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Feature Articles: Mello and His Precursors: Invisible Threads • Picture Book Characters with Disabilities: Patterns and Trends in a Context of Radical Change • Translation of Cultural Specific Items in Hooshang Moradi Kermani's Novel • Trends in Translations: The Mildred L. Batchelder Award from 1997-2013 • The Canonical Status of Children's Book Authors • Rebellion as Spiritual Activity • **Articles on the Hans Christian Andersen Award Winners and Shortlist**

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Editor: Roxanne Harde, University of Alberta—Augustana Faculty (Canada)

Address for submissions and other editorial correspondence: rharde@ualberta.ca

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IBBY may be contacted at Nonnenweg 12 Postfach, CH-4003 Basel, Switzerland, tel: +4161 272 29 17
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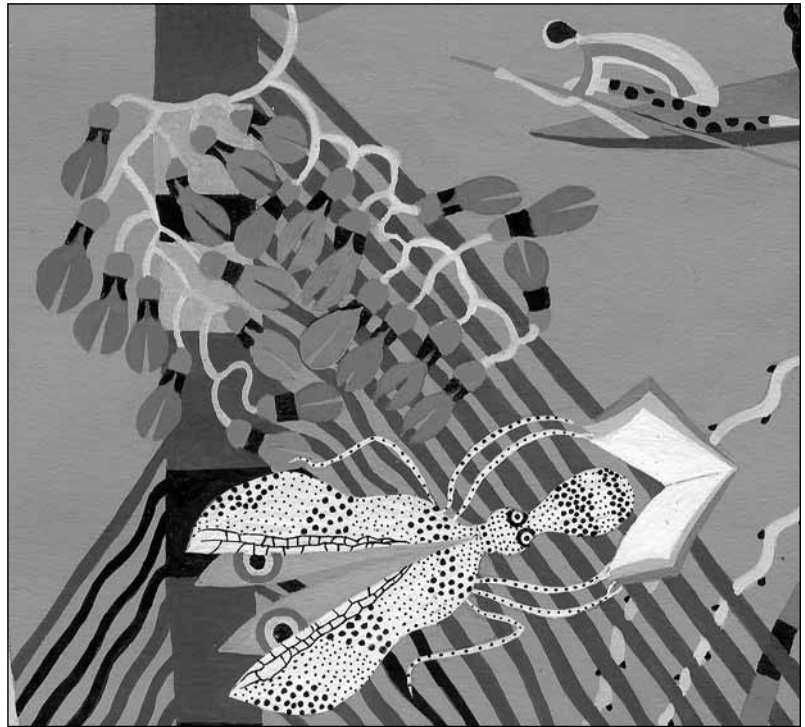
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Bookbird Editor



Roxanne Harde is a Professor of English and a McCalla University Professor at the University of Alberta, Augustana Faculty. She studies and teaches American literature and culture. She has recently published *Walking the Line: Country Music Lyricists and American Culture* (Lexington 2013), and her essays have appeared in several journals, including *International Research in Children's Literature*, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, *Christianity and Literature*, *Legacy*, *Jeunesse*, *Critique*, *Feminist Theology*, and *Mosaic*, and several edited collections, including *Enterprising Youth* and *To See the Wizard*.



“About the cover: I thought of people that bring books and the sharing of reading books in very far away, almost inaccessible places in the Amazon. There, sometimes the water ways are the only way to bring fiction for people who already have plenty of stories of their own tradition, but desire and deserve so much to have books and to read stories from abroad as well. I also decided to make a forest basically with the roots and fruits of palm trees. One of these palm trees is Paxiuba. Paxiuba is a moving plant. It grows as any plant grows, but as she gets older her axial roots substitute the main root that gets tied to ground not anymore, and so Paxiuba goes wherever she thinks it’s better. I like Paxiuba for many reasons, because she breaks with the concept of unchangeable perspective, immutable background.”

Roger Mello

Dear *Bookbird* Readers,

This issue of *Bookbird* focuses in part on this year’s Hans Christian Andersen Awards, which were announced by IBBY at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair in March and given out at the awards banquet at the IBBY Congress in México City in September. Roger Mello, the winner of the Illustrator Award, provided the original artwork that graces the cover of the issue (and the detail above). As Roger writes in the epigraph above, the Paxiuba tree so prominent in his painting is a symbol of change, as are the books being ferried by boats and insects to the depths of the Amazon jungle. I am deeply grateful to have this gorgeous painting on my last issue as editor of *Bookbird*.

In addition to the wonderful cover provided by Roger Mello, this issue has three fine articles on Mello's illustrations. In the Hans Christian Andersen Award Winners section, Flávia Brocchetto Ramos and Marília Forgearini Nunes focus on Mello's *Cavalhadas de Pirenópolis* to analyze narrative creation through the interaction of the verbal and visual components of the picturebook and to comment on the ways that Mello represents Brazilian culture. With a similar focus on the verbal visual, Graça Lima and Claudia Mendes discuss Mello's experiences as a young boy in the Brazilian Cerrado, linking them to the mixed methods that Mello employs to tell his stories, right from the first tactile experience the reader has with the material object of the picturebook. Junko Yokota and Reina Nakano then provide an overview of the Japanese fantasy worlds created by Nahoko Uehashi, winner of the Hans Christian Andersen Author Award.

The section of peer-reviewed feature articles begins with María Gracia Pardo's "Mello and His Precursors: Invisible Threads." Like Lima and Mendes, Pardo examines a variety of Mello's picturebooks, arguing that Mello's work, largely influenced by the time and place in which he was born, both comments and criticizes the society in which he lives, even as it creates a space for us to hear voices that are typically silenced. In the second feature article, a team of researchers from the University of Saskatchewan, led by Jean Emmerson, offers a qualitative content analysis of Canadian and American picture books featuring characters with disabilities. Then, Bahar Eshraq examines how words specific to Persian culture are changed in translations of *The Palm*, a novel by Hooshang Moradi Kermani. The theme of translating books for children continues in the next article, in which Kasey Garrison and Sue Kimmel analyze the characteristics of translations that have won the Mildred L. Batchelder Award. Their study raises questions about the availability and diversity of translated books for children in the United States. Helma van Lierop-Debrauwer also offers a case study, focusing on important Dutch authors of children's books to trace the development of the field in the Netherlands. In the final feature article, Catherine Posey discusses rebellion and spirituality in two popular books for adolescents, *The Magician's Elephant* and *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*.

The next section features essays on the authors and illustrators who made this year's Hans Christian Andersen Award Shortlist. As the scholars who contributed these pieces make clear, these ten artists and writers matter a great deal to the world of children's books, and the overviews of their stellar careers and analyses of their work offer readers new ways to understand and enjoy their many texts and illustrations.

Three Children & Their Books columns follow the essays on the HCA shortlist. Terry Farish writes about storytelling to children across the globe, Tülin Kozikoğlu discusses her work teaching creative writing skills to children in Turkey, and Lydia Kokkola examines Finnish children's language and culture in Sweden. All three columns offer imaginative ways to engage children in the processes of reading, writing, and understanding their world.

The Letters columns come from the amazing organizations that won this year's IBBY Asahi Reading Promotion Award. Established in 1986 and sponsored by the Asahi Shimbun newspaper company, the award is given biennially to two groups or institutions whose outstanding activities make a lasting contribution to the promotion of children's reading. Carole Bloch discusses the important and long standing work done by PRAESA: the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa, and Kim Beatty details the history and operation of the Children's Book Bank in Toronto. Both contributors have sent along wonderful photos of their reading promotion activities in action. Our columns in this issue also include an annual update from the International Youth Library in Munich by Claudia Söffner and Elizabeth Page's Focus IBBY, which provides a lively overview of IBBY's activities around the world. The issue also includes a number of reviews of new scholarly works on literature for children and young adults, as well as several postcard reviews of new books for young people.

As I mentioned, this is my last issue as editor of *Bookbird*, and I must thank a number of people and organizations, beginning with you, a reader of this journal in which I have invested a good deal of time and effort over the past years. The many comments and compliments I have had from *Bookbird*'s readers have inspired and guided me, and have made all the work more than worthwhile. I believe in this journal; it isn't like any other in the field, and its tradition of offering interesting, important, and imaginative material to scholars, teachers, librarians, humanitarians, parents, and everyone else with a vested interest in books for children has always spoken to me, as a scholar, former children's librarian, parent, and grandparent. I am deeply grateful to Valerie Coghlan and the Bookbird Inc. Board for giving me this opportunity and supporting my work over these twelve issues. Ellis Vance has become a treasured colleague and friend. Bill Benson has designed the journal throughout my tenure, and he has brought a wealth of talent and patience to our collaboration; I owe him a good deal for the beauty of this and all my issues, as I do to

the many contributors of articles and columns, and the members of the Editorial Review Board. Lydia Kokkola began this journey with me, and though she couldn't finish it, she has been unbelievable helpful during my tenure. The dozens of academics who have reviewed articles in the blind peer review process must stay unnamed, but I hope they know how much I appreciate their work. They have helped me ensure the highest quality of scholarship in the articles I have brought to you.

I want also to thank the Executive Committee of IBBY—Redza Khairuddin, Hasmig Chahinian, Linda Pavonetti, Marilar Aleixandre, Gülçin Alpöge, Nadia El Kholly, Azucena Galindo, Angela Lebedeva, Kiyoko Matsuoka, Akoss Ofori-Mensah, Timotea Vrablova, María Jesús Gil, and Jehan Helou—and its Secretariat, Liz Page and Luzmaria Stauffenegger-Lobato. This diverse group of people has taught me a great deal about international children's literature, and I have been inspired by their commitment to children's reading. They are all exceptionally talented and busy people who take time from their daily activities to better the lives of children around the globe.

The University of Alberta has supported my work as editor, covering my administrative costs, paying for graduate student assistance, and making clear that this work is valued within the academy as well as without. Dr. Allen Berger and Dr. Kim Misfeldt, my dean and chair respectively, have offered continued support for my *Bookbird* duties and have not minded the time away my commitment to the Bookbird, Inc. Board and IBBY has required. I'm grateful also to the students who have worked on *Bookbird* with me—Samantha Christensen, Erin Peters, Andrea Zerebeski, Tia Lalani, Taylor Kraayenbrink, Ben Smith, Yulun Wu, and Fei Li: their talent, enthusiasm, and efforts have made my work stronger and more joyous. Thank you all, and thanks to the incoming editor, Dr. Björn Sundmark, who has collaborated with me to make the editorial transition seamless. I know you'll enjoy the products of his editorship just as much as you'll enjoy this issue.

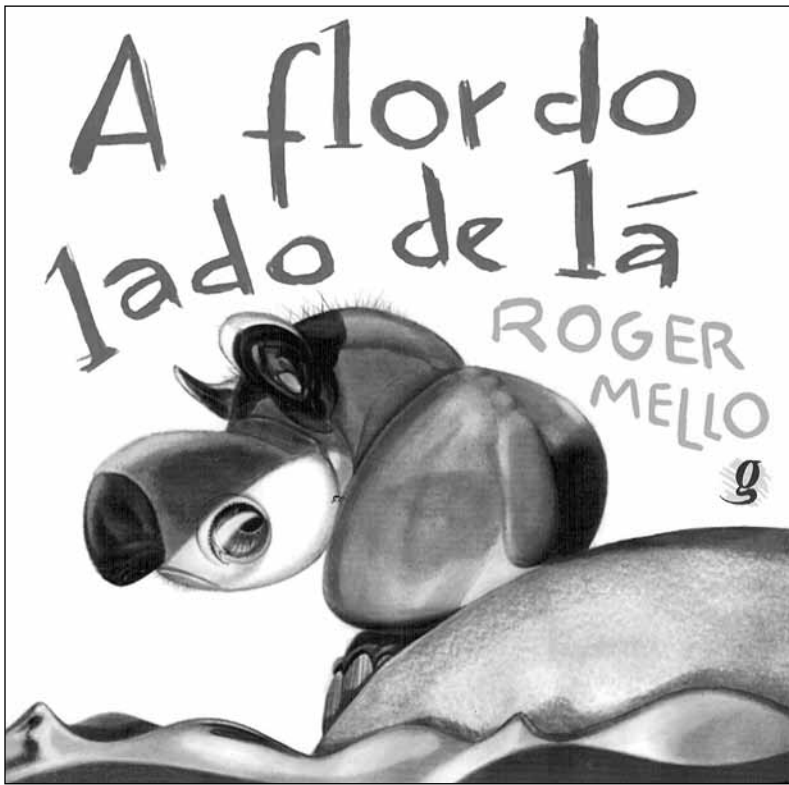
Roxanne Harde

Mello and His Precursors: Invisible Threads

by MARÍA GRACIA PARDO



María Gracia Pardo is Visiting Assistant Professor of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Miami, where she received her Ph.D. in Romance Studies with a dissertation on Brazilian and Venezuelan children's literature. She previously researched at IBBY's Venezuelan section, Banco del Libro.



This essay examines the work of Brazilian illustrator Roger Mello by placing it in dialog with the literary tradition, the artistic environment, and the historical circumstances that have contributed to shape it, from Mello's childhood in Brasília during the Brazilian dictatorship—in a time when children's literature thrived as one of the few freely circulating means of expression—to the recent announcement that he is the winner of the 2014 Hans Christian Andersen Illustrator Award.

Roger Mello was only three years old in 1968, when, in the midst of a military dictatorship and against all odds, the local section of *IBBY: Fundação Nacional do Livro Infantil e Juvenil* [National Foundation for Youth and Children's Books], was founded, welcoming a new generation of freethinking artists and intellectuals. By the following year, Brazilian juvenile literature already featured an impressive roster of creators, including such influential figures as Ruth Rocha, Joel Rufino dos Santos, Ana Maria Machado and Ziraldo, all of whom continue, to this day, addressing young minds to challenge old mentalities.¹

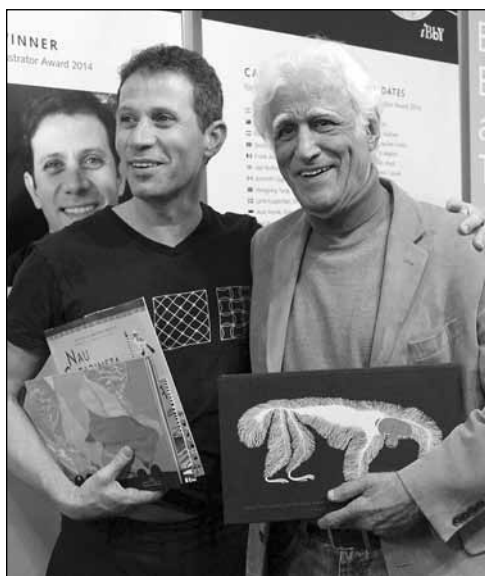
Perhaps the “best of times” are also always “the worst of times.” It was then a time of repression and censorship, enforced by decrees such as the infamous 1968 *Atto Institucional No. 5*, or AI-5. Paradoxically, it was also a time when the publishing field flourished under the unsuspecting gaze—and even the sponsorship—of the government itself, which, according to Cláudia Morales, passed a law in 1971 so “that children’s books be used in schools,” (57) subsequently purchasing an unprecedented volume of new locally printed titles, thus unwillingly opening up a market niche for otherwise silenced writers (16).²

As many of these authors themselves have noted, juvenile literature, with its inconspicuous tone, was probably the most appropriate medium to fly under the radar, or, as the idiom would have it, “*driblar a censura*” [“dribble the ball around censorship”].³ Like the music, theater and cinema of that period, many children’s books had an allegorical and subtly subversive edge, frequently taking the side of the underdogs against the powerful and mighty. But unlike movies, songs, plays, and indeed other books, these circulated freely, probably better understood by insightful children than by censors themselves. Groundbreaking combinations of text and image found their way into picture books like Ziraldo’s *Flicts* (1969) whose title character, a dull color with an unpronounceable name, feels excluded from the rainbow, the flags of the world’s nations and even the modest crayon box.

The power of visual and verbal imagery to reveal abstract social issues like injustice and exclusion must have had a formative impact on the imagination of the child growing up in the Capital city. “I am the child of the dictatorship,” Mello says, “but was lucky to have been brought up in a time when thinkers and artists reimagined the country as a utopia” (qtd. in Margolis n.p.). Perhaps it was no coincidence that many years later Mello jumpstarted his career at Ziraldo’s Zappin workshop, showing from the start his signature style. Fast forward to Bologna Children’s Book Fair, where both artists were together as members of the Guest of Honor country when the announcement came that Mello would be the recipient of the 2014 Hans Christian Andersen Award.

By now the third Brazilian to earn the Award—after authors Lygia Bojunga Nunes in 1982 and Ana Maria Machado in 2000—Mello will nevertheless be the first Brazilian, or Latin American for that matter, to accept the honor as an illustrator, having previously earned many international and national-level prestigious prizes, including the Swiss Prix Espace-Enfants and several Brazilian Jabutis. A renowned illustrator, his work,

however, exceeds the boundaries of visual communication, combining genres, techniques and aesthetic influences. Even his collaboration style is eccentric and unpredictable, a point in case being his role reversal in *Vizinho, vizinha* [Neighbor, Neighbor] (2003), where his texts and a



Credit: photo by BolognaFiere

“guest appearance” as illustrator accompany images by his colleagues Graça Lima and Mariana Massarani. How to frame a creator as comfortable writing plays and stories as he is staging visual scenes? How to read his picture books attending only to one of their modes of expression?

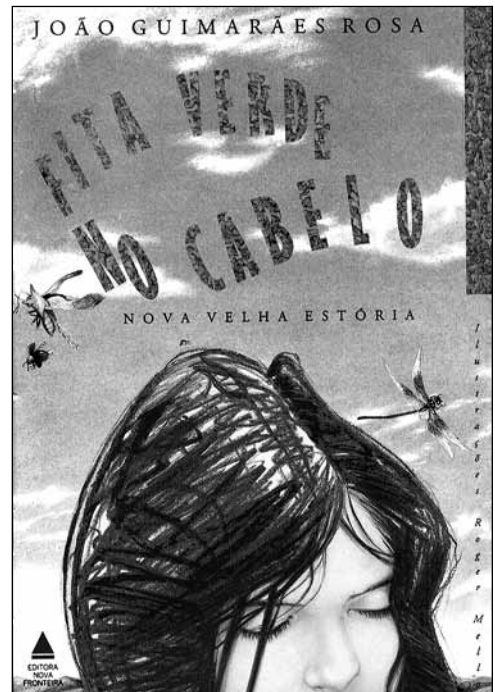
Beyond the eclectic tradition of the Brazilian picture book, Mello has also absorbed the national literary canon, having illustrated short stories by Machado de Assis, Guimarães Rosa and one of the country’s finest memoirists of childhood, regionalist Graciliano Ramos. Like others before him, Mello draws inspiration from popular forms of circulation like the *literatura de cordel* [Cordel literature] *cantigas* [songs]. With a vision rich in local color and a keen ear for regional specificities, his creations are nonetheless, just as the work of his precursors, anything but provincial.

With a vision rich in local color and a keen ear for regional specificities, his creations are nonetheless, just as the work of his precursors, anything but provincial.

To See Better, To Hear Better

In 1992, Mello illustrated Guimarães Rosa’s *Fita verde no cabelo: nova velha estória* [Green Ribbon in Her Hair: A New Old Story], a reimagined version of Little Red Riding Hood set in Brazil’s arid *Nordeste*, with the title character wearing, instead of a red hood, a green ribbon in her hair, a metaphor for her lack of judgment. There are no wolves in the text, since the lumberjacks have hunted them all, and so the wolf cannot claim, in Grandma’s guise, that his exaggerated features enable him “the better to hear,” nor “the better to see.” In her comparative dissertation on lusophone children’s literature, Mariana Cortez does a careful reading of the intertextual and psychoanalytical overtones in this book. She notes that under Mello’s gaze, the tale takes one more unexpected turn, as Green Ribbon cannot tell the difference between the hunter and the wolf. Both appear to be one and the same, united in the body of a werewolf or *lobisomem*. Rather than being redundant, the illustrations add another layer of meaning to the text, as if one end of the ribbon tied *Fita-verde* to the landscape of Rosa’s backlands and the other reached back to an archetypal source.

Playing on another folk tale motif—that of the pregnant woman with uncontrollable cravings—one of the books whose text he has penned himself, *Bumba meu boi bumbá*, begins not in a witch’s orchard but on a cattle farm on the backlands of Brazil, where a peasant woman feels the irrepressible urge to eat the tongue of an ox before giving birth. After much pleading, her husband agrees to cut one for her from a live ox. Unfortunately, the ox belongs to the “coronel,” the landowner who rules their lives. Praised by Ana Maria Machado for its sophisticated drawings and seamless recreation of traditions, this

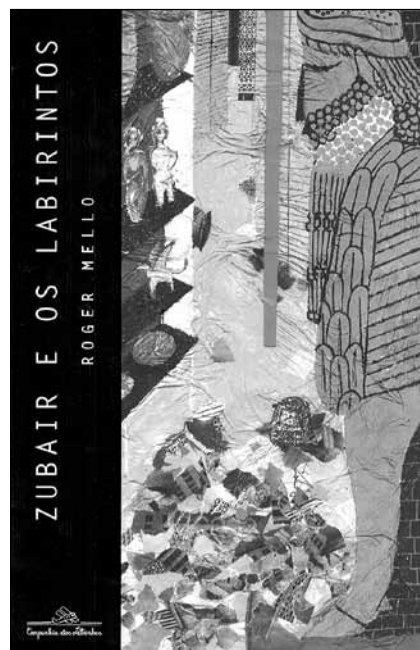




book takes its storyline and musicality from the variations on the performance enacting the death and resurrection of a bull that customarily takes place in June, during the Brazilian winter. The illustration's hues and geometric patterns are drawn from the traditional costumes worn on these annual festivities: on a vibrant background, the colorful bodies and clothing of both ox and man contrast with their black-and-white theatrical masks. The resemblance between them, as in wolf and man in *Fita verde*, once again blurs the line between human beings and animals, their faces all but interchangeable.

Contrast has been a rhetorical tool since the first book under his own name, *A flor do lado de lá* [A Flower on the Other Side]. In their *Bookbird* article, Erin Peters and Samantha Christensen comment on this wordless sequence that alternates soft colors and grayscales to highlight the emotional ups and downs of a tapir, an animal found often in Brazil (and neighboring Venezuela, I may add), in his quest for a flower on the “other side” of the shoreline (Dunbar). Also featuring a tapir, but extending far from the Brazilian zoological imagery, another wordless quest takes place in the first title of an anticipated “tiger trilogy”: *Selvagem* [Wild] (2010), features a safari hunter and the picture of a Bengal tiger. Like *Fita-verde*, this book ponders on the

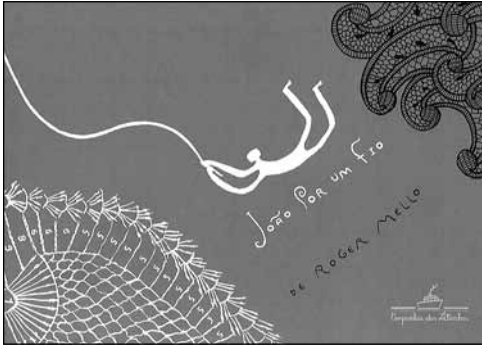
paradox of the hunted hunter—as Alina Dunbar notes in her blog—the Borgesian tiger jumps out of its pictorial frame and into the “other side” of the canvas.



Ever more Borgesian is *Zubair e os labirintos* [Zubair and Mazes] (2007), also praised by Dunbar, as well as by Christensen and Peters. The story, set in the Museum of Baghdad among the debris left by war in 2003, follows the thread of the Iraqi boy Zubair through thirteen mazes composed as thirteen respective vignettes, each reconstructing fragments of previous civilizations—from Sumer and Babylonia to present day Iraq—as layers of sediment in a sort of cultural palimpsest.

Carefully enveloped by a cover that itself unfolds like a maze, each protecting sheet is an ironic reminder of the material and symbolic value of human-made documents and the pains we take—or at least should take—to preserve them. On the cover's flaps, two strikingly similar green silhouettes draw a parallel between an Assyrian sphinx and a modern-day soldier, respectively guarding the building and its looting. To further disorient his usual readers, the internal pages open from right to left, contradicting western literacy conventions but emulating, among other scripts, that of Arabic. Defamiliarization works

as a device to convey that books, whatever their format, must not be taken for granted.

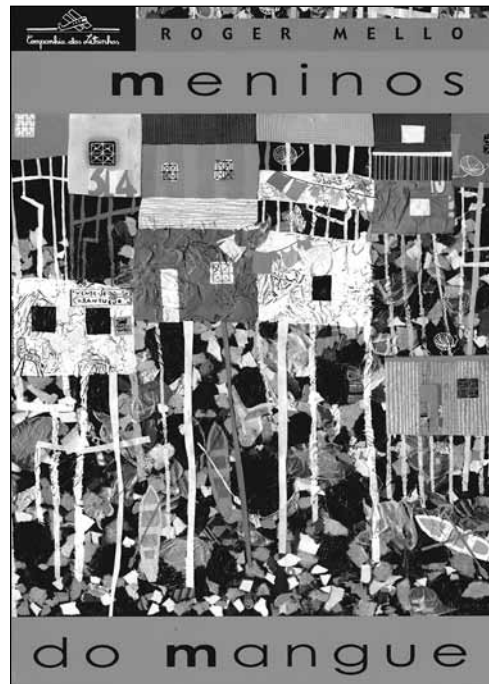


If *Zubair* reminds us of Theseus's walk through a maze, *João por um fio* [John by a Thread] (2005) recalls Ariadne's clever strategy to help him out. Elegantly presented in black, white and red with lace-like line drawings, the book follows the thread of a boy's thoughts as he is about to fall asleep tucked under a hand woven blanket. As he drifts between consciousness and dreams, the threads of his blanket morph into a mountain range, a quilt, a fishing net, a popular ballad, a lullaby, and finally, an entangled net of words, in a progressive fall from solidity into immateriality. The story was adapted for the theater by Mello himself. In its book format, it is dedicated to the children of the Island(s) of Uros in the Peruvian side of Lake Titicaca, many of whom, like João's family, participate in everyday economic activities such as weaving, fishing and boating.

In *Nau Catarineta* (no trans.) (2005), transatlantic oral tradition navigates its way into children's literature. Playwrights have frequently found inspiration from this popular Portuguese poem about the whims of the ocean and the fears that haunt sailors through lull and storms. Seen through Mello's eyes, the massive ship becomes a simple toy boat, and the captain who refuses to abandon his crew during a shipwreck, just a small boy pulling the toy boat by a thread. Many different versions of the poem have been sung for centuries in Brazil as part of an itinerant performance. It seems fitting, then, that—as documented in a 2010 *Bookbird* starred review—“his illustrations for the popular verses were part of an itinerant show that toured Parisian libraries,”

thus sending the ship and its verses all the way back through the Atlantic (Christensen 11).

Also recreating the rhythms of life marked by the ocean, and slightly reminiscent of Ziraldo's *Menino do Rio doce* [The Boy Rio Doce] (1996), Mello's visually stunning *Meninos do Mangue* [Boys Mangrove] (2001) evokes artisanal hand-crafts. It is based on a film documentary entitled *O ciclo do caranguejo* [The Lifecycle of the Crab] set in the urban mangroves of Recife and produced by Mello in partnership with director Adolfo Latermacher. Like *Bumba*, this book revives the medieval ballads still sung in the northeastern region, which have inspired authors like João Cabral de Melo Neto, and from whose well-known play *Morte e Vida Severina* (no trans.) it takes one of



its epigraphs and a great deal of its tone.⁴ Structured in embedded narrative frames, much in the manner of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the narration starts with a bet between two anthropomorphized abstractions, Luck and Sloth, to find out who can catch a crab with the most legs. Lucky Luck finds a nine-legged *siri*, or crab. Lazy Sloth, having only found an eight-legged one, pays his opponent by telling her eight stories about her quest for a handful of tripe to use as bait. Each of

these intertwined stories celebrates one aspect of community life in the mangrove, such as fish farming, enjoying the local gastronomy and, of course, catching *siris*.

Just as the imagery of the book replicates the local landscape, the style of the narration echoes the community's colloquialisms, slang—*gíria*—and wordplay. In one scene, the children play telephone, whispering into each other's ears and taking delight in the nonsensical transformations on the original message. In another, the women intone *cantigas* on their way to work. In the last one, Sloth weaves a cumulative litany: “*Eu andando com um punhado de tripas, uma mosca ficou curiosa, veio ver o que era. / Eu andando com um punhado de tripas, uma mosca no meu encaço. Uma galinha ficou curiosa, veio ver o que era...*” [“I was walking along with a handful of tripe, a fly was curious and came to see what it was. / I was walking along with a handful of tripe, a fly following along. A hen was curious and came to see what it was...] and so forth,

Most of Mello's books are rich in evocative atmospheres but devoid of straightforward plots.

until all the previous characters in Sloth's stories reappear. But what binds all the threads together is the way Mello translates them visually, as an endless race among the characters.

Most of Mello's books are rich in evocative atmospheres but devoid of straightforward plots. As Peters and Christensen explain, the topics of “Time and Transformations,” are inextricable in Mello's work. In *Meninos* particularly, many elements contribute to create a non-linear, or what Maria Nikolajeva would call “mythic,” sense of temporality (*From Mythic to Linear*). Time in this book alternates between low tide and high tide, imitating the oscillating flow of life in the mangrove. The “*siris*” swim sideways, not straight ahead. Sloth has no rush, and Luck is more haphazard than providential. This flexible weaving of time strikes a delicate balance between acknowledging a local modernization and breathing life into old traditions.

In the contemporary but peripheral space of the mangrove, only a few technological objects—a TV set, an alarm clock, a toy robot found among the trash—hint at a timeframe close to the reader's own historical present. The characters play with a “supersonic robot of the kind that twinkles and moves its arms.” Delightful as it is, the robot also represents a source of covetousness among the children who until then seemed to enjoy themselves with few personal belongings.

Contrary to popular belief, Sloth is always very busy indeed, “entangling hair, fixing remote controls and damaging alarm clocks.” However, she's a trickster who never ends up having her way. Luck, by contrast, always has good fortune, so she can afford to be lazy. A dozen children of different ages compose a third character. Their lack of distinct facial features allows the illustrator to represent them together as a kind of collective, anonymous *pivete* [child thief]. All twelve steal crabs together, flee from punishment together and play in the mud together. Only two of them appear by name: Zecão, the eldest, and Josimar, the youngest. As an alternative to the typical urban nuclear unit, a much more fluid and strikingly honest notion of a matriarchal *parentela* [relationship] is

implied. In this extended family, aunts, mothers, and godmothers help each other raise their children, who can be seen running about on the street, on the mangrove, and around their neighbor's homes. As a result, not only *time* but also *space* is transformed and expanded beyond the so-called domestic sphere.

Reviewers tend to place *Meninos do Mangue* and *Carvoeirinhos* (2009) together, and indeed the resemblances are apparent. To begin with, both open with an epigraph about children by a well-known Brazilian poet. *Carvoeirinhos* takes its epigraph from the poem "Meninos carvoeiros" by Manuel Bandeira. The delicate topic of the working child, merely suggested in the former, is depicted more explicitly and tragically, but still with great tact and nuance, in the latter.

"Mello's upbringing during the dictatorship," writes Dunbar, "helps to explain the strong thread of social criticism running throughout his books, and especially in *Carvoeirinhos* [Young Charcoal Burners], which exposes the evils of child labor." Although as of 1998 the minimum legal working age was raised to age 16, 14 for apprentices, and hazardous work is prohibited for children under 18, the charcoal industry is still today largely responsible for child employment, charcoal being fundamental in the production of steel, one of Brazil's main exports, as Mello explains in an interview with journalist Sérgio Maggio (qtd. in Dunbar).

Undeniable as it is that these books bear witness to the evils of child labor, they simultaneously, and eloquently, contest the prejudiced tendency to treat child laborers as if they embodied such evils themselves. In other words, they make "invisible children" visible. Against vilifying the victim, then, but also beyond merely denouncing child labor or domestic work performed by children, Mello's approach forsakes the typical detached sociological perspective, favoring instead the point of view of children whose experiences do not conform to urban middle class standards but whose inner lives are, if anything, even richer and more filled with imagination and the wish to play.⁶

Meninos and *Carvoeirinhos* are, however, like night and day regarding the sense of place they recreate through their palettes. While *Meninos* displays an almost dizzying spectrum to recreate the surroundings of the mangrove, *Carvoeirinhos* "is all in gray—like charcoal" as Dunbar describes it, "while the fires, symbols of heat and oppression, burst relentlessly from the pages in orange, pink, and red" to evoke the glum atmosphere of the coalmine and the dangers of fire. And yet, both evidently bear Mello's late signature style, alternating clean lines with collage-style mixed-media compositions. The textured effect of the latter type is so realistic, the observer feels compelled to touch the pages to make sure they are actually smooth.

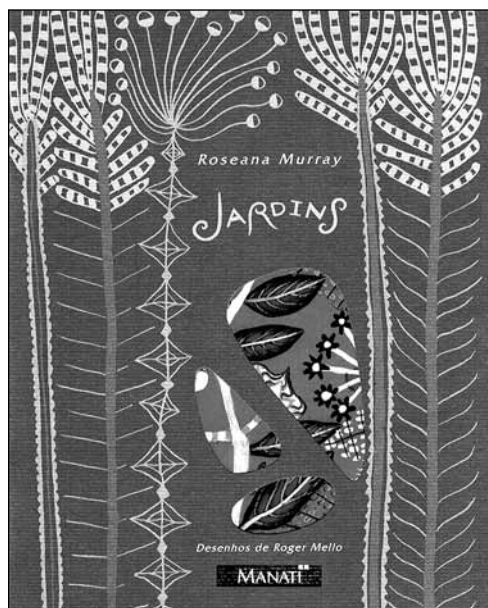
Counterbalancing its dark, heavy tone, *Carvoeirinhos* is told from the topsy-turvy perspective of a busy hornet embodying the metaphor



of the small, hard-working but vulnerable creature. The hornet hovers over a nameless, faceless working child wearing only *abadás*, or capoeira pants, and a cap. As the hornet builds a nest for its tiny eggs, he observes the child building an oven. The wingless child has a friend. Much to the hornet’s surprise, the friend has white, clear skin, like hornet’s eggs. Like many other small children, both friends like to play with their toy cars. But unlike most nurtured children, the two can also easily sneak out by the ovens to smoke. The accident that ensues has tragic consequences for both the child and the baby hornets. Living among the ashes is no Cinderella story.

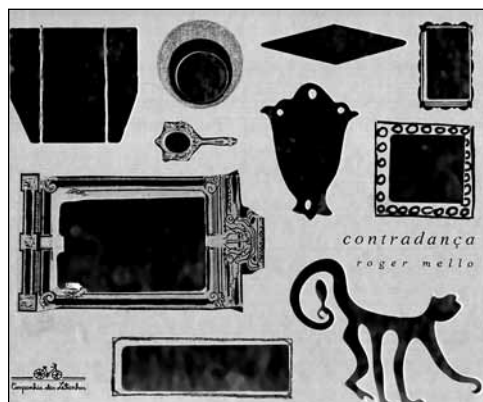
If *Carvoeirinhos* suggests a hellish environment, *Jardins*, with poems by Roseana Murray, evokes by contrast a luxuriant Paradise of ever changing colors and shapes, populated not only by hornets, but also by birds, snails and butterflies. Toucans and oversize flowers suggest—but also break away from—the landscape of the Amazonian rainforest.

Mello’s expert graphic design allows Murray’s lyrical text to stand out, the typography levitating against bright monochrome backgrounds. On solid-color pages, twirling shapes creep in like wild weed following the sun, or, as the poet herself puts it, like “garlands of words and wind.” In other pages, the lines of a praying mantis or the shapes on the wings of a butterfly are replicated in



the design of a garden or a mosaic. The resulting patterns recall Escher’s explorations on infinity, as Cortez observes. Cortez also remarks that the layout and binding of *Jardins* mimic a botanist’s sketchbook, complete with a red ribbon to keep it closed. The title page, in turn, imitates a pressed-leaf album with multicolored pieces of tape keeping the leaves in place. Just like the illustrations in *Zubair*, *Meninos* and *Carvoeirinhos*, they create the visual illusion of texture. But in this case, the tactile experience is taken one step further, with a dust jacket made in coarse opaque construction paper. Three leaf-shaped cutout windows mark a tactile contrast with the glossy, smooth, flamboyant cover underneath.

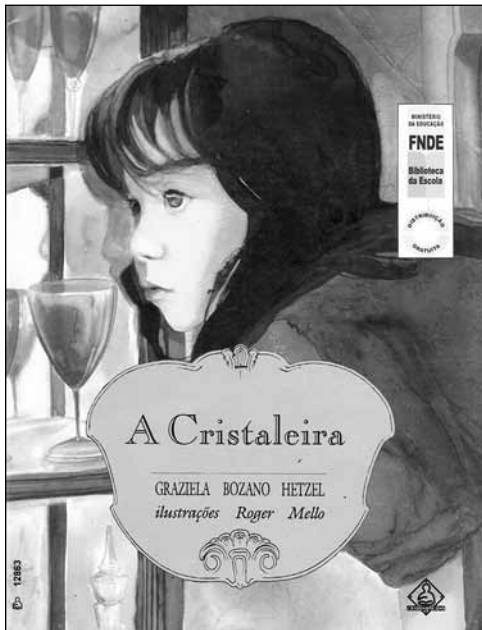
A surrealistic feast for the senses, starting with the musical title all the way to its touchable format, *Contradança* [Quadrille] (2010) is one Mello’s favorite works, albeit one of his least reviewed ones (Romeu). A sumptuous bright green cover showcases a gallery of mirrors made of silver-colored inlays, inviting the child to feel



the cover and look at her own reflection, like Alice in Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass*. The story takes place at night, on a glass shop, among the scattered pieces of a broken antique mirror. Somewhat unsettling black-and-white photographic illustrations feature a monkey—one of his recurrent motifs—and a wooden ballerina; or rather, the *reflection* of an imaginary monkey and the *image* of a little ballerina who dreams of being a monkey. Together, they reflect on the meaning of our multiple images. At what time do our reflections go out and play? What do our

fragmentary reflections say about ourselves?

Glass and crystal take us back to one of Mello's earliest works as the illustrator of Graziela Bozano Hetzel's *A Cristaleira* [The Cabinet] (1995). In a simple style, less sophisticated than his recent pieces, but just as delicate, Mello draws the portrait of a wide-eyed girl whose parents talk about divorce. As she struggles to make meaning from the fragments of overheard conversations, her grandmother's display cabinet offers her a cozy refuge, with its clear crystal glasses representing her longing to become transparent. From a sewing basket, Mello's illustration focuses on the detail of a needle and a strand of thread which together stand for Grandma's ability to mend the little girl's confused heart.



As in the girl's case, having more access to information does not necessarily mean making sense of it all. These days, when nets of digital data compete to hold our attention for mere seconds, Mello's invisible threads spin another type of web, made not of flashy robotic connections, but of subtle intertextual allusions, geometric patterns seeming to grow endlessly, playful visual textures and unsaid words. As intriguing verbal, tactile and visual objects, his synesthetic books call for contemplative, slow paced readings. They are not meant to be consumed and discarded, but

to be leisurely savored by children who, in the process, might grow to see better, hear better, and hopefully, feel better.

Each of Mello's books is, in summary, a gift that lasts a lifetime.

Each of Mello's books is, in summary, a gift that lasts a lifetime. The message is taken quite literally in some cases: like a souvenir toy or a bookmark, *João por um fio* includes a simple cardboard fish tied to the end of a piece of thread. Similarly, the touchable cover of *Jardins* mimics not only an artist's sketchbook, but also an intriguing gift wrap, complete with a red ribbon. Strategically placed to contrast with the striking colors and textures inside, the cutout windows entice the recipient to take a peek into the beautiful present before untying the bow. If you hold a thread—or maybe a colored ribbon—you won't lose your way, no matter how far you explore. Go ahead; take a step into Mello's labyrinthine gardens. Your own flower might be waiting “on the other side.”

Notes

1. As documented in FNLIJ's 2010 Bologna Book Fair catalog, featuring a cover illustration by Mello.
2. Morales quotes the *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases N.º 5.692/71* [Bases and Guidelines Law No. 5692/71].
3. Among many references to the paradoxes of this period, see particularly the aforementioned catalog by FNLIJ (10), Ana María Machado's *Texturas* (80), and Maria Nikolaeva's article on Machado, “The Power of Language,” which elaborates on Alison Lurie's notion of children's literature as a subversive (6).
4. An everyday nativity play set in Brazil's northeast, depicting the severity of life but also celebrating the arrival of a newborn, albeit in the harshest conditions.
5. For notions of matrifocal families and extended family or “parentela” in the Northeast of

Brazil, see Hecht (esp. 226-7). The implied families in this book resemble both notions without fully corresponding to either.

6. Drawing on anthropologist Thomas Offit, I make a distinction between the roles of child workers (who help out their families doing unpaid work) and child laborers (who perform remunerated activities). The lines may of course become blurred, especially in the case of children—particularly girls—employed as domestic workers in third-party homes.

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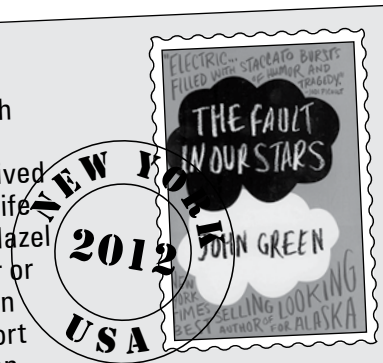
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John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* does a rare thing for a novel about the life of a teenage cancer patient: it uses laugh out loud humor to discuss the deeply horrendous nature of sickness. Because of the thyroid cancer diagnosis she received at the age of thirteen, Hazel Grace Lancaster goes through life attached to an oxygen tank. A "miracle drug" has allowed Hazel to live with her cancer, although she's uncertain of whether or not her frequent hospital visits, the stress her illness puts on her parent's relationship, or having to endure a pitiful support group on a weekly basis can be called living. However, when one of the weekly group sessions leads to Hazel meeting Augustus—an attractive amputee in remission—Hazel's life becomes a little more worthwhile. More than just your typical teenage love story, Green creates utterly realistic characters that must deal with the big questions in life. Causing more than a few tears, this rare and profound piece of fiction leaves readers knowing that they have come across something marvelous and feeling unusually complete.

Tia Lalani



John Green

The Fault in Our Stars

New York: Dutton, 2012.

313 p.

ISBN: 9780525478812

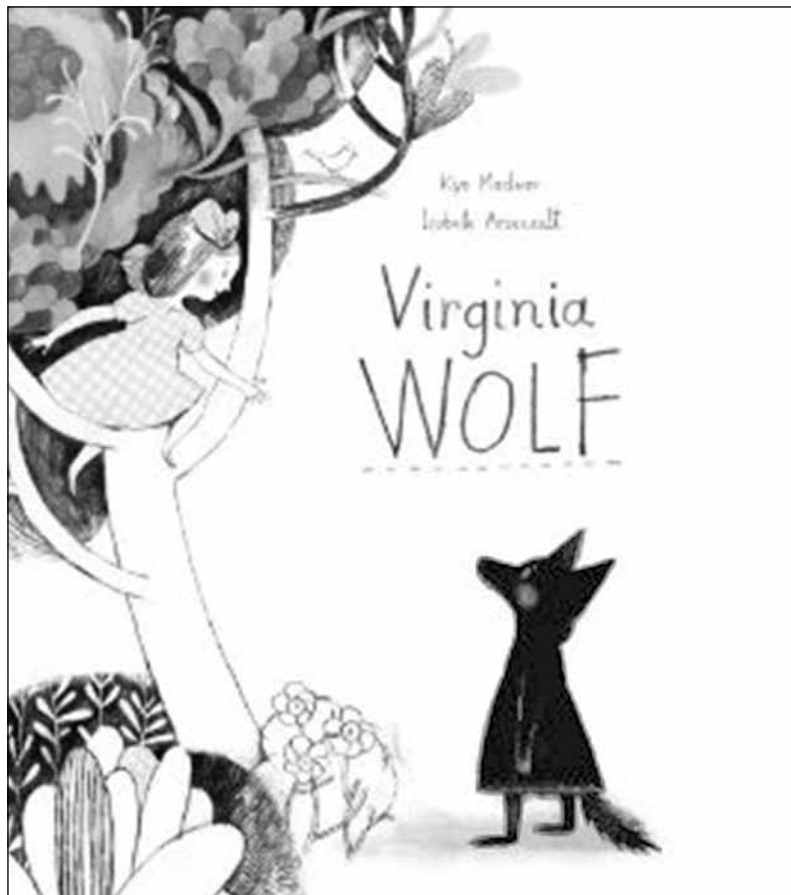
(YA Novel, 14+)

Picture Book Characters with Disabilities: Patterns and Trends in a Context of Radical Change

by JEAN EMMERSON



Jean Emmerson is a PhD Candidate in Educational Psychology and Special Education at the University of Saskatchewan. She has an undergraduate degree in music and education and a graduate degree in counselling psychology. These studies have shaped and informed her 25 years of teaching in a variety of educational settings.



This study, framed through a lens of Radical Change, examines selected Canadian and American picture books featuring characters with disabilities. While aspects of diversity such as cultural difference are consciously included in contemporary children's books, differences related to disability are often absent. In this study, qualitative content analysis identifies patterns, trends, and themes related to characterizations that involve disabilities, proposing critical literacy as a framework through which children may interrogate messages in text and illustration.

This qualitative content analysis framed by “Radical Change” theory (Dresang) explores selected Canadian and American picturebooks containing characters with disabilities. Radical Change conceptualizes changes over time with respect to

by QIANG FU



Qiang Fu is a volunteer tutor at the after-school EAL program at Bethlehem High School, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Originally from Anshan, China, he obtained his Master's Degree in Education from the University of Saskatchewan in June 2013. His research interests include international students' transition issues and picture books from North America and China.

by ANDREA LENDSAY



Andrea Lendsay is a medical student at the University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine. Andrea majored in Physiology and Pharmacology during her undergraduate studies. Currently, she is the Jr. Nutrition Executive with the Physician Wellness Initiative and is also working with Immigrant and Refugee Health in Saskatoon.

by BEVERLEY BRENNAN



Beverley Brenna, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor in Curriculum Studies, College of Education, at the University of Saskatchewan where her research interests include children's literature, literacy, and special education. She is also an author of ten books for young people and more about her published work can be found at www.beverleybrenna.com.

textual forms and formats, perspectives, and boundaries. Research on classic fiction involving characters with disabilities has uncovered intriguing patterns, including the trend that characters with disabilities are either “cured” or “killed” during the course of a story (Keith), a tendency that suggests authors have not been able to envision a happy future for someone with a disability. An exploration of a contemporary study sample, such as the sample collected for this study, offers a viewpoint from which to approach critical literacy—the interrogation of texts—in educational settings. Based on earlier work related to the limited research on disability in American books for young people (Dyches and Prater; Dyches, Prater, and Cramer; Dyches, Prater and Jenson; Greenwell; Leininger, Dyches, Prater, and Heath; Mills; Pajka-West), this study extends previous samples of books to include both Canadian and American literature. The specific objectives of this article include:

- identification of trends and themes in representations of North American picture book characters with disabilities;
- provision of a bibliography of award-winning North American English children's picture books, published in 1994 or later, that contain characters with disabilities.

We collected picture books published since 1994 in order to obtain a large, yet not unwieldy contemporary sample. A similar timeframe was utilized in a Canadian study of children's novels (Brenna), allowing an opportunity to make some cross-study comparisons.

If books are, as Galda suggests, mirrors and windows into a deeper understanding of self and other, then picture books authentically portraying people who are differently abled have an important place in a collection of educational resources. As well as offering resources in which children see themselves in the text, authentic depiction of characters with disabilities can benefit children's interactions with peers who have disabilities, reciprocally affecting all students in a positive way (Dyches, Prater, and Cramer).

Research Frameworks

In addition to the literary framework of Radical Change, this research is also theoretically connected to disability studies, a vibrant field of inquiry within the critical genre of identity studies (Garland-Thomson). In the context of disability studies, disability can be defined as a “social construct” (Sherry), contrasting with a medical model of the body which suggests that biological differences equate to impairment. While relating our study's findings to the idea of disability as a social construction, we have utilized a list of particular disabilities derived from Saskatchewan Education's 2012-2013 Impact Assessment in order to support a clear framework for book selection. Definitions of disability abound; we acknowledge that alternative perspectives exist and that the categories we have selected are not necessarily reflective of “disabling” conditions,

nor are these categories all-inclusive as far as disability is concerned. Our choice of study limitations seemed reasonable since our work was grounded in the field of education in Saskatchewan, and the parameters advanced by the Impact Assessment document has offered distinct descriptors that could be uniformly applied.

Educational Importance of the Study

It is increasingly important for students to learn methods for critical reading rather than to simply accept given texts as appropriate representations of the world. Reading instruction can be considered a social practice that goes beyond coding into text-meaning, pragmatic understandings, and critical practices (Luke and Freebody). Notions about critical literacy have been emerging since Freire’s theoretical groundwork regarding the need for a critical stance with respect to literacy. Critical literacy informs students’ responses to texts in the manner in which texts may be interrogated on the basis of at least four dimensions: disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on socio-political issues and taking action towards the promotion of social justice (Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys).

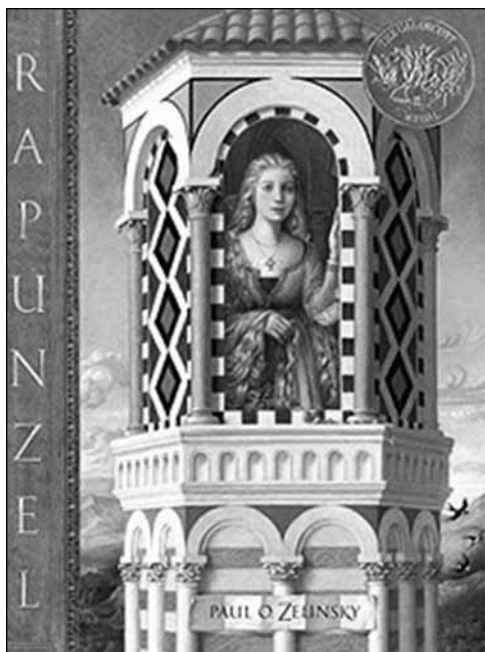
In order to support the development of critical literacy, teachers require a sound knowledge of potential classroom resources that will support and engage their students in critical literacy practices. This content analysis of select Canadian and American picture books allows comparisons to be made regarding situated patterns, trends, and themes, and offers a wide scope of titles to include in critical discussion regarding North American work. While

our conclusions are tentative and emergent rather than comprehensive, this research provides not only a resource base for educators but also a model for further research.

Method

Content analysis (Berg; Merriam) of award-winning North American picture books was conducted through a qualitative interpretive stance (Seidman), allowing the development of conceptual categories alongside categories emerging from Dresang’s theory about the radical changes that have appeared in children’s literature. A content analysis chart developed for the purposes of this study (Appendix A) offers opportunities for the exploration of trends and themes within and among the books.

In terms of award-winning picture books, the study sample contained four winners of the Canadian Governor General’s Award (for text or illustration), one winner of the American Caldecott Medal and seven winners of American Schneider Awards, an honour bestowed on books that include characters with a disability. In addition, we collected an

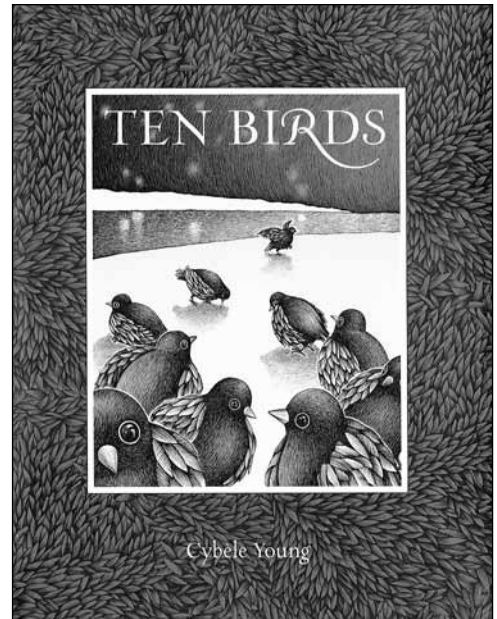


array of other Canadian titles published since 1994—basically, all of the Canadian picture books portraying a character with a disability that we could locate through direct contact with publishers and recommended titles from the Canadian Children’s Book Centre. In addition, we scrutinized the Canadian picture book collections available on the shelves of two local bookstores, querying which books were easily available to the Canadian public.

Findings

Canadian Governor General’s Award for Illustration

Two of the eighteen Canadian Governor General’s Award winners since 1995 (published in 1994) in the category of illustration contain representations of characters with disabilities. Cybele Young’s *Ten Birds* offers an abstract view of physical disability in a story of how seemingly flightless birds manage to use various innovative strategies to cross a river, with perhaps the most ingenious bird of all simply walking over a bridge. Kyo Maclear’s *Virginia Wolf* likely depicts a character with childhood depression, however the interpretation of this diagnosis remains relatively ambiguous within the context of the story.

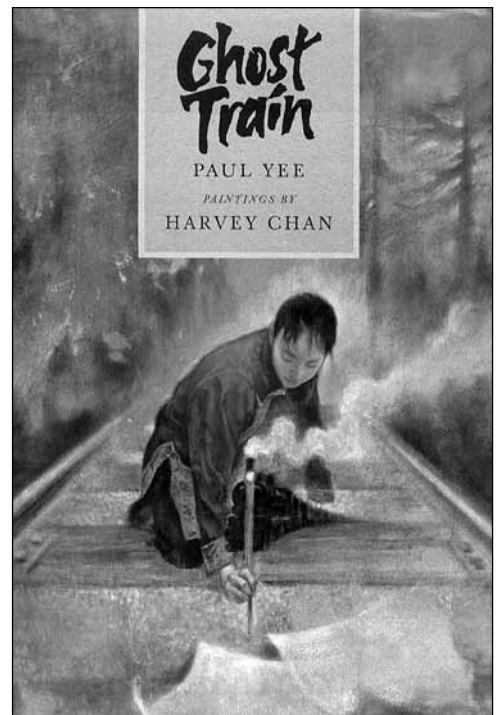


Canadian Governor General’s Award for Text

Because the nature of books has generally advanced in this category, picture book titles are relatively rare. Two picture book award winners from the twenty winning titles (illustration and text) since 1995 have appeared, and both portray characters with disabilities. Paul Yee’s *Ghost Train* depicts a physical disability in the central character. Rachna Gilmore’s *A Screaming Kind of Day* provides a striking portrait of a little girl whose hearing impairment is just one aspect of her characterization. The fact that the only Governor General’s Award-winning picture books in the category for text present characters who are differently abled is a particularly interesting finding.

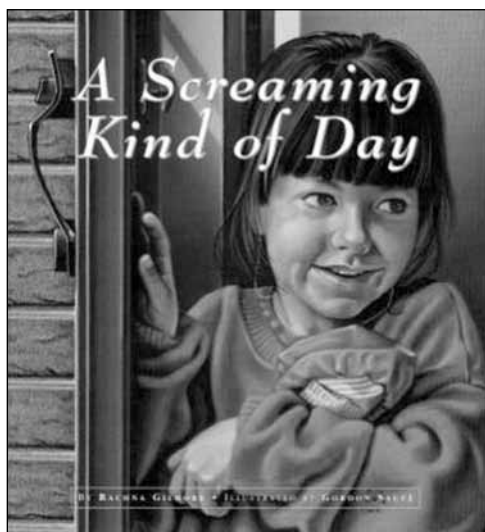
American Caldecott Medal Picture Books

In comparison to Canadian award winners that include characters with disabilities, an exploration of the nineteen American picture book winners of the prestigious Caldecott medal for children’s illustration has turned up even fewer examples of characters who are differently abled. Only one book awarded since 1995 has depicted a character with a disability: P.O. Zelinsky’s *Rapunzel* offers a version of the fairy tale that includes a prince who is blind, albeit temporarily.



American Schneider Family Book Awards

The Schneider Family book awards, first awarded in 2004, contributed seven titles to our study sample. This award, recognizing the dearth of disability in characterizations, was developed by the American Library Association—in addition to the Caldecott—and the depiction of disability is part of the award criteria.



Of the seven Schneider titles, three are picture books portraying characters who are blind or visually impaired, three are picture books depicting characters who are deaf, and one is a picture book presenting a character with an orthopaedic disability. Characters with autism or developmental disabilities have not been included to date among the Schneider award winners, perhaps because another award category has been in operation since 2000. The Dolly Gray Award was introduced by the Division of Autism and Developmental Disabilities, a special interest group of the Council of Exceptional Children. Titles from the Dolly Gray Award categories have not been included as part of this study, because the explicit focus on autism and developmental disabilities would have skewed any comparison results about the prevalence of types of disabilities in the wider study sample.

Wider Canadian Sample

Wider Study Sample

In addition to the four Canadian award-winning

books, twenty-five other Canadian books were added to the sample for a total of twenty-nine books. While the publishers who responded with applicable titles did so within a week or two of initial contact, it is possible that other titles were missed due to communication breakdowns. Our local search of two major bookstores offered the following: out of the collection of 252 Canadian

...out of the collection of 252 Canadian picture books sampled in one store on August 7, 2012, only one representation of characters other than “typical” was found.

picture books sampled in one store on August 7, 2012, only one representation of characters other than “typical” was found. Epp’s *Hope and the Dragon* narrates the story of a boy who uses his imagination to help deal with a chronic illness. A survey of the second bookstore produced no results in terms of picture books presenting a character with a disability.

A consideration of the twenty-nine picture books in the Canadian study sample, including the governor general’s award-winning titles, offers some interesting patterns and trends. Eight of the books are narrative non-fiction produced by the same authors: Bobula and Bobula. The books by these authors are similar in that they observe childhood through narration rather than invoke the reader’s experience of childhood through active scenes. The teaching function in these titles seems to be overt, with a didactic tone that hints at the perspective of a “disability expert” and presents as narrative non-fiction. As part of a series, Bobula and Bobula’s books are unexceptional in terms of both literary merit and merit of illustrations; our team perceived them to be the lowest quality titles in the group. Five other books in the Canadian study sample as a whole are also narrative non-fiction, ten are realistic fiction, four are human fantasy, one of the books is an animal fantasy, and one is historical fiction. No books appeared from the mystery genre. It is important to note that of the ten realistic

fiction books, many contain exaggeration that approaches fantasy. Other than the Bobula and Bobula series, the twenty-one remaining books in the Canadian category received a positive response from our team in terms of literary merit and merit of illustrations.

Patterns and trends in the High Quality Canadian Sample

It is these twenty-one Canadian books of higher quality that will be further explored in this section. There is evidence of Radical Change through changing forms and formats, where illustrations in some of the books go beyond the storyline, in some cases offering renderings of disability not present in the text. Examples of changing perspectives include books with adult protagonists and books that include ethnic diversity alongside disability. Changing boundaries can be seen in titles that depict non-traditional contexts for children's stories, such as group homes, as well as international settings (i.e. Pakistan). Male and female characters are well balanced in terms of number, mirroring a previous study with Canadian children's novels (Brenna). In all of the books within this study sample, disability is merely part of the plot, not central to it.

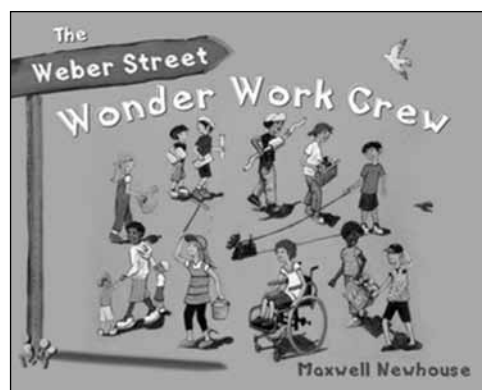
It is predicted that the following perspectives within the study sample will offer new opportunities for the radical changes of the future. In terms of characterization within the study sample, special gifts are abundant where a disability is present in characterization, including but not limited to: hockey playing ability, extra sensitive senses (perhaps to compensate for the disabled sense), artistic talent including painting ability and costume design, storytelling acumen, computer savvy, a particularly daring personality, and resilience. This sample of picture books generally depicts urban settings, with only one rural setting established. In contrast to the large number of single-parent families appearing in previous research on Canadian children's novels (Brenna), most of the picture books in our sample depict two-parent families.

In terms of an extension of Dresang's Radical Change theory, several themes appear in these

Canadian picture books that may flag evolving aspects of contemporary children's literature in general, or perhaps identify evolving aspects of books where disability is included. Many of the titles in the study sample invoke the reader's experience of childhood rather than simply observe childhood, which is a positive achievement. Some of the titles in this set appear to blur genres, with realistic fiction dominating, although the inclusion of exaggeration nudges the otherwise realistic titles towards fantasy. As well, the physical setting sometimes involves a shift from one large context or setting to another (i.e. urban to rural; city to city). In addition, stories within the sample do not appear to be attempting to teach a lesson, a noticeable difference from classic picture books, which are almost entirely didactic (Russell).

Prevalence of Particular Disabilities

The data reflects a prevalence of particular disabilities within the larger set of twenty-nine Canadian picture books (Appendix B), generally realistic when compared to statistics offered by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). The proportions of those with disabilities in this set of picture books generally correspond to the prevalence of youth with various disabilities in Canada (HRSDC) with the exception of orthopaedic disabilities, which are over-represented in the study sample. Six book characters have orthopaedic disabilities, five have chronic illness, four have other differences (such as allergies), three have dyslexia, three have emotional disorders, two have attention deficits, another two have intellectual disabilities, two are deaf, one is blind, and one has autism.



Disability Messages

While the Bobula and Bobula series teaches about many of the disabilities experienced by schoolchildren, the other books vary in their intent. Some profile diversity through disability, such as Newhouse's *The Weber Street Wonder Work Crew*, in which the youth on an urban street—including one adolescent in a wheelchair—use their talents to improve their community. Other books focus on resilience and a character's strengths. For example, in Gilmore's *A Screaming Kind of Day*, a young girl with hearing aids must endure her brother's teasing and her mother's anger before her bad day comes to an end. Other titles have a social justice theme, such as *The Little Yellow Bottle* by Delaunois, in which a landmine formed as a tiny bottle injures two children. The remaining books infer disability through pictures rather than text, often invoking the experience for the reader. For example, Day's *Edward the "Crazy Man"* discloses a character's schizophrenia through illustration in addition to hints in the narration. Seven of the twenty-nine Canadian books visually infer disability rather than specifically mentioning it. This may be an example of how, through Radical Change, books in the digital age allow illustration to carry important aspects of the storyline beyond the written text.

While positive experiences appear, portrayals include the idea that living with a disability or difference may involve ostracism and discomfort and often require perseverance and tenacity in terms of attainment of personal goals.

In terms of what we learn about disability through these books, except for the Bobula and Bobula series, which is persistently positive, the message in most of the remaining books is realistic. While positive experiences appear, portrayals include the idea that living with a disability or difference may involve ostracism and discomfort and often require perseverance and tenacity in terms of attainment of personal goals.

Comparison between Canadian and American Award Winners Concerning Disability

Of the award-winning books concerning disability, the four Canadian award winners range from two stories about children with disabilities, to a tale of flightless birds, to a book about the Chinese workers who died during the construction of the Canadian railroad as seen through the eyes of a daughter with a disability. Regarding the American books, there is only one Caldecott award winner involving disability—Zelinsky's version of *Rapunzel*. Of the seven Schneider books, three are about famous musicians with disabilities—one African-American, one gypsy, and one with multi-ethnic band members—and a fourth is about a famous baseball player. Another book is about a deaf boy in Nepal, another is about a girl who must wear a patch over one eye, and a final book is about a Latino boy in a wheelchair. Clearly, authors in the American sample, similar to the group of Canadian authors, are able to envision characters with disabilities that also have a variety of ethnicities. This is markedly different from a previous study of children's novels where ethnicity was rarely paired with disability (Brenna).

Conclusions

Previous research provides evidence to suggest that the inclusion of characters with disabilities in children’s literature has discarded traditional formulas, evolving along with Radical Change in terms of Dresang’s discussion related to the use of new literary forms and formats, the employment of new perspectives, and changing boundaries for children’s literature emerging with the advent of the digital world (Brenna; Dresang and Kotrla). New patterns are important in the manner in which they reflect disability as a social construction alongside gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. Radical Change theory leads us to believe that the presence of “unheard voices” in this regard is predicted to further change over time.

New aspects of radical changes in children’s literature (Dresang) may be observed in this sample of books, and these include the blurring of genres, the author’s invocation rather than observation of childhood, the physical movement of characters from one setting to another, and the propensity for instruction to be subtle instead of overt. Consistently positive representations of disability no longer prevail, although the addition of “special gifts” alongside disability seems prevalent.

In summary, we found that only a handful of books portray characters who are differently abled have appeared on the awards lists. During a period when most governor general’s award-winning picture books earn prizes in the illustration category, it is perhaps important to note that the only two picture books that earned a Canadian governor general’s award for children’s literature (text) presented characters with disabilities. This is possibly a sign that juries recognize and commend the originality of such portrayals, allowing these books to contend alongside longer chapter books.

American groups supporting the Schneider Family Book Award and the Dolly Gray Award seem to recognize that if books portraying characters with disabilities are going to make it to an awards list, the award needs to be tailored in order to spotlight unique content. As more authors take on the inclusion of characters who are differently abled, this imbalance in award winners should shift, further evidence of Radical Change in action.

While our sample is not an all-inclusive compilation of North American picture books portraying characters with disabilities, the majority of the books we analyzed was of high quality and would be a welcome addition to any school or personal collection. Other studies that explore a wider range of titles, as well as the response of readers with disabilities to texts portraying characters with disabilities, might have very worthy implications for classroom practice. The responses of families of children with disabilities to particular text samples would be another interesting data source.

Further research with a more comprehensive study sample is



suggested to consider future representations integrating various disabilities, as well as characters' vulnerability to social and economic differences. In light of globalization, consideration of these representations internationally—including picture books from other countries—is recommended. Similarly, further study is suggested regarding the special gifts with which picture book characters are endowed. We wonder if characters with disabilities are portrayed with special gifts beyond what is typical in other characters. Perhaps some authors are attempting to compensate for disability by also depicting extraordinary ability? As we construct and deconstruct societal resources with respect to diversity in characterization, we will be able to move towards a clearer understanding of how disability is currently envisioned on the North American landscape, as well as suggest more desirable future representations of characters who are differently abled.

When characters with disabilities are portrayed dynamically, with features of growth and change, embracing various aspects of difference alongside disability, they may be more reflective of multi-faceted, authentic members of society and worthy of inclusion in classrooms as mirrors and windows. Until that time, however, books in which there are discrepancies between characters with disabilities and real life can produce an environment for critical literacy discussions between children and teachers, and it is recommended that such books be invited into guided reading activities.

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Appendix A

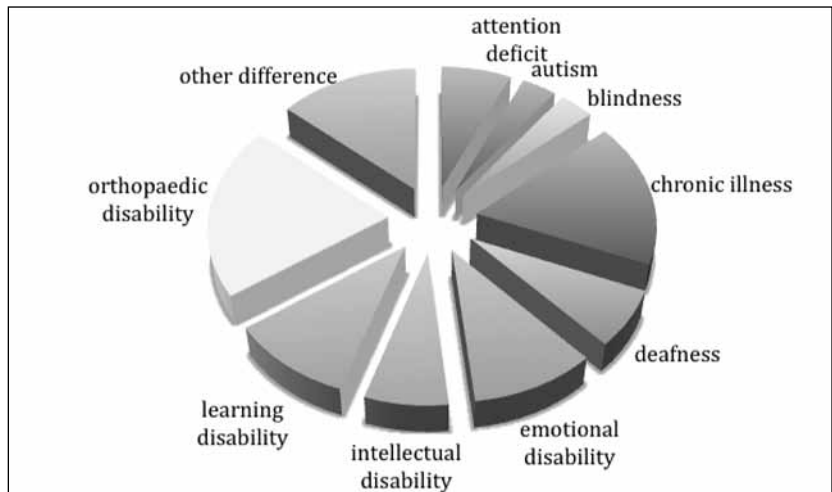
Content Analysis Chart Derived from Dresang's (1999) Radical Change Theory

Able Texts: Content Analysis				
Genre	Character with disability	Disability	Context	Radical change
<input type="checkbox"/> Realistic fiction	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth, age:	<input type="checkbox"/> ADD/ADHD	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	<input type="checkbox"/> Forms and formats
<input type="checkbox"/> Historical fiction	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult, age:	<input type="checkbox"/> Blind or visual impairment*	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-parent, stated or implied	<input type="checkbox"/> Picture book for all ages
<input type="checkbox"/> Fantasy - animal	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Deaf or hard of hearing*	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-parent, stated or implied	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential storyline
<input type="checkbox"/> Fantasy - human	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Emotional behavioural disorder	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-linear format
<input type="checkbox"/> Mystery	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 rd gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual disability*		<input type="checkbox"/> Varying font size/shape
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-fiction	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Setting	<input type="checkbox"/> Illustration carries storyline
<input type="checkbox"/> Narrative non-fiction	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental health impairment*	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-traditional graphics:
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 st person	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple disability*	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple layers of meaning
<input type="checkbox"/> Series	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 rd person	<input type="checkbox"/> Orthopaedic disability*	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> Interactive formats
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability central to plot	<input type="checkbox"/> Pervasive developmental disorder* (autism)	<input type="checkbox"/> Canadian	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability part of plot	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical health impairment*	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Canadian	<input type="checkbox"/> Perspectives: unheard voices
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability shown in pictures	<input type="checkbox"/> Prenatal substance exposure* (FASD)	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation/gender
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability mentioned in text	<input type="checkbox"/> Sensory integration disorder	<input type="checkbox"/> Time period	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability in pictures and text	<input type="checkbox"/> Speech or language disorder	<input type="checkbox"/> Contemporary	<input type="checkbox"/> Ethnicity
	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-image	<input type="checkbox"/> Substance related disorder*	<input type="checkbox"/> Past:	<input type="checkbox"/> Advantaged/disadvantaged (socio-economic)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Traumatic brain injury	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/spirituality
	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	<input type="checkbox"/> Other diagnosed condition*	<input type="checkbox"/> Story time frame	<input type="checkbox"/> Perspective of youth
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> Other undiagnosed condition*	<input type="checkbox"/> Days	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple perspectives
	<input type="checkbox"/> Image presented to others	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability specifics:	<input type="checkbox"/> Weeks	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
	<input type="checkbox"/> Special gift:		<input type="checkbox"/> Months	<input type="checkbox"/> Boundaries
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:		<input type="checkbox"/> Years	<input type="checkbox"/> Subjects previously unheard
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other character's with disability (complete other form's)		<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> New types of communities
<input type="checkbox"/> Literary merit				<input type="checkbox"/> Unresolved endings
<input type="checkbox"/> 1-5; 1 low				<input type="checkbox"/> Setting previously overlooked
<input type="checkbox"/> Illustration merit				<input type="checkbox"/> Characters portrayed in new, complex ways
				<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

* Saskatchewan Ministry of Education *Impact Assessment* 2012/2013

Appendix B

Prevalence of Particular Disabilities in Canadian Sample of Twenty-Nine Picture Books



Translation of Culturally-Specific Items in Houshang Moradi's *The Palm*

by BAHAR ESHRAQ



Bahar Eshraq holds a Master's in Translation Studies from Shahid Beheshti University. She is a translator of children's & YA books and of theoretical articles in children's literature, a librarian at the acquisition department of the IIDCYA Library, and a member of the CBC and the author of Persian research papers in translation criticism.



*This article identifies the changes occurring in the translation of cultural words in the Persian YA book, *The Palm*, by Houshang Moradi Kermani. When cultural words are involved, there is a translation problem due to the cultural gap between the two languages. This article tries to find the position of the translators, and the systematic or idiosyncratic nature of the strategies adopted in the translation of cultural words in this YA novel.*

Introduction

Tabbert believes that translated children's literature bridges between different cultures, which challenges the translator to place the text within the culture to which it is aimed. Xeni quotes from Frimmelova that "the translated book plays a role in the development of children reading", and notes Pinsent's point that the translator who can make other books from other countries accessible to the children of the world plays a vital role in transmitting of the cultural values (6). Stressing humanistic traditions and international understandings, O'Connell suggests, has been the site of translation activity. By identifying the specific problems in the translations of children's literature, cultural interchange can be achieved. In what follows, I focus on the field of translation research, using Hooshang

...I focus on the field of translation research, using Hooshang Moradi's The Palm as a case study, to show the importance of translation, in this case from Persian to English, in the field of children's literature.

Moradi's *The Palm* as a case study, to show the importance of translation, in this case from Persian to English, in the field of children's literature.

When scholars identify changes or shifts in translations of children's literature, they often analyze the changes in terms of social, cultural and literary norms of the source and target text. The point of my study is identifying the changes

occurring in the translation of cultural words between two languages. When cultural issues are involved, there is a translation problem due to the cultural gap between the source text and target text. Some words or phrases bear heavy connotations or are heavily grounded in one culture and are almost impossible to translate into another cultural context. Therefore, translators are faced with problems regarding the adequate equivalents of the translation of cultural words and they search for the possible procedures to cope with these problems. I concentrate on the process of such changes in the translation of words peculiar to one culture, or what translation scholars call cultural-specific items (CSIs) in order to recognize the translator's presence in the translated text.

According to O'Sullivan, the visibility of the translator has been discussed in translation studies since Lawrence Venuti used the terms "invisibility" and "visibility" to describe the effect of the translator by judging translations acceptable when they read fluently or non-fluently respectively. Venuti believes that when the translator uses a heterogeneous language, s/he becomes visible by producing foreignized rather than domesticated texts.

In simple words, when the reader is taken to the foreign text, foreignization occurs, and some traces of the foreign text are to be found in target text. When the text is domesticated and the reader does not notice that it is a translation then domestication happens. Venuti privileges foreignization and believes that domestication is violent. He believes if the text is domesticated, then the translator is invisible, because the reader cannot tell that s/he is reading a translation of an original international text.

In this paper, I analyze the translator's presence in the text, where the translator adopts different strategies regarding the translation of cultural words or cultural specific items (CSIs) and positions him or herself in relation to the translated text. The questions I answer are what is the position of the translator in the translation of cultural words; which technique, domestication or foreignization, the translator tends to follow in translation of cultural words in YA novels? What strategies does the translator adopt regarding the translation of cultural words or cultural specific items (CSIs)? What are the possible problems concerning the translation of YA literary texts? Are the translation strategies idiosyncratic or systematic? To address these questions, I will present a theoretical model formed by Peter Newmark which links the theoretical field of translation and culture to use in an analysis of Iranian YA writer Hooshang Moradi Kermani's *The Palm* and its English version translated by Soheila Sahabi and Chris Lear to identify the possible cultural words and their translation procedures. I explain the translation procedures in detail through representative examples extracted from the English translation of *The Palm* for better understanding. I have selected this book as the corpus because it is the most famous novel in Iranian YA literature and the author of the book uses vernacular language, which includes various popular cultural words. *The Palm* is the story of the orphaned teenage boy, Morad, who plants a date stone in earth. It is cold in the region and everybody keeps saying that a date palm never grows in such cold climate. Despite the bad weather and villagers' opposition, he is not disappointed. For the growing of the palm he fights all natural forces. The palm takes root, but Morad has to leave the village. He, who has become stronger and more hopeful with the growth of his palm, must make the most important decision of his life.

Cultural Words or Cultural-Specific items (CSIs)

Some words or phrases bear heavy connotations in one culture; therefore, when we are dealing with cultural words, translation problems arise. These words and phrases are culture-specific items (CSIs) or cultural words that have no lexical meaning in another culture or have different value. The differences between the cultural words in source texts and target texts have received attention in translation studies. Different scholars such as Vinay and Darbelnet, Newmark, Baker, Aixela, and Hervey and Higgins proposed different translation strategies regarding the translation of CSIs (Shabani Rad). According to Baker, source text words may express a concept that is totally unknown in the target culture. It can be abstract or concrete. It may be a religious belief, a social custom or even a type of food.

Javier Franco Aixelá (Cited in Alvarez & Vida) also believes in cultural-specific items or CSIs as "those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the nonexistence of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target

text” (58). According to O’sullivan, the translator acts as the “real reader” of the source text and creates the target text in such a way that can be understood by the target text readers whose language, conventions, and culture differ from those of the source text readers. By interpreting the source text by following the norms of target culture and by adopting different strategies, the translator builds a relationship between the target text and its new readers (105).

As every text conveys certain connotations and denotations in translation, creating the possible relationship between the connotations and denotations of the source text and target text is rather difficult when the two languages are not closely related. Therefore, the translator may encounter a problem when there are linguistic and cultural differences between the two languages. Shabani Rad also believes that when we communicate with someone in our own culture as far as we share similar experiences it is easy, but, when we communicate with someone from different culture, the process is much more difficult, because, no two cultures are identical. Therefore, in translation, all differences should be taken into account, and the translator encounters problems in translating some of the cultural elements. When two cultures are greatly different, it is likely that many concepts and cultural elements in one language do not exist in another. This will cause a cultural gap between the source and target texts. Words represent objects and concepts. Some words in one language are not found in another and cannot be substituted for the words in another language. The source and target languages describe the same concept with a different kind of lexical unit or they have no lexicalization for the concept. When there is no lexicalization for the concept, there is a lexical gap. When there is a lexical gap the matter of translation is difficult.

Translation is rendering a lexical word or phrase into a synonymous word in another language. So the work of the translator is to get the message from a language, “re-express” (Shabani Rad) the message into another language. Because of the linguistic and cultural differences between cultures, cultural words

have no existence in the target language or they have different values. Therefore, the translation of these words and phrases is a hard task, which translators overcome with different strategies.

In order to focus on the nature of the problem and give some representative examples, I will use Newmark’s cultural categories in order to find CSIs and the problem of translating them from Persian into English.

Newmark’s Cultural Categories and Possible Translation Strategies

Newmark defines culture as a way of life that is specific to a society. Accordingly, most cultural words are easy to detect, as they are associated with a particular language. He believes that they cannot be literally translated because the literal translation would distort the meaning and a translation may have a descriptive/functional equivalent. He also states that cultural objects may be given a culture-free generic term or classifier. In the translation of foreign cultural words, he offers different techniques and categorizes the cultural words into five domains: 1) Ecology such as flora, fauna, hills, winds, plains, mountains, 2) Material Culture such as food, clothes, houses and towns, transport 3) Social Culture like work and leisure, 4) Organizations Customs, Activities, Procedures, Concepts which are divided into political and administrative, Religious, artistic area, and 5) Gestures and Habits like spitting. He identifies twelve different translation procedures the translators use to fill the lexical and cultural gaps in the translation of cultural words.

The first translation strategy Newmark explains is *transference*: by using this procedure the translator transfers the source language word into the target language without any manipulation. It is felt to be more alien to the target reader. In the translation of the word *Tanoor* (37), categorized in the material culture domain since it is related to food names, the transference occurs. *Tanoor* is a place to bake bread, but because of the lexical gap that exists between source text and target text, the translators have chosen transference instead of the word’s exact equivalent. However, in the case of *Tanoor* and other such words, the translators have given extra information in notes

at the end of the book.

The second procedure is *cultural equivalence* in which the source language cultural word is translated into the target language cultural word. With the phrase “God bless you” (15) the translators have adopted the cultural equivalent regarding the translation of the phrase “*khuda omret bede*” (11), which is categorized in Newmark’s fourth domain, since it is a cultural idiom. *Khuda omret bede* is an idiom in Persian and the translators have replaced it with a familiar idiom in English language, providing a good cultural substitute.

The third translation procedure is *neutralization* (i.e. functional or descriptive equivalent) in which the translator uses some description to clarify the meaning of the cultural word for his or her audience (descriptive equivalent) or neutralizes or generalizes the source language word or uses a cultural free word (functional equivalent). Using the functional equivalent procedure, the translator finds a more general word that covers the meaning of missing target language word. One example for descriptive equivalent is the word *kahgel* (8) which is a building material consisting of clay, sand, and straw and water similar to adobe. In translating this cultural word, the translators have used some description to clarify the meaning of this word: “Ali-Askar was mixing the mud and straw” (10). For the word *estamboli* (8) the functional equivalent is used. *Estamboli* is the pan in which the clay, plaster, and cement are mixed. But because of the lexical gap that exists between two languages, the translators have selected the more general word “bucket” (10) instead of the exact equivalent. These examples fall into Newmark’s material culture categorization since we deal with

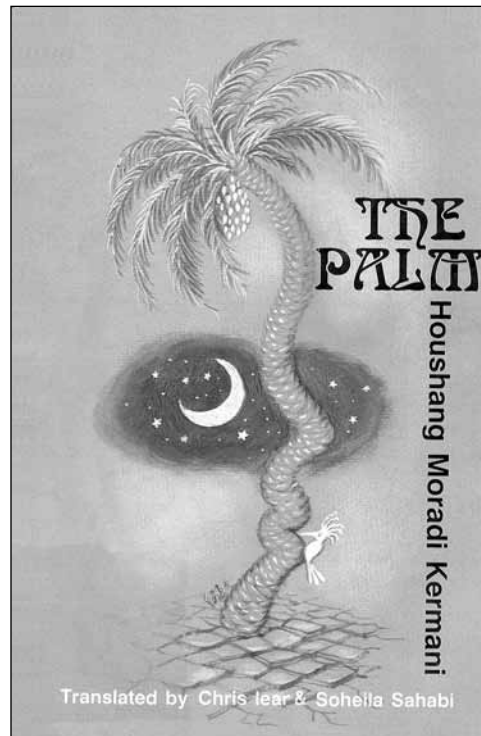
house making material terms.

The fourth procedure is *literal translation* or *through translation* in which the source language expression is transferred through literal translation. *Khormapazan* (51) is the period in which dates ripen. It is absent in target language culture; therefore the translators have selected a word-for-word translation: “date ripening weather” (p. 70). It consists of target language words and is syntactically formed according to the structure of the source language. This example falls into Newmark’s first categorization since we deal with weather term.

The fifth procedure is *label*, which is a provisional translation, usually of a new institutional term and is not found in *The Palm*. The sixth procedure is *naturalization*, in which the source language word adapts to the normal pronunciation and morphology of the target language. For example, in *The Palm* the word *darvish* has been naturalized into “Khezr, the dervish came” (9). *Darvish* is someone who is treading a Sufi Muslim ascetic path. The translators have chosen the word that adapts the source language to normal pronunciation in the target

language. This examples fall into Newmark’s fourth categorization, since we deal with a religious term.

Newmark calls the seventh procedure *componential analysis*. It means unpacking of the words in order to find the meaning that is presented by lexical form. Newmark believes “comparing source language word with target language word which has similar meaning but is not an obvious one to one equivalent by demonstrating first their common and then their differing sense components. Normally, the source language word has more specific meaning than the target language



word" (114). In *The Palm*, the word *kashkol* is a rhombus vessel the dervish uses for begging. The translators have compared the word *kashkol* with the target language word "drinking bowl" (9-10) that has the same implication and similar meaning but is not a one-to-one equivalent. This example falls into Newmark's material culture categorization.

The eighth procedure is *deletion*, and I did not find an example in the novel. The ninth procedure is *couplet*, in which two, three or four translation strategies are combined to find a solution for the translation problem. The translators of the book frequently used this procedure. In *The Palm*, the *Golekhatmi* is a kind of flower that has no equivalent in the English language. The equivalent used in the translation is "khatmibanafshi, violet flowers with their purple blossoms" (10) as a loan word plus a descriptive equivalent. This example falls into Newmark's first categorization since we deal with flora terms.

The tenth procedure is *accepted or recognized translation*. It is the "officially accepted translation of any institutional terms." (Newmark 89). The word "headscarf" (102) is generally accepted for the word *charghad* (74). This example falls into Newmark's material culture categorization since we deal with clothes.

The eleventh procedure is *paraphrase, gloss, notes* which explains the meaning of the source language cultural words in the target language. *Khormaye baadriz* (14) has been paraphrased into "dates that fell off the tree when the wind blew" (19). Sometimes the translator is unable to find the best equivalent in the target language or the context is not adequately informative. In such cases, a definition or explanation may be given as a note or gloss, depending on the situation. The notes offer additional information in a translation. The translator may give more information within the text or in the footnote or at the glossary at the end of the book. This example falls into Newmark ecology categorization since we deal with weather terms. The final procedure is *classifier*, a measure word used in some languages to classify the referent of a countable noun according to its meaning. No case was found in *The Palm*.

Conclusion

In this study, I examined the Newmark's taxonomy for the translation of cultural specific items (CSIs) in *The Palm* by Hooshang Moradi Kermani. The culture specific items identified in the corpus fall into the categories of clothes, food, customs, cultural concepts, habits, ecology, and religious terms; therefore, it was observed that translators have adopted different procedures to fill the lexical gaps they encountered. Using these strategies is effective in many cases and the translators can make their translation more accurate in this way. *Transference, cultural equivalent, neutralization, gloss or note* and also *couplet* procedures were the most frequently used strategies by these translators. According to Nikolayeva, the technique of domestication is a common procedure in the translation of children's literature, and Lear and Sahabi change foreign food, clothing, weight, measures, currency, flora and fauna, feasts, customs and traditions into words that the target language reader will easily understand, but they also work to keep the Persian culture in the

...Lear and Sahabi change foreign food, clothing, weight, measures, currency, flora and fauna, feasts, customs and traditions into words that the target language reader will easily understand, but they also work to keep the Persian culture in the text; the reader of their translation of The Palm will understand far more about Iran after reading the novel.

text; the reader of their translation of *The Palm* will understand far more about Iran after reading the novel. As far as words categorize in the five domains stated by Newmark (which he calls cultural words), the domestication technique is a hurdle to the expansion of a reader's knowledge of the world. Because, children and young adults have less knowledge of the foreign countries and

cultures, the aim of translation of children's literature should be to help a young reader become familiar with other cultures; this familiarity can lead to international understanding by sharing experiences with other children who speak different languages.

According to Venuti, in literary translation, there is a tendency to use source text oriented techniques in translation in order to assure the representation of source culture in the target culture. The above examples show that the translators tend to adopt the technique of foreignization, which shows the translator's presence in the translated text. This way of translating, following the foreignization technique, can expand the world knowledge of the adolescents. They can gain international understanding through translated literary texts and get familiar with the traditions of other nations. This case study indicates that the translators have used these strategies systematically in most cases to cope with lexical gaps, to make *The Palm* accessible to English readers even as it expands their knowledge of Persian culture.

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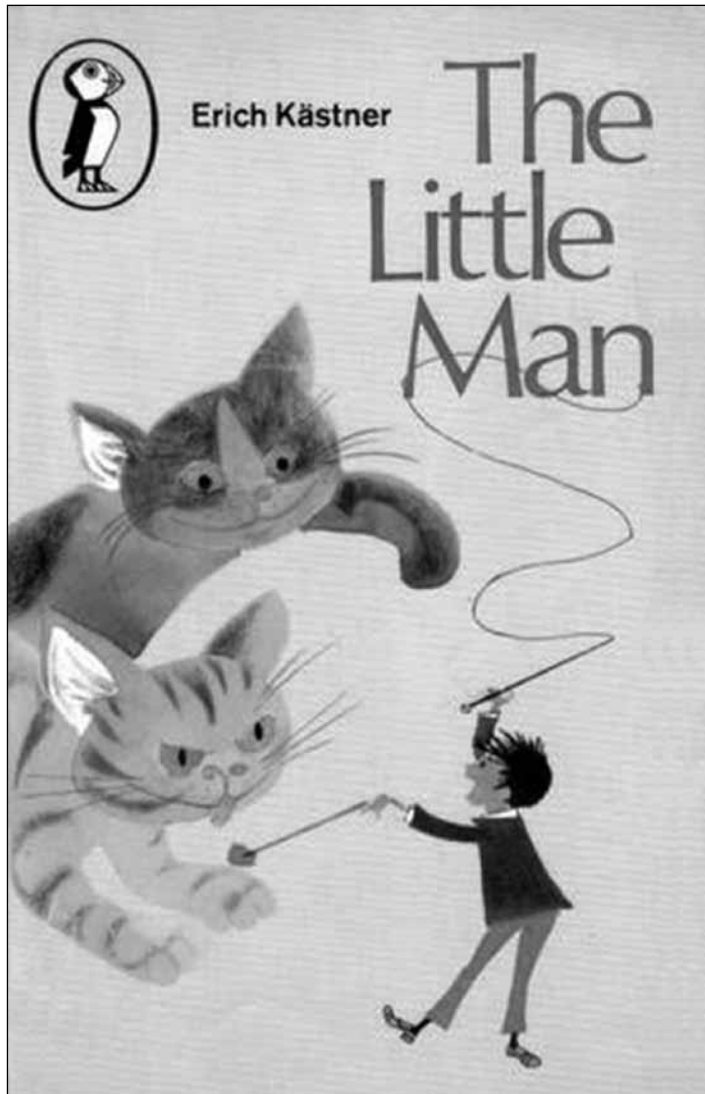
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Trends in Translations: The Mildred L. Batchelder Award from 1997-2013



The Mildred L. Batchelder Award is given to United States publishers who have published English translations of books originating outside the US. This study analyzes characteristics of Batchelder titles from 1997-2013 including format, genre, original language, and setting. Our findings reveal a predominance of Western European languages and settings and a preponderance of fiction novels with serious subjects. These findings raise questions about the availability and diversity of translated books for children in the US.

Introduction

As youth leverage social media and technology for information and communication, they have the capacity to find instantaneous connections with others around the world, to encounter multiple viewpoints and diversity, and to discover new places and cultures with unprecedented ease. Yet without the facility to communicate in multiple languages, these young people will encounter barriers to many spoken and written expressions of culture from around the world. In the world of children's literature, books from other countries that have been translated from other languages are one means for today's youth to gain access to a more expansive and global literature. Since 1968, the Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC), the children's services division of the American Library Association (ALA), has promoted this vision through the establishment and annual selection of the Batchelder Award winner and honor books.

The Mildred L. Batchelder Award for Translated Literature

Mildred L. Batchelder was a children's librarian who worked in public and school libraries and was an active leader in ALA and ALSC throughout the Twentieth Century. Batchelder believed that sharing translations of children's books from around the world helped children grow towards international understandings, recognize the literary and cultural heritage of other peoples, develop feelings of "nearness" to those people despite physical and geographic boundaries, and create bridges of communication between and among cultures (qtd. in Batchelder 307-15). Her efforts to promote international understandings across the globe spawned the creation of the Mildred L. Batchelder Award for translations. This award was established in 1966 and first awarded in 1968 to Alfred A. Knopf for *The Little Man* by Erich Kästner, translated from German. The Batchelder Award is unique because it is given to the publisher for an outstanding book originally published in another country and translated into English for publication in the United States. Titles awarded the Batchelder are deemed worthy through a rigorous review by a committee of appointed ALSC members. The evaluation focuses on the title's "relationship to the original work" as well as the quality of the translated title itself ("Mildred L. Batchelder

By definition, Batchelder Award winning books "should not be unduly 'Americanized.' The book's reader should be able to sense that the book came from another country."

Award Criteria and Terms"). The translations must reflect the original style, elements, and tone of the author. By definition, Batchelder Award winning books "should not be unduly 'Americanized.' The

by KASEY GARRISON



Kasey Garrison is a lecturer of Teacher Librarianship at Charles Sturt University in New South Wales, Australia. Kasey earned her PhD in Education with a focus on Curriculum and Instruction from Old Dominion University in 2012. Her research interests focus on diversity within children's and young adult literature.

by SUE KIMMEL



Sue Kimmel earned her PhD in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 2010. She is currently an Assistant Professor at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. Her research interests include multiple literacies and the socio-cultural impacts of children's literature.

book's reader should be able to sense that the book came from another country" ("Mildred L. Batchelder Award Criteria and Terms").

The award criteria focuses attention on the text; picture books and graphic novels are eligible, but the text must be substantial and "as vital as the illustrations" ("Mildred L. Batchelder Award Criteria and Terms"). The translated work must also maintain high standards in the quality of writing, literary elements, format, presentation, and design. Depending on the content and format, these broad criteria include: "Interpretation of the theme or concept, presentation of information including accuracy, clarity, and organization, development of plot, delineation of characters and appropriateness of style" ("Mildred L. Batchelder Award Criteria and Terms"). Such considerations are used in many of the ALSC children's awards including the John Newbery and Pura Belpré Awards. Books that receive the Batchelder Award are thus deemed by the committee to be of the highest quality in all aspects not just in the translation.

Before 1979, the Batchelder Award was given biennially to a publisher for a book published within the two previous years and nominees were announced publicly. Since 1979, the award has been given annually for a book published in the previous year and the list of books under consideration for the award is not shared publicly. Beginning in 1994, the award committee has had the option to name honor books in addition to the award winner. The committee also has the option in any year to decline to name a winner and/or honors if no titles meet the rigorous criteria.

The Batchelder Awards 1968-1996

Previous studies by Nist and Lo and Leahy looked at language, setting, and genre for the Batchelder Award winners from *The Little Man* (Kästner), the first award-winning book in 1968, up through the 1996 winner, *The Lady with the Hat* (Orlev). Both studies found persistent patterns in terms of language, format, and subject matter throughout the award winners. The typical award winner found in both studies was originally published in German, often historical fiction written for an older reader, and featured the events of World War II, particularly the Holocaust. Joan Nist examined the first twenty years of the award from 1968–1987 and found a distinct Western European bias, specifically Germanic, in terms of both setting and language of the original publication. Despite the European dominance, Nist noted a particular lack of works from France, Italy and Spain (7). Additionally, Nist discovered that the Batchelder books tended to be more historical fiction with a focus on World War II (7). Few picture books had won the award, and titles often had a serious rather than humorous tone that Nist reported as unappealing to children (8).

Deborah Eville Lo and Autumn Leahy extended Nist's study with their examination of the first twenty-eight Batchelder Award books identifying the theme, setting, language, and genre of each (218-219). They also found a pattern of "difficult topics," particularly war and

suggested this may “in part explain the Batchelder’s lack of popularity” (220). The eight additional years studied by Lo and Leahy continued the earlier pattern uncovered by Nist of Germanic settings and languages. Historical fiction continued to dominate, and no additional picture books received the award. These authors made a persuasive argument for children’s literature, particularly in translation, as a way for young readers to experience “others” and develop a more global perspective (Lo, and Leahy 222).

An Examination of Batchelder Titles from 1997- 2013

Nist suggested that the addition of honor books to the award might serve to promote diversity in the list in terms of nationality, format, and subject matter (5). Since honor books were added in 1994 and a new century is now underway, we examined the Batchelder Award winner and honor titles representing the seventeen years between 1997 and 2013 to determine whether this expanded selection would indeed provide more diversity. In this time frame, there were a total of 45 books recognized by the Batchelder: seventeen Award winners and twenty-eight honor books. Generally each year there were one to three honor books named; however, none were recorded as honors in 1997.

For each of the forty-five award-winning or honor books, we gathered information from examination of the book along with records from the websites of the Batchelder Award, the United States Library of Congress (LoC), and WorldCat. For each title, we recorded bibliographic information in addition to the country the book was originally published, its original language, the country of the book’s setting, the LoC Subject headings, and the publisher of the US translation. One or both of us also read the thirty-five books published from 2000-2013 as part of other research (Forest, Kimmel, and Garrison). For the ten books we did not read, we used descriptions of the books from noted websites as well as the subject headings to infer genre, format, and topic(s). We also decided to record the sex of the main protagonist since this was readily available from our readings of the books and the secondary sources. The information was assembled in a table and frequency counts were developed for each category. Occasionally, there was not an identifiable country as a setting (e.g. the setting was a farm-yard or an imaginary setting), which we labeled as unspecified. Fantasy settings were also labeled as such. After gathering these characteristics for each of the forty-five books, we analyzed the patterns and themes reflected in these titles.

Characteristics of the Batchelder Award Winners and Honors from 1997-2013

Original Languages

Most of the Batchelder Award winners and honors from 1997-2013 followed the trend found in previous studies and continued to be translated from Western European languages, specifically German (see

Table 1). Within these European counts, the honors provided more from French as well as the addition of other European languages including Norwegian, Italian, and Danish. Two Batchelder Award-winning titles, *Run, Boy, Run* (Orlev) and *Samir and Yonatan* (Carmi), were originally translated from Hebrew to English. Two winners and one honor title were translations from Japanese. It is also notable that two of the German translations, *Thanks to My Mother* (Rabinovici) and *Hostage to War* (Wassiljewa), were stories that had already been translated before being translated to German. *Thanks to My Mother* was originally translated from Hebrew and *Hostage to War* was translated from Russian. As a secondary translation, *Hostage to War* represents the only title with any type of Russian origin in the sample. While Hebrew is not specifically a European language, it undoubtedly has ties to the continent. Thus, the only non-European translations came from the three award winners and one honor translated from Japanese.

Table 1: Translated Languages for Batchelder Award Winners and Honors

Language	Winners	Honors	Totals
German	6	7	13
French	3	9	12
Dutch	2	3	5
Japanese	3	1	4
Swedish	1	3	4
Danish	-	3	3
Hebrew	2	-	2
Norwegian	-	1	1
Italian	-	1	1
Totals	17	28	45

Settings

The settings of the Batchelder Award winner and honor books span the globe and even space (see Figure 1). However, as with the languages of origin, most of the books (53%) have settings in parts of Europe. Fantastical places include five settings. Some titles had settings that were

undefined, perhaps purposefully, to suggest a universal backdrop of any town, village, forest or chicken house, as was the case in *Henrietta and the Golden Eggs* (Johansen), a story in which a plucky chicken advocates for better working conditions. However, it is notable that two of the picture books with such “universal” settings, *Garmann’s Summer* (Hole) and *The Collector of Moments* (Buchholz), showed and described locales that might be recognized as European, especially given their European languages of origin.

Figure 1: Frequency of Settings of Batchelder Award Winners and Honors 1997-2013



With 15 of the Batchelder titles straddling more than one setting, the overall totals for settings equal sixty-seven different places in the Batchelder books from 1997-2013. Of these settings, thirty-seven (55%) were in European countries. Books that dealt with war featured troop movements across countries and continents, such as the 2012 winner *Soldier Bear* (Tak) where Polish refugees join the British army in Iraq and Italy during World War II, and the 2006 winner *An Innocent Soldier* (Holub) where a young farmhand is forced to join the Napoleonic army as it invades Russia in the Nineteenth Century. Other characters moved among settings, for example: children running away from home, like young brothers Bo and Prosper who flee Frankfurt, Germany to travel to Venice, Italy in *The Thief Lord* (Funke); refugees fleeing conflicts or political unrest, like Blaise and Gloria who live their home in the Georgian Republic following the break-up of the Soviet Union in *A Time of Miracles* (Bondoux); and immigration, like Johann’s family who migrate to the US for economic reasons at the turn of the Twentieth Century in *How I Became an American* (Gündisch). In the 2008

fantasy winner, *Brave Story* (Miyabi), the movement of the main character Wataru is between the real world, his home in Tokyo, Japan, and a fantasy dimension called Vision.

The immediate answer to the question for this study of whether the Batchelder recognitions awarded from 1997-2013 provide greater diver-

The immediate answer to the question for this study of whether the Batchelder recognitions awarded from 1997-2013 provide greater diversity in languages and settings is a resounding, “No.”

sity in languages and settings is a resounding, “No.” The past 17 years of the Batchelder Award look very much like the first 28 years as reported in previous studies by Nist and Lo and Leahy. Honor books have only slightly extended the geographic scope of the award, continuing to fall into the European pattern for both original language and settings. European languages predominate in the sources, and while a few settings include the continents of South America and Africa, they are from European perspectives and authors. With the exception of the Japanese titles, European authors wrote the books with settings in Asia, Africa, or North and South America.

Format, Protagonists, Genre, and Topic

Without the engagement of the reader, the global aspect of these books is pointless. If no one reads these titles, then their international perspectives are missing. Young readers may not be as concerned about the linguistic origins or settings of these books as much as other appeal factors such as format, genre or subject matter. Additionally, youth may be drawn to stories with protagonists of the same sex. In this study, we also looked for diversity linked to these factors to see how the Batchelder Award winners and honors related.

Format

The majority of this sample was in a novel format, predominantly comprised of text with some or no illustrations. Thirty-nine of the forty-five titles fell into this category, including all of the seventeen award winners from 1997-2013. Of the twenty-eight honor books, six provided the only variety in format. The focus of the Batchelder Award criteria is on the text, but picture books and graphic novels are considered for the award. In 2013, the first graphic novel was awarded a Batchelder honor; *A Game of Swallows: To Die, To Leave, To Return* (Abirached) is based on the author’s experiences as a child in Lebanon during the civil war of the 1980s where neighbors comfort each other with good food and memories of a more peaceful time. From 1997-2013, there were four picture books noted as honors: *Big Wolf and Little Wolf* (Brun-Cosme), *Garmann’s Summer* (Hole), *Henrietta and the Golden Eggs* (Johansen), and *The Collector of Moments* (Buchholz). Another honor title, *Hostage to War: A True Story* (Wassiljewa), was a nonfiction biographical tale written in a diary format about a Russian girl who was captured by the Germans and forced to work in a factory during World War II. The most uniquely formatted title was *The Man Who Went to the Far Side of the Moon: The Story of Apollo 11 Astronaut Michael Collins* (Schyffert), which offered a scrapbook format including handwritten notes, family photographs, and news-clippings from the 1969 moon landing. Nist projected the hope that the inclusion of honor books would help to broaden the types and appeal of books recognized by the Batchelder selection committee (5). This study found this to be somewhat true with six honor titles, 13% of the forty-five winners and honors. Some new formats, like the scrapbook design, graphic novel, and picture books have achieved honor status.

Protagonists

This study examined a facet of the Batchelder titles that the previous studies did not: the sex of the protagonists. Overall, most of the Batchelder Award winners and honor books from 1997-2013 included male protagonists (see Table 2). Most (71%) of the award winners featured male

protagonists in comparison to 24% with female protagonists. The honor books have provided an equal balance in the sex of protagonists with 11 titles each. Books with animal characters were noted separately and included three honor titles.

Table 2: Sex of the Protagonists for the Batchelder Award Winners and Honors

Protagonist	Awards	Honors	Totals
Male	12	11	23
Female	4	11	15
Both Male & Female Protagonists	1	3	4
Animals (two males, one female)	-	3	3
Totals	17	28	45

Genres and Topics

As noted by earlier research studying the 1968-1996 titles, fiction also dominated the Batchelder Award winners and honors from 1997-2013 (see Table 3). While some fictional titles were based on true stories, only one award winner, *Thanks to My Mother* (Rabinovici), and three honor books, *When I Was a Soldier* (Zenatti), *Hostage to War* (Wassiljewa) and *The Man Who Went to the Far Side of the Moon* (Schyffert) were truly non-fiction, and were all biographical or autobiographical in content. For this study's purposes, titles set in the years before 1980 were considered historical fiction. When only the award books are considered, historical fiction dominates, but the inclusion of the honor books reveals that realistic fiction is the most frequent overall genre of the 45 books. The honor books provided more significant variety for genre by also including ten fantasy titles.

Table: 3 Genres of the Batchelder Award Winners and Honors

Genres	Awards	Honors	Totals
Realistic fiction	5	11	16
Fantasy	3	10	13
Historical fiction	8	4	12
Non-fiction- Auto/ Biography	1	3	4
Totals	17	28	45

The Batchelder books included quests in fantastical settings like the *Moribito* series by recent HCA winner Uehashi that featured the heroic deeds of Balsa, a strong female warrior who must save her kingdom from mythical beasts and greedy rulers, and *The Last Dragon* (De Mari) in which a young elf raises a dragon to fulfill a prophecy. More realistic

subjects like school and friendships are found in the *Nicholas* series (Gosciny) where a group of young boys get into mischief at school and home. However, as noted by previous studies (Lo, and Leahy; Nist), more serious topics also dominated these newer recipients, with twelve of the titles (27%) dealing with war or conflict. Eight of those books were directly related to the events of World War II in Europe like the 2013 winner *My Family for the War* (Voorhoeve) and a 2012 honor *The Lily Pond* (Thor) where children of Jewish descent flee their Nazi-ridden countries while their parents are forced to remain behind. Further heavy subjects explored dark topics including murder and death in books like the 2007 honor *The Killer's Tears* (Bondoux) where a young boy is adopted by his parents' murderer to the philosophical meaning of life sought by the bored teenage protagonists in the 2011 honor *Nothing* (Teller).

Humor, in particular, was absent from award winners while lighter topics could be found in eleven of the twenty-eight honor recipients with books like *Nero Corleone: A Cat Story* (Heidenrich) where the feline protagonist leaves his farm home in Italy to seek the finer things in life like condensed milk and sausage and *Secret Letters 0 to 10* (Morgenstern), a story of love and friendship. Uma Krishnaswami discusses the lack of humor in multicultural books in general noting that the "identity tale of oppressed people continues to dominate those books dubbed 'multicultural'" (20). She notes that insider jokes may find difficulty crossing borders. While this author does not specifically address the translated books, it may be that jokes are also difficult to translate across the language border as well.

Although the Batchelder defines its child audience as birth to age fourteen following the ALSC definition, the winners of the Batchelder Award tend toward the narrow upper end of this range, typically feature few or no illustrations, and are generally novel length. Batchelder winners are also heavily fiction with fewer non-fiction selections. Poetry is another format and genre notably absent from the Batchelder awards. Similar limitations have been the subject of criticisms leveled at the winners of ALSC's Newbery Award for literature (Parravano 436) given to the author of the "most distinguished contribution to American literature for children" ("Newbery Medal Terms and Criteria"). Both awards share similar criteria for literary excellence that may lead the award committees to focus on fiction as well as books for older readers.

Our analysis found limitations in the Batchelder winners similar to those identified by the earlier studies of Nist and Lo and Leahy, leading us to wonder whether it is the state of publishing limiting the kinds of books available for the award. Also, given that the award recognizes the publisher, it may be important to understand how publishers decide to acquire and publish a book in translation.

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Translated Books in the United States

Are the Batchelder Award winner and honor titles representative of English translated books for children in general? Maureen White and Ruth E. Cox completed a study of recommended translated books for children published in the United States between 1990 and 2000 drawing from the Batchelder, other awards, recommended lists and major review sources (25). During this decade, the dominant language was German, which mirrors our findings of the Batchelder winners, followed by French, Swedish, Japanese, and then Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Danish and Russian. A total of twenty-eight languages including Afrikaans, Hindu, Iroquois, and Swahili (26) were also identified suggesting a greater linguistic diversity than that of the Batchelder titles. White and Cox found a preponderance of picture books (60%) with realistic fiction, information, and animal fantasy books leading the kinds of genres (27). This result is in contrast to the findings that few picture books or informational titles have won Batchelder recognition. They also noted from subject headings, a number of books about the Holocaust or World War II written for older children and a rise in titles about personal problems including sex, death, and emotional issues (28). Our findings as well as that of previous Batchelder studies by Nist and Lo and Leahy mirror this trend. In particular, the addition of honor books has increased the amount of realistic fiction on the list along with the few picture books. While the White and Cox study included Batchelder winners, their findings suggest that the range of translated titles eligible for the Batchelder Award may include more languages, formats and genres than are actually singled out for the award.

Other authors have addressed the general state of translations published in the United States. Michelle Maczka and Riky Stock studied all translated titles reviewed in *Publisher's Weekly* during 2004 and 2005. These authors found that French led the way followed by German and then Spanish (50). But they did note translations from 34 different languages during this time period (51). Natalie Levisalles points out that 50% of books translated in the world are *from* English while only 3% are translated *into* English (55). She finds this troubling since the English-speaking United States has such a large immigrant population. According to this author, the US is “threatened by an extreme cultural isolation” (55). Among the reasons identified by Levisalles is the argument that there is no market in the US for translations (56).

Publishers of Translated Books

Studies of the Batchelder titles suggest that a variety of publishers are engaged in the work of publishing books for children in translation. For the first twenty years, sixteen different publishers received the award (Nist 6). Our findings reveal that twenty-six publishers were responsible for the forty-five books in the period from 1997-2013. There were seventeen publishers who received the award once with nine recognized for the remaining twenty-eight books. It is also notable that of these, Delacorte and Dial belong to the same company, and Arthur Levine

is an imprint of Scholastic. These two publishing companies were responsible for fourteen of the total forty-five titles, or over 30% of the Batchelder Award winners and honors published since 1997. The information in Table 4 consists of all publishers recognized by more than one Batchelder Award winner or honor. Ten of the Batchelder titles represent five matching sets of author, translator, and publisher. For example, Viking Press won a Batchelder honor in both 1999 and 2002 each time for a book authored by Susie Morgenstern and translated by Gill Rosner. Other repeated award-winning collaborations include Phaidon Press with author Rene Goscinny and translator Anthea Bell as well as Delacorte Press with author Anne-Laure Bondoux and translator Y. Maudet.

Table 4 Publishers of Batchelder Award Winner and Honor Titles from 1997- 2013

Publisher/Imprint	Number of Batchelder Award or Honors
Delacorte	6
Arthur Levine	4
Farrar Straus Giroux	4
Eerdmans	3
Viking	3
Dial	2
Godine	2
Phaidon	2
Scholastic	2

The Batchelder Award is given to the publisher who is responsible for bringing the book in translation to the market in the United States. A few publishers of children's books have written about the process. "Publishing literature in translation for young readers is lunatic," Front Street publisher Stephen Roxburgh proclaimed in an address to USBBY, the United States national section of IBBY (48). Americans are myopic and insular and translated books are "expensive, time consuming and unsuccessful in the marketplace" (48). Another publisher and four-time Batchelder honoree, Arthur A. Levine, provides insight into the complexity of identifying and bringing translations to an American audience. From a publishing view, the ultimate goal is twofold. First, they must identify a title in the original language that is well written. Then, they must find a translator who will retain the voice and tone of the original in order to bring it to an English-speaking audience (Levine 519).

Annette Goldsmith's study of the factors impacting US publishers picking up international translations revealed perceptions of the market, as well as financial issues, as the most predominant factors influencing

publisher decisions. Simon Broughton, an editor from Roaring Brook, has written about attending international book fairs in search of new acquisitions. He comments that the decision to acquire an international title as similar to choosing domestic titles with consideration of audience, sales potential, timeliness, and appeal (16). Acquisitions are both editorial and business decisions, Broughton asserts, and the business decision for foreign titles may be restricted in terms of the market for a title (e.g. only to the United States while US publishers might otherwise be free to market their books to other English-speaking countries abroad) (18).

Goldsmith also found the ability of publishers to speak multiple languages was another important factor in seeking out translated books. Bilingual publishers were more likely to choose translations than monolingual publishers speaking only English. Karen Nelson Hoyle shares remarks that confirm these findings from two Delacorte editors whose books have won Batchelder Awards. Beverly Horowitz, married to a Frenchman, reports that she discovered the 2007 winner *The Pull of the Ocean* (Mourlevat) in a bookstore while traveling (14) and Francoise Bui who is fluent in French found the 2005 winner *The Shadow of Ghadames* (Stolz). Addressing the question of translated books, Roxburgh notes that the state of books in translation in the United States is “pretty grim” (9) and that culture, not language or economics, is the most difficult boundary these books must cross (8).

Conclusions

Based on our overall findings in this study, a composite Batchelder Award winner or honor from 1997-2013 would be:

- A novel (83%)
- Realistic fiction (33%)
- Set in Western Europe (54%)
- Dealing with a serious topic (62%), like war (21%), most likely World War II in Europe (17%)
- Featuring a male as the protagonist (55%)

These findings suggest that the readership of the

Batchelder titles may be limited by the selection; however, honor books have clearly diversified this list. The predominance of longer novels, fiction, and serious themes likely limits the readership as well. Nist suggested the need for a separate award for picture books. Perhaps that would develop an awareness and readership among younger readers for books from other countries. The continuing geographic limitations, first identified by Nist and confirmed by Lo and Leahy, both in terms of the country of origin and settings for the books greatly restricts the award’s purpose to promote international understanding. Future research should investigate the children’s book publishing industry in under and unrepresented countries particularly from the continents of Asia, Africa, and South America.

Despite their limitations, this sample of Batchelder Award winner and honor books

Despite their limitations, this sample of Batchelder Award winner and honor books represent a unique set of books, singled out for both their outstanding literary qualities and their foreign flavor.

represent a unique set of books, singled out for both their outstanding literary qualities and their foreign flavor. As the criteria itself states, “The reader should sense that the book came from another country” (“Mildred L. Batchelder Award Criteria and Terms”). We have read many of these Batchelder Award titles and concur with Roxburgh that books written from and for another culture have the potential to expand our understandings of other cultures (50). What could we learn about issues of race, gender and disability in books originating from other cultures? What are universals across nationalities? What are distinguishing or unique attitudes or beliefs that might extend our understanding of ourselves? Are there social issues that we struggle with such as immigration, poverty, or homelessness that might find different approaches in other cultures? What are the things we take for granted in our

country that are not necessarily the way things are around the world? Future studies of the Batchelder Awards might look in finer detail at this unique group of titles.

Finally, we have to ask ourselves how the sweeping changes impacting the publishing of electronic books will also change the world of books in translation. Will authors and readers begin to bypass publishers and find each other on the web through sites like the International Children's Digital Library¹ or through the many opportunities to self-publish online? Gabe Habash and Jim Milliot suggest that foreign publishers may begin to circumvent arrangements with US publishers and market and sell their books directly to US markets. As these different models of publishing emerge, questions arise about the quality of the literature as well as the translations. The value added by publishers who can find outstanding writing around the world and work to break down the language and cultural barriers is huge. In a sense, it is exactly the concerns that publishers have about the difficulty, time, and expense involved in bringing translations to a new market, that makes this work essential.

Today's youth deserve access to high quality literature originating outside of their cultural borders. Translations are a formidable choice in granting this access. The Batchelder Award titles offer an opening, however limited, to a wider world of literature. The award sets standards for excellence in both the translation and the literary qualities of international books published for children in the United States. We call on publishers to cultivate relationships beyond European markets and seek outstanding books for young readers from around the world. Perhaps, if youth develop a taste for international literature at an early age, an interest in global authors will persist into adulthood. We would also like to encourage teachers and librarians to read the Batchelder Award winner and honor books. The serious tone and historical settings for many of the titles are outstanding choices for classroom study and book club discussions. Let's work to share more translated literature with young readers and build demand for greater access to the world's cultures

through the world's literature. In doing so, we will promote the vision of Mildred L. Batchelder "to eliminate barriers to understanding between people of different cultures, races, nations, and languages" (About the [Mildred L.] Batchelder Award).

Notes

1. The International Children's Digital Library is a large collection of free electronic books translated to and from different languages from around the world: <http://en.childrenslibrary.org/>

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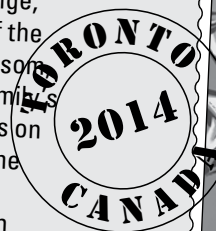
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This book draws a perturbed preteen, Lynn, and her carefree, new-age mother closer together through the daughter's strange, but authentic, relationship with another teenage girl living off the grid with her family in the middle of Toronto. Her name is Blossom and her underground home is called "the Lingerlands," and her family's self-professed title, "the Underlanders." Their livelihood relies on finding everything second-hand, which exposes Lynn to a home stranger than her own. Ellis captures the difference that each realm imposes on Lynn with ease, in her whimsical banter with friends and her contemptuous critiques of her mother at home, and writes Lynn's surrender to the innocent charm of "the Lingerlands" and its inhabitants with picturesque delicacy. Lynn's journey of reconciliation with her mother remains engaging throughout as she handles the complex social issues an adolescent might face in learning to love others from different backgrounds. Even with this book's theme of accepting difference, both Lynn and Blossom come to the same humorous conclusion after their unique journey together: sometimes being strange is just too funny not to laugh out loud about.

Ben Smith

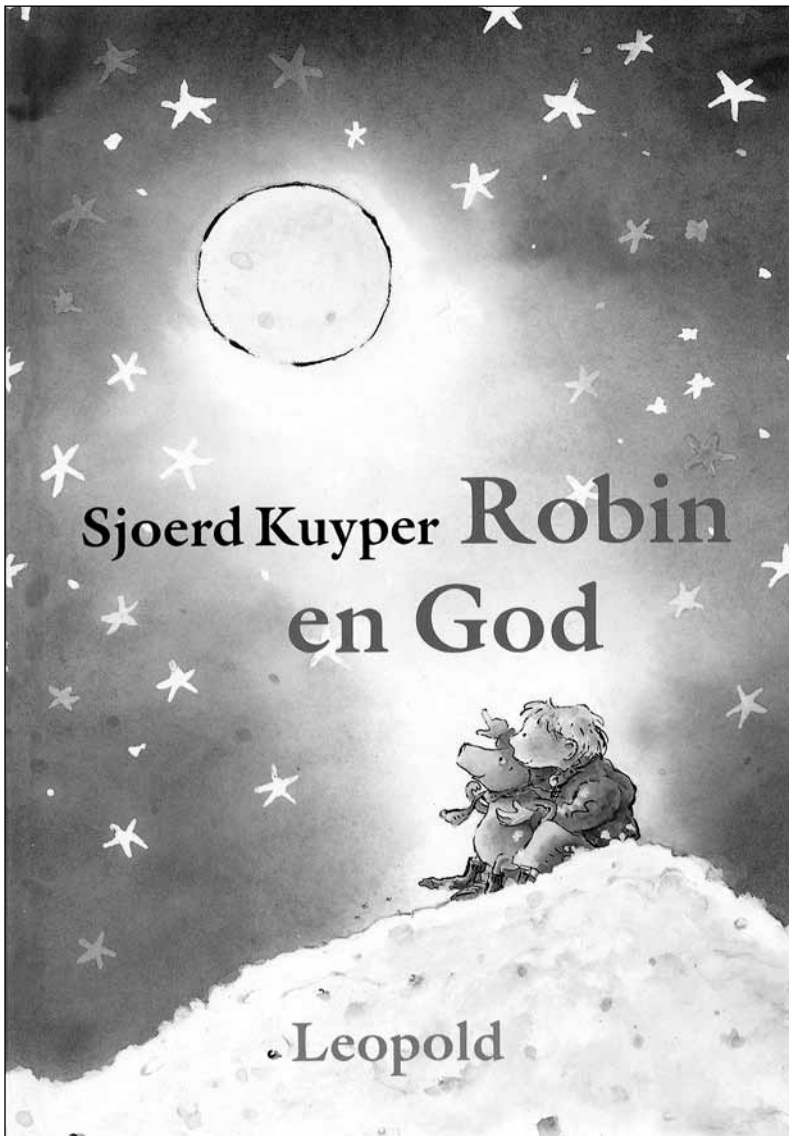


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The Canonical Status of Children's Book Authors: The Self-Image of Dutch Children's Writers since the 1990s



by HELMA VAN LIEROP-DEBRAUWER



Helma van Lierop-Debrauwer is professor of children's literature at Tilburg University and chair of the Dutch IBBY-section. Her main research interests are literary socialization, adolescent literature, the history of Dutch children's literature, and the relation between children's books and film.

The literary emancipation of children's literature which started in the 1990s has slightly improved the canonical status of children's authors. On the basis of a case-study of Dutch children's book writers this article argues that this small step forward towards external literary recognition is paralleled by more self-confidence and self-esteem among the authors themselves. Evidence is found in the writers' acknowledgement of the importance of children's books as part of the literary system.

In 1986, Zohar Shavit, *professor* at Tel Aviv University and an authority in the field of child culture, published her thought-provoking study *Poetics of Children's Literature*. The aim of the book was twofold: to analyze the interaction between society's concepts of childhood and texts written for children, and to examine the ways in which "the cultural position of children's literature imposes certain patterns of behavior" on the system (Shavit xi). With respect to the latter, Shavit concludes that at the time "its status within culture as a whole and in the literary polysystem in particular [was] inferior" (33). Her conclusion is based on her discussion of the self-image of children's literature. This self-image, a concept borrowed from social psychology, is determined by the interaction between external and internal views of children's literature. In other words, to describe this self-image, two questions needed to be answered: "How does the system see itself?" and "How is the system seen by others?" (34) Central to her discussion of these issues is the position of the children's book authors. I will take Shavit's answers to the questions she posed in 1986 as my point of departure for exploring the image of Dutch children's book authors since the 1990s.

Many researchers have pointed to changes that have taken place in the field of children's literature in the last two decades. They describe these developments in terms of "coming of age" (Nikolajeva) and "literary emancipation" (De Vries) and they point out the resulting shifting borders between children's literature and adult literature. Against the background of these changes, two questions will be addressed here: firstly, whether the developments in the past twenty years have changed the external view of children's literature and improved its status; and secondly, whether the impact of the literary emancipation has altered the way children's book writers see themselves. The first question will be explored on the basis of a reflection on the contemporary phenomenon of crossover fiction and on the critical reception of Dutch dual-readership authors. My answer to the second question will be based mainly on an analysis of recent comments by Dutch authors on their position in the literary field as children's writers.

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The Background: How Did Others Look at Children's Literature?

Shavit describes the external view of children's literature generally held until the mid-1980s through an exploration of the means by which societies express their high regard for literary systems and their authors, and which thus reflect their high status. The status symbols she discusses are literary histories, encyclopedias and lexicons, academic attention in literature departments and literary prizes. All these manifestations of appreciation were seldom shown towards children's literature. This

had important consequences for the canonization of children's literature within the literary polysystem. Because these status symbols determine whether or not an author becomes canonized, being deprived of them meant that children's literature was excluded from the literary canon. National literary histories barely paid attention to children's books and authors, and the same was the case for encyclopedias and lexicons. Obviously, literature for children was not seen as part of a country's cultural heritage.

Because of its minor importance in adult culture, children's literature was almost completely absent in the curriculum of literature departments at universities. If it was considered worthy of academic attention, it was studied in departments of education. The value of children's literature, if any, was considered to be educational rather than literary in nature.

One of the most important status symbols is the awarding of literary prizes. Shavit observes that up until 1986, "the policy of awarding prizes ha[d] almost always excluded children's writers from the list. Not even one Nobel Prize, nor any other less prestigious prize, ha[d] ever been awarded to a children's writer" (35-36). As an alternative, special children's literature prizes were introduced. This, however, further sharpened the distinction between "Literature" and children's literature, implying that children's books cannot be judged by the same literary criteria as other literary systems. Again, the educational function of children's books played an important role, as can be concluded from the composition of the juries awarding the prizes. Shavit concludes her exploration with the observation that the low status of children's book writers becomes most apparent when we compare them to the position of canonized writers for adults. The latter are considered important members of society. They are invited to give their opinion on all kinds of societal issues, while children's book writers are almost never asked to reflect on matters of public interest.

In her overview of status symbols, Shavit does not mention literary criticism. Other researchers have, however, pointed out the importance of critical attention for an author's literary reputation (Janssen; Van Dijk and Vermunt), hence, this aspect should equally be taken into consideration. When we look at literary criticism up to the mid-1980s, we see a situation comparable to the awarding of literary prizes. Children's literature was seldom reviewed in the cultural or book supplements of newspapers, but was set apart. Children's books had their own critics who judged children's literature mainly using criteria that underline the educational function of children's books.

Since the 1990s

Since the 1990s, the focus in children's books has been on the literary form of the text. As a consequence, contemporary children's literature has evolved towards "a more complex novel form" (Nikolajeva 8). Children's books have become a "field of innovation and experimentation, challenging the conventions, codes, and norms that traditionally

governed the genre” (Beckett, *Transcending Boundaries* xvii). As a consequence of this literary emancipation, the gap between writing for children and writing for adults, where form has been stressed since the beginning of the twentieth century, has been getting smaller. Evidence of this can be found in two developments: crossover fiction and dual-readership authors.

So far there has been no consensus on the use of the term “crossover fiction,” and as a result the term lacks conceptual clarity. Since the worldwide success of J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series, the notion of crossover fiction has been widely used to refer to the trend in the new millennium of adults reading contemporary children’s books (Beckett; Falconer). Beckett considers this definition too restrictive. In her opinion, crossover fiction is a much older phenomenon, going back to a time when there was no specialized children’s literature. However, this point of view does not help much to clarify the concept, since the very use of the word “crossover” implies the existence of two separate types of literature, one written for children, the other written for adults, which was the case from the late eighteenth century onwards. Beckett is right in pointing at classics such as *Alice in Wonderland*, *Pinocchio* and *Peter Pan* as crossover titles, but at their time they were exceptions to the rule. Apart from the fact that Beckett feels that crossover fiction is an age-old phenomenon, she also rejects the one-sidedness of the definition, i.e. its referring solely to children’s books being read by adults. To her, crossover literature “refers to fiction that crosses from child to adult or adult to child audiences” (4). Indeed, there have been many adult books in the past that were also read by children, but these crossovers differ substantially from how adults today read children’s books. As Falconer rightly observes, the adult texts which crossed-over to child readers were often abbreviated and illustrated, adapted to the needs and competency of child readers. Adults today read children’s books at the same time and in the same form as children read them. Moreover, what is essential to crossover fiction as it is used in this article is that these children’s texts do not appeal to adults in their roles as mediators, but as readers on their

own rights. More and more children’s books have “come of age” as literature and are therefore appreciated by adult readers for their own pleasure. No longer being an exception to the rule, crossover fiction has been a phenomenon typical of children’s literature since the 1990s. The second consequence of this literary emancipation is an increase in the number of dual-readership authors in the past two decades. Beckett uses the term “crosswriting” in this context, which she defines as referring to “authors who write for both child and adult audiences in separate works” (5). However, to avoid confusion with crossover fiction, “dual-readership authors” might be a better term to use. The books by these authors can be crossover fiction, but they are not so by definition.

A growing number of authors writing for both readerships can be observed in Dutch-speaking regions, as well as in other language areas (Allsbrook; Ewers; and Beckett). David Galef divides the group of dual-readership authors into three categories. According to Galef, the most frequently occurring category is the group of authors who write adult literature and then begin penning for children at some later point in their careers. The second category of authors develops in the opposite direction, starting out as authors for children, and later deciding to write for adults. The third group consists of authors who have always combined their writing for children with writing for adults. The phenomenon of the dual-readership authors and its presence in contemporary literature is mentioned several times explicitly as an indication of blurring the borders between the two literary systems:

That in the past few years the traditional demarcation between children’s literature and adult literature has been breached several times is best illustrated by the growing border traffic. From both directions, authors who want to extend their range, go on a scouting expedition ... In any case, the number of authors of adult literature who have published one or more children’s books in the past few years, is striking. (Van den Hoven 13-14)

Both the popularity of crossover fiction and the increase of dual-readership authors are signs that the distinction between the two literary systems is not as sharp as it used to be. The external view of children's literature appears to be at least slightly changed. But does this also lead to an improvement of the low status attributed to children's literature as compared to adult literature? Have literary histories, academic interest, literary prizes and serious critical attention come within the reach of contemporary children's literature and its writers? In answering these questions, I will focus on the situation in the Dutch language area.

Literary Histories and Literary Studies

For some people, in particular for academics working in the field of children's literature, the literary "coming of age" of books for young readers is a reason to argue that children's literature should have a position equal to that of adult literature; children's literature should be considered part of cultural heritage just as much as books for adults is. Some of these academics are even inclined to completely integrate children's books into literary histories of adult literature:

Children's books will not be part of the *literary* canon until a literary history of modern literature is published in which children's literature is no longer discussed in a separate chapter but organically integrated into the description of literary developments, currents and genres. (Bekkering 750 [emphasis in original], my translation)

LiteraryIt is not a coincidence, however, that the authors of these overviews are either working in the field of children's literature, working within both the children's literary system and the adult literary system, or have advisors who are experts in the field of children's literature. This

situation is not unique to the Dutch language area. In the English language area, for example, the boundaries between children's literature and adult literature are also mainly explored by the children's literary system, and there is relatively little interest in the border traffic originating in the adult literary system.

Literary Prizes

From the end of the 1980s onwards, Dutch children's literature has two important literary prizes which are awarded annually: *De Gouden en de Zilveren Griffels* [the Golden and Silver Slate Pencils] and *De Woutertje Pieterse Prijs* [the Woutertje Pieterse Prize]. The latter prize is a result of the literary innovations in children's literature, introduced in 1987 by the Woutertje Pieterse Foundation at the initiative of several well-known Dutch reviewers who wanted the children's book to be recognized as a fully-fledged literary genre. For that reason, they wanted a prize for books of Dutch origin written for children

or young adults and showing exceptional qualities with respect to language and content as well as to images and graphic design (Boonstra 7).

An overview of the prizes awarded in the last twenty years shows that they often went to authors debuting in children's literature who had previously only written for adults, more so than to those working first as children's book authors. Examples are Mensje van Keulen (Zilveren Griffel for *Tommie Station*) and Willem van Toorn (Zilveren Griffel for *Rooie*). Moreover, these authors have relatively often won prizes for their later books. Dual-readership author Toon Tellegen, for example, is an author who has twice won the *Woutertje Pieterse Prijs*.

In 1991, the jury awarded the Woutertje



Pieterse Prijs to *Anderland* by Paul Biegel, a book originally written and published for adults. The publisher did not submit the book for the prize, but the jury added the book to the list on its own initiative. The judges ignored the fact that *Anderland* was written for adults, because, as they argued in their report:

For children's books there is no maximum age, just as there is no minimum age for literature; luckily no age limit is specified anywhere in the rules of this prize. We feel free to consider Biegel's assertion that he does not consciously write for children as a challenge, as a statement that from the age of ten, children can understand more than is often thought. (Janssen et al.)

Although the literary qualities of the prize-winning books were probably decisive, judging by the apparent desirability of affiliation with adult literature it is likely that another factor played a role: the need of the children's literary system to blur the boundaries between children's literature and adult literature, and to subsequently advance in status. Awarding literary prizes to well-known authors of adult literature, or to a book originally written for adults, breaches traditional boundaries and helps to establish a positive external image.

The reverse development appears to be taking place in adult literature. The 1991 nomination of the children's book *Verse bekken* [Fresh Mouths] (1990) by Anne Vegter for an important adult literature literary prize in the Netherlands, the AKO Prize for Literature, induced several well-known critics to object to such a mixing of children's literature with adult literature. In reaction to the nomination of a children's book, Reinjan Mulder, a critic of the Dutch quality newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*, drew a picture of what a live broadcast of the AKO Prize awarding ceremony might look like. He fantasized about how the prize-winning children's book author would thank the jury by reading aloud a few lines from her book, so that the audience (and the viewers at home) would catch a glimpse of the outstanding quality of Dutch literature. To ensure that his irony would not be misunderstood, he concluded by saying that in other countries it would be unthinkable that a "wafer-thin children's book" could be nominated for the most important literary prize (Mulder n.p.).

A year later, the rules were changed to prevent a similar nomination from ever occurring again. The regulations of other important literary prizes in the adult literary system had excluded children's books right from the start (Linders), a situation that has not been changed. An adult prize for a children's book is felt to be bad for the reputation of adult literature and goes far beyond the occasional special issue or attention in a history of literature, where children's literature is carefully distinguished from adult literature. A prize stands for explicitly awarded quality. However, according to Sandra Beckett, crossover fiction has changed this situation thoroughly in the English language area since crossover authors Philip Pullman and Mark Haddon won prestigious literary awards such as the Whitbread Book Prize.

Critical Attention

The weekly reviews in newspapers, together with literary studies and prizes, provide a good standard for developments in the literary field and for the changing status of children's books and their writers. Serious critical attention is a necessary condition for recognition and a sound literary reputation. Because both writers of crossover fiction and dual-readership books are blurring the borders between adult literature and children's literature, it seems only logical that their works should be discussed in the two literary systems, thereby improving their own status and that of children's literature.

Beckett is convinced that the critical attention paid to crossover fiction has fundamentally changed the status of children's literature in the English language area:

Initially, crossover fiction was seen essentially as a financial success, epitomized by *Harry Potter*. It was not long, however, before it firmly established itself as a critical success as well, notably with the third novel in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*. *The Amber Spyglass* was followed by other award-winning bestsellers like Mark Haddon *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Even critics who generally disdain most bestsellers as pulp fiction, are now praising bestselling crossovers. (14-15)

With respect to the dual-readership authors in the Dutch language area, I am less convinced of a change in status of children's literature and its writers than Sandra Beckett is with regard to crossover writers.

When comparing the reviews of children's books by dual-readership authors with the reviews of their works for adults, one is immediately struck by the fact that the books they write for adults tend to get reviewed more often. Moreover, the reviews of the books for children are on the whole substantially shorter than the reviews of books for adult readers. A good example of this is the reception of Dutch dual-readership author Mensje van Keulen, with the reviews of her debut in children's literature averaging 314 words, while critics on the average devoted 846 words to her debut in adult literature. Moreover, in reviews of Van Keulen's children's books, more lines are devoted to a reproduction of the content than in reviews of her adult books. The majority of the reviews of children's books describe content and end with a brief evaluation, mostly without providing arguments. The reviews of Van Keulen's oeuvre seem to indicate that the conclusion of a research study by Krikhaar & Ros on children's literature criticism between the 1960s and the mid-1980s still applies to many reviews in the 1990s. The results of this study point out the poor quality of children's books reviews, displaying as they do the

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above-mentioned imbalance between description of content and argumentation (Krikhaar & Ros).

Another important difference between the reviews of children's books and those of adult books is that in the former there is often a reference to the specific child readers that will appreciate the books under reviews. The pedagogical approach to children's literature still appears to be firmly fixed in some of the reviews. Critics of children's literature write their reviews primarily for the "common" buyers of children's books, that is, children's caregivers, who are mainly interested in which book is appropriate and interesting for the children that they are raising.

Ideas about the target group also seem responsible for the superficial attention paid in the critiques to the question of whether, and if so to what extent, dual-readership authors change the relation between children's literature and adult literature. Because children's caregivers are not interested in the questions of the status of children's literature, little attention is paid to the borderline traffic.

Neither do critiques of adult literature pay much attention to the relationship between children's literature and adult literature when they discuss the works of a dual-readership author. When they do, they limit themselves to the short statement that the author also has written for children. Taking a closer look at what exactly they write about children's books reveals that adult critics explicitly or implicitly attribute fewer qualities to children's literature than they do to adult literature. When critics do not appreciate elements in the adult novels of an author, they generally refer to (genres in) children's literature. Van Keulen's adult novel *Overspel* (1982)

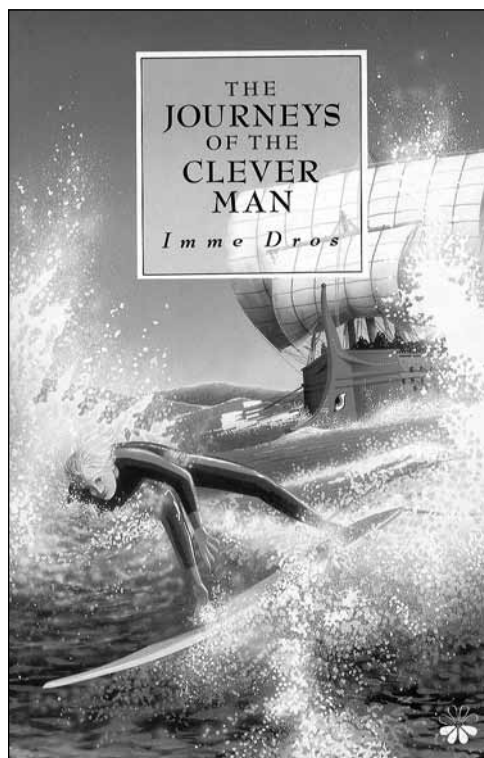
[Adultery], for example, was criticized for its excessive use of clichés, which one critic explicitly stated reminding him of girls' books.

Within the adult literary system, the demands imposed on authors seem to be heavier than in children's literature. For example, critics in both literary systems praise Van Keulen's style of writing. In children's literature reviews, a good storyteller is almost inevitably praised. If besides being a good storyteller and the author succeeds in creating a story that fits in with the child's imaginary world, success is guaranteed. For critics of adult literature, being a good storyteller is not enough for an author to get approval. It is for this

reason that a number of Van Keulen's adult books, in which qualities other than a good style were found to be lacking, have been disqualified.

Some critics seem to have difficulties getting rid of their prejudices against children's literature as they look upon the writing of an adult novel as the author's liberation from the constraints of children's literature. In reviewing Joke van Leeuwen's novel *Vrije Vormen* (2002) [Free Forms], Dutch critic Max Pam is convinced that van Leeuwen wants to transcend the boundaries between children's literature and adult literature,

because she wants to bypass the restrictions of the children's literature system imposed on it because of the child readers. Others state openly that writing a good children's book is not the same as writing literature. With respect to Joke van Leeuwen, Marja Pruis, a well-known critic of adult literature, comes to the conclusion that although Van Leeuwen is the author of one of the best children's books of the past few years, she is not capable of writing literature.



With respect to the external view, one can conclude that the literary emancipation of children's books has led to a discussion of the traditional boundaries between children's literature and adult literature within the field of children's literature. This debate has trickled into the adult literary system in bits and pieces, but has still only had a superficial impact there. For several authors of adult literature, as well as for authors of children's literature, the growing interest in children's books has obviously legitimised an extension of their range. This seems at least a plausible explanation for the increase in crossover fiction writers and dual-readership authors in the last twenty years. An analysis of the status symbols awarded to these authors and of the critical attention paid to them leads to the conclusion that the status of children's literature has improved, but in general still is inferior to that of adult literature. While children's book critics most of the time welcome dual-readership authors who are well-known in the adult literary system, critics of adult literature have difficulties overcoming their prejudices against children's books.

The Internal View: How Do Children's Book Authors Look at Their Own System?

According to Shavit, the external view of children's literature is very much related to the internal point of view, to the way authors see themselves: "The fact that children's literature is not recognized as literature per se and the criteria for its evaluation are not determined by its official addressee [the child] influences, of course, the view children's writers have of themselves. Consequently, it plays an important role in determining the self-image of the system from the internal point of view" (38). In children's literature up to the 1980s, Shavit observes two main interrelated reactions to the fact that children's book writers have always had an inferior status compared to that of authors writing for adults. The first reaction is authors denying that they write specifically for children. In the beginning, many writers, in particular men, published books anonymously because they knew that they would not gain any societal respect by writing for children. In the

Netherlands, Hieronymus van Alphen was an example of this attitude. He published his first book of poems in 1778 anonymously (Buijnsters 173). It only included a foreword in which the poet said he did not expect his children's poems to bring him any literary fame. Because he was already known as an author for adults, he probably thought it would be better not to name himself. However, because of the success of his poems, he did sign his second and third books (Buijnsters 173).

The second reaction, which can also be considered as an attempt by authors to free themselves from children's literature, is the demand that children's books be reviewed and evaluated on the basis of the same literary criteria as adult literature. According to C.S. Lewis, there are only two kinds of books: good and bad books. In his view children's books that are appreciated only by children are bad children's stories (Shavit 41). Both reactions point out that children's book authors themselves confirm the low status attributed to children's literature by other systems.

I explore next whether or not the literary emancipation of children's literature since 1990 has given children's book writers more self-esteem. Again, I will confine myself mainly to the situation in the Dutch language area. Although the distinction made in the Netherlands and Flanders between the status of children's book authors and that of writers of adult literature is comparable to that in many other countries, the Dutch situation cannot be generalised to all countries. Beckett points to the situation in Italy, for example, where in contrast to many other countries, mainstream "authors who also write for young readers have never suffered noticeably from the negative image that has often stigmatized their counterparts in other countries, causing them to take a defensive stance about their writing when it is categorized for children" (12).

Since the 1990s

Of course there have always been Dutch children's book authors who have reflected on their status, more specifically they compared it to the societal position of writers of adult literature. One of them is the famous Dutch writer of children's

books, Annie M.G. Schmidt. From the very beginning of her writing career she also wrote for adults. Joke Linders describes how Schmidt had great difficulty coming to terms with the feeling of not being taken seriously as a writer. When she received *De Constantijn Huygens Prijs* [the Constantijn Huygens Prize], an important literary award in the adult system, Schmidt admitted that she had always longed for that kind of recognition.

Over the past fifteen years, more and more children's book authors have been addressing their position openly. In 1991 *Raster* [Frame], a journal for adult literature, devoted a special issue to children's literature in which children's book authors were challenged to reflect on their position. *Literatuur zonder leeftijd* [Literature without Age], an academic journal on children's literature and its boundaries, published several interviews with children's book writers in which they discuss their professional emancipation against the background of the literary "coming of age" of children's literature. Furthermore, the same journal annually publishes the *Annie M.G. Schmidt Lectures* and the *Woutertje Pieterse Lectures*. These lectures are also meant to give authors the opportunity to express their views on their own position and on the situation of children's literature in general.

On the basis of these reflections it is possible to give an answer to the question posed at the beginning: What is the impact of the literary emancipation of children's literature on the way children's book writers see themselves? Do children's book authors still want to liberate themselves from children's literature in the way Shavit described in 1986? Based on the evidence I found I am inclined to say that the internal view has become more diversified.

First of all, there is a group of authors who at first sight appears to resemble the authors mentioned by Shavit in that they repeatedly say that they don't believe in a division between adult literature and children's literature in terms of better or worse. There is good and bad fiction in both genres. In fact, good fiction always blurs the boundaries between the two literary systems. The important difference is that contemporary authors such as Joke van Leeuwen, Ted van Lieshout, Bart Moeyaert and Anne Provoost are not trying to escape from their position in the children's literary system. They act out of the self-confidence of being a writer. Thus, the four authors mentioned are all at the same time dual-readership authors and crossover writers who do not deny their position as children's book authors. Joke van Leeuwen says that she never minded being categorised as a children's book author, "because it is a beautiful genre" (Boonstra 187).

Bart Moeyaert regularly shows his self-confidence in interviews and in his blog on his website, for example in his reaction to what he qualified as "the most stupid question ever asked." In the television broadcast of *De Gouden Uil*- [The Golden Owl] awards 2010, an important literary prize for a number of different book categories, the female presenter asked the winners of the children's literature prize if they planned to continue writing for children, suggesting that it was time to

do some real writing. In another blog Moeyaert asserts that every writer who is made of the right stuff, is convinced of what he does, because he works with passion. Therefore, writers should not be bothered by outsider opinions: "Designers, artists, including writers, children's book writers, should expand their own universe and should not feel they have to account for what they are doing. They have to do it their own way."

Authors such as Imme Dros and Peter van Gestel react slightly differently and appear to be representatives of the second typical reaction to the low status of children's literature Shavit described. Both Dros and van Gestel can be considered crossover authors, having written books such as *Ongelukkig verliefd* (1995) [Unhappily in love] and *Winterijs* (2001) [Winter ice]. They ask for respect for children's literature and demand it to be judged by the same literary criteria as adult literature. But again this claim cannot be explained as an attempt to free themselves from any kind of misguided distinction between children's literature and adult literature. Indeed, for Dros, children's literature is the most valuable literary genre there is. Rather than feeling restricted by the genre she feels it offers a wide range of possibilities, many of which have to be excluded when you are writing adult novels (Niewold 1996:490).

The third response to the low status attributed to children's literature from the outside again is one which reveals self-confidence, but this time with the acceptance of the risks that their books are not being judged as literature by adults. A representative of this attitude is Bibi Dumon Tak who gave the 2010 *Woutertje Pieterse Lecture*. To her, writers for children are different from writers for adults. According to Dumon Tak they relate to each other as tigers relate to lions. And just as a tiger is not interested in the fact that the lion is considered to be the king of the jungle, Dumon Tak is not bothered by what adults think of her as a children's book author. She prefers to be a tiger. She wants to write children's books because that makes her happy. And that is why she wants to concentrate on being a children's book writer: "Nobody will rush my pen anymore. I am my own pen" (115).

The fourth reaction is the most ambivalent one, and was expressed by Sjoerd Kuyper in his *Annie M.G. Schmidt Lecture* in 2009. Although Kuyper started as an author writing for adults, he is best known as a children's book writer. His books have been awarded several prizes. In his lecture he attacked what he perceived to be the external view, represented by the media as well as the internal view of children's literature, expressed by children's literature publishers and academics. On the one hand Kuyper shows a belief in the important mission of children's book writers, which is to write beautiful, literary books for children that can help them grow up and become fine adults. On the other hand he obviously envies the writers for adults for their high status: their income, the attention they get in the media

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and the preferential treatment given to them by critics, academics and publishers.

Kuyper's view of the status attributed to children's literature in the past is different from Shavit's idea that this status of children's literature has always been inferior. In Kuyper's opinion the literary emancipation of children's books has not improved the position of children's literature and its writers. In fact the situation, at least financially, is worse than ever. Therefore he asks for solidarity among children's book writers, against all the people and institutions who deny them a good income, critical attention and acclaim, adult literary prizes and financially substantial children's literature prizes.

Conclusion

Returning to my questions at the beginning, what conclusions can we draw? The literary emancipation that started in the 1990s has slightly, but not significantly, changed the position of children's literature and its authors. There is an opening up of the borders between children's literature and adult literature, as is evidenced by the increase of crossover fiction and dual-readership authors. As a consequence of blurring the borders, we see some attention being paid to children's literature in adult literary journals and literary histories. Crossover fiction has led, in particular in the English language area, to more media attention and to the awarding of the status symbol of literary prizes to crossover authors. At the same time, the reception of dual-readership authors reveals that in literary criticism both literary genres are still almost completely separated. Authors may cross the borders, but critics do not.

The slight improvement of status in the external view seems to be paralleled by more self-confidence and self-esteem among children's book authors. The ways in which this self-awareness is expressed, sometimes show that a blurring of the boundaries does not mean that the boundaries are disappearing, nor that the status of children's book authors is becoming more like that of authors of adult literature. Therefore, many children's book authors explicitly give vent to the opinion that children's literature deserves

more respect. I conclude with a statement by Dutch children's writer Imme Dros: "A language without children's books is a language that lacks at least one authentic literary genre" (122).

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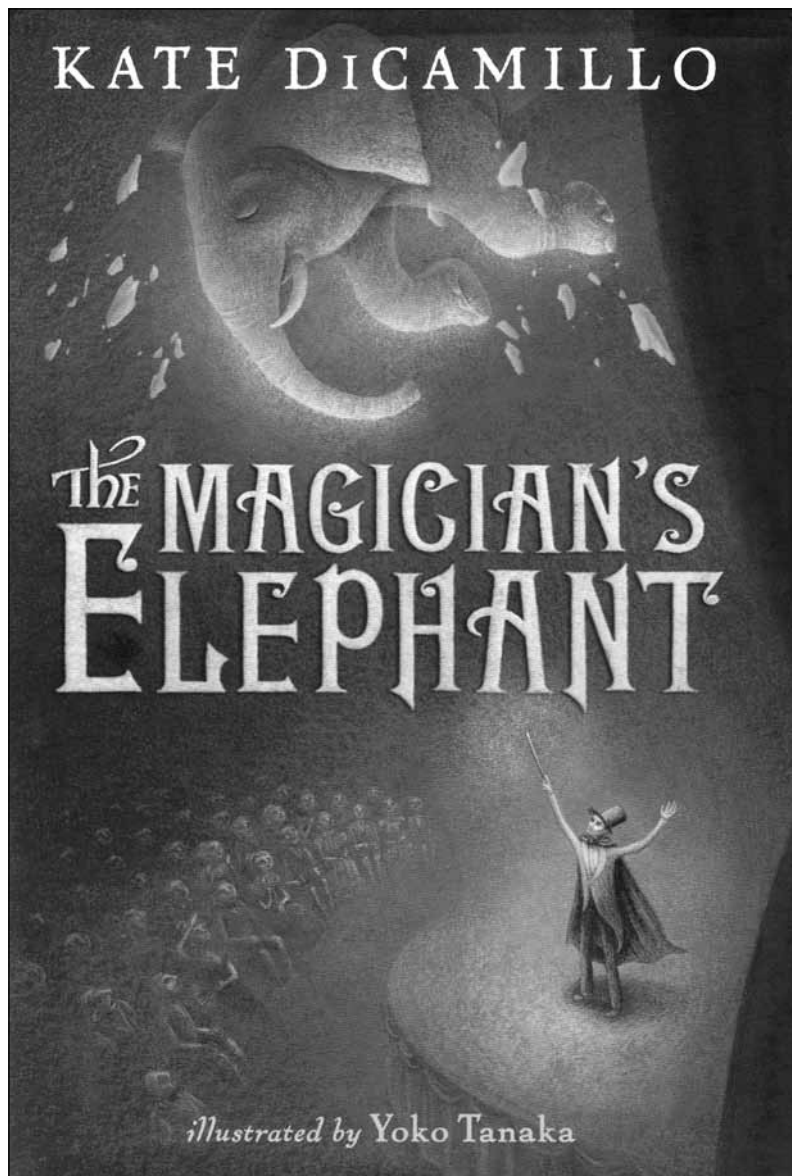
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Rebellion as Spiritual Activity in *The Magician's Elephant* and *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*

by CATHERINE POSEY



Catherine Posey, Ph.D., currently teaches online in the area of children's literature and writing. An Executive Committee member of the Association for Children's Spirituality, she researches the topic of children's literature and spirituality, and also develops curriculum in language arts for elementary and middle school.



*Some orphans in children's literature rebel in order to survive, but this rebellion can serve a deeper purpose. Readers may discover a spiritual dimension in the narratives through characters' rebellious acts in *The Magician's Elephant* by Kate DiCamillo and *Hugo* in *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* by Brian Selznick. Both books highlight a relational spirituality, suggesting that life-changing connections can develop compassion and a renewed sense of purpose.*

Introduction

Orphans abound in children's literature. These texts depict the plight of the parentless child, and include classics such as *Oliver Twist*, *The Secret Garden*, and *Anne of Green Gables*. Even into the 21st century, books for children showcase these characters' trials and joys, reflecting a persisting cultural awareness of the orphaned young person. Such characters face unique challenges, but their circumstances position them to embark upon meaningful journeys of the heart. This enduring motif deserves a closer look, particularly in terms of children's spirituality.

In some children's novels, the orphan protagonist participates in a strategic act of rebellion, resulting in key connections or revelation for that character. In fact, these rebellious acts serve a deeper purpose than survival. In the context of this article, acts of revolt in two stories engineer key interaction among characters, and it is valuable to analyze these rebellious moments, especially when illuminated through the lens of a spiritual reading of the text. This lens illustrates the effects of such rebellion on the spirituality of the characters. A reading of the spiritual in a text, however, reveals much more than connection with other people, and is not limited by religious rhetoric or reference to God or the Divine. In this analysis, I first articulate a conception of spirituality that provides a groundwork for exploring the relationship between rebellion and the spirituality of characters in two works of children's literature.

Conceptualizing Children's Spirituality

Many of those theorizing about children's spirituality have discussed it as a concept that resists definition (Helminiak; Schneiders; Watson). However, those exploring the spirituality of children must articulate what is meant by the term. For this analysis, I understand spirituality as a universal tendency in humans to desire deep connection with something greater than themselves, being potentially aware there is something beyond the physical realm. In some children's literature, the protagonist encounters profound connectedness with other characters in the story, such as Tom and Hatty in *Tom's Midnight Garden*. Or, a character may have a transcendent experience in the natural world, such as Anne Shirley in *Anne of Green Gables*.

A key aspect of this spiritual definition is the desire for an experience that is intangible and invisible. It is not as simple a notion as "love," though love can certainly play a role in this connectedness. An intangible, deep connection with someone or something might manifest through interactions with other people, the natural world, or with a divine source, such as the universe or God. A leading figure in children's spirituality research, Rebecca Nye, articulates the concept of relational

Central to this notion of spirituality is transcendence, which can be understood as a going beyond or outside of the self; a transcendent experience can also strengthen a person's awareness of destiny or sense of purpose for the future.

consciousness, a raised awareness, as a fundamental aspect of children's spirituality. Central to this notion of spirituality is transcendence, which can be understood as a going beyond or outside of the self; a transcendent experience can also strengthen a person's awareness of destiny or sense of purpose for the future. Some interactions between characters in children's literature are spiritual in that they reflect this notion of transcendence. For certain characters, these interactions engineer a greater awareness of future purpose or a renewed sense of identity. In this way, these connections are spiritual due to what happens to the characters as a result of these relationships.

Tobin Hart highlights the importance of Martin Buber's ideas about spirituality: "Spirituality is often lived out at the intersection of our lives—at the meeting between you and me. It is the quality of these human encounters that is the basis of a relational spirituality" (172). Some people discuss their spiritual lives in relation to their place within a community of others also on similar spiritual "journeys." As people express a desire for life-changing relationships with others, they are essentially participating in this reaching beyond the self. I do not think it is helpful to simply reduce a conception of spirituality to connection with other people, or even connection with the self. Rather, a significant connectedness to others or the self is a characteristic of spirituality. Spirituality is *a way of being* that reflects significant and life-changing interactions with other people, and potentially the natural world or God. This existence may reflect moments of transcendence and going beyond the self that represent powerful and anchoring experiences. I am interested in this specific kind of existence within the pages of specific literary texts for children.

Spirituality in Children's Literature

As children's literature reflects real life, we find examples of spirituality in books young people. Both *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* and *The Magician's Elephant* reflect examples of profound need fulfilled by characters living through transcendent experiences. These orphan characters forge connections that help them to develop

an authentic identity and purpose specific to the challenge depicted within the story. Both *Hugo Cabret* and *The Magician's Elephant* showcase resolutions that offer significant benefits to people outside of the protagonists' inner circle. Hugo and Peter's fulfillment of their purposes means that others will also reap the benefits. The connections in both novels illuminate spiritual dimensions of these texts through their effects on the orphaned characters and their quests. In this way, I can also define spirituality as a deeper sense of the self, characterized by renewed confidence and encouragement to fulfill some kind of task or quest.

How does the spirituality of these connections relate to rebellious acts? Rebellion and spirituality share a unique relationship, for rebellion can be positive in terms of a person's spirituality. In some cases, someone going outside of the box or stepping beyond what is considered normal and accepted is considered rebellion. In Zohar and Marshall's discussion of "spiritual quotient," they state that it "allows human beings to be creative, to change the rules and to alter situations. It allows us to play with the boundaries" (3). This idea reveals an important perspective: we can consider a rebellious act as spiritual in its capacity to invite creativity and a new viewpoint. How does children's literature enter the conversation on this celebration of rebellion?

The field of children's literature has historically produced texts that, upon closer analysis, harbor and promote certain acts of revolt and rebellion, challenging the prevailing social norms of the time in which they were published. For example, Peter Hunt discusses a common perception of *Treasure Island* as "a conventional nineteenth-century boys' adventure story" (72). However, upon closer analysis of Stevenson's text, Hunt concludes that the story is "actually about corruption and moral ambiguity: it may be an exciting page-turner, but it is also a critique of the approved social order, and of the books with which Victorian children were so familiar" (72). Hunt states, children's literature "is always at once conservative and revolutionary, pushing at the boundaries imposed upon it" (72). Kimberley Reynolds also understands children's literature

as a “paradoxical cultural space...orthodox and radical, didactic and subversive” (100). Texts for children that feature a subversive message mirror some of the questions with which young people grapple: “Many children’s books offer quirky or critical or alternative visions of the world designed to provoke that ultimate response of childhood, ‘Why?’ ‘Why are things as they are?’ ‘Why can’t they be different?’” (Reynolds 101). These questions connect with the idea of the spiritual quotient in humans; this spiritual intelligence helps individuals to push the boundaries of the norm and challenge the status quo.

Another important work within the conversation about rebellion and children’s literature is Alison Lurie’s *Don’t Tell the Grownups: The Subversive Power of Children’s Literature*. This work focuses on how many classics of children’s literature subvert the status quo and portray plots in which children resist the values of the adult world. Such resistance is celebrated and traditional values are overturned. Lurie explains why subversive literature is good: “Of course, in a sense much great literature is subversive, since its very existence implies that what matters is art, imagination, and truth. In what we call the real world, on the other hand, what usually counts is money, power, and public success” (xi). Literature for children offers readers stories that will appeal to our desire for what really matters, and such stories resonate with our rebellious streak. In light of Lurie’s case for the way in which countless books for young people reflect underlying subversive currents, Selznick and DiCamillo are not doing anything new. Hugo and Peter are both thieves. Hugo lies. Peter disobeys the wishes of his caretaker. However, the boys are eventually rewarded

for their rebellion, and this rebellion plays an important role in their spirituality.

The Novels

DiCamillo’s *The Magician’s Elephant* opens with Peter in a market square, where he is going to purchase fish and bread for his caretaker. Instead of this, however, he risks his coin on a fortuneteller. The fortuneteller’s sign complicates the boy’s ability to breathe with its “dizzying promise” (2). Aware that using his coin in the fortuneteller’s tent is an act of rebellion, Peter struggles with his decision. He admits to himself that he must

lie to his caretaker and he labels a lie as “dishonorable thing” (4). Finally, he decides to use the coin, but vows he will not lie about it. Peter’s grappling with what to do reflects a spiritual struggle. His heart is open, in that he receives the “outrageous and wonderful words” of the fortuneteller and must respond to that promise (4). The fortuneteller claims she will answer a “profound and difficult” question, and when she reveals that Peter’s younger sister is alive, he wants to know how he can find her. The fortuneteller’s answer mystifies Peter; he is told to follow



the elephant. Peter responds to this this cryptic phrase and begins to look for an elephant, engineering multiple important connections. Hugo makes a similar choice in Selznick’s novel, which also opens with a significant and necessary act of rebellion.

Set in Paris in 1931, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* is a graphic novel containing two hundred and eight-four drawings within its five hundred and thirty-three pages. Its visual narrative communicates the story just as powerfully as its words, and the first words in the novel do not

appear until page forty-six. The opening images show us Hugo, an orphan left to fend for himself in a train station after his uncle vanishes. Hugo completes the daily task of winding the clocks in the station, hiding the fact that he lives alone in a secret apartment, stealing food when he can. His central task is to repair an automaton, a complex windup figure, once owned by his father. He believes the windup might hold a message from his deceased father, and he steals what tools and bits he can find in hopes of repairing the mechanical man. In this way, the boy desires to connect with his father through the automaton. Hugo steals in order to survive, and also in order to build a necessary bridge to his father. It is Hugo's Uncle Claude that first teaches Hugo how to steal, "which Hugo hated more than anything, but sometimes it was the only way to get something to eat" (126). The opening images detail Hugo's observation of a toy booth in the train station, where he has been stealing toys in order to go forward with his repairs. The discovery of Hugo stealing is foreshadowed by the close up of the toy booth owner's face, harboring an expression of shrewdness and suspicion (36-37). Even before readers have read any written text, they are offered an extreme close up of both Hugo and the toy booth owner, Papa Georges. The pupil of the owner's eye takes up almost an entire page, foreshadowing the older man's spiritual awakening later on in the novel.

The spiritual aspects in each story specifically relate to connectedness with others that leads to a profound awareness of purpose and destiny in individual lives. The protagonists actively seek links with other people, whether they are in the form of Hugo's dead father or Peter's thought to be dead younger sister. Along the way, these characters' spiritual lives are enriched as they discover purpose and meaning through community with other people. A closer look at these relationships uncovers more insight into the links between rebellion and children's spirituality in these novels.

A closer look at these relationships uncovers more insight into the links between rebellion and children's spirituality in these novels.

Spirituality & Rebellion in *The Magician's Elephant*

In *The Magician's Elephant*, DiCamillo underscores the significance of connection through the struggles and issues of the narrative's characters. Peter's longing to be reunited with his sister is what fuels his decision to rebel and use his only coin on the fortuneteller. As he begins his search for the elephant, Peter establishes contact with a policeman, Leo Matienne, who aids him in catching a glimpse of the creature. The policeman perceives there is more to the world than meets the eye: "Leo Matienne had the soul of a poet, and because of this, he liked very much to consider questions that had no answers" (34). This passage tells the reader something about Leo Matienne's spirituality: he is comfortable asking the significant questions in life and is more aware of his authentic desires than most people. Peter's growing relationship with Leo is strategic; Leo becomes a kind of father figure for Peter, and the two share a further connectedness through their concern for the elephant. The

spiritual aspect in their relationship cannot be ignored, but this spiritual dimension does not only apply to Peter's friendship with the policeman.

While Peter searches for his sister, and attempts to help the elephant, the story shifts to the perspective of Adele who lives at an orphanage with a group of nuns. Sister Marie's character reflects a kind and thoughtful spirit who becomes aware that we are more connected to one another and to the world than we think. As Peter is encouraged and mentored by Leo Matienne, Adele has Sister Marie, who carries a childlike heart. Adele's relationship with Sister Marie reflects this spiritual aspect of transformation through connectedness to others. Sister Marie's own spiritual awareness grows after she has a meaningful dream in which she flies over all of a glowing "creation" (163). Through this dream, she realizes that all the creatures of the world are connected and that they are "emitting pulses of light" (163). As her heart gains this awareness, she is able to fly higher and higher in the dream, "but no matter how high she flew, she never lost sight of the glowing earth below her" (163). This dream occurs right before Sister Marie witnesses the reunion of Peter and Adele. "The whole of him, in fact, shone like one of the bright stars from Sister Marie's dream" (178). As a result, she recognizes the profound importance of the reunion.

Ursula King's article on the spiritual potential of childhood (2013), discusses the development of a spiritual awareness as "a different, deeper way of 'seeing'...It involves seeing experiences in a larger context, having a greater vision by relating more widely and responding more effectively" (7). Sister Marie provides an excellent example of someone who is experiencing this growing spiritual awareness, an awareness that will bring her into relationship with others. Leo Matienne and Sister Marie are both characters whose experiences reflect a spiritual dimension of the novel. For Peter and Adele, their connections with Leo Matienne and Sister Marie support them and provide them with necessary hope, affecting their own spirituality.

The magician is another example of a character benefiting from Peter's quest to find the elephant. Though the magician had promised to produce a bouquet during his magic show, he instead performs powerful magic. Through this act, he transgresses the norm of what the audience expects. It is his sudden awareness that "he had wasted his life," that drives him to perform this real act of magic (25). Madam LaVaughn, the woman crippled by the elephant resents the magician for his failed trick, and orders that he be placed in prison. The magician does not regret what he has done, but he is isolated physically and emotionally from other people. DiCamillo positions both the magician and Madam LaVaughn early on in the story for transformative experience, as they both need of a greater relational spirituality.

Hans Ickmann, Madam LaVaughn's servant, is also affected by Peter's act of rebellion and the elephant's subsequent arrival. We discover that he spent his childhood in the mountains, within a happy family, complete with a dog that could leap a huge distance across a river. Hans longs to return to the happiness of the past, perhaps to the sense of appreciation

for the world that children possess, but that adults so often lose (King 7). He is also aware of the dysfunctional relationships surrounding him. In addition to Hans, there is Bartok Whynn, the man responsible for the upkeep of the elephant. Bartok had been employed as a stonecutter, but a fall prevented him from continuing his work. Now, he cleans up after the elephant, laughing at everyone and everything, since “the whole of existence struck him as cause for hilarity” (125). He has disconnected from life, and is prime for a transcendent experience as he nears connection with Peter and the community. One night, Bartok dreams he is carving figures he does not know, but the reader recognizes them as Peter, Leo Matienne, Madam LaVaughn, and Hans Ickmann. As he carves the figures in his dream, he is “astonished and deeply moved” (DiCamillo 161). The remembrance of his dream motivates him to allow Peter and his company to access the elephant; without the dream, Bartok might not have allowed Peter in to see the elephant. As such, Bartok is positioned for a profound and powerful spiritual experience.

As these characters dream dreams, follow intuitions, take risks, and interact with one another, their trials, losses, and hopes evolve as they experience community. By the end of the story, it is evident that Peter’s choice to ask his difficult question functions as a catalyst for the bringing together of loved ones, stirring hope, encouraging forgiveness, and promising restoration. Peter reunites with his sister, Leo and his wife receive the children they never had, and Madam LaVaughn forgives the magician. As the paths of the characters converge at the conclusion of the novel in the snow, where the magician utters the spell that sends the elephant back to her home, a greater enchantment takes place: the magic of authentic connection among people, a spiritual aspect of life that *The Magician’s Elephant* illuminates.

Spirituality and Rebellion in *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*

For Hugo, stealing toys in order to fix the automaton brings about necessary connection with others, though in a different manifestation

than Hugo expects. Hugo longs to connect with his deceased father through the restoration of the automaton. However, it is Hugo’s relationships with the old man in the toy booth, Papa Georges, and his goddaughter, Isabelle, that are his most significant connections. The resulting relational connectedness affects Hugo’s spirituality as well as the spirituality of Papa Georges by helping them to realize their potential. At the story’s beginning, Hugo has no real interaction with others, save for when he is caught in the act of stealing by the old man. This rebellious act is crucial for the development of relationships for Hugo. Papa Georges threatens to burn Hugo’s notebook, and Hugo seeks connection with Isabelle in hopes of petitioning her to help him retrieve it. He eventually begins repairing small toys for the man. Though their relationship begins on rocky ground, a connection between the boy and the old man develops, providing Hugo with a father figure, who is also in need of the restorative effects of a child’s spirituality.

The child and adult provide the reader with a valuable spiritual lesson: we must intentionally pursue relationships with others on a deep, rather than superficial level. Hugo and Papa Georges discover aspects of the other that oppose their initial impressions and assumptions. Papa Georges admits he only thought Hugo to be a worthless thief, but is impressed with the boy’s ability to repair mechanical toys. Hugo accordingly observes Papa Georges executing complicated card tricks and wonders, “How could such a mean old man do such amazing things?” (166). The two gain insight about one another as they interact. Papa Georges’ goddaughter is another character whose connection is vital in Hugo’s life.

Hugo and Isabelle’s connection provides Hugo with the support he needs to finish fixing the automaton. Isabelle motivates Hugo to be a better person, influencing his spirituality. Hugo’s connection with Isabelle does not happen overnight, however. When they unlock the automaton together, Hugo tells Isabelle the truth about where he found the automaton and about his past. The author depicts this moment as an unlocking: “But he looked at Isabelle, and it was as if he could feel all the cogs and wheels begin to

engage in his mind, and the words suddenly came together” (365). Hugo is relieved to unlock some of what is hidden in his heart with Isabelle, and this represents a crucial turning point for Hugo’s spirituality. The next double page spread presents a close up of Hugo and Isabelle. The level and expression of their gazes implies new trust and the appreciation, on Isabelle’s part, for Hugo’s honesty (366-367).

Hugo’s friendship with Isabelle and Papa Georges helps them as well. Hugo recognizes that when people lose their purpose in life, they are broken. Thus, he and Isabelle attempt to “fix” Papa Georges. In this way, Hugo’s spirituality and Papa Georges’s spirituality are affected. The two forge a unique connection, receiving what they need in order to move forward in their lives with hope and renewed dreams. With Hugo and Isabelle’s help, Papa Georges realizes that people still appreciate his movies and want to honor him by showing them once again. He experiences newfound joy and a willingness to revisit the past. By the conclusion of the story, these characters face their issues and pain and grow spiritually by connecting with those around them in authentic ways. Certainly, strategic acts of rebellion play a role in the conclusion of *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*.

Conclusion

In conclusion, these contemporary novels consider how the rebellion of orphan protagonists can encourage the spirituality through genuine connection and relationships with others. Each story reveals a unique character or object around which the plot centers, and which the protagonist needs. For Peter it is the elephant, and for Hugo it is the automaton; both characters ask for help from others. These needs engineer new friendships that benefit the protagonist and result in a satisfying web of relationships. Though both stories open with children in need of significant connections and relationships, they conclude with portraits of families, in which these children experience a satisfying relational spirituality.

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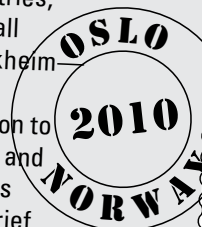
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At times playful, at times serious, Nina E. Grøntvedt's pseudo-diary *Hey, It's Me!* weaves together hand-written journal entries, drawings, email messages, lists, poems and short stories—all created by its twelve-year old protagonist Oda Andrea Stokkheim with longer typeset sections, also told in the first-person. Its sub-title, *Please Don't Leave Me Here Alone*, is a dual invitation to both physically pick up and read the book, and to accompany and befriend the artistic Oda as she negotiates the confusion, joys and challenges of adolescence, including an intense, albeit brief, period of self-precipitated isolation and loneliness. With the help of her grandmother, the strong-willed and occasionally aggressive Oda gains some self-awareness and insight as to why we are often cruelest to those closest to us, and this helps her to mend old relationships and build new ones near the happily wrapped-up ending of this novel. Mildly reminiscent of Jeff Kinney's popular *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series, Grøntvedt's novel was part of the *Leselyst* [I Want to Read] program in Norwegian schools, and it has been translated into six languages. Oda's adventures continue in two sequels, both published by Ompipax.

Ingrid Urberg



Nina E. Grøntvedt

Hei, det er meg! ikke la meg bli alene igjen her [Hey, It's Me! Please Don't Leave Me Here Alone]

Oslo: Ompipax, 2010
282 pages
ISBN: 9788253032658
(Ages 10 +)

Verbal-Visual Narrative and the Development of Brazilian Identity in the Work of Roger Mello



Using elements of the plot from Roger Mello's Cavalhadas de Pirenópolis, the aim of this article is to show how various verbal and plastic details reveal aspects of Brazilian culture and identity. I highlight the importance of a mediated reading experience and suggest that images be considered not only by the decorative role they play, but also because of their discursive content.

Since the act of telling stories seems to be a strategy found by people to explain their surroundings and themselves—mainly events that cannot be rationally explained—many are the existing narratives. Each period uses the strategies and well-known ways to narrate. Barthes suggests that a narrative can be oral, written, verbal, visual, fixed, with movement, or use different resources (19). Within the scope of children's literature, considering the advent of the illustrated book and the development of technologies in the book industry, verbal-visual narratives, that tell a story through the dialogue of two different languages, have been enhanced.

A great narrative reveals a story that evokes a reader's curiosity to know what will happen next. The reader plunges into the story and becomes more and more attached to the plot in order to apprehend the possible meanings that are suggested by the narrative. The author, a great strategist, takes into account not only a good story, but has the sensibility to involve the reader in a narrative that is

by FLÁVIA BROCCETTO RAMOS



Flávia Brocchetto Ramos is a Doctor in Language and Literature (PUCRS/Brazil). She is a professor at Caxias do Sul University (UCS/Brazil). She researches reading and children's literature. She is the author of the book *Literatura infantil: de ponto a ponto* (edited by CRV) and co-author of *Interação e mediação de leitura literária para a infância* (edited by Global).

by MARÍLIA FORGEARINI NUNES



Marília Forgearini Nunes is a Doctor in Education (UFRGS/Brazil) and investigates how mediation can help readers to become visually literate through images in children's literature. She is a member from GEARTE, a research group linked to Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) in Brazil, that researches the different relations among art and education.

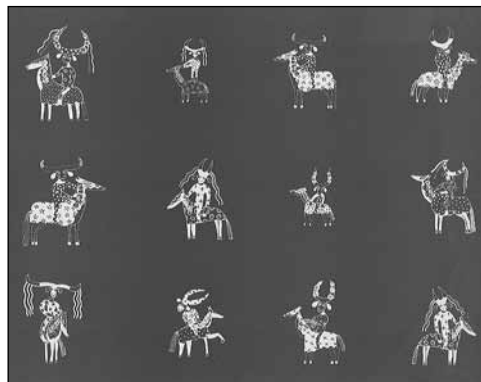
verbal and visual at the same time, as we can notice in Roger Mello's production.

According to Walter Benjamin's assertions about the act of narrating, man tells what he knows and this knowledge is part of a culture, since man produces and also is a product of a culture. The multiplicity of cultural manifestations in a country with such vast territorial dimensions as Brazil can be revealed in the literature produced in this country. In order to think about this, we consider one of Roger Mello's books, *Cavalhadas de Pirenópolis*. This book chooses a popular feast and presents it to the reader using verbal and visual language.

Cavalhadas de Pirenópolis as a contemporary book for children is an object materialized by word and artistic plasticity that are combined in the graphic design, in the drawing, and in the way colors and shapes are chosen and interact among themselves. Roger Mello has been awarded for his illustrations in picturebooks, and the quality of his books has as the main characteristic the interaction between word and image. In *Cavalhadas de Pirenópolis*, the narrator builds a plot that has as its scenario the popular festival involving mounted horses.

During the festival there is a re-enactment of a fight between the Christians who wear blue, and the Moors who wear red, which results in the expulsion of the Moors from the Iberian Peninsula by the Christians. *Cavalhadas* [no. trans.] from Pirenópolis—a city in Goiás, a central state in Brazil—is part of an important feast in Brazil. It is a long ritual that takes place over the course of three days. During *Festa do Divino Espírito Santo* [Feast of Holy Spirit], horsemen wearing masks are traditional figures responsible for encouraging public participation.

Fig. 1. Horseman wearing masks, *Cavalhadas*.



Narrative Features in *Cavalhadas de Pirenópolis*

The story created by Roger Mello has the celebration from the Feast of Holy Spirit as its main scenario. The main character in this plot is a boy called Arlindo who falls in love with a girl, Lucinda. In order

to demonstrate his love, he wants to give her a special flower, the cerrado flower, which is protected by a bird of prey, the Crested Caracara. How will Arlindo get the flower? A horseman warns the boy that the Crested Caracara is not afraid of children, but that it does fear the jaguars. This horseman lends the boy a jaguar mask and he is able to acquire the flower. During the feast, while he is looking for Lucinda, Arlindo meets a baker woman from the city and she covets the flower. Arlindo refuses to give it to her, keeping with his goal to give the flower to Lucinda alone. Later on, the baker goes to the forest to gather fruit to make compote. The tree she climbs is very high and she cannot climb down by herself. The Crested Caracara appears and tells her that a jaguar has taken away the flower. The baker woman asks the Crested Caracara for help and in return promises to tell who took away the flower. The bird accepts the proposal and the woman reveals that Arlindo took away the flower using a jaguar mask. The bird flies away after hearing the flower's destiny, leaving the baker woman in the tree. Meanwhile, the boy, still wearing the mask, finds Lucinda during the horsemen exhibition and gives her the flower. A furious Crested Caracara appears and, besides taking the flower away from Lucinda, also takes Arlindo's mask. During the confusion, Lucinda sees Arlindo without a mask and does not recognize him, and asks the boy if he has seen her boyfriend, the one wearing a jaguar mask who gave her a flower.

In this narrative conflict, Arlindo is the leading figure. The Crested Caracara is the antagonist, and Lucinda is the object of desire from the protagonist. The masked horseman appears as a helper to the hero and the baker woman as a helper to the antagonist. The characters are organized in opposing pairs, a recurrent feature in plots from popular culture. This makes the narrative more open to the meanings suggested by the interlocutor, diminishing the asymmetry that is often shown in children's literature.

The cultural intention is reinforced by the images that are paired with the text. The images show a contrast between the urban and rural contexts, since the conflict is triggered in the city, but there are also actions occurring in a country area. Additionally, the opposing contexts are host scenarios that contrast character actions. In the country, Arlindo was brave and able to procure the flower. In the city, his experience is the opposite; the boy loses the flower to the bird and is not recognized by Lucinda who falls for the horseman with a jaguar mask.

Symbolic Features in *Cavalhadas de Pirenópolis*

At this point, our focus turns to the symbolic features made evident by the images in *Cavalhadas de Pirenópolis*. Our attention will be on the substances that shape what we see and how these substances interact, resulting in enriched meanings. We will observe in selected images how colors, lines, and shapes fill the space, not only presenting narrative elements to the reader, but also offering aspects a characterization of the vast Brazilian culture. Thus, the images' plasticity is not only responsible for narrating, but also has an aesthetic role that reaffirms cultural

features. More than simply telling a story about a boy called Arlindo, the images offer a dialogue that reveals meaning relevant to Brazilian social identity and culture. By means of the interaction among visual substances (color, shape, space), the visual text draws the reader's attention and enables the visibility of possible meanings in order to recognize a culture.

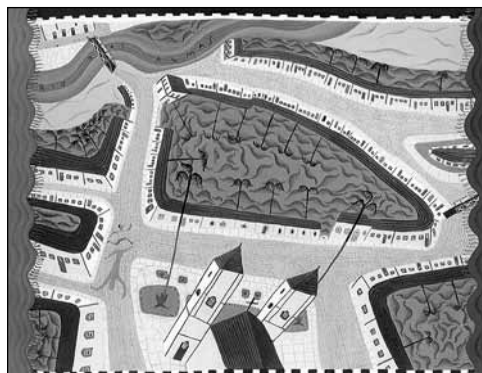
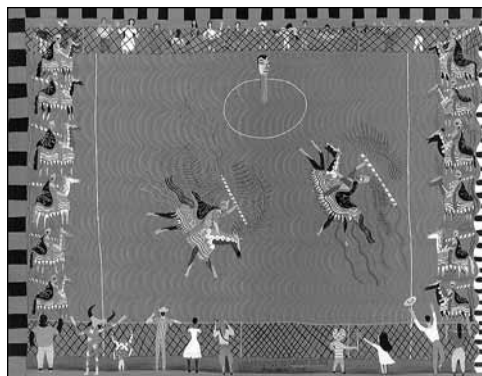
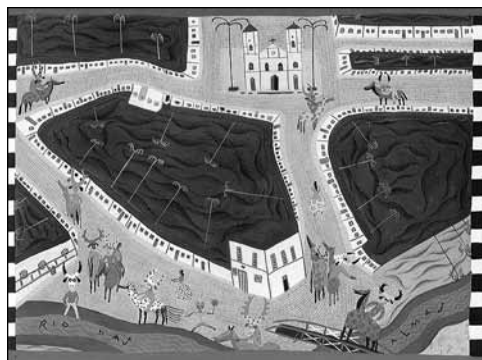
It is possible, then, to observe that Roger Mello uses images to narrate his fictional story and also to present a point of view filled with figures that disclose meaning effects, highlighting elements from national and local identity. By looking at *Cavalhadas de Pirenópolis*, we can focus on how space is filled by the eleven scenes, including the cover, in the way that different points of view are alternated: specific or general, detailed or panoramic. In the eleven images in the book, there is a dynamic interplay between the figurative elements and the layout. Two points of view can be identified, which presents a central element that anchors the visual narrative and the aesthetic-cultural intention of the scene, as can be seen in Figure 2:

Fig. 2. Scenes with a central element, *Cavalhadas*.



If in this first group the point of view is based on an element, in a perspective that focuses on a subject and/or a narrative action, the other way to distribute images gives us a panoramic perspective, by which the reader takes the role of an omniscient observer that is able to have a general view of the scene, recognizing the space and actions that are happening there. This panoramic point of view can be seen in Figure 3:

Fig. 3. Panoramic point of view, *Cavalhadas*.



A combination of these two perspectives can also be identified in a third point of view presenting the visual narrative made by Roger Mello. Figure 4 shows that there is an anchor element at the scene, but this figure is inserted in a context of shapes and colors that represent the narrative place and a character in action. These elements are not superposed nor do they efface each other, but they form a setting. Thus, reading these scenes should deal with all the elements that are shown.

Fig. 4. A central element in a panoramic context, *Cavalhadas*.

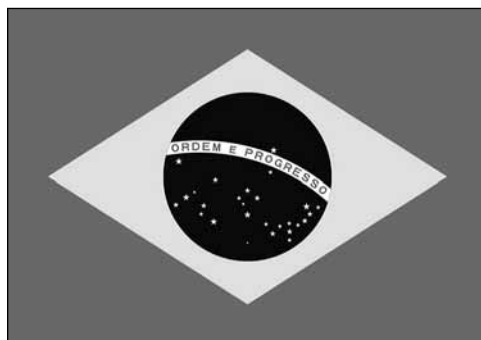


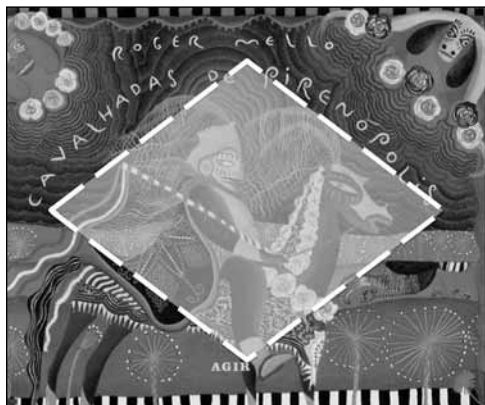
Considering the narrative space, we can observe two scenes that present the perspective with a central figure. We chose to analyze these four pages because they, by the manner in which the space is filled and colors and shapes are chosen in a very explicit way, reveal meaning effects related to delimitation of identity and culture that are diffused through the whole narrative.

The presence of a central subject brings to light an intention that is at the same time aesthetic and symbolic. On the cover there is a central figure, a horseman wearing blue, riding a horse. This figure is not isolated in the central part of the cover, since the background that surrounds it is not only fills the space, but also delimitate spaces—the sky and the earth—and highlights the Christian horseman figure. This spatial distribution, associated with colors and shapes, produces meaning effects that surpass the basic role of a cover that is presenting the book. The division of colors using cold colors—at the top—and warm ones—at the bottom—reveals more than a chromatic or spatial opposition. The green color that delimitates the top area, besides subverting the traditional use of the blue color representing the sky, is not reduced to showing a kind of vegetation. The round lines and texture, produced by the material used to produce the color, make reference to the idea of vegetation; however the green tone, as it fills the head part, makes reference to the Brazilian flag.

The cover, on that account, besides presenting the book and its theme, reveals meaning that reiterates the nationality, society, and culture that are the foundation to the narrative development. The presence of the horseman, dressed in blue, in the central position makes reference to the geometric shape that appears at the same position on the flag, which can be seen in Figure 5. The connection is not intended to be an immediate or trustworthy representation.

Fig.5. Symbolic reference to the Brazilian flag, *Cavalhadas*.





The distribution of the elements in the space, associated with the colors, is not casual and takes over a narrative role, highlighting the singularity from Roger Mello's work. More than the book wrapping, as Ramos and Panozzo characterize, the cover assumes an identity role, representing the country of origin from the book. Cultural and social identity is noticed not only upon reading the title, nor through the horseman, but also on the set established by the space occupation together with the colors and figurative elements that can be seen on the cover.

The focus is on the horseman, since he is the main character from the popular feast that gives name to the book. However, the relationship between colors and shapes in the space increases the idea of culture as a production that results from the interaction among the subjects in a specific context. When we talk about a localized folkloric manifestation in a vast country such as Brazil, it is important not to forget the connection among all the various regions that constitute the country despite the distance and differences. The national flag represents this union. The same intention can be noticed in Figure 6, referring back to the flag in Figure 5, by the connections among the colors, having predominance from the green in opposition to the yellow in the character representation, makes possible to discern the flag once more. Not only the colors, but also the shapes and the position occupied by the character on the page space, foster a meaning effect that is related to the national identity.

Figure 6: National identity, *Cavalhada*.



Conclusion

The contact between verbal-visual narratives, such as the ones produced by Roger Mello, demands an attentive look at the images, which assume a discursive role as important as the one expressed by the verbal. In order to comprehend the visual discourse it is important to know how the plastic substances—colors, shapes, lines—are put together in a semantic and syntactic way. Thus, reading a verbal-visual text requires an attentive verbal and visual reading, being able to comprehend not only what is said by the text, but also how it is said.

The singularity of the reading process called for by the literary texts produced by Roger Mello reveals the necessity of learning practices in the school context (the fundamental context of children's literature) in order to facilitate this kind of reading development. Seeing becomes an important action, considering that the images carry out other roles besides their narrative function. There are two main principles that sustain this interaction. First of all, in order to understand that images in a verbal-visual narrative have a discursive content besides the narrative one, and to comprehend or infer the possible meanings that they convey,

it is necessary to know how they are built, what plastic substances are used and how they relate to each other. Secondly, since it is an interaction, it is important to be aware that these are not simple or common relationships. Thus, a mediated experience is a specialized interaction in which mediators must be conscious of their role as helper to infer meanings, and not as conductor to the right meaning.

The intention of establishing an identity perspective that is presented by *Cavalhadas de Pirenópolis*, for example, is not the only possible meaning conveyed by the narrative. However, to notice this and other meaning effects a mediated reading experience will be helpful child readers, otherwise the discursive content may not be identified, conferring an exclusively decorative role to the image. We understand that a mediated reading experience is the way to help a reader to comprehend that looking at an image is a sensible and intelligible action.

Acknowledgements

We thank Roger Mello for permission to use his wonderful illustrations, and we are grateful for the support we received from the University of Caxias do Sul, where this study was produced.

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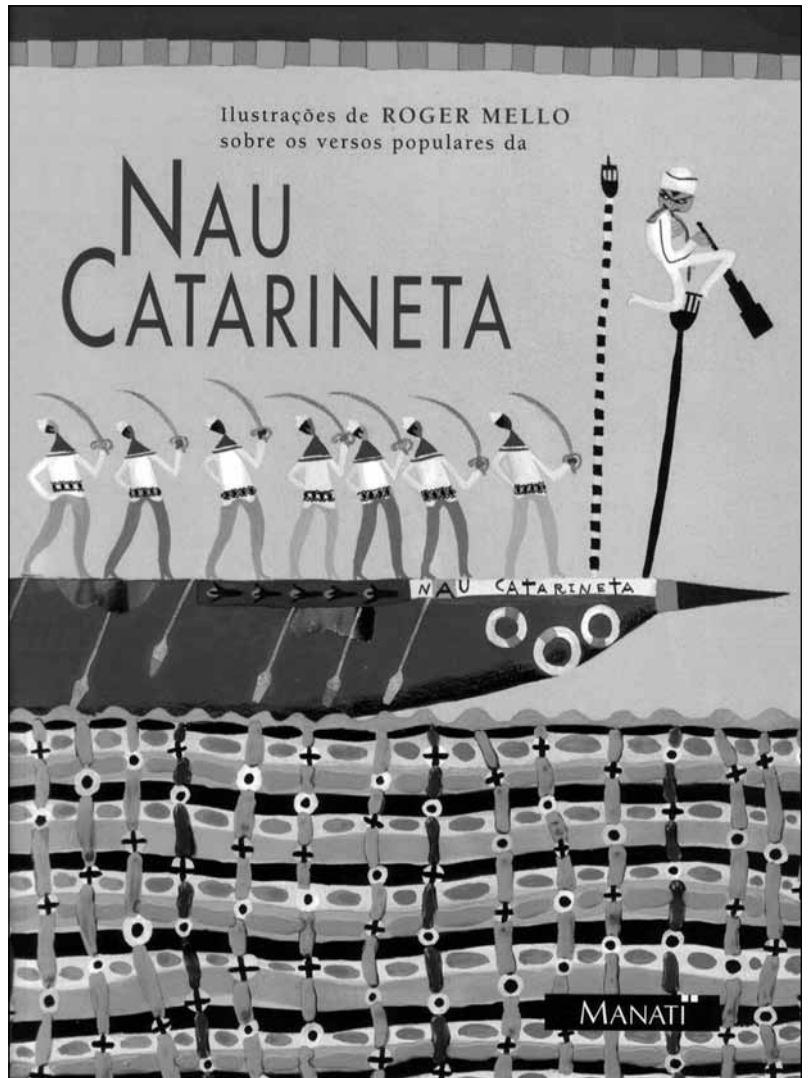
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Roger Mello: A Sea of Stories



*Who was it taught you to swim?
Who was it taught you to swim?
I'll tell you, I'll tell you sailorman,
it was the little fish in the sea.*

*Peixinhos do Mar [Sea Fish],
traditional Brazilian children's song*

A deep plunge, the first seed of life that swims for its existence: without fixing the space, nor constraining the time, the trajectory of this artist flows through multiple possibilities, always ready to rethink and reinvent each territory he chooses to explore. Time is the material of his inquietude, in a continuous searching movement, always forging ahead, seeking out new objectives and concerns. From the rivers that meander through the Pantanal¹ wetlands, from the calm waters of the mangrove swamp

to the raging waters of the sea, Roger Mello builds his visual narratives.

Mello was born in Brasília, the new capital of Brazil designed by Oscar Niemeyer and Lúcio Costa² in the middle of the enormous natural diversity of the Cerrado.³ This environment, together with his schooling at an establishment that embraced the innovative pedagogical theories advanced by Anísio Teixeira and Darcy Ribeiro⁴, enabled the free development of his artistic expression without prejudices or preconceived ideas. Since a very early age, Mello has had a roving, curious eye, paying attention to life in its many forms, whether human, animal or plant:

I've always had a vivid imagination, and it has taken me on innumerable voyages. I always was a compulsive drawer fascinated by comic strips and books. I've always loved animals and nature in general—the woodlands, the Cerrado, the mangrove swamps. At the time, even living in Brasília, it was still possible to visit the Cerrado. On those field trips, and even in the classroom, I always had a notebook handy to draw what I was seeing or develop comic strips. (Kikuchi)

Accompanied by his father on these constant incursions into the Cerrado, Mello observed the plants and animals who filled his “imaginary museum”⁵ with images of the local ecosystems. His encounter with the sea, during holidays spent in Bahia, Rio de Janeiro and Sergipe, expanded his scope of adventures with nature, in its copiously registered lines and forms. In between these trips, the books scattered about the house awoke his curiosity, and the silence of the afternoon nap gave way to the sound of turning pages.

In the 1980s, after a short term at the Agronomy College of Brasília, Roger moved to Rio de Janeiro to enroll in the graphic design course at the ESDI/UERJ.⁶ The course was concluded in 1989 with a daring graduation project, being the fruit of his observations of the fauna and flora found in the Cerrado, while marking the birth of his ability to communicate through the colors and shapes of nature.

Narrative was always of the greatest interest to Roger Mello: narrative that is manifest in widespread fields, including drama, literature, illustration, animation, cinema, and graphic design. The blurring of the genres is quite evident if we examine the visual language that Roger uses in his illustrated books. The artist passes with ease through different references and styles. His first works showed his dominium over representational drawing, from which he has slowly drifted and has moved towards the sophistication of more stylized forms. His intimacy with drawing prevails in any compositional choice, mixing styles and techniques to the benefit of narrative expressiveness.

by GRAÇA LIMA



Graça Lima is an award winning illustrator, PhD in Visual Arts, professor at School of Fine Arts at Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and Roger Mello's professional partner.

by CLAUDIA MENDES



Claudia Mendes is a book designer, former fellow researcher at International Youth Library and presently a Visiting Scholar at the University of Cambridge as part of her PhD research about Roger Mello's work, sponsored by CAPES.

Mello's experimentation on each new project speaks highly of his artistic spirit. The world is the limit for his enormous library of references, while the different cultures of the world are his constant references. His creative power has renewed dialogue concerning the creative process in general, while still demonstrating awareness of all the different artistic offshoots that the contemporary world has to offer. For Roger Mello, the creative act is a constant pulse and can become manifest in various languages. Although the illustrated books are his most numerous and best known works, he expresses his multiple interests in varied media, which enables different interactions of genre and widens the dialogue between the arts. He travels like the "merchant adventurer" of whom Walter Benjamin writes in *The Narrator*, whereby the artist explores the world and exercising his facility for interchanging experiences. By introducing this positioning into a book of literature for children, Roger invites his reader into a world of visual eclecticism presented in a creative and sophisticated manner.

With a picture book, the aesthetic experience is lived from the reader's first contact with the book as an object. The reader's gaze follows the elements of the graphic project in a way that is much like the way that the eye of the spectator, sitting in the theater, follows the development of a show. A narrative path is created using codes and graphic spaces that turn reading into an experience of sensorial pleasure, in which, to their mutual benefit, coexist the verbal and the visual languages, for Mello, both have equivalent weights. Tactile and olfactory senses are also stimulated in the perception of the experience of reading the book object. The texture and format of the cover, the use of printing resources with matt and shiny areas, different cuts and creases, the diversity of types of paper used in the book, all of these factors collaborate to turn the reading process into a mobilization of the senses.

A line that comes and goes, passing through space characterizes drawing. In this passing, the gesture is transformed into a line, the line becomes an outline, and the outline produces the form, from which an infinity of images can be generated. In addition to structuring the blank page as an open field, the first line defines the sequence of lines that will be organized over time. "Contemporary drawing" is an expression that covers any and all drawings—realist, abstract, modernist, post-modern—produced from the 1950s to the present time. The concept is not regimented by any image in particular, but rather by an understanding of the creative process and by the choices made by the artist. Support, material, scale, register, space, composition, and intentionality are essential for the realization of the image and for the significance of the drawing, or for the significance of the image, as what defines contemporary drawing is much more the "how" than the "what." Disregarding whether or not the final image is familiar to its first conception, these are the questions that the artist must consider and base his or her aesthetic choices on.

In his trajectory, Mello considers drawing not as a passive capacity to reproduce objects or to make copies of the so-called real objects, as

the image cannot be a simple simulacrum without its own life, without an independent significance, without essentiality. His significance is external and must be sought out as a concept. Nourished by images, the artist's eye forms a repertoire that enables it to create images that, in Mello's case, instigate his readers to reflection. He is a chronicler with a quotidian eye. His work fosters dialogue with varied artistic manifestations, resulting in a form free of labels or tendencies. In his works, we see a progressive movement away from the institutional canon towards a freer visual repertoire. On this journey, the artist circulates through different narrative possibilities, with time serving as the sovereign element of his creation and its formation process.

His first books respect the conventions of drawing representational realism. Mello's use of color is masterful, and gives the illustrations a dream-like quality. With some images, the colors are a narrative resource, such as the nuances of intense blue in the night sky with its full moon, and the bluish light of the depths of the sea used in *The Flower on the Other Side*. Published in 1990, this is a picture book without words, where Roger shows the mastery of his art in a detailed set of drawings that speak about gaze, about impossible desire and things just out of reach, which parallels a relationship between the reader's privileged point of view and the narrative. Inside a flower and a tapir flutter back and forth between a flower and hint at an indulging philosophical inquiry concerning the nature of narration.

Maria Teresa, from 1996, tells the story of a boat's passage through the São Francisco River, which flows through the Northeastern region of Brazil. Maria Teresa gives a rhyming account of the many events that she witnesses as she travels along the river. The drawing is a tribute to the local culture of the riverside towns, with their colorful houses, boats, people, customs and festivals, all lodged in Mello's memory since childhood, when he travelled the region with his family.

Cavalry Charge in Pirenópolis, of 1997, owes its inspiration to the celebration of the Feast day of the Divine Holy Spirit, held every year in Pirenópolis, a small town in the state of Goiás listed as an historic center in the National Heritage, for maintaining its colonial-era bucolic ambience. Located not far from Brasília, this town is part of the network of roots that nourishes Mello's imagination. He comments that in the art, culture, history, heritage of the Cerrado everything gains value in Pirenópolis.



This is an interesting ecosystem, the heritage of the place is deposited in the people, it's all heritage! And this heritage exists because people continue to celebrate the festival, to make and wear the costumes and fully live these two weeks of the Feast of the Divine, culminating in the Cavalry Charges. The masks they make are all marvelous. I did *Cavalry Charge in Pirenópolis*, because I wanted to see in book form what was so important

and unsettling for me. I like to work with issues that are linked to the roots, to observe things with the distrustful eye that they deserve – and not like a tourist. (Kikuchi)



The book tells a tale against the background of the Cavalry Charges, a folk festival that dramatizes a clash between Moorish horsemen, dressed in red, and Christian knights, dressed in blue. The festival serves as the spatial axis for the comings and goings of the characters, while other elements like the geographic space and the local culture appear to compose the narrative, with the square, the church, the Pireneus, the Rio das Almas, the chairs set out on the mosaic-paved streets, the locally made sugared fruit candies, the trees filled with birds that are native to the Cerrado.

“Nau Catarineta” (The Ship Called Catarineta) is a tragic maritime poem reminiscent of the Portuguese tradition that tells of feelings impregnated in the imagination of that people. In the story, the Nau Catarineta galleon is lying calm in the middle of the ocean, while the crew has to cope with fear, isolation, loss, hunger, despair, culminating in the mortal clash between the Captain and the devil. Transported to Brazil, the story began to be played out at coastal folk festivals. Men dressed as sailors chant the verses of the poem as they parade through the streets, dancing and imitating the movement of the waves until they finally arrive at a boat-shaped stage, around which the whole festival revolves. The poet and editor Alexei Bueno writes the following about Roger Mello’s version of this epic poem:

Prolonged research into the various folkloric manifestations in the vast Portuguese-speaking world led Roger Mello to the excellent dramatic version of this book. Similar work, of reinterpretation of the many variants of our popular art, served as inspiration for his marvelous illustrations that make this album a feast for the eyes and for the soul, an obligatory celebration for all those who are interested, at any age, in our deepest and most authentic roots.

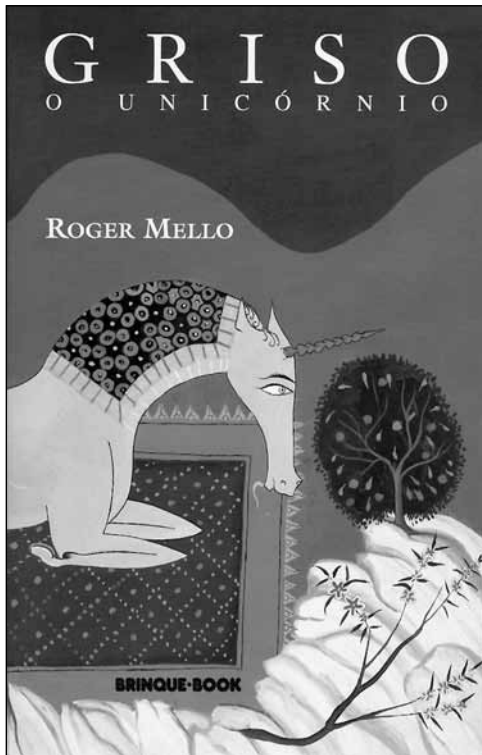
If, for Mello, the verbal and the visual have equal narrative importance, this is more than evident in the pages of this book. For him, the use of color is pure relationship made present: it is a sensorial relationship, not a symbolic one. Together with the other graphic elements, color structures the composite space. The graphic representation of the sea shuns tradition, as he tells us:

There is no sea: there are fish and a quasi-solid element that holds up the boat, as though it was the backdrop for a *mamulengo*⁷ puppet. And then these modules, that start off as small, highly-colored reef fish, gradually change their coloring as the boat moves into deeper waters. There is not so much color in deeper waters, because sunlight does not have the same influence. Deep sea fish, the fish of the great currents, are generally not colored: they are normally gray on top and white on the belly, as a sort of camouflage. This is a subtext that I develop—that is not in the written text—until we arrive at the fish who swim in the depths of the abysses. (Mendes)

Taking liberties with human anatomy, he draws the crewmen with stylized bodies and organizes them like a pile of acrobats, entertaining the possibility of the imbalance and of the oscillation of the waves. This visual narrative combines singular elements from the field of the arts, such as references to votive tablets for the XVIII century shipwrecked, and the works of folk artist

Nhô Caboclo, on permanent exhibition at the Casa do Pontal Museum.⁸

Mello's voyaging intent with the plastic arts intensifies in *Griso, the Unicorn*, where the last of these mythical animals gallops over the plains "looking for another of his kind." In his search, Griso travels through time and space, assuming forms that correspond to different styles of universal art. The idea is developed and



gives different visual languages a plural dimension. The work leads the reader through time and shows the importance of narration by imaging them throughout history. The author's versatility is renewed on each project, as he considers every book a new piece of art. The work's graphic design is always developed in a manner that ensures a narrative interlink with the particularities of the story. A true craftsman, Mello exercises his imagination by choosing new techniques and materials that speak with the story.

In *Boys from the Mangrove*, Mello developed the drawings on boards that had been texturized with garbage bags, in reference to the physical space of the community shanties on stilts, built

over the waters of the mangrove swamps, where mud and garbage mix. The book is an encounter between Mello's affectionate memories of the mangrove swamp, where he spent vacations with his uncle in the state of Bahia, and where, later on, he was the art director for the film *The Cycle of the Crab*, directed by Adolfo Lachtermacher and inspired by the work of sociologist Josué de Castro in *Geography of Hunger*.

As they head into the mangrove swamp looking for crabs, the characters Sorte and Preguiça make a bet: whoever catches the crab with the greatest number of legs will be the winner. Sorte wins, and Preguiça has to tell eight stories, one for each leg on the crab caught by Sorte. This is the cue for Roger to tell his stories of the mangrove swamps, home to crabs and people alike. Found all along the Brazilian coastline, in cities like Recife and Rio de Janeiro, the mangrove swamps have been turned into waterlogged shanties, whose population survives on the biological bounty. *Boys from the Mangrove* tells the story of these people.

Mello's *Gardens, Deserts* is a book ruled by essentiality. Roger created the illustrations as a travel diary, as he crossed both desert and urban regions in Morocco. Sitting in the window seat of the bus, armed with five colors (red, yellow, green, blue and black) box of crayons, the artist made his visual annotations. Inside we find registers of people, buildings, objects, details of daily life. The graphic project is practically a facsimile of this travel diary. The line, the void, and the ample space prevail. The illustrations give priority to the gesture, without worrying about the finish. This is imaging made economic, in synthetic visual descriptions. The illustrations are the records of a curious observer, the page offered to the reader as a window on ethnographic questions, with varied human types, clothing and accessories, cultural habits, architecture and organization of geographic space, animals; in short, life and its onward flow under the eyes of a foreigner. Employing concise technical resources, Mello succeeds in communicating a varied range of situations and sensations by means of visual commentary.

Mello's concern for social themes is reflected in works like *Young Charcoal Burners*, a book that denounces the evils of child labor. Once in his

early childhood, while leaving Brasília in his father's car, Mello saw some "little round houses with smoke seeping out of them." His father explained that they weren't houses: they were charcoal ovens. Mello uses chromatic contrasts that emphasize the dramatic nature of the theme: the dark, the shade, what is hidden and what cannot be revealed; the

light of the fire, the coal that burns and gives off heat, the oven that gulps down, like a monster, the boy's infancy. The hot colors against dark backgrounds reinforce the idea of leaping flames: he planned pages in hot colors cut out in the format of flames, sewn into the binding of the book, designed to leap out in a pop-up effect. The illustrations heat the eye of the reader, sometimes with the fire that burns like the sting of the wasp, sometimes with the poetry of the termites illuminated by magic fireflies, the light of children and transformation.

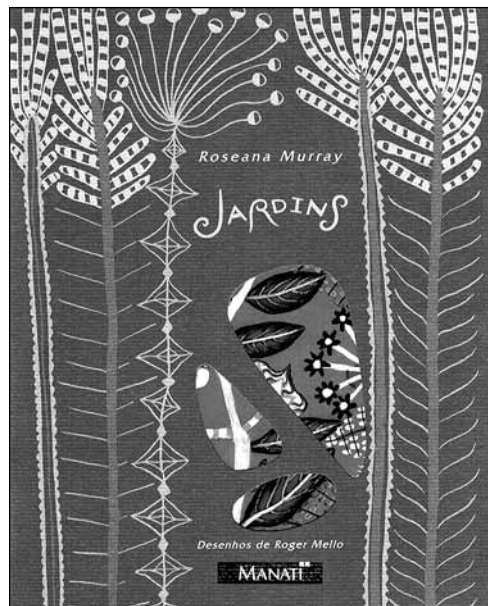
In *John by a Thread*, a little boy faces up to his worst nighttime fears protected by a quilt. Son of a fisherman, John only knows how to weave thread and words, which he uses when his protective quilt is broken. The story presents the multiple issues that John will face throughout the night. Inspired by the webs produced by the craftsman's hand counting only on thread, skill and sensitivity, Roger Mello weaves a sophisticated visual narrative using economic resources and invites the reader to dive head-first into the story, where he can weave his own threads.

Roger Mello's work as an illustrator is extensive, spread over partnerships with numerous other writers, in addition to the completion of twenty solo works. He dedicates a lot of time to research and conceptualizing his books as objects of art. Fragmentation and displacement, characteristics of contemporaneity, have a strong presence in works like *Contradance* and *You Can't Be Too Careful*. *Savage* shows his affection for animals, giving readers an unbiased vision in both ethic and aesthetic terms. Social issues permeate his work in a subtle yet intense manner, like in *Bone Weary*, a book about the work of a gravedigger painted in a poetic light. His latest book *Sting of the Ray*, tells a story of an Amazonian monkey, an Uakari, who affects the life of a boy.

Roger Mello is an artist who is attuned to his own time. His work contains flow and temporality, both placed at the service of universal time. His narrative embodies the fluidity of the itinerant waters of signification. His work goes beyond technical questions and aesthetic possibilities, but seeks out fundamental philosophical questions.

Notes

1. The Pantanal is the world's largest tropical wetland area, located within Brazil and portions of Bolivia and Paraguay.
2. Oscar Niemeyer and Lúcio Costa, Brazilian architects who are considered to be key figures in the development of modern architecture in Brazil. Known worldwide for the urban design of the Pilot Plan of



Brasília, the city planned to be the capital of Brazil in 1960. Niemeyer participated in the group of architects who designed the United Nations building in New York City, USA.

3. Typical biome of the central region of Brazil, similar to the African savanna, characterized by its great biodiversity.
4. Educator and anthropologist, respectively, were pioneers in the campaign for quality public schooling in Brazil. They firmly believed that education could transform the country, and fought for this dream up to the ends of their lives.
5. Concept presented by André Malraux in his essay *Le Musée Imaginaire*, published for the first time in 1947.
6. The Upper School for Industrial Design of the Rio de Janeiro State University (ESDI/UERJ). The first design faculty in Latin America was founded in 1963, based on the ideals of formal clarity and rationality of Bauhaus and the Hochschule für Gestaltung (HfG) of Ulm, Germany.
7. A puppet that is typical of the Brazilian northeastern region, similar to the French *guignol* or the Italian *pupazzi*. The puppeteer remains hidden behind a backdrop, holding the hand with the puppet above his head.
8. Nhô Caboclo is an artist that explores a nautical theme, with ships full of warriors and chained slaves, in compositions where movement predominates. The *Casa do Pontal*, a private museum dedicated to Brazilian folk art, has a large collection of his works. See more at <http://www.museucasedpontal.com.br/pt-br/node/81>.

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Nahoko Uehashi: Cultural Anthropologist and Storytelling Creator of Imaginary Worlds



Introduction

Uehashi, Nahoko is the winner of the 2014 Hans Christian Andersen Award for writing. This article builds on the original introduction by Roxanne Harde, in which Uehashi was introduced as a nominee for the award.

幼い頃、祖母が語ってくれた昔話、父母が読んでくれた物語、十代の頃に出会い夢中になったイギリスの児童文学たち、そして、文化人類学を学んだこと——この、どれかひとつでも欠けていたら、私は、国際アンデルセン賞を頂くことはできなかったでしょう。そう思うと、私をこれまで導いてくれたすべてへの、深い感謝の念が溢れてきます。

When I was young, my grandmother told me folktales, my parents read me stories, and sometime around age 10, I encountered and became engrossed in British Children's Literature. And then, I studied cultural anthropology -- if I had been lacking in any one of these, I would not have been able to receive the International Hans Christian Andersen Award. When I consider this, I feel deep gratitude overflowing for all that has guided me thus far. (Translated by Cathy Hirano)

A storyteller of extraordinary talent, Uehashi, Nahoko creates fantasy worlds with a backbone grounded in her work as a cultural anthropologist. In her anthropological work, *Tsuki no mori ni, Kami yo nemure* [O God, Sleep Ye in the Forest of the Moon], set in a remote village of indigenous hunter gatherers and subsistence farmers who have defied a royal edict to begin cultivating rice, Uehashi noted how difficult it was for people of indigenous cultures to maintain aspects of their traditional ways as they live in changing civilizations. From an anthropological stance, she transposed the idea of how important it is to accept the values of others and coexist with them, into the *Moribito* fantasy series. Multiple tribes live between a seemingly real world and a spiritual world, and a middle-aged woman guarding the lives of others faces questions of destiny. With fast-paced storytelling that grips readers' attention, Uehashi's worlds are fantastic, yet believable.

Background Influences

Early in her life Uehashi developed an interest in storytelling because her grandmother told her folktales from the oral tradition that described the coexistence of humans and animals. These later became the root of her imagination for creating original fantasies in which humans and other creatures lived in interrelated worlds.

Uehashi's anthropological research focus on aboriginal cultures led her to spend some months as a volunteer teacher in an elementary school in Western Australia where half the students were Aboriginal. It was through this practical, hands-on experience that she came to realize how difficult it is for indigenous populations to retain their cultures. Moreover, this led to close consideration of individuals who are marginalized by their worlds, those who live between the borders of defined societies, and the interactions of those who are outcasts by those in dominant societies.

Fantasy Worlds with Japanese Sensibilities

Uehashi's fantasy worlds are aligned with epic and heroic fantasies that feature allusions to worlds that appear medieval, that are characterized by grand designs, and that are populated with compassionate yet courageous heroes who command emotional engagement of readers. Her created worlds have logic and internal consistency.

by JUNKO YOKOTA



Junko Yokota is Director of the Center for Teaching through Children's Books, and Professor Emeritus of National Louis University.

by REINA NAKANO



Reina Nakano is a part-time Researcher at the International Library of Children's Literature, Tokyo.

that enable readers to “suspend disbelief,” central tenets of well-written fantasy literature. (Temple, Martinez, & Yokota). Kotani characterizes the fantasy literature in Japan as a case of writers turning their attention to indigenous cultures and reconstructing myths. This would have been a natural inclination for Uehashi as a professor of anthropology. However, the worlds she creates in her books are decidedly original, although based in an allegorical world that stems from roots in Japan.

Uehashi creates a fantasy world that has Japanese qualities. “The (Guardian) series masterfully straddles the boundaries of two worlds. Both are uniquely Japanese: one a mirror of feudal Japan with flourishes of the fantastic; the other a variation of established Shinto mythology, populated by *yōkai* [monsters] and other spirits of myth and legend” (Jackson 55). At the same time, it is clear that these allusions to Japan flavor the story and are not necessary to be understood deeply in order to enter and live in the worlds Uehashi has created.

Created Worlds as Series

In the Guardian series, qualities of friendships, loyalty, and protective attitudes abound in character relationships in these books. Responsibility and duty are clearly addressed. What is especially evident from Uehashi’s anthropologist background is that she does not dichotomize the good/bad worlds; rather, she carefully presents multi-dimensional characters facing multi-faceted challenges.

The series features a protagonist named Balsa who takes on responsibilities as a bodyguard in life-threatening situations. The situations vary from protecting the life of a young prince to

rescuing children from becoming enslaved. What may seem surprising is that the protagonist is a 30-year-old female. Her age gives her numerous advantages in “knowing” how worlds work, but she also displays ties to childhood experiences and emotions that connect her to the children she guides and saves. Tough, smart, and quick, Balsa acts on instincts that have been honed by decades

of facing the world’s challenges. She is kind and she is strict; she is trustworthy. She restores the balance of the two worlds, and maintains equilibrium.

The Beast Player series depicts humans and their relationship with animals in an interwoven world. The protagonist, Elin, has lost her parents and her home. Her natural affinity for living creatures and her thirst for knowledge lead her to discover the true nature of the Royal Beasts and how they are being manipulated for political ends. Her quest to understand and heal the Royal Beast cub, Leelan

reveals why animals live the way they do. This leads to the broader theme of why humans live as humans do. The central theme focuses on the world shared by humans and other creatures and the interrelationships among living beings.

Both Uehashi’s series involve conflict and therefore violence, but this violence is never gratuitous. Rather, it plays an important role in deepening readers’ understanding of the characters:

Enro o yuku mono [Travelers on the Road of Fire] presents two short stories, one of Balsa and another of Hyugo when they were both teenagers. Both have been dealt a cruel hand by fate and are consumed with a helpless rage that at times explodes into violence. At first they justify their actions, revel in their



superiority over their opponents and are intoxicated by their own strength, but as the story progresses they become increasingly aware that violence solves nothing and leaves only emptiness in its wake. The reader goes through this process with them, experiencing the peril of surrendering to rage, the pain and hatred violence breeds, and ultimately, the despair it brings. The image presented is in stark contrast to the stereotypical hero who overpowers the bad guy because the “good guy always wins”. We desperately need this perspective today in a world where the simplistic hero image has become mainstream and technological advancements have given us the capacity to maim and kill so easily. (Hirano)

Universal Themes

Although set in worlds that do not exist, Uehashi’s works contain themes that matter to people in our contemporary worlds. They vary in scope from individual character development to relationships among various groups to larger societal issues of survival amidst political corruption. Thus, within the books, readers are faced with the very questions that matter in their own worlds. To name a few:

- **Society and Borders:** Uehashi often explores the question, “How can people cross cultural borders and understand each other?” In her books, she explores how some live in borders of society as outcasts, yet are able to communicate in multiple worlds. The risk of individual lives and preserving society as a whole, even if it is necessary to cross dangerous borders, is considered worthwhile.
- **Respect for Living Creatures:** Throughout her writings, but particularly in *The Beast Player* series, Uehashi depicts a range of living creatures showing respect for each without hierarchical designations.
- **Destiny:** In Uehashi’s books, characters often live life under sever circumstances and even against their own will, but

ultimately they accept their destiny and life. Can such destiny be challenged or changed, or must it simply be met? Being prepared for what may come your way is an important part of this question while considering honor and duty; fate and sacrifice. Not only individual characters, but entire groups must prepare for and accept the physical, mental, and psychological challenges that are strongly influenced by incidents in alternate worlds.

- **Politics and Power:** Treachery, conspiracy and rebellion are politically motivated, and outcomes have negative impact on the dominated. Deception by those in power is for self-gain, blind to the cost of security for the nation’s future. Commoners are dispensable commodities if the powerful need pawns. Kilpatrick and Muta (81) note that “*Moribito* questions hegemonic power constructions, deconstructing how cultural myths are made, manipulated and reinforced by corrupt leaders.”
- **Influence of Religion:** In the afterword to “The Book of Returning,” the second and final volume of *Guardian of the God*, Uehashi is quoted by Miyakawa, “The 2001 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States highlighted what can happen when religion is mixed with politics, but this work was not inspired by that incident. I actually finished *Guardian of the God* one month before it happened.”

Translation Issues

Readers of Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, Thai, and Taiwanese now have access to some the *Moribito* series, *Kemono no Soja*, and *Koteki no Kanata*. Translation of fantasy is particularly difficult, and the ever-present questions regarding the balance of faithfulness to the original text to readability in the target language impact the final product. In a workshop led by Cathy Hirano (English language translator of Uehashi’s work), six versions of a passage from Uehashi’s *Koteki no Kanata / Beyond the Fox Whistle* were analyzed,

and it is easy to see how translation decisions are critical to a new language edition's accessibility (Udagawa).

In a presentation at the International Library of Children's Literature, Tokyo, Uehashi and translator Hirano discussed the collaborative nature by which they created the English editions of *Moribito* with editor Cheryl Klein (Itsuji). With a very detail-attentive editor, and an author and translator who both studied anthropology, the three worked well together. One major change made was that what seemed to flow naturally when the history of the land was being recounted by an unnamed narrator in the original Japanese raised curious questions of *who* was telling the story in what would be the English version. After much discussion on different ways of handling the ambiguity, the author rewrote that section to be able to attribute the telling to a specific character. This example shows the translation teamwork: it was initially found problematic by the translator, agreed as an issue needing resolving by the editor, offered as a rewrite by the author, and finalized by the translator (Dikengil; Ikegami; Klein).

Klein and Hirano discussed the fact that character voices in *Moribito* needed individualizing. Hirano noted how in Japanese, characters' language use identifies gender, social status, and the relative relationship between characters (Ikegami). This was particularly important in readers' understanding of the story development in *Guardian of the Spirit*, as Prince Chagum used language that would betray his secret identity. Parallel to Chagum being taught survival fighting skills for self-protection, his change in speech from elevated, stilted formality to casual, familiar tone increasingly showed his adaptation to his new identity.

Adaptations and Their Influences

Moribito was first published as a novel series, then adapted for a radio series, followed by an animated television series, and ultimately returning to print in the form of manga. The anime series being released internationally gave momentum to the publication of international translations (Uehashi & Hirano). Spinoff publications are numerous, and even a cookbook of foods Balsa might have

eaten is now sold. Uehashi herself reports finding the anime to be a faithful recreation of the world she created. Moreover, she recognizes that story-telling is something that takes many forms, something she knows from her field as a cultural anthropologist. She appreciates how director Kenji Kamiyama has transformed her work into a unique new way of telling story.

Uehashi's series have been turned into multi-media platforms because of their enormous popularity. Her oeuvre is expansive; her publications range from series to stand-alone titles. At the time of this article's publication, access outside of Japan has been predominantly limited to The Guardian series and The Beast Player series; therefore, the bulk of this article's analysis focuses on them. Perhaps continued interest and future translations will generate wider scholarship on Uehashi's wonderful worlds.

Acknowledgement

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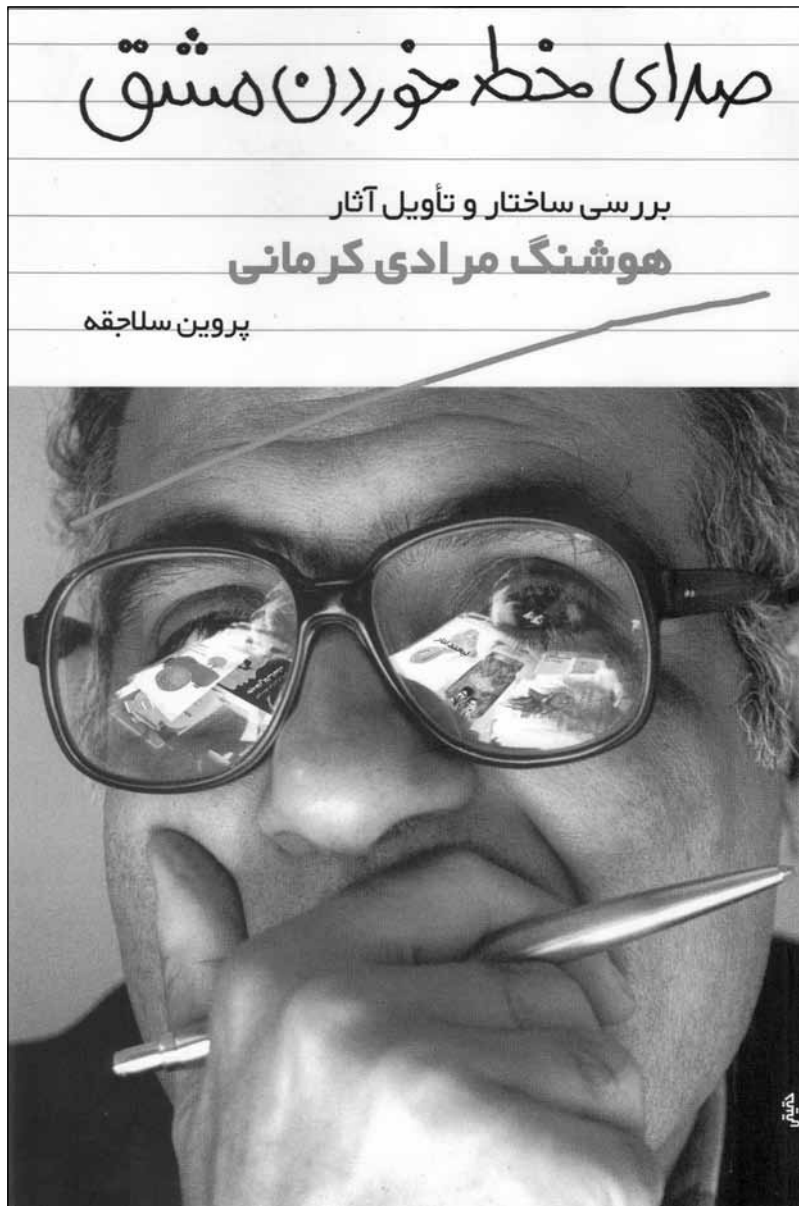
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Houshang Moradi Kermani: Striving for Survival

by BAHAR ESHRAQ



Bahar Eshraq holds a Master's in Translation Studies from Shahid Beheshti University. She is a translator of children's & YA books and of theoretical articles in children's literature, a librarian at the acquisition department of the IIDCYA Library, and a member of the CBC and the author of Persian research papers in translation criticism.



Biography

Celebrated children's author Houshang Moradi Kermani, who has made Tehran his home for the past 45 years, looks back on his childhood experiences as an orphan in his recent autobiographical book, *Shoma ke Gharibeh Nistidid* [Believe It or Not]. This is a departure from his past body of work which has only presented the reader with mere glimpses into his personal life.

Moradi Kermani's innovative work has been strongly influenced by the loss of his mother at the tender age of six months, and his father's struggle with mental illness, and reflects his perseverance in the face of hardship. Born in 1944 in Sirch, a village near Kerman, Iran, he was raised by religious grandparents in their rural home. His grandfather is the headman of the Sirch and a great storyteller. The family patriarch's storytelling and love of Iranian poetry

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and literature—particularly the works of Hafez and Saadi’s—inspired Moradi Kermani’s childhood writing. His paternal uncle—the village teacher—quickly discovered his nephew’s literary talent.

At thirteen Moradi Kermani, then a young teenager with no family to support his father, was forced to live in Kerman with his uncle. Kerman proved to be a font of literary inspiration for Moradi Kermani, and his stories become a refuge from loneliness and the harsh realities of life. He opted for a yearlong truancy to work in a bakery and bookstore, where the young bibliophile could feed his passion for books. He also began to write film advertisements in pursuit of another longtime interest: the cinema and the theatrical arts.

Spellbound by Iranian classic literature, art and cinema, Moradi Kermani traveled to Tehran in 1964 to become an actor, where he was more successful as a writer than an actor, publishing his first story, “Alley’s of the Fortunate,” in 1968, in *Khusheh* magazine. He studied translation at the Academy of Foreign Languages in Tehran in 1970. From then on, he wrote for the press and hunted for a job. At last, he found a five-year placement with the National Radio from 1970 to 1975. In 1974, the radio station asked Moradi Kermani to write a humorous piece for Norouz, the Iranian New Year. This request produced “Clothes for Eid”, the short story of an overlooked orphan child who has no new clothes for the New Year celebrations. This piece—first published in 1980 in the *Tales of Majid* collection—garnered much critical acclaim for Moradi Kermani.

Since then, Moradi Kermani has earned many national and international awards and the notice of renowned filmmakers—such as Kiumars and Marzieh Broumand—and his works have been published in numerous countries and translated into many languages.

Themes

Moradi Kermani firmly believes in his dreams and has overcome many obstacles, tenaciously pursuing his goals. He gazes with sympathy into the lives of deprived communities, and opts for a complex array of social motifs in his writing, such as family, poverty, children’s rights, social cooperation, among others, and is also a critic of the traditional educational system. Four main elements are reflected in his writings: the narration of the life of an orphan and his loneliness, “honorable poverty,” the portrayal of village lifestyle, and the presence of a moral, which is invariably about perseverance in the face of difficulties. He introduces young readers to rural life in Iran with all of its hardships and helps this younger generation to find their identity.

He masterfully uses the technique of defamiliarization² to shape a simple subject and turn it into a critical issue, which is exemplified in “The Samovar,” one of the stories from *Tales of Majid*. In the story, Majid has to carry the Samovar—a wedding Present—to the Bride’s home, and during his journey he has an unexpected experience. An aunt mistakenly thinks that the Samovar is a present for her, and Majid, who does not have a heart to disillusion her, is struck dumb with embarrassment.

The reader experiences discomfort as they read about the event. “The Samovar” emphasizes the social conventions of Iranian cultural—such as Iranian compliments and the fear of saying no to others—but also focuses on themes of caring for others, thinking of their happiness, and honesty. Moradi Kermani successfully sensitizes young generations towards the emotional, cultural and social problems which often go unnoticed in their society.

The thinking, worldview and unique themes of Moradi Kermani are all inspired by his childhood memories. In *Hoosboo*, he stresses that every author writes his own autobiography and that his works are a re-creation of his life: “truly, the reflection of my personal life is depicted in my whole works” (Ghukasyan 13).

Language and Style

Moradi Kermani also has the ability to narrate the common events unusually with his use of satiric-colloquial language. In fact, satiric-colloquial language assists in his discussion of his own experience of loneliness and suffering through the medium of story. In “The Samovar,” Moradi Kermani describes events and Majid’s feelings well with his satiric tone and first-person narration, making the story believable to all readers, even those international readers that are unfamiliar with the Iranian aboriginal culture. Attentive readers will enjoy the dialect and colloquial language, full of gloomy satire, all the while praising the honesty and truthfulness found in “The Samovar.” The satire embedded in all his writing is enmeshed with sorrow. Moradi Kermani adapts a gloomy tone and compensates for it by using the style of tragic satire which helps to take some of the sting out of his main

theme, namely social disadvantages.

He maintains a colloquial form by adjusting parts of speech, using short sentences, connotative words and a great deal of dialogue. As he is living with cultural words which are helpful for the creation of the tone of his characters, the language employed often mirrors the character’s traits. Moreover, he keeps monotony at bay by mixing prose and poetry, even using nursery rhymes to mask a character’s pain. One of Moradi Kermani’s fictional devices is the use of proverbs and idioms in his novels to introduce anthropological and social information to readers. He pursues a plain style, opting for brevity and use of hyperbole, allegory and suspension in his stories which focus on rural identification and hold a mirror to his own childhood.

Characters

One characteristic of Moradi Kermani’s work is that he chooses to write young protagonists. He pays close attention to the young generation and selects his characters from among the creative, curious, and naughty young people of society. These young characters have a different way of looking at the world,

one which is full of hope and joy, all the while enduring poverty. Moradi Kermani’s characters are not the outcome of an exclusive ideology, despite his selective approach in portraying only underprivileged characters in his novels. Instead, his characters are humane and ethical people whose flaws are cultural poverty, violence and vice—all problems related to economic issues. Hence, readers attempt to identify with them and do not condemn their understandable mistakes. *Tales of Majid* is fiction that presents an excellent example of downtrodden people who bear much



contempt while they try hard to be honest and loyal, and work to correct any wrong actions they have done. This series of short stories centers on two protagonists, Majid, a twelve year-old boy, and Bibi, his “granny,” characters that mirror the author’s experiences with his own grandmother. The character of Majid is very similar to the author as Majid also wishes to become a writer.

Majid narrates the stories and the series has a simple, character-oriented plot told mostly through dialogue. The stories’ humor and intimacy are memorable, with poverty acting as a catalyst for ambition in a young adult’s quest for self-esteem. Following the on-air fame of the *Tales of Majid* series, Moradi Kermani’s work became widely noticed, launching his career as a writer of children and young adult literature. In this series, he presents part of Iranian indigenous culture, beliefs and traditions, displaying an acute awareness of the layers within the society’s inequalities and focusing on the tragedy of his own surroundings. Moradi Kermani draws out the deficiencies and narrates them aesthetically in the form of satire, a feature which doubles the impact of his works; while the reader puts on a cathartic smile, he or she is deeply engaged with the painful themes. Apart from his brilliant portrayal of deprived children in rural areas, Moradi Kermani has garnered praise for his sympathetic and wise treatment of these oppressed characters. His writing is stirring because it leaves room for intimate empathy with the protagonist. It is Moradi Kermani’s use of regionalism and appreciation of folk culture that elevates his writing to long-lasting critical acclaim.

Film Adaptation

Given Moradi Kermani’s interest in acting and filmmaking, it is not surprising that his stories lend themselves well to being changed into movie scripts; most of his works boast film adaptations. The film adaptation of the *Tales of Majid* enjoyed great commercial success between 1990 and 1993. The public empathized with the characters of Majid and his granny because of their extreme poverty, a poverty which forces them to suffer all manner of humiliation and contempt. However, the poverty of Majid is not only piteous, but

also serves as an incentive for his resilience, idealism, and actions. The social behavior of Majid provided an outlet for the underprivileged to vent their suppressed tears. Majid is a browbeaten yet self-sufficient young boy with a compassionate, albeit rigid, grandmother. A series of films based on *Tales of Majid* are like *cinéma vérité*: credible as well as simple. The films succeed in convincing the viewer that there is no human intervention in the unraveling story.

Conclusion

Since he has a humanistic view on the life around him, pays attention to

minorities— specifically the underprivileged, young generation—represents local culture and dialect, and crafts realistic depictions of social, ethical and educative motifs, Moradi Kermani bridges the gap between generations and his works travel to other cultures. He uses his senses to write based on instinct and, consequently, his integrity, deep humanity and wisdom are inherent in all of his writings. While the external layer of Moradi Kermani stories conforms to the style of satire and humor, internally the stories seek to depict unity, harmony and human resistance



against natural disaster or catastrophe. In fact, the complexity of human relations and his loving attitude toward human interactions is depicted in his plain writing. His works have a kind of healing effect on the young readers who would be inspired to find a solution for their social and emotional problems. Though his writings hearten young readers and lend them courage, they can also be seen as a plane on which the battle for the survival of his soul is fought. In this guise, his stories have unconsciously acted as great healers for Moradi Kermani himself, a remedy for his loneliness and triumphing over life's adversities and hardships. He states in *Second Houshang* that: "My great and only shelter is not my life, family, job, social position or fame, but the blank paper" (182). Lastly, he has been the worthy recipient of a host of awards both at home and abroad for children's literature from Iran and is the first to enjoy lasting fame and good reviews in the country.

Notes

1. I wish to thank Mr. Kian Soheil, assistant professor at Shahid Beheshti University, for editing this article.
2. A term coined by Viktor Shklovsky.

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This picturebook is brimming with colorful illustrations and meaningful content. The text is co-authored by Shaila Abdullah and her ten-year-old daughter, Aanyah, and the book dedicates a page at the end of the story to discuss Aanyah's passion for helping children with disabilities. The story describes a seven-year-old girl, Suhana who lives with cerebral palsy. The narrator spends an hour with Suhana each week when she volunteers at a special needs class in the community. The young narrator explains Suhana's mannerisms, means of communicating, and favorite activities. Despite the fact that Suhana cannot speak, walk, or play like other children, she is still a beloved friend. As Suhana enters physical therapy to begin the process of learning to walk, the young narrator draws her a picture of a kite flying freely, surrounded by stars representing the people who love and care for her. As a means of showing her appreciation, Suhana reaches out and touches the narrator's hair, drawing the story to a touching close. The book ends with an informative section on cerebral palsy, and provides guidance on how children can develop friendships with those living with disabilities.

Samantha Christensen



Shaila Abdulla and
Aanyah Abdulla

My Friend Suhana

Ann Arbor: Loving Healing
Press, 2014

23 p.

ISBN: 9781615992119

(Picturebook; all ages)

“I am my work”:
Dutch Writer and Illustrator
Ted van Lieshout

The dearest boy
in all
the world



Ted van Lieshout



In 1989 Ted van Lieshout received the Charlotte Köhler Stipend, which is awarded every three years to talented writers who have just started their career. In the accompanying report, the jury complimented him on the subtle style of his work, his use of surprising metaphors, and the rhythm of his language. The jury also mentioned that Van Lieshout’s books in general and his poems in particular “act as a bridge between literature for children and literature for adults” (1). Five years before, in 1984, still only known as an illustrator at the time, he had made his debut as a writer with his first poem in *De Blauw Geruite Kiel*, the famous children’s newspaper of a Dutch weekly magazine. Two years later he published *Van verdriet kun je grappige hoedjes vouwen* [Out of Grief You Can Fold Funny

Little Hats], his first collection of poems. In the following three years, Van Lieshout published two more volumes of poems and also wrote several children's novels while continuing work as an illustrator, illustrating both his own work and that of others. His work was admired by critics, who recognized in Van Lieshout an author who approached children in the same way as he would adults. Since this time he has more than lived up to the expectations inherent in winning the stipend, as 20 years later, in 2009, he received the most important Dutch award for children's literature, the Theo Thijssen Prize. According to the jury who awarded him this prize "Van Lieshout distinguishes himself from many other authors in the many-sidedness of his oeuvre, the dialogue between words and images, his original and imaginative style and the "other" eyes with which he observes the world constantly from a new perspective" (2). By this time, his reputation as an illustrator, author, and activist fighting for a higher regard for children's literature had been definitively established in the Netherlands and Flanders. His being one of the short-listed finalists of the 2014 Hans Christian Andersen Award shows that thirty years after his debut his fame has spread internationally as well. It is a prestigious nomination for the author, who has just celebrated his thirty-year career as a writer with the publication *Het rijmt. Veel versjes & liedjes 1984-2014* [It Rhymes. Many Poems & Songs 1984-2014].

In the course of his career, Van Lieshout has indeed proved that he is multi-talented, a real jack-of-all-trades, practicing a great diversity of genres for all age groups: he has written and illustrated picture books, books for early readers, novels for children, young adults and adults, poems, informative books on art, song lyrics, and scripts for children's television. Whereas other writers tend to focus exclusively on their own work, Van Lieshout has never stopped praising the quality of children's literature, and has demanded that books for young readers be awarded the same status as adult literature. He is held in high esteem both by his peers and by critics for his tireless efforts in keeping the public discussion on children's literature going.

Van Lieshout has always found inspiration for his work in his own life: "I put as much as possible of myself into my work. If you describe a person, you have to do this in as lifelike a manner as possible. You can only realize that by borrowing from yourself, by looking at yourself. Using a variety of techniques, I try to evoke emotions and moods in my work" (Brandhof & Kleef 3). He makes what he calls "Tedbooks", and says that in his work he wants to present himself "as openly as possible, preferably not hiding behind fiction, as *Ted* as possible" (Van Lieshout 4). As a result, recurring themes in his work such as death and exclusion are important issues also in his personal life. Both his father and his brother died when he was young and their deaths have influenced his work deeply. In many of his poems he expresses the feelings of loss and

by TOIN DUIJX



Toin Duijx is the secretary of the Dutch IBBY-section and works at Leiden University (Child and Family Studies) and Tilburg University (Children's Literature).

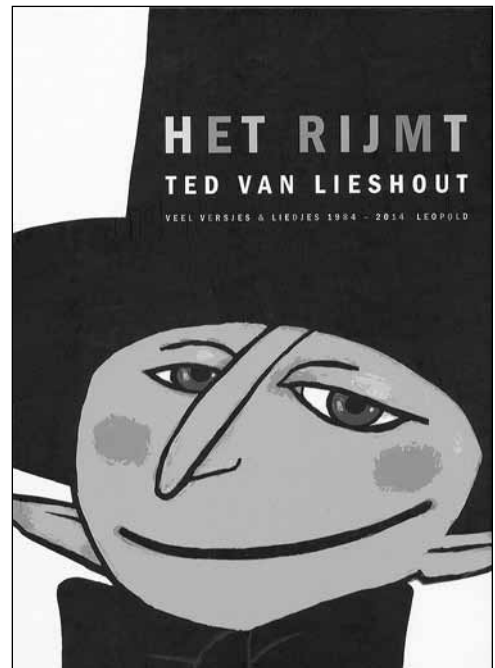
by HELMA VAN LIEROP-DEBRAUWER



Helma van Lierop-Debrauwer is Chair of the Dutch IBBY-section and is a professor of Children's Literature at Tilburg University.

grief he experienced after the death of his father, stressing how vulnerable he felt and how important it is to feel safe and secure. Thus, in his debut, *Van verdriet kan je grappige hoedjes vouwen* [Out of Grief You Can Fold Funny Little Hats], he describes his feelings as a seven-year-old boy immediately after his father passed away. Although he does not understand exactly what has happened, he can feel the somber atmosphere, which he tries to put into words by comparing his father's room to a haunted cave: "They turned his room into a haunted cave/draped curtains on the walls. In new/ pajamas he was exhibited on folds white, /a rosary squeezed between both fingers" (5). In *Brothers* (1999), an intriguing Young Adult novel, Van Lieshout deals with the death of his brother. In the book, Luuk mourns his brother's death and tries to cope with the memories of their relationship, while he reflects on how these times have influenced his own identity. Reading his brother's diary and writing in it six months after his brother's death, he is finally able to be honest with himself and dares to admit that he is gay. Homosexuality is closely related to the second main theme of Van Lieshout's work, that of exclusion, of being an outsider. As a homosexual, Van Lieshout has expressed his feelings of being different from others and has felt pressure to compensate his outsider status by doing his very best to get noticed for his work. In his prose debut *Raafs reizend theater* [1986; Raven's Travelling Theatre], for instance, he portrays the life of an anti-hero who travels around with a theater company consisting of outsiders, whose journey results in him getting the respect and support that he failed to find in his youth. In a similar way, the protagonist from *The Dearest Boy in All the World* (1990) feels that he has to somehow replace his father after he dies in a traffic accident: "Tim was a boy who had so much to worry about that he hardly ever went out to play. All day long questions without answers and answers without questions would be crawling around inside his head. And they didn't stop at night either. He even worried in his dreams. (...) But his mother and all the other grown-ups that he knew said that Tim was the dearest boy in all the world. One special day he believed it" (n.p.).

Van Lieshout never makes it easy on himself and his readers, neither with respect to the content, nor in the form of his work. Death and exclusion are confrontational themes, but *Zeer kleine liefde* [Tiny Love], a collection of poems, letters, and photos he published in 1999, features an even more daring theme. In this book he describes the relationship he had with an adult man when he was just twelve years old. Carefully weighing his words, he unearths his feelings from this time and reflects upon his emotions twenty-five years later, in an effort to shatter the taboo of pedophilia. Van Lieshout felt it was necessary to discuss this theme, first of all for personal reasons: "For quite a long time I wanted to make a poetic composition around the theme of a child with



a pedophile experience, just because it is part of my youth and I felt it shouldn't be left out in the portrait of my youth that I wanted to describe in my oeuvre" (Van Lieshout 6). In 2012 he decided to write a novel for adults on his relationship with a pedophile [*Mijn meneer*; My Gentleman], but this time because he wanted to voice his opinion in the ongoing debate of pedophilia in Dutch society.

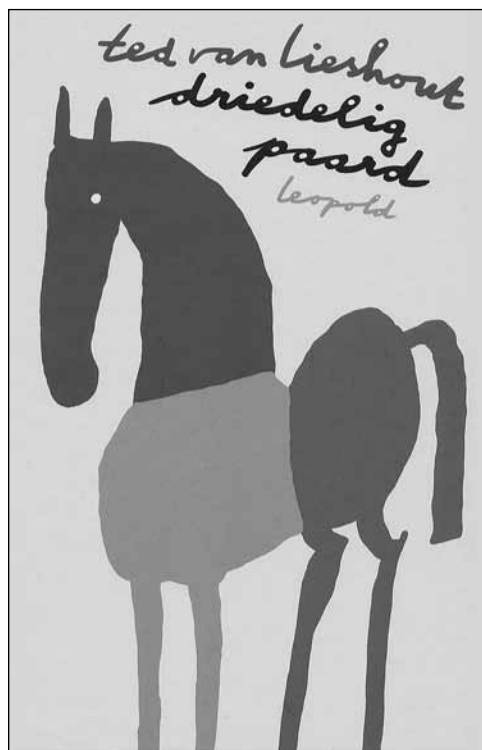
When the forms of his books are of concern, the author has routinely proven himself a practitioner of stylistic renewal. For Van Lieshout this is a basic need: "I don't want to get stuck in one style. I need change" (Frederik 7). This is particularly visible in his poetry. The most striking quality of his poems is the unique way he plays with words: his simplicity without being simple, his use of surprising metaphors, and his experiments with subgenres of poetry. In *Driedelig paard* [2011; Three-Part Horse], a recent collection of poems, he combines what he calls "block-poems" with sonnets and with images and illustrations. In the afterword of this book he gives his definition of a block-poem as one that takes the form of a block without any further characteristics

specified. All elements typical of poems, such as rhyme or blank spaces, are left out. The poem has no title and it is left to the reader to find out who is speaking and who is spoken to. Thanks to its humor and its accessible style the book can be enjoyed by both experienced and inexperienced readers alike. Van Lieshout connects the world of adults to that of children, by offering them his world in which everything is possible, wherein both age groups are taken seriously. He may be called a true ambassador of poetry, not only in

his own work but also in promoting the work of other poets and by giving them a chance to be published. Since many publishers are reluctant to publish collections of poems, Van Lieshout took the initiative to compile a yearbook with poems, titled *Kwam dat zien! Kwam dat zien!* [Welcome to the Circus! Welcome!]. In the five volumes that appeared between 2008 and 2012, he succeeded in combining the work of over fifty poets, presenting them as a circus show.

In discussing Van Lieshout's work one cannot and should not leave out his illustrations. After studying at the Academy of Fine Arts, he started working in the field of children's literature as an illustrator. Although he developed a passion for writing quite soon hereafter, he never stopped drawing. Because of the emphasis placed on his illustrations, his collections of poems are often called poetry picture books. One look at these books reveals that Van Lieshout sets great store by art education for children (and adults). He once said that he has always intended his work to reduce the distance between pure illustration and modern visual arts. He wants his readers to become familiar with the possibilities of various

illustration techniques: "I work with calligraphy techniques, for instance, with wash ink, pencil, finger[s], sweat, and spittle" (Brandhof & Kleef 8). To give the reader an insight into how the illustrations are made, he often explains in the paratext of his books which materials he used in the process. However he does not stop there. In *Stil leven* [1998; Still Life] he explains his art poetics in a collection of 26 essays on Western art, ranging from prehistory to the present day, in which comparisons are made between each



paired work of art. Aspects of these works, such as the techniques used, their composition, style and theme, are described and discussed in a very personal way, which is emphasized by the use of the first-person-perspective. His enthusiasm for art and his wish to share this with his readers is even more striking in his *Papieren Museum*-series (Paper museums-series). In *Papieren Museum 3—De engel met de twee neuzen* [2007; Paper Museum 3—The Angel with the Two Noses] he takes on the role of the museum director. The cover of the book is the wall of his museum, the pages are the galleries, where readers can wander and get lost amongst the works of art that he has selected with so much care. Making a comparison between well-known paintings using illustrations by distinguished Dutch and Flemish illustrators, Van Lieshout shows how these illustrations are inspired by (great works of) art, making the reader aware of the close relationship between the traditions of visual art and the art of illustration. In all these art books Van Lieshout manages to make art accessible and attractive both to a young audience and to adult readers.

In 2009 almost all his poems were republished in one single volume. In the epilogue the author reflects on his mainly autobiographical work. The title of this collection is no coincidence, because it summarizes in three Dutch words (and two in English) what Van Lieshout has been aiming at in all of his books: *Hou van mij* [Love Me].

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All translations are the authors.

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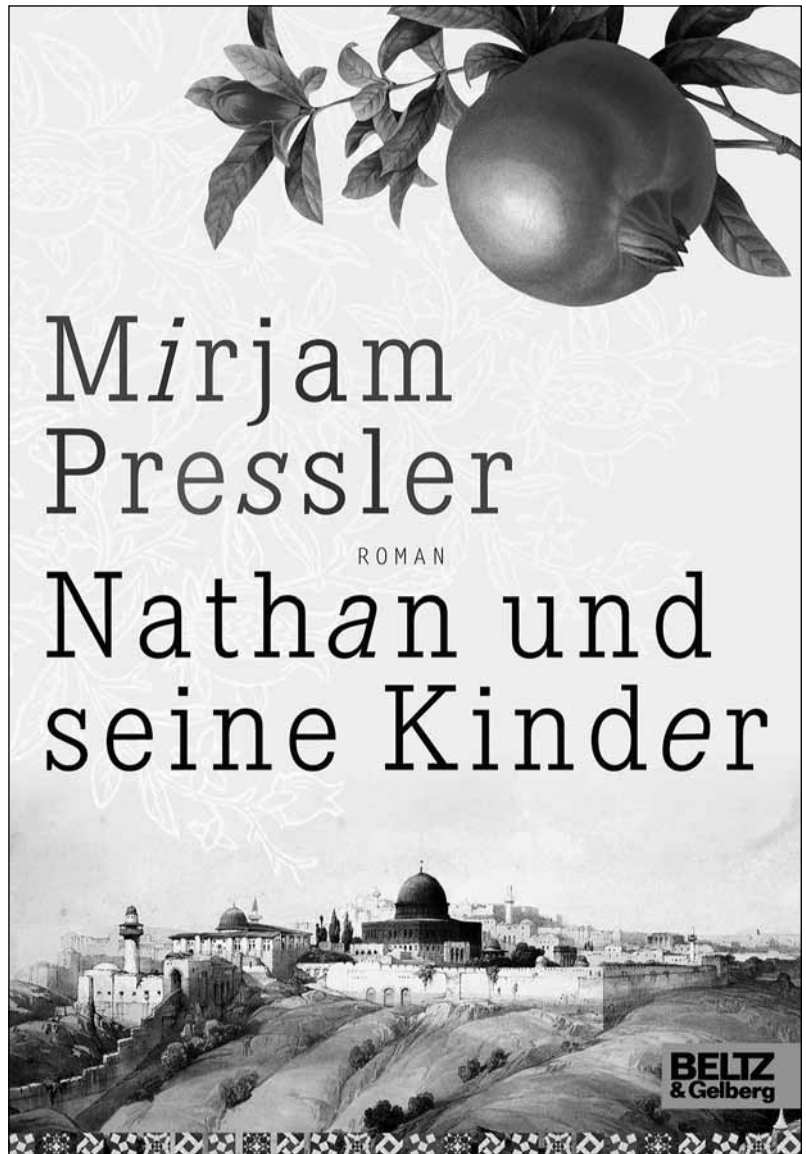
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“Power opposes a lack of power”: On Mirjam Pressler’s Nomination for the Hans Christian Andersen Award

by IMKE LICHTERFELD



Imke Lichterfeld studied English and History at Bonn and Aberdeen. Her research focuses on early modern English drama, but she has taught a wide range of topics and co-edited *A Hundred Years of The Secret Garden*. *Frances Hodgson Burnett’s Children’s Classic Revisited*. Currently, she works as Studies Coordinator at the Department of English at the University of Bonn.



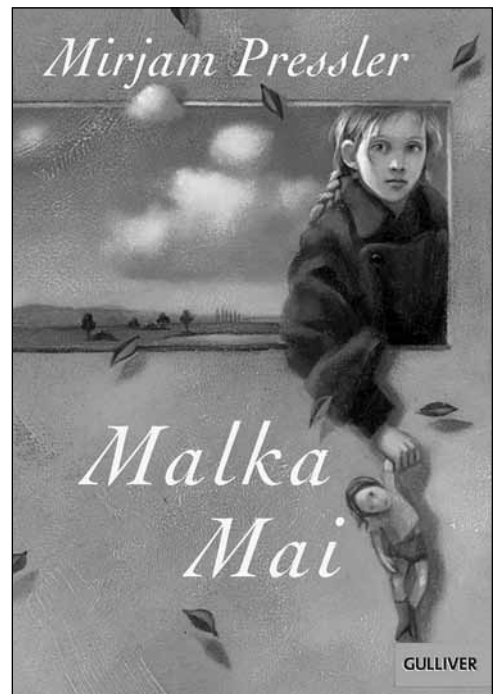
An avid approver of children’s curiosity and spontaneity, Mirjam Pressler is one of those authors who are not known only to an audience that is interested in fiction for young people. Her works are concerned with topics that grab a reader’s attention beyond one’s own backyard and show a concern about history, social problems, and politics. Pressler is one of the most prolific German writers of children’s fiction, her best known fictional work possibly *Bitterschokolade* [Bitter Chocolate] which caused her to be widely known throughout Germany and won the 1980 *Oldenburger Kinder- und Jugendbuchpreis* [Oldenburg Children and Youth Book Award]. Her debut novel is concerned with the schoolgirl, Eva, who does not accept her obese and lonely self and has to learn to overcome her self-doubt and be happy with her body and within her circle of family and friends. The enthralling, down-to-earth and honest account seems more than relevant in today’s supermodel

culture. Eva’s psychological complexity is presented in a comprehensible manner and already indicates Pressler’s precise, yet tentative style that provokes reflection.

Mirjam Pressler studied at the *Hochschule für Bildende Künste* [Academy of Fine Arts] in Frankfurt and in Munich. She has been based near the Bavarian capital for the last several decades. Born in Darmstadt near Frankfurt in Germany in 1940 during the first years of the Second World War and growing up with foster parents, Mirjam Pressler is also a well-received translator of texts from Hebrew, Yiddish, English and Dutch into German, among them novels by Zeruya Shalev and Amos Oz. As translator Pressler is most famous for her annotated edition of Anne Frank’s *The Diary of a Young Girl*, a work that remains the most vivid and haunting personal account of Jewish life during the persecution in twentieth century Nazi Germany.

When Pressler was young, she spent a year in a kibbutz in Israel and a major part of her writing centres on questions of Jewish faith, not the least of which is her interest in Anne Frank. Having acquainted herself with Frank’s diary in a critical edition, Pressler worked extensively on the famous National Socialist victim and her circumstances. She wrote a biography on the young girl that suffered in Nazi Germany and the occupied Netherlands, *Anne Frank: A Hidden Life*, and another biography on Frank’s family, a typical German-Jewish successful family until the Holocaust: *Grüße und Küsse an alle. Die Geschichte der Familie von Anne Frank*, published in English as *Treasures from the Attic: The Extraordinary Story of Anne Frank’s Family*. The volume provides a highly informational account of the family over three centuries on the basis of various letters and other documents. It describes Frank’s ancestors as European intellectuals and artists, spread throughout the Netherlands, Switzerland and England, recording the life and fate of the family and their daughter whose life was cut short by the horrors of fascist, anti-Semitic politics.

The German societies for Christian-Jewish collaboration awarded Pressler the Buber-Rosenzweig Medal in 2013 for her focus on aspects of Jewish life during times of National Socialism. The award granted by the German *Koordinierungsrat* honours her excellent translation and literary engagement with regard to aspects of a multilayered and complex society. It highlights her honest and relentless transmitting of aspects of “damaged childhoods” to the next generations, also underlining aspects of her books that support demands for an open and tolerant society which she brings closer to her young audience in an accessible narrative way (“Mirjam Pressler erhält”). The committee also reflected on her function as a translator from Hebrew and Yiddish to emphasize her success in overcoming prejudices against foreign cultures to erect a differentiated and complex picture of Jewish and Israeli society after the Holocaust.

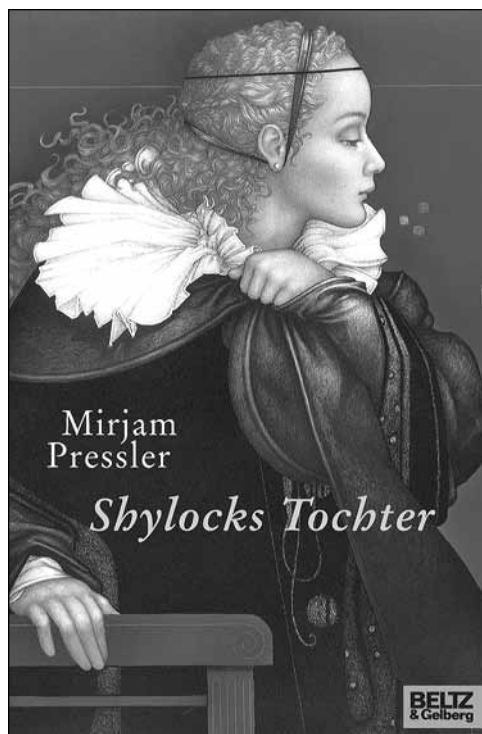


Her engaging output on Anne Frank is only one of many concerned with the Jewish faith in times of crisis: *Malka Mai*, published in 2001, winner of the German *Bücherpreis* [Book Prize] in 2002, and a favourite among teachers to be read in classrooms, tells the touching, truth-based story of the difficult yet human relationship between a girl and her mother during the Second World War. It targets one Jewish girl’s fate and her 1943 forced emigration and deals with questions of fear, suffering, loneliness, and crushed hopes. The moving plot describes how the little girl Malka learns to survive in a world of hurt when she is left on her own during the haunting escape from Nazi Germany to Hungary.

Her interest and often matter-of-fact account of damaged childhoods is what makes her so worthy of making the Hans Christian Andersen Award shortlist. Invited to the *Deutsche Shakespeare Gesellschaft* [German Shakespeare Society] in 2000 for having written *Shylocks Tochter* [Shylock’s Daughter] (1999)—which she calls one of her favourites (Pressler “Vita.”)—Pressler explained in her speech that she wanted to strengthen the family bond between the father Shylock and the daughter Jessica, as she felt Shakespeare’s text raised questions that had not been reflected through early modern English anti-Semitism. Pressler has written that “power opposes a lack of power,” a statement seems to drive her descriptions, illuminations and stories of those who lack power (“If you prick us” 226).

In *Shylocks Tochter*, a rewriting of William Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, the Jewish ghetto in Venice feels less like protection and more like a prison to the juvenile Jessica, yet her breakout into the Christian world does not bring her freedom and happiness: “In her book she

rewrites the Lorenzo-Jessica plot of *The Merchant of Venice* from the imagined point of view of the Jewish community to which Jessica and her father must have belonged—thus exonerating Shylock who, she feels, has been badly wronged by Shakespeare” (Jansohn 15). At the Shakespeare conference, Pressler gave a lesson on Venetian Jewish history and the monetary value in Venetian society from the perspective of the early modern Venetian ghetto. She thus rewrites the story of Shakespeare’s problem play with a focus on the Jewish community in Venice, absolving Jessica’s father Shylock of the anti-Semitic blame he suffers in Shakespeare’s plot by erecting a visual picture of Jewish family life. This reveals a new perspective for today’s reader as it shows how differently characters and motifs from early modern times can be critically evaluated from a contemporary perspective.



Questions around the theme of powerlessness remain her main focus, as more recent publications confirm, and she has been well received by the public and honorary boards. A winner of many prizes and awards, among them the

Bundesverdienstkreuz [Federal Cross of Merit] and in 2004, the German *Bücherpreis* as a lifetime achievement award, prove the established place of her work in juvenile fictional writing and translation. She has been nominated for the German *Jugendliteraturpreis* [Youth Literature Prize] three times, successfully in 1995 for another of her favourite works, *Wenn das Glück kommt muß man ihm einen Stuhl hinsetzen* [If Luck Comes Along, You Must Offer a Chair], which deals with the twelve-year old orphan Halinka who indulges in a solitary existence and literary dreams until given the chance to break away from her routine.

In 2009, Pressler published the highly praised *Nathan und seine Kinder* [Nathan and His Children], a rewriting of G. E. Lessing’s famous play on religious tolerance from the Enlightenment period, *Nathan the Wise*, that contains the famous ring parable with the unanswerable question for the right religion. Pressler insists that the story around Nathan and his aim for joint peace remains essential today. Pressler was awarded the *Corine, Internationaler Buchpreis* [International Book Award] by the highly influential *Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels*, the German Publishers and Booksellers Association, who organize the German book market. Their criteria for success are current thematic relevance of the plot of a book, quality of content, and commercial success, all of which have been met by Pressler on many occasions.

Nathan und seine Kinder and many of her other works reveal Pressler’s self-professed aim to indicate the importance of a voice: language allows the creation and thus the undeniable existence of her young protagonists. These can then evolve and grow in her readers’ heads. According to Pressler, “language is needed to survive”; it gives her heroes and heroines a mode to phrase their longings and needs (“Arbeiten.”). Her task and “challenge as an author,” according to Pressler, is to “frame the speechless into words and language” (“Arbeiten.”). She thus again endorses those who lack power.

Pressler also writes for a very young audience. Among her works are short stories for children starting to read, or bedtime stories, such as her simple yet wonderful *Die schönsten Erstlesegeschichten* [The Most Beautiful Stories for First-Time Readers], which center around sibling relationships, important events like birthdays, and issues of dreaming at night. There are also the volumes in the *Leselöwen* series (which roughly translates as bookworms) with similar topics, or those on Ben and Lena, little stories that depict events in Lena and her little brother Ben’s life, like going to the doctor’s or preparing for Christmas. In another little book, Jola and Nickel learn how to help with gardening and aspects of agriculture on a farm. Next to these texts for a primary school audience, most of her

works focus on topics for teenage readers that deal with problematic relationships, first love, longing, difficult living situations, often with a recurrence to religious tolerance, historical aspects, and Jewish topics, especially set in 1930s Germany.

In 2010, she was given the German Youth Literature award for her exceptional lifetime achievement at the annual Book Fair in Frankfurt. She had already won the same award for her translation, but this bestowal proves the highest honour of a German writer. The jury’s verdict on Pressler’s works draws special attention to her role as a voice of anti-authoritarian literature for young people. The committee in 2009 emphasized her novels as timeless classics dealing with “damaged childhoods” that keep their current relevance. The jury, too, referred to Pressler’s engagement with Anne Frank as a cross-generational symbolic figure and her rewritings of great works of literature to achieve a literary way of international understanding. This accomplishment is reflected in so many of Mirjam Pressler’s works: her novels and stories open horizons, or, as Pressler herself calls this effect of literature especially for young people, they cause the existence of “many little peepholes through a wall that stands between us and the often incomprehensible world” (“Home”). According to her, books can “grant a new perspective” and “one specific book may allow a life-changing opinion to be shaped for an individual person” (“Home”).

Pressler is a keen and shrewd observer of life and living circumstances. Her writing is detailed yet not exuberant, but sharp, reduced, and accessible. She does not refrain from complicated, difficult and violent topics that young people can be confronted with. As the St. Gallen daily newspaper, *St. Galler Tagblatt*, writes, her depictions of social environments are precise and multifaceted and thus get under your skin without effort (Bazzoli 15). Mirjam Pressler is a perceptive and empathetic translator and author for young readers and fully deserves more international attention.

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All translations are by the author.

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RENATE WELSH

Sonst bist du dran



“Maybe it will help you,
now that you know what
you are capable of”

by KIM MISFELDT



Kim Misdeldt is Professor of German and Chair of the Fine Arts and Humanities Department at Augustana Campus, University of Alberta. Her research interests are study abroad, second language pedagogy, drama pedagogy, and violence and trauma in German literature. Recently Kim was recognized with a 3M National Teaching Fellowship.

Violence and Empathy in Children
in *Sonst bist du dran* [Or else] and
Wehr dich, wenn du dich traust
[Defend yourself, if you dare] by
Renate Welsh

S*onst bist du dran* [Or else] first published in 1994 and its 2011 sequel *Wehr dich, wenn du dich traust* [Defend yourself, if you dare] tell of grade four pupils and their encounters with bullying and violence. Austrian author Renate Welsh has published these and more than eighty other books for children, young adults, and also for adults. She has been recognized with numerous literary prizes and is perhaps most famous for her *Das Vamperl* [The Little Vampire], a series which began with the first book in 1981 and is still going strong today. Her little vampire is unique in that, unlike regular vampires, he does not drink blood. Rather, when he senses anger or rage, he arrives on scene to suck that

anger from the character. Welsh’s focus on real human reactions to painful motivations and stressful situations includes creating empathy not only for the victim but also for the child perpetrator. Aimed at younger children, the Little Vampire easily removes the anger that would make small children uncomfortable. In her work aimed at older children, Welsh insists that her readers grapple with the causes of violence and bullying. In the two books *Sonst bist du dran* [Or else] and *Wehr dich, wenn du dich traust* [Defend yourself, if you dare] upon which this article will focus, as with many of her books, Renate Welsh does not shy away from a difficult subject—violence in the school—and in doing she confronts another taboo topic: the potential for violence within each of us.

Sonst bist du dran begins as Michel witnesses a group of five or six bullies hold Arnold’s head in the toilet. The scene on the first page is described in detail, too much detail for some readers, according to blogs about Welsh’s work. Michel wants to tell the bullies to stop but he is unable to due to the spit that has gathered in his mouth. Unfortunately for Michel, he gets noticed and is threatened to keep silent. Although not involved in the bullying and threatened himself, Michel quickly finds fault in Arnold’s behavior. Rather than identify at all with the

victim, he questions in his mind why he should speak if Arnold himself does not “yell, not cry, not pound on the door?” (7). Michel does not question that Valerie builds a wall of books, rulers and painting supplies between her and Arnold and moves as far away as possible, nor as the children tell the teacher “He stinks!” (11). Again Arnold says nothing and Michel continues to blame him for not standing up for himself.

The bullying continues after class in the park. Once again Michel is a coincidental witness, and once again he is threatened to tell no one “You know, if you say a word, it will be your turn. Is that clear?”(18). Michel does as he is told and keeps quiet. The bullying of Arnold continues and one day Michel is forced to choose either to belong to the group of bullies or place himself on the ground beside Arnold. He chooses to belong. Once again his anger is directed at Arnold, rather than at the bullies: “Suddenly Michel had an incredible rage at Arnold. He didn’t



know why. ... ‘Sure I want to belong’ said Michel. Arnold should not look at him that way. Dammit, he shouldn’t look at him that way!’ (49). Michel is told to stuff grass in Arnold’s mouth. Arnold looks at Michel, and Michel feels his rage grow: “The look hit Michel somewhere deep inside, but suddenly he felt a monstrous rage” (53). Once again Michel does as he is told. When he is finally alone he stomps again and again on a snail until there is nothing left. It is much safer to be angry at a victim (Arnold) than at a bully, and it is common that the destructive impulse looks for a yet weaker victim (the snail). Michel’s guilty conscience also plays a role in his anger: “As often as he saw him, Michel’s rage at Arnold grew. Especially as he sat there with his back bent, his eyes lowered, the way he jumped when anyone went by his desk, as if he wanted to remind the world, that they should feel guilty. Rage and guilt could live together in you, Michel concluded” (84). It is interesting to note that once again it is Arnold’s fault that Michel is feeling guilty, not because Michel had succumbed to the peer pressure and stuffed grass into Arnold’s mouth. Welsh deftly encourages her readers to reflect on both the roots and effects of anger.

Michel tells his parents what he has done. They react by openly acknowledging their shock and disappointment but they continue by recognizing the potential for violence in everyone: “You know, in each of us hides plenty of bad. Some don’t want to believe it, that’s when it is especially dangerous” (67). Welsh does not step back from taboo topics and confronts the potential for violence, even in mothers. Welsh makes clear that even a sympathetic character like a normal, very caring mother, has thoughts of extreme violence against a helpless infant. She says: “You know that I love you. But there were times, when you screamed and never wanted to stop, it didn’t matter what I did, you were dry, you were fed, you weren’t in pain, as far as I could see, but you still screamed half the night. I was so angry at you, no one could imagine. I wanted to throw you out the window” (68). Michel’s dad reasons: “Maybe it will help you, that you now know what you are capable of” (68). This conversation between Michel’s parents models empathy for Welsh’s readers to demonstrate that although we all may have the potential for violence, we do not need to act on those thoughts.

The classroom teacher continues with this line of thinking. After a violent episode in another class, she does not shy away from the difficult topic, but rather tackles it head-on. As the conversation centers around violence that the children had seen from a distance, on the street or on TV, she does not let the topic of violence remain at a safe distance away. She shakes her head and states: “I don’t think that we should talk about others now” (75). She continues: “I don’t think that we are brave enough or honest enough to talk about ourselves” (77). Therefore she has the children sit in a circle, hands out slips of paper and asks each one to write a sentence or two about when they have witnessed or perpetrated violence themselves. Later as she reads the statements aloud, all the children are touched. Welsh does not, however, leave her readers with easy answers. Days later the teacher has each pupil speak

the sentence that they remember (not their own). As the children have no answer to her question of where they go from here, she says: “I am happy that you don’t believe that just doing that would solve everything. Nothing is solved and it probably won’t be. All of this is in all of you, in me, in all of us and much more, I’m afraid. Maybe we can be a bit more aware, maybe even put on the brakes in time now and again” (108). This teacher states that she does not expect her pupils to be heroes all the time but she does show them the option of choosing one’s behaviour. She helps them understand that empathy can build the confidence to intervene.

In the sequel *Wehr dich, wenn du dich traust* [Defend yourself, if you dare], Welsh has Michel and his fellow pupils understand more of what could be behind the actions of both the main bully Klaus and his victim Arnold. They also come to realize that the two boys’ stories may be more alike than anyone might have imagined. When Klaus explodes in anger yet again, the new teacher tries something similar to the teacher in the previous book. She hands out colored strips of paper and asks the students this time for two types of sentences: “Arrowhead sentences and cuddling sentences” (68). She explains, “When an arrowhead has hit and perhaps broken off, it cannot fester itself out and digs deeper and deeper into the flesh. As soon as someone touches it, you feel a painful twinge. There are sentences that someone said just once but they still hurt, and there are those that seem rather harmless, but when you have heard them for the umpteenth time, you want to jump out of your skin. Do you understand what I mean? ... Then there are the cuddling sentences, on which you can lean or warm yourself by, even if they were said long, long ago” (69). The children realize that “The dumb thing is that arrowhead sentences work so much longer” and that “You need many cuddling sentences to get rid of one arrowhead sentence” and there are some “that can’t even be surgically removed” (80). As the children discuss why someone might say one of the arrowhead sentences, they begin to understand that there is often a story behind the aggression. After Arnold (the silent victim up to this point) becomes the

aggressor and attacks Klaus, the children learn that Arnold, like Klaus, had lost his mother as an infant. As the two boys realize what they have in common, they are able to look at each other with more respect and understanding and become friends. Again Welsh manages to weave empathy in heuristic ways that enable children to read situations in fiction and real life and react to them more filled with justice and caring.

These two books are important resources for both children and teachers and unfortunately neither is available in English translation, although a number of Welsh’s works have been translated into Spanish, Danish, French and Afrikaans. As with many of her award-winning books, *Sonst bist du dran* [Or else] is read in German schools and there are publications of activities, worksheets and ideas of how to work with the book in the classroom. There are also internet forums where teachers and pupils discuss their reactions to the book. Although some children write that they don’t like to read the details of the violence, they do appreciate the message of the book. Others note that their teacher had done as the teacher in the book and had them write out sentences describing violence that they had witnessed or perpetrated. Both teachers and children found it a valuable experience. Once such website is <http://www.kinderbuch-couch.de/welsh-renate-sonst-bist-du-dran.html>.

Note

All translations from the German are my own.

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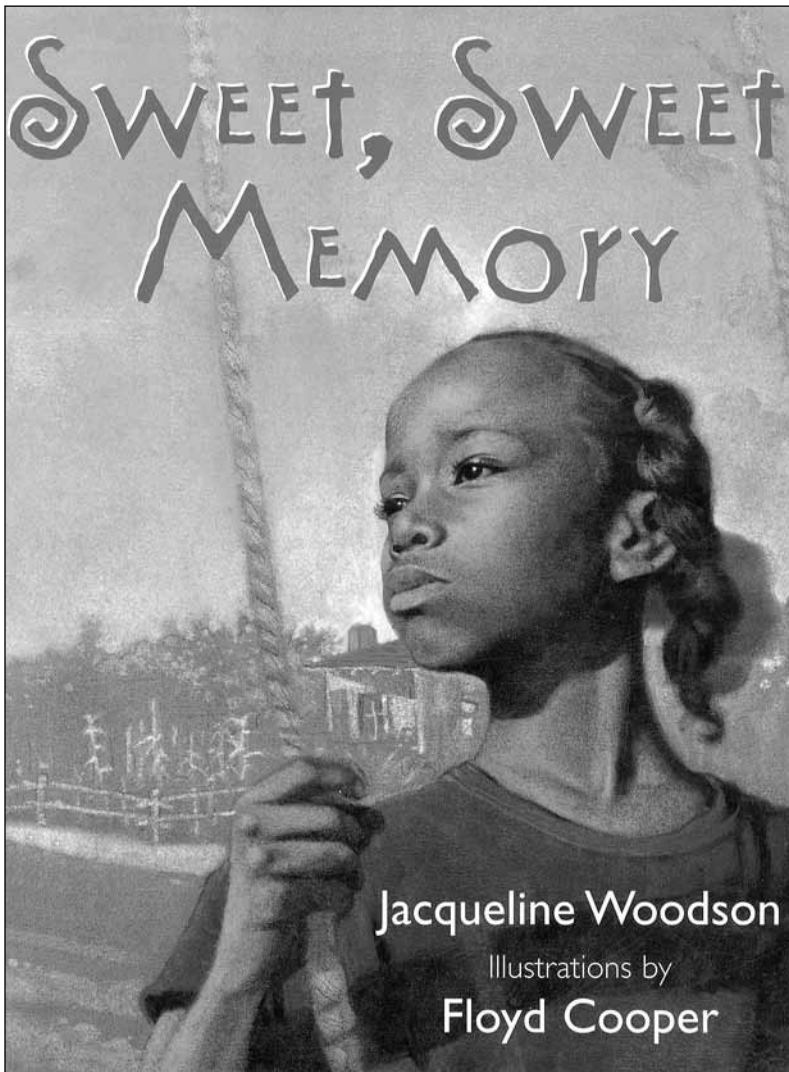
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“Best Batch I Ever Fried”: Food and Family in Jacqueline Woodson’s Picture Books

by MICHELLE H. MARTIN



Michelle H. Martin, the inaugural Augusta Baker Endowed Chair in Childhood Literacy at the University of South Carolina, teaches children’s and young adult literature in the School of Library and Information Science. She is the author of *Brown Gold: Milestones of African-American Children’s Picture Books, 1845-2002* (Routledge 2004). (48 words)



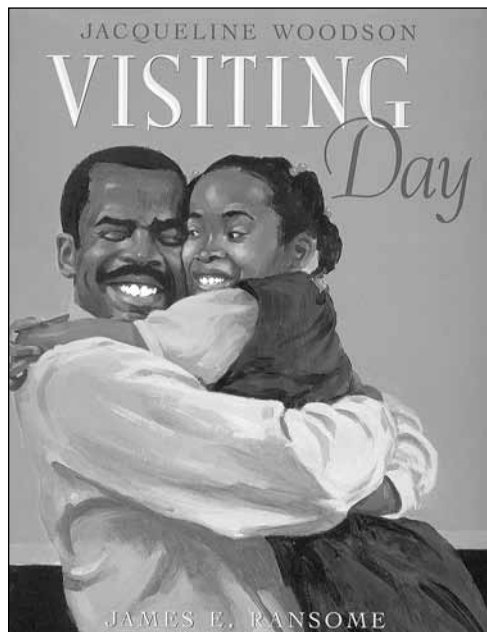
In a May 2009 *Horn Book* article, “Still Hot: Great Food Moments in Children’s Literature,” author Linda Sue Park writes: “our choice of food is neither trivial nor merely personal but has lasting social and cultural significance” (232). Children’s literature scholar Leona Fisher affirms this idea in her essay, “Nancy Drew and the ‘F’ Word,” published in Kara Keeling and Scott Pollard’s 2008 anthology, *Critical Approaches to Food in Children’s Literature*. She argues that in the Nancy Drew books, food persists throughout the series as a “signifier of protagonists’ privileged status and ability to consume at will . . . also serving as a moral marker of both genteel poverty and criminality” (1682). While food can indicate wealth, the inability to consume (or produce) food can just as firmly define a character’s lower social and socioeconomic status. In Carolyn Daniel’s introduction to *Voracious Children: Who Eats Whom in Children’s Literature*, she notes: “Food events are always significant, in reality as well as in fiction. They reveal the fundamental preoccupations, ideas and beliefs of society” (1).

In the selection of Jacqueline Woodson’s African-American children’s picture books that this essay analyzes, the centrality of food in children’s lives in large part defines who they are: *We Had a Picnic This Sunday Past* (1997) illustrated by Diane Greenseid; *Sweet, Sweet Memory* (2000), illustrated by Floyd Cooper; *Visiting Day* (2002), illustrated by James E. Ransome; *Our Gracie Aunt* (2002), illustrated by Jon J. Muth; *Coming On Home Soon*, illustrated by E. B. Lewis (2004) and *Pecan Pie Baby* (2012), illustrated by Sophie Blackall. In these picture books intended for younger readers, the privilege of growing, preparing, consuming, and enjoying food represents belonging within a circle of family care. Hence, Woodson makes food a textual centerpiece that teaches her child protagonists what family means, situates them within a particular socioeconomic class, and prescribes their role within the family, community, and social power structures while also providing rich material for story-making.

In several of Woodson’s picture books, those who grow and prepare food bind families together. In *Sweet, Sweet Memory*, Sarah’s recently deceased Grandpa still has lettuce, corn, collards, squash and tomatoes growing in the yard. Grandpa’s words about the earth that linger like his plants help Sarah come to terms with his death: “Like us it lives, it grows . . . Everything and everyone goes on and on.” As Sarah looks out of the window of Grandpa’s house with one of her female relatives, readers can see his tall stalks of corn framing one side of the illustration. This visual reminds readers that even though Grandpa can no longer tend his garden, he will continue to contribute tangibly to the life of his family despite his absence. Near the end of the book, Grandma promises that they will “eat sweet corn and have a sweet, sweet memory.” By cooking the food for Sarah that Grandpa grew, Grandma keeps his memory alive as well.

The Grandma of the unnamed child protagonist in Woodson’s *Visiting Day* also functions as the family glue whose food preparation helps the child maintain a connection with their absent relative, in this case her incarcerated father. The book opens with Grandma frying chicken at 6:00 a.m. to eat on the bus to the jail. On the ride, Grandma doles out chicken to riders who are visiting their own incarcerated relatives, and other passengers pass around cornbread and sweet potato pie. Sharing food and getting to know others on this monthly

trip probably make these emotionally draining visits easier. Near the end of the book, the protagonist relates how she and Grandma bide their time while they await Daddy’s return: “we can count our blessings and love each other up and make biscuits and cakes and pretty pictures to send Daddy.” The narrator’s “we” suggests that the granddaughter has helped Grandma make the “Daddy” cake that sits next to a cardboard box, ready to mail. According to Daniel, “the imperative to provide,

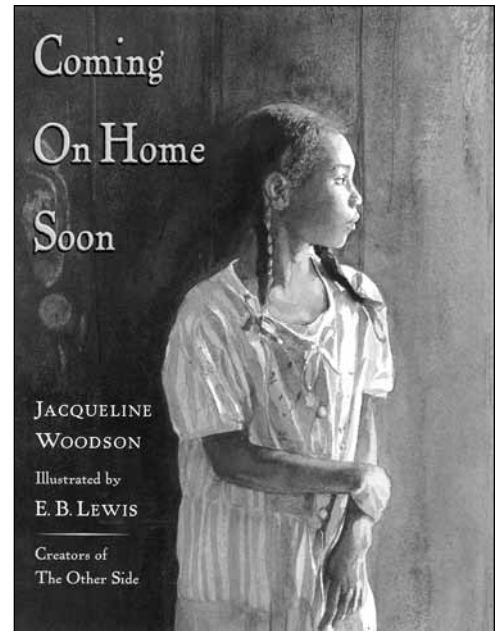


prepare, and cook food is culturally determined and assigned, even in contemporary society, generally according to gender” (15). Hence, by involving the child in making a treat for her father, Grandma shares with her grandchild food preparation tasks that will later help her bring her own family together, be it a traditional or nontraditional family. Throughout this beautifully illustrated picture book, Woodson gives no indication of where the little girl’s mother is, why she lives with Grandma, or what crime landed her father in jail. None of that matters. In Ransome’s final image, grandmother and granddaughter sit on the porch, wrapped together in a blue blanket, smiling as they “make big plans for when Daddy comes home again.” All the ways they love him from afar—with food, handmade art or making plans for his return—keep Daddy just as present in this home as Grandpa remains in *Sweet, Sweet Memory* after his death.

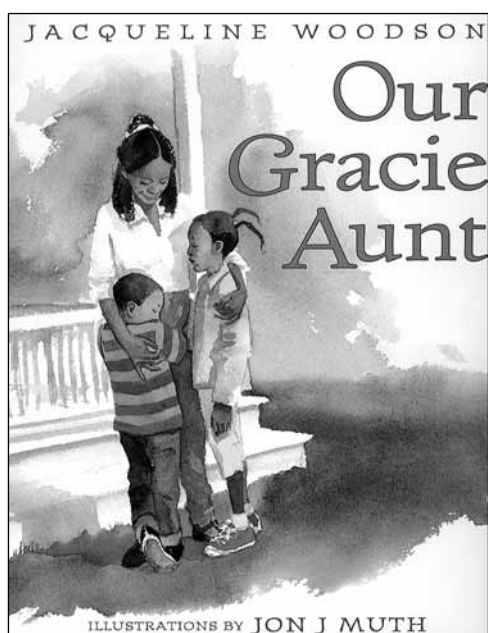
Just as the growth and preparation of an abundance of food indicates strong family ties, a paucity of food or limited access to it in Woodson’s picture books can highlight difficult family dynamics. In both *Coming On Home Soon* and *Our Gracie Aunt*, the children cannot assume easy or daily access to food. Like the protagonist in *Visiting Day*, these children have nontraditional families, but in these stories, the explanation of why they do not live with their parent(s) constitutes an important part of the plot. In *Coming on Home Soon*, Ada Ruth’s mother has left for Chicago to earn money for the family, taking a job that men have abandoned to go fight in World War II. In

Our Gracie Aunt, young narrator Johnson and his older sister Beebee are living alone in their apartment because their mother—perhaps because of drug addiction, mental illness or other challenges—has once again abandoned them.

These families’ financial challenges make food scarce for the children in both of these stories. Ada Ruth narrates, “There is a war going on. Some days not much food to speak of. Corn bread and clabber milk for morning meal and supper.” They drink milk from Grandma’s cow, and when a black and white kitten shows up one winter day, Grandma declares, “You know we can’t keep it,” but promptly serves the kitten a dish of milk. In telling Ada Ruth that the kitten can’t stay, she admits that they barely have enough food to feed themselves, let alone a pet. But by being the first to offer the hungry cat a meal, she indicates either that she suspects the pet will help Ada Ruth deal with missing her mother, or that no matter how poor they are, they can always share with one more. After an ice storm, Grandma hunts rabbits and opossums for stew, but the only meal that Lewis illustrates shows Ada Ruth drinking hot cocoa and eating “two biscuits from last night’s supper” after the winter storm. When a letter comes from Mama and money falls out of the envelope, Ada Ruth describes “Stew cooking on the stove” while she sits on Grandma’s lap, wrapped up in what appears to be a handmade



quilt, reading Mama’s letter, while big snow flakes fall outside. Perhaps the money from Mama makes the stew on the stove more possible. In both *Coming on Home Soon* and *Visiting Day*, the Grandmother, as primary caregiver, feeds and loves the grandchildren while they eagerly await the parent’s return. And whether the parent can or cannot contribute to the family income, neither grandmother passes judgment on her child but participates in the granddaughter’s anticipation of Mama’s or Daddy’s return. In addition, neither grandmother complains about sharing food and other resources with her grandchild; each welcomes the company and share what she has to keep the children and the family whole.



Our Gracie Aunt addresses much more difficult family dynamics than the previous texts. When Johnson asks Beebee if she thinks Mama is ever coming home, she says, “She always did before, right?” Johnson narrates: “Sometimes my mama went away for a day. Sometimes for a lot of days. That’s how it was with our mama.” In this picture book, food—and the lack thereof before Gracie—serves as a reminder of the absence of family and often sparks conflicts between Johnson and Beebee because he admits his hunger and accepts food from those who offer it, while she tries to keep a safe emotional distance between herself

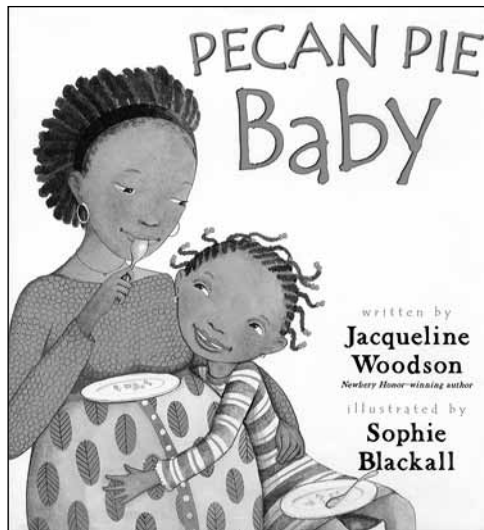
and others by refusing food. When the social worker, Miss Roy, takes them from their apartment to a restaurant, Johnson asks, incredulously, if they can order whatever they want. When they arrive at Gracie aunt’s house, she is baking cookies with their names on them. On their first morning with Gracie aunt, the stack of three pancakes Johnson has on his plate for breakfast contrasts sharply with the sandwiches Beebee fixes for dinner earlier when they were alone in the apartment. Gracie represents an abundance of food the children have always lacked, but she also represents food freedoms they have never experienced. When they help Gracie cook pasta, Johnson joyously flings spaghetti at the wall while Beebee holds a platter aloft: “If it stuck, it was done.” The white background and Beebee’s yellow shirt and pants and Johnson’s yellow oven mitts portray joy and excitement about food and cooking it. This image also portrays the story’s turning point when the children are beginning to accept Gracie as family and not an estranged relative who is attempting to replace their absent mother. Food punctuates this progress toward family wholeness: Gracie makes popcorn on Saturday evenings and lets the kids watch scary movies with her, and they help her harvest the ripe vegetables from her garden. When Miss Roy comes to take them to visit Mama, Johnson thinks to himself that he no longer wants to live with his mother:

I thought about the tire swing in our Gracie aunt’s yard. I thought about me and Beebee not even saying good-bye to our Gracie aunt. Then I thought about all the nights me and Beebee didn’t eat ‘cause we didn’t have any food and we didn’t know where Mama was. I wanted to go back to our Gracie aunt. There was always something to eat in her house. Every night she gave me a tuck-in. And even though we were big, some nights our Gracie aunt let me and Beebee sit on her lap.

After the visit with Mama and realizing that they cannot live with her (yet), the children return to

Gracie, who then becomes “Aunt Gracie,” instead of “our Gracie aunt.” Both her ability to provide food for them and her willingness to offer them unconditional love and stability enable them to accept her as their family.

In all of these Woodson picture books, food helps to define familial relationships but in *Pecan Pie Baby*, food helps Gia accept the



newest member of their nontraditional family, the “ding-dang baby” her mother is carrying. Resentful that the baby will disrupt her relationship with Mama and jealous of the space the baby will take up, Gia makes clear to her mother and everyone else that she does not want a sibling. But both she and Mama love pecan pie, and because Mama craves this dessert while she is pregnant, Gia eventually dubs it “that ding-dang pecan pie baby.” Mutual love of pie actually draws mother and daughter together and helps Gia to accept that just as she can share pie with the baby *in utero*, she can share her mother with the baby after he or she arrives. Gia narrates: “[Mama] knew, just like I did, how much the three of us loved ourselves some pecan pie!”

While food plays an important role in all of these picture books, food takes center stage in *We Had a Picnic This Sunday Past* and because of this, many more relationship dynamics surface surrounding the preparation and consumption of food than in the other books. As a large African American family spends a sunny summer day



visiting and enjoying an overabundance of southern delights, the story shines a spotlight on socioeconomic class, power dynamics and the social structures in place both within the family and among the community members who attend the picnic. Both the foods this family consumes and the way they dress label them as working class, though they do not suffer from the bouts of poverty that plague the families in *Coming On Home Soon* and *Our Gracie Aunt*. On the menu are Grandma’s fried chicken (the self-professed best she ever fried), Auntie Sadie’s “sweet cob corn” and Uncle Luther’s cinnamon bread. The summer picnickers dress casually: many of the girls and women wear patterned dresses, and Grandma sports a big, flouncy hat ringed with flowers that matches her dress. Protagonist and narrator, Teeka, comments critically on Grandma’s hat: “Grandma wore her blue dress with all those flowers on it.” Furthermore, Teeka brags about Cousin Kim, the one relative who has a college degree and a teaching career, which suggests that few members of this family are college educated.

Teeka attends the picnic with Grandma, who may be her primary caregiver, and their interactions surrounding food reveal a great deal about the relationship. While Grandma announces she got up at four to fry chicken and brags about the tastiness of her biscuits, Teeka strikes a pose at

her elbow, claiming pride in Grandma’s cooking too. Grandma also whispers to Teeka that she hopes Cousin Martha doesn’t bring that “same dried-out apple pie,” but she warns Teeka that if she does: “you better eat every bite of it so you don’t hurt Martha’s feelings.” In this exchange, Grandma simultaneously confides in Teeka just as she might bad-mouth a relative to another adult, while giving her granddaughter a verbal “smackdown” to remind her that as a child, she must defer to adults and stay in a child’s place. In a similar instance, when the green-suit-wearing Cousin Trevor arrives bearing flowers (that look picked, not bought) rather than an edible contribution to the meal, Grandma, Teeka and Paulette visibly disapprove, folding their arms and turning their backs on Trevor. Despite this act of solidarity in roundly rejecting Trevor’s actions, when Teeka quips a whispered comment to Paulette that they “Can’t eat air,” Grandma tells her not to be a smartie. Teeka thinks to herself, “but you know she was thinking the same exact thing.” Alice Walker would likely accuse Teeka of being “womanish,” which she defines as “From the black folk expression of mothers to female children, ‘you acting womanish,’ [or] like a woman. Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behavior” (iii). These interactions illustrate the fine line children walk to find their place in this African American family. Because food at this picnic delineates who are the producers and who show up only to consume without contributing, the children learn through the production and consumption of food how to be a good and well-respected family member and what food-related behaviors can turn family members into outsiders. Hence, the picnic teaches Teeka what will likely be expected of her when she becomes an adult, while it also reminds her that she is *not yet* an adult.

Clearly, as Woodson’s fine work demonstrates, food plays a significant role in children’s lives and therefore in their literature. As these young protagonists become a part of the foodways of their respective African-American microcultures through the growth, preparation, distribution and consumption of food with their elders, they learn much about the way things are and ought

to be in their families. Furthermore, how people deal with and talk about food teaches them what will be expected of them as adults when they, in time, will bear the responsibility of sharing with the next generation what food means in their families.

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ROTRAUT SUSANNE BERNER · EDMUND JACOBY



DUNKEL WAR'S, DER MOND SCHIEN HELLE

VERSE, REIME UND
GEDICHTE

 GERSTENBERG

Aesthetics of Childhood: The Visual Art of Rotraut Susanne Berner

by SABINE MARIA BERTHOLD



Dr. Sabine Maria Berthold has worked as Junior professor of children's literature at the Humboldt University of Berlin, as research assistant at the *Centre for Research in Children's Literature* at the Goethe University, Frankfurt, and as research fellow at the *Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung*, Berlin. Her research focusses on children's literature and media, visual literacy and intersections between literature and consumer culture. Her recent book *Doppelbelichtung. Die 50er Jahre in Jugendromanen* (2008) analyzes the constellation of generational patterns and cultural change in the postwar period.

Rotraut Susanne Berner's ambiguous and subtle illustrations and literature can be seen in a romantic tradition of creating meaning through art, thereby emphasizing the potentials of images and literature in deciphering the mystical and unconscious dimensions of life. With oeuvre, Berner has created a unique cosmos of children's worlds. Her artistic work comprises book covers, illustrations for children's literature, and the creation of her own books and anthologies. Showcasing her polyvalent and multisided art of illustration and storytelling, she is one of the most important and influential contemporary illustrators. Berner combines pictures and words into unique compositions while also telling stories as series of pictures. As Berner argues, her intention is to develop pictures "in-between the lines" (Petermann 8), or, in the words of Hans Magnus Enzensberger: "Not to repeat the text, but to throw light on it, this is the challenge of illustration." (qtd. in Petermann 6).

Enzensberger's awarded children's book *Zahlenteufel*, illustrated by Berner, impressively demonstrates the meaning of this words and shows Berner's skills in giving words a new dimension. Berner has illustrated many books of well-known authors for adults as well as for children, including T.C. Boyle, Italo Calvino, Christoph Hein, Josef Guggenmos, Gudrun Mebs, Jürg Schubiger Franz Hohler and others. Her work comprises more than 80 books and over 800 book covers. Berner has created an oeuvre of picture books, which is influential in its combination of simplicity and complexity, as it opens new dimensions and views to the world. Amongst them are the *Karlchen-Geschichten* [Stories of Little Charly], the *Wimmel* books, several alphabet books, as well as several retellings of fairy tales. In her illustrated anthologies, like

Apfel, Nuss und Schneeballschlacht or illustrated collections of poetry "pictures form the unifying link that connects the poetry of very different poets" (Kokkola 27). In poetry anthologies Berner often uses techniques of surrealism, combining poetry and pictures to a new dimension.

Rotraut Susanne Berner has been awarded the most important prizes, including Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis für ihr Gesamtwerk [German Literature Award for her complete works] (2006), Celestino Piatti-Preis (1983), and several times the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis (1984, 1996, 1998). In the category "Children's Illustrator" she was a finalist for the Hans Christian Andersen Award in 2002, 2004, and 2014, being shortlisted for her exceptional illustrations of children's literature.

Berner has been creating and illustrating a wide range of picture books for over 40 years. She studied graphics at the Fachhochschule München [School of Design in Munich] from 1971-75. After her studies she worked in publishing houses; since 1977 she worked as a freelance graphic designer, illustrator and author. Her illustration and conceptual skills can be seen in her use of many different techniques as well as in her ability to

adapt the techniques to different topics. As Berner says: "I don't have a technique that I always use, instead I try to adopt the techniques to the texts" (qtd. in Petermann 8). Although Berner's illustration style has a unique signature, Berner continuously innovates her art with new experiments both in style and form. Her techniques range from delicate pen and use of outlines to the use of "brushes to spread colors, line cuts and stamps" as well as the "rare technique of flat screen printing, in which she draws directly onto the film so that the original is produced only after printing" (Kokkola 27). Motion, as Kokkola shows, is a very important characteristic of her work: "These lightly indicated backdrops may be tilted or the perspective may be skewed to create the impression that the figures are in movement. Her characters dance, the houses float, the whole world is in motion" (Kokkola 27). Berner's techniques to



create effects of motion give her illustrations a great dynamic; it reflects in some illustrations Walter Trier's dynamic scenery and depiction of motion. Characteristic for Berner's illustration is her clear and reduced treatment of colors in her work, especially the characteristic "Berner-red" can be observed. Her art of illustration is unique through its creation of characters, which are deeply psychologically shown, despite its seemingly reduced forms.

In all of her illustrations, Berner's outstanding capacity of translating and transforming life and experiences of contemporary childhood becomes highly evident. She strictly avoids a depiction in a seemingly naturalistic way. In this process of translation, it reveals the universal quality of her narratives and visual worlds that show, in a very empathetic mode, the way children percept and experience their world. It is this exceptional quality of universality that gives children the opportunity to recognize their own personal, familial and social experiences, as well as to find through artistic distance new approaches, a new key to understanding the world. It is this balance of both *modes of identification* and *modes of distance* that can be found in her work. For example, her famous and popular character "Karlchen" in her *Karlchen Geschichten* [Karlchen Stories]. Karlchen, at the first glance, is a little rabbit. It, however, wears flap trousers and loves to play like little children do. With this anthropomorphic figure and the plots of the Karlchen stories—short stories of everyday life—Berner has created a figure that allows young readers modes of identification as well as modes of distance in their reception. As Berner summarizes it: "Karlchen is in fact a little boy with long ears. Mainly little children need in picture books a certain distance to their own environment to understand things better" (Scholz). Berner was also inspired by the symbolic cleverness and anarchy of the rabbit as it is depicted in literary and cultural traditions. This shows the illustrator's interest in the anarchic qualities of the character; nonetheless Karlchen is embedded in trusty and stabile social systems and family life, that gives orientation, as well as a feeling of security.

Berner's Wimmel books—in tradition with the Wimmel books of Ali Migutsch—are a genre of picture books for very young readers telling stories in panoramic format with many small figures. As Kokkola points out, they "contain numerous hidden objects for the young child to find" (27). Berner's precise observation of everyday life and her fascination for detail becomes evident in her Wimmel book series. They combine simultaneous narration with the progression of the story in follow-ups, which is a very distinctive characteristic of her Wimmel books compared to others, such as Ali Migutsch. The concept underlying the Wimmel books is based on simultaneity and progress at the same time. By this means, they show the complexity of our everyday life. Berner needs no words. Her pictures tell it all in the Wimmel books.

Berner's poetic view of the world also becomes evident in her sensitive, sometimes fragile, dancing and surreal illustrations of poetry, be it for adults or children. Her artistic skills reveal, for example, in her interpretation of Rilke's poem "Der Panther", the imprisonment of

the panther. The imprisonment cannot be shown more intensely like in this visual realization of Berner.

Berner emphasizes in her poetic reflections the meaning of childhood as a source of her creative inspiration and the importance of visual learning and visual literacy in childhood: "I am convinced that the first pictures of our childhood are the magic pictures of our life, forming our later reception of pictures" (qtd. in Petermann 6). As Kokkola points out, "Berner attempts to address what she regards as a major problem in childhood education: the lack of attention paid to picture reading skills" (27). Berner calls the reception of picture books and illustrations as formative for her whole life, being a continuous source of inspiration: "I am five or ten years old, when I translate, when I draw, and at the same time I have the consciousness of an adult" (qtd. in Petermann 5). She sees and draws in a complex way, in which adult knowledge and experiences manifest and remain hidden in children's literature.

Berner's illustrations and books can be seen in the tradition line of romanticism, as I argued, she sees childhood and ways of perception of children as being privileged while also acting as a source of inspiration. Showing the psychological dimensions of development and perception of growing up, including the emphasis on the depiction of the emotional life and conflicts, her modern interpretation of childhood becomes obvious. Berner finds visual realizations with universal quality. Her extraordinary and experimental art of illustration, her variety of techniques and topics and the ambiguity in depiction allows the reader new perspectives on their experiences.

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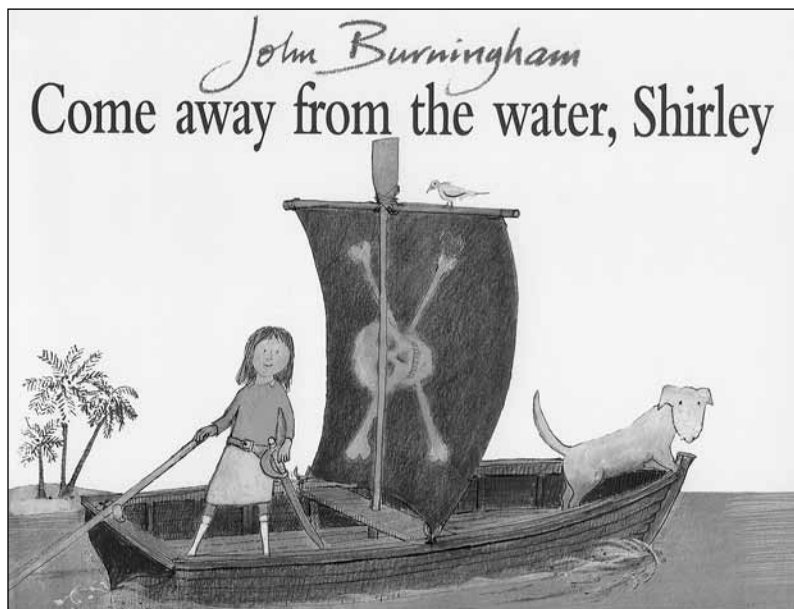
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Imaginative Spaces and Emotional Depth in the Works of John Burningham

by LYDIA KOKKOLA



Lydia Kokkola is Professor of English and Education at Luleå University of Technology in northern Sweden. Her research interests include bilingual literacy education, Holocaust fiction, adolescent sexuality and she has just begun a new project on advanced reading skills. Her latest book, *Fictions of Adolescent Carnality*, was published by Benjamins (2013).

Twice short-listed for the Hans Christian Andersen prize for illustration, the British nominee John Burningham has averaged more than a book a year since 1963. This prolific output includes illustrations of other people's writing, including works for adults on topics as varied as champagne and aging (upon reflection, might the two be related?), although he usually illustrates novels including works by Jules Verne and Ian Fleming, amongst others. However, he is best known as an illustrator of books for children. Commenting on the task of illustrating *The Wind in the Willows* in 1983, Burningham revealed the key problem with illustrating texts written by others: "the pictures add a quality of character, but there's so much in the text already that the pictures can't add that [much or] the balance is off" (qtd. in Hares-Stryker 56). In the picturebooks he has produced alone or in close collaboration with his equally talented wife, Helen Oxenbury, the balance is never "off". Indeed, it is the perfect balance between word and image that creates imaginative spaces for the reader and generates the remarkable emotional depth his characters possess. Although he has been nominated in the category of illustration, his talent with words matches his talent with images, and in this overview I will focus on how the balance between the two generates a positive reading experience for young children.

Born in Surrey in 1936, John Burningham's childhood was clouded by the Second World War and also unsettled by attending nine different experimental boarding schools, including Summerhill, the brainchild of Alexander Sutherland Neill. Neill insisted that children should not be forced to fit schools; schools should adapt to suit pupils. Summed up in the phrase "Freedom not License", the pupils at Summerhill were free to develop their own interests, and to decide how to spend their time, provided that their actions did not harm others. Attending class was not compulsory

and so—although Burningham left Summerhill with a school certificate in English literature—he failed many other subjects including art. Using a portfolio of his work, he was able to enter the Central School of Art in London, where he met Helen Oxenbury, with whom he had three children. Like most authors Burningham incorporates biographical elements into many of his works, perhaps most famously in *Granpa* (1984) which was inspired by “the relationship between his youngest child, Emily, and her maternal grandfather who lived next door” (O’Reilly). It is also evident in his other works depicting the day-to-day dramas of family life, such as mealtimes clashing with imaginative games, and children squabbling and getting sand in sandwiches. Critics, including Clare Bradford, also see connections between Burningham’s unorthodox education and his beloved character, Mr. Gumpy. For Bradford, Mr. Gumpy—the titular hero of *Mr. Gumpy’s Outing* (1970) and *Mr. Gumpy’s Motor Car* (1973)—is “a figure reminiscent of A. S. Neill” (205) because of his open-hearted acceptance that chickens will be chickens, pigs will be pigs, and kids will be kids.

Burningham’s debut picturebook, *Borka: The Adventures of a Goose with No Feathers* (1963), remains one of his best loved. Commenting on the release of special 50th anniversary issue, Burningham observed, “Looking at the pictures, there’s a lot about them that’s very crude, but it works. I might not do it as well now because I would probably be slightly more polished. Being the first book, there’s a sort of innocence about it” (Calkin). The ‘crudeness’ of *Borka* stems partly

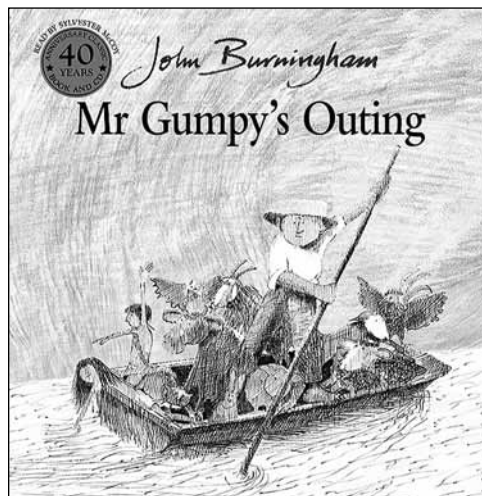
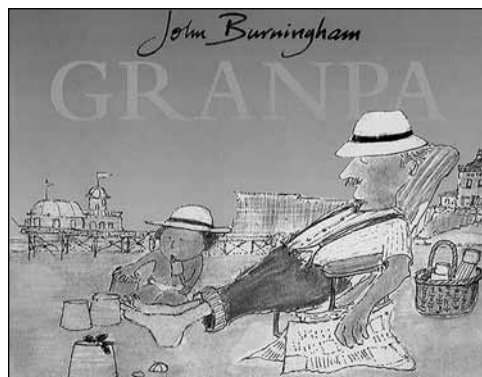
from features which resemble children’s own drawings, for instance the point of view in each of the images is side-on, with Borka placed in the center, and never allow us to look down from a height, or to view the events mentioned in the

text from Borka’s perspective. In later books using similar media, such as *Courtney* (1994), the viewing perspective is more varied. Courtney, a multi-talented, scruffy mongrel, is placed center stage when she juggles and cooks, but she is also viewed from above, as an adult looking down

at a dog would view her, in the early part of the book. In the final spread she is only visible in the distance so that the narrative can focus on the restoration of harmony between the parents and their children; indeed, it takes a little searching to find Courtney in the final spread. Her presence is there to reassure the reader that she has not died, but her absence is needed in order for the parents to resume their proper role.

Borka was not only significant for Burningham’s career but marks an important turning point in publication history. *Borka* was produced under the guidance of Jonathan Cape’s innovative editor, Tom Maschler, who saw that the book was printed using full color lithography. Until then, the colors were separated by hand, a technique Burningham claims he could never have managed (Calkin). The result drew instant acclaim and was

awarded the Kate Greenaway Award for illustration. The thickly painted, heavily brushed illustrative style of *Borka* and *Courtney* is picked up in later works, such as *Oi! Get Off Our Train* (1989), which was commissioned by the Japanese



Expo '90 to promote a strong ecological message. Although the paintings are naïve, they resemble children's paintings only in the sense of the heaviness of the brush stroke, the choice of material and the simplicity of the format.

In his highly acclaimed books about Shirley—*Come Away From the Water, Shirley* (1977) and *Time to Get Out of the Bath, Shirley* (1978)—as well as *Granpa* and others, Burningham combines sparse, airy sketches in ink and crayon with more densely colored paintings and additional media, such as acrylic in the *Shirley* books and watercolor in *Granpa*. The materials resemble those used in children's own paintings with powder paint, watercolor, colored pencils and felt-tipped pens, which makes them more accessible and familiar. The sophistication of these books lies in the way the contrasting painting media and the words play off one another. For instance, the *Shirley* books use the gutter—the gap between the pages where they are bound together—to separate the mundane world of the adult, depicted in light sketches on the left, from the imaginative interior world of the child's imagination, depicted in heavily brushed paintings on the right. The text is comprised of things the parents say to Shirley: the titles are both phrases used in the books. Shirley's fantasy world, in which she fights pirates, finds treasure —*Come Away*—and travels on a rubber duck through the water pipes—*Out of the Bath*—is not narrated, leaving it up to the reader to decide how much the parents know about their daughter's imagination and about the nature of their relationship more generally. Shirley's parents “are easy prey for the satirist or the social critic, but they are in Burningham-land where the criteria are different. The reader does not despise so much

as feel sorry for them” (Alderson). As I've noted before, “Burningham celebrates the complexity of the child's emotional world without taking cheap shots at the adults in their lives” (Kokkola 57). Rather than simplifying the complex range of emotions between parents and children, Burningham exposes how very varied, and occasionally incompatible, the emotional world of a family can be. This is perhaps even more true of his Kurt Maschler Award winning book, *Granpa*.

In *Granpa*, the space left for the reader is even greater than in the *Shirley* books. Here there are different layouts on each page. The line drawings sometimes depict Granpa's memories from when he was a child, and the watercolors depict the here-and-now or vice versa when the imaginative world of the girl is lightly sketched—for instance, as she imagines they might catch a whale—and Granpa's reality is in color. The text is comprised of a dialogue written in two different fonts: “If I catch a fish we can cook it for supper. / *What if you catch a whale, Granpa?*” (Burningham *Granpa* 20) Since there are no speech tags, one could also consider the lines as things the characters *think* rather than *say*. One of the



most discussed pages in the book depicts Granpa exiting the page to the right and the girl sulking and walking towards the left hand edge of the left page. The emotional gap between the characters is signaled by the emptiness of the center of the spread. The text reads “That was not a nice thing to say to Granpa” (Burningham *Granpa* 10-11). The font is not italicized, and so these are either meant to be the words of Granpa or his thoughts. Maria Nikolajeva observes how this image and the simple statement evokes a range of complex questions about seemingly incompatible emotions and about how well the characters

understand what is going on inside the other's head:

Does she know that Granpa still loves her, even though he might be angry and distressed for the moment? ... And what about what about Granpa—what is he feeling? ... Does he feel guilty because he has caused her anger? Does he feel guilty because he is angry with her? Does he know what she is feeling? It is especially desirable for a young reader to be encouraged to understand Granpa's feelings, not only the child's. Here we come to the issue of immersive versus empathic identification; do we understand the character's emotions and can we judge them without sharing their subject position? ... A seemingly simple emotion ekphrasis becomes a powerful vehicle for ethical education. (Nikolajeva 124)

As the range of questions Nikolajeva can pose indicates, and I have removed many of them, there is nothing 'simple' about Burningham's work. As I have noted before, Burningham never 'dumbs down' to his child readers, and his work appeals to children precisely because of the respect he pays them (Kokkola). He makes complex ideas and emotions accessible to his readers. This partly lies in the gaps between the images and the text—precisely the gaps that were absent in his illustrations of *Wind in the Willows*—which allow readers space to use their imagination. Typically, these imaginative spaces center on the emotional depth of the characters. In doing so, they leave space for readers to reach their own conclusions.

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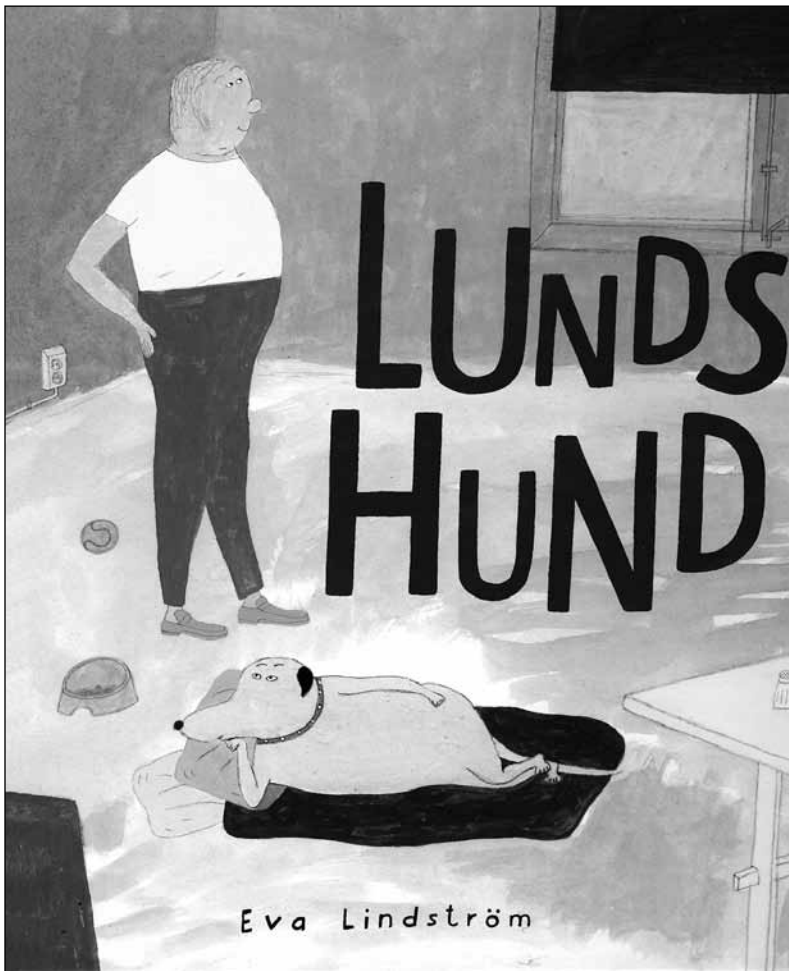
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Eva Lindström and the Stories Colors Tell



The acclaimed Swedish illustrator and author Eva Lindström (1952-) began her career as a cartoonist and comic strip artist before turning her hand to picture books in the late 1980's (Christensen 49). To date she has published some 30 titles under her own name, and many more as an illustrator of the works of other authors. Her illustrations are naivistic in style, especially in her later work. Proportions and perspectives are distorted, foregrounding and emphasizing what is central to the story she is telling. Colors are important too. In an interview Lindström says "colors are a language. What stories they tell is not clear, but they do have something to say" (Warnqvist 64). Lindström's preferred illustration technique, especially in her later work, is gouache or pencil and watercolor. She uses it to great effect. It has been noted about *Olli och Mo* [Olli and Mo] from 2012, that the grey-blue color tones and the flowing gouaches creates the feeling of a landscape under water: "When Olli and Mo are at their most lost the perspective in the images dissolves completely. Leaves, flowers and seed pods extend over the pages from all directions and it is impossible to define what is up and what is down, a confusion that applies to the pictures and to the actual story" (Nordic Council).

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by BJÖRN SUNDMARK



Björn Sundmark is Associate Professor of English at Malmö University, Sweden. His publications include *Alice in the Oral-Literary Continuum* (Lund University Press), the co-edited volume *The Nation in Children's Literature* (Routledge), and several articles on Selma Lagerlöf, Lewis Carroll, Andrew Lang, Walter Scott and Hesba Stretton. Currently he also serves on the children's literature committee of the Swedish Arts Council.

Thus, on the surface, Lindström's picture books may seem simple, but careful reading of the naivistic illustrations and the lyrical and precise language is rewarded. There is great depth of meaning and complexity, as well as aesthetic enjoyment in Lindström's best work (see Druker; Hellström). In order to demonstrate some of these qualities I will in the following focus on one specific picture book *Lunds hund* [Lund's dog] from 2013. In it Lindström tells the story of a rather mismatched relationship between a man, Lund, and his dog, Kulan. In it, Lund literally takes down the moon for Kulan. But this supreme act of love is strangely devoid of sentiment, and does not lead anywhere. The symbol turns out to be drained of meaning and the story itself ultimately defies closure. In this article, I will offer a few possible interpretations of this rich and strange picture book.

On the first page of the book we see Lund with a frying pan. He is glancing back towards his plate. The pork chops that he had prepared are gone. In the foreground we see Kulan; he is licking his paw, and looks pleased. A broken piece of bone is visible under a chair. The combination of verbal text and illustration makes it apparent to the reader what has happened: the dog has stolen the meat. Lund either does not understand what has happened or chooses to ignore it.

The following double spread shows Kulan lying on his back in a sofa, picking his teeth; Lund is still busy in the kitchen. Kulan asks why she is never served cooked food, to which Lund says "sure, you can have some," and immediately heats up some dog food, and then carefully puts it in a bowl. But Kulan is full and will not eat. The reader knows why.

A disturbing detail here, as well as in all of the illustrations in the book, is that the two characters never look one another in the eyes. When Kulan asks for cooked food, Lund looks towards the dog. She, however, stares at the ceiling, as if talking to herself. It is also of significance that they are placed at opposite ends of the room, and that they are not engaged in a common endeavor. In fact all of the pictures show them doing different things: preparing food or building a rocket, and Kulan eating or resting. Out of twelve illustrations with Kulan, she is either resting or eating in eight of them, and the illustrations draw attention to dog bowls and dog food packages, leftovers, cots, and sofas. Correspondingly, Lund's orientation towards activity is shown by the presence of tools, toolboxes, kitchen utensils, electric cords, and rocket fuel. Thus the two characters may inhabit the same space, but they do not see each other; instead they are turned away from the other and are regularly placed at opposite ends of the illustrations. In the central double spreads, Lund is absent altogether. Lund flies to get the moon leaving Kulan alone in the house.

All of this points to a breakdown of communication or miscommunication. When Kulan looks out at the full moon in the second double spread and says that she likes it, Lund says "now, do you?" In the following we understand that Lund takes Kulan's exclamation as a wish to have it. It could be the case, of course, but the main thing is that Lund does not make sure what Kulan really wants, but pursues

his own idea of what that is. Instead of communication there is guesswork. For instance, Lund does not keep his rocket project a secret (he builds it right outside the house), but neither does he tell Kulan about it. She looks out and notes that it is “an ordinary rocket,” something that is confirmed by Lund. When he is about to leave on his moon-quest, Lund announces simply “be back soon.” Kulan reflects that it is “disappointing that he just left like that. And ‘come back soon,’ what does that mean?” When Lund does come back (“in time for morning coffee”) and places it on the table, he has to explain that it is not just any old ball, but the actual moon. In the next spread she plays with it a little in the backyard while Lund is barbecuing some meat. But in the end it turns out to be “an ordinary and rather boring moon.” On the final page Kulan wistfully looks out of the window at the sun and says, “I like the sun,” to which Lund replies “now, do you?”

So, what does this text mean? One can of course read it as a story about unconditional, unrequited love. Lund loves Kulan and is prepared to do anything for her. And just as in St Exupéry’s *Little Prince*, the loved one (the Rose in St Exupéry’s book) is difficult to please and perhaps not so easy to live with, but the protagonist Lund/the little prince is prepared to move worlds, literally, to make the relationship work. Lindström herself has said in an interview that the main point of the story is not the forgiving and all-embracing nature of love, but rather the inequality of this relationship, where one does everything, the other nothing (Warnqvist 60-61).

My own analysis does not contradict any of the above, but places the emphasis differently. As I have already hinted at, the story illustrates what happens when communication breaks down in a relationship, when guesswork and misplaced projections of desire is all that remains. In such relationships the twain shall never meet, even when they are under the same roof, and even when they intend to fulfill the other’s wishes. Under such circumstances there is no understanding, no eye contact, and no real communication. Each one goes about his or her own ways in splendid isolation. Hence, to me *Lunds hund* is in some way like a children’s *Waiting for Godot*, with Lund and Kulan very much like Vladimir and Estragon, doing things that have no meaning besides prolonging one’s existence, talking to each other but not with each other, and going through the moves in a reiterated dance of death. It is absurd, it is horrible, and it is funny!

As my reading indicates, Lund is not the hero, and Kulan is not the culprit; they are both victims. If the dog’s misbehavior is open for all to see, Lund is on the surface self-sacrificing and loving. But as I have already noted, he fails to understand what Kulan needs, and rather seems to project his own desire on to Kulan. The title “Lund’s Dog” demonstrates ownership. If in the story, Lund appears to be the servant of Kulan, the title says otherwise. The cover shows Lund standing up over the dog, looking out and looking pleased; Kulan is in her cot, in a semi-recumbent attitude, with one paw under her chin, hind legs demurely crossed, but body facing the spectator/reader. Her position

in fact looks very much like a typical “glamour” pose. To my mind it serves, more than anything else, like an ironic comment on the “male gaze.” The fact that Kulan is both a female and a domesticated animal of course suggests that Kulan is subservient. As a female she is ornamental and “deliciously useless,” and as a dog her animality and lack of civilization is signaled. Thus we get a fetishized and female-gendered object of desire.

But what if we regard Kulan as a representation of a real animal rather than as a desired other (typically a woman) in animal guise? My argument is that the anthropomorphic nature of Kulan actually works to hide her essential animality, her dog-ness. A dog who talks, walks on its hind legs, and watches TV (with the remote in her paw) must be human. The outward animal form is only there to make it invisible; indeed, that is how anthropomorphism commonly works. Yet, behind that cliché maybe one can discern another story. For it strikes me that *Lunds hund* on a deeper level might be a rather accurate description of the relationship between human and animal, not least that between dog and dog-owner (myself included). We usually live under the same roof, and although the dog is owned, a possession, we cater to what we believe are its needs. We project human characteristics and desires on to it, and deny it its essential and inscrutable otherness, just as Lund does with his dog.

The strangeness and indecipherability of nature and animals is actually a recurring theme in Lindström’s work. In her book *I skogen* [In the Woods] from 2008, a group of children play in the forest, subjecting everything playfully to their whims and fantasies. But then the trees start to disappear. The children lose control of their game. Without explanation the forest then returns towards the end. In yet another book, *Apan och jag* [Monkey and Me] from 2011, we meet a conflation of some of the themes in *Lunds hund* and *I skogen*. In this case the protagonist’s monkey disappears without apparent cause. The reader can see that it is never far away, but for the narrator/protagonist the loneliness is real and inexplicable.

Finally, it should be said that despite heavy themes such as loss and alienation, and their

many levels of meaning, there is a redeeming sense of humor too in Lindström’s books, very often nonsensical and absurd, but also life-affirming and good-hearted. There is nothing judgmental in her stories. Her flawed characters are allowed to be precisely what they are. Neither Lund nor Kulan is condemned. Life goes on in all its imperfect beauty.

I think that is the story Lindström’s colors tell us.

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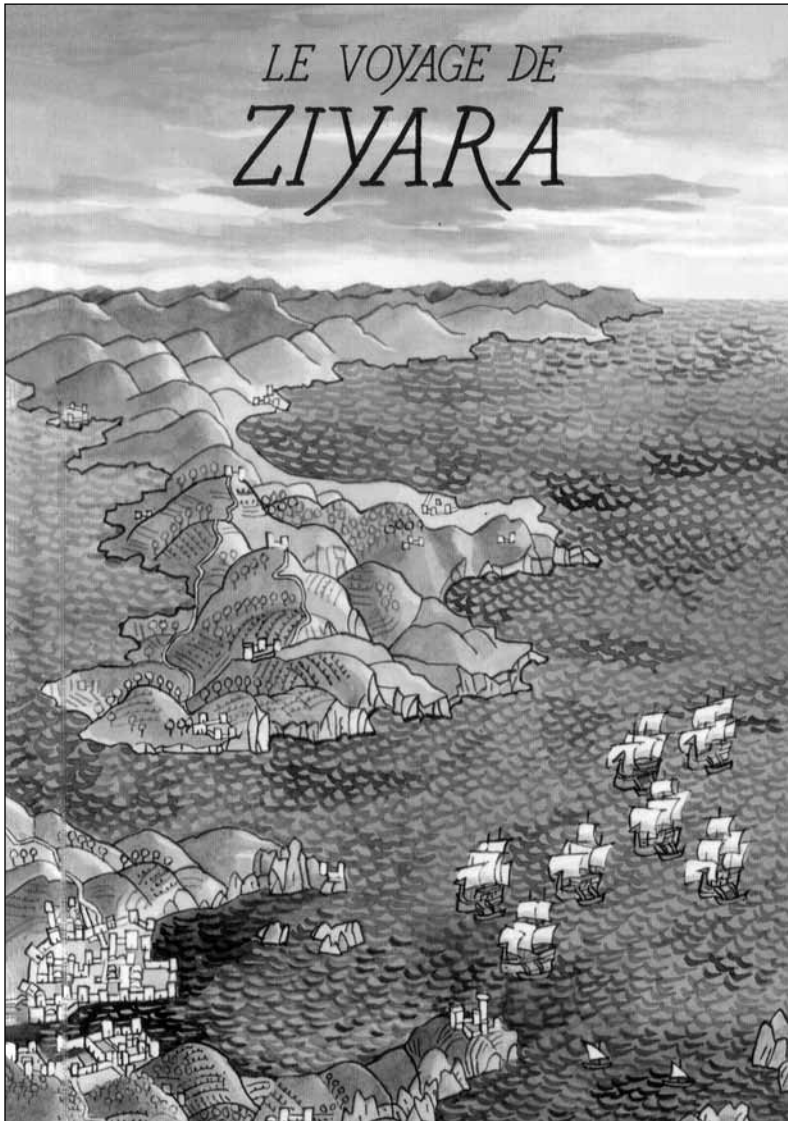
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François Place, Traveler of the Imaginary

by CHRISTOPHE MEUNIER



The work of François Place is at the intersection of documentary and fiction, of historical or geographical reality and the imaginary. Traveler of time and space, the French artist has the gift of taking his readers of all ages through his lines, strokes, and colors into parallel universes. In turn, illustrator, author, and novelist, Place also has the genius of rethinking the very concept of children's picture books.

Born in 1957, to a schoolteacher mother and a mosaic artist father, François Place spent his childhood in Ezanville, a small town located about 20 kilometers north of Paris. He was eleven years old when the Place family moved to Touraine where his grandparents lived. François pursued his secondary studies at Tours. With a literary baccalaureate in hand, he left the Valley of the Loire in 1974, and undertook three years of advanced study in Paris, at the Ecole Estienne, a school of advanced studies for the arts and graphics industries. After graduation, he started out in business



Christophe Meunier obtained a Master's in Medieval History in 1986, working on representations of the child between the 14th and 15th centuries. In 2010, he started a PhD on space and spatiality in children's picture books. Since 2006, he teaches History and Geography in the School of Education of the University of Orleans (France).

communication, publishing and advertising. In 1983, he began illustrating at Hachette, collaborating on the “Bibliothèque Rose” collection, where he participated in republishing the works of the Countess of Ségur. For Hachette Jeunesse always and for “Le Livre de Poche” collection, he worked with Henriette Bichonnier and Roselyne Morel. In 1985, he met Pierre Marchand, editor at Gallimard Jeunesse, who noticed his drawings for youth. His career as an illustrator seemed to skyrocket from this point. Gallimard entrusted him with the illustration of a series of five documentaries for the “Découverte Cadet” collection, having as a subject the discovery of the world, the great conquerors, explorers and navigators.

In 1992, it was Casterman who put their faith in him. They published *Les Derniers Géants*, the first illustrated work of fiction in which he was both author and illustrator. The book suggests, by its form, a travel journal and tells the story of an English adventurer of the 19th century, Archibald Ruthmore, who having purchased at a port in Sussex a tooth that he was told come from a giant, embarked on a brigantine and left, armed with a map, in search of the last giants. The book was a clear success, receiving three major awards on its release: that of the *Salon de Montreuil*, the *Société des Gens de Lettres*, and the *Cercle d'Or Livres Hebdo*. It was translated into English in 1993 by William Rodarmor, under the title *The Last Giants*, by the American firm David R. Godine, then into German, Dutch, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese.

All while continuing to illustrate the work of other children's authors, Place undertook in 1994, an enormous piece of work which would take six years. The project was to produce an atlas of twenty-six maps from the letters of the alphabet and accompany each with a story of an imaginary country depicted by the map. The world of *Atlas des géographes Orbae* came to light as three volumes

appearing in 1996, 1998, and 2000. The first volume was showered with praise and received the Children's Book Award from the Geography Book Fair at the International Festival of Geography at Saint-Dié-des-Vosges in 1997, as well as the prize for the Bologna Children's Book Fair the following year. Six other children's picture books would follow before François Place started writing youth novels. In 2010, he published with Gallimard Jeunesse a fantasy adventure, *La Douane Volante* about the initiation voyage of a young Breton orphan, Gwen-le-Tousseux, carried off by the wagon of Death. Two years later, François Place wrote a follow-up to the *Atlas des géographes d'Orbae* issuing in a boxed set two novels relating two crossed destinies, those of two characters from Orbae. His most recent novel, published in March of 2014, by Casterman, is again the recounting of a voyage, that of *Angel, l'indien blanc*, embarking in Buenos Aires on *The Neptune* and setting foot in Antarctica.



Whether through his picture books or novels, the voyage is at the heart of the work of François Place. Marked in his early childhood by wall maps, terrestrial globes which decorated the walls of his mother's classroom, fascinated in his youth by *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, *Treasure Island*, and *Moby Dick*, the stories of Jules Verne or the collection of “The Children of the Earth,” from *Les Albums du Père Castor*, our author was drawn very early on by explorers and explorations of time and space. Later, his work on the documentary series “Découverte Cadet” led him to spend a great deal of time in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and to immerse himself in the accounts of great explorers like Dumont-d'Urville or Chardin as well as in the engravings, prints, and atlases of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. What interests Place is how people perceive each other, how little by little they come to own the world that they circumscribe by representing

it. If François Place affirms that his graphic style varies in function with the story that he wants to tell, nevertheless his touch remains finely chiseled in the manner of a Rembrandt or a Gustave Doré whose illustrations of the *Fables* of La Fontaine also sweetened his childhood.

The Last Giants, by its oblong format, recalls a travel journal and could make us think of an illustrated book in which generally a passage of text placed on the right-hand page, is portrayed as a picture on the left-hand page. However, this is not the case. It is rather an iconotextual picture book in which the author plays with three interdependent dimensions: text, image, and medium. François Place chose a picture book of small dimensions to depict a world of giants. Different scales are thus put to the test: from the small to the infinitely great. The Italian-style format allows the use of landscapes as well as the setting of the tragic destiny of the Giants from their initial verticality of living beings to their final horizontality of defunct beings. As pointed out by Isabelle Nières-Chevrel, verbal and iconic narration respond to each other on each double page. The typography, close to that of a novel, is not always the same size on the left-hand page so that the block of text can be in balance with the space taken by the picture on the right-hand page. Thus, the text is always dictated by the succession of pictures.

This is an identical process reproduced in *Atlas* whose underlying project is a reflection on time and space, on the relationship of man with the world. The trilogy of *Orbae*, whose only the first volume was translated into English under the title *A Voyage of Discovery*, is a shortcut for the world. It is still a hybrid picture book whose map frontispieces and conclusive collection of images for each of the twenty-six stories functions in an inter-iconic mode and form what François Place himself calls “reader-traps.” As Yvonne Chenouf states, “each hero seems to be the witness and/or the incarnation of the stakes of the civilization

from which he comes” (129). What Place hopes to find through these characters is the wonder of the first explorer, what we could call the “Columbus syndrome.” The *Atlas des géographes d’Orbae* is an encyclopedia of the known World. Mother-Map, on which women-cartographers draw what is reported by stories of the travelers, wants to be the knowledge of the World, registered inside a big circle (*enkuklos*, in ancient Greek) and conceived to educate the peoples (*paideia*). But much more, it is also an encyclopedia of the myths and the literary genres, those narrative structures that build societies. So, we can find, inside the three volumes of the Atlas, tales, initiatory stories, adventures, investigations, journey diaries, autobiographies. To elaborate his worlds, François Place leans on myths passed on by Greek, Buddhist, and animistic tradition. He stages physical, philosophical, metaphysical or social forces that represent inherent symbols to the human being or collective aspirations.

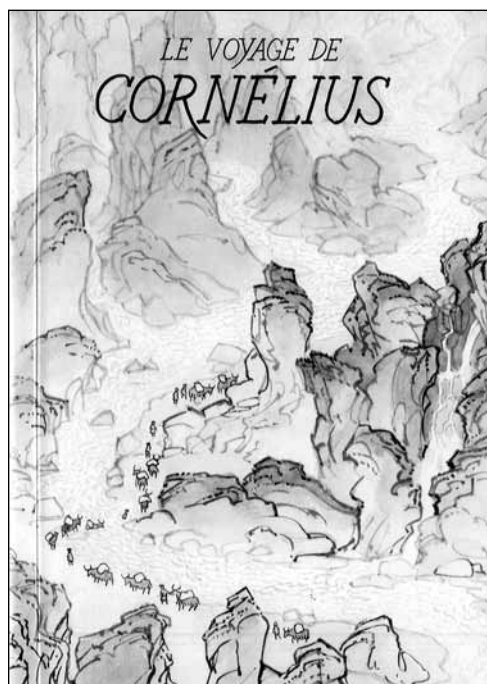
In 2011, the boxed set of *Le Secret d’Orbae* was a new visual-textual innovation. The set functions

as a reading system: two novels, eighteen color plates, and a map of the known worlds of *Orbae* established by a certain Cornelius Van Horn. The two novels are the fruit of two prolonged and completed stories that come from *Atlas*. It is a love story in two voices. The set is conceived as a musical score with a high-pitched voice (novels), a deep voice (map), and a subwoofer (drawings of landscapes). It pushes back rather far the limits of medium. It makes the reader an explorer, an adventurer free to create his own itinerary. He has thus at his disposal the map, the landscapes, and the intersecting stories. It is up to the reader to act in a hollow space to make sense by intermingling the three dimensions, the three narratives, verbal (the two novels), iconic (the pictures) and malleable (the set itself).

If, as François Bon wrote, “the world needs dreams and for one to still carry in front of



oneself his greatest and very oldest memory,” the work of François Place is inventive and participates in the development of this dream machine, which the book is. His work pushes the limits of the iconic text, interrogates space and time, and feeds on the dizziness of the imaginary. The passionate reader is called to enjoy the pleasures of the re-reading, to enter this “long distance reading,” according to François Place, to let him absorbed by the picture and to enter it “up to the weft,” to discover its infinite spaces of interpretation (qtd in Bon).



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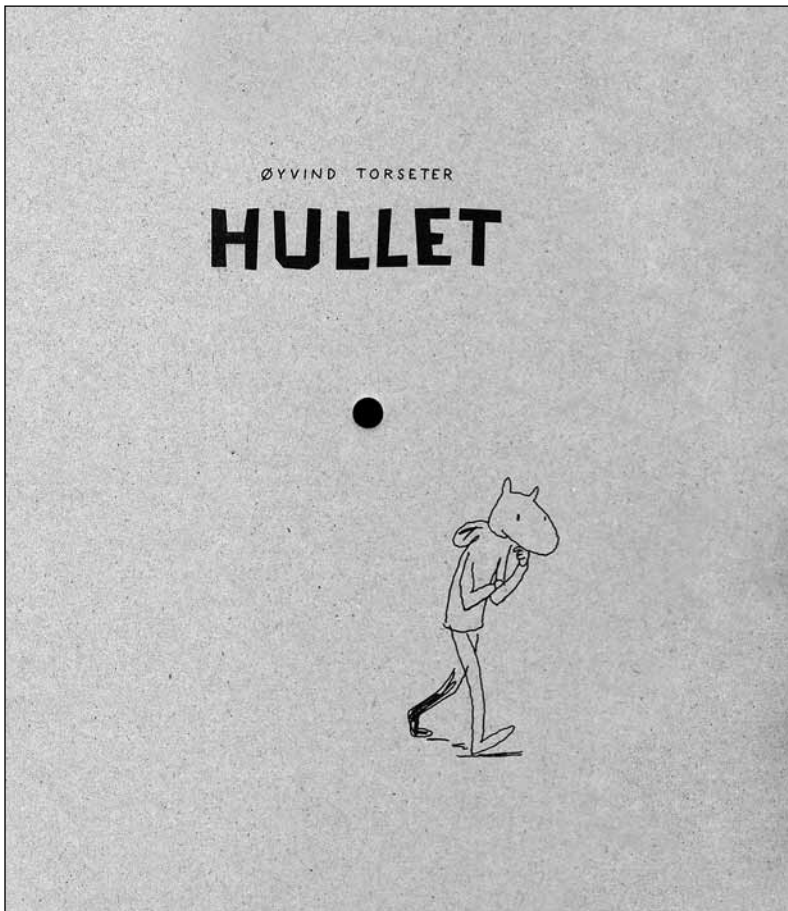
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Pictures First: A Journey through Øyvind Torseter's Universe



Since his debut in 1999, Øyvind Torseter has garnered a reputation as one of the most innovative and versatile illustrators in the rich field of Norwegian children's literature. In addition to writing and illustrating seven books, Torseter has partnered with an impressive array of authors, including Jon Fosse, Tore Renberg and Bjørn Sortland, on over a dozen book projects, and his list of collaborators and awards continues to grow. While the array of techniques he employs and experiments with range from traditional line drawings to three-dimensional paper clippings, graphic effects, digital picture techniques and ink drawing collages, there is critical consensus that Torseter retains his own distinct style and voice. Nowhere is this clearer or more colorful than in his solo ventures, and a look at some of the stylistic and thematic threads that run throughout these books not only provides an introduction to Torseter's often surrealistic universe, it also illuminates the ways in which he engages and challenges his readers to be creative, and opens the door to lively discussions about intended audiences.

Elephant men, cat women, menacing octopuses, cowboys and superhero figures fill the pages of Torseter's first solo work, *Mister Random* (2002), and many of these characters reappear in various forms in its unofficial sequels *Detours* (2007) and *Connections* (2013) as well as in *Gravenstein* (2009) and *The Hole* (2012). While some

by INGRID URBERG



Ingrid Urberg is Associate Professor of Scandinavian Studies at the Augustana Campus of the University of Alberta where she teaches a variety of Norwegian language, Scandinavian literature, and Scandinavian culture courses. Her research focuses on personal narratives and polar literature, and she is currently working on an oral history project, *The Norwegian Immigrant Experience in Alberta*.

members of this colorful menagerie, such as the leopard lady and Mr. Random, are humans in costumes or disguises, others, most notably the elephant man, appear to be human-animal hybrids or monsters, and can be viewed as both playful and unsettling. The diminutive book *Gravenstein* fittingly features a leopard girl and an elephant boy to match its petite physical format, and *The Hole* introduces a camel-faced man who reappears with the feline and elephantine figures in *Connections*. Masks, disguises and dressing-up are a central visual theme in *Mister Random*, and just as the leopard lady puts on a cowboy hat, and an octopus hides under a large elephant head, Torseter invites us to dress up and enter his surrealistic world in a playful and imaginative spirit. The inquisitive reader may ask what is real and what is imaginary? Does it matter? Where are we, and what is taking place? He further facilitates this creative play by keeping text to a minimum and maximizing the number of story lines.

Many of Torseter's solo works can be read as one narrative or as individual stories, and it isn't clear, for example, in *Mister Random*, where the stories begin or where they end. With only very minimal text, this decision is left up to the audience. *Gravenstein* contains two distinct, yet interconnected story lines related to the rather esoteric topic of heirloom apples, and each tiny page frames just one scene. *Detours*, with its five titled but un-texted chapters, and *Connections*, which is divided into thirteen wordless vignettes, also encourage the viewer to experiment and play with order and meaning. While *The Hole*, the story of a man who tries to figure out the origins of a hole in his new apartment, *A Handful of Oats* (2005), about a cowboy who steals a sack of money, and *Click* (2004), the story of the panic that ensues when a young boy accidentally locks himself in his grandparents' bathroom, have fairly linear plots, there is very little text, requiring audiences to engage with the illustrations throughout.

Torseter has said that he does not sketch before drawing, and he never alters or erases his original drawings. Rather than discarding work that doesn't seem to fit with what he is doing, he puts it aside for future projects and consideration (Madsen 2). In a 2011 interview in *Nynorskopplering*, a Norwegian pedagogy publication, Torseter also revealed that when he works alone, "the picture (not text) always comes first" (Helgesen 13). While this method, in the opinions of most critics, is generally highly successful, it has led to some mixed reviews. Ola A. Hegdal, for example, finds *Gravenstein* to be problematic in its juxtaposition of text and illustrations and writes that its "spontaneous, expressive drawings don't manage to save a weak story about petty apple theft" (Hegdal, "Ikke så eplekjekt"). Whatever one's take on the dialogue, it is clear that visuals are centerpieces of Torseter's solo works, and this makes them accessible to an international audience. Indeed, while a number of these works have been picked up by publishing houses outside of Norway, they can also be enjoyed by non-Norwegian language audiences in their original form, and in most cases translation is arguably unnecessary.

Torseter's minimal use of color in his solo works is also striking. Splashes of yellow are the only color on the first 90 percent of *Gravenstein's* 104 pages, with greens, blues and browns appearing as safety and resolution approach near the end, and *The Hole* sparingly combines bright yellow with muted blues, browns and greys throughout. In both works a large number of black and white line drawings are devoid of color or are only partially colored, and we are clearly invited to provide our own. The pages of *A Handful of Oats* and *Click*, on the other hand, are filled with bold colors and drawings, but Torseter's palette is limited to varying shades of red, brown, blue, yellow, grey, green and black. *The Hole* is also noteworthy for its large empty, blank spaces which can be filled in by imaginative audiences, and Norwegian critic Ola A. Hegdal notes: "Øyvind Torseter is an illustrator who isn't afraid to refrain from drawing, who recognizes the expressive power of white paper" (Hegdal, "Å glimre med sitt").

The centrality of the hole in the delightful book that bears its name cannot be missed, since this die-cut hole physically and figuratively permeates the entire book. The hole functions as a protagonist in tandem with the camel-faced man who is trying to figure out its origins and identity, and it is—using Hegdal's term—an active hole (Hegdal, Å glimre med sitt). We are drawn to turn each page to see where the playful, floating hole is positioned, and how the camel man is faring in his detective work. We are encouraged to ask: What is the hole? What does it mean? In typical Torseter fashion these questions remain unanswered.

This is not, however, the first appearance of hole imagery in Torseter's solo works, where holes are a prevalent motif and function both as passageways to the imagination, and as tunnels to exploring very real situations and fears. In *Mr. Random*, for example, members of Torseter's menagerie enter and exit a relatively small hole in a wall clock lying on the floor, and they use it as a storage place for various pieces of clothing, costumes and disguises. In one scene, Mr. Random also pulls parts of his disguise out of a dryer door opening. A cavernous hole is found on the last page of *Detours*, and windows and open drawers and doors figure prominently in this book and its follow-up *Connections*. These open spaces invite us to interact with the material on each page and also to ask what lies beyond.

The keyhole in *Click* and the large trap-like hole which the elephant boy falls into while being chased in *Gravenstein* encourage very young audiences to confront fears of abandonment and isolation as well as feelings of helplessness and loneliness. In addition, the hole in *Gravenstein* provides a forum to discuss bullying. The hole the grandfather in *Click* unnecessarily chops through the bathroom door is a humorous reminder that adults may sometimes experience panic and fear themselves, and while adults facilitate the rescue of both the *Click* and *Gravenstein* boys, these children play an active role in the process. The numerous holes



which the thieving cowboy digs in the light-hearted *A Handful of Oats* in an attempt to locate his misplaced loot also open the door to imaginative thinking and discussion. In all cases, the Torseter holes are active holes. They are a fitting metaphor for Torseter's creative method and serve as an invitation to readers of all ages to both engage with and expand upon his universe.

Allusions to a variety of film and literature genres—not least westerns and *film noir*—and other art forms, abound in Torseter's works. (Schäffer) This visual intertextuality was noted by the jury that awarded him the prestigious Bologna Ragazzi Award in 2008 for *Detours*, and raises questions surrounding Torseter's intended audience, the discussion of which first emerged in Norway after the publication of *Mister Random* in 2002 (Madsen 2-4). Are these books too sophisticated or inaccessible for a younger audience? Most critics argue that the material can be appreciated by a variety of age groups, but on different levels and in different ways. One experience isn't any more or less valid than another, but rather each is unique.

Torseter is of the opinion that “children's books in Norway are not necessarily designed to be exclusively of interest to children,” and he models this in the *Mr. Random*, *Detours* and *Connections* series (Salisbury 74). Even *Click*, a book that is clearly directed toward a very young audience, speaks to adults everywhere who have panicked and overreacted while caring for young children, and it lends itself to satisfying and light-hearted intergenerational readings.

In 2011 Øyvind Torseter was awarded the prestigious Norwegian *Bokkunstprisen* (Art Book Prize) for his collective body of work, and it would be remiss not to underscore the importance of partnerships in his career. Torseter's effective use

of three-dimensional paper clip art in books such as *The Violin Girl* (with Jon Fosse), the poignantly beautiful *My Father's Arms are a Boat* (with Stein Erik Lunde), as well as in Tore Renberg's three-part series about siblings Ine and Hasse who use play to explore the world, is but one area of his collaborative work that warrants further discussion. Torseter's art also adorns public spaces in Norway, and he has illustrated numerous math and Norwegian textbooks for young people (Goga, “To billedbokprisvinnere”). Most recently Torseter has contributed to an anniversary edition of Asbjørnsen and Moe's—Norway's equivalent of Germany's Brothers Grimm— iconic collection of folktales, and illustrated a new edition of *The Green Mitten*, a classic story by the beloved Norwegian musician and writer Alf Prøysen. It will be interesting to see where Torseter's adventuresome, collaborative spirit takes him in the future.

Beautiful is a word frequently used by critics to describe Torseter's solo and collaborative works, and *Mister Random*, *Click*, *Detours*, *My Father's Arms are a Boat*, *Gravenstein* and *The Hole* and have all been

awarded prizes in Grafill's annual “The Year's Most Beautiful Books” competition in Norway. What makes a book beautiful? Nina Goga has taken a close look at the aesthetic thinking and criteria used to evaluate children's picture books in Norway, and it is clear “beautiful” is a highly subjective and tricky designation (Goga, “Det sublime”). My hope is that this brief look at Torseter's pictorial universe demonstrates how it is beautiful in its collaborative spirit and inclusivity. Not only does Torseter share his voice with multi-generational audiences in a variety of venues, he provides us with myriad opportunities to respond with our own.



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From a Bhutanese Farm to Small-Town America: A Folktale Journeys with Its Tellers

by TERRY FARISH



Terry Farish is a writer for children and young adults. She wrote *The Good Braider*, an American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults, after years of collecting oral histories among southern Sudanese families in Portland, Maine. Her picture book *The Alleyway* about a Dominican-American boy will be published in 2015.



A book was created in an ESOL classroom of adult Nepali-speaking refugees from Bhutan newly settled in a small New Hampshire town in the U.S. The book was a tale told by one of the students about a magic pumpkin who married the king's daughter, and when the pumpkin fell from a mango tree his shell cracked and out stepped a handsome prince. Students roared with laughter when they heard it. The story built community and delight in the classroom and served as a bridge to the wider community that was the new home for hundreds of families from Bhutan. The creators were an ESOL teacher and many storytellers and illustrators: her students. A folklorist, a book designer and I, a writer and literacy program director, supported the work of the class

Even though we laughed and painted and danced and sang and drank sweet chai tea, we also could simply call this project to create a bilingual folktale, a practice of listening. And stories did indeed unfold in class sessions devoted to storytelling. We thought it would take time to cultivate a distant memory of a story heard in childhood, but it did not. Given the floor, student after student told us long elaborate stories heard on the farms where they were born. One teller explained that stories lasted as long as the work at hand, or as long as the walk on the road to get home. If work in the cardamom fields was not done, he said, the teller kept telling, thickening the plot, or weaving in a whole new story line.

All the students in the class were parents and many were grandparents. Many grew up on the farms in Bhutan where they were

born, herding livestock and working in cardamom or rice fields. Many had not had a chance to go to school. A grandmother of four told us that as a child she tended cows and goats, and although she didn't have books, her father told her many stories, which she remembered in detail. She told us her favorite story her father had told her, *The Story of a Pumpkin* which became the project's first book. She had told the story to her elders in Beldangi 2, the refugee camp where she lived in Nepal for 18 years, and now in her English classroom in the U.S.

Early on we chose to cultivate the telling of folktales as opposed to stories of leaving home, or stories of remembered loss. These Nepali-speaking Hindu families were exiled from their homes in Bhutan and lost their farms, land, and animals. Our goals in inviting students to remember folktales were many. We wanted to create a bilingual text to honor the story told in Nepali and to offer it in English to support English language learners. Supporting family literacy was a second major goal, and we wanted to create a rollicking tale for children to enjoy and to learn about the culture of the home their elders cherish. And third, we wanted to make a link, through story, among long-term residents and the families who are newcomers from Bhutan in order to build understanding and lessen the newcomer's isolation.

We found that benefits of the project came not just from the final book but also from the process of creating it. The following is a sketch of our journey:

Vision for the book: We wanted to make a book we could give to libraries and schools in the area and other organizations working especially with Nepali speaking refugees, the largest group of refugees in the state. We decided to work with a local printer to create a single folk tale in a trade book format.

Funding a folktale project: The New Hampshire Humanities Council, working in collaboration with ESOL teachers and consultants, directed the project. We wrote grants to individual funders, businesses, and organizations interested in supporting literacy projects. We were able to raise funds to pay honorariums to Hari Tiwari, the grandmother who told the selected story, Dal Rai, the illustrator, and other contributors as well as for the book's printing. Upon publication of the book, we hosted a public event to which we invited people from many cultures and communities and where funders were honored.

Creative ownership: We created an editorial committee that oversaw the steps of our work. The committee was made up of Bhutanese educators and artists, a book designer, a writer/ project director, a folklorist, and ESOL teachers. We wrote job descriptions for committee members. We learned in this committee's first meeting that the cultural expectation of stories in Bhutan is that they teach a lesson, and, indeed, all the stories we heard met this expectation.

Finding a common language for stories: The Bhutanese people in the class did not speak English and neither the teacher nor other English-speaking contributors spoke Nepali. We told stories in our story-telling sessions with the support of a Nepali-English interpreter. Tellers paused

in the storytelling so that the interpreter could retell in English, or if the story was in English, to interpret in Nepali. The folklorist, Dr. Jo Radner, instructed the interpreter to present a word-for-word interpretation. We made audio recordings of each session including all stories in both Nepali and English.

A lesson is generating folktales: Radner invited people to remember stories about their grandparents, but few people responded. We found that the prompt to remember grandparents caused people to remember the death of a grandparent and they spoke of an unhappy memory. The next time, she invited people to remember something fun they did as a child. This prompted stories of games, songs, and dances. Women in the class gathered during break, remembering a song they used to sing when they went to collect firewood. Students began to remember riddles, and they offered riddles one after the other, which the interpreter told us in English, but they made no sense. The interpreter laughed. “You see,” he said, “the joke is in our culture. It does not translate.” The students loved stumping us. Radner told a story she remembered from her childhood. She asked if anyone wanted to tell a story they heard as a child. *Everyone* had a story to tell, pausing only briefly as the story came back to them from over the years. We heard stories of daily life, relationships between men and woman, greed, revenge, tricksters, and sorrow. The interpreter became invisible. It was as if the storytellers were speaking directly to us English speakers. The students’ individual lives opened through their stories and we were their students as we listened.



Selection of story: The editorial committee selected the tale “The Story of a Pumpkin” to publish from about a dozen recorded stories. Our plan was that at the culminating event, many of the class members who told

stories in class would come together once more and tells their stories to the wider community that would include their own children and grandchildren.

Illustration: Bhutanese community members recognized one young man as the artist among them. The Committee and designer suggested illustrations for the book, and we also contracted with other Bhutanese illustrators to contribute images we needed. The book designer, Susan Kapuscinski Gaylord, described another layer of the value of our process in creating an illustrated tale. She said, “The illustrator brought us a watercolor painting and several drawings. Many of the refugees have only memories of their homeland and his pictures gave them visual reminders of the life they left behind. A picture of an ox in a field with a basket muzzling its mouth sparked a lively discussion of farming and basket weaving.” Later, the designer scanned the wedding sari of an editorial committee member, as well as other fabric that families had brought from Nepal. The designer used the fabric scans as well as scans of handmade paper from Bhutan in the design of the book.

Writing the text of an oral story: The word-for-word interpretation in English of the tale was extremely important to us. I adapted those words for the English version of the text. In the class we sorted out cultural questions. Hari Tiwari gave us clarifications: “Where did the 100 elephants come from? What did the young wife wear under her sari? Was that a lullaby the wife spoke to the animals when she returned in the night? What exactly was the punishment the king ordered?” The recording of Tiwari’s first telling of the story in Nepali was the source for the transcriber of the story for the published text. Nepali comes in many fonts and in consultation with the editorial committee and several classes of Bhutanese students, we settled on Preeti font, one that students said they were familiar with in books from India.

One of the last great tasks was to assure the accuracy of the Nepali text in the book. One of our proofreaders, who was in a high level ESOL class, kept shaking his head, laughing, almost crying when he read the story in Nepali. He said the printed story in Nepali was in the simple language of a country tale. This was an endorsement of the work. This was our goal. We knew this was the way the storyteller as a child heard it from her father, a farmer and herdsman, and the transcriber had written the tale with this authenticity.



The book is now published. In public libraries in the state, librarians share the tale of new arrivals from Bhutan in library story programs. And the book has been added to immigration units in elementary and middle schools. One middle school class made up of new arrival refugees themselves read *The Story of a Pumpkin* and wrote their own adaptations of the tale. They also listened to stories from their parents and grandparents in the language they spoke at home, and then retold the tales in English for their classmates.

A reviewer in the *Concord Monitor* wrote these words about the book. They spoke to our goals of sharing the story of a culture:

“The Story of a Pumpkin is most definitely not just the story of a pumpkin. It’s a story of national heritage, rooted deep in the farmlands of Bhutan and passed down from generation to generation. It’s a story of growth and change, written in both the native language of Bhutanese refugees and the language they are struggling daily to learn. And it’s a story of honoring tradition, designed to link these refugees’ children to the quickly fading memories of their homeland.”

One afternoon when I was in the home of the family of Narad Adhikari, the transcriber, I asked his children about the stories their grandparents told them. They explained to me that they don’t listen to stories. In the U.S., no one tells stories, they said. They had never heard *The*

Story of a Pumpkin. But their elders had. When one grandfather heard the story in the printed book, he scratched his head, pondered, and then a smile lit his face. “Oh, yes, I know this story.” Then he told it with his own twist as his four-year old grandson listened in wonder: the story of a pumpkin who wins a princess for his bride and magically is transformed into a handsome man. Now the grandson knows the story and tells it to all who will listen.

Note

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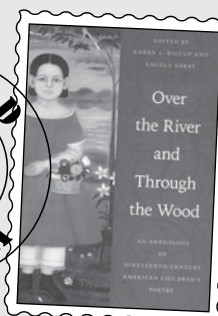
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Children’s Books

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With hundreds of poems and dozens of illustrations, this remarkable collection breaks new ground with old poetry for children. The first such anthology of its kind, *Over the River and Through the Wood* offers readers new access to an amazing array of poems sorted into twenty sections, including “Growing Things,” “Feathered Friends,” “Toys and Play,” “Slavery and Freedom,” and “Holidays.” The collection includes poems by important poets such as Emily Dickinson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Edna St. Vincent Millay, by relative unknowns such as Christina Moody (an African American who published her first book when she was sixteen) and by several children who contributed to the era’s very popular children’s periodicals. The illustrations, mainly from those periodicals, offer visual interest and insight into nineteenth century literature for children. More importantly, with inclusions like “Mary’s Lamb,” “Orphant Annie” and “Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas,” Kilcup and Sorby have given children today a wonderful collection of entertaining verses.

Roxanne Harde



Karen L. Kilcup and
Angela Sorby, Editors

*Over the River and Through the
Wood: An Anthology of Nineteenth-
Century American Children's Poetry*

Illus.: Various
Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP,
2014., 564 p.
ISBN: 1421411407
(All ages)

Encouraging Reluctant Writers: Can Writing Be Taught to Kids?

by TÜLİN KOZIKOĞLU



Tülin Kozikoğlu is an award-winning children's book author living in Istanbul, Turkey. She also writes children's books reviews and travel articles for one of the major newspapers in Turkey, and teaches creative writing to elementary school children and trains teachers on teaching creative writing to kids.



In today's world of technology, the act of writing is more important than it has ever been in human history. Various issues in everyday life that were solved through oral communication in the past are handled through writing today. Business problems are solved through e-mails, parent-teacher meetings are held through on-line chats, even gossip is not a face-to-face oral act anymore. In oral communication intonation and body language act as assets supporting our words in transferring our message to the opposite party. Since most communication is carried through writing today and since written communication lacks these assets, it is obvious that only those who can use written words most efficiently will be successful in expressing themselves effectively to the outside world.

Are our children well equipped for this era that can be named as a "climax of writing." Do they have the necessary skills to use this form of communication most effectively? In other words, are we teaching our kids how to write? And more importantly, can writing be taught?

As my first books were published in 2010, I started to visit schools to meet kids for book readings and signing sessions. During these visits, I came to realize that teachers face difficulty in teaching kids how to write. They were asking for my advice on motivating reluctant writers. That's when I decided to design a workshop to teach kids how to write. It wasn't hard to figure out that this workshop should

use different methods than what the teachers have been doing in their classrooms. Therefore I studied my own writing methods as a writer, rather than studying the teaching methods of teachers. The fifteen-hour workshop I designed enables students to utilize the same methods I use in my own writing process.

With this innovative technique, I don't play the role of a teacher and teach my students how to write; instead I share the secrets of being a writer with future writers.

Why Do Kids Have Difficulty in Writing?

When it comes to stories, there is no doubt that kids are the most able and willing ones. They are able to come up with the most imaginative scenarios and also are very willing to articulate them verbally. However, almost all the elementary school teachers complain about the difficulties they face in inducing kids to write. They all accept that kids can “tell” a story, but cannot “write” a story. What is the difference between the act of articulating a story and putting it into written words? What are the obstacles that stand in children's way during this journey? What is preventing kids from the act of writing? How can these barriers be eliminated and how can the kids be motivated to write?

It wouldn't be wrong to make an assumption that for the brain, the act of writing has similar connotations with speaking in a second language. So the obstacles standing in the way are similar to those that are valid for speaking a foreign language. If the foreign language is not thoroughly acquired, the ideas are there, but one cannot find the words to reveal it. It is not very uncommon to see a very talkative person becoming silent and aloof when the conversation turns into a second language. Communicating in written form might have the same “silencing”

effect. The lack of motivation for writing in kids can be explained with this phenomenon.

When speaking in a foreign language, the message is also inadequately sent, just like a skillfully constructed story told in detail verbally by a child transforming into a weakly structured piece in written form. However if the person becomes proficient in a foreign language, the blanket that covers the communication paths are removed. Just like children learning the techniques of formulating a story, becoming less reluctant writers.

Therefore in sharing my “writing secrets” with children, I utilized techniques used in language education and based my workshop on the assumption that writing can be taught to kids if it is presented in the form of play, thus every concept should be presented through fun and colorful activities that have characteristics of play in nature.



The Writing Workshop Begins

The workshop starts with an activity focused on getting to know each other. The basic aim of this activity is to introduce students the notion of thinking about themselves. Thinking is the first step of writing. Turning their attention onto themselves, help them to practice observation of positive and negative attributes of their own personalities.

After reading them a poem called “Who is Who” written by Thomas Salamun, the children are expected to write a four line poem praising themselves in each line. After they are finished, children are asked to add another line, which starts with “If only you were not.” and expected to end the line with a negative attribute.

The lesson continues with an emphasis on the role of writing in everyday life. Activities on two different forms of written communication of today's technological world are conducted:

1. In the first one, children are given the following scenario and expected to write a text message to their mothers: You are alone in the house. You broke your mother's favorite vase, which is an antique piece. Write a text message to your mother giving her the news. It has to be such a text that after reading it, your mother will not be able to get mad at you. She can be sad, afraid, ashamed or happy but cannot be angry.
2. In the second one, children are expected to write a persuasive e-mail to an elderly person convincing her/him about a certain conflict; e.g. you don't want to eat spinach but your mom thinks you should. After reading your e-mail she will never dare to feed you spinach again.
3. Tear the brown bags open and create a rectangular paper.
4. Make a ball and squeeze, then open it back into a rectangle.
5. Draw four random settings and a treasure chest.
4. Setting 1: Write 1-3 sentences informing the reader... A) Character, B) Setting, C) He/She is in search of a treasure.
5. Setting 2: Write 1-3 sentences informing the reader... A) How or why he came here, B) Problem.
6. Setting 3: Write 1-3 sentences informing the reader... A) How or why he came here, B) A new character that will help him solve the problem.
7. Setting 4: Write 1-3 sentences informing the reader... A) How or why he came here, B) How the two solve their problem, C) How they find the treasure chest.

As the importance of effective writing is highlighted, the conversation turns into a brainstorming session on the relationship of writing and reading. Picture books are used as examples throughout the workshop to show students how an author performs various techniques of creative writing in stories. Just like using "addition, subtraction, multiplication and division" in "solving a math problem," a similar four-tool approach is employed in "solving a story"; "character, setting, problem and solution." As the workshop continues with steps studying these four tools in depth, the picture books that exemplify the subject matter are read to kids for analysis purposes; first broken into pieces just like puzzles, and then put together again with precision. All through the workshop, the student gains the ability to conduct a surgery on a story. Concentrating and understating on what and why the author is doing as opposed to what and why the character in the story is doing, is a skill each student gains by the end of this workshop.

In order to show the kids how the four basic tools are sufficient to create a story, a fun activity inspired from Rebecca Olien's book called *Kids Write* is conducted. The kids are expected to create a treasury map with a treasury hunt story on it by using a brown bag. The activity's instructions are as follows:

What Inspires A Writer To Write?

Before starting in-depth training on the tools of creative writing, a class is spent on the question "What pokes a writer to write?" Basically a writer writes about: 1) the questions she has in her mind, 2) her opinions, 3) her memories, 4) her imagings or dreams.

Just as soccer players stretch their muscles before starting a game, a writer stretches her brain through questions before starting to write. Some of the questions used to stretch the students' brain are as follows:

1. If you were rain, where would you fall?
2. If you were a TV, whose house would you be?
3. If you were an alien, what would you say to the humans?
4. If you were only 1 inch, where would you go?
5. If you get a chance to be invisible for a day, what would you do?
6. If you were a fish, which bait would catch you?
7. If you were entitled to be in Guinness World Records Book, what would be your record?

The answer search to these questions can be a productive supply for stories; e.g. the record in the last question can be used as a character attribute of a protagonist or the answer to the second question can be used as a setting in a story. The sixth question can either be the problem or the solution in a story.

Various books are studied to show the kids how opinions can be revealed most effectively through stories and how different perspectives are valuable in creating stories.

Regarding memories, J. Prelutsky's poem called "I Wonder Why Dad is So Thoroughly Mad" is studied after reading his article called "My Father's Underwear." After stating how memories can be converted into a poem, similar poetry practices are conducted.

After examining various books to understand how imagination pokes a writer, a discussion on dreams is supervised and attention is drawn to the fact that dreams are scenarios created by our own brains. Based on this fact, a writing practice on dreams is carried. The children are told to think of a dream recently dreamt and try to analyze it connecting it to real life personal experiences. The idea is to figure out how the brain finds symbols or metaphors. Then they are told to think of a memory that is valuable for them and write a scenario of a dream that is full of symbols and metaphors.

The discussion on imagination is finalized by creating a Dream Cruise in which only children are allowed to travel. All children work on this together to create a list of things that they imagine to have in this boat. Then they are asked to write a story of a group of kids that travel in this cruise for a week. The idea is to show the kids how each writer can create a different story although they are all writing on the same subject; each from his/her own perspective and with his/her own words. This leads to the session on the importance of words.

Words, Sentences, Stories

As noted earlier, we should be capable of utilizing words so effectively that we should overcome the weakness of lacking intonation and body language in written communication. In order to highlight the importance of words, an activity called Word Chests is conducted. The following lists, called word chests are created during a brainstorming session.

1. List of words you like.
2. Lists of words you don't like.
3. List of funny words.
4. List of intangibles.
5. List of words that we don't know the meaning.
6. List of nasty words.
7. List of words that start with a certain letter.
8. List of words that we created ourselves.

The kids are told to place these chests in their brains. When writing a

piece, kids are expected to open these chests and use the words inside them. The words in list number five are expected to be looked up in a dictionary before using. The words in list number six are those that need to be substituted by other words so a list of new words or expressions that can symbolize them are found for each word in that list. A quick game is played with the words in list number seven; trying to form the longest sentence possible by using words only starting with that certain letter. Using words that start with the same letter helps create rhythm; e.g. shy slender squirrel, big blue bird. List number eight is consisted of words that are created by splitting and pasting different words; e.g. strapeach meaning peach tasting like strawberry, angdad meaning an angry dad, girafone meaning telephone produced for giraffes.

As the chests are ready, an introduction is made on similes and metaphors. This is followed by a game called Metaphor Machine, which is inspired by Julie Albright's Almost Authors Workshop. In this game, each kid is expected to write an intangible on a red piece of paper, a color on a green piece of paper and a name of an object on a blue piece of paper. Colored papers are grouped and then a paper is randomly chosen from each color. When put together, random metaphors are formed; e.g. love is a blue kite, time is a green book, honesty is a purple knife. Then the kids are asked to guess why a book character might have thought of love as a blue kite or time as a green book. In search of finding a reason, kids come up new stories knitted around these metaphors.

As the kids finish the preliminary phases, they get ready for an in-depth study of the tools used in formulating a story. After this point, they start creating and formulating their own story.



Formulating a Story

The first tool, which is “character,” is introduced by reading a book and studying how the writer formulized the protagonist in that book. In creating an interesting character, it is important to find extraordinary attributes for him/her. However, just as “Chekov’s Gun Principle” suggests, one has to utilize this extraordinary attribute in the story. The book chosen exemplifies this principle effectively by using unexpected characteristic attributes to create problems and solutions for the protagonist along the story.

Masks are used to exemplify “Show, Don’t Tell Principle.” For anonymous masks, kids are able to talk about physical attributes only, however for masks of celebrities (Santa Claus, Einstein, Cleopatra, etc.), they are able to tell character attributes as well. It is important to show the character attributes rather than telling them to the reader and one can do so by creating episodes in which characters behave in certain ways. In search of finding episodes to do so, kids are able to create more elaborate plots for their stories. This is emphasized a little further by reading a book that exemplifies “show, don’t tell principle” effectively.

The most important fact about creating a protagonist is having in-depth knowledge about him/her. Therefore a questionnaire called “Character Form” is given to the kids to help them create a protagonist for their stories. This questionnaire acts as a screwdriver that aid the kids to get the ideas out of their minds, helping kids to create more sophisticated characters

Then a poetry activity inspired from Shelley Tucker’s book *Word Weavings* is conducted in which kids write a poem on someone they know well such as their mothers, fathers or themselves. This is an activity in which the kids are guided step by step for each line of the poem by asking them to make metaphors with an animal, something from nature, game, food, color, etc. (e.g. I am an emerald green tree / Losing leaves in the summer / I am a snake / Searching someone to sting in a magical castle / I am a kite / Trying to reach the rainbow).

As students create their own characters, the study continues with “setting.” This is introduced by reading a poem called “I’m Listening to Istanbul” by O.V. Kanik. This poem portrays a city with descriptions that are perceived through auditory stimuli. Emotional reflections of the setting on the character are also emphasized. The study continues by reading books that exemplify usage of setting as a starting point in a book.

In order to demonstrate the importance of point of view in establishing setting in a story, a game using mechanic toy animal is performed. As the winding animals start walking through the path covered with various objects, the students are expected to talk from the point of view of the animal. Before ending the “setting” section of the study, a questionnaire called “Setting Form” is distributed to help kids create a setting for their story.



The last two tools, “problem and solution,” are studied by reading various books. Various frequencies of problem-solution duo in a story are exemplified in the books read. Different ways of solving a problem is also studied in these books; e.g. solving a problem by the help of another person, a tool, magic or fate or solving a problem by willpower, wit or just by changing perspective, etc. Then the kids are expected to fill their Problem-Solution Forms.

Then a game is conducted to help kids practice solution variations. They are expected to write their setting on red papers and problems on green papers. Then the colored papers are collected and randomly distributed back to the kids, and

they are expected to find solutions to the new problems that their characters are facing in their new settings. Then a story writing exercise is conducted to demonstrate their knowledge. The kids are told to write a one page story that starts with “When I woke up this morning, I realized that I turned into a mouse” and ends with “As I stepped into

the school bus, I was smiling.” The kids are expected to show, not tell the attributes of the characters that take place in this short story while solving the problem of turning into a mouse by wit, fate, magic, tool, change of perspective, etc. As the kids are done with the planning of their story with the help of the questionnaires filled for the four tools (Character, Setting, Problem, Solution), they are ready to write their own story. The study ends by reading sessions that include training of criticizing.

Every Kid Can Write

My experiences with this workshop prove that even those kids that are thought to be reluctant writers can be encouraged to develop a positive attitude and talent in writing if a fun approach is adopted. The products generated by the kids

during the workshop show radical differences than the ones written by the same kids in their homeroom classes. The workshop enables kids not only to think creatively but also to organize their ideas and communicate them effectively in written form. Although analyzing and adapting the writing methods of a writer generates the workshop, the whole package is composed of profound, simple and usable techniques that can be conducted to any student by any teacher.

Note

Photos used with permission.

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In this seemingly authentic children's workbook, the dissatisfied author yearns for the ability to draw like a "real artist," but soon learns to enjoy his imagination by allowing himself to draw what he likes rather than what he thinks is "good." The story begins in the midst of the author's pouting, where he draws himself on the page infuriated by his own lack of ability. But when he finds the objects of traditional art boring, his mind takes off. He makes his drawings more original and adds playful words to fit the scenes, creating his own wacky world in which he defeats a dragon by playing his mandolin. Fagan's quirky story is simple in its presentation, consisting of sparse sharpie sketches, and playful narration, the tone of which simultaneously charms and entices the reader to turn the next page. Both children and parents stand to benefit from the message of the book, which simply suggests that personal success lies in valuing the talents that make each one of us unique.

Ben Smith



Cary Fagan

I Wish I Could Draw

Toronto: Groundwood, 2014
32 p.
ISBN: 9781554983186
(Picture book, ages +3)

Bound in striking black covers with white lettering, these two picturebooks are entertaining and informative, leaving readers with the desire to explore the stories of the Noongar people of Western Australian. In *Mamang* a man dives inside a whale and journeys across the sea. *Yira* tells of a husband tricked into—and then trapped in—a tree by his wife, and his friendship with the one who rescues him. Based off of linguistic notes from 1931, these are just two of the four picturebooks crafted by the WNLSP. Also documented in each picturebook is the remarkable collaborative effort that took to produce them. Members from the Noongar community of the original storyteller report that they experienced healing and drew strength from the process itself. The careful cultivation of picturebooks from stories of this community's past ensures that their culture will survive into the future. Readers of these picturebooks are receiving more than just excellent, entertaining literature, but also an understanding of a people that have often felt and been forgotten.

Andrea Zerebeski



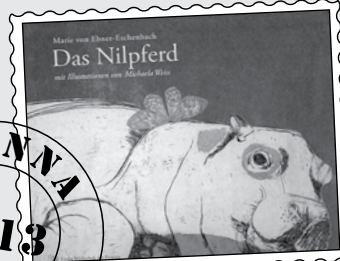
Kim Scott, Iris Woods the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project (WNLSP)(Illus. Jeffrey Farmer, Helen Nelly and Roma Winmar)
Mamang
Crawley: UWA Publishing, 2011, 36 p.
ISBN: 9781742582962

Kim Scott, Hazel Brown, Roma Winmar and the WNLSP(Illus. Anthony Roberts)
Yira Boornak Nyininy
Crawley: UWA Publishing, 2013, 36 p.
ISBN: 9781742585123

(Picturebook 6+)

Strange things happen when a caterpillar believes that change is good and decides to use the wrinkles on a hippopotamus' back instead of a cocoon. Incredibly, it is not a full butterfly that emerges one day, only two beautiful shimmering wings. Other hippos begin to notice and comment on the beautiful wings. The winged hippo longs to know something about his wings and goes into the forest to try them out. Unwilling to admit that flying is not possible, the hippo tells of great adventures in flight. One day the wings blow off and as the other hippos notice, the once winged hippo smartly claims that he removed the wings so that the other hippos would not feel disadvantaged. The hippo who had been admired for the beautiful wings was now admired much more fervently for such a humble deed. Austrian author Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach originally published this fable in 1897. The text engages and inspires over a century later with illustrations that allow the colorful wings on a hippopotamus to shimmer for the enjoyment of children and adults alike.

Kim Misfeldt



Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach

Das Nilpferd Eine Fabel

Illus. Michaela Weiss
Vienna: Bibliothek der Provinz,
2013
32 p.
ISBN: 978-3990281918
(Picturebook)

Finnish Child Language and Culture in Sweden: An Original Luleå Story



Photo of performance of *When Winter's Stars Shine Here*.

When Winter's Stars Shine Here: A Story of Language Oppression

On a cold winter's night in Norrland, Sweden's most northern district, the snow falls as two teenagers wait for their bus home from school. They are annoyed because their teacher was unimpressed by their presentations about their ethnic identity and their relationship to the region in which they live. So begins a theatrical piece, *When Winter's Stars Shine Here*, which combines film, dance, and electronic text with a dramatic performance in seven languages: Swedish, Finnish, Meänkieli, Northern and Southern Sámi, as well as Finnish and Swedish sign languages. It is unlikely that anyone in the audience can follow all seven languages, but for once those from national minority backgrounds are in a better position than the majority population. And so everyone gets to experience the somewhat bewildering daily lives of those whose dominant language is not the same as the majority population.

The play is a result of collaboration between three theater groups in the Northern Norrland region and the national theater, and requires a brief socio-geographical explanation. Norrland as a whole comprises roughly 59% of Sweden's total landmass, but is home to just 12% of the country's population. For many administrative

by LYDIA KOKKOLA



Lydia Kokkola is Professor of English and Education at Luleå University of Technology, Sweden. Her main areas of research include reading in a foreign language, trauma literature and adolescent sexuality.

purposes, Norrland is subdivided into Southern Norrland (*södra Norrland*) for which the main city is Umeå and Northern Norrland (*norra Norrland*) for which the main city is Luleå. Northern Norrland covers the historical provinces of Norrbotten, Västerbotten and Lappland, and is the cultural home for two main groups of Swedish national minorities: The Sámi (formerly known by the perjorative term “Lapp”) who speak a variety of Sámi languages which are not all mutually comprehensible and the Tornedalerna who come from the Torne Valley. The Torne River divides Finland from Sweden, although for several months

a year the river is frozen and the border is neither visible nor relevant as citizens from both sides of the river socialize, marry, shop, work and engage in hobbies such as fishing and hunting which take them back and forth across the borders. Until 1809, Finland was part of Sweden and although today one is required to carry some form of identification (a driver’s license will suffice) when crossing the border, in practice border checks are very rare. Until the period taken up in the play, the main language of the region was *Meänkieli* (literally “our language”), which is very closely related to Finnish.¹ Finnish and Swedish belong to different language families (Finnish is Finno-Ugric and Swedish is a Germanic language);



they are not mutually comprehensible. Since all Finns study Swedish in school, *Meänkieli* is comprehensible for Finns (and vice versa) with only minor problems, but Swedish speakers cannot understand either *Meänkieli* or Finnish. Northern Norrland is also home to significant numbers of two of the other national minorities: Finns and Romani.² Although Romani Chib is the official language of the Romani, the majority of Romanies in the Northern Norrland region are Finnish speakers.

The play focuses on the period in the 1950s when the speaking of minority languages was discouraged, and in some cases forbidden. It also includes a scene depicting the State Commission of 1921, which took several steps towards suppressing minority languages. Not only was education in the minority languages banned, libraries were forbidden to stock Finnish books and there were calls from teachers and farmers to forbid the use of Finnish in the playground. Schooling took place exclusively in Swedish, and children were publically shamed if they used their home languages. Girls were encouraged to report on the boys for speaking Finnish (*Winsa Language Attitudes* 120). During the Second World War, attitudes towards the Finns (who first fought the Soviet Union and then Germany) became more positive, and with that came a more positive attitude towards standard Finnish, although less so towards *Meänkieli* (*Winsa Language Attitudes* 154). Economic migration from Finland to Sweden in the 1950s led to a revival of more negative attitudes towards Finnish, and these attitudes were internalized by many in the Torne Valley region (*Winsa Language Attitudes* 118-125).

Some of the thinking behind these policies was fairly benign: with a full command of Swedish, the children were more likely to find employment, continue into tertiary education and integrate with the majority population. As recently as 1991-92, when Birger Winsa conducted an enquiry into attitudes into Finnish and Meänkieli, he found that bilinguals held some of the most negative attitudes towards the languages in Sweden. Those from the laboring classes, Winsa found, tend to regard bilingualism as a luxury the working classes cannot afford. He cites one informant as claiming that children learn Meänkieli “because it is the teachers’ interest and not the wish of the children” (Winsa, *Language Attitudes* 53) and several others arguing that their accented Swedish has made it very difficult for their children to leave the region and find better forms of employment. They point out that children on the Finnish side of the border do not experience similar levels of stagnation. Rather than seeing the problem as lying in poor provision for bilingualism and demotivation of pupils who felt, at best, undervalued by their Swedish-speaking teachers, these respondents regard themselves as “semi-lingual” people who are unable to communicate in any language. By reframing the language policies as an issue of class rather than racism, the problem for Meänkieli speakers continues in ways that are not as evident among standard Finnish speakers. The oppression of minority languages and the internalization of negative attitudes towards the children’s home language(s) had a disastrous impact on children’s emotional, linguistic and cultural development. As a result, children of the post-war generation did not pass on their languages to their own children. Today, the children and grandchildren who are unable to speak their cultural languages often express their disappointment that they were not raised in bi- or multi-lingual environments. (See Winsa *Language Attitudes*).

When Winter Stars Shine Here is a collaboration between Giron sámi téahter (the Sámi theater), Tornedalsteatern (the Meänkieli speaking area) and Norrbottensteatern (which is based in Luleå). It toured with support from the national theater (Riksteatern), which has more than 30 years of experience of working with theater in sign language. With humor and beauty, the play made this dark period in Sweden’s history accessible and tangibly relevant to its audience. It is a deeply moving piece that reduces the audience to tears, but also makes them laugh at the absurdity of praising monolingualism over multilingualism. It is a play that reflects the enormous changes that are currently taking place in relation to national minority languages.

The play is, in a sense, part of a spirit of apology for the wrong-headed thinking of the language policies that were so damaging for Sweden’s national minorities. It informs and reminds people of the dangers of “Ett folk, ett språk, en nation” [One people, one language, one nation]



thinking. But rather than dwelling in guilt and shame, this recognition of the need to support minority languages, to enable the cultures embedded within the languages to flourish and to pass on the cultural and linguistic heritage to the next generation has resulted in positive action. As Winsa observes, language policies arise from a combination of “inherited attitudes and practices towards linguistic diversity and dialects”, politicians and legal bodies tend to enforce existing beliefs about language (“Language Planning” 377). Attitudes and practices can be changed by grass roots activism. Almost a century after the State Commission initiated the sequence of events that led to cruel events depicted in *When Winters Stars Shine Here*, a new act of government was passed. The 2009 Law on National Minorities and Minority Languages signals a complete change of direction. In this column, I wish to outline what a community can and does do to revitalize national minority heritages in the hopes that it will inspire readers from other minority languages to do the same in their own community, no matter how bleak the situation might seem. Although I focus on only one language and one community, similar stories are taking place throughout Sweden and could be implemented in other communities as well.

An Original Luleå Story

Luleå is a small, coastal city with just over 75,000 inhabitants (“and growing” as its website likes to remind us). Situated only a 90 minute drive from the Finnish border in the east and the Arctic circle in the north, it is the administrative capital for northern Norrland. There are no statistics available on people’s home languages, and so it is not possible to determine exactly how people speak Finnish, but it is estimated that about 13,000 (17.3%) are of Finnish descent. Since Meänkieli speakers are ethnically Swedish, it is even harder to estimate the numbers of speakers,

but the representative for Finnish speakers in the region, Anne-Mari Angeria, believes that there are more Meänkieli speakers in the municipality than Finnish speakers. As such, support for Finnish in Luleå is a way of supporting three national minorities, although the Tornedarlerna and Romani have additional needs that are not met by a focus on Finnish alone.

As formally designated “national minorities” in Sweden, Finns, Tornedalerna and Romani have special rights to develop their language and culture, to influence decision making processes that affect them, to use their language in official dealings with the authorities, as well as a number of other rights (Lag). Paragraph four of this law specifically determines that the development of minority children’s language and cultural identity

must receive special attention. Care for the elderly (for whom dementia may affect languages acquired later more severely) is also mandated. Since this law came into effect in 2009, municipalities throughout Sweden have been seeking ways to actualize these rights. This includes hiring members of the national minorities who act as

representatives in decision-making processes at the municipal level.³ They also promote their languages and cultures, and function as coordinators for existing and new initiatives. The Finnish representative for Luleå, Anne-Mari Angeria, was hired in autumn 2013 as was a Romani representative. Plans to improve the situation for Meänkieli speakers are underway.

In Luleå, the Finnish-speaking community already had a number of organizations which could spread information promote opportunities. These include LUFF (Luleå Finska Förening), the Lutheran church (which employs a Finnish-speaking priest and deaconess) as well as less formal networks. The activities these organizations arrange range from billiards to choirs, and from exercise groups to flea markets. The majority of these activities are intended for adults, but I



shall focus on activities that support Finnish-speaking children's bilingualism and dual cultural identity. In last July's edition of *Bookbird*, I endeavored to explain how the bilingual child's brain develops somewhat differently from the monolingual child, and how early contact with other languages is beneficial in the long run, even though the child may appear to struggle in one or both languages in the early stages. Recognition of the need to support additive, early bilingualism is formally acknowledged in the 2009 law on national minorities, so how does this work in practice?

Finnish from Cradle to Grave

Bilingualism actually begins prior to birth, as the unborn child is already able to hear sounds already in their third trimester and so is able to recognize their mothers' voices at birth. Support from the authorities in Luleå starts not long afterwards. Attempts are made to ensure that the staff on the maternity ward is able to communicate in Finnish, although medical qualifications obviously precede language competence when work-shifts are allocated. The Swedish post-natal care includes information on the library facilities in the region, and these are often the first place that parents receive support for the second home language. Luleå library has regular activities for babies and toddlers. Baby singing and storytelling have proved so popular that an additional room has been provided to accommodate all the prams and pushchairs! These activities are mostly in Swedish, but once in the library the families have access to books, music and films in Finnish, and are likely to be served by staff who can speak Finnish.

Books, as every *Bookbird* reader can attest, are one of the best ways to support children's language and cultural development. Conversely, removing books is a way to stifle the transmission of children's language and culture, and this is why libraries were specifically targeted in the 1921 State Commission. Today, the library in Luleå has impressive holdings for children, including materials in over thirty languages other than Swedish (about one in four of the children's books in the holdings are in a language

other than Swedish). The most commonly loaned materials are in English, because Swedish speakers also like to practice their English (there are considerably fewer English speakers in Luleå than Finnish speakers). Finnish ranks third (after English and Persian) in terms of loans. The library currently has proportionately fewer holdings in Finnish today than it did in the late 1960s and early 1970s, despite the more generally negative attitudes towards minority languages at the time. This was because the economic difficulties in Finland (resulting from the need to pay off war reparations and rebuild the country that was badly damaged during the war) led to a rise in the numbers of Finns living in the region. The Finns who migrated to Luleå at that time tended to be employed as manual laborers, who could rarely afford to buy their own books. Recent migrants tend to be well educated and able to afford to buy Finnish children's literature. Sometimes parents need guidance, and the library staff offers advice and also buys in most books that are requested by clients. Books also form one of the main concrete ways in which the municipality has endeavored to bring Finnish into the daycare centers and pre-schools in the city.⁴

Unlike many countries, Sweden's municipalities are responsible for ensuring that good quality child-care is available for working parents. Parental leave is available for 480 days per child. This leave is normally shared between the parents, and there is an expectation that some of the leave will be taken when the child transitions from child-care into school life. Typically, children are cared for at home for the first year, and after that they are cared for in a daycare center in small groups with qualified staff. At this point, the child probably only has a few words, and it is more than likely that children raised in bilingual environments will appear to have fewer words. This is partly because only those words that are comprehensible to the staff are recognized as words, and partly because of the slight delay in the on-set of speech for bilingual children. The minority language needs support during this transition and books have a role to play here.

One of the first activities Anne-Mari Angeria undertook when she was appointed was to buy

in Finnish children's books, specifically books for daycare centers and pre-schools. Packages of picturebooks and bilingual songbooks were taken to each of the centers, and at the same time Anne-Mari was able to map which centers had staff who could speak Finnish. Look-and-say books proved the most popular, not least because they provided an opportunity to share the language with those who did not have Finnish as a home language. The books provide a place for the children to share something about their home life with the other children, and at the same time, the presence of these books in the everyday environment reminds everyone that Swedish is not the only approved language. It is a small gesture, but it makes a difference. In bilingual Belgium, Stichting Lezen—an organization which promotes literacy in the Flanders (the Flemish-speaking region of Belgium)—has a similar project, *O Mundo*, which has used its close connection with IBBY to enable children to find good quality children's books in their school environment. These are not just in the other national language; they endeavor to embrace the full linguistic diversity of Flanders. By such simple means, minority language speakers can support their children anywhere in the world.

The second step in Luleå will be to encourage the Finnish-speaking staff in the daycare centers to use Finnish with the children. At the time of writing, the best way to implement this has not been decided. The option of creating a full immersion program that supports the children all the way through their school lives, such as those promoted for maintaining Finnish-Swedish bilingualism in Finland and French-English bilingualism in some areas of Canada has been rejected. This is partly a matter of resources, but also because the law only mandates support in pre-school contexts. The alternatives currently under discussion are whether to encourage the staff to code-switch between Swedish and Finnish, so that they speak Finnish with children who have that as one of their home languages and Swedish in other contexts and a milder version of immersion whereby the member of staff speaks only Finnish, regardless of the child's home languages. In this way, children from monolingual Swedish-speaking homes would also learn a little of the minority languages. Programs like this are popular between Finnish and English in Finland, and nearly all towns of 25,000 inhabitants or more have a kindergarten that works in this way (Williams). On a global level, Finnish is obviously not as prestigious as English, but in Luleå, as I noted above, there is a strong sense of regret among the population who did not learn Finnish from their parents and a desire to revive their cultural and linguistic heritage. The decision as to how to proceed will doubtless reflect a combination of attitudes and resources. What is clear, however, is that there will be more Finnish in the daycare centers in Luleå in 2020 than there is today.

Once at school, all children, not only those from the national minorities, are entitled to support for their other language if they come from a bilingual home, in practice, this comprises of a few hours of lessons every week. Children can choose Finnish as one of their final exam subjects. In addition to formal school study, there are occasionally

activities such as meeting the star Finnish ice-hockey players on the highly successful Luleå ice-hockey team, which reminds the children that there are advantages to learning to speak Finnish well! For the most part, however, responsibility for cultural and playful engagement with the language lies with the families themselves. This was why the children's club "Mukulat" (a term of endearment to describe a group of children) was formed.

Mukulat's stated aims are to support children's familiarity with the Finnish language and Finnish culture. The children play, sing, and read in Finnish, and there is a strong emphasis on handicrafts and artistic expression. The activities are mostly bilingual since this is a place where the whole extended family can meet and socialize. There are day trips and camps for the whole family. The camps are partly funded from the municipality and the church, but an ensemble of small grants from LUFF, The Union, meets most of the costs of the club for Swedish Finns (Ruotsinsuomalaisten keskusliitto) and SOFI (Institute for Language and Folklore). The costs are minimal as the three main leaders of the club donate their time voluntarily. This sort of grass-roots activity is vital for bring the community together to share their cultural heritage and language.

Bringing Minority Languages into Majority Contexts

In addition to these school and free-time activities that are specifically geared towards children who are already familiar with Finnish from their home environment, Anne-Mari has endeavored to provide opportunities for all children to come into contact with Finnish culture, and this has taken the form of sponsoring children's theater. If *When Winters Stars Shine Here* functions as a reminder, warning and apology for an oppressive language policy, then the theatrical works brought into the ordinary daycare centers around the city or offered free of charge in the one of the city theater provide a playful way of undoing the damage done. *Sagoväskan* is a theatrical company that tours daycare centers, presenting plays bilingually (the name is Swedish, and means "a bag of stories"). Most of each play is in Swedish, but Finnish phrases, rhymes and songs are incorporated. In this way, Swedish-speaking children get to hear Finnish, and bilingualism is normalized. When these children's grandparents were in school, they could be beaten for speaking Finnish in the playground. This generation is growing up with a very different set of values.

Another travelling theater company, Akseli Klönk, was invited to offer a children's play solely in Finnish: *Ursas Porhea*. The title is a play on words. *Ursas* is Latin for a bear and *porhea* is Finnish for bushy or hairy, so the surface meaning is about a bear with a thick coat. But Finnish language play often involves swapping the position of syllables,



producing *Porsas Urhea*, which is Finnish for the brave pig. The play itself combines storytelling, puppetry, music, acrobatics and song to tell a story of a pig who was anything but brave, but who nevertheless manages to defeat the bear and save the day.

Theater offers the opportunity for engagement with the living language. The plays that were chosen were all playful, but they also included elements of formulaic language and language play. “Formulaic language” means a segment of language that is larger than a word but which is treated as a single unit of meaning. A minimal example would be “Once upon a time” and its equivalent in languages around the world. Formulaic language can also refer to a “chunk” of language that is only found in a particular context, such as a children’s book.

When Max sails his boat “through night and day” and “in and out of weeks” and “almost over a year” to and from the place *Where*

the Wild things Are (the order depending on the direction in which he is traveling), Sendak creates three small formulaic units to do with time. In my own teaching experience as an English teacher in a Finnish language kindergarten, I witnessed how children used these chunks of language in creative ways to communicate (Williams). It is undeniably alarming to hear a child enter the playroom shouting “Let the wild rumpus start!” to his friends, but it is wonderful to be part of the child’s experimentation with language! The segments in the Finnish plays brought to Luleå included counting play, useful verbal phrases and also nonsense sound play and the kind of syllable play explained above.

It is easy to dismiss nonsense and language play in the context of language acquisition, but consider the babbling of babies and the communicative sounds toddlers make before they are

able to use the words of their family’s language(s). Language play of this kind is essential for gaining a sense of the rhythm and sound patterns of the target language, which are central for reading as well as speaking. Play with syllables is particularly important for the reading of Finnish, as it is also central for engaging with the grammar of the fourteen case endings. Drawing on work in the neurological sciences, Karen Coats recently proposed that the jingling, low-brow poetry of children’s nursery rhymes and chants “preserves

the rhythms and pleasures of the body in language and facilitates emotional and physical attunement with others”, as a result, language play of this kind creates “a holding environment in language to help children manage their sensory environments, map and regulate their neurological functions, contain their existential anxieties, and participate in communal life” (127). This may seem rather a large claim to make, but the success of incorporating

rhythmical language play in language education is well established by the extensive studies of Peter Bryant, Morag MacLean, Lynette Bradley and Clare Kirtley, among others. The number of nursery rhymes a child can speak on entering school is the best predictor of their reading success in later life (Adams; Bryant et al). But it is with Coats’s final point, that such language play enables children to participate in communal life that I would like to conclude.

A colleague of mine, Maria Lassén-Seger, once said “language is like love; it doesn’t mean anything until it is shared.” When parents share their love for their children, they do so through by word and deed. When social attitudes towards a minority language exert pressures on parents to communicate in a language other than the one in which they feel most at home, a barrier is formed. Languages hold communities together,



and minority languages offer no threat to the majority language unless the element of shame is brought into play, and the children are encouraged to feel inferior because they have the gift of bilingualism. In one generation, anger over the loss of this gift has raised social and political awareness to the extent that a law promoting bilingualism was enacted. This change was made possible because ordinary people insisted on sharing their language and culture with their children. Today there are funds available, and there is political power behind the decision to support these children, but people sharing stories, rhymes and songs with their children generated this momentum. This is what a revolution can look like.

Notes

1. See Winsa ('Language Planning' 381-84) for a discussion of whether Meänkieli formally constitutes a dialect or a different language and Winsa (*Language Attitudes 20-23* and 'Language Planning' 382) for a summary of the main linguistic differences between Meänkieli and standard Finnish. Three other varieties of Finnish are spoken in the Norrbotten region: Nattavaara, Gällivare and Vittanki Finnish. These varieties contain many loan words from the Sámi languages in addition to Swedish influence, and the grammar has also been affected by the proximity of Sámi (which belongs to the Uralic language family). None of these varieties are comprehensible to a monolingual standard Finnish speaker (Winsa *Language Attitudes 122*).
2. The fifth national minority are the Jews, but the 20-25 000 Swedish Jews mostly live in the south of Sweden. There are no temples or synagogues in Norrbotten.
3. Luleå has also hired minority representatives to work with gay, lesbian, transgender and queer issues; Romani issues, youth groups, multilingualism and Muslims. Although there is no formal mandate for such representation, the municipality has taken the decision to make the community as open as possible and promotes immigration to the city.
4. Books are available in the other national minority languages, but they are not so actively borrowed: only a few Sámi books were loaned in the year April 2013-April 2014, and none of the others.

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The Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA)

by CAROLE BLOCH



Carole Bloch directs PRAESA, which is driving the Nal'ibali National Reading-for-Enjoyment Campaign in South Africa. Also a founder and trustee of The Little Hands Trust, she supports the development of multilingual children's literature in Africa and helps to enable meaningful literacy learning opportunities for all children.



The Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA: www.praesa.org.za) is an independent research and development organization affiliated with the University of Cape Town. Established by Dr. Neville Alexander in 1992, PRAESA emerged from the struggle against apartheid education, to document educational alternatives that had been tried out during those years, which could inform the new education process. Circumstances since 1995 focused the project's work on language policy, especially the key area of language-in-education policy implementation (Alexander).

In multilingual South Africa with its eleven official languages, a central focus of PRAESA has been on early language and literacy teaching and learning as the essential foundations for learning. Our approach appreciates the storytelling hearts and minds of children (and adults) and how meaningful encounters with reading and writing are as critical for learning to read and write as the mechanics of the literacy learning process (Bloch "Don't"). We thus have always had the aim to help enable the kinds of conditions for learning (Cambourne), inside and outside of school, which motivates children and adults to want to read and write in African languages and in English.

Over the years of trying to support government to provide appropriate learning opportunities for all children, our goal was to perform a catalytic role in the two major overlapping areas of language policy implementation and pedagogical approaches to literacy. We did this via a series of small-scale research projects (Bloch and Alexander, Bloch “Helping”) and the facilitation, production and dissemination of storybooks and other materials for multilingual education in African languages and English (Bloch “Building”). PRAESA’s view is that any serious thinking about and action for literacy development and support for reading and writing habits needs to take place from within an overt multilingual frame of reference. Most South Africans want to be proficient in English because of the immediate and obvious economic and social benefits of English, but this does not mean that literacy is equal to English. Nor does it mean children have to leave their “mother tongue/s” at home either in Grade 1 or at the end of Grade 3. To provide the best of both worlds for all, we use and promote mother tongue based bilingual approaches to language use, in formal and non-formal education.



In addition to the lack of political will by government to implement its language in education policy, one of our greatest challenges is to find ways of supporting adults from all cultural, linguistic and class backgrounds to become well-read, interactive reading and writing role models for children. In 2006, PRAESA began to establish community based reading clubs to promote and support reading cultural practices and biliteracy development as part of creating literate communities using an apprenticeship approach (Rogoff, PRAESA). Neville Alexander retired at the end of 2011, and in 2012 PRAESA began a new phase. Under my directorship, we took what we had learned in the preceding two decades to scale and initiated a national reading-for-enjoyment campaign with main financial support from the DG Murray Trust (www.dgmt.co.za).

The Nal’ibali National Reading for Enjoyment Campaign (www.nalibali.org), now in its third year, means “Here’s the story” in Xhosa. With its key message “It starts with a story,” Nal’ibali aims to revive and deepen our appreciation of stories and narrative as being not only

Read to me. Book by book.

Lees vir my. Boek vir boek. • Ndifundele. Incwadi nencwadi.
Ngifundele. Incwadi nencwadi. • Mpalle. Buka ka buka.
Mpalele. Puku ka puku.

Sparking children's potential through storytelling and reading
www.nalibali.org www.nalibali.mobi [nalibaliSA](https://www.facebook.com/nalibaliSA)

Nal'ibali
It starts with a story.

essential as the primary way we as human beings remember and organize our thoughts and conceptual worlds (Gotschall), but also the basis for critical thinking and a meaningful education for all children (Krashen, Clark and Rumbold,). It does this by sparking connections between adults and children as they tell, read and talk about stories in languages they understand as well as those they want to learn. By overtly (re)positioning oral and written stories as valuable in daily life, parents and other adults have the chance to experience for themselves how homes, community venues and after school spaces, can contribute richly towards children's literacy development. Their role, even those who are not readers and writers themselves, is central for the growth of literate communities.

PRAESA works with an ever-increasing number of partners to raise public awareness of the critical link between reading for pleasure and children's educational success through a multimedia advocacy campaign. A team of community literacy activists drives the campaign. In six provinces, they work with partners to set up and support a network of reading clubs who engage communities in children's literacy development through mentoring workshops and parent meetings throughout the year. In addition to over three hundred supported reading



clubs, Nal'ibali has also initiated drives and projects to involve the broader community and stakeholders: On World Read Aloud Day 2014, (5 March), Nal'ibali community mentors and members of the public signed up to read aloud to 47,902 children; on World Book Day SA (23 April), we launched a Children's Literacy Charter, with 14,000 copies printed and circulated to date to schools, libraries, NGOs and reading clubs across South Africa, outlining the literacy experiences all children need (see <http://nalibali.org/nalibali-launches-childrens-literacy-charter->

[celebrate-guide-childrens-literacy-rights/](#)).

We define a reading club loosely as a gathering of between five and fifty children who meet at an agreed time and place at least once a week, from thirty minutes to two hours, with one or more adult volunteers. Because the intention is communication around stories, the adult-child ratio is preferably no greater than 1:10 (it is even better if it can be 1:5). The program can be as simple as "just" telling and/or reading stories or can be made up of a mix of songs, games, acting, reading and writing activities. We have found that all of these fun activities bring about bonding and a keen sense of belonging. Everyone concerned is affirmed by the commitment to sharing playful, imaginative times together. We appreciate storytelling for its role as a bridge to reading and writing, but we also value it in and of itself to provide adults and children with opportunities to connect with one another as a group as they remember and share old stories, and

dream up new ones. Storytelling invites everyone in, whether they do or do not read and write themselves. "Storyplay" is an adaptation of the reading club model for younger children, before school-going age (preschools and crèches). Bringing a focus on play as story in action (Paley), we mentor adults to

enable babies, toddlers and young children to begin to explore books in appropriate ways, and offer them multi-modal opportunities to represent their own stories and those they hear from others. The focus on imaginative and playful uses of language, oral and written is a deliberate strategic intervention to counter the overly didactic introduction to concepts and language that tends to dominate.

The content development component of the campaign ensures access to children's stories and guidance freely available in six to eleven South

African languages across a variety of platforms. In partnership with Print Media partner, Times Media, the Nal'ibali reading-for-enjoyment supplement appears in several newspapers each week during term time. It is intended as a "scaffold" for adults to use with children, providing regular stories, guidance and information about reading clubs. It is designed to take into account the circumstances of caregivers living in South Africa. Reading and storytelling features speak to the realities of many adults such as finding ways to create print-rich environments with limited access to books and a shortage of money. In the supplement we model, rather than preach good language and literacy practices and focus on achievability: the adult reader needs to be left with the feeling, "Hey, I can do this!" The supplement is bilingual. All text is in English and one African language and available in five



language combinations: English-Xhosa; English-Zulu; English-Sesotho and English-Afrikaans.

Since launching in 2012, Nal'ibali has produced and translated 106 children's stories; 15,732,400 supplements; 148 literacy activities for children (shared online and printed through the supplements); broadcast 78 stories on SABC Public Radio Stations in 9 South African languages and donated and distributed 30,000 free copies of the supplement to reading clubs, crèches, libraries, classrooms and NGOs each week during term time. To meet the need for digital material for a growing community of online readers, 48,980 Mxit subscribers receive a literacy tip each week via this social networking platform; an average of 8000 users access our resources via the mobile site each month.

Dreaming big, we are planning to bring the Nal'ibali message into homes across South Africa. With more collaborations and increased support, this is possible. Although we have enormous challenges, not only in the appalling results from

the school system (Taylor), but also in the task to inspire and bring about the necessary voluntary action, the signs are hopeful: The Nal'ibali team and it's growing number of partners, are committed to working together to inspire and support communities as they work on ways to share stories with their children, shaking out and shining up ones from the past, and finding new ones. This is not a series of events, but a process that will need to continue to expand for many years to come, if it is to succeed in creating the literate communities that can lead South Africa to a prosperous future for all of its citizens.

Note:

1. We do not exclude other genres or texts of any kinds, and indeed encourage these. But the core thread of Nal'ibali is about storytelling, reading and writing.

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This audio book series takes us back in time to the fabled fall of Troy. Read from the perspective of a young Trojan boy who is captured and forced to work as a slave and healer on a Greek ship, the story takes us through some of the most fascinating moments of Greek mythology. Along the journey we meet a Cyclops, Sirens and sea monsters, and travel to the underworld of Hades. The old myths that we know are put into new contexts that allow us to become better acquainted with the men and beasts involved. The beautiful rewording of Homer's *Odyssey* gives young adult readers a better understanding of the epic journey. The narrator Gerard Doyle reads in an engaging and interesting manner, which succeeds in pulling the reader into the story. Enticing and unusual, Bowman's tale is a beautiful mix of old legend and modern fantasy that will encourage readers to take a glimpse into the history of storytelling and civilization itself. This audio book series was published by Post Hypnotic Press, which has also made audio books of the Anne of Green Gables series and other children and young adult novels.

Maeve Wentland



Patrick Bowman

*Torn from Troy and
Cursed by the Sea God*

New Westminister: Post
Hypnotic Press, 2013
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(Audio book, ages +10)

The Toronto Children's Book Bank



by KIM BEATTY



The Children's Book Bank (www.childrensbookbank.com) was founded by a group of community volunteers in Toronto, Canada in 2007. These volunteers shared a love of books and reading, along with a large supply of children's books that their own families had outgrown. The idea was a simple one, to collect the many gently used children's books that families across Toronto no longer needed and to get these books into the hands of children who might not otherwise own any children's books themselves. The result was Canada's first children's book bank.

Over the course of almost a year the group debated different models and approaches to creating a book bank, having finally settled on a storefront model that would operate much like a children's bookstore. The group divided up the long list of tasks to be completed: setting up the charitable organization, finding space, soliciting donations of fixtures for the space, decorating the space, networking in the literacy and publishing community in Toronto and of course, collecting books. Boxes and boxes of donated books accumulated in garages and basements across Toronto. Soon enough this group of mostly 50+ year-old women were abandoning the gym for the demanding exercise of moving boxes of books. In the

Kim Beatty is a lawyer with a special interest in children's literacy and community service. Kim practiced litigation law in the Toronto area for almost twenty years before retiring to found the Children's Book Bank. Throughout her litigation career, Kim had been actively involved in a wide range of community service initiatives, including volunteering as a tutor in a local inner-city school and coordinating numerous drives to assist low-income children and their families.

spring of 2008, a team of volunteers was assembled to move hundreds of boxes of books from the various storage spots around the City to the Book Bank's new storefront space in the Regent Park area of Toronto.

Regent Park is one of Toronto's high-density, low-income communities and is home to many new Canadians.

The storefront Book Bank is much like a treasured children's bookstore in any city. There are shelves and shelves of brightly colored books of every shape and size. There are classic novels and ABC books. There are dictionaries and activity books. There are science books and history books. There are early readers and comic books. There are stuffed animals and posters from our favorite childhood stories, all complimented by knowledgeable and helpful staff members waiting to introduce children to the magic of books and reading. And best of all, the books are free! There are no fees or registration of any kind at the Book Bank. Each visitor is permitted to take and keep one book per visit and families are encouraged to visit often. Many families visit daily.

From its very earliest days, the Book Bank has been very busy. Word of mouth has worked effectively in introducing the Book Bank to the Regent Park community, and before too long it was seeing an average of 200 visitors

a day. Aside from a few sub zero days in the winters these numbers have held firm for over six years. We are delighted to observe that even with computers, video games and eReaders, children still love books! In its first six years of operation the Book Bank has given away over

450,000 books. On almost any day of the week the Book Bank offers a tableau that would warm the heart of any book lover- parents and children reading together in one of the cozy overstuffed reading chairs, keen young readers immersed in their first chapter-books, children lying on the floor leafing through gorgeous non fiction books, toddlers pulling books off the shelves and of course, babies chewing on board books.

The Book Bank operates through a small group of paid staff and a large volunteer base, including many retired teachers and librarians. In addition to assisting with book sorting and organization, volunteers provide literacy advice and support to the children and their families, and also run story time presentations.

The Book Bank offers a number of programs through its storefront. In addition to serving drop-in customers, the Book Bank sees many school children through a field trip program called "Stories for Students". Through this program the Book Bank offers free field trips



to local schools, daycares, summer camps and after school groups. These field trips involve a story time and an opportunity for students to “shop” for a book and to take and keep one free book per visit. The Book Bank has offered a number of literacy education and support programs, including a dictionary distribution program, an after school reading buddies program, a program for teenaged mothers and a program to teach mothers about the importance of reading books to their babies.

The Book Bank supports communities outside its immediate area through an outreach program called Books Beyond Berkeley Street. In this program the Book Bank provides free books and advice to community agencies operating in low-income communities across Toronto, to enable them to operate their own smaller book banks in their communities. Through this program the Book Bank has distributed books to children living in high needs communities across Toronto.

The inventory for the Book Bank comes primarily from families who donate their gently used children's books. The Book Bank solicits and supports community wide book drives through schools, churches, community centers and corporations. These drives are well received in the community as many families have large numbers of surplus children's books. Children can participate in the collection and organization of donated books, as they seem to genuinely enjoy sharing their favorite books with children who might not own their own books. In addition to family donations of books, the Book Bank receives a small number of new books from authors, publishers and retailers. The Book Bank does not generally purchase inventory.

The Book Bank does not receive government funding and is entirely reliant on the generosity of individuals, foundations and corporations to cover its annual operating costs. The Book Bank is a registered charity in Canada.

The Book Bank has become an important literacy hub in the Regent Park community of Toronto. In its six years of operation, we have watched children grow from infants to confident and capable students. We have received countless anecdotal reports from parents and teachers that our service has improved the literacy rates and school performance of the many children who visit regularly. In 2013 we were lucky to hire two high school students to work part-time at the storefront. These students literally grew up at the Book Bank and are now great role models for our young customers.

The Book Bank has received inquiries from across Canada as well as from the United States and Europe, from individuals interested in





starting a book bank in their communities and those who have already started book banks of their own. Please consider doing this in your community. There is nothing more heart-warming than introducing children to the joy of book ownership and the magic of reading. We guarantee it will bring a smile to your face.

Note:

Images are used with permission.

Special Issue Exploring Indigenous Children's Literature

Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature invites contributions for a special issue exploring Indigenous Children's Literature from around the world. Taking our cue from studies like Clare Bradford's germinal *Unsettling Narratives*, which examines First Nations' issues in texts by Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors, this issue welcomes articles that focus on texts for children and young adults by Indigenous/Native/Aboriginal/First Nations authors. Topics might include, but are not limited to:

- nations within and across nations
- decolonization and survivance
- orality and storytelling
- history and context
- formation of identity
- borders and journeys
- place and the natural world
- spirituality and sacred folkways
- origin stories and the trickster figure
- tribal politics and sovereignty
- community and culture

Full papers should be submitted to the editor, Björn Sundmark (bjorn.sundmark@mah.se), and guest editor, Roxanne Harde (rharde@ualberta.ca), by 1 July 2015. Please see *Bookbird's* website at www.ibby.org/bookbird for full submission details. Papers which are not accepted for this issue will be considered for later issues of *Bookbird*.

Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Reading Revolution: Race, Literacy, Childhood, and Fiction, 1851-1911 by Barbara Hochman. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2011. 400 p. ISBN: 9781558498938.

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Reading Revolution*, Barbara Hochman uses paratextual material, readers' comments and marginalia in order to conduct a study of the cultural meaning of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). She explores how responses to Stowe's widely read abolitionist text began to change after the American Civil War, and is interested in "the powerful hold of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* on antebellum readers, its waning appeal for white readers at the turn of the century, its heightened appeal for African Americans of the same period, and the implications of that shift" (6). Throughout her analyses, Hochman looks to two distinct reading revolutions to understand the cultural significance of the novel: that which took place with the rise of print culture and mass-produced literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the reading revolution in the 1970s that returned the reader to literary scholarship. She suggests that *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the most heavily read novel in the antebellum period next to the Bible, became a different work during the Civil War, Reconstruction, and Segregation periods, and whereas the novel was once viewed as the most important piece of sentimental fiction in the nineteenth century, it became problematic during the 1880s and 1890s. Children's editions, stage adaptations, and cultural material of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* emerging in the late nineteenth-century reflect its shifting significance in American culture, and Hochman traces these shifts by considering consumer responses in the decades following the American Civil War.

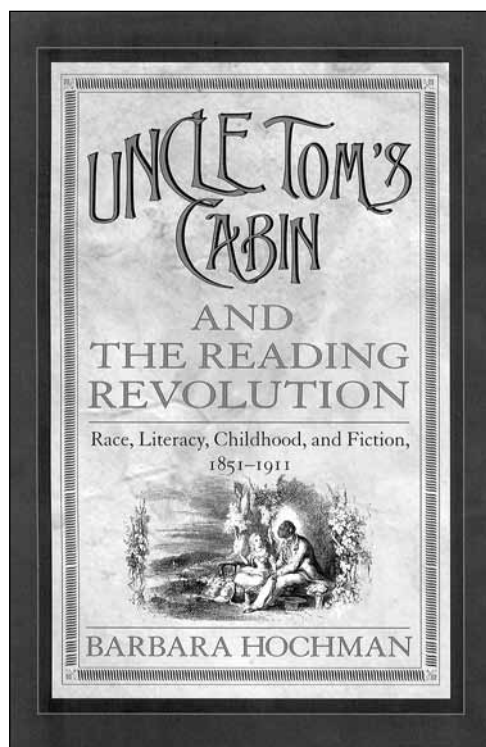
Hochman dedicates two of her seven chapters to the influence of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in children's lives, which will be my primary focus in the interest of *Bookbird* readers. Chapter 4 looks at the cultural influence of *Pictures and Stories from Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853), an illustrated children's edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which Hochman suggests had a particular appeal to antebellum child readers in the North, "in part because the book violated widely shared conventions for antebellum children's literature" (105). She notes that this particular edition "radicalizes" *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by minimizing racialized language and emphasizing the themes of fairy tale and legend in the figures of Topsy and Harry. She explores the two child characters throughout the chapter, and is interested in the ways they resist racial stereotypes in *Pictures and Stories* and assert themselves not as "objects of sympathy, but subjects for identification" (108). The notion of deep character identification was a subject of anxiety in the nineteenth century—sympathetic reading was encouraged, but "ministers, educators, and benevolent reformers ... cautioned against the confusion that the reading of fiction might produce through identification" (109)—but Hochman suggests that Stowe

actually encourages this absorptive reading and persuades white child readers to place themselves in the positions of Harry and Topsy. As the early children's edition avoids racial markers while emphasizing universal children's behavior in the young black characters, Hochman looks at the ways *Pictures and Stories* constructs Eva as a character for children to imitate while inviting young readers to identify with the child slave characters. She concludes her chapter with the reminder that each child responds differently to what they read, yet *Pictures and Stories* welcomes the white child reader to align their own experiences with those of Harry and Topsy, thereby "challeng[ing] generic norms and expand[ing] the experiences available to young readers" (130).

In Chapter 7, the second chapter dedicated to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a children's text, Hochman turns her focus to a later edition of the novel as a children's book and traces its cultural influence at the turn of the twentieth century. Stowe died in 1896, the same year that segregation became nation-wide practice in America, and her death sparked a rise in reprinting and new editions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, including the tremendously popular children's edition, *Young Folks Uncle Tom's Cabin*, edited by Grace Duffie Boylan in 1901 (illus. Ike Morgan). Hochman explores how *Young Folks* reflects the cultural shifts in segregated America, particularly as it stifles Stowe's agenda of "white social responsibility, religious faith, black literacy, and spiritual equality between the races" and perpetuates racist images of the African American as foolish minstrel; in this later children's edition, Topsy is no longer the abused, thoughtful child but rather a minstrel caricature meant to entertain, and Hochman suggests that her seemingly "natural" inability to learn or relate to Eva, the enshrined white middle-class child, reinstates the social and class hierarchies that advocate racial binaries as natural law in turn-of-the-century America (206). Hochman traces childhood development theories in the period, as children's literature being a distinct genre became well-established in the 1890s, and with the increase in printed texts designated specifically

for children, didacticism was often replaced with imagination and fancy. Rather than inviting the child reader to identify with the suffering slave children, as is seen in *Pictures and Stories*, Hochman argues that *Young Folks* relies heavily on minstrelsy and encourages young readers to view Topsy only from a distance. Despite of the novel's reinscription of segregated America, Hochman points to its redeeming qualities as it brings slavery to the attention of young readers and actually allows Topsy and Harry to remain free in the United States.

Throughout *Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Reading Revolution*, Hochman employs strategies of historical materialism to understand reader responses—both from adults and children—to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in antebellum, Civil War, and post-bellum America, and traces how



emerging editions reflect cultural shifts occurring in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By focusing on editions for both children and adults, Hochman is able to cover enormous ground and draw powerful conclusions regarding the cultural influence of the novel. The book offers an informative notes section along with an extensive index and logically organized chapters. Hochman is able to contribute innovative discourse to a novel that has been heavily criticized over the past century and a half, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Reading Revolution* will be essential to Stowe scholars, researchers in American children's literature, and enthusiastic general readers alike.

Samantha Christensen, University of Alberta, Canada.

Picturebooks: Representation and Narration edited by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer. New York: Routledge, 2014. 239 p. ISBN 9780415818018.

The goals of Routledge's Children's Literature and Culture series, as defined by its founder, Jack Zipes, are "to enhance research in this field and ... point to new directions that bring together the best scholarly work throughout the world." A recent publication in the series, *Picturebooks: Representation and Narration*, edited by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer, unequivocally meets these criteria. The twelve articles in this collection exemplify the outstanding achievements of some pioneers and most respected theorists in western Children's Literature scholarship of the past twenty-five years and articulate the "new directions" they are forging. Some revisit familiar picturebooks; others travel through new terrains; all open promising portals for future exploration.

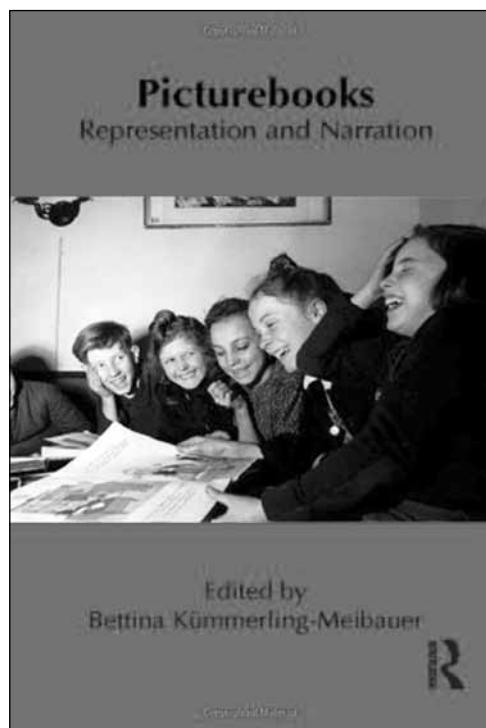
The collection has three theoretical clusters. Part I, comprising five articles, focuses on "Crossing Genre Boundaries: Artists' Books, Wordless Picturebooks, and Picturebooks for Adults." "Boundaries" is interpreted variously for explorations of visual and verbal strategies shared by children's and adult's literature, text (however limited)-image synergies, and innovative deconstructions of a book. Included are articles by Åse Marie Ommundsen, who traces the origins of a "Nordic phenomenon," adult picturebooks, from increasingly advanced picturebooks for children, and Emma Bosch, who interrogates the term "wordless" picturebook by investigating texts and peritexts and developing a system of classification to avoid mislabelling. More beneficial is Sandra Beckett's advice to question "the need to categorize artists' books or books of any kind." Renowned for her work on "crossover" literature, Beckett produces a trailblazing discussion of "The Art of Visual Storytelling: Formal Strategies in Wordless Picturebooks" and the influence that the artist's book has had on the picturebook. Beckett is the only contributor with an extended discussion of a non-western artist, Katsumi Komagata. While others have not considered non-European writer-illustrators,

there is ample opportunity to build on the laid foundations. As Beckett concludes, “[t]hese extraordinary ‘books’ present new structural formats for the book as well as new ways of reading it.” No one knows this better than Carole Scott, whose publications on picturebook aesthetics and communication are mandatory for anyone studying in this area, and whose article in this collection also examines the influence that the artist’s book has had on the picturebook, particularly its materiality. This group of essays is appropriately rounded off by Evelyn Arizpe, whose extensive publications on literacies and reader response are at the core of Children’s Literature scholarship, and who appeals for more interdisciplinary research into “the ways in which illustrators invite readers to make meaning and how readers respond to these invitations.”

Arizpe’s appeal segues well to the three articles in Part II, “Change, Emotions, and Hybridity: Characters in Picturebooks.” Nina Christensen’s “‘Thought and dream are heavenly vehicles’: Character, *Bildung*, and Aesthetics in Stian Hole’s Garmann Trilogy (2006-2010),” also advises against compartmentalization by eradicating boundaries between instruction and delight, education and art, through the concept of *bildung*, which captures both the characters’ processes of change and the potential transformative effect that the reading experience can trigger. The heart of this book, and the most cogent discussion on the affective nature of text-image interanimation, is Maria Nikolajeva’s “‘The Penguin Looked Sad’: Picturebooks, Empathy and Theory of Mind.” This prolific scholar, pioneer in picturebook theory, takes us into the cognitive sciences, draws on empirical evidence and psychological theories of empathy and mind-reading to reach her conclusion that “it is in the meeting space between words and images that the emotional tension is created. Cognitive criticism makes this space more visible.” What makes Nikolajeva’s recent work so important is its advocacy of the role that picturebooks can play in honing the potential for empathy and mind-reading (versus “identification”) in the youngest readers. The matchstick figure

with its hybridity and seeming incompleteness, discussed by Kümmerling-Meibauer and Jörg Meibauer in the next chapter, may not invite mind-reading, but does evoke empathy. They also explore the connection between the matchstick figure and children’s drawings, suggesting that “the impact of children’s drawings on picturebook artists has not yet been well investigated, even though it opens up a new field of research for different disciplines and perspectives.”

As with this article on the matchstick figure, the four articles in Part III, “Interpictoriality and Visual Clues in Picturebooks,” all suggest some specific “new directions” for picturebook studies. And, as Kümmerling-Meibauer indicates in the introduction, this third part “returns to the themes of the first one, examining the sophisticated



double address that defines modern picturebooks.” María José Lobato Suero and Beatriz Hoster Cabo contextualize this “double address” in a pedagogical framework by providing guidelines to train reader-mediators for the advanced visual literacy essential to understand the intertextuality of modern picturebooks. Janet Evans’s “Audience, Theme, and Symbolism in Wolf Erlbruch’s *Duck, Death and the Tulip*” would be helpful for anyone in a mediating role in discussions of historical representations of death and their transformation. Nina Goga’s “Learn to Read. Learn to Live: The Role of Books and Book Collections in Picturebooks” pursues what Nikolajeva, in *New Directions in Picturebook Research* (Routledge), identifies as an often neglected avenue: setting. Goga examines representations of book collections for both the cultural values and potential for personal formation and even transformation. In the final chapter, Agnes-Margrethe Bjorvand discusses two other often ignored elements, prologue and epilogue pictures, with reference to Astrid Lindgren’s picturebooks. Although the functions vary for readers and depend on the kind and number of readings of a picturebook, some functions are common to both these peritextual elements. Bjorvand describes these as redundant and expanding functions, arguing that the latter best complement Lindgren’s text by extending the narrative and opening up interpretations before the story begins and after it ends.

This collection builds a backstory for modern picturebooks and picturebook research by laying the historical foundations of picturebook theory in the editor’s introduction and many contributors. It also provides valuable projections of the myriad directions for picturebooks and research. As the editor concludes, “These essays demonstrates that picturebooks—especially those that challenge children’s emotional, cognitive, linguistic, and aesthetic engagement—have much to teach us about how young people enter the world of fiction and imagination.”

Lesley D. Clement, Lakehead University

Illustration of Children’s Books: History, Definitions, and Genres by Zohreh Ghaeni. Tehran: The Research Institute on the History of Children’s Literature in Iran, 2011. 520 p. ISBN: 9786009032556.

Most Iranian art majors are interested in the illustration of children’s books; however, they encounter few scholarly texts concerned with this budding field of inquiry. Here is a unique theoretical book that focuses on the history of children’s illustration around the world, including Iran, and discusses the relevant definitions, genres, visual elements, and audience response-types essential to studying the profession. While some researchers have already commented on children’s illustration from an aesthetic view, this book discusses illustration in relation to the text it compliments.

The book is divided into four sections and thirteen chapters. In the

preface, the author talks about her methods and her criteria for the selections provided and how she aims to improve visual literacy in the illustration world. Chapter one begins with a description of the ancient history of illustration, which explores handwriting and calligraphy invention. The reader is introduced to the invention of the printing press in chapter two and is given examples on how the process of publishing illustrated books has changed over time. Chapter three analyzes the first illustrations done before the advent of the printing industry in Iran, and

techniques such as *eidisazi* (a technique of illustration) and wood molding are described. Lithographic printing and book making are also explained from a historical perspective. As lithographic printing and book designing are the main focus of the author, she concentrates on maktab-khane illustrated books (traditional primary school based on Islamic themes) and children's picture books by naming different painters from this period.

Chapter four discusses children's illustration from 1920 to 1960. Image production in textbooks, character design, innovation in printing, and illustration techniques are covered here as well. In chapter five the author attempts to locate the highpoint of Iranian illustration between 1960 and 1979. The author goes on to attribute the innovation in illustration techniques in Iran to the following proceedings: heightened printing influence and advances in lithography by the Franklin Publishing House in Iran, the influence of different painters of the Fine Arts faculty of Tehran University, and by the contact made by western art and international universities

The second part of the book has four chapters and include the following titles: "The Picture Books", "The 20th Century Phenomenon", "The Illustration of Children's Books in Iran from 1979 to Date", and "New Illustrations on Ancient Myths and International Awards." Chapter nine focuses on children's illustration awards, specifically the Hans Christian Andersen and Astrid Lingern Memorial Awards. In the third section the definitions, genres, and visual elements of picture books are discussed and are interpreted with precise examples, and in section four studies on audience are considered. Here Ghaeni maintains the importance of the audience in this field and discusses illustration's affirming effect on readers' lives.

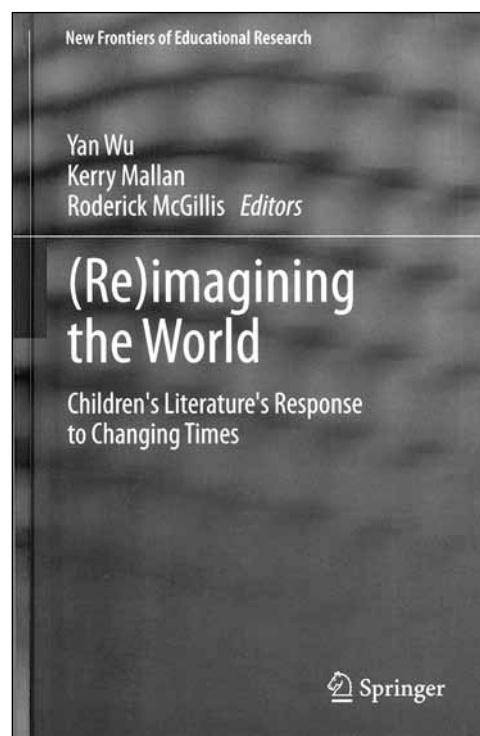
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(Re)imagining the World: Children's Literature's Response to Changing Times edited by Yan Wu, Kerry Mallan, and Roderick McGillis. Heidelberg: Springer, 2013. 157 p. Print. ISBN: 9780141977447.

This thin and expensive collection of essays operates under the premise that children's literature reimagines the world in ways that "enable young people to think beyond limits, to realize the options, and to imagine the kind of life that a prosperous future could hold" (xi). While well-theorized studies of just how literature written for children does those things are both welcome and useful, *(Re)imagining the World* hangs its chapters together under a series of words "that are not specifically associated with literary or cultural studies" (xii). The editors invited a dozen scholars, many of them leading voices in the field, to structure their contributions around these words: reading, knowledge, consumption, discovery, childhoods, imagination, migrancy, food, empathy, monsters, memory, and future. The Introduction gives the word "Privacy" a cursory reading, in addition to offering brief, if disjointed, abstracts of the chapters. After describing Xu Xu's reading of imagination in modern Chinese children's literature, the editors baldly state, "The example of China should prove heuristic. A recent study of national identity through children's books is Miriam Verena Richter [sic], *Creating the National Mosaic...*" (xv). I am left wondering what the example of China will enable me or Chinese children or children more generally to discover. If the reader is meant to link this highly general claim back to "the correlation between childhood and nationhood at three historical moments in modern China," then I am also left wondering how the specific example of nationhood in modern China can have much of anything to do with childhood and national identity in the literatures of any number of other countries (xv). Xu's chapter, which "explores the cultural roots of a particular nation, China," offers a detailed and specific, if too brief, reading of that particularity, rather than any kind of heuristic pattern (69). That brevity is, to my mind, the chief problem with this collection. A disjointed introduction does not make or break an anthology of scholarly essays, but not giving scholars enough freedom and space to fully explore their assigned words just might, and several of the chapters could have benefitted from expanded and more detailed readings.

Even so, many of the chapters in *(Re)imagining the World* offer particularly useful ways of thinking about children's literature from a variety of countries. The lead essay, Erica Hateley's "Reading: From Turning the Page to Touching the Screen," analyzes a number of picturebooks to consider how children's literature today depicts reading as an act of subjectivity and agency. Her turn to how new technologies are now shaping reading shows how digital texts or accompanying apps can fall short in stimulating children's imaginations, even as she suggests they have the potential to re-imagine reading "as a technology of the self" (11). In the following chapter, Alice Curry similarly looks at the digital landscape, in this case analyzing two YA novels, Veronica Roth's



Divergent and Bertagna's *Exodus*, as examples of how contemporary fiction responds to burgeoning digital "knowledgescapes" (18). Curry ably demonstrates how both of these dystopian texts show information literacy as "a combination of mastering the technical apparatus through which knowledge is communicated and spatially navigating the visual ecology" (21).

Equally impressive are Margaret Mackey's reading of consumerism and consumption in early North American texts and Ingrid Johnston's consideration of migration in Canadian books for children. The detailed analyses in these chapters, and their solid grounding in theory and criticism, make them both interesting and useful scholarship. I would have liked to see more diversity in the chapters; nine of the twelve focus only on Anglo-American/ANZAC texts for children. The remaining three are on Chinese children's literature, unsurprising given that Beijing Normal University sponsors the book and its series, *New Frontiers of Educational Research*. Of those three, "Childhoods in Chinese Children's Texts—Continuous Reconfiguration for Political Needs" by Lijun Bi and Fang Xiangshu Fang, like the chapter by Xu, offers a historical overview of the field, and Yan Wu's contribution is an interview with a ten-year-old girl from Beijing. These three chapters go some way in explaining how Chinese children's literature reimagines the world, but the collection would be far stronger if such imaginings from the Arab or Hispanic or Slavic or Nordic (and etc.) world had at least some representation.

Roxanne Harde, University of Alberta, Canada

Children's Literature on the Move: Nations, Translations, Migrations. Eds. Nora Maguire and Beth Rodgers. Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2013. 167 p. ISBN: 9781846824128.

In *Children's Literature on the Move: Nations, Translations, Migrations*, Nora Maguire and Beth Rodgers have compiled essays on children's literature from various parts of the world in order "to explore the various roles played by children's literature within the processes of creating and contesting notions of collective identity and belonging" (9). By examining how children's literature from other parts of the world negotiate nation, globalisation, and post-nationality, Maguire and Rodgers wish to engage in "promoting and progressing children's literature in Ireland" (9).

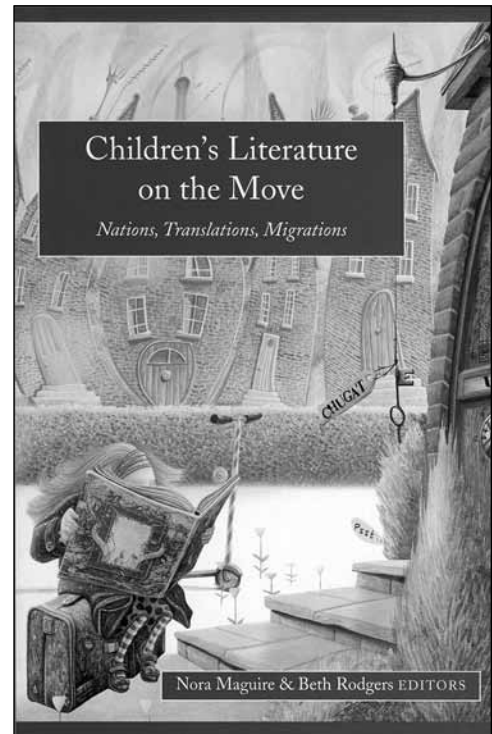
Maguire and Rodgers have divided the book into three sections. The first section examines case studies of children's literature in Turkey, Estonia, and Britain in order to show how children's literature is complicit in creating a homogeneous national identity. Deniz Arzuk and Mari Nari both argue that language was used to re-imagine Turkey and Estonia, respectively. While in Turkey children of the elite were taught to artificially view the country as an "homogeneous nation" (23), songs

in Estonian fantasy fiction “were rooted in the Estonian language and they ... exclude[d] the Russian community present in Estonia” (43). The ability children’s literature has to create myths also applies to Ireland. In the second section, Celia Keenan claims that false assumptions of the origins of the Old Irish poem “Pangur Ban” are based on a desire to create a national identity untainted by foreigners. It is evident in these four articles that exclusionary politics structure the literary process of nation building. Moreover, they also show how such literature can be insidious as it moulds young readers into child citizens based on the specific socio-historical needs of the countries.

In sections two and three, the editors offer articles that discuss new ways of configuring the nation through transcultural children’s literature. Valerie Coghlan, Cliona O Gallchoir, and Ruth Scales propose that such literatures offer a solution to the problem of homogeneity by creating an identity that expands beyond the borders of the country of origin. Characters are often depicted as embodying a liminal position where they struggle with the loss of their home and attempt to find a sense of belonging. Ultimately, multiculturalism or living in double cultures is advantageous. For instance, Coghlan asserts that works of emigrant Siobhan Dowd are productive as they provide a social commentary of Ireland’s shortcomings and “challenge the sentimentality underlying the nostalgic view of Ireland” (99). Scales proposes that Algerian-French writer Faïza Guène helps to rewrite the dominant racialized representations of the working-class Algerian community in France, and empower the Algerian-French youth. Justyna Deszcz-Tryhubczak highlights how authors have used fairy tales and graphic memoirs to discuss “individual stances on historical events” in opposition to official reports on Polish history. This strategy is advantageous as it has ensured a “multiplicity of interpretations” (137). Deszcz-Tryhubczak elaborates that these texts have led to the rise of games and websites, which enable children to move beyond rote-learning to become active participants of history and identity formation.

In order to promote access to children’s literature from around the world, the book proposes the need for translation. According to Caoimhe Nic Lochlainn, translated texts have often gone through a process of excessive domestication in Ireland. This act of appropriation is unfavourable because it prevents children from learning about the rest of the world and reinforces “insularity in Irish Gaelic literature” (86). In more recent years, Siobhán Parkinson has used her publishing company—Little Island—to publish translated works. She claims that her firm resists domestication:

We do not set out to localize the books we translate, or to erase the markers of the originating culture. On the contrary,



we encourage translators to leave personal and place names in the original language, for example, so that readers are aware that they are reading a book that was written out of a different language and culture. (156)

The firm tries to hire a reader who is familiar with the particular foreign language to decide if a text is worth publishing. Since it is impossible to have readers of all languages, and many books in Europe are translated into German, Parkinson suggests that having “a reading knowledge of German can, for example, make Swedish or Dutch titles accessible” (154). As Lochlainn notes, Parkinson’s method has its limitations because there is a politics to what gets lost in translation as the “target language [can] be incapable of rendering foreign or exotic elements” (86). The demand for translated literature continues to be low in Ireland and thus, Parkinson ends the book by calling for greater support for the publishing of translated works in Anglo-centric societies such as Ireland.

This book is useful for scholars specialising in international children’s literature, Irish children’s literature, postcolonial studies, transcultural literature and/or translation studies. This text carefully examines language and storytelling to reconceptualise Benedict Anderson’s concept of nationalism via imagined communities amidst globalisation. The essays largely focus on works situated in Europe or North America. What requires further address is how children’s literature from other parts of the world might contribute to the discussion of identity formation. More specifically, how would such books advance children’s literature in Ireland? The editors need to clarify what translated literatures have to offer the discussion of identity politics that English writing authors across the globe cannot offer. Furthermore, translation is one possible solution to increase awareness of other kinds of literature, but it is not the only solution. More research needs to be done to investigate the existence of children’s literature written by contemporary immigrants in Ireland in order to consider how their texts might also complicate what it means to be Irish.

Ayantika Mukherjee, University of Alberta

The Jane Addams Children’s Book Award: Honoring Children’s Literature for Peace and Social Justice by Susan C. Griffith. Plymouth, UK: Scarecrow Press, 2013. 182 p. ISBN: 0810892022.

Regardless of the reader’s familiarity with the life and legend of Jane Addams, Griffith’s book provides a well-researched and well-written contribution to Addams scholarship. However, the main intent of the book is not to shine a light on Addams herself, but on the children’s book award named for her, and it does so in a comprehensive and authoritative manner. It is apparent that every chapter has been thoroughly

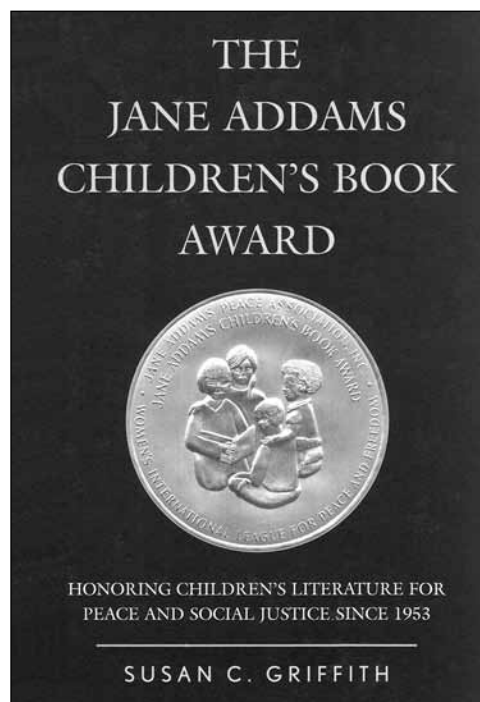
researched and a bibliography is included at the end of each one, should the reader be interested in reading further. Rather than maintaining a singular narrative thread, the book reads as a collection of essays, each connected in some way with the Jane Addams Children's Book Award. The book is divided into two parts: the first part addressing the history of the award and the second part describing the award process and the books that have been recipients.

The history of the award begins, appropriately, with a history of Addams herself. Drawing from multiple sources, Griffith begins her book by constructing a brief, but engaging picture of Addams as a person and the nature of the work that she did. Particularly interesting is Griffith's discussion on "story-thinking, [a process of] reflecting on the meaning of experience through composing and framing stories" (4). Of course, this is a useful way of thinking about literature in general, and certainly is applicable to children's literature and the meaning that children can take from such stories.

Following the introduction to Addams is a discussion of *The Cay* that demonstrates the ways in which children's literature can challenge the perspectives of young readers and evoke a sense of social justice. After briefly explaining the novel, most of the discussion centers around the controversy surrounding it, which was given the Jane Addams Children's Book Award in 1970, only to be allegedly rescinded in 1975. Not only does this controversy illustrate the effect that the award can have on a novel's reception, but it also demonstrates the often difficult and nuanced decision making that goes into choosing a recipient of the award. Griffith also demonstrates the value of discussing the historical controversy surrounding the book with modern young readers.

The focus of the book shifts back to the person of Jane Addams in the third chapter, which discusses how she has been portrayed in biographies written for young audiences. Particularly interesting in this chapter is a discussion of the tendency of biographers to put Addams on a pedestal as the saintly embodiment of compassion, and how this not only discredits the real, hard work that Addams did, but also makes it less likely for people to think that they can make a difference themselves. However, Griffith has found a few biographies that offer a more realistic and nuanced treatment of Addams, and she also provides brief analyses of the virtues and drawbacks of each one. If you are looking for good sources to teach children about Addams, then this chapter is a good place to start.

As a former chair of the Jane Addams Children's Book Award Committee, and a committee member for nine years, Griffith possesses first hand knowledge of the award process, which she shares in the second part of the book. In the fourth chapter, it is interesting to see the guidelines for evaluation of award candidates and how these guidelines



have changed since the award was established in 1953. Copies of the original 1957 award guidelines, as well as the updated version of 1994, are also provided in the appendices.

Through a discussion of the selection process, Griffith demonstrates how difficult it can be to determine award winners each year. One of the difficulties is how to determine categories for the award. Sorting by age seems to be the simplest method, and that is how the award is currently divided, with a category for older children and a category for younger children, which used to be a category for picture books. However, the increasing popularity of picture books for older readers has made it necessary to eliminate the separated picture book category, which creates the added complication of comparing works that are essentially in a different medium. Even determining categories based on age is more complicated than it would seem. Where is the line drawn between younger children and older children? Should age categories be based on books that children can read alone or should they allow for books that are mediated by an adult? These are a few of the questions that Griffith discusses, and they give some indication of the difficult and subjective nature of the awards process.

The final chapter of the book is an annotated bibliography of all of the award winners and honor books from 1953 up to 2012. Each brief annotation contains a synopsis of the book, frequently accompanied by a short note about the author. This bibliography is a great way to find books that have been vetted by the awards committee and, even better, the following appendix allows you to effectively browse the books by subject and theme. Also appearing in the appendices is a chronology of the key events in the Award's history as well as a timeline of the life of Jane Addams, including her published works.

Taken as a whole, the main value of the book is as an excellent selection tool for librarians and educators to find books that inspire children to think about issues of peace and social justice. A list of titles that have won the award, organized by theme and topic, adds immense usefulness to it as a selection tool. The extensive number of sources Griffith provides in each chapter also makes this a good place to start for researchers interested in Addams scholarship. Of course, anyone else interested in Addams, the award, or children's literature in general would also find it a quick and informative read.

Erin Peters, University of British Columbia

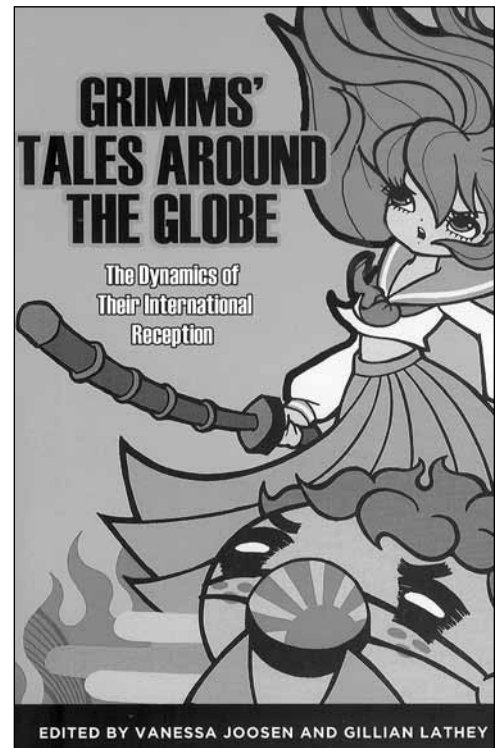
Grimms' Tales Around the Globe: The Dynamics of Their International Reception edited by Vanessa Joosen and Gillian Lathey. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2014. 320 p. ISBN: 9780814339206.

Kinder-und Hausmarchen by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm—otherwise known as the “Brothers Grimm (1)”—“exerts enormous influence

in many countries of the world” (130). Many of their fairy tales are regarded as classics, and are known and loved by adults and children all over the globe. In Vanessa Joosen and Gillian Lathey’s *Grimms’ Tales Around the Globe: The Dynamics of Their International Reception*, scholars explore how Grimm narratives, told in nurseries and schools, libraries and living rooms, through oral and textual means, through film and stage play, have been received. Chapters are devoted to discussion of the Grimms’ tales in Croatia to India, with two pieces devoted to Korea’s reaction to these stories in different time periods. While the Grimms are ranked within the “top ten most frequently translated author’s in the world,” this volume illustrates the great variability in the ways the stories are told, indicating that the function they have served varies from context to context (1).

The fourteen chapters of *Grimms’ Tales Around the Globe* are organized into two parts: Part One is essays on Cultural Resistance and Assimilation, while Part Two focuses on Reframings, Paratexts and Multimedia translations. Joosen and Lathey remark in their introduction that among the contributions emerges five themes, which become easily apparent through a reading of the book.

Malini Roy’s chapter “The Grimm Brother’s Kahaniyan: Hindi Resurrections of the Tales in Modern India by Harikrishna Devsare” provides an explanation of Devsare’s distinctive perspective on the tales he very closely recounts in a Hindi translation of *Kinder-und Hausmarchen*, which reflects “The Grimms As a Source of Inspiration for International Folklorism” (3). Grimms’ tales have often been adapted to suit the cultural context of particular nations, illustrating “Ambivalent Innovations as Children’s Literature.” Isabel Hernández and Nieves Martín-Rogero take on a study of the Grimms’ tales in Spain and conclude that translations of the Grimms’ fairy tales have been reflective of Spain’s “changing sociopolitical conditions” (73). When a “conservative ideology” has dominated the country’s landscape, it was much less important that translations maintain “literary” fidelity; transmitting moral values has taken a back seat to providing “more accurate renditions of the original text” when “progressive ideological winds” have been victorious (73). The observations of Hernández and Martín-Rogero in their chapter on Spain underline the relationship the editor’s note between “innovation through translation and cultural context adaptation” (8). In a chapter titled “Fairy-Tale Scripts and Intercultural Conceptual Blending in Modern Korean Film and Television Drama,” Lee utilizes a comparison of the “first kiss” to humorously illustrate conceptual blending (278), making it clear that the Grimms’ works have been mediated in a variety of ways, highlighting not only the “importance and difficulty of “Translation,” but also how “a spectrum of transformation now exists, from the



mediator whose intention is to produce a faithful rendering that may nonetheless include degrees of domestication, censorship, and revision to the playful or subversive creator” (8-9). The fourth emerging theme from this collection is “The Visual” (10). Mayako Murai’s Chapter “Before and After the ‘Grimm Boom’: Reinterpretations of the Grimms’ Tales in Contemporary Japan” provides readers with actual images alongside her text, which has otherwise sparingly utilized visual references to assist the reader in discussions of the visual. Other chapters, such as Sara Hines’ “German Stories/British Illustrations: Production Technologies, Reception, and the Visual Dialogue across Illustrations from ‘The Golden Bird’ in the Grimms’ Editions, 1823-1909,” would have been enhanced through the use of the art in discussion in the author’s piece. “Political and Ideological Issues”, as the fifth and final theme indicated by the editors, is evident throughout, an example of how children’s literature has always been recognized as a powerful influence in the life of a nation.

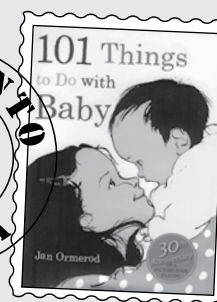
Alexandra Michaelis-Vultorius concludes her chapter by stating that “the flexibility of the tales

to adapt to any medium and to any land, language, and culture and to assume new meanings and identities [which] ha[ve] conferred on the stories the ability to bridge generations”, a statement which demonstrates the breadth of the Grimms’ dissemination (94). A comprehensive exposition of the reception of Grimms’ tales the world over would be an enormous undertaking, one that would certainly take more than the 312 pages that this book devotes, and the editors readily admit that such a task has not been realized with this book (3). However, Joosen and Lathey have made an excellent start. *Grimms’ Tales Around the Globe: The Dynamics of Their International Reception* is an important contribution to the discussion of stories that have appealed to imaginations around the world. Those just beginning their study of the Grimms’ beloved tales will not be disappointed, and established scholars of children’s texts will find this collection to be a valuable addition to their knowledge of Grimms’ fairy tales. Despite its limitations, *Grimms’ Tales Around the Globe* covers a lot of ground.

Andrea Zerebeski, University of Alberta

In this 30th anniversary edition of the picturebook classic, *101 Things to Do with Baby*, Jan Ormerod narrates activities for elder children to participate in with their infant siblings. Alongside beautiful illustrations, an older sister and her parents explore various activities that go along with the daily routines of families with small children. The family plays with baby, collectively takes part in baby exercises such as tummy time and rolling over, and takes baby to the park for picnics. His older sister learns to dress him, feed him, and help with the household chores while keeping him by her side. While the focus of the text is the baby, Ormerod also stresses the importance of one-on-one time between the older child and her parents while the baby sleeps. The picturebook does not follow a particular storyline, as it is written in list-form with accompanying illustrations, however we are invited to witness the bond between a sister and her infant brother strengthen as they play together. The exercises Ormerod offers are just as pertinent today as they were thirty years ago, which is an invaluable resource for parents welcoming another child into the family.

Samantha Christensen



Jan Ormerod

101 Things to Do with Baby

Toronto: Groundwood,
1984, 2014.

32 p.
ISBN: 9781554983797
(Picturebook, 4+)

Knuffle Bunny Meets Rosa Parks

Preisgekrönte
amerikanische
Bilderbücher
aus der Sammlung
Lawrence R. Sipe



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“Knuffle Bunny Meets Rosa Parks” at the International Youth Library, Award-Winning American Picture Books from the Lawrence R. Sipe Collection

The late Dr. Lawrence R. Sipe, Professor of literature and education at the Penn Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania—Philadelphia, was an expert picture book researcher and collector. One focus of his academic studies was the interplay between picture, text, and paratext in picture books. As a former International Youth Library Research

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by CLAUDIA SOEFFNER



Claudia Soeffner graduated from Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich with an MA degree in English literature and linguistics. Since 2001, she has been working at the International Youth Library, where she is responsible for the English language section.

Fellow, Dr. Sipe had close connections to the library, so in 2011, after his unexpected death, his heirs donated his children's and youth book collection to the International Youth Library.

The Lawrence R. Sipe Collection consists of approximately 4,200 volumes, primarily English-language children's and young adult books from the 1990s up to 2011. Multicultural books, African-American literature, and fairy tales feature prominently in the collection. Two-thirds of the collection consist of picture books, including biographical picture books, science books, and—as a particular highlight of the collection—multicultural picture books. In addition, the collection also includes young adult fiction, realistic fiction, pop-up books, artist's books, as well as historical books for children and teenagers. Secondary literature about picture books, literacy, and reading behavior in children perfectly complements the collection.

The Lawrence R. Sipe Collection was catalogued in the years 2012 to 2013 as a special collection within the International Youth Library that is now accessible to researchers and the general public both at our research library and through inter-library loan. The cataloguing of the collection was funded through the U. S. Consulate General, the Friends of the International Youth Library, and through internal funding by the International Youth Library. The generous donation as well as the cataloguing of this exceptional collection was celebrated with an exhibition at the International Youth Library entitled "Knuffle Bunny Meets Rosa Parks" from March 14th to April 27th 2014. This exhibition focused mainly on the award-winning picture books of the collection and put particular emphasis on the distinctive features of American picture books.



Picture Books from the USA have long been at home in German nurseries. In the middle of the 20th century, picture book protagonists such as Maurice Sendak's *Wild Things*, Eric Carle's *Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and Dr Seuss's *Cat in the Hat* travelled to Germany, while children today laugh at the frolics of Ian Falconer's confident pig Olivia, suffer with Mo Willems's poor little Knuffle Bunny, or enjoy Peggy Rathman's mischievous bedtime stories. Moreover, exciting and mysterious works by American illustrators enrich the German market, e.g., the mostly textless surrealist books by David Wiesner and Peter Sis's adventures, illustrated with great attention to detail.

Still, Germans encounter only a small section of the entire American picture book production because it is mainly witty, bold, comic-book-like works and surrealist books that are likely to be taken on by German publishers. Yet, American illustrators have much more to offer. Their creative output ranges from quiet, poetic books, e.g., those by Erin E. Stead, and sumptuously or decoratively illustrated retellings of folk tales and fables, such as the works by Paul O. Zelinsky and Jerry

Pinkney, to fascinating concept books by Laura Vaccaro Seeger and others. In addition to producing realistic and hyper-realistic pictures and tales about everyday life with both human and animal protagonists, many authors—Bryan Collier, Kadir Nelson, Christopher Myers, Lane Smith, and David Small, to name a few—also tackle political, cultural, and historical topics.

The “Knuffle Bunny Meets Rosa Parks” exhibition presented highlights of contemporary American picture book art. It is important to keep in mind that the focus for this selection was not solely on illustration and illustrative techniques but on the picture book as a complete work of art; therefore, the successful combination of illustration, text and layout was central. Picture books that have been awarded the Caldecott Medal during the past 20 years were used as the core collection for this exhibition. While most of them belong to Lawrence R. Sipe collection, they were complemented by important books from the collection of the International Youth Library.

In order to make this exhibition accessible to both adults and children, the more than 180 books were not presented chronologically or according to illustration techniques. Instead, they were divided into six thematic groups. Some of these groups—namely the stories about everyday life, fantasy adventures, and books about creativity—represent topics that are popular in picture books in the US as well as in Europe. Other groups point out American peculiarities that are mirrored in the US picture book production: diverse landscapes, American history, and the USA as a multicultural society of immigrants. An overview of these three specific groups follows:



From Coast to Coast: America as Place

With a size of almost four million square miles, America is a vast country. It stretches from the Atlantic Coast to the Pacific Coast and across the ocean to Hawaii, and it covers more than 25 degrees of latitude from North to South. The USA consists of mountain ranges, plains and valleys, large rivers and lakes, as well as deserts, tropical and subarctic regions, rural and urban areas, and many picture books reflect this immense variety.

Noisy and crowded urban environments are often represented in picture books: Christopher Myers’s *Black Cat* follows a cat on her prowl through the city; *Hot City* by R. Gregory Christie and Barbara Josse describes a brother-and-sister’s attempt to escape the city heat—both accounts of real life in big cities; illustrator Matteo Pericoli spent months drawing a detailed likeness of all the buildings along the shoreline of Manhattan for his *See the City*, while Steve Guarnaccia’s fanciful pictures offer a more abstract and colourful interpretation of ear-splitting city sounds in *Busy Busy City Street* written by Cari Meister.

Compared to the city noise and bustle, life in the countryside is much quieter. Mary Azarian's woodcut illustrations in *From Dawn Till Dusk* bring Natalie-Kinsey-Warnock's memories of her childhood on a farm in Vermont alive for readers. Langston Hughes and E. B. Lewis evoke the mystical power of rivers all over the world—including the great Mississippi—in *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*, and Bonnie and Arthur Geisert present a glimpse of daily life in a *Desert Town and a Mountain Town* respectively, executed in detailed etchings. A true celebration of the slow pace and patience of a country life can be found in Julie Fogliano's *And Then It's Spring*, expertly illustrated by Erin E. Stead's delicate woodblock and pencil illustrations.

History, Politics, and VIPs: America in the Past and Today

German picture books about politics or the history of Germany and its people are very hard to find. These topics are generally tackled in novels for older children or in non-fiction books. Not so in the USA. There historical, political, and biographical picture books play an important role in helping not only small children but also tweens and teens learn about their country, their people, and their history. Such books are frequently used by librarians and teachers to initiate discussion about a particular topic, such as Judith St. George and David Small's *So You Want to Be President?*, which offers humorous advice to would-be presidential candidates.

A striking number of US picture books focus on African American history, such as Shane W. Evans's *We March* about the 1963 March on Washington, Richard Michelson's *Busing Brewster*, a book about forced desegregation busing in the 1970s, tenderly illustrated by R.G. Roth, or *Boycott Blues – How Rosa Parks Inspired a Nation* by Andrea Davis Pinkney, with fittingly dark

pictures by her husband Brian Pinkney. Famous African Americans who fought for their rights, such as Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., or Harriet Tubman are the subjects of many biographical picture books, as are lesser known heroes, like Phillis Wheatley and aviator Bessie Coleman.

Joseph Bruchac's *Crazy Horse's Vision*, illustrated by S. D. Nelson in a mixture of modern and traditional style, describes an important childhood event of the famous Lakota warrior, is included in the collection, showing that the history and stories of Native Americans—though less often portrayed—are also represented.

Yet it is not only historical or political figures and events that merit a story; music and sports heroes are also popular picture book protagonists. Boxer Muhammad Ali's life career is told in Bryan Collier's trademark collages in *Twelve Rounds to Glory* by Charles R. Smith Jr. Other books focus on important baseball players such as Native American Louis Sockalexis and African American Satchel Paige. In *Blues Journey*, Walter Dean Myers's poetic



text and Christopher Myers's white-and-blue-ink paintings provide a powerful tribute to Blues music, while *When the Beat Was Born* by Laban Carrick Hill, illustrated by Theodore Taylor, introduces Jamaican-born Clive Campbell, aka DJ Kool Herc, who pioneered the sound of hip-hop music.

Welcome to the “Melting Pot”: America and Its Multicultural Society

America is a nation of immigrants, immigrants who came and are still coming from all over the world. Just like the various ingredients in a “tossed salad” keep their respective taste and flavour, the people who make up America's multi-ethnic society are proud of their different backgrounds and celebrate their cultural heritage, be

it European, African, Asian, or Latino. In fact, the Spanish-speaking community in the US has grown steadily in the past decades, so that major publishers now produce bilingual picture books or dual language editions in English and Spanish to cater for this large new market, as is seen in books such as *Estrellita en la ciudad grande / Estrellita in the Big City* by Samuel Caraballo and the Spanish illustrator Pablo Torrecilla.

In picture books, we find all kinds of thematic issues related to the multicultural society, be it the immigration experience and coming to terms with life in a different country—portrayed, for example, in Allen Say’s authentic watercolour illustrations in *Grandfather’s Journey* or *Tea with Milk*, and in Gabi Swiatkowska’s dream-like pictures for *My Name Is Yoon*, written by Helen Recorvits—or be it multi-cultural friendships, such as those featured in Peter Sis’s *Madlenka* and in Jacqueline Woodson’s *The Other Side*, illustrated by E. B. Lewis. In addition, immigrants and refugees have also brought their own stories to the US. Peter Sis’s *The Wall—Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain* and Uri Shulevitz’s *How I Learned Geography* speak of painful childhood memories from their former home countries. Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed’s *Four Feet, Two Sandals*, illustrated in subdued tones by Doug Chakya, takes readers on a journey to a refugee camp in Pakistan.



Folk tales and fables, themselves “immigrants” from other parts of the world, are also very popular with US authors and artists. They range from well-known tales, such as *Rapunzel*, lavishly illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky, and *The Lion and the Mouse*, a textless “retelling” of the Aesop fable in detailed watercolours by Jerry Pinkney, to Gerald McDermott’s *Musicians of the Sun*, a new version of an ancient Aztec myth, and *Sense Pass King*, a story from Cameroon retold by Katrin Tchana, illustrated by her mother Trina Scharf Hyman.

On the occasion of the opening of the exhibition, the International Youth Library was happy to welcome many international guests, including family and friends of the late Lawrence R. Sipe, the renowned illustrators David Wiesner and Christopher Myers, the members of the Hans Christian Andersen Award Jury, and the U. S. Consulate General in Munich. We would like to thank all those who have made this exhibition possible.

A bibliography of the exhibition is available on request (E-mail: info@ijb.de).

Claudia Söffner, International Youth Library, Munich, Germany



The exhibition *Silent Books. Final Destination Lampedusa* was launched at the 33rd IBBY Congress in London in 2012 as part of the project *Silent Books: From The World to Lampedusa and Back*. It is an international cultural initiative that aims at highlighting the quality and potential of wordless picture books while supporting the start-up of a children's library on the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa.

Over the last few years, illustration has been increasingly recognized as a separate artistic discipline in children's publishing. Works of an extraordinarily good quality and originality often include daring and innovative ideas that have come to hold an important place in picture books. In particular "wordless" or "silent books" books in which the story is completely contained in the images are finding an important place among picture books. Because of the challenge these books represent to their creators and the processes they activate in our understanding, they take on an artistic form that is based on an intelligent use of book format and layout with the reader.

The attention that books without words is attracting throughout the world amongst publishers and the public shows that the traditional boundaries between books for children and for adults have been overcome. It is not just by chance that international prizes, such as the *Bologna Ragazzi Award*, have been awarded to outstanding wordless books. In a world of globalized communications, wordless books can represent an extraordinary opportunity of openness, inclusion and sharing. By telling stories through images, they are particularly suited to overcoming linguistic barriers, something that often hinders the appreciation of a work that is mainly based on a written text. This can in turn benefit and enrich encounters between children and adults from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The Collection and Exhibition

Following the launch in 2012, IBBY National Sections contributed to the international collection of wordless books and over one hundred books were selected from twenty-three countries. Ten of these books were selected as exemplary examples for their originality,

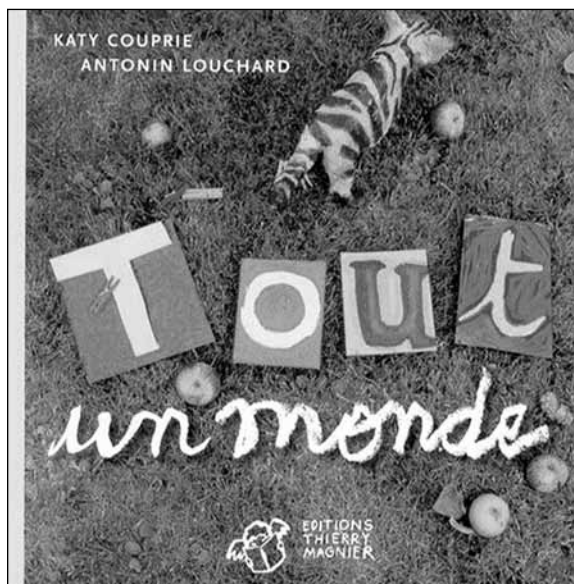
Compiled and edited by
ELIZABETH PAGE



Elizabeth Page is
IBBY's Executive Director

complexity and historical themes. A further three were awarded honorable mentions by Amnesty International, the *Palazzo delle Esposizioni* in Rome, and IBBY Italy.

The exhibition was inaugurated in Rome, at *Palazzo delle Esposizioni*, on 7 May 2013. Since then it was successfully exhibited in libraries, theatres, parks and historical buildings around Italy. The exhibition was launched at the international level at the IBBY Congress in Mexico City. From 2015 the books will start to tour the world. The institutions that have hosted the exhibition also organized many workshops and story-telling sessions to make children, teachers and parents familiar with wordless books. They have discovered the potential of these books as tools for encouraging inclusion, discovery and competence building. In the preface of the exhibition catalogue, Sophie Van der Linden says: “You have to have seen kids pick up these books over and over again and comment on them with their friends, taking pride in pointing out hidden details and the way things logically follow on from one another; and above all, you have to have experienced the fabulous silence that surrounds them when they read this kind of book, to really believe it.” The English version of the catalogue and the full list of Honor titles can be downloaded from the IBBY website.



One of the Honor Books

The Children's Library of Lampedusa

Because children and adults from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds can benefit from exploring *Silent Books* IBBY Italy decided to establish this innovative project, in particular in relation to the island of Lampedusa, which represents one of the main access routes to Europe for many people migrating from Africa and the Middle East. Therefore, since 2012 IBBY Italy has been collaborating with the City Council of Lampedusa to create a children's library on the island. The children and young people on Lampedusa were without a library and had no access to books that they could understand. Thanks to the intervention of the Mayor a suitable building was found in a central and easy-to-reach site, accessible to everyone: teachers, parents, school staff, tourists, but especially children and young people. An agreement between the Municipality of Lampedusa and IBBY Italia was signed in 2013 for the necessary refurbishment of the building and management of the library. IBBY Italia began to fundraise for the refurbishment. In collaboration with the City Council, they also



organized two series of reading-promotion activities on the island. In June and November 2013 many volunteers, including librarians, writers, teachers, librarians, authors, educators, travelled from all over Italy and enthusiastically offered their expertise, work and time to organize the first activities of the children's library.



During the November event, more than 49 events were organized involving over 800 children and young people. The library was not finished, but its doors were opened temporarily, hosting reading aloud events, workshops, training sessions for parents and teachers. The children were also made welcome as they visited and explored their new library. "Every day we went to school to promote the project and we organized activities with the children," wrote Laura Corrado, "and the response was extraordinary: the library was always full, the children's eyes shone in front of so many books." The project has now become part of a broader community development program that, in addition to children and

young people, is also addressed to women and families. To find out more about the project's progress or donate funds, please go to www.ibby.org > activities > silent books. The exhibition can be reserved through the IBBY Secretariat.



South Africa was admitted as a national section of IBBY in 1992 and the South African Children's Book Forum (SACBF) accepted the honor of representing the country's children's literature. After our successful hosting of the 29th IBBY Congress in Cape Town in 2004, the SACBF was re-named IBBY SA. Genevieve Hart, who lectures at the University of the Western Cape, has agreed to become Acting Chair of IBBY SA following Nonikiwe Mashologu. Genevieve knows IBBY well and she was in charge of the conference component of the 2004 Congress. Her appointment was warmly approved at the 2014 AGM, together with an enlarged Executive Committee.

As with many national sections, IBBY SA needs more members and more income, but there is a new atmosphere of positive determination here in the South African book world.

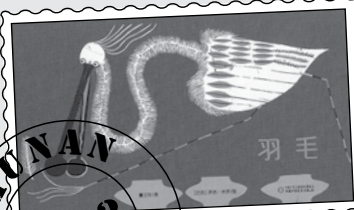
The AGM welcomed illustrator Alex Latimer as its guest speaker. His *South African Alphabet* ranges from Aardwolf to Zulu King, vwith D for Desmond Tutu, N for Nelson Mandela and T for Table Mountain. The “winds of change” are still blowing in South Africa!

Jay Heale



The Feather by Chinese author Wenxuan Cao and Brazilian illustrator Roger Mello tells how a feather seeks to discover from which bird she came. In the story, the feather asks various kinds of birds whether she belongs to them and always gets negative answers. Finally just when she is about to give up, the feather discovers that a hen is missing one feather! The ending leaves readers wondering about whether the feather indeed belongs to the hen. The feather’s quest embodies similar human philosophical enquiries: where do we come from? Where are we going? The ambiguity of the feather’s true home prompts readers to consider whether a definite answer is ever possible. The tapestry-like front cover depicting a gigantic bird and a feather on an uneven surface of cloth in combination with the images of ancient jars and urns frequently interwoven into the story suggests the ancientness of human philosophical enquiry. With the picturebook’s innovative design, vivid colors, and engaging story, readers are invited to embark on a satisfying journey of discovery and self-reflection.

Shi Xiaofei



Wenxuan Cao

羽毛 [The Feather]
Illus. Roger Mello

Hunan: Juvenile and Children’s
Publishing House, 2013
44 p.
ISBN: 9787514812756
(Picturebook, ages +6)

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

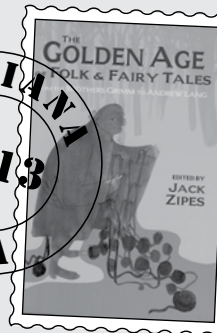
ca. 300 or 1000 words

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: Björn Sundmark, Email: bjorn.sundmark@mah.se

This expansive edited collection includes stories from the "Golden Age" of folklore and fairy tales (the period from 1812 to 1912). Jack Zipes begins with the collected tales of the Grimms in the early nineteenth century—stories that originate in European oral tradition—and moves toward European fairy tales emerging in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The stories are arranged thematically, with sections on brotherly love, the beast as bridegroom, abandoned children, and neglected daughters, to name a few, and each section opens with a brief introduction from Zipes on the history and significance of each story included. These stories are perhaps targeted toward older children—many of the stories feature gruesome content and there is a section of the book dedicated to "incestuous fathers and brothers—but the sheer volume of the book, along with the limited illustration, makes these stories ideal for sharing between parent and child. The eighteen illustrations that are included in the text are original artworks from art students at Anglia Ruskin University. From "Little Red Riding Hood" to "King Thrushbeard," Zipes has collected a useful selection of folklore and fairytales that have and will continue to captivate children from all over the world.

Samantha Christensen



Jack Zipes, ed.

The Golden Age of Folk and Fairy Tales: From the Brothers Grimm to Andrew Lang

Indianapolis: Hackett, 2013
714 p.
ISBN 9781624660344
(All ages)

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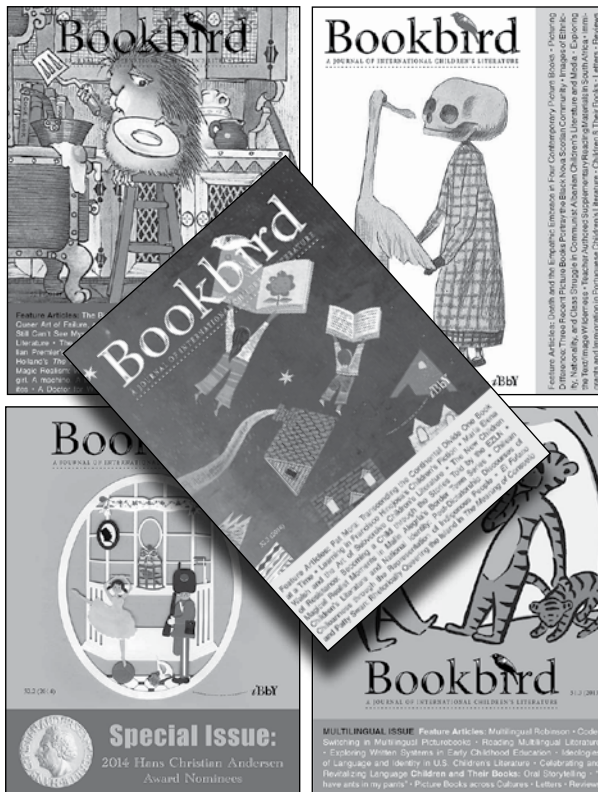
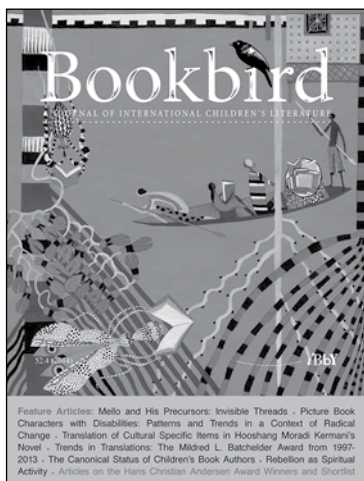
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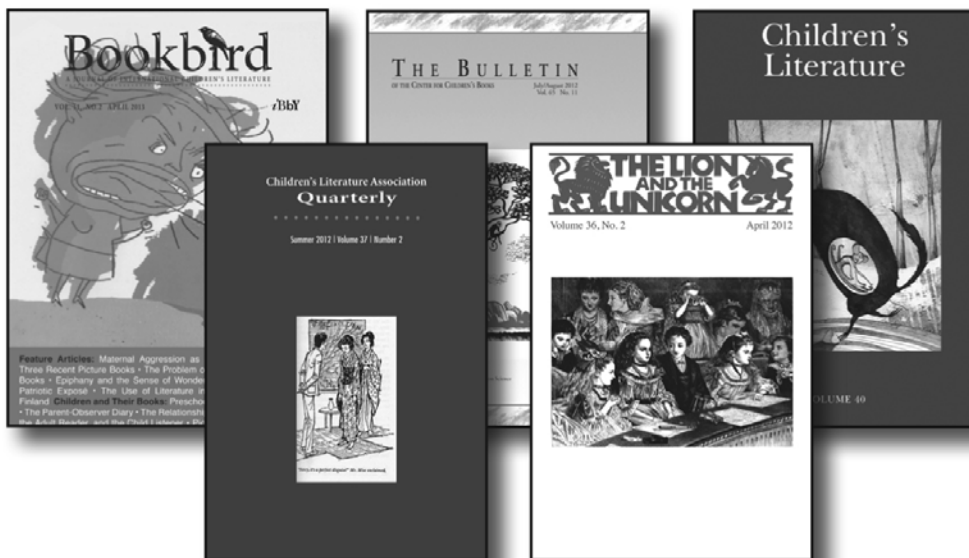
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