the words flow into her like music. It is an experience that places both the body and the brain on equal ground. It is reading without judgment. Just as I described quiet books, affect does not rely solely on meaning here, but instead on the way a text—in both its form and content—simply and profoundly moves the reader (Littau 143-44). Another way to look at embodied reading is to take its meaning quite literally—examining the way that specific conditions surrounding the reading experience affect the response to it (Waller).

Just like the reader response theory, the theories of affect and reading as an embodied experience fit perfectly within the Vibrant Triangle experience. When I first read, "Nanas, papas, cousins, kin/Piano, harp, and violin" (Scanlon 30-31), Tavia intuitively felt a kinship to the words because of their sounds. She liked hearing them. She liked repeating them. She "[heard] before comprehension" (Littau 143), and because we were snuggled together on the soft couch, perhaps she felt a security that allowed her to be curious. She initiated a conversation about nanas and papas and cousins. And then when she asked me to re-read the book, she gleaned more meaning. She named her grandmothers, her father, and her cousins. She felt something new and made new discoveries.

Tavia's experience of listening to the story completed a process. Words and rhythms, repetition and page turns, pictures and hues, characters as they struggle and succeed—these are all palpable links between the picture book, the child listener, and the adult reader.

Because picture books are read again and again—often a dozen times during the course of a few minutes—the process of gleaning and applying meaning is easy to see. Repeated exposure to both the sound and sight of words, and connecting the words on the page to tangible objects, ideas, and emotions—to things that matter to the child—make a huge difference in the way a child develops literacy. Before our eyes, the child safely snuggled in our laps is learning, changing, and growing. She is tapping into her chorus of voices. She is discovering herself. So there is real merit in saying *yes*, *yes*, *yes* when a child asks for the same picture book again and again and again.

We all carry the picture books from our own childhoods with us. We remember them; we draw on them; we quote them. But there is more to it than that. When a Vibrant Triangle picture book is read aloud, that dynamic experience has the real potential to slip through a child's skin and into her body. It nestles deep, sprouts wings and begins to grow. It is the sense of self a child develops, and her sense of the world. It is a child's sense of her place *in* that world.

Just this morning, a wiggling Tavia found herself in *All the World*.

"I'm a bird," she said.

We are all birds. We are all every story we have heard and read and tucked away inside of us. These picture book read-aloud experiences are—all of them, over time—vital partners in helping us unfold our sense of possibility and our potential. They are our flock of winged things.

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La bambina che ascoltava gli alberi focuses on nature and, in particular, on the importance of being able to listen to its voice. The narrative tells about a child who is able to listen to and feel what trees say. She is well aware that trees have a voice and it is sometimes necessary to be silent in order to listen to them and understand what they want to tell us. Listening to these trees enables this child to receive their special gifts, whether they are fruits, branches or leaves. For instance, the magnolia gives her its beautiful flowers and leaves to be used as an eye mask to see the world through the eyes of a tree, and the beech tree helps the child to become a tree for a while. While she is tree, another child passes by her without noticing at all her presence. This once again underlines the importance of listening to nature and looking at it carefully in order to catch its secrets. The text is accompanied by starkly beautiful illustrations by Cristina Pieropan.

Melissa Garavini

Maria Loretta Giraldo

La bambina che ascoltava gli alberi
[The Girl Who Listened to the Trees]

Illus. Cristina Pieropan
Perugia, Italia: Edizionicorsare, 2011
40 p.
ISBN 9788887938722
(Picture book, ages + 5)

Turkish Delight: Sweet or Sour? The Double Face of the Turkish Children's Book Market

by TÜLIN KOZIKOĞLU

What does it take for an Eastern market to catch the attention of Western producers? Usually, a stable economic environment with promising sales volumes is enough for a company to focus on a new market, thus spending effort and energy to establish existence in that country. Let's stroll in the streets of Turkey, the second fastest growing economy after China. Producers of various products are flooding into the country and dedicating their utmost attention to creating a market share. What about children's book publishers? Turkey is a country with a population of 73 million, along with an increase of 1.5 million every year. The country has 15 million students in elementary, secondary, and high school levels. When you add the 6 million children between 0-6 years old, you face a total number of 21 million that can be attributed as the target of children's literature. Is this country with such promising numbers attracting Western publishers? Are they spending any energy to create a market share for themselves? Let's try to analyze the Turkish children's Book environment by looking into the strengths and weaknesses of this market, and explore the opportunities and threats for Western publishers. I am hoping to foreground an understanding as to why they are not investing, and try to explain why they should.

Tülin Kozikoğlu studied Psychology followed by an MBA. After working in marketing for international companies, she started writing children's books and received two different awards for her work. She also writes book reviews for one of the major newspapers in Turkey and teaches creative writing to elementary school kids.

Turkey is a target with a crowded population, but is it as lucrative as it looks? Is a large population meaningful if the reading population is only 4.5%? Yes, we are talking about a country whose spending value for books is less than $10 per person per year, a country that is ranked 86th among 173 countries in a reading ratio list of United Nations. In spite of these disappointing facts, the children's book industry has been booming in Turkey, especially within the last 10 years. The number of high quality children's books published is increasing rapidly. Not only the Turkish authors and illustrators, but also the publishers, have the vision to think globally and act locally. They are able to produce books with local themes, treasured with a western touch. Along with the local books, foreign books are also filling up the shelves in the bookstores. The best examples of the world's children's literature are being translated into Turkish. Within the last ten years, the publishers have been bending backwards to publish the maximum amount of books they can (both local and foreign) so that Turkish children have access to quality literature. The amount of children's books produced by title have increased from 431 in 2007 to 6,319 in 2011, and the total number of books sold increased from 3.1 million to 8.5 million.

Yes, book production has an inclining track in the country, but are the publishers making high profits? It is common knowledge that books are profitable products if sold in high quantities, and the above numbers are insignificant compared to the total number of books sold yearly in the Western world; e.g. more than 100 million in the USA and close to 100 million in the UK. While the number of picture books to be published in the first edition is at least 5,000 in the West, this number is generally 2,000 in Turkey.

Does this discourage the local publishers? Not at all! Interestingly, they are producing more and more titles every day, but why? Any sensible businessperson makes a cost-benefit analysis and acts accordingly when it comes to investments. Why do Turkish publishers continue publishing new children's books, despite the fact that their return is not satisfying? The answer is obvious: they have long-term strategies.

The 21 million members of Turkey's young population may not be reading as much as western children, but sooner or later they will, and publishers are well aware of that. How will this vast population start reading more and more books? What is the necessary and valid tool that encourages children to read more? The answers to these questions are obvious for anybody in the book industry: high quality books lead to book lovers! If a child is continuously presented good books—and only

good books—sooner or later he or she will become a persistent reader. That is, high numbers of good books supplied to children create a higher demand for books. How so?

When it comes to children's books, certain economic rules work backwards; in many other industries, the supply is increased when there is a demand. However, in this case, Turkish publishers are presenting the supply in order to create a demand in the long run. They are putting their utmost energy toward increasing their product range as much as possible. They know that one good book will lead to a public desire to read more and more books, thus leading to an exponential increase in sales of books. We can relate a book-loving child to a hungry giant: a giant with a stomach that is getting bigger and bigger with each book it reads, and as the stomach gets bigger, the giant gets greedier and greedier in order to fulfill its hunger.

This also leads to an extraordinary situation regarding the competition process; for example, if you are selling refrigerators and produce a high quality product, one customer purchasing *your* product means one less sale for your competitors, because in most cases, one single refrigerator is purchased per each household. The same is true for a car, a box of detergent, or a bottle of milk. When the need is satisfied, the competitor loses market share. However, when it comes to books, especially children's books, when the need is satisfied, an increased market is created for the competitors. A child that is satisfied with what he or she has read starts searching for more books. An author writing a good book causes not only an increase in the sales of his or her other books, but also in the sales of other authors' books. Therefore, we can safely assert that there is no competition among children's book writers; on the contrary, they are intentionally or unintentionally supporting each other.

Can we assume that since there is no competition, marketing efforts are not relevant for the children's books industry? No, that is definitely not a valid argument. In today's world of infinite numbers of choices—where an enormous amount of effort needs to be exerted for realizing sales of each product—obviously it is not possible to sell books without using alternative and brilliant marketing approaches!

If you prepare a wonderful meal and forget to invite your guests, you have no right to complain. You cannot expect people to guess that the food is served at your house. Somehow you have to inform them about your efforts. Likewise, it is meaningless to produce tens, hundreds, or thousands of different books unless you let the reader know what you are supplying. Therefore, just like any other retail product, all kinds of marketing strategies are essential for selling books, especially in a country like Turkey, in which the ultimate goal is to create book lovers. But who is responsible for applying these strategies? Who is the owner of the product: the author or the publisher?

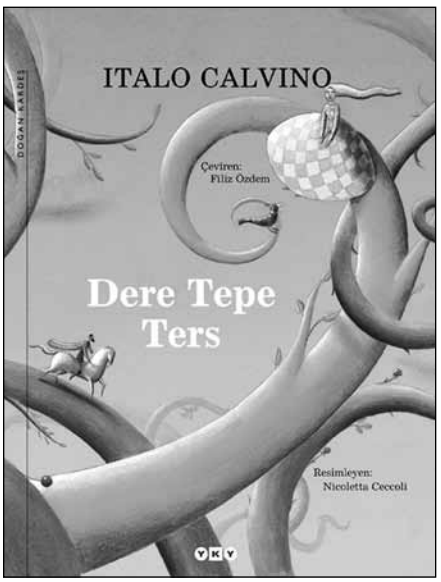
Although books are mostly referenced by the author, the actual owner of the product is the publishing company. However, this should not limit the responsibility of the efforts to the publisher. The author and the publisher should share the marketing efforts when it comes to communicating the voice of the book to the reader.

In Turkey, this responsibility is not only shared by the author and the publisher, but the efforts are also supported by many other individuals. Because the goal is not simply to generate sales, but more complicatedly to generate book lovers, ordinary marketing techniques, which are inclined to directly generating sales, are not adequate to have successful end-results. More creative ideas and more inspiring projects are required to initiate higher levels of consciousness towards books, which in the long run will result in exponential sales. That is why the country is going through a "National Reading Revolution"; all the parties are acting jointly for this goal with an imaginative and ambitious attitude.

The Ministry of Education is leading various projects to reach children. Universities are organizing symposiums on children's literature, schools are organizing book festivals, and teachers are coordinating workshops to exchange ideas on effective usage of books in the classroom. Non-profit organizations are setting up libraries and supporting authors' school visits, the private sector is donating books to kids, publishing companies are arranging contests, bookstores are organizing book-reading sessions, and parents, without hesitation, are allocating the majority of their budget to their children. Each party is doing its share in order to create a young reading population. This is not a planned and organized "revolution." Every party seems to be going with the flow and exercising their common sense, and trying to add its share to the proverbial "soup." The kettle is quite a big one to fill, but everybody involved seems to know that if there is a will, then there is a way; desire and perseverance is the key to every revolution.

Although everybody in Turkey is trying their best to create book-loving children, thus leading to exponential increase in sales, there is a neutral element in this equation: that is, foreign publishers. What can foreign publishers do for the Turkish market? Would it be too much to expect Western publishing firms to grasp the gigantic potential in the market and join the team in this challenging but promising process? Is it over the limits for them to unite forces in marketing efforts? In many other industries, the foreign companies transfer their marketing know-how, apply their best practices, and reach the consumer in the most efficient ways. Somehow when it comes to translated books, the local publisher is left alone, and the book's destiny can be far different than it is in its own country. This attitude can easily be changed, and the unfortunate destiny can be transformed into mutual benefit, leading to a win-win situation for all parties involved.

The Turkish Government provides a similar win-win opportunity for those foreign publishers who want to translate Turkish books into their own languages. The TEDA Project (Translation Subvention Program of Turkey) has financially



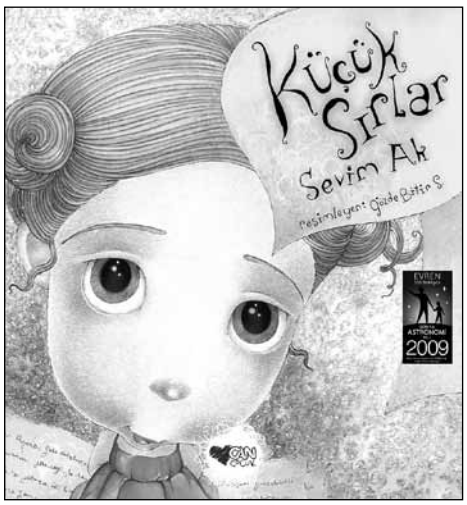
supported the translation and publication of Turkish books into foreign languages for the past 7 years, translating more than 750 books into 40 different languages.

The same type of support from the Western world would be highly welcomed by Turkish

publishers, especially for picture books. Everybody knows that children are made readers on the laps of their parents, and that is through picture books. The basic obstacle Turkish publishing companies face is that parents in Turkey are inclined to buy books for their kids only after the kids start to read themselves. Most of the role players of the "Reading Revolution" are also focusing on elementary school kids. Picture books are the ones that are sold the least, and again are the most expensive and cumbersome to produce. Parallel with the long-term strategies of creating book-lovers, picture books are inevitable; therefore, *that* is where the Turkish publishers need the most amount of financial and marketing assistance.

Local institutions should also start concentrating on preschoolers. It would not be a bad idea for the Ministry of Education and non-profit organizations to import project ideas from their Western counterparts, while taking on other projects that stem from their own ideas. These projects should target parents and aim to train them about the importance of reading picture books to kids before they start school. This approach will not only broaden the scope of the revolution, but also have a positive impact on the projects that are targeting the older kids.

Yes, this country has a long way to go. It is full of opportunities for only those that have a long-term vision. Patience and perseverance are the two attributes that will lead to successful end results. Yes, Turkey is a compelling market for the Western world. It is like a busy crossroads; opportunities are available for those who want to translate their books into Turkish, as well as for those who are interested in translating Turkish books into their own language. Like any other crossroads, a certain amount of attention and effort need to be exerted in order to pass through it safely and continue on the route; a route that is not dull, but quite colorful. Like any other crossroads, this fruitful market is demanding, but promising at the same time: a sweet and sour treat for you to enjoy.



Our Forthcoming Issues:

51.3 (Summer 2013) Multilingual Literature
51.4 (Fall 2013) Open Themed
52.1 (Winter 2014) GLBTQ
52.2 (Spring 2014) HCA Award Nominees
52.3 (Summer 2014) Mexico City Congress
52.4 (Fall 2014) HCA Awards and Open Themed

Charlotte Steiner

by ZLATA FUSS PHILLIPS

Zlata Fuss Phillips is a Research Associate in the Department of Information Studies at the State University of New York in Albany. She is the author of *German Children's and Youth Literature in Exile 1933-1950* (K.G.Saur, 2001), several journal articles (including an article in *Bookbird*, Vol 33); and a member of North American Exile Studies Society.

Charlotte Steiner (1898-1981), author and illustrator of children's books, published more than seventy books between 1939 and 1972 in the USA. She both wrote and illustrated most of them, and she illustrated the texts of other authors. Her books demonstrate remarkable insight into the psyche of the children for whom she created wonderful stories.

Her first Doubleday title, *Lulu*, published in 1939, consists of exquisite drawings of a young girl, Lulu, sitting on a chair and drawing a picture of a dog. The dog comes to life and becomes her companion, eating a meal with Lulu, going to the pond with her, and catching fish with her. When Lulu does not succeed in catching a fish, she cries and the dog comforts her, and tries to catch a fish in order to console her. It succeeds, and both Lulu and the dog happily walk back home. The only text is on the first page, giving the name of Lulu and her adventures, and on the end page announcing the end of the story. This moving story, told only with simple, repetitive drawings of Lulu, in white overalls with "Lulu" embroidered on the bib, the dog, and simple objects, captures perfectly the egocentric imagination of preschoolers then and always. Knowing her intended audience and creating books that appealed to them is the keystone of her entire opus.

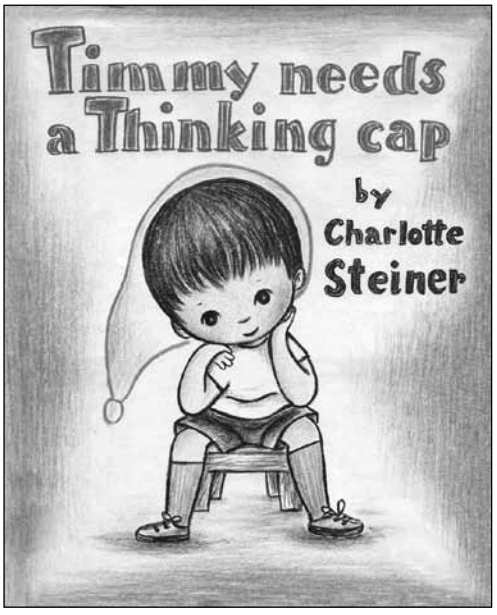
Charlotte Klein was born on November 17, 1898 in Nový Bydžov, Bohemia, Czechoslovakia. In 1911, she moved with her parents, Adele and Bernard Klein, and her older brother Ernst, to Vienna. By the age of ten, Charlotte was fluent in Czech, German, English and French. She subsequently studied in Prague, Vienna, and Paris. In 1922 she married Friedrich Steiner, a businessman, in Vienna. For a period of time they lived in Berlin, until Hitler's rise to power in 1933. Charlotte's family of origin was Jewish; Friedrich

was Protestant. It was for her sake they left Germany, and later Austria.

After living in mid-1930s Vienna, they travelled in the fall of 1938 to Naples, Italy. After obtaining immigration visas in Naples, Charlotte and Friedrich sailed with the ship "Roma" to New York City, arriving on October 7th. Cousins of Charlotte, who lived in Brooklyn, sponsored their immigration passage, according to the list of alien passengers at the port of arrival. In December, 1938, she applied for US citizenship. While working at Brownie's Blockprints, Inc. in New York City in 1939, she applied for a social security number—the same year she began to write and illustrate children's books.

In 1944 Charlotte, became a US citizen. By this time Doubleday, Doran & Co., one of the biggest US publishing companies at the time, had already published half a dozen of Charlotte's children's books. Charlotte's career as an author and illustrator of children's books began at an opportune time as the demand for children's books, especially picture books, increased dramatically during the 1940's. Many mothers of young children worked in war industry centers (for example, Rosie the Riveter) during the period, and their children attended nursery schools. With the money they earned, mothers could afford to buy books for their children.

This increased demand for nursery books led Charlotte and her publishers to produce children's books in special formats: pull-out books, pop-up books, cloth books, accordion books, mail-me books, and toy theater books. For example, she created the toy theater book, *Charlotte Steiner's Story Book Theater* (1944), a proscenium, and six booklets, "Little Black Sambo," "Red Riding Hood," "Hansel and Gretel," "Snow White," "The Gingerbread Man," and "The Three Bears," each in pictorial wrappers packaged in a box covered with illustrations.

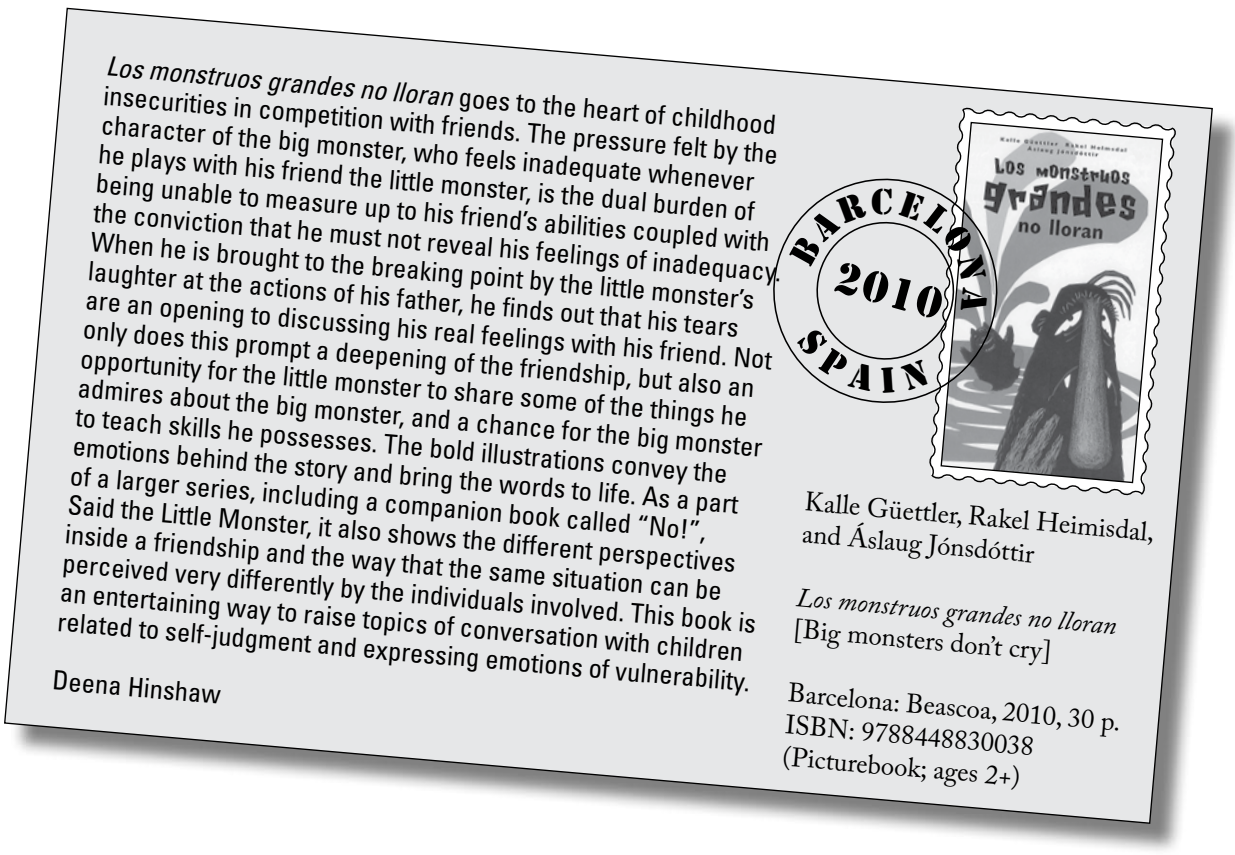


Charlotte branched out into different styles and content in her later books, using rhyme in *Let Her Dance* (1969), or playing off the intrusion of television into every day life in *Timmy Needs a Thinking Cap* (1961). Timmy wants to win a live donkey, as advertised in a promotion he sees on television. He needs money to buy many cereal boxes, where cards with pictures of animals are hidden, and thus increase his chances. To earn money to buy the boxes of cereal, he thinks hard and tries different ways to earn it on his own. Finally, he hits on the idea of renting out his father's binoculars so people walking in the park can identify birds, UFO's, kites, etc., and makes enough money to buy many cereal boxes. Eventually he finds one with the picture of a donkey in it. Imagine the cleverness of this conceit: in order to win a television-promoted contest, Timmy helps people better see the natural world around them. In her last published book, *Look What Tracy Found* (1972), she returns to her earlier style; as in *Lulu,* the pictures tell the story and the accompanying text is minimal.

During the 1950s and 1960s, she formed a close association with another publisher, Alfred A. Knopf. Her books were published in the series *Junior Books*, *Borzoi Books*, and *You-tell-a-story Books*. Simultaneously, Random House of Canada in Toronto published several book titles. Both Alfred A. Knopf and Random House archival collections preserve the informative correspondence between Charlotte and her agents, as well as publishers' agreements with the author. In the 1950s and 1960s, Danish publisher Carlsen published translations of several of her books originally published by Grosset & Dunlap, later by Wonder Books (a division of G&D). These translations were published with multiple printings in Danish, Dutch, Faroese, Finnish, French, German, and Swedish.

Charlotte and Friedrich, later Frederick, had no children. They lived in New York City and maintained summer homes on Lake Mahopac, in Putnam County, New York, and later in Woodstock, Vermont. During the 1970s, Charlotte moved to a nursing home, the Margaret Tietz Center, in Jamaica, New York. She died on August 12, 1981. The Center, founded as a nursing home for Holocaust survivors in 1971, received Charlotte's royalty payments as late as the early 1990s, more than ten years after her death. Unfortunately, the Center presently has no documents or papers on Charlotte Steiner.

It is a mystery why this skilled and prolific author/illustrator's life and work remain relatively unknown. Paragraphs found in reference books are confusing, as they provide contradictory facts about her life; they give different dates of birth, different countries of origin, and different religious affiliations. Her artistic legacy, deposited in the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, contains almost no biographical information. Contemporary reviews of her work appear to be non-existent, except for the interest shown online today in the selling of her books and the chatting about favorite books of one's childhood.



Los monstruos grandes no lloran goes to the heart of childhood insecurities in competition with friends. The pressure felt by the character of the big monster, who feels inadequate whenever he plays with his friend the little monster, is the dual burden of being unable to measure up to his friend's abilities coupled with the conviction that he must not reveal his feelings of inadequacy. When he is brought to the breaking point by the little monster's laughter at the actions of his father, he finds out that his tears are an opening to discussing his real feelings with his friend. Not only does this prompt a deepening of the friendship, but also an opportunity for the little monster to share some of the things he admires about the big monster, and a chance for the big monster to teach skills he possesses. The bold illustrations convey the emotions behind the story and bring the words to life. As a part of a larger series, including a companion book called "No!", Said the Little Monster, it also shows the different perspectives inside a friendship and the way that the same situation can be perceived very differently by the individuals involved. This book is an entertaining way to raise topics of conversation with children related to self-judgment and expressing emotions of vulnerability.

Deena Hinshaw

Kalle Güettler, Rakel Heimisdal, and Áslaug Jónsdóttir

Los monstruos grandes no lloran
[Big monsters don't cry]

Barcelona: Beascoa, 2010, 30 p.
ISBN: 9788448830038
(Picturebook; ages 2+)

Algoritem arene: Priročnik za branje kakovostnih mladinskih knjig 2012 [The arena algorithm: manual for reading quality youth literature 2012]. Darja Lavrenčič Vrabec and Ida Mlakar (ed.). Ljubljana: Mestna knjižnica Ljubljana, 2012. 251 pages.

The Centre for Youth Literature and Librarianship of the Ljubljana City Library has taken on a difficult task of compiling yearly reviews of all the books for children and youth published in Slovenia. This effort is surely made easier, one would think, by the relatively small number of books a country like Slovenia can produce. But the figures in the manual's introductory analysis tell a different story: the number of books published in 2011 alone exceeds 1,180 titles (1,003 for 2010 and 1,044 for 2009), in a country of two million people.

A team of experts (librarians, critics, members of IBBY Slovenia and also employees of the Slovenian Book Agency and the Slovenian Reading Badge Society) sifts through all the books for children and youth published in Slovenia the previous year, not only original Slovenian fiction, but translated literature, non-fiction, and new editions of older books as well. In a country where approximately 60% of the books published each year are translated, such a review is invaluable.

The manual is aimed at librarians, teachers, and reading-conscious parents, at people, in short, who recommend reading material to children and youth. Publishers and editors may find it interesting as well, to see how their books did in the reviews and how they fit the current ideal of literature for young people.

In the manual, the books are divided into categories according to the age of their target readers (from preschool to secondary school), their genre and content: "fantasy" and "realistic" novels are treated separately, for instance. For each title entry, the author (and translator), publisher, genre (adventure story, science fiction etc.) and main topics are listed, which is very convenient for a user who is searching for books on a certain subject, a teacher who wishes to discuss gender issues with his or her pupils, for instance. The manual also includes an index arranged by subject so as to make searching easier.

Compiled and edited by
CHRISTIANE RAABE
and JOCHEN WEBER

Christiane Raabe is the director and Jochen Weber is the head of the language sections of the International Youth Library in Munich, Germany.

The most important part of each annotation, however, and the main purpose of this manual, is the grade that each book is given by its reviewer: the grades range from "excellent" and "very good" to "good", "insufficient" and "unsatisfactory" (translation by K.B.); "excellent" books are equipped with a short summary of their contents. Some books, particularly those written by children, are not graded, but are rather just listed as a separate category.

This is, obviously, the most controversial part of the manual. Even though the introduction offers a short description of criteria for each of the grades, some users would undoubtedly wish for a more elaborate explanation. Publishers, for example, would surely be interested in knowing what to strive for in producing new books.

In addition to that, books which are deemend exceptional are awarded a special label, the "Zlata hruška" [Golden Pear], which is then made visible in libraries by instantly recognizable pear labels. Only three books, however, are given actual prizes, the Golden Pear Awards, at a special ceremony each year in the categories of "Original Slovenian youth fiction", "Translated youth fiction" and "Original Slovenian youth non-fiction." This year's "Translated youth fiction" award, for example, went to Stana Anželj's translation of Walter Moers's *Der Schrecksenmeister* (*Vreščji mojster*).

Apart from this annotated book list, the manual offers concise statistics of the books published, the figures for translated and original Slovenian books, and the number of books in each of the age groups and grades. This last information is particularly important and worrying: of the 991 graded books, only 119 were judged to be "excellent," and almost 40% of these were reprints of older books. A particularly interesting table also presents the distribution of Golden-Pear-awarded books among Slovenian publishing houses. Something that the users of the manual might miss in this introductory section is a more comprehensive interpretation of these figures, an analysis of trends, perhaps, or a survey of the popularity of these books among children and youth. The manual also includes the lists of nominees and winners for other awards, such as the Slovenian "Večernica" and "Desetnica" and the international Hans Christian Andersen Award and Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.

Overall, the manual has been for the last decade the most complete and important yearly review of Slovenian book production for children and youth and is a precious addition to Slovenia's growing field of children's literature studies.

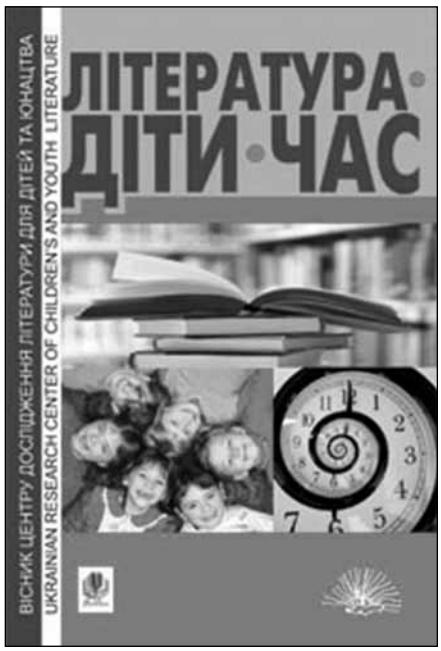
Previous years' manuals (which bear different titles: *Geneze – poti v bistroumne nesmisle* for 2011, *Ozvezdje knjiga* for 2010…) are available on the website of the Ljubljana City Library: http://www.mklj.si/index.php/projekti/nacionalni-projekti/prirocnik-za-branje-kakovostnih-mladinskih-knjig (the site is in Slovenian).

Kaja Bucik, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Literatura. Duty. Čas [Literature. Children. Time]. By Uliana Hnidets, et al., eds. Series: Visnyk doslidzhennia literatury dlia ditei ta iunatstva. 192 pages.

Literatura. Duty. Čas. comprises a collection of key scholarly essays on major issues of Ukrainian children's literature in order to develop a theoretical and methodical framework for research. The book was published as a result of the Second International Symposium on the subject, which was held in Lviv in 2011, and was organized by The Ukrainian Research Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature (URCCYL) and The National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

The contributors to this volume focus on a number of issues: the role of scholarly studies in children's literature, contemporary prose and poetry for children, the concentration and depiction of historical themes in children's books, the introduction of children's literature into the school curriculum, comparative aspects in the study of children's and youth literature, and literature as a tool for the establishment of reading as a critical, educative, and aesthetic skill. In the preface, Uliana Hnidets, the president of the URCCYL, highlights the main purpose of the volume, which is "to diminish a distance between literary theories and contemporary children's literature," and to introduce a wider spectrum into contemporary Ukrainian children's literature by involving pedagogues, educators, psychologists, translators, writers, readers, and book publishers.



The volume is divided into two sections. The first, "Literary Criticism," draws on the study of children's literature from a theoretical perspective. It focuses on the context of twentieth-century Ukrainian literature for children and youth, and traces major steps of historical and contemporary interpretations of texts for children. In her article, Raisa Movchan explores the dynamic development of books for children and books that constitute children's reading interests. She refers to Ukrainian writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to trace the increasing interest in representing childhood in prose, and stresses the profound involvement of writers in creating realistic fiction about children of that particular era. She concludes that Soviet cultural politics used the psychological component of children's literature to ideological ends, which led most Ukrainian writers to look for different approaches to reflecting reality. Halyna Bijchuk's essay employs Wolfgang Iser's construal of a literary work as a form of communication, and Maria Zubrytska's interpretation of postmodern readers' interaction with a text. Bijchuk explains the possible roles of the implied reader, presents a schema for a youth's response to a text, and discusses its implications for classroom use. The chapter also addresses today's publishing needs and interests, and additionally, it presents a variety of formats of contemporary picture books and evaluates their significance for young readers.

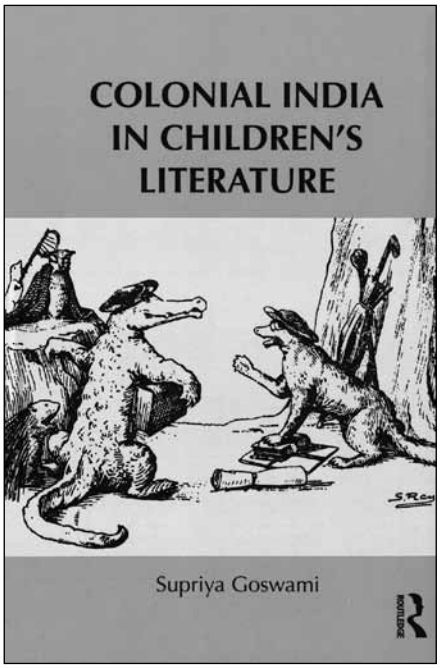
The second section, "Pedagogy and Methods," analyzes the classical pedagogical and methodological model of classical education in Ukraine, and its potential growth in response to developments in contemporary children's literature; the readiness of pedagogues and literature teachers to introduce contemporary Ukrainian titles and selected translated titles of world literature for children in the classroom; the need to interconnect them across the curriculum. It also stresses the aim of developing and improving the role of children's books for children to become lifetime readers. For instance, Boris Shalahinov's article contends that in Ukraine, the notion of child readership is mostly based on two recently established approaches: the methodologist's inquiry and the publisher's offer. He argues that education, and especially a school's reading curriculum, should reflect and elucidate the contemporary reality of children and young adults.

In her article, Tetiana Kachak looks at the definitions of the term "children's literature," as well as its function in the theoretical works of Ukrainian and international scholars. Kachak's major argument sees children's literature as part of world literature that develops in a transnational process by absorbing new trends, styles, genres, content, modern, and postmodern patterns. She criticizes that only a handful of selected writers and books form the object of study for younger Ukrainian scholars, narrowing their perspective and remaining unable to provide a solid theoretical basis for the study of children's literature. Yet, she suggests that the scholarly interest in children's literature gains strength and potential for growth.

The final part of *Literatura. Duty. Čas.* offers scholarly surveys written on thematic issues discussed in this volume. For scholars, the publication of this volume is timely because it delineates the major questions and challenges of contemporary children's literature studies in Ukraine. Overall, the volume is sure to contribute to children's literature research by presenting it as a worthwhile area of study and a pedagogical necessity.

Oksana Lushchevska, University of Georgia

Colonial India in Children's Literature. By Supriya Goswami. Series: *Children's literature and Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2012. 197 pages.



Although there is certainly no shortage of literature about the history of British colonisation and imperial rule in India in general, Supriya Goswami's slim but meticulously researched book seems to be the first thorough study to bring together children's literature by British, Anglo-Indian, and Bengali authors with colonial Indian history. Focusing on six authors, Goswami explores the connections between these two fields, and develops her argument that these authors' texts "not only engage in political activism, but also seek to empower children (both real and fictional) by celebrating them as active colonial and anti-colonial agents" (3).

In her chronologically arranged research, she devotes one chapter each to *The History of Little Henry and His Bearer* by Mary Sherwood, *The Captives in India* by Barbara Hofland, *The Story of Sonny Sahib* by Sara Jeanette Duncan, *The Jungle Books* by Rudyard Kipling, and texts by the two Bengali authors, Upendrakishore Ray and Sukumar Ray, respectively. Goswami's

book, spanning a period of roughly 100 years from the early nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century, pairs each author's text with a significant event or occurrence in Indian history.

In addition to including ample background information in each chapter about the socio-political situation in India at the time, the author also offers biographical details about each of the six writers mentioned above, and situates the texts within the wider context of the authors' further works and the works of other writers. Thus, Goswami does not only provide an analysis of the relationship between the respective historical events and their meanings in the analysed texts, but she also confirms the important role that children's literature may have played in cementing or fighting against cultural stereotypes.

Chapter 1 focuses on the importance of the missionary debates, which led to the Charter Act of 1813, in Mary Sherwood's book. Goswami shows how the eponymous protagonist Little Henry, although he is just a sickly little boy, manages to convert his Indian bearer Boosy to Christianity, and thus fulfils an important role as British missionary.

In Chapter 2, Goswami relates why the Anglo-Mysore Wars in the eighteenth century, and particularly the defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1799, generated such immense interest in Britain, and how Barbara Hofland, who had never even travelled to India, used that interest to write a "captivity tale" in which she is able "to reverse the pattern of cultural contact that the British feared so much" (77).

Sara Jeanette Duncan's *The Story of Sonny Sahib*, discussed in Chapter 3, is set during the Indian Mutiny of 1857, and can be considered, according to Goswami, as an "allegory of the empire saved, greatly improved, and reborn […]" (81). As Goswami argues, its hero Sonny, who survives the mutiny, is brought up by Indians and later reunited with his English father, serves as the ideal post-Mutiny hero who can bring together the two opposing worlds and thus "consolidate British authority in the colonies." (81)

In Chapter 4, Goswami draws parallels between the unruly and law-defying monkey mob called the Bandar-log in Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Books*, and the emergence of a group of Western-educated Indians who threaten British rule in India through a newly found Indian nationalism. Kipling's justification of violence in order to re-establish his hero Mowgli's supremacy is compared by Goswami to the British justification of their supremacy in India.

The last chapter focuses on the Swadeshi movement after the partition of Bengal in 1905, and uses *Tuntunir Boi* [*Tuntuni's Book*] and *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* by Upendrakishore Ray and *Ha-Ja-Ba-Ra-La* [*A Topsy-Turvy Tale*] and *Abol Tabol* [*Rhymes without Reason*] by Sukumar Ray as examples for "anti-colonial texts that seek to empower Bengali children living under colonial rule" (136)—unlike the books in the previous chapters, which served to justify and strengthen British rule in India.

This engaging study offers a new perspective on historical children's books about and from India and may be an incentive—together with Michelle Superle's "Contemporary English-Language Indian Children's Literature" [see review in *Bookbird* 50. 3]—to dig deeper into the field of Indian children's literature.

Claudia Söffner, International Youth Library

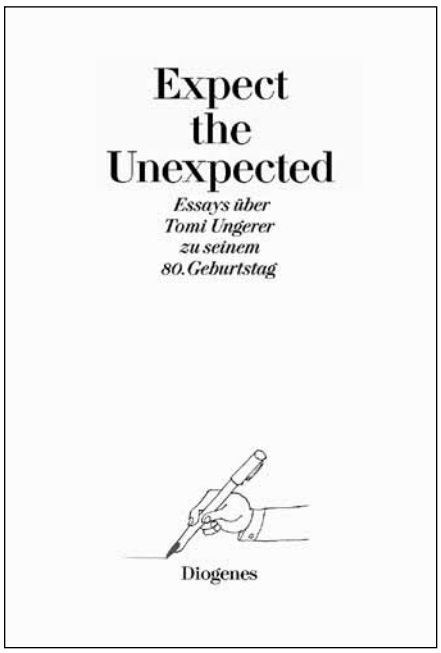
Expect the Unexpected. Essays über Tomi Ungerer zu seinem 80. Geburtstag [Expect the unexpected: essays about Tomi Ungerer on his eightieth birthday]. Edited by Daniel Keel, et al. Zürich: Diogenes, 2011. 254 pages.

Tomi Ungerer: obsessive, creative, provocative.

The mild Maurice and the wild Tomi? They must have made a remarkable pair, producing images and picture books in the hectic city of New York in the 1950s and 1960s. When Maurice Sendak completed the series of his popular bear books with *A Kiss for Little Bear*, Tomi Ungerer countered with *No Kiss for Mother*, a picture book about bad kitty Piper Paw, which caused outrage in the United States. Probably most readers had not noticed the hidden explosive in Sendak's final picture, and even less so the gesture of reconciliation at the end of Ungerer's

story. It seems that the son of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe and the *enfant terrible* from Alsace, who grew up under German and French repression, are closer than they may seem at first glance. "All minorities," Ungerer suggested in 1997, "share the same humour: Jews, the Irish, Alsatians. Black humour" (112).

On November 28, 2011, Tomi Ungerer, who now lives in Ireland following long years in New York and the Canadian Nova Scotia—with many interludes in his home town of Strasbourg—celebrated his eightieth birthday. In honour of this birthday, Diogenes published a celebratory volume of essays on him, authored over the last forty-four years by drawing and writing colleagues, including Ungerer himself. They feature an obsessively creative man and the impressively wide spectrum of his creations. Even readers primarily interested in his books for children will gain from learning more about his work not suited or intended for younger audiences. Because the sense of uneasiness with the modern adult world so vividly expressed in his commercial, personal, and political art also informs Ungerer's work for children, it prevents it from indulging in the children's book genre's wide-spread harmlessness. This overall subversive consciousness is rightly highlighted by the contributors who work in the field of children's literature criticism (Ute Blaich, Roswitha Budeus-Budde).



Essays reflecting this more subversive strand include contributions on the early caricaturesque drawings of a U.S.-American society besottet with sex and technology (Jonathan Miller, Walter Killy), on provocative political posters (Hellmuth Karasek), and punchy, facetious advertising graphics (Robert Gernhardt). Ungerer himself reflects on his illustrations of *Das große Liederbuch* [The great book of song], which cannot deny their nostalgic origin despite their darker duplicity. Friedrich Dürrenmatt, the great Swiss playwright, observes how opposites converge in Ungerer's work: the idyllic in the *Song Book* and *Heidi* illustrations on the one hand, and the monstrosities in *Fornicon* and *Babylon* on the other, modelled on nineteenth-century precursors as varied as Ludwig Richter and Honoré Daumier. In her honorific speech to the Kästner Prize, Jutta Limbach draws out the parallels between Ungerer and Kästner, who passed equally harsh judgement on adults while openly reaching out to children—Kästner did so in writing, Ungerer mainly in pictures.

Art historian Werner Spies digs deeper, analyzing Ungerer's art in relation to modern art, especially the works of Picasso and Max Ernst. Andreas Platthaus draws on his intimate knowledge of Ungerer's art to profile the oeuvre of this verbal-visual genius in its uniqueness. In a second contribution focusing on Ungerer the writer, Platthaus traces two models to the picture book cat Piper Paw: the recalcitrant tomcat Piper in *Heute hier, morgen fort* [Here today, gone tomorrow] and the author himself as child in *Es war einmal mein Vater* [Once upon a time my father] (205). Personal memories of Reinhard Stumm and Thomas

David's description of a day in Ungerer's Irish workshop give insight into the artist's creative process. Overall, readers will regret the publisher's decision not to include any illustrations in this collection of essays, especially when specific images are referenced. Readers can instead refer to catalogues of various recent exhibitions (e.g. *Eklipsis. Ausstellung Albtraum und Befreiung* [Exhibition nightmare and liberation]. Kunsthalle: Würth & Swiridoff, 2010; Willer, Thérèse. *Tomi Ungerer. Das Tomi Ungerer Museum ins Strasbourg* [The Tomi Ungerer Museum in Strasbourg]. Zürich: Diogenes, 2007). Some may even be inspired to visit the recently openend Musée Tomi Ungerer in Strasbourg.

By way of conclusion, two prominent voices rounding off the Festschrift deserve mention. Peter Sís remembers how in Communist dominated Prague, Ungerer opened his eyes to the possibilities of illustrative art. Maurice Sendak found the right words to characterize the genius of his colleague and long-time friend already in 1967: "Like the exceptional poet who can gracefully meet the demands of terza rima or write a good sonnet, he knows how to create the satisfying balance of language and illustration that marks a picture book worthy of the name" (243).

Dr. Reinbert Tabbert, University of Education Schwäbisch Gmünd / School of Library Sciences Stuttgart, Germany.

Review reprinted from JuLit (1/2012), with permission from the Arbeitskreis für Jugendliteratur (IBBY Germany). Translated by Nikola von Merveldt.

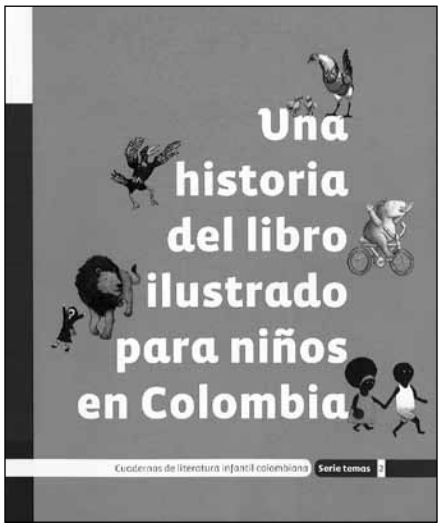
Una historia del libro ilustrado para niños en Colombia [A history of illustrated books by children in Columbia]. Edited by María Fernanda Paz Castillo. Series: *Cuadernos de literatura infantil colombiana*. Bogotá: Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia, 2011. 316 pages.

For five years now, the National Library of Colombia (Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia) has been publishing essay collections on Colombian children's literature. Even though the series comprises only five titles presently, it is highly remarkable, especially since Colombia has not yet produced much research in the field of children's and young adult literature.

The first titles of the series present two authors, one illustrator, and the theme of "music and children's literature." *Una historia del libro ilustrado para niños en Colombia*, the largest volume of the series so far, takes on the history and development of Colombian children's book illustration from its beginnings to the present. Historical account and critical survey of the current state of the art in one, the work is based on five hundred books from the collection of the National Library in Bogotá. The authors of the twelve chapters, all recognized authorities in the field,

cover the professional spectrum from university, education, library, publishing, and illustration. Their different views of the field make for interesting and varied reading.

Just as for other Latin American countries, the beginnings of what could be considered autonomous literature for children and young adults took shape only toward the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In her essay covering the period until 1920, Beatriz Helena Robledo describes textbooks and primers as precursors to illustrated children's books for children in Colombia. Their images were still overtly didactic, merely serving the text. These books followed European models, such as the "Orbis pictus" by Comenius, or books in the spirit of European educationists like Pestalozzi.



John Naranjo defines the decades between 1920 and 1940 as the "decisive" and formative ones for the country's children's book illustration. During the two World Wars and the Spanish Civil War, Colombia imported fewer Spanish books. This created a need and provided the opportunity to establish the domestic book industry. In synchrony with social reforms, publications with a new kind of illustration took shape: pedagogically progressive textbooks, children's magazines, such as "Rin Rin," or milestones like the illustrated book for children "El país de Lilac" (1938) by Oswaldo Díaz Díaz.

It was not before the final decades of the twentieth century that Colombia had developed an independent, expanding children's book production, according to Silvia Castrillón. Looking at the period between 1970 and 1990, she observes a gradual shift away from the traditional didactic ways of using children's literature and illustration. Moreover, the images tend to go beyond their previously dominating decorative function.

In the following chapter, Carlos Riaño analyzes the remaining twenty years from 1990 to the present. Himself a graphic artist and illustrator, he focuses more strongly on the artistic-aesthetic aspects. He describes how children's book illustration was influenced by new artistic techniques and the audio-visual media, and how these developments fostered greater diversity.

The other contributions to the book offer different ways of approaching the topic. María Osorio, for example, presents a selection of eighteen illustrations from twentieth-century Colombian children's books, which she considers indicative and emblematic of the development of the art of illustration. Zully Pardo analyzes the genre of the picture book as a specific type of illustrated children's book, which in comparison with other Latin-American countries, such as Venezuela, developed late in Colombia and has only just begun to gain more ground.

Una historia del libro ilustrado para niños en Colombia comes with high-quality reproductions of book covers and pages. A name and title index would make a welcome addition to a new edition. Overall, the book is a remarkable piece of pioneer work. By giving a compact, extensive view of the development of national children's book illustration, it makes a major contribution to the field of Colombian as well as Latin-American children's book studies and offers an excellent foundation for further studies on the topic.

Jochen Weber, International Youth Library, Munich, Germany. Translated by Nikola von Merveldt.

Presentation of the Hans Christian Andersen Awards 2012

Laudation by María Jesús Gil, President of the Hans Christian Andersen Jury 2012

Mr. President, Distinguished Laureates, Most valued Hosts and Sponsors, Esteemed Guests:

As the President of the 2012 Hans Christian Andersen Awards Jury, I am very proud to be here, in London, to introduce the winners of the 2012 Hans Christian Andersen medals – María Teresa Andruetto and Peter Sís.

As soon as the Jury selected the winners, I informed to the patron of the Awards, Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, who has kindly granted me permission to extend Her heartiest congratulations to the two winners today. I send our gratitude to Her Majesty for Her patronage of these awards.

I would also like to express my gratitude to this year's Jury that I have had the honour to preside. Working with these ten distinguished experts in literature for children from five continents, has been an extraordinary experience for me. Many of them are with us this evening. Allow me to recognize them and their fantastic job: **Anastasia Arkhipova** from Russia; **Françoise Ballanger** from France; **Ernest Bond** from USA; **Sabine Fuchs** from Austria; **Ayfer Gürdal Ünal** from Turkey; **Jan Hansson** from Sweden; **Eva Kaliskami** from Greece; **Nora Lía Sormani** from Argentina; **Sahar Tarhandeh** from Iran, and, **Regina Zilberman** from Brazil. **Elda Nogueira**, representing IBBY and IBBY Executive Director **Liz Page** also attended as ex officio non-voting Jury members. As President of this Jury I want to express my gratitude all of them.

María Jesús Gil
(photo by Doris Breitmoser)

The Jury spent more than nine months studying the books and dossiers of 57

Compiled and edited by
ELIZABETH PAGE

Elizabeth Page is
IBBY's Executive Director

candidates nominated from 32 countries. In behalf of IBBY, I thank you for your dedication.

Furthermore, I would especially like to thank Mr Kang, the CEO of Nami Island Inc., the sponsor of the Hans Christian Andersen Awards, for the generous support of this the most prestigious award given to the creators of children's literature. I thank him also for his inspiring words that he just shared with us. I also warmly welcome the Minn family who are here from Nami Island.

And now, in the name of IBBY and of Jury, it is my privilege and pleasure to briefly introduce you to our 2012 winners whom we are honouring this evening.

It is very easy to say: "briefly introduce". But, in fact, it is a hard, almost impossible challenge. How to reduce to five or six minutes the enormous work of our talented winners, two artists of the stature of María Teresa Andruetto and Peter Sís?

However, let me make the attempt, relying on the indulgence of the winners. Both of them have in common an ability that is very deep, sincere, and intelligent. Both of them have lived through great difficulties during their lives.

Maria Teresa Andruetto experienced the consequences of the military dictatorship in Argentina. Peter Sís was born in the former Czechoslovakia – on the Red side – the Communist side – of the Iron Curtain. However, they have overcome all the difficulties in their paths and, through their work have, by making an ever-lasting contribution to children's literature, given children and adults the message that we must aim for a better world.

The winner of the 2012 Hans Christian Andersen Medal for writing is María Teresa Andruetto from Argentina.

María Teresa Andruetto was born in Arroyo Cabral, Córdoba, Argentina. She is the daughter of an Italian immigrant who arrived in Argentina after the Second World War, but she did not begin to write until the end of the military dictatorship in Argentina.

She writes without having in mind if her books are for children or for adults. In her book *Hacia una literatura sin adjetivos/ Towards a literature without adjectives* she asks herself: "To write for children or just to write?"

In the same book she says: "A writer is a person whose more pure pleasure is to find among thousand of words, the words."

The building of individual and social identities, the female universe, the after-effects of the dictatorship in her country – all written with a deep, rich, poetic language – are some of the central themes in her work. And about life as a journey: to look far away for what maybe is close by.

We can find all these key elements, this theme, this strong sense of communication between the writer and the reader, in *Stefano*: one of her best-known novels. In *Stefano* we find many of the topics that María Teresa frequently writes deeply about – the journey, migration, poverty, solidarity, inner worlds, injustice, love, violence and poetical

affairs – with a very high and rich language. Because these universal themes her books broke generational barriers and are read by both young people and adults.

The Jury wishes to recognize the talent of María Teresa Andruetto with this year's award for writing. Thus, honouring her mastery in creating unique and sensitive books, which are deep and poetic, and for being an outstanding artist with words.

The winner of the 2012 Hans Christian Andersen Medal for illustration is **Peter Sís** from the Czech Republic.

Peter Sís is an illustrator, filmmaker, painter and author. He was born in 1949 in Brno, in the former Czechoslovakia and grew up in Prague. In 1982 he was working in the USA when the Soviet Union ordered him back to Prague – he declined to go and consequently he could not go home.

His books are extraordinary for the way they demonstrate how words and art work together to communicate with the readers through well-documented and extraordinary original stories: to transmit the emotion and the excitement of discovery.

María Jesús Gil and Ahmad Redza Ahmad Khairuddin welcoming Bart Moeyaert to the stage (photo by Doris Breitmoser)

He is a master in expressing the deepest emotions through his detailed images and texts, while dealing with universal subjects and so captivating both children and adults from all countries.

I would like to read the final sentence from Peter's after word from the picture book:

The Wall: Growing up behind the Iron Curtain, where he tells us about the oppressive environment, the lack of freedom of expression and government censorship in the Communist Czechoslovakia:

> The wall which for many years divided Berlin and the whole Europe is now, fortunately, only a memory. But some memories need to be preserved. As a message about the past. As a warning to the future. Even though one wall has fallen, others remain and more are being built. All over the world. In Israel, Korea or on the Mexican border. Symbolic walls, ideological walls and real walls. Walls of fear, confinement and suspicion. Walls without which our lives could be freer and happier.

The Jury appreciated Peter Sís' extraordinary originality and versatility as he engages his powerful imagination to create a complex and intricate visual language through the different layouts, artistic techniques and designs that he has especially created for each book, where marvellous surprises delight the reader! The winner is a master in using watercolours, oil paints, collage, pen-and-ink and many other graphic

elements, which he uses to create a personal and unique universe.

María Teresa Andruetto and Peter Sís are both worthy winners of the Awards.

Congratulations to both of them.

Before we go further I would like to invite some of the finalists to the stage to receive their diplomas: Bart Moeyaert author from Belgium and Roger Mello illustrator from Brazil.

Now it is with great pleasure and a real honour for me to invite the 2012 winners to the podium to receive their diplomas and medals from IBBY President Ahmad Redza Ahmad Khairuddin, and to address to us with their acceptance speeches.

María Jesús Gil
25 August 2012
33rd IBBY Congress,
Imperial College, London, UK

IBBY FRANCE: 3rd European Encounters on Children's Literature

On Friday, 30 November 2012, experts from all over Europe who work in the field of children's literature were brought together at the National Library of France in Paris. Through discussions and exchanges they reflected about the creation of comparative literature in Europe, as well as publishing practices, mediation and promotion founded on mutual knowledge.

Anaïs Gonzales-Suescun, researcher at the University of Rennes 2, explained that although traditionally dependent on foreign production and scarcely distributed in France, Spanish children's literature began to boom during the 1920's. Despite this lack of expose in France, a French publisher, *Union Latine d'Editions*, publishes a selection of titles that were published by writers and illustrators of the Spanish avant-garde movement and are remarkable for their particularly imaginative world. Marie-Pierre Litaudon , also researcher at at the University of Rennes 2, talked about the brothers Karel and Josef Čapek who were two leading figures of the Czech avant-garde interwar period. Their tales, inspired by communism, became major classics of Czech literature for children and were rapidly distributed throughout Europe.

A presentation about picture books in the United Kingdom by illustrator Martin Salisbury, Deidre McDermott the publisher of Walker Books and illustrator Axel Scheffler was very interesting. In particular their exploration of the issue of why relatively few picture books from continental Europe are available on the English market. They proposed that UK publishers often label European picture books as too sophisticated. For example, Andersen Award winner Wolf Elbruch has hardly been published in the UK because publishers believe that his books are too explicit for children. Many British picture books are sold in department stores and the publishers generally focus on mass production, while in

Storming the bastion of the British Picture book
IBBY at France 2012 (photo by Wally de Doncker)

Europe there are a certain amount of government subsidies, which do not exist in the UK or the USA. As a further point, Deidre McDermott recognised that children's books for the UK market are expected to be political correct. A lot of British publishers want to protect the child from violence, war, blood and naked breasts…

In the afternoon there was a conversation with Fausta Orecchio and Simone Tonucci, founders of *Orecchio Acerbo*, about the new trends in publishing picture books in Italy. *Orecchio Acerbo* was founded in 2001 with the aim of publishing illustrated books for children and adults – books that combine quality texts with visual and graphic research. Some of the most famous Italian and

foreign authors and illustrators are represented in their catalogue.

The Norwegian publisher Svein Størksen presented his Magikon publishing company. He told us how five years ago he catapulted himself from an almost comfortable life as a freelance illustrator into the book business whirlwind. He talked about the editorial process in his publishing house and the cooperation with authors, artists and foreign publishers. Since its establishment, Magikon has published about forty titles, of which several have been translated to foreign languages – very remarkable for a one-man publishing house.

The German reading promoters Annette Meyer and Iris Wolf from the *Bundesverband Leseförderung*, based in Stuttgart, presented their projects for reading promotion. Within the organization teachers specialized in reading and literature comprehension work in different cultural contexts. Their concept is to use the diversity of existing resources alongside classical educational institutions, such as kindergartens and schools, in order to create new opportunities for children and young adults to read and write. These resources are libraries, bookshops, publishing houses, museums, cultural societies and organizations.

Deborah Soria, board member of IBBY Italy and bookseller of children's books since 1999, presented the recently launched international prestigious project 'Silent Books. From the World to Lampedusa and Back'. The aim of this IBBY Italia project is to put together a collection of the best-illustrated wordless picture books that have been published around the world. The project will go hand-in-hand with a biennial travelling exhibition to promote the selected books and their use. A library will also be opened on Lampedusa, the small island in the Mediterranean Sea where thousands of immigrants, including many children and young people, pass through on their way to Europe. (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdWG79dMrkQ)

Continuing on the theme of multi-culturalism, Anne-Laure Cognet interviewed author Janne Teller about her book *Guerre, et si ça nous arrivait?* The book was written in different languages (Danish, French, Hungarian) according to the country of publication. Janne Teller, born in Copenhagen now living in New York, is a Danish novelist with an Austrian-German family background. Since her 1999 debut novel, the highly acclaimed modern Nordic saga *Odin's Island* about political and religious fanaticism, she has published several best-selling and award-winning novels. She left her professional career with the United Nations to concentrate fully on her writing.

Anne-Laure Cognet and Janne Teller
(photo by Wally de Doncker)

Six European professionals presented their special books of 2012: Julia Subbrich talked about *Alles Lecker* (Germany), Jean-Baptiste Coursaud with *Sneedronningen* (Denmark) and *Jenta som ikke kunnen slute…* (Norway), Urszula Sadlowska *Petit Homme* (Poland), David Toland *Libretto Postale* (Italy), Teresa Duran Armengol *Alfabeto*(Spain) and myself with *Nederland* (Netherlands) and *Van 12 tot 1* (Belgium).

At the end of the conference Hasmig Chahinian, current vice-president of IBBY International, presented the official IBBY diplomas to the French candidates for the 2012 Andersen Award and to the 2012 IBBY Honour list nominees from France.

The European Encounters on Children's Literature of IBBY France was a very interesting and challenging meeting: I am looking forward to the next Encounter in 2014!

Wally De Doncker

Ehon 3/2011: Children in Crisis in Japan
www.ehonproject.org/iwate

Following the earthquake, soon to be known as the Great East Japan Earthquake, and subsequent Tsunami that hit the northeast coast of Japan on 11 March 2011, IBBY immediately sent out an appeal for donations to take books to the children in the devastated area. Long-time IBBY member and former Executive Committee member Chieko Suemori had recently moved to the Iwate Prefecture; one of the prefectures where the disaster was unfolding. Chieko as a publisher of children's books knew what they needed: picture books, and lots of them. She appealed to the publishers and the children of Japan and very soon books were arriving at her headquarters at the City Hall in Morioko and the 3.11 Ehon Picture Book Project Iwate was ready to go. By April, children from all over Japan had sent 1,500 boxes of books – approximately 75,000 books. The devastation was too awful to contemplate for long, so action was needed. As the roads were still in bad condition, small vans were bought with the donations and converted for use as mobile libraries. IBBY had collected CHF 20,000 from friends and colleagues around the world. In total six Ehon vans were put into commission and were soon travelling to the coastal regions taking books and storytellers to the children. In July 2011 IBBY President Redza Ahmad Khairuddin visited the project and eighteen months later he returned with Patsy Aldana and me, representing IBBY international. We were taking part in an IBBY/JBBY Asahi Shimbun symposium on reading promotion in Tokyo and found time to take the Shinkansen north to Morioko. We visited the cultural centre when Chieko has her headquarters and where the mobile library books are stocked. The centre is host to a children's week once a month where storytelling and other activities take place for the children, many of whom are refugees from the devastated coastal area. We travelled east and visited Miyako on the coast, which is an area that was hit hard by the Tsunami. The town remains devastated with little or no rebuilding visible so far. All along the coast bodies are still being found under collapsed buildings and the people are still in shock: 230,000 people are still living in temporary housing or living with relatives.

Kindergarten children enjoying their books

We visited a thriving kindergarten that has been supplied with picture books through the Ehon project. The kindergarten leaders were convinced that working with picture books was really beneficial for the children – something that they had not known before the disaster. The town also had a bunko or home library and an Ehon car supplied by the project.

Another bookmobile project in the region is the Books for Tomorrow project that was founded by the Japan Publishing Club, PEN Japan, JPIC and Japanese IBBY (JBBY). The fully-stocked bookmobile visits the affected area on a regular basis returning to Tokyo to restock. The initial funding came from an auction of donated artwork, which raised 13 million yen – far more than expected and showed the importance given to picture books for children. Volunteer readers go with the bus and sometime visiting actors give performances. The bus regularly visits parking lots belonging to supermarkets and posters at local schools give the schedule. In good weather reading activities take place in the open air, particularly popular are the Kamishibai shows. At the end of 2011 the project built a permanent library to serve the community at Rikuzen-Takada City. Five librarians died or are still missing from the original library of the town as it was washed away. The new library is used by all the community and serves as a focus point for the people. One of the saddest things we were told was that the teenage girls in the region are worried about their chances of having children in the future after being radiated after the power station was hit by the Tsunami. They felt that they would be ostracized wherever they lived.

Mobile library of Books for Tomorrow with Naoko Torizuka and the librarian from the Rainbow Library

Both of these projects are doing very necessary work and it is clear that although there is much still to do and a lot of frustration with the authorities, there is a feeling of community and working together for the future.

Liz Page

IBBY – JBBY – Asahi Shimbun Symposium Tokyo December 2012

On 3 December 2012 JBBY organized a symposium in the impressive Asahi Shimbun offices in Tokyo on reading promotion. IBBY and the Asahi Shimbun assisted in the preparations and the event was well attended by around 200 participants. The international guests included IBBY President Ahmad Redza Ahmad Khairuddin, IBBY Foundation President Patsy Aldana, IBBY Executive Director Liz Page and two representatives of SIPAR the 2012 winner of the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award from Cambodia – Socheata Huot and Sothik Hot. Other speakers included Hisashi Yoshizono the General Director of the Public Affairs Environment of the Asahi Shimbun, Noriko Saito from the Books for Tomorrow project and Takao Murayama the current President of JBBY. IBBY EC member Kiyoko Matsuoka compered the symposium.

IBBY Regional Conferences

In 2013 three regional meetings are being planned, two of which are the first for their regions. The first will take place in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates and will cover the region of Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa – IBBY sections from Pakistan to Tunisia. The conference will take place 21-23 April and will have the theme: *Bringing Children and Books Together.* http://www.uaebby.org.ae

The aim of the conference is:

- To learn more about different initiatives taking place in the region for the promotion of reading, especially among children living in difficult conditions.
- To shed light on past and emerging trends in children's book publishing in the region, with a focus on groundbreaking developments that serve to expand and diversify children's book publishing.
- To identify practical suggestions and steps for cooperation and networking on national, regional and international levels.
- To encourage the establishment of new national sections of IBBY in countries where IBBY currently does not have established sections.

The next regional conference will cover Asia and Oceania and take place in Bali, 23-26 May. The main theme is *How to Strengthen Asia-Oceania IBBY Knowing Your Neighbours* and *Asian/Oceania Stories are Unique.* Speakers include representatives from IBBY across the region as well as from international IBBY. www.inabby.com

The topics covered will include:

- Vibrant and effective programmes for children to celebrate International Storytelling Festival on various Folktales.
- Programmes that use stories to prevent bullying.
- Working with children in children's literature projects in schools and/or libraries with emphasis on teaching children to live in harmony; understanding and respecting others with different race, background, ability and children coming from other countries.
- Using newer media, theatre, film, radio, TV, digital media, to teach children the issue of "Knowing Your Neighbours".
- Children's literature research projects at the university level, involving Asian and Oceania Children's literature
- The uniqueness of oral traditions of Asia and Oceania
- Asian and Oceania stories in the eyes of international publishers
- Stories that show children living in Multicultural Societies
- Asia and Oceania stories which can play in the world of the children's literature market.

The third Regional Conference of the year will be the 10th IBBY regional meeting organized by USBBY. This biennial conference will take place in St. Louis, Missouri, 18-20 October. The theme is *Bookjoy Around the World*, celebrating the 2013 International Children's Book Day theme. Speakers will include Ashley Bryan and Pat Mora the creators of the ICBD message and artwork, Katherine Paterson and Siobhan Parkinson in conversation, Peter Sís and Klaas Verplanke talking about illustrators, a panel with Andrea Chang, Louis May, Simone Elkeles and Ifeoma Onyefulu, and Mem Fox will give the Briley Lecture. www.usbby.org

A full programme for 2013 already! Go to the IBBY website for details of more IBBY events throughout the year. www.ibby.org

IBBY World Congress 2014: Reading as an inclusive experience

The IBBY World Congress in Mexico City in 2014 has as its motto: *May Everyone Really Mean Everyone*. This motto is what IBBY is striving for worldwide as we encourage our friends and colleagues around the world to be inclusive in their membership. Therefore, it is time

to start saving and planning to attend the 34th IBBY Congress. The Congress will open on 10 September 2014 in the heart of Mexico City. During 2013 information will become available at http://www.ibbycongress2014.org

The Year of the Dragon is the tenth book in the *Tales of the Chinese Zodiac* series. In it, Dominic the Dragon (Dom) and his friends must overcome parental disapproval, adult disdain, and physical impediments to compete in the annual river race. While children will surely enjoy the lively illustrations by Nickelodeon designer Jennifer Wood, parents may be disappointed in the book if they are looking for a story that draws on Chinese cultural traditions and legends to introduce their child to the animals of the Chinese Zodiac. Dom does not exhibit the quality of proud and stately, if at times imperious, dignity that is the dragon's defining feature, and neither the story nor its illustrations offer any distinguishing mark of Chinese culture, aside from the token pagoda, dragon gate, and gong. Most startlingly, the human characters in the book all look decidedly non-Chinese. As a result, this book offers a lively story about a dragon, but not a tale of the Chinese Zodiac.

Helen Luu

Oliver Chin

The Year of the Dragon

San Francisco: Immedium, 2011.
36 p.
ISBN 1597020281
(Picturebook; ages 5+)

Editor(s) Required for *Bookbird: a Journal of international Children's Literature*

Bookbird, Inc., the managing board of IBBY's journal, *Bookbird: a Journal of International Children's Literature* seeks an editor or editorial team to take over from the current editor, whose term of office finishes with the publication of the October 2014 issue. *Bookbird* is a refereed journal published quarterly by IBBY (The International Board on Books for Young People), and is distributed by the Johns Hopkins University Press.

The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) is a non-profit organization that represents an international network of people from all over the world who are committed to bringing books and children together. www.ibby.org

The *Bookbird* editor(s) must have the following qualifications:

- An appropriate level of experience in editing a journal or books to publication level.
- An understanding of the publishing process and experience in working with copy editors, designers, and printers.
- Evidence of a clearly defined interest in and knowledge of children's literature in an international context. Previous experience in this area will be an advantage.
- An excellent command of the English language and a general ability to work with foreign languages and writers whose first language is not English. Proficiency in a language other than English will be an advantage.
- A degree in an appropriate discipline, e.g. literature, languages, children's literature, education, childhood studies, publishing, or librarianship.
- A sympathetic ability to work with and encourage authors from a wide range of cultures and different educational backgrounds.
- Excellent information technology skills, including access to email and other appropriate technology.
- An ability to work within and keep to deadlines.
- Commitment to the ideals of IBBY and an understanding of and empathy with the principles guiding the publication of *Bookbird*.
- A willingness to work closely with the board of Bookbird, Inc., the IBBY Executive Committee, and the IBBY Secretariat.
- Be free to travel to designated meetings of Bookbird, Inc. and the IBBY Executive.

Editorial duties include:

- Planning the content of each issue of *Bookbird*.
- Sourcing and commissioning suitable articles.
- Liaising with the *Bookbird* review panel and overseeing the refereeing process for each article.
- Working with authors to improve their texts.
- Working with the organizations and individuals that produce additional content for the journal, i.e. reviews, "Focus IBBY," etc.
- Editing content and overseeing the copyediting and proofreading of articles and dealing with illustrations and permissions.
- Liaising with the designer and printer, and generally project-managing each issue of the journal and ensuring that it appears on time.
- Working closely with and informing the board of Bookbird, Inc. on editorial-related matters.
- Promoting the overarching aims of IBBY through *Bookbird*.

The editor(s) are required to attend Bookbird, Inc. and IBBY Executive Committee meetings twice yearly in various venues around the world. These are held in March or April at the Bologna Book Fair

and in another location later in the year, usually during August or September. There is a modest budget available to cover hotel and travel expenses to these meetings.

The application deadline is August 1st, 2013. It is expected that the incoming editor(s) will be in place by early 2014 to prepare the first issue of 2015 (January). The contract to edit Bookbird extends for four years subject to an initial period of approval.

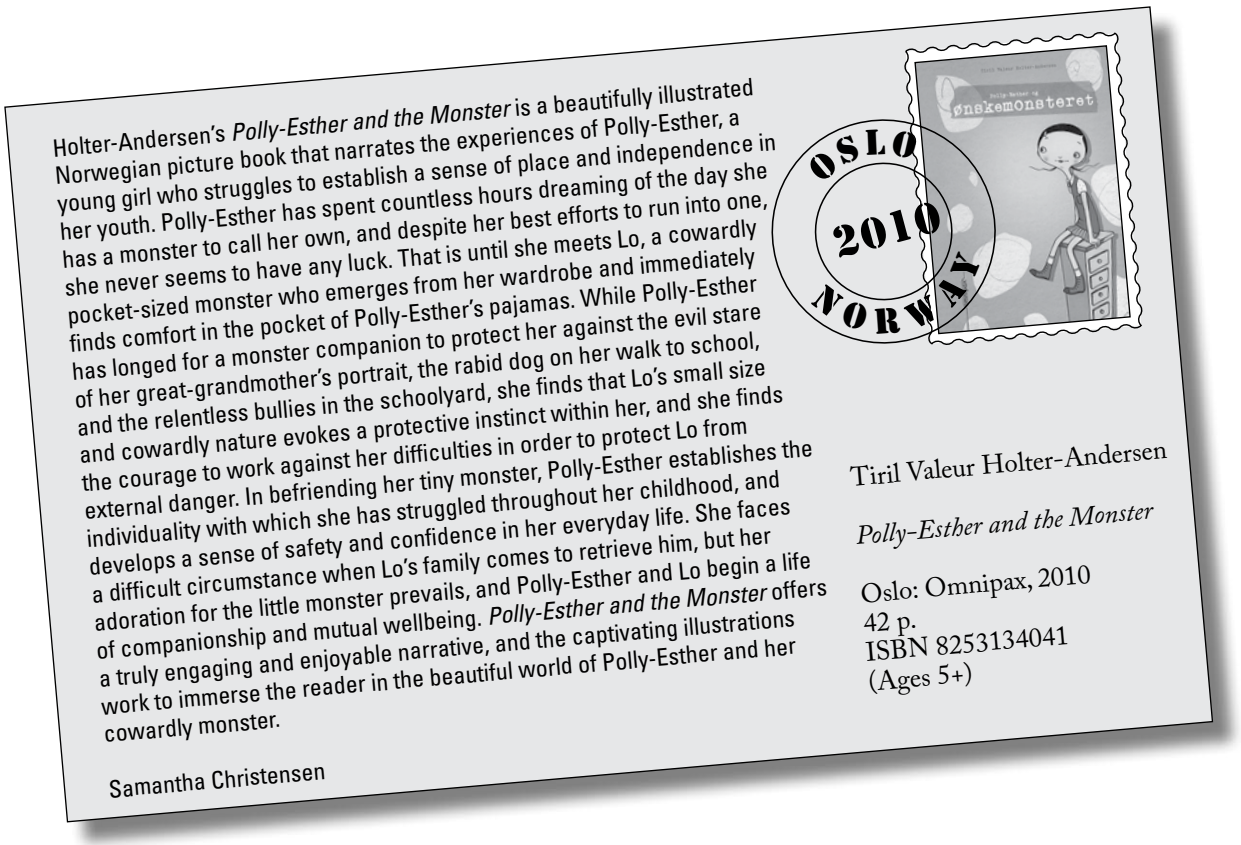
This is an excellent opportunity for an ambitious and creative person or persons with a strong interest in international children's literature to acquire invaluable experience. It is not a full-time job, however, remuneration is modest and the editors will need to provide their own back-up by way of office facilities and secretarial help. The editor(s) work from their own homes or offices and may be based in any country.

Interviews for the post are likely to be conducted by Skype or telephone with a possible follow-up interview in person.

Applicants are expected to be familiar with *Bookbird* and with the aims of IBBY.

Expressions of interest, including a detailed CV (resumé), a statement about the applicant's vision for *Bookbird* and an outline of how the applicant would manage the processes involved in producing the journal are invited from suitably qualified persons. These should be sent by email to:

Valerie Coghlan, President of Bookbird, Inc.: bookbirdpresident@gmail.com
Ellis Vance, Treasurer of Bookbird, Inc.: executive.secretary@usbby.org



Holter-Andersen's *Polly-Esther and the Monster* is a beautifully illustrated Norwegian picture book that narrates the experiences of Polly-Esther, a young girl who struggles to establish a sense of place and independence in her youth. Polly-Esther has spent countless hours dreaming of the day she has a monster to call her own, and despite her best efforts to run into one, she never seems to have any luck. That is until she meets Lo, a cowardly pocket-sized monster who emerges from her wardrobe and immediately finds comfort in the pocket of Polly-Esther's pajamas. While Polly-Esther has longed for a monster companion to protect her against the evil stare of her great-grandmother's portrait, the rabid dog on her walk to school, and the relentless bullies in the schoolyard, she finds that Lo's small size and cowardly nature evokes a protective instinct within her, and she finds the courage to work against her difficulties in order to protect Lo from external danger. In befriending her tiny monster, Polly-Esther establishes the individuality with which she has struggled throughout her childhood, and develops a sense of safety and confidence in her everyday life. She faces a difficult circumstance when Lo's family comes to retrieve him, but her adoration for the little monster prevails, and Polly-Esther and Lo begin a life of companionship and mutual wellbeing. *Polly-Esther and the Monster* offers a truly engaging and enjoyable narrative, and the captivating illustrations work to immerse the reader in the beautiful world of Polly-Esther and her cowardly monster.

Samantha Christensen

Tiril Valeur Holter-Andersen

Polly-Esther and the Monster

Oslo: Omnipax, 2010
42 p.
ISBN 8253134041
(Ages 5+)

Dear Colleague,

Outside In is a UK based organisation that promotes children's literature in translation. So far we have featured more than 850 on our website from different parts of the world. For more information about **Outside In** and the books featured please visit www.outsidein-world.org.uk

We would like publishers in the UK to be aware of the wide range of books for children from other parts of the world. We are aware that some countries are particularly underrepresented and some of their greatest books have not yet been translated into English.

We are creating a 'Book Professionals Zone' on our website for publishers and translators. The idea is that we want to showcase good books from around the world that have not been translated into English.

We want to get recommendations of books that your IBBY section believes should be translated into English. A maximum of three titles can be recommended and they can be picture books, fiction or poetry for children. Whether it is a classic, bestseller, award-winner or even a debut book we are interested in all your recommendations.

From each of the recommended titles we would need the following information:

- Title
- Author and or Illustrator
- Date of Publication
- Country of publication
- Publisher
- Original language in which the books was written (for example: Spanish)
- Synopsis (no more than 350 words in English or alternatively the publisher's blurb)
- Book cover: please send an image of the cover by attachment.
- A couple of lines about the person and/or organisation who has recommended the book/s and a link to their website (if you have one) or email address so that publishers in the UK can find more about the other books, writers, etc.

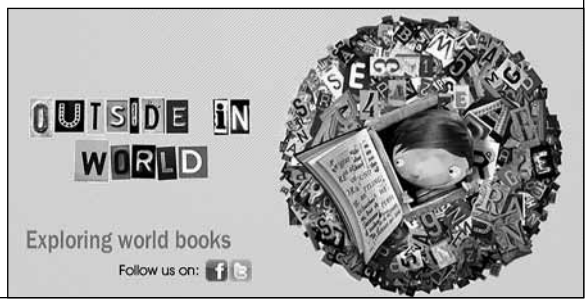
I would be grateful if you could send your recommendation/s to me by email at the following address: eoscarz@yahoo.co.uk

Many thanks for your collaboration in this matter.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,
Ed Zaghini

Outside in Team, November 2012



Call for Papers: "Que todos signifique todos": Inclusivity and Mexican Children's Literature

We invite submissions for a Special Issue of *Bookbird* to coincide with the 34th IBBY International Congress to be held in Mexico City in 2014. We invite papers that examine texts for children from Mexico or the Latin American world as they relate to or intersect with the conference theme: "Que todos signifique todos / May Everyone Really Mean Everyone."

Proposed papers of 4000 words are invited on, but not limited to, the following topics:

- Inclusivity/exclusivity
- Diversity
- Participation
- Alternatives
- Multiculturalism
- Stereotyping
- Normalcy
- Belonging
- Developments and trends
- Genre, form and themes (including, but not restricted to, fantasy, realism, young adult fiction, visual texts, poetry, controversies and taboos)

Abstracts of 250 words should be sent to both editor and guest editor by 1 May 2013.
Editor: Roxanne Harde (rharde@ualberta.ca)
Guest Editor: Beatriz Alcubierre Moya (balcubie@gmail.com)

The full articles will be expected by 1 September 2013. Please see *Bookbird's* website at www.ibby.org/bookbird for full submission details. In addition, short reviews of relevant recently published children's literature (250 words) or research on children's literature (1000 words) are warmly welcomed. Papers which are not accepted for this issue will be considered for later issues of *Bookbird*.

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, but 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.

For further information, please contact: Roxanne Harde, Email: rharde@ualberta.ca

Bookbird

A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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