

# Bookbird

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*Bookbird* is, as we know, a journal of “international children’s literature.” What does that mean? Specifically, what does “international” mean? I think I know what the founding mothers and fathers of IBBY and the International Youth Library meant with the term—something along the lines of “quality children’s literature from all over the world that transcends linguistic, cultural and national borders, ultimately bringing mutual understanding and peace on earth.”

But is that how the term is understood today? This is not just a rhetorical question. I have had reason to think about it after a few email conversations I have had recently, and it has made me consider the purpose of *Bookbird*.

First, there are those who write to me doubting the “international” relevance of a book from a small country, and written in a language unfamiliar to most *Bookbird* readers. However, for *Bookbird*, size and scale does not matter in the least. A children’s book in a language threatened by extinction could have enormous international relevance, precisely because of its importance as a carrier of language and culture content. In any case, it appears that neither the country nor the language needs to be particularly small to trigger doubts about relevance. I have heard it from children’s literature experts from some of the largest countries and languages in the world. The extreme version of such a self-deprecatory understanding of “international” is that nothing really qualifies as international unless it is in English to begin with or has been accepted into the English children’s literature canon through translation.

But this is not the position of *Bookbird*, or of me as editor. Rather, *Bookbird*’s unique position as an academic journal devoted to children’s literature, our “sales pitch,” so to speak, is that we strive to include pieces on children’s books from all over the world and from as many languages and cultures as is possible. Of course, our language medium is English—and this does present a real problem since it indirectly favors coverage of English language books—but our ambition is unequivocally to give place to articles on literature from all corners of the globe. I would, for instance, encourage the translation of recent important critical texts into English so that they may be published in *Bookbird*, too.

This matters because “International children’s literature” does not only mean that *Bookbird* is (or should be) a forum for literature that has already been canonized; it is itself a vehicle of recognition. By being analyzed and commented on in *Bookbird* and (let us be generous!) other academic journals, books from all over the world are recognized and “internationalized.” It is a dynamic process. For journals like *Bookbird* are not just reflectors of a given situation, but creators, too.

The second question I have received is in many ways the complete opposite of what I have just discussed: “can I write for *Bookbird* even if I focus on well-known English books?” It stems from the notion that “international”

refers to literature that comes from outside one’s own national borders (or language community). For me, it would mean that anything not written in Swedish would be “international.” Thus, what is regarded as international depends on your nationality. In practice, however, the term has not gained much currency outside the United States and is almost uniquely applied to books that have not been published in the United States (or in English) originally. In these cases, I sympathize with the sentiment—why should *Bookbird* promote yet another article on English children’s literature? Yet it would be untenable and paradoxical to exclude children’s literature written in English in the name of “internationalization.” English children’s literature (and culture) is driven by the culture industry and reaches all corners of the world. For this reason alone, it is necessary not to ignore English children’s literature in a discussion of international children’s books. Moreover, English is an important vessel for literatures of diverse cultures and geographies, and not only the mouthpiece of the culture industry. These reasons aside, the simplest answer (which I offered one correspondent) is that the United States is part of this world, after all.

Thus, *Bookbird* remains a “journal of international children’s literature,” meaning that we accept texts about literature from all corners of the world.

This particular issue reaches out to a particularly distant corner (from my vantage point anyway)—New Zealand, Australia, and Oceania. Anna Jackson is our special guest editor for this issue, and I refer to her Introduction to the theme and to the articles.

*Björn Sundmark*



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# “Openly Searching, Inventive and Welcoming”: Oceania and Children’s Literature.

Anna Jackson

This issue of *Bookbird* focuses on the children’s literature of Oceania. Anthropologist and cultural critic Epele Hau’ofa writes of the region in *We Are the Ocean*: “Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous.” An Oceanic identity, he goes on to suggest, should “transcend all forms of insularity, to become one that is openly searching, inventive and welcoming.”<sup>1</sup> Such indeed are the features of the children’s literature from Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands that are discussed in this issue of *Bookbird*. The picture book *Sione’s Talo* by Lino Nalisi offers one example of such transcendence and hospitality to multiple influences and audiences: based on the Russian story about the giant turnip that takes a village to pull it out of the ground, this version gives the story Pasifika references, and is published in Auckland in four different languages—English, Samoan, Niuean, and Maori.<sup>2</sup> A searching and inventive approach to cultural sources can equally, if differently, be found in Australian YA fantasy—with their radical revisionings of classical mythology and fairy tale motifs and from all over the world, as Sophie Masson and Elizabeth Hale examine in their essay for this volume.

Margaret Mahy has written often of the particular

difficulty she found writing children’s fantasy in New Zealand, when her own childhood reading was of literature from the Northern Hemisphere, in particular Britain. Again and again, in essays and interviews, she has returned to this subject of the “imaginative displacement” that results:

When I was a child, which was a long time ago, the stories I read and had read to me were almost exclusively English; Beatrix Potter, A.A.Milne, Kenneth Graham and so on... It was not until I was in my teens and trying, self-consciously, to write a “New Zealand” story that I realized that I had suffered a sort of imaginative displacement. Any writing I did that dealt and described the things I knew best—the landscape in which I had grown up and the idiom I heard every day seemed somehow unnatural to me.<sup>3</sup>

Many other writers from New Zealand, Australia, and the Pacific Islands have talked of a similar sense of imaginative displacement, in which their imaginations have been shaped by texts from another hemisphere. Patricia Grace, for instance, likewise read “English classics and English poetry”

at school and was taught to write “using words and phrases that we had come across in books, but had never heard spoken.”<sup>4</sup>

Mahy and Grace began writing children’s books with local content in the 1980s, Mahy having already published several picture books internationally since the 1980s. Their influence on later children’s writers has been profound, with Karen Healey, for instance, declaring her “own struggle with imaginative displacement” enriched by the fact that, “born in the 80s, I was in a much better position than Mahy,” coming after “Margaret Mahy, Patricia Grace, Gaelyn Gordon, Witi Ihimaera, Maurice Gee and many others...wrote New Zealand/Aotearoa. And, growing up, I was able to read it.”<sup>5</sup> And yet, while Mahy was reading Beatrix Potter, A.A. Milne, and other English writers, as were most children of her generation, it was not as if there had been no local writing produced for children of this hemisphere.

In Australia, stories with a determinedly local setting have been produced since as early as 1841, when *A Mother’s Offering to Her Children* by Charlotte Barton was published, which opens with the child Emma remarking, “How very extraordinary those tremendous noises were, Mamma, which we heard at the Coolandal Mountain.” More enduring has been the classic *Seven Little Australians* by Ethel Turner, first published in 1894, about a family of Australian children, distinguished from those “paragons of virtue” that might be found in English, American, African, or Asian stories: “Not one of the seven is really good, for the very excellent reason that Australian children never are.” (Of course it is equally conventional to distinguish the hero or heroine of an English children’s story from the paragons of virtue supposed to be the fictional norm.) In New Zealand, Esther Glen’s *Six Little New Zealanders* was published in 1917, modeled quite deliberately on *Seven Little Australians*.

Attempts to establish local traditions of fantasy and fairy tale were also made early on in both Australian and New Zealand children’s literature. In 1918, May Gibbs published *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie*, domesticating the Australian landscape with the idea of the gumnut baby. In the same year, Norman Lindsay’s even more fantastic story, *The Magic Pudding*, made a claim for a local children’s literature based not on landscape so much as a concept of Australian identity involving larrikinism, mateship, and—above

all—a love of good eating.<sup>6</sup>

Even the date of 1841, of course, applies only to settler writing as, of course, indigenous stories long pre-date colonization. The publication of indigenous stories in English also played an important part, early on, in establishing an Australian literature for children. In 1896, for example, Katherine Stow’s collection *Australian Legendary Tales* was published—acknowledging the Aboriginal story-tellers, Peter Hippi, Hippitha, Matah, Barahgurrie, and Beemunny, who told Stow the tales—and illustrated with extraordinarily beautiful drawings by aboriginal artist Tommy McRae. In the 1920s, Aboriginal author David Unaipon collected the stories published in 1930 as *Legendary Tales of the Australian Aborigines*, initially under the name of the anthropologist who bought the manuscript. It is interesting to note the influence of English literature on his own writing style—which borrowed from Milton, Bunyan, and the Bible—showing little trace of the Australian vernacular but incorporating, with and without translation, indigenous words and phrases.<sup>7</sup>

In New Zealand, too, from the 1890s, Maori legends were collected by both settlers and by Maori scholars, who according to Te Ara (the New Zealand on-line encyclopedia), “wrote as they spoke,” with the new medium of written language having had “little effect on the style or the content of the narratives.”<sup>8</sup> As in Australia, indigenous myths had from early on an important place in the canon of literature for children. A. W. Reed’s much reprinted *Myths and Legends of Maoriland*, first published in 1946, for instance, was awarded the Esther Glen medal for best children’s book in 1947 and went on to be published in many later editions, both national and international.

Today, there is a tremendous energy and commitment to publishing Indigenous literature for children in Australia, New Zealand, and Oceania more generally. Since the 1970s, the IAD Press has been publishing work by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers, including children’s books in the Arrernte language of the Mparntwe (Alice Springs) region where IAD are based. In Broome, Western Australia, Magabala Books have since 1990 published children’s books emerging from the Aboriginal Language Centres of the Kimberley region. In New Zealand, there is a rich range of children’s books in Maori being printed both by

specialist presses, such as Huia Publishing, and by mainstream presses, including Mallinson Rendall, Scholastic, Reed, Puffin, and many others.

In her article for this issue, Nicola Daly examines the Dual Language books, in Maori and English, produced for New Zealand children. Although her article does raise some questions about the relative privileging of English and Maori in some Dual Language texts, the value of such publishing initiatives is also clear. Along with Marion McKoy, Nicola Daly is responsible for the creation of the wonderful resource, the online NZ Pacific Picture Book collection (<http://www.pacificpicturebooks.co.nz/>), hosted by the University of Waikato. This collection identifies and introduces thirty-six Pacific picture books, recommended by New Zealand librarians, reflecting Pasifika identity and experiences. It is interesting to see the publishing companies involved in making such books available, ranging again from mainstream New Zealand presses such as Mallinson Randell, Reed and Puffin, to specialist educational presses, such as New Zealand-based Pierce Education, Porirua's SEEDS: Samoana Early Education Development Services, the Suva-based Institute of Pacific Studies and Apia press Niu Leaf, amongst many other large and small presses supporting this work. A wide range of Pacific languages are represented, too, with many of these books published in two or more languages.

Picture book publishing has been important to both Australia and New Zealand since the 1970s. Today it is not only an important part of children's publishing but represents a major art form for some writers and illustrators, notably Shaun Tan, whose tales of quest and displacement and imagery of hauntingly strange and familiar suburbia have had an international impact.

As children's literature of Oceania increasingly takes on a global presence—Elizabeth Knox's Dreamhunter Duet, Garth Nix's Gabriel series, and Bernard Beckett's Genesis are amongst many books from Oceania that have not only entered a global market but a global canon of new classics—children's own reading choices remain affected by the dominance of American and British publishing. Librarians, teachers, and publishers continue to advocate children's literature as essential to the development of a national identity. In this issue of *Bookbird*, Kay Hancock looks at the importance

of the Ready to Read series in New Zealand, presenting recognizably New Zealand landscape, scenes, and activities, while Erica Hateley looks at the continuing construction of a canon of Australian children's classics, examining four series that have been published since 2000. As Hateley astutely observes, this may reflect adult desires rather than children's needs, even as it is predicated on a perceived lack, as "young Australian readers are imagined or desired to be...thirsty for a sense of their national heritage and history," like the protagonist of Ruth Park's *Playing Beattie Bow*:

It was like going to another country, seeing landscapes that were not of this world. Yet she had known those landscapes were there: that was why she had always felt empty, incomplete, because she knew they were there and she belonged in them, but she did not know where to look to find them. (Park 124)

In particular, as Troy Potter notes in this issue's "Identifying with Trauma: Reframing Anzac in Contemporary Australian Young Adult Literature," the ANZAC story has taken an "oppressively central position in Australian national image-making." In New Zealand, too, the ANZAC story has played an important role in national image-making, and, as in Australia, writers for children have seen a need to present the story in ways children might understand. *The Bantam and the Soldier* by Jennifer Beck and Robyn Belton, for instance, focuses on the friendship between a soldier and a bantam hen, while Philippa Werry's picture book *Best Mates* focuses on the friendship of the best mates of the title. As well as telling a moving story, the book also includes two pages of factual detail and was written after the critical and commercial success of Werry's important non-fictional account for children, *Anzac Day*, tellingly subtitled "A New Zealand Story: What it is and why it matters." According to the Ministry of Culture and Heritage website, "Werry wants 'Anzac Day: The New Zealand Story' to instill a sense of national pride in our children, reminding them that the values of war of 'courage, camaraderie, loyalty, endurance and commitment' have influenced our Kiwi spirit to help them understand that attitudes and events from 100 years ago are just as important

today."<sup>9</sup> As Potter outlines, however, the meaning even of an iconic story such as the ANZAC story constantly changes and can support a range of values and be told from a range of perspectives. The effects of children's reading can be unpredictable, too: while Jennifer Beck's story, for instance, may lead children on to read some of the other war stories listed and reviewed on Philippa Werry's excellent website, it may be just as likely to encourage children to want a bantam hen for a pet (a wonderful children's pet in my experience).

The unpredictability and enthusiasm of children's responses to literature is celebrated throughout Oceania and supported by an extraordinary range of dedicated people and institutions. I like the story Barbara Else told in her 2016 *Margaret Mahy* lecture about the child who took some time learning to read, until, as Else tells the story, "One day she looked up astonished at her foster mother and said, 'When I read, I get pictures in my head. Does that happen to you?'"<sup>10</sup> Who knows what might happen if pictures get into your head? A lion could get in to the meadow! Paula Green's wonderful website, *Poetry Box*, which she describes in a piece for this issue, reveals some of the creativity of children's responses as they share their own pictures in their heads, in the space the website makes for children's own poetry.

Storylines, New Zealand's annual festival of children's literature, does a tremendous amount to bring books, authors, illustrators, and child readers together. In Australia, the importance of children's literature has been recognized with the role of a children's literature Laureate, currently held by Leigh Hobbs and previously by Jackie French, Alison Lester and Boori Monty Pryor. Both children and scholarly researchers of children's literature are well served by outstanding collections of children's literature in New Zealand and Australia. Belle Alderman and Trish Milne describe some of the uses made of the National Collection of Children's Literature in Canberra (formerly the Lu Rees Collection) in their contribution to this issue. The most significant collection in New Zealand is the Dorothy Neal White Collection, held in the Turnbull Library in Wellington, along with the excellent Susan Price Collection of Twentieth Century children's literature and supported by the Friends of the Dorothy Neal White Collection, who play

an important role in promoting children's literature and its study.

Paradoxically, Karen Healey finds that whereas an earlier generation of writers such as Margaret Mahy and Patricia Grace had their imaginations filled with British literature and struggled to find the ordinary New Zealand landscape resonant enough as a setting for fantasy, for writers in New Zealand today, the difficulty is the perception of the landscape *as* fantasy. "I come from fantasyland," Healey writes. "To outsiders, it might be Middle-Earth, or Narnia, and (the Hollywood rumors say) Azeroth; exotic imagined locales. But it gets annoying to be enthusiastically complimented on the beauty of your country by the phrase, 'It looks just like the movies!'"<sup>11</sup> This is another form of "imaginative displacement," producing its own fault lines. Yet such tensions can be creatively productive and offer their own resonances, as indeed Mahy herself observed:

Coming in from swimming on Christmas Day I would sit with my sunhat on, reading stories of snow and robins and holly, and... those things are now part of my Christmas nostalgia. The imaginative truth and the factual truth may be at odds with each other but personally I still need those opposites to make Christmas come alive for me<sup>12</sup>

Contemporary Oceanic fantasies for children and YA readers revel in such contradictions and combinations. Whether given local New Zealand, Australian, or Pacific Island settings or whether they are set in entirely invented worlds, such narratives, as Sophie Masson outlines in the essay for this issue she has co-authored with Elizabeth Hale, offer "a reinvention of motifs from ancient stories—fairy tales amongst them—and a rich blend of folklore from many lands, spiced with contemporary references and concerns." Masson identifies this as a significant shift from "the old preoccupation with transposing traditional fairy tale narratives and tropes into recognizable or identifiable Australian settings." For Masson herself, "as a first-generation immigrant who came to Australia as a non-English-speaking child of mixed ethnic origin, it comes naturally" to invent magical versions "of the modern Muslim folkloric world...Russian, British, and French fairy tales," and

to populate her fiction with "changelings, shape-shifters, creatures of divided natures, in-betweeners, exiles." Elizabeth Hale, in the second part of the essay, finds a similar energy and creativity informing the use of classical references in contemporary Australian YA fiction.

This issue includes, too, an interview by children's literature scholar Angelina Sbroma with Tulia Thompson, an Auckland poet, scholar, and children's literature writer of Fijian descent. Her novel, *Josefa and the Vu*, is brilliantly syncretic in its bringing together of mythic tropes from Fijian, Pakeha, and Chinese cultures. She says in the interview, "my love of reading stemmed from the joy I had experienced reading as a child, and I felt a sense of wanting to complete the circle. I had loved fantasy-adventure when I was a child, especially *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*, so yes, it was definitely about the appeal of fantasy and the supernatural." Despite the importance of British books for her own childhood reading, however, she goes on to say, "I had been thinking about eurocentricism of children's literature, and how Pacific communities in New Zealand have lower literacy. I wanted to write a children's novel that offered a Pacific/ Fijian world-view." Fantasy is a genre she found fitted well with the Fijian relationship to the spirit world. At the same time, however, much of the energy and the humor of the book comes from the way traditional mythic elements are modernized and come into new tensions and arrangements with contemporary multi-cultural Auckland society: as Thompson herself says, "to an extent, cultural traditions respond to the demands of particular geographies, which are also socio-economic."

Elizabeth Knox has suggested that "writing literary fantasy it seems there is more scope for dealing with social issues when the business of what we think we know about those problems is removed from the picture... If you invent a story that isn't an allegory but has echoes of historical events, things of roughly equivalent meaning, readers can think and feel about ideas freshly."<sup>13</sup> While this contention is certainly supported by the fantasy texts discussed in this issue, much contemporary realism for children and Young Adults also finds fresh and inventive ways of addressing serious and significant issues. The excitement of reading children's literature is brilliantly captured by Knox's account of reading a

Margaret Mahy story-book:

I remember yelling with joy at the line in *The Pirates' Mixed-up Voyage* concerning the philosophical position of the parrot given to intoning "Doom and destiny!" With just four or five lines she produced 1) a very funny joke, and 2) a deeply felt personal worldview, and 3) a potted history of Western philosophy in all its sober nuttiness. I mean—this was a book for 8 to 11 year olds.

And reading one of the lectures Mahy published, Knox writes, "I remember hitting myself on the head a few times with the literary magazine it appeared in, and then hiding my eyes in the open book."<sup>14</sup>

This issue hopes to capture some of the excitement of the children's and YA books being published in Oceania today, while looking seriously at some of the issues and concerns that the literature raises, sometimes intentionally and sometimes in ways that require further thought. "Doom and destiny!" can be a lot of fun to think about, as can fault lines and fantasy! heritage and history! transcendence and hospitality!

- 1 Epeli Hau'ofa, *We Are The Ocean*, University of Hawai'i Press, 2008. *Hau'ofa's own biography exemplifies this transcendence of insularity: born in Papua New Guinea, of Tongan descent, his career and education took him from Papua New Guinea to Tonga, Australia, Canada, Fiji, and Samoa.*
- 2 Lino Nelisi, *Sione's Talo*, Auckland: Ashton Scholastic, 1993
- 3 Judith Ridge, Interview with Margaret Mahy, 2004 <http://misrule.com.au/wordpress/interviews/margaret-mahy-interview-2004/>
- 4 Karen Healey, <http://www.strangehorizons.com/2010/20100315/healey-c.shtml>
- 5 Healey, *ibid.*
- 6 Information on Barton, Turner, Gibbs and Lindsay in this paragraph sourced from this website: <http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/austn-childrens-books>
- 7 The above website also informed this paragraph, as well as the Australian Dictionary of Biography entry, [adb.anu.edu.au/biography/unaipon-david-8898](http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/unaipon-david-8898) Benjamin Miller's "Confusing Epistemologies: Whiteness, Mimicry and Assimilation in David Unaipon's 'Confusion of Tongue'" is particularly useful and informative about Unaipon's use of literary English, and gives a fascinating account of the publishing history of the work. It is available as a PDF at the following site: [ps://thealtitudejournal.files.wordpress.com/2008/07/34.pdf](http://ps://thealtitudejournal.files.wordpress.com/2008/07/34.pdf)
- 8 <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/1966/maori-myths-and-traditions>
- 9 <http://www.mch.govt.nz/news-events/news/anzac-day-new-zealand-story> Philippa Werry's blog of war books reviews can be accessed at <http://childrenswarbooks.blogspot.fr/>
- 10 <http://www.storylines.org.nz/Awards/Storylines+Margaret+Mahy+Medal+and+Lecture+Award.html>
- 11 Healey, "Strange Horizons," as above
- 12 Margaret Mahy, "A Dissolving Ghost," from *A Dissolving Ghost: Essays and More*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2000, p33; also available at [http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Ba07Spo\\_N67217.html](http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Ba07Spo_N67217.html)
- 13 <http://www.yalsa.ala.org/thehub/2013/07/25/one-thing-leads-to-another-an-interview-with-elizabeth-knox/>
- 14 <http://www.elizabethknox.com/archives/2012/07/24/margaret-mahy-hero/>



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# Dual Language Picturebooks in English and Māori

Nicola Daly

Dual Language Books (DLBs) “are books that are written in two languages, typically English on one page and another language on the adjacent page” (Naqvi, McKeough, Thorne and Pfitcher 504). However, the way in which languages are presented within DLBs varies a great deal, and the ways in which they are presented tell us something of the status of the respective languages within the society of publications. They also tell us something of the purpose of the book, as will be discussed later. According to Sneddon, DLBs have been in use in Britain since the 1970s; however, it is interesting to note that they have existed for many years before that with versions of the first acknowledged picture book, *Orbis Pictus* (written by the Czech scholar Comenius in 1657). The focus of the article is to describe and analyze New Zealand dual language picture books featuring English and te reo Māori (the Māori language).

Dual language or bilingual picture books are extremely powerful resources in the education of children who come to school with multiple langua-

ges (Helot and O’Laire; Sneddon). Research shows that because DLBs are popular with parents of bilingual children, they are acknowledged as a “bridge between home and school” (Naqvi et al. 504). The use of a range of languages within children’s literature has been the focus of several recent studies often motivated by the pedagogical potential of such resources. Naqvi, McKeough, Thorne and Pfitcher explain that “DLBs can potentially address the diverse ethnic and linguistic composition of mainstream classrooms by supporting home-language literacy and English literacy development concomitantly” (504). Peterson and Heywood’s research with teachers, parents, and principals in six Canadian elementary schools showed that when teachers and principals were invited into classrooms to read DLBs, there was a change in school practices which “better accommodated the language, customs and, values of the immigrant families” (Naqvi et al. 505).

DLBs are not only important in maintaining community languages belonging to immigrant and refugee communities, but they also have an important role to play in maintaining indigenous langua-

ges (Hadaway and Young). Hadaway and Young analyzed thirty indigenous bilingual picture books from Australia, Canada, and New Zealand to explore how the use of indigenous languages functioned in terms of awareness, positionality, and providing multiple perspectives. The twelve New Zealand picture books included in their study books show how books can increase community awareness of indigenous languages; they reveal attitudes to languages in terms of the order in which languages are presented on pages, the fonts and size of fonts used; and DLBs can also reflect multiple perspectives and authentic voices from an indigenous perspective.

Hadaway and Young note that the publishing practices of mainstream publishers of the past have “limited the number of indigenous authors whose work was accepted and constrained the indigenous voice through the editing process” (59). This historical paucity of books by indigenous authors featuring indigenous language and perspectives is certainly true in the New Zealand context, where one of the first children’s picture books to be written in English and then translated into Māori was *The Kuia and the Spider* by Robyn Kahukiwa, published in 1981. The establishment of Māori medium educational institutions, however, has led to a huge increase in published material, much of it translated from English (Garlick).

## The New Zealand Sociolinguistic Setting

Spoken by 96.1% of the New Zealand population (Statistics New Zealand, 2014), English is the most widely used language in New Zealand—a fact reflecting this country’s British colonial history. This is followed by te reo Māori (3.7%), Samoan (2.2%), Hindi (1.7%), and Northern Chinese (1.3%) (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). New Zealand is a relatively monolingual setting, with only 18.6% of the population in 2013 speaking more than one language (Statistic New Zealand, 2016). In 1987, the Māori Language Act gave te reo Māori (the Māori language) official language status in New Zealand.<sup>1</sup> This act also declares that te reo Māori can be used in all court proceedings, commissions of inquiry, and tribunals; further, it created Te Whiri i Te Reo Māori, the Māori Language Commission, whose central aim is to “promote the use of Māori as a living lang-

<sup>1</sup> The third official language of New Zealand is New Zealand Sign Language. This status was given in 2006.

uage and as an ordinary means of communication” (*Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori*, 2016).

By the 1950s, due mainly to urbanization and education, there was a generation of Māori who could not speak Māori language, and the language appeared to be heading towards language loss and death (Macalister). This led to the establishment in 1981 of the first kōhanga reo (Māori language preschools) and then in 1989 and 1990 to legislation for kura kaupapa Māori (Māori medium schools) and wānanga (universities). In July 2015, there were 17, 842 students receiving part or all of their education through the Māori language at schools throughout New Zealand (Education Counts).

In addition to the Māori medium sector of the New Zealand education system, more recent educational policy supports the teaching of te reo Māori in all New Zealand primary classrooms (Stewart), including in English medium classrooms. This policy direction in support of te reo Māori being present in all New Zealand classrooms is based on research showing that Māori students do better in classrooms where their culture, language, and identity is present (Ministry of Education). This support for the provision of te reo Māori in English-medium classrooms provides a challenge for many Pākehā teachers who do not have skills in te reo Māori or do not believe that it is their place as Pākehā to support this language in their everyday classroom practice. In her article examining ways forward with respect to the teaching of te reo Māori in English-medium classrooms, Stewart advocates the importance of supporting non-Māori speaking teachers in terms of the provision of professional development and high quality classroom resources in order to meet these policy directions. It would seem that Dual Language Books featuring te reo Māori and English have the potential to fit the category of high quality resources suitable for bringing te reo Māori into New Zealand classrooms.

In this article, a range of Māori/English DLBs are critically examined in terms of the message they impart about the relative status of the two languages in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

## Different Kinds of DLBs

The morphology of DLBs varies considerably, and researchers in the area have identified three major formats: Interlingual Books, Parallel Texts, and Si-

multaneous or Sequential Publication.

Interlingual Books (Hadaway and Young) are those in which a primary language (usually English) is interspersed with borrowed words from the indigenous language. This mix of languages is used by many US Latino authors (Semingson) as a celebration of the way in which bilingual speakers authentically mix their linguistic resources. Prominent sociolinguist Garcia has labelled this phenomenon “translanguaging” (Garcia and Yip), and she argues that this mixing of codes is a normal practice amongst those with access to more than one linguistic code; thus, its representation in children’s picture books is simply a reflection of the linguistic reality of multilingual children whose translanguaging practice has been previously made invisible by dominant publishing practices. Earlier studies by this author (2007; 2008) have examined the use of borrowing and codeswitching in New Zealand English picture books, also indicating its increasing frequency in New Zealand picture books. I suggest this perhaps reflects an increase in indigenous authors, publishers, and the revitalization of te reo Māori in New Zealand.

Parallel texts are texts that present both languages within one book, sometimes on the same page; sometimes on separate pages (Semingson). Hadaway and Young analyze several picture books in this category from Australia, New Zealand, and Canada—showing that the placement of the different languages, the space given to them, the font used, and the order of languages may all be analyzed as a reflection of the sociolinguistic status of the two languages. Their findings indicate the relatively positive situation for the publication of dual language books in the indigenous language of New Zealand when compared to the situations in Australia and Canada.

Simultaneous or Sequential DLBs are books which have separate versions for the same story in two languages. Hadaway and Young note that producing bilingual books in separate versions for each language is a common practice for books in Māori and English. This may be due to the urgent need for Māori language books to support the needs of children in Māori-medium education, which began in 1981 with the establishment of Māori-medium early childhood education centers called Kohanga Reo or Language Nests. The translation of existing Eng-

lish texts such as *Katarina* by Gavin Bishop, first published in 1990 and then later translated into te reo Māori by Katarina Te Keikoko Mataira in 2008 provide access to an excellent story; Jennifer Garlick points out that this is a cost effective way of producing material as existing art work can be used and text can be placed into existing page design. More recent books, such as *Koro’s Medicine* (2005), have also been translated and published simultaneously (Daly, 2008).

Given there have been several studies already of the use of borrowed Māori words in Interlingual New Zealand English picture books (Daly; Macdonald and Daly), this article focuses on the second and third of these formats: Parallel Texts and Simultaneous/Sequential texts. The focus of the analysis is not on the finer details of translation between the two languages presented but on the ways in which the languages are presented in terms of page placement, font size, use of italics, and use of diacritics such as the macron for long vowels in Māori. Several books have been chosen for analysis in both categories, representing a subset of an ongoing larger project collating a list of Dual Language picture books published in Māori and English.

## Analysis of Books

### Parallel texts

*Tangaroa’s Gift/Te Koha a Tangaroa* by Whaanga-Schollum and Keruru is one of the very first trade books to be produced in Māori and English. In this story, a shellfish known as Pāua (an abalone) explains to the sea god Tangaroa that he feels sad and lonely and ugly, and Tangaroa gives him a shell of many colors to protect him. The English and Māori titles are both given on the cover in the same size and font, and both author and translator are also given in the same typeface. On each page within the body of the book, Māori is presented on the verso and English on the recto in the same typeface, and macrons are used in all Māori text to indicate long vowels. However, in the English text, Māori loanwords or borrowings do not use macrons to indicate long vowels in Māori; for example, the name Pāua is spelled ‘Pāua’ in the Māori text and ‘Paua’ in the English text. While this book gives equal status to the two languages in terms of font size, page space, and book cover representation, indicating respect for both languages, the lack of macrons in the borrowed Māori words

used in the English text may indicate a different era in the revitalization of te reo Māori which began in the 1980s. In more recent publications, such as *Kei te pēhea koe? How are you?* (2008), macrons appear in both borrowed words in English and full Māori text, and it could be that this reflects a much more widespread awareness of the orthographic practices of te reo Māori.

Tracy Duncan’s *Kei te pēhea koe? How do you feel?* (2008) presents the text in Māori first and then in English underneath on each page, using the same font and size for both languages. The cover has the Māori title first with the English title underneath in smaller font. This order of languages, and the size of the font used, implies the importance of both languages, but the primacy of Māori, perhaps indicating the pedagogic intention of the book with regards to teaching te reo Māori. An information panel is given in English at the back of the book regarding pronunciation, entitled “How to pronounce Te reo Māori.” That these instructions are in English underlines that this book has pedagogic intent; it is clearly designed to support English speakers in learning to speak Māori.

In a very recent parallel DLB, *Mōtiti Blue and the Oil Spill* (McCauley and Waaka, 2015), English and Māori are both presented on each page, with Māori underneath English and in italics of the same size and font. While the translator of the English text into Māori is acknowledged (albeit in smaller text than that for the author) on the cover, there is no Māori title given for the book either on the cover or on the title page. This book appears to be one of a very limited number of bilingual non-fiction picture books available in New Zealand. Its use of two languages in the non-fiction genre appears to be breaking new ground, and its award for best non-fiction book in the 2015 New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults is a recognition of its high quality and innovation. This narrative non-fiction tells the story of a blue penguin affected by the oil spill from the sinking of a ship near the Port of Tauranga in the North island of New Zealand (a true event), presenting factual information in panels around the story. While the narrative is represented in Māori and English, the information panels are in English only. Māori words used in these English information panels use macrons on the long vowels (which are distinct phonemes from short vowels in te reo

Māori). This use of macrons (which are not always included on borrowed Māori words in New Zealand English texts) indicates a sensitivity to and respect for te reo Māori (Daly, 2007). Thus, it seems that this book has been designed to make the story accessible to speakers of te reo Māori, but the extra background information given in panels has to be read in English. Given that most if not all Māori speakers in New Zealand also speak English (de Bres), this may not make the information in the panels inaccessible. However, it is a rather confusing decision, given that the book clearly sets out to be bilingual. Considerations of space have probably come into play because the layout of each page is already filled with information panels.

### Simultaneous or Sequential Publication

As mentioned earlier, simultaneous or sequential publication of Dual Language Books is a common practice in New Zealand (Garlick; Hadaway and Young). An early example of simultaneous publication whereby a book is published in both English and te reo Māori is *Te Kuia me te Pūngāwerewere* (Grace, Kahukiwa, Melbourne, and Kaa, 1981) and *The Kuia and the Spider* (Grace and Kaukiwa, 1981), a winner of the 1981 New Zealand Children’s Picturebook of the Year award (Pollock). The text in both versions is placed in exactly the same place relative to the illustrations, with the text for the Māori version being slightly smaller due to the translation being slightly longer in word number. In recent times, it has become more common for picture books to be published simultaneously in both te reo Māori and in English. In most cases, the book is written in English and then translated into Māori, but both versions are published simultaneously. This is the case for *Remember that November* (Beck and Fisher, 2012) and *Maumahara ki tērā Nōema* (Beck, Fisher, and Teepa, 2012). This story begins with a speech contest in which a boy gives his speech about Guy Fawkes blowing up the British parliament and the celebration of Guy Fawkes Day on November 5 each year. It is an excellent speech, and the narrator suggests he will win the competition until a young girl stands up to give a speech retelling the story of passive resistance of the people of Parihaka, who were violently forced off their land by British troops in the Taranaki region in 1881, also on November 5. Again, the text font, size, and placement is identical

in both versions of the book, and the use of larger font for some key phrases on six of the fourteen double-page spreads is used for the same corresponding translated phrases.

*The Keys* (Cotter and Morgan, 2014), and *Ngā Kī* (Cotter, Morgan, and Teepa, 2014) which was a finalist in the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults (Booksellers, “Award News”), features a young girl in bed waiting for her father to arrive home from work, listening for the sound of his key in the door. When he does arrive home, she knows he will come in to say goodnight, and then she asks him to tell her about all the keys on his key ring. For each key, he makes up fanciful stories about what the keys unlock. Like *Maumahara ki tērā Nōema* (Beck, Fisher, and Teepa, 2012), this book is produced by Huia publishers, a Wellington-based New Zealand publisher who specializes in producing stories which reflect Māori and Pasifika communities. They are also a leading publisher for producing resources for learning te reo Māori (Booksellers, “Huia Publishers”), and so it makes sense that they have a commitment to producing picture books for both English speaking and Māori speaking New Zealanders. While there is nothing specifically Māori about the context or plot of the story, in the illustrations, the father and daughter are Māori in appearance. The two versions of this book are identical in font size, placement of text, and font type used for the text.

And a third recent book published in both English and te reo Māori by Huia in conjunction with the New Plymouth District Council is *Tamanui the Brave Kōkako* (Beyer and Wellington, 2015) and *Tamanui te Kōkako mōrehu o Taranaki* (Beyer, Wellington, and Burdan, 2015). This book tells the story of the last Kōkako bird left in Taranaki after the species is devastated by predators. He is taken away and used in a breeding program, with the aim that his progeny brought back to repopulate the Taranaki region. This story features Tamanui being captured, driven in a car, and then welcomed on to a marae, but at all other times, the illustrations feature birds and predators only. The size, font, and placement of text are identical in the two versions.

It is interesting to note that all of the text in the Māori version of *Maumahara ki tērā Nōema*, *Ngā Kī*, and *Tamanui te kokako mōrehu o Taranaki* is in Māori, including the publishing details, and author

dedications. This is not the case in the Parallel Texts analyzed in this article, where English is used for all such details. This perhaps indicates a fundamental difference in the identity of the publishing companies, and their purpose in producing the books.

Books published in both English and te reo Māori are also published sequentially. Recently in New Zealand, classic books with no link to New Zealand in terms of setting, plot, or characters have been translated by Huia publishers. With its strong commitment to Māori language learning, we can assume this comes from a desire to ensure children in Māori speaking homes and Māori medium schools have access to the rich diversity of stories from around the world. Two very famous examples include *Te Tanguruhau*, a 2013 translation by Brian Morris of Julia Donaldson’s *The Gruffalo* first published in 1999; and *Te Anuhe tino hiakai*, a 2012 translation by Brian Morris of Eric Carle’s *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* first published in 1969.

A more unusual example of sequential translation is that of *Tekiteora. Kei hea ō hū?* (Gabel, Teo, and Jensen, 2002), which was written in Māori first for distribution in Kohanga Reo (Māori language preschools) and then because of its success was subsequently translated into English by Hannah Rainforth and published as *Oh Hogwash Sweet Pea!* in 2003 (Daly, “The Narrative Contract”).

In *Te Tanguruhau* (2013) and *Te Anuhe tino hiakai* (2012), the text placement and font used is identical to *The Gruffalo* (2009) and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (1969) respectively. In *Tekiteora, kei hea ō hū?* (Gabel, Teo, and Jensen, 2002), the design of the text is such that some words on each page are highlighted by the use of a much larger font, and these larger words are sometimes also placed on a diagonal rather than on the horizontal line. The text has a similar design in the translated English version, but the same words are not always chosen for the same treatment. This may be due to several factors including the visual balance in each text passage, and the fact that translations of children’s literature are shaped by many factors, including “the developmental aspects of childhood that determine the unique qualities of successful writing for children” (Lathey 4).

## Discussion and Conclusion

Bader’s definition of picture books refers to them as “social, cultural, historical documents” (1), and certainly, it is clear that analyzing the way DLBs in the New Zealand context represent the country’s two official oral languages reflects the sociolinguistic context of Aotearoa New Zealand with regard to the relative status of and relationship between Māori and English.

My analysis of the simultaneous and sequential DLBs indicates that books simultaneously produced in separate Māori and English versions are more fully monolingual in each version, with all of the text—including publisher details, author dedications, and other paratext in Māori in the Māori version. Whereas when the two languages are featured within one book (parallel texts), English dominates in terms of being the language used for publication details and information panels. If unequal space is given to the two languages in the book it appears that Māori is given less space. These observations are based on the small number of books examined in this article, and more research is needed to explore these ideas further. Interviews with authors and publishers could also provide valuable insight into decision making around the practices described in this article.

While the very existence of dual language books featuring both languages in parallel texts, simultaneous publication of texts in English and Māori versions, and the sequential translation of popular children’s titles into te reo Māori are all positive indicators of an indigenous language being revitalized, the way in which the two languages are treated, especially within the Parallel Texts, are indicative of the lower status of Māori and perhaps also of a dominant monolingual culture. This setting is also apparent in the way in which these books which have such a rich potential for meeting the needs of teachers bringing te reo Māori into English-medium classrooms are catalogued in libraries. It was not possible to identify books featuring both languages in the author’s university library catalogue, nor in the National Library of New Zealand catalogue. Thus, compiling a list of books featuring English and Māori has been a process of trawling through booksellers’ websites, and looking through shelving systems within the libraries where Māori language books are often separately shelved, if not catalogued to indicate their bilingual status in a distinctive way.

As mentioned earlier, the work presented in this

article is part of a larger project identifying all of the DLBs published in Māori and English as both parallel texts and simultaneous texts, and while this work is not yet complete, the work so far supports the observation of Hadaway and Young that the simultaneous and sequential publication is a common approach to the production of Dual Language Books in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In the list compiled, to date there are three simultaneous texts for every one dual language text. The abundance of books which have simultaneous English and Māori versions, as compared with the far fewer number of parallel texts featuring both Māori and English within the same text may reflect the history of the revitalization of Māori. In the 1980s when the revitalization of te reo Māori was gaining momentum (having been made an official language of New Zealand and in the development of a Māori medium educational system), the urgent need was for a range of literature in te reo Māori for the children in these educational contexts to read and enjoy. The provision of translations of books already in existence had many economic advantages (Garlick), which made for speedy production also. This pedagogical purpose for the Māori medium educational system may be one of the main factors behind the preponderance of dual language books in the New Zealand context being simultaneous publications.

That it is now quite common for new picture books in New Zealand to be published in both English and Māori reflects a change in attitude to bilingualism in New Zealand, which has long had a very monolingual mindset (East). The relatively small number of parallel texts featuring both English and Māori within one book—and the apparently lower relative status of Māori in some of these books—perhaps indicates that acceptance of bilingualism (in the form of having two languages included in one text) is still limited. It would seem that the current policy support for te reo Māori to be taught to all New Zealand school children in English medium settings (Stewart) provides fertile ground for this format of parallel Dual Language Picture books to flourish, as they provide a tool for the majority of New Zealand teachers who need support to enable them to bring the indigenous language of Aotearoa New Zealand into the classroom.

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Her research focuses on representations of diversity in language and culture in picturebooks, and inspired by Dr. Penni Cotton's European PictureBook Collection she has developed the New Zealand PictureBook Collection ([www.picturebooks.co.nz](http://www.picturebooks.co.nz)) and the New Zealand Pacific PictureBook Collection ([www.pacificpicturebooks.co.nz](http://www.pacificpicturebooks.co.nz)). Together with colleagues Professor Christine Helot and Dr. Raymonde Sneddon she edited 'Children's Literature in Multilingual Classrooms' (IOE, 2015).

*Ahla al Aghani* (The Best Songs), written in rhyme, reflects the beauty, power, and joy of music. When songs filled the air and spread in wide open and closed spaces, they overpowered everything. Children playing listened and immediately joined in singing. Children in shops listened and joined the singing, banging on their juice bottles. Children and parents busy in the kitchen started singing and drumming on pots, pans, and dishes. Even children in the neighborhood yard stopped quarreling and started singing and laughing. Music continued to travel, arriving to a near-by village.

Thus, music brings pleasure to everyone, and it is easy to have in daily life as simple tools can become music instruments. Its magic can even end a children's quarrel. The author subtly includes the idea of gender equality—with the father, mother, and children all helping in the kitchen. This book is very popular among children, and the second edition was published only two years after the first publication.

*Jehan Helou*

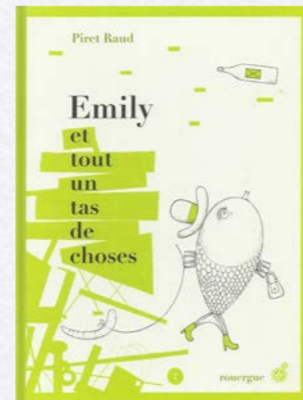


**Ahla al-Aghani**  
**(The Best Songs), 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.**  
Safa Ameer  
Illust. Yara Bamieh  
Ramallah, Palestine: Tamer  
Institute, 2015. 24 pp.  
ISBN: 9789950260498  
(Picture book; ages 5-9)

BOOKBIRD POSTCARDS

The simplicity of young Estonian author/illustrator Piret Raud's work belies the complexity of her stories. *Emily et tout un tas de choses* is no exception. Its perceptive visual narrative (black and white highlighted with environmentally friendly green) will amuse yet allow young readers to reflect on themselves and the world around them. Emily, a pert, fashion-conscious little poisson, collects things during her morning swim along the bottom of the sea. Each material object she believes is the most important thing in her life, until one day she finds a message in a bottle that gives her a life-changing surprise! Raud's illustrations, interwoven with her text, pinpoint the confused excitement in Emily's mind as she realizes that she is more important than anything else because she can read and write. We now see an upside-down and wide-eyed, almost rediscovered Emily as she discards her possessions and returns to her fish-like self. This fascinating picture book can be read at many levels. It allows for reflection on our material lives and the environment in which we live, as well as each individual's need to know who she is. It also, of course, reinforces the importance of being literate.

*Penni Cotton*



**Emily et tout un tas de choses (Emily and a Whole Heap of Things)**  
Piret Raud  
Illus. Piret Raud  
Translated from Estonian into French by Olek Sekki  
Paris: Rouergue, 2014. Unp.  
ISBN: 9782812607547  
(Picture book; ages 3-11)

BOOKBIRD POSTCARDS

## New Zealand Books for New Zealand Students: The Portrayal of Children's "Own Worlds" within the 1963 Ready to Read Instructional Reading Series

Kay Hancock

The Ready to Read instructional reading series for students in the first three years of school was established in 1963 by the New Zealand Department of Education and has been provided free to New Zealand primary schools ever since. The policy of free distribution has meant that every young reader in New Zealand for over fifty years has had access to these books, far greater access than for any commercially published materials. Although the series has changed a great deal since 1963, it has always strongly reflected a vision of New Zealand materials for New Zealand students. This vision was developed under the leadership of Clarence Beeby, Director General of Education 1940-60. In an introduction to a 1957 UNESCO report about the Department's School Publications Branch, Beeby wrote:

Good educational theory and our new sense of nationhood both demanded that we should begin the child's education from his own world immediately surrounding him. And that world was New Zealand, where the sun shines from the north and Christmas Day is in summer, where the farm looms larger than the factory, whose flora and fauna are foreign to the European textbook writer ... (UNESCO 6)

The New Zealand content within the 1963 Ready to Read series was of particular significance because,

at the time, there were very few New Zealand books for young readers. Instead, the picture book world available to young New Zealanders provided very much a Northern Hemisphere view.

The Ready to Read series continued unchanged as the core reading materials for students in the first three years of school for almost twenty years, providing a snapshot in time of New Zealand children's "own worlds," or at least the view of it provided by the series developers. Having said that, the development process for the series involved wide consultation and school-based trialing, meaning that teachers and students were also involved in shaping the materials.

Despite its significant role as part of children's early reading experiences, the Ready to Read series has not been the subject of literary research. References to the Ready to Read series tend to be confined to historical studies—whether of education, education publishing, or of reading instruction. Some Ready to Read books were included in a 1975 study of "sex role stereotyping in infant readers" (Wainwright et al), and in 1987 Baker and Freebody included one Ready to Read example in their research into "constituting the child in beginning school reading books" but the focus of this research is pedagogical rather than literary.

The *New Zealand School Journal* has been the subject of some literary analysis (van Rij; Moore; O'Brien), but for the most part, instructional reading materials have been excluded from discussions of New Zealand children's literature. Studies centered

on commercially published picture books, such as investigations of the representation of children and national identity (Gibbons; Daly; Daly and McKoy) could equally well be carried out on the Ready to Read materials. As illustrated story books written expressly for New Zealand children, these materials have been overlooked as New Zealand children's literature. My discussion here represents an effort to fill this significant gap.

### The Educational Context for the Ready to Read Series

The mid-twentieth century was a dynamic time in New Zealand education, based on ideas about developmental learning, with the Department of Education demonstrating progressive and innovative views. Teachers were encouraged to provide opportunities for children to learn through activity and experiences, in particular arts and crafts, and with language (oral and written) as central. These ideas, particularly the importance of reading and literature, were encouraged under Beeby's leadership. One of the sections in the 1961 Department of Education bulletin, *Suggestions for Teaching English in the Primary School*, was entitled "Learning to Want to Read" and included the following statement:

At all levels the ability to read is more than being able to recognise words. It is also the capacity to respond with imagination and with appropriate feeling to the experiences books can give. The essence of teaching reading, therefore, is to create the need and the desire to read, and attention must be paid to this at all levels of education. (Department of Education 12)

The bulletin described the Ready to Read series, which was under development at the time, as having been devised "with the idea of making the best of both worlds—the world of interest and excitement and the world of 'method' where children are taught to master reading skills though a carefully planned text" (ibid. 14).

This emphasis on reader engagement and of educational materials reflecting children's lives had long been evident in the materials for older students but not (until 1963) in the materials for students in the first three years of school. Instead, the Depart-

ment of Education had been importing "Janet and John" books from Britain as instructional reading materials. These books had charming illustrations but stilted, contrived language (which teachers were required to pre-teach) and characters who had little in common with New Zealand children. By the late 1950s, teacher dissatisfaction with the Janet and John books, and the impending costs of paying for a reprint, prompted the New Zealand Government to approach the Department of Education about publishing a homegrown reading series.

### Developing the Series

Myrtle Simpson, a school inspector, was seconded to the Education Department's School Publications Branch to be the editor of the new series. Simpson instigated extensive consultation with teachers, reading advisers, school inspectors, staff from universities and teachers' colleges, and groups from the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI, the primary teachers' union). It was agreed that the series should be made up of meaningful stories with entertaining plots. In the series handbook, *Suggestions for Teaching Reading in Infant Classes*, Simpson states that the books were also to include content "closely related to the environment of New Zealand children" because "[w]hether the books help children to acquire the most important 'skill' of all, reading for meaning ... depends to a large extent on the interest the stories hold for them and on how familiar they are with the concepts and situations in the text" (Simpson 48). Many of the stories were developed from teachers' recounts of actual experiences with children and, as mentioned above, the stories were trialed with teachers and students before publication. Helen May, in her history of early years schooling in New Zealand, includes a recollection from a teacher about Dora Ridall, one of the illustrators for the series:

Mrs Ridall became an almost daily visitor to our school and a much-loved friend of the children and staff alike. She wished to absorb the atmosphere of the junior school in and out of the classroom to capture something of the children's experience ... The illustrations were tested with groups of children to test their effectiveness. Miss Simpson took the group ... while Mrs Ridall sat beside her holding the painting. (May, 176)

The 1963 series consisted of twelve "little books" for students in the first year of school, each book a complete story, and six miscellanies for students in the second or third years of school (see Figure 1). Each of the twelve little books had the same layout, with the print always on the left hand page and the illustration on the facing page (as shown in Figures 2, 3, and 5.) Each book also included one double-page illustration (as in the second image in Figure 4).

(Digitized versions of the twelve little books and the first two miscellanies, *The Hungry Lambs* and *Boat Day*, are available at <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-corpus-readytoread.html> )

### A Note on "Authorship"

I refer above to the stories as having been "developed" rather than "written." Although authors of the stories in the miscellanies are named, there are no author acknowledgements within the first twelve books. The reason for this is that these stories were composed collaboratively by an editorial committee rather than by a single author. Hugh Price refers to a planning committee established by Pat Hattaway, the Editor of School Publications, which included Myrtle Simpson, Bryan Pinder (also a school inspector), and several teachers who "gave advice" (4).

### A Natural Language Series

The principles of familiarity and appeal were applied to language as well as the storylines. In contrast to the dull, contrived language of Janet and John, the new series was to include "language New Zealand children would naturally experience in conversation and in the course of having stories read to them" (Leckie 39). Ready to Read came to be referred to as a "natural language" series. As well as featuring the repeated use of a core set of commonly used words (such as "and," "here," "I," "is," "look," "said," "the," "to," "we," and "went"), a significant innovation compared to other instructional reading series of the time was the inclusion of a wide range of "interest words." The interest words proved very popular when the books were trialed. Simpson reports,

One teacher wrote: "I felt that, despite the fact that few of the children had ever seen an escalator, they loved the idea of it and the taste of the word." She admitted that there were some rather odd pronunciations at times: "tricolorator" and "picalator" (there was an "alligator" at another school), but she thought this was unimportant compared with the enjoyment children got from the word. "Once they managed to get their tongues round it they remembered it correctly, and in any case whatever the pronunciation it was still a moving staircase." (Simpson 45)

Although many of the interest words in the earliest books (for example, "hungry," "breakfast," "fire engine," "jungle gym," and "football") were not unique to the experiences of New Zealand five year olds,

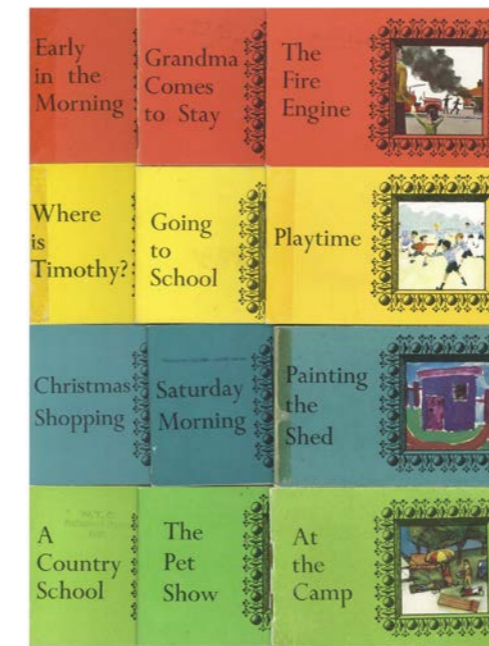


Figure 1. Ready to Read book covers

some words did have particular resonance for New Zealand readers, as shown in Figure 2. New Zealand's National Airways Corporation (NAC) was established in 1947, of huge importance for a country so far away from the rest of the world. Although air travel was probably not a common experience for children, airports and planes were of great interest. As I have discovered, if one asks almost any New Zealander who went to school in the 1960s about their recollections of the Ready to Read series, they are likely to mention the "Viscount" (introduced to NAC in 1958) in *Grandma Comes to Stay*.

As the series progressed and the stories became longer, there were many examples of interest words more strongly associated with New Zealand lifestyles—words such as "creek," "paddock," "pet lambs," "letter box," "motor camp," "long dry grass," "sandhills," "billy," "Standard 2," "primer children," and "school bus." Some terms—such as "manuka,"

"pohutukawa," and "nikau" (Māori names for trees) and "Health Stamp," a reference to stamps sold to raise funds for Health Camps, established to provide for children at risk of ill health—were unique to New Zealand.

#### Children's Own Worlds in the "Little Books"

The stories in the little books have mostly suburban settings, conveyed largely through illustrations, at home or school. Two stories take place in department stores (one featuring the escalator mentioned previously), and one is set at a lakeside campsite. Elements likely to be especially familiar to New Zealand five-year-olds include sunny weather, grassy back yards, sheds, sandpits, picnics, and children wearing "togs" (bathing costumes) or shorts and T-shirts, playing with the hose, and having bare feet, very different to Janet and John. *Saturday Morning* is a typical example (see Figure 3).

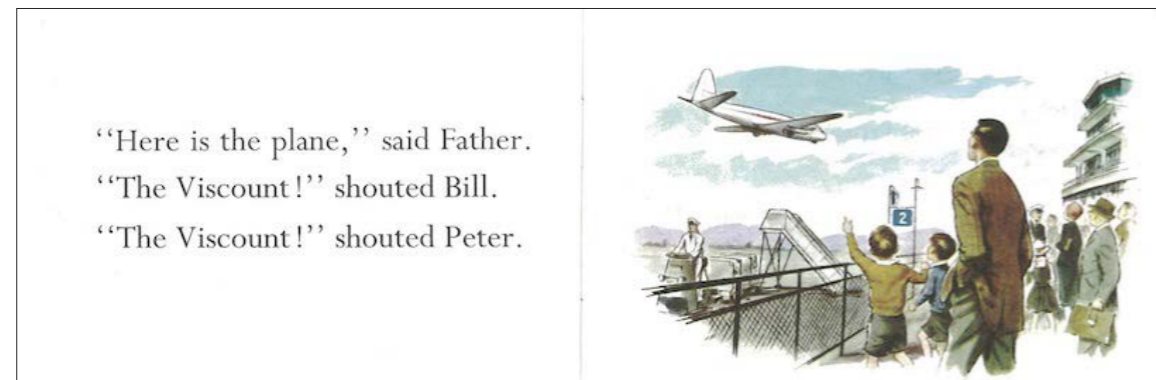


Figure 2. Page spread from *Grandma Comes to Stay*, illustrated by Conrad Frieboe.

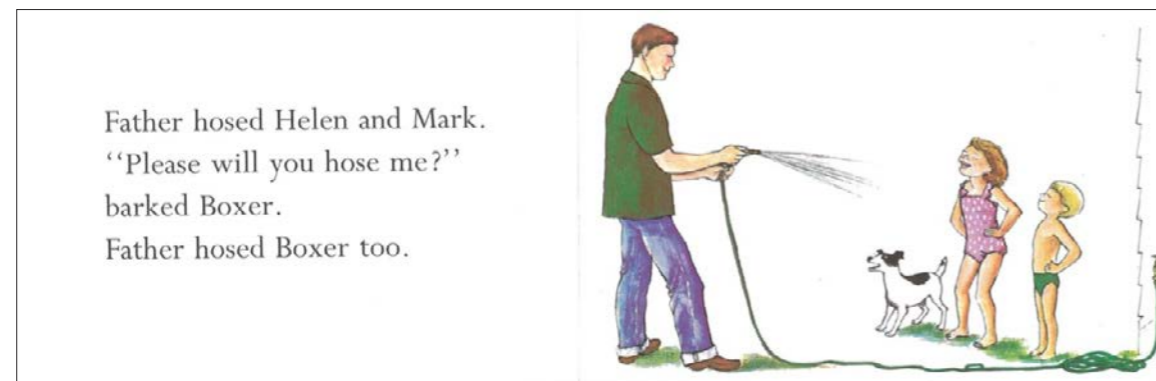


Figure 3. Page spread from *Saturday Morning*, illustrated by Mary Roberts.

(The distinctive "zigzag" weatherboard detail on the far right of the illustration marks the family home as a New Zealand house of the 1950s or later.)

Many of the stories are set at school, clearly a familiar setting for readers. One of the earliest books, *Going to School*, describes Timothy's first day at school on his fifth birthday, an experience likely to appeal greatly to children who have themselves only recently started school. An intriguing aspect of the illustrations in this book and several of the other school stories is the use Simpson appears to have made of them in promulgating the Department of Education's recommendations about developmental learning. Middleton and May (1994) cite the comments of Valerie Dell, another teacher involved in trialing the Ready to Read materials. Dell says that schools

were asked to check that the illustrations matched the experiences the schools were providing for their students. The implication here was that the schools should change their practice if this was not the case! Dell views this positively, describing it as "a wonderful opportunity for looking at appropriate programs in activity time" (Middleton and May 150). The illustrations in Figure 4 show an almost exact representation of the following statement from Simpson's handbook: "It is impossible to assess the value of the talking, thinking, and planning that go on as children build houses, airports, and ships with blocks, boxes, and planks; improvise costumes for dancing; discuss their paintings; play on the jungle gym and in the sandpit" (Simpson 18).



Figure 4. The first two rows of illustrations are from *Going to School* and those in the bottom row are from *Playtime*, both illustrated by Dora Ridall.

The families within the little book stories have several children, often with the youngest child (or the family dog) getting up to mischief or trying to help. It will be evident from these and previous illustrations that there is a great deal of relaxed humor within the illustrations. The children are (for the most part) portrayed as resourceful, confident, active, engaged, and, as apparent in Figure 4, enthusiastic about school.

Yet, despite the vitality and humor in the stories and the appeal of the child characters, many of the stories feature a significant element of adult intervention and control. For example, the story *Grandma Comes to Stay* ends with the narrator's comment "Naughty Sally"; Timothy's adventure in *Where is Timothy?* ends with his having to return his "borrowed" but very stylish hat to the sales assistant; Mother tells Richard he is naughty for wetting the family with the hose in *Saturday Morning*; and the horrified reaction of Mother and Father to Mark's attempt to help is the focus of the final illustration in *Painting the Shed*, as shown in Figure 5.

#### Sharpening the New Zealand Focus

The landscape of children's "own worlds" broadens in the miscellanies. Although home and school remain important, these stories have a wider range of settings. Two include visits to hospitals, three are set on farms, one involves an A&P (Agricultural and Pastoral) show, one is set in a seaside town, and six are set in an area of New Zealand bush, close to the sea. Some of these stories are more explicit, almost didactic, about aspects of New Zealand life, as if the series developers wanted children to notice and ap-

preciate the natural environment, outdoor lifestyle, and to some extent, New Zealand's Māori heritage.

In "Penguin Island" (*Sliding and Flying*) the opening illustration and first three pages of text (almost twenty percent of the entire story) provide an explicit and detailed description of the lifestyle in a seaside town. "The River Picnic" (*The Stars in the Sky*) includes experiences that would have been familiar to most New Zealand children but shows them through the eyes of Tim, a boy who has recently arrived from England. Tim needs to have the word "togs" explained to him and is surprised and delighted at his first experience of swimming and rafting in a river, thus building awareness in the young New Zealand reader that these aspects of New Zealand life may not be the same for children in other countries.

The most explicit set of examples, however, are in a set of six stories about Tony and Anne Matthews on a Christmas camping holiday with their parents. These stories are spread over two of the miscellanies, *The Sweet Porridge* and *Sliding and Flying*. The stories in *The Sweet Porridge* revolve around the preparation for and celebration of Christmas. The family find a fallen branch from a pine tree to use as a Christmas tree and Mother and Father suggest that the children go and find decorations for it. When Tony and Anne come back with their finds, they have a very "instructive" conversation with their parents. Here are some excerpts from "The Christmas Tree." (I have reproduced these excerpts as they appeared in the books, without macrons and with the same line breaks.)



Figure 5. The final two pages of *Painting the Shed*

"Do you know what this is?"  
Mother held up a branch of white flowers.  
"Tea-tree," said Anne.  
"No, it is manuka," said Tony.  
"Both right," said Father.  
"Manuka is the Maori name" ...

... "Look at the flax flowers," said Anne.  
She picked up some tall branches  
of red flowers.  
"Joe Bird will like those," said Mother.  
"Birds love to sip honey from flax flowers" (53).

After they have decorated the Christmas tree with their finds, Father tells the children that they "want one bright thing at the top" (55) and gets something out of his fishing basket:

"What do you think these flowers are?"  
"Pohutukawa," said Tony.  
"Yes, the New Zealand Christmas tree" (56).

The pohutukawa is a coastal tree, endemic to New Zealand, that produces a spectacular summer display of scarlet flowers and, as Father says here, it is indeed commonly referred to as the New Zealand Christmas tree.

The attention to New Zealand landscape continues in the second set of Tony and Anne stories in *Sliding and Flying*. These stories are also significant in that this is the first time the Ready to Read materials provide an insight into Māori family life, with the introduction of Mr. and Mrs. Katene and their children, Huki and Rata. Tony and Anne play with the Katene children, exploring rock pools, making dams, sliding down hills on nikau leaves, and leaping in the sandhills, giving rise to the title "Sliding and Flying." The Katene family live by the sea, close to the camping ground and sea food is an important part of their lives. Mrs. Katene gives the Matthews family pipi (shellfish) she has gathered, and three pages (510 words) are taken up with describing the characters' opinions of cooking, eating, and enjoying the pipi. Mr. Katene is a fisherman, and it is his prowess with rowing and maneuvering his boat that saves the children when they find themselves stranded by the tide.

These camping stories, beautifully illustrated by Ian Jackson, seem to be almost more about the New

Zealand landscape than about the characters. In the seventeen illustrations for the six stories about Tony and Anne, only three of them have the children as a focus. Instead, the dominant features are the New Zealand bush and coastal settings (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. Six of the eleven illustrations (by Ian Jackson) from the Tony and Anne stories in *The Sweet Porridge*.

Overall, it seems that the 1963 series reflects a sincere attempt to portray the reality of children's lives and, in the later stories, the wider context of the New Zealand lifestyle and landscape. Yet, if we look deeper, there is an ambivalence about the portrayal of Māori within the series. The historical background is crucial here. Post World War II New Zealand retained strong ties with Britain but was, as Beeby has described, developing a "new sense of nationhood." What was less certain, however, was the place of the indigenous Māori people. The 1840 Treaty of Waitangi between the British Crown and Māori chiefs was intended to protect Māori rights. By the 1960s, however, there had been a huge reduction in Māori land ownership, years of economic and educational disadvantage, weakening of traditional Māori communities, and marginalization and decline of the Māori language. It was not until the 1970s that there was the beginning of a self-led Māori renaissance in regard to language, land rights, and education. Te reo Māori was made an official language of New Zealand in 1987.

The characters in the Ready to Read stories I have discussed above are almost exclusively Pakeha (non-Māori). In the miscellany *Boat Day*, however, a Māori boy, Wiri, emerges as a major character but only because he is always getting into trouble. *Boat Day* is a collection of stories set in a New Zealand country school. When Wiri's class is planning to put on a circus to entertain their parents, Wiri volunteers to be a clown and has several ideas about how to make the circus entertaining. He wants to pin a tail on the circus "pony" (two children under a sheet) and ride it. Not surprisingly, his teacher, Miss Pennyfeather, says no, but Wiri carries out his ideas regardless. In fact, he goes further. With the help of his father, he smuggles a pig into the circus and lets it loose into the audience, creating an uproar. His classmates and Miss Pennyfeather are blunt in their responses:

"Your pig was not a good idea.  
All the mothers and fathers  
ran after him,  
and they did not look at us," said Don (56).

"... you are a naughty boy,"  
said Miss Pennyfeather.  
"We will not have you  
for a clown again" (57).

However, Wiri's tricks turn out to be very popular with the parents and he is specially thanked by them for making them laugh. The story ends with Wiri busy thinking of new ideas and the teacher resigned to more surprises: "And now Miss Pennyfeather laughed. 'What will you do next?' she said (60).

Wiri's deliberate disobedience is a stark contrast to the behavior of any other Ready to Read characters. It seems unclear how a child reader (Māori or Pakeha) might have been expected to respond to this story, particularly when we consider that Wiri is praised for his behavior and that his father has colluded in the trick with the pig. I have mentioned that in the other stories, there is a clear sense of correct behavior; when children step out of line or do unexpected things, adults have the last word, commenting on events and restoring order. It may be that the portrayal of Wiri here reflects a view, current at the time, of Māori as mischievous and undisciplined, expected to behave differently from Pakeha children. This perception is uncomfortably evident in *National Education* articles of the 1950s and 1960s. (National Education was the magazine of the NZEI.) For example, in a March 1952 article about settling Māori new entrant students into school, an infant mistress writes, "Maori five-year-olds are more immature than their European contemporaries ... they are very frequently over-indulged" (54), and "Maori children are very playful and love jokes" (55).

In the 1963 Ready to Read series, Simpson had emphasized the need for the stories to reflect what was familiar to children and, for the most part, the series does indeed seem to have done this. The characterization of Wiri, however, suggests a limited perspective of children's "own worlds". Concern about the narrow representation of cultures and lifestyles was one of the key drivers for a major revision of the series in the 1980s. The extent and impact of the revision was profound, not only in the representation of New Zealand landscape and lifestyles but in the literary characteristics of the materials, and just as for the 1963 series, invites critical attention.

#### Acknowledgment

I thank the New Zealand Ministry of Education for permission to include extracts from the Ready to Read books in this article.

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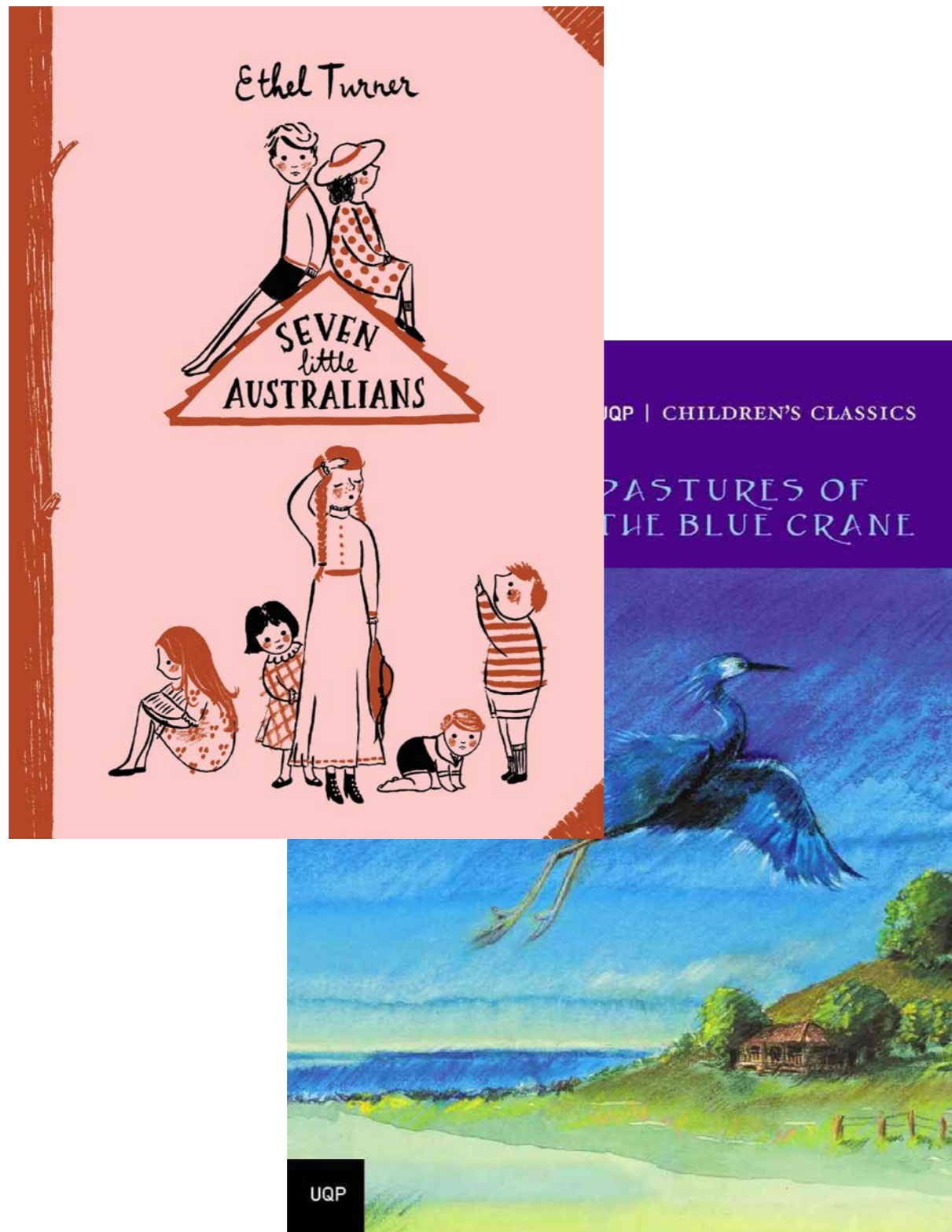
- (all published by School Publications Branch, Department of Education, 1963).
- The books are listed in order of reading level. Note that there is no author acknowledgment for the little books.
- Grandma Comes to Stay*. Illustrated by Conrad Frieboe.
- Where is Timothy?, Going to School, Playtime*. Illustrated by Dora Ridall.
- Saturday Morning, Painting the Shed*. Illustrated by Mary Roberts.
- Boat Day* (a collection of five stories). Written by Rae Huson, illustrated by Peter Campbell.
- "Joe Bird," "The Christmas Tree," "Presents from the Tree." Written by Helen A. Cutten, illustrated by Ian Jackson, in *The Sweet Porridge*.
- "The River Picnic." Written by C. Hooker, illustrated by William Stobbs, in *The Stars in the Sky*.
- "Penguin Island." Written by Rae Huson, illustrated by Roy Cowan, in *Sliding and Flying*.
- "Sliding and Flying," "The Pohutukawa Flowers," "The Rescue." Written by Helen A. Cutten, illustrated by Ian Jackson, in *Sliding and Flying*.



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# Judging Books by Their Covers: Australian Children's Classics in the Twenty-First Century

Erica Hateley



Series of literary classics speak to the possibility and value of reading the right kind of books. They seem to promise readers acquisition of cultural capital, fluency in high or venerable culture, self-improvement, and membership in a desirable or superior culture. Classic series imply an audience of adult readers presumed to need and desire inculcation into a literary tradition, which will in turn secure those readers within a national heritage and identity. Children's literature implies an audience presumed to need and desire inculcation into a stable, authoritative social and cultural context, which will in turn secure the reader's identity. Thus, the following description of children's literature could in large part apply to the history of reprint series of classics since the eighteenth century:

The two defining characteristics which distinguish children's literature from other branches are first that it is a body of literature which belongs simultaneously to two systems, the literary and the pedagogical; it is a literature into which the dominant social, cultural and educational norms are inscribed.... The second defining characteristic is that the communication in children's literature is fundamentally asymmetrical. Production, publication and marketing by authors and publishing houses, the part played by critics, librarians, booksellers and teachers, as intermediaries—at every stage of literary communication we find adults acting for children. (O'Sullivan 193-194)

"classics" that the functions of general and children's literature are more clearly and overtly aligned than anywhere else and rendered particularly clearly in series of children's classics. This paper explores the recent construction of such children's classics in Australia, manifest in four series that have appeared since the beginning of the century: Pan Macmillan's John Marsden Presents Australian Children's Classics (2001); University of Queensland Press's Children's Classics (2003-2009); Penguin/Viking's Australian Children's Classics (2012-2014); and Text Publishing's Text Classics (2012-2014). These series are a predictable local example of a global phenomenon, suggesting that Australian literary culture shares many general anxieties with wider literary cultures. They also reveal particular anxieties about Australian literature for young people and a recapitulation of Australian children's literary history.<sup>1</sup>

## What Is a "Classic"?

Margaret Ezell usefully defines classics as "that group of texts the literate portion of the population is presumed to be acquainted with" (2), which "in turn make up the institution the "Canon," or that body of knowledge which is generally believed to comprise the materials of significant value in a standard education" (3). When it comes to *children's classics*, it is understood that timelessness and universality are accrued not only through education, but through affection. Thus, Deborah Stevenson argues that "classics need to be loved, not just respected, and their textual story needs to fit into the popular audience's story of childhood" (115). What cannot be avoided, however, is that such classics really only remain available to the degree that they remain physically available. Certainly, families may have a treasured copy of

Seen in this light, it may well be in the domain of

a classic book which is passed down from generation to generation, but it is often true that the more loved a book is the more physical damage it will receive—the affection necessary to keep a classic alive may well be the cause of ‘death’ for a particular copy of that classic. Publishers often trade both on nostalgic affection and timeless authority in their packaging of children’s classics.

It is precisely the packaging which marks a range of classics as a series. Readers are encouraged not just to engage with a classic work but with a particular edition of a classic work. In order to consider the significance of such packaging, we move from the classic text itself to what Gérard Genette called “paratext”:

a title, a subtitle, intertitles; prefaces, postfaces, notices, forewords, etc.; marginal, infrapaginal, terminal notes; epigraphs; illustrations; blurbs, book covers, dust jackets, and many other kinds of secondary signals ... provide the text with a (variable) setting and sometimes a commentary, official or not, which even the purists among readers, those least inclined to external erudition, cannot always disregard as easily as they would like. (Palimpsests 3)<sup>2</sup>

These are the features which mark particular texts as “classics” within particular series. While it may be unsettling to literary critics to move from the textual to the paratextual, doing so opens up a space where both particular texts and collective narratives of childhood and culture might be interrogated.

### Classics Series as Collective Canons

Two obvious recent examples of collective stories of childhood are Penguin’s Puffin Classics (relaunched in 2008), and Random House’s Vintage Children’s Classics (beginning in 2012). These series constitute a broadly trans-Atlantic canon of Anglophone children’s texts, rather than promoting specifically national literary traditions. I am drawing on the Australian lists for each of these series, and in the case of the Vintage series at least, Australian titles were included for the local market (see media release, qtd. in Lawn 20). The overlap of titles across these two series demonstrates the shared ideologies of childhood and culture which inform the wider project of “children’s classics” in the Anglosphere:

- Alcott, *Little Women*
- Barrie, *Peter Pan*
- Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*
- Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes* [each list has a Sherlock title]
- Coolidge, *What Katy Did*
- Dickens, *A Christmas Carol; Oliver Twist*
- Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*
- Hodgson Burnett, *A Little Princess; The Secret Garden*
- Kipling, *The Jungle Book*
- London, *The Call of the Wild*
- Montgomery, *Anne of Avonlea*
- Nesbit, *Five Children and It*
- Sewell, *Black Beauty*
- Spyri, *Heidi*
- Stevenson, *Kidnapped; Treasure Island*
- Stoker, *Dracula*
- Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn; The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

These titles suggest the importance of the mediating adult audience for such series, who may be as likely to recognize some of these titles from their own classics series as from their own childhood. While copyright regulation will obviously shape publishers’ selections of titles, this Victorian and Edwardian crossover list also suggests the dominance and perpetuation of the “Golden Age” discourse in Anglophone children’s literature. As Peter Hunt suggests, such titles invite us to consider “books that *were* for and *are* for children as distinct” (201) and, further, that such books “are now being directed *at* childhood, rather than being *of* childhood” (201). The liberal-humanist notion of self-knowledge or self-improvement through reading of “great” literature can certainly be traced in children’s classics series such as the Puffin and Vintage lists. While such series show how the “advertising and packaging of literature into uniform series combined both the elements of an appeal to ‘master’ a national literary identity with the inducement of convenience and commodification which transform volumes ... into a ‘library’ of ‘classics’” (Ezell 11), an obvious gap—from an Australian perspective—in the Puffin and Vintage lists is a specifically “Australian” cultural identity or subjectivity.

### Anxieties about an Australian Tradition

Seemingly prompted by Rosemary Neill’s article for

*The Weekend Australian* in 2006, “And Then There Was One—Lost for Words,” a mini-panic about a perceived decline in the teaching of Australian literature in schools and universities has been the subject of popular and pedagogical debate in recent years (see Neill, Davis; Mead; Mead, et. al; Hayes). While there are emotional and discursive links between classics and classrooms in popular narratives about the health or endurance of Australian literature, a publisher of Australian classics cannot hope to survive on educational trade alone (see Indyk). Australian publishers have attempted to generate their own market and cultural momentum in order to attract the reading public’s interest. For example, 2012 saw the appearance of two popular lines of Australian literary “classics” in bookstores and libraries. The A&R Australian Classics (HarperCollins) and the Text Classics (Text Publishing) each achieved much greater visibility than University of Sydney’s Classic Australian Works, which has been running for several years. Each line drew on established classics design practices, creating or extending visual brands that—perhaps artificially—unified a number of disparate literary texts into a national canon. The A&R line drew on nostalgia for Angus and Robertson as the preeminent Australian literary publisher of the twentieth century, while Text marketed themselves as a young, independent company, undertaking a rescue operation of Australian literature from the dustbin of history. One of the obvious points of distinction of both A&R and Text’s series from other classics series was the emphasis on a national Australian literary tradition. Before the current anxieties about Australian literature in Australian classrooms, there has been discursive desire for reading about specifically Australian childhoods. Ethel Turner’s well-known *Seven Little Australians* (1894) has long been read and loved, not least for its opening account of Australian childhood:

Before you fairly start this story I should like to give you just a word of warning. If you imagine you are going to read of model children, with perhaps; a naughtily inclined one to point a moral, you had better lay down the book immediately and betake yourself to *Sandford and Merton*, or similar standard juvenile works. Not one of the seven is really good, for the very excellent

reason that Australian children never are. In England, and America, and Africa, and Asia, the little folks may be paragons of virtue, I know little about them. But in Australia a model child is—I say it not without thankfulness—an unknown quantity. (Turner 1)

This Australian childhood is defined in large part by its difference from the literature and childhoods of other nations. More recently, young Australian readers are imagined or desired to be like the protagonist of Ruth Park’s *Playing Beatie Bow* (1980), no longer objectified for a non-Australian reading audience but thirsty for a sense of their national heritage and history:

It was like going to another country, seeing landscapes that were not of this world. Yet she had known those landscapes were there: that was why she had always felt empty, incomplete, because she knew they were there and she belonged in them, but she did not know where to look to find them. (Park 124)

It makes sense, then, that Australian publishers have turned specifically to the idea of “Australian children’s classics” in their efforts to balance commercial and cultural interests.

In 2001, Pan Macmillan published a series of four novels under the umbrella John Marsden Presents. The front covers all feature large blocks of bright colors, with a recurring orange background to the novel’s title and a faint image of a hand holding a quill. At least one reviewer found that the “plain orange, purple and green covers of the present editions make them look worthy and dull” (Lees 32). It can hardly be avoided that the figure most fully and consistently canonized by this series is John Marsden himself. He provides introductions to each book, and these introductions emphasize Marsden’s subjective experience of the classics. The value of particular novels is marked by Marsden having “loved this book” (Phipson [2001] n.p.), or in the case of Nan Chauncy’s *Tiger in the Bush*, being “my favourite children’s book, by my favourite Australian children’s writer” (Chauncy n.p.). In turn, this affective experience is linked with Marsden’s own career as a writer as

when Phipson's *Good Luck to the Rider* is identified as an influence on the novel *Tomorrow, When the War Began* (Phipson, Good n.p.). Reviewers seemed less sure that what they saw as "attitudes that will, one hopes, be completely alien to today's readers" (Robson Kett 62), or more straightforwardly, as "racist" (Lees 30) in Mary Grant Bruce's *Peter & Co.* should be promoted to Australian readers in the twenty-first century. However, Marsden emphasized the notion not just of a canon but of a direct literary ancestry: "I can only write my books because Nan Chauncy and Joan Phipson went down the path before me. And no doubt they in their turn, read Mary Grant Bruce and Ethel Turner" ("Comment" 63). Thus, readers may infer, if reading such works enabled Marsden to grow up to become a writer of renown, a similar pathway may be open to them.

A far more diffuse and decentered logic of publishing and reading informs University of Queensland Press's Australian Children's Classics. While there is a unifying visual design for the seven covers—there are no consistent paratextual features used to construct a unifying narrative (or brand), and the books appeared once a year from 2003 to 2009. Just one of the UQP titles, Brinsmead's *Pastures of the Blue Crane*, features a foreword (by scholar Clare Bradford). Neither the timing nor physical features of this series suggest an implied child consumer. The lack of consistent paratextual framing similarly fails to suggest a clearly-imagined adult consumer.

In contrast with these small paperback series, Penguin/Viking's Australian Children's Classic series—published since 2012—offers an intriguing exception to the Penguin Classics/Puffin Classics norms. There are no introductions by scholars or contemporary children's writers, and these are not affordable paperbacks, but "keepsake editions of some of our most memorable children's books" ("Australian Children's Classics Set"). These keepsake editions are beautifully designed by Allison Colpoys, who won the Australian Publishers Association (APA) Award for "Best Designed Children's Series" in 2013 for her work ("APA Book Design Awards winners announced"). In short, the paratextual and physical features of this series "Australian Children's Classics" not only draws upon and extends the well-known Penguin brand but also is clearly intended as a finite set of books to be collected and kept for many years.

Davina Bell, an editor at Penguin, commented

that "When we compiled the list, of course we were looking at books that were popular and sold well, but there was something else we wanted our selection to capture—something quintessentially Australian" (qtd. in Lawn 19), and further that "even though Penguin considered additional material, they decided to let the stories *speak for themselves*" (19-20). In practice, this means that Penguin itself becomes the visible arbiter of what counts as a classic. Further, in addition to the overt paratextual elements of design, there are covert paratextual undertakings. So, for example, in *Taronga* Victor Kelleher's "Note to the Reader," which in early editions appeared after the novel's conclusion, has been designated a "Preface" in the 2013 Penguin edition and inserted between an epigraph from Randolph Stow (itself a gesture of canonical alignment with Australian literary history) and chapter one. A similar reordering can be seen in Bryce Courtenay's *Power of One*, the Penguin edition of which moves the glossary from the back of the book to the front, where it now faces the imprint page.

Text Publishing do not visually or materially differentiate between the children's and general titles in their Text Classics series.<sup>3</sup> This embeds children's literature in the wider Australian canon and claims a cultural legitimacy which is sometimes withheld from texts for young people. The eye-catching bright yellow covers of Text's classics have uniform layouts which produce visual consistency across covers: all feature a white band along the bottom for the Text Classics insignia, but each title has a unique cover illustration (which in turn often evokes illustrations included in first editions of the texts). Even as it mimics other classics designs, the strong paratextual signature of this series was distinct enough to have won designer WH Chong the 2013 Joyce Thorpe Nicholson Hall of Fame Award from the Australian Publishers Association (APA) ("APA Book Design Awards winners announced").

Two consistent paratextual features deployed by Text are the naming of any awards a title may have won and the use of author(ity) figures to write introductions to their books. In their overt gestures towards such arbitrations and mediations, Text are constructing two complementary canons of Australian children's literature: the literature of the past and of the present. In turn, the unique combinations of a particular mediator with a particular text marks out the Text volumes themselves as a kind of miniature

contemporary canon. Text's Michael Heyward describes the introductions as "wonderful things because they will help readers form connections between writers they already love and writers they are discovering for the first time" (Hanke 24). This is a canny description because it does not presume that either the classic author or the paratextual author will be the figure already known or loved by the reader.

The powerful effects of Text's paratextual constructions of classics and their significance may be seen at work in Margo Lanagan's introduction to Joan Phipson's *The Watcher in the Garden*. Lanagan speaks clearly and consistently as (and to) an adult reader of Phipson's novel. Lanagan foregrounds her personal experience of reading the novel which has lead her to reconsider Phipson's work in particular and Australian children's literature more generally. Lanagan remembers, "I knew Joan Phipson was well-respected, her work undeniably canonical in Australian children's literature, but I had her filed away in the jolly-hockey-sticks, horse-stories category of my memory" (Phipson, Watcher vii). Having reread *The Watcher in the Garden*, however, Lanagan asserts that Phipson's "assembled works reflect the larger movement of our country's literature for children, progressing from conventional stories that carefully muted their Australianness to deeper and wider explorations of young people's inner and outer landscapes" (xiii). Thus, Lanagan models the ideal reader response to this and other classics.

### A Canon of Australian Classics

It may be as a collective cultural gesture that these four series of Australian children's classics speak most clearly. Like the international children's classics series which they emulate, the Australian children's classics series also serve as a collective or cumulative canon, and they do not do so in a vacuum. Multiple forms of mediation and canon-formation such as book awards, educational markets, and critical histories intersect (implicitly or explicitly) with the selections made by publishers.

The latter part of the twentieth century is generally seen as time when high-quality, well-written, literary fictions for and about young Australians flourished. Writers identified as key figures in this development are (to take Walter McVitty's influential 1981 collection *Innocence and Experience: Essays on Contemporary Children's Writers* as a convenient short-

hand): Mavis Thorpe Clark, Joan Phipson, Eleanor Spence, Patricia Wrightson, Hesba Fay Brinsmead, David Martin, Colin Thiele, and Ivan Southall. If one also called upon the Children's Book Council of Australia's Awards lists for the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, or Brenda Niall's *Australia Through the Looking Glass: Children's Fiction 1830-1980* (1984), one would probably add Nan Chauncy, Reginald Ottley, Christobel Mattingley, and Ruth Park to the list. The survival and authority of this historical narrative is confirmed by its recapitulation in the four twenty-first century Australian children's classics series, when they are read as a larger, unified cultural formation. Combining these series' lists yields 29 titles, which in order of original publication are

- Turner, Ethel. *Seven Little Australians* (1894)
- Bruce, Mary Grant. *Peter & Co.* (1940)
- Chauncy, Nan. *They Found a Cave* (1948)
- Phipson, Joan. *Good Luck to the Rider* (1953)
- Marshall, Allan. *I Can Jump Puddles* (1955)
- Chauncy, Nan. *Tiger in the Bush* (1957)
- Chauncy, Nan. *Tangara* (1960)
- Spence, Eleanor. *Lillipilly Hill* (1960)
- Southall, Ivan. *Hills End* (1962)
- Brinsmead, Hesba. *Pastures of the Blue Crane* (1964)
- Ottley, Reginald. *By the Sandhills of Yamboorah* (1965)
- Southall, Ivan. *Ash Road* (1965)
- Southall, Ivan. *To the Wild Sky* (1967)
- Lindsay, Joan. *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1967)
- Wrightson, Patricia. *I Own the Racecourse!* (1968)
- Southall, Ivan. *Josh* (1971)
- Southall, Ivan. *Seventeen Seconds* (1973)
- Wrightson, Patricia. *The Nargun and the Stars* (1973)
- Manley, Ruth. *The Plum-Rain Scroll* (1978)
- Park, Ruth. *Playing Beatie Bow* (1980)
- Facey, A.B. *A Fortunate Life* (1981)
- Phipson, Joan. *The Watcher in the Garden* (1982)
- Klein, Robin. *Hating Alison Ashley* (1984)
- Wheatley, Nadia. *The House that Was Eureka* (1985)
- Kelleher, Victor. *Taronga* (1986)
- Park, Ruth. *My Sister Sif* (1986)
- Courtenay, Bryce. *The Power of One* (1989)
- Marchetta, Melina. *Looking for Alibrandi* (1992)
- Winton, Tim. *Blueback* (1997)

Here, in booklist form, is the standard history of Australian children's novels. There are a few titles here which are about the experience of youth rather than being 'for' young readers at the time of their publication, but which have been made over into children's literature such as *A Fortunate Life*, or *The Power of One* (each is published in abridged form here). This only confirms that such classics series are about the construction of youth as much as they are for young people. The individual series published by Pan Macmillan, UQP, Penguin, and Text certainly speak to the properties and priorities of their respective publishers. More importantly, a shared socio-cultural agenda of literary education and canonicity marks their collective output as a coherent assertion of the books which might make a young reader into a young Australian.

Cumulative acts of mediation and arbitration matter. The titles chosen for inclusion in the publishers' classics series trade heavily on any Children's Book Council of Australia (or other) Awards won. Of the 29 titles that appear on the combined book list, 22 qualified for CBCA consideration (by reason of publication date or genre). Further, 16 of those 22 titles were winners or honor/commended CBCA titles, another two were shortlisted, and while Southall's Josh did not win any CBCA awards, it did win the prestigious Carnegie Medal. The overlap of award-winning and classic status simultaneously affirms the legitimacy of the book chosen for reprint and the award it received. Of course, this also aligns the reprint publisher with the venerable quality assurance of bodies such as the CBCA, by marking the publisher itself out as a trustworthy selector of quality children's literature, and possibly deflects attention away from the very practical facts of backlist, copyright, and rights that must dictate inclusion of titles in any classics series.

The authors who make repeat appearances on the list—Nan Chauncy (3), Ruth Park (2), Joan Phipson (2), Robert Southall (5), and Patricia Wrightson (2)—all also make repeat appearances on awards lists and appear in the foremost histories of Australian children's literature (Saxby; Niall; Bradford). Such consensus could speak to some kind of objective, self-evident "greatness" of these writers' work—as might be called canonicity—or, it may indicate the circular logic of "canonical architecture" (Kidd 169). The republication of award winners confirms them

as classics, the publishing of them as classics legitimizes the awards, and the use of these novels as exemplars in influential scholarly histories of Australian children's literature further legitimizes their award-winning and classic status while also authenticating the histories themselves.

With such accumulations of what Stevenson calls canonical "accelerants" (118), it makes sense that publishers have seized upon the titles they have to populate new classics lists. By recapitulating such critical narratives, these publishers both draw on and extend a rhetoric of canonicity and cultural value which is not of their making. Less clear is whether today's child readers can or even should desire to partake in this rhetoric—whether they can or should consume the ideologies of childhood and nationality circulated by the series. At the very least, this collective story of childhood needs to be examined for its ideological dispositions towards nation, colonialism, race, indigeneity, migration, gender, class, and landscape. These very pretty books tell very pretty stories about "stories too precious to leave behind" (Penguin series blurb); however, they never really explain what or how such preciousness means, why "Australianness" in literature may or may not matter, which and whose stories are being left behind, and why. In other words, these classics series are canonical interventions into the story of Australian childhood but may have little to offer Australian children.

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2: Genette distinguished between paratextual elements that appear "around the text, in the space of the same volume" ("Introduction" 263), which he called the peritext, and "all the messages which are situated, at least originally, outside the book: generally with the backing of the media" (264), called epitext, offering "for those who like formulae, paratext = peritext + epitext" (264). I use the inclusive term paratext here, in large part because I address series of books which are materially defined by their paratextual signatures.

3: I have classified titles from the Text Classics series as children's classics in accordance with Text's own tagging of specific titles as "young adult" on their website. Available at: <http://textpublishing.com.au/books-and-authors/tag/young-adult/> (Accessed: February 22, 2014). Thus, I exclude crossover works such as Henry Handel Richardson's *The Getting of Wisdom* (1910).



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As it begins, this tale seems a familiar one: the Biblical story depicted in many Renaissance paintings. A man, woman and child set out on a journey.

Tonight is the night.

The family has to flee.

They've been tipped off that the authorities are after their blood.

But Wheatley's spare text and Greder's spreads of a vast and dark Middle Eastern desert reshape the centuries-old tale. The reader is startled by a change in timeframe, as the night's bombardment is shown to come from modern weapons. Pictures and words subtly reveal interactions in the family as well as their faith and endurance. They reach a camp as the book ends, but we do not know what their future holds. It is the child who tells his mother, "One day we will reach our new home." This book, many years in gestation, emerges now when the world is experiencing the biggest flow of refugees since the era of IBBY's foundation. As the cover blurb claims, this is indeed a fable for our times.

Robin Morrow

BOOKBIRD POSTCARDS



### Flight

Nadia Wheatley

Illus. Armin Greder

Kew East, Australia: Windy

Hollow Books, 2015. 32 pp.

ISBN: 9781922081483

(Picture book; ages 8+)

These two books are part of KPC (Kelas Penulis Cilik or Children Writers' Club) founded by Grasindo to give opportunity to elementary and middle school students who are gifted writers by assisting them to write and then publish their works.

These books by Utami Ichda are sequels about friendship and sibling rivalry and how to deal with such problems. The first book is narrated by Aurel Liantavidia; the second one is from the perspective of Aira Liantavidia, Aurel's twin. The twins are very different from each other; Aurel is more social while Aira is introverted. Aurel has many friends while Aira does not really have any friends and prefers to stay home by herself. At first, this condition creates problems between the two, but they realize at the end that being different does not mean that they cannot be close to each other.

Theresia Enny Anggraini

Theresia Enny Anggraini

BOOKBIRD POSTCARDS



### I was Invisible/ Keep Holding On

Utami Ichda

Illus. Indri

Jakarta, Indonesia: Grasindo,

2015. 88 pp/64 pp.

ISBN: 978-602-375-0641/

ISBN: 978-602-375-0610

(Chapter books; ages 11-13)

# Identifying with Trauma: Reframing Anzac in Contemporary Australian Young Adult Literature

Troy Potter

On 25 April 1915, when Australian and New Zealand soldiers landed on the remote shores of the Gallipoli peninsula in Turkey, the so-called "Anzac legend" was born. While Anzac is an acronym for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, within an Australian context, the reference to New Zealanders is often forgotten. In most Australian retellings of Anzac, it is Australia's involvement in the world wars and the plight of Australian soldiers which are central. "Anzac" has since come to signify Australia's military identity, increasingly occupying a somewhat oppressively central position in Australian national image-making, especially since the 1980s (see Lake et al.).

The ninetieth and centenary anniversaries of the Anzac landing have occasioned a renewed vigor in the retelling of Anzac in film, television, and literature.<sup>1</sup> Two recent Australian adolescent novels, David Metzenthén's *Black Water* (2007) and Robert Newton's *When We Were Two* (2012), mobilize the historical fiction genre to engage teenage readers with Anzac. The novels frame the Anzac experience through the lens of trauma and center on relationships between brothers during the First World War. While *When We Were Two* focuses on life prior to enlisting the war, the narrative events in *Black Water* focus on the impact the war has on those remaining at home and on the challenges associated with the reintegration of a returned soldier. That the two novels have received critical acclaim suggests the official

approbation and recognition of their *modus operandi* of historical (Anzac) fictions for adolescents.<sup>2</sup>

Despite an overwhelming desire to render Anzac ahistorical, the myth has been susceptible to subtle change since 1915, demonstrating its inherent narrativity. Mythic narratives, such as the Anzac legend, are "the wellspring of nationalism" and are "constantly mobilized to serve differing ideological and political interests" (Darian-Smith and Hamilton 2). Relatedly, of early Australian First World War writing, Robin Gerster notes the Australian soldier figured as "a twentieth-century embodiment of classical heroic virtue" (5). This characterization, he concludes, was a reflection of the "insecurity of a culture which has felt the need to promote itself in the most primal terms possible" (258). Since the 1980s, however, historians have begun to sentimentalize the Anzac hero, emphasizing his fragility, innocence, and youth (see Damousi; Donaldson and Lake). The trend in modern Australian war writing is to depict the Digger (Anzac slang for soldier) "not as a larger-than-life hero going into battle but as a very human survivor reflecting on the meaning of it all" (Rickard 71). The neoclassical hero that Gerster identified has been recast as a tragic hero, vulnerable and human.

This shift in the narrative framing of the Digger, Christina Twomey suggests, may partly explain the resurgence in public interest in Anzac more generally.<sup>3</sup> The construction of the Digger as victim allows Australians to identify empathetically with the Anzac experience, Twomey argues, as "trauma, through

its very broad definition, is something anyone can experience" (107). Yet, while trauma may enable readers to identify with fictional male protagonists, and thus with Anzac, Twomey warns that "Affective response is not the same as deep historical understanding of the causes and consequences of conflict" (107). A tension therefore exists between empathic identification with Anzac and cognitive understanding of the politics of war. Problematically, while the use of trauma facilitates staunch identification with and support of the legend, it provides only a superficial understanding of the socio-political aspects of war and the Anzac landing.

Rewriting the past involves as much forgetting as it does remembering, and it seems those who reconstruct the Anzac legend for adolescents in the form of historical fiction are less interested in uncovering any historical truth than they are in promulgating the Anzac legend and its associated nationalism. Describing children's historical fiction as a "very powerful ideological tool," John Stephens argues that the genre is characterized by an emphasis on humanist principles and seeks "to transform events which appear to be historical particularities into universals of human experience" (205, 238). This ideological manoeuvre echoes Twomey's observation about the use of trauma in recent constructions of Anzac: the shared experience of suffering encourages (reader) identification with the Anzac legend. Thus, as well as acting as repositories for reconstructions of the past, Australian war histories indoctrinate adolescent readers into the Anzac tradition, thereby maintaining the dominance of Anzac in the Australian national psyche. Cherie Allan notes exactly this function of Australian picture books that represent Anzac, viewing such objects as "textual monuments" that act "as points of reference through which younger generations can learn about, and (re)imagine anew, cultural memories associated with the Anzac Legend" (133).

The representation of trauma in the two Anzac adolescent novels discussed in this article sees individual or psychoanalytic models of trauma merge with cultural or nationalist constructions of trauma. Cultural trauma theory emphasizes that "Trauma is a culturally mediated attribution" (Alexander 8). In and of itself, a particular event is not inherently traumatic; rather, it is the belief that the event has "abruptly, and harmfully, affected collective identity" that renders it so (Alexander 10). Moreover, an

individual's response to cultural trauma defines his/her solidarity with the collective identity. The representation of the Anzac landing at Gallipoli would constitute a cultural trauma, given the way it has affected constructions of Australian national identity. In addition, cultural constructions of Anzac, such as Anzac Day commemorations and literature for young people, function to promote individual identification with Anzac, thereby promoting cohesive national identity.

This article examines how Anzac is reimagined anew in *Black Water* and *When We Were Two*. Both novels mobilize trauma to encourage reader identification with Anzac, while they efface many of the social and political aspects of war. Beginning with Metzenth's *Black Water*, I argue that individual trauma experienced by both Anzac soldiers and those remaining at home during the war establishes collective trauma. While on the one hand this facilitates communal solidarity, on the other it creates a tension between public and personal experiences of war. Metzenth's choice to represent a returned soldier enables him to begin to explore the complexity of reintegration while concomitantly to emphasize the characterization of the Digger as a tragic survivor. In Newton's *When We Were Two*, trauma also functions to establish solidarity between the teenage protagonist and a group of would-be soldiers who are marching to enlist in the war. However, in this novel, trauma is figured as a male rite of passage, which is problematic as trauma thus functions to include particular constructions of masculinity while excluding other subject positions.

### Unspoken and Unifying Trauma

Set in the coastal area around Queenscliff, Victoria, in 1915, David Metzenth's *Black Water* is focalized by teenager Farren Fox. At the beginning of the narrative, Farren lives alone with his fisherman father; his mother has been dead two years and his older brother, Danny, is fighting in the war in Gallipoli. The novel can be roughly divided into three major narrative arcs: the death of the brothers' father, Danny's return and struggle to reintegrate, and a boat race and Danny's eventual departure. *Black Water* challenges the romanticization of war, as it represents the anxiety and trepidation those at home experience during wartime. At the same time, the novel engages with the complex process of reintegration

and participates in the reconfiguration of the Digger as a tragic hero.

*Black Water* focuses on the personal impact of the war as a cause of sorrow rather than of celebration, thereby extending the trope of trauma to encompass those at home. It is not only Farren who worries about a loved one fighting in the First World War, though; a sense of trepidation hangs over the whole town given that everyone seems to have a father, husband, son, or nephew fighting or missing in the war. This shared experience of apprehension establishes solidarity within the town, demonstrating how collective experiences of trauma enable empathetic identification and solidarity. This is perhaps best demonstrated by Farren's burgeoning mateship with Robbie. At the beginning of the novel, Farren does not consider "goody-goody Robbie-boy" a friend (Metzenth 20). However, when Robbie's father is reported missing in action in the war, and after Farren rescues Robbie from a boating accident, the two begin a dialogue and demonstrate a shared, keen awareness of the impact of the war, which sees them become "mates" (47).

The experience of loss is also shared by the two brothers, Farren and Danny, although Danny's experience of trauma is represented as being more significant than Farren's. The death of the brothers' parents enables Farren to show some insight into Danny's mental state and to come to appreciate the complexity of war. As Farren reflects, "He couldn't truly imagine what had happened to Danny, or what he'd done, or what'd happened to all his mates, but he knew it could never be undone. And that it was beyond words, even though words had been said" (140). Moreover, that Farren has managed to deal with the death of his parents and continue to function as a member of society demonstrates his fortitude, and Danny commends and validates the strength Farren has shown, comparing his bravery to that of the soldiers at the battlefield. The novel uses trauma to create empathic links between the Anzac experience and that of young men. Further, given the novel is focalized by Farren, the reader is positioned to identify with Farren, thereby adopting similar perspectives and being inculcated into the Anzac tradition, too.

A tension is created in the novel between public and private outlooks of war, and the novel demonstrates, albeit peripherally, the social pressure to con-

form to public discourse. When Robbie's mother, for example, wonders about the merits of the war, it startles Farren because "You weren't supposed to say that the War was bad, even if your husband was missing, or someone in your family had been killed. You had to say that it was worth it" (77). This discrepancy between public and personal accounts of the war, however, is reiterated through Danny's recollections of the war. According to Danny, "old Abdul the Turk" was "Not a bad bloke, ... all things considered. ... He was always gunna have somethin' to say about us jumpin' his back fence. Just like you would. And sometimes he did the right thing" (138). Danny's characterization of the Turkish soldiers promotes a sense of fraternity between the Turks and the Anzacs, and it also positions both groups of soldiers as pawns who have been dragged into another's war. However, Danny is aware that his characterization of the Turkish soldiers undermines official descriptions of the war as it questions the morality of the landing. He warns Farren to not tell others about his views of the Turks, as "Stuff like that's too easy for the experts to misunderstand" (139), which suggests that any dissent against Imperial and official accounts of the war must be repressed, again demonstrating the need to conform to accepted public discourses.

Wounded in the head and arm, Danny returns home a broken man in search of isolation. As he explains to Farren,

"Me head's not right, me arm's not right, me eye's not right, and I'm not right. A lotta things've happened to me, Farren, and I gotta work 'em out and let 'em settle. And that's why I come home. For some peace and quiet. And to see you. But I ain't crossin' that bridge [into town]. Not today. And not tomorrow, either." (131)

Danny's scarred body, discolored "like a rotten peach" (130), bears testament to the atrocities to which he has been exposed. Yet, Farren's realization that "The scars he had were one thing, what [Danny had] been through was another" (137) shifts the focus of the novel from an exploration of the consequences of living with a physical disability to the psychological aspects of the reintegration or returned soldiers. By representing the personal experience of war, Metzenth is able to proffer a more realistic

account of the impact of war on soldiers, thereby participating in the reconfiguration of the Digger as a tragic survivor and dismantling romantic and heroic constructions. Although Farren wonders what atrocities Danny may have committed during the war, this line of enquiry is not pursued, in part because Danny believes such knowledge is better “locked away. Better for everyone, really, if the truth be known” (150). Danny’s foreclosure of any discussion about the war, while perhaps realistic, further implies the individual psychological damage war causes, thereby reaffirming the Digger as a tragic survivor.

Despite his desire for isolation, Danny is eventually drawn back into society when he rescues the lone survivor of a shipwreck, the girl, Souki. The two support each other as they work to overcome their fears and experience of loss. It is unclear, though, whether the emphasis that “Danny was *still* Danny ... and all that he needed to get going again was a bit of time and care” (109, emphasis in original) is Farren’s wishful thinking or an objective account of Danny’s physical and mental injuries. That Danny manages to outsmart his competitors in the boat race at the end of the novel suggests that Danny will recover and, in some ways, undermines Metzenthén’s exploration of the impact war disability had on both returned soldiers and their families. It is also unclear whether Danny leaves Queenscliff in the narrative conclusion because of his burgeoning love for Souki’s mother or because he is unable to re-establish his life at home. He confides in Farren, “I ’ave to [go]. It’s me only hope. Otherwise I’ll never know and I’ll never make it. I ’ave ter go, Farren, but I’ll be back mate. I promise. I’ll be back” (303, sic). Danny’s departure from the narrative enforces his continued silence and effectively effaces the profound challenges experienced by returned soldiers and their families who struggled with the consequences of physical and mental war disability. That aside, *Black Water* is one of a very few novels for adolescents that begins to engage with complex issues associated with returned soldiers’ reintegration into society.<sup>4</sup>

### Trauma as a Rite of Passage

Like *Black Water*, Robert Newton’s *When We Were Two* participates in the wider discourses that figure the Anzac as a tragic hero. However, unlike *Black Water*, which depicts the experiences of a returned soldier, *When We Were Two* follows the journey of two young

boys through rural New South Wales. Set in 1916, sixteen-year-old Dan and his younger, intellectually disabled brother, Eddie, run away from home, fleeing their abusive father. They set out on a journey from Gunnedah to Port Macquarie in the hope of reuniting with their mother, who has also fled home. Along the way, they join a group of would-be soldiers who are marching to Port Macquarie to enlist in the war. What is intriguing about this novel is the way in which it contributes to the sentimental meta-narrative of the Digger, while at the same time it departs from traditional constructions of masculinity in its emphasis on empathy.

The novel contains numerous intertextual references which add to the complexity of the narrative and reinforce the recurring theme of innocence.<sup>5</sup> The title, *When We Were Two*, invites a nostalgic reading of the text and recalls A.A. Milne’s collection of poems for children, *When We Were Very Young* (1924). The narrative events of the novel also echo those of the music hall song *Two Little Boys*, which was repopularized by Rolf Harris in the 1960s. In both Newton’s novel and Harris’s version of the song (which has been used to consciously reference the First World War), boys play at being soldiers and one boy must help the injured other.<sup>6</sup> Other intertextual references, such as the singing of *Grand Old Duke of York* (Newton 4, 193), hint at the futility of war and, perhaps, of Dan’s efforts to find happiness with a mother who has abandoned him. Like the generalized figure of the Digger, Dan is doomed for failure before his journey begins; his naïve hope of success, like that of the soldier, reaffirms his innocence and invites the reader to adopt a sympathetic outlook.

Despite pretending to be, the boys are not soldiers and are therefore not yet restricted by military protocols. Throughout the narrative, a tension exists between the boys’ innocence and their perceived need to display appropriate forms of masculinity. At times, the boys hold hands to comfort one another, yet Dan is aware that such behavior should be disallowed given it does not conform to the dictates of normative masculinity. The exchange between Dan and Eddie in the opening chapter exemplifies this:

“No, Eddie, they don’t. Soldiers don’t hold hands.”  
“But they might in the dark, if they were scared.”

“I don’t think so.”

“But we could, Dan. We could hold hands.

If we were scared, I mean.”

I look at my brother’s face and see the panic in his eyes.

“All right, then. We can hold hands. But only at night, if we’re scared.” (6)

The boys’ behavior oscillates between that of children and young men, indicating their developing maturity and their awareness of the necessity to conform to accepted sets of masculine behaviors. While the boys’ adoption of socially acceptable displays of masculinity seems inevitable, that they demonstrate the ability to operate outside of gender confines, albeit in a limited way, demonstrates the fluidity of gendered practices, thereby challenging fixed, patriarchal constructions of masculinity.

Similar to the boys, the would-be soldiers perform their masculinity. Although the soldiers present a brave façade, they nevertheless experience trepidation; after all, “every man going off to war is scared, and if he says he’s not, he’s a liar” (117). Bear, the youngest of the group, embodies the soldier’s innocence and fragility. While he stands “a good four inches taller than [Dan], with shoulders twice as broad, there seems to be something fragile about him, a softness underneath the big and broad” (114). That Dan later realizes the fragility he sees is fear reaffirms Bear’s childlike state, his size undermined by a teddy-bear softness. Fear is thus normalized, challenging the perception that men do not or should not experience the emotion, which further reconfigures the Digger as a tragic hero. As opposed to the conventional heroic trope that was prevalent in earlier Australian war writing, the would-be soldiers in *When We Were Two* are “ordinary men with sunken chests and hairy backs ... husbands and fathers, simple men with hearts of gold” (143).

Eddie dies on the journey before reaching Port Macquarie. It is unclear what causes his death, but he must be written out of the text in order for Dan to continue his journey. There can be no happy ending for Dan, in part because “A man learns nothing about himself when things come easy” (120). Trauma is thus constructed as a male rite of passage, enabling individuals to move from innocence to experience, from naïveté to understanding. However, if trauma is framed as a rite of passage, it necessarily stands

that only some go through this rite and thus only a privileged few are able to speak from a position of experience. Similar to mateship, which marks men’s membership to a homosocial order, when figured as a rite of passage, trauma functions to unify some while excluding others.<sup>7</sup> This exclusionary aspect of trauma becomes problematic when it is only male characters who mature from their experience of trauma, reaffirming the gendered segregation inherent to the Anzac legend.

Given that Eddie symbolizes the would-be soldiers’ innocence—as well as being their flag bearer, Eddie is designated their mascot—Eddie’s death signifies their eventual loss of innocence, too. That Eddie is buried in an unmarked grave in Port Macquarie recalls the grave of the Unknown Soldier, who has come to represent all Anzac soldiers. Like the mythologized Unknown Soldier, Eddie “was a good soldier ... But most of all he had a heart of gold. He was too good for this world, ... far too good” (189). The legend of the soldier must remain intangible, otherworldly, if it is to remain unblemished and unchallenged.

### Conclusion

During his Armistice Day address at the Australian War Memorial in 2004, then Prime Minister John Howard rejoiced that young Australians “were seeing in the sacrifice of their fathers and grandfathers and great-grandfathers a wonderful Australian saga” (n. p.). In part, the use of historical fiction for children and adolescents enables the myth of Anzac to find new purchase among younger generations of Australians. As discussed, while such narratives are based on historical truths, the purpose of Anzac historical fiction, at least in children’s and young adult literature, is not to interrogate Australia’s involvement in wars. Rather, Anzac historical narratives serve a nationalist purpose, endeavoring to promote renewed vigor in the military myth, which is conflated with Australian masculinity.

Part of this process has entailed the rewriting and remaking of the cult of the Digger. Contemporary reimaginings of Anzac are predicated on the experience of trauma: no longer is the Digger a larger-than-life hero; he has transformed into a vulnerable survivor of the atrocities of war, as exemplified by representation of the returned soldier in *Black Water*. The repositioning of the Digger as victim enables

authors to use the experience of trauma as a unifying force, such that contemporary readers are able to feel some empathy for, and thus identify with, fictional soldiers. Yet, as in the case of *When We Were Two*, such use of trauma excludes as much as it unifies.

#### END NOTES

1. In addition to the two young adult novels discussed in this article, other texts that retell Anzac include picture books, such as Norman Jorgensen's *In Flanders Fields* (2002) and Catriona Hoy's *My Grandad Marches on Anzac Day* (2006); the television series, *Anzac Girls* (2014) and *Gallipoli* (2015); and the films, *Beneath Hill 60* (2010) and *The Water Diviner* (2014). This list is not meant to be definitive; rather, it is a brief selection of the numerous publications since the turn of the century that engage with Anzac. It demonstrates that the two adolescent novels under analysis function as an aspect of a broader cultural and political engagement with the Anzac myth.

2. Metzthen's *Black Water* was named an Honour Book in the 2008 CBCA Book of the Year Award: Older Readers and was shortlisted for the 2007 Queensland, the 2007 Victoria, and the 2008 New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards for young adults. Newton's *When We Were Two* won the 2012 Premier Minister's Literary Award: Young Adults' Fiction and was an Honour Book in the 2012 CBCA Book of the Year Award: Older Readers.

3. Twomey contends that changing ideas about trauma and victimhood, which emerged from the 1980s, played an important and insufficiently recognized role in the reinvigoration of Anzac for contemporary times. Arguing that male veterans adopted a position of victimhood in response to feminist critique, she claims the traumatizing effects of war and sympathy for its victims have become a central trope in the post-1980s incarnation of Anzac.

4. Another Australian novel for young adults that demonstrates the psychological damage war causes is Michael Gerard Bauer's *The Running Man* (2004). This novel, while not an historical novel, constructs parallels between a teenage boy and a returned Vietnam veteran.

5. While many of the intertextual references may go unnoticed by the implied reader, the novel has been studied in secondary school English classrooms, and extensive teacher notes have been produced which encourage students to consider the significance of the intertextual references.

6. The novel also engages with issues of child abuse, both physical and sexual; as well as having a physically abusive father, the boys encounter a paedophile on their journey. That Harris was convicted in 2014 of twelve counts of indecent assault relating to girls aged between eight and nineteen is an unintended irony of the title of Newton's book.

7. This is similar to the way in which familial links to Anzac enable some to speak from a position of authority, which Marilyn Lake notes in her introduction to *What's Wrong with Anzac?*

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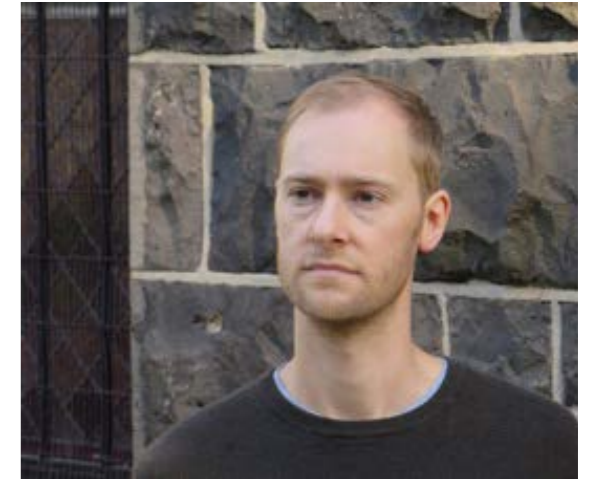
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# Mosaic and Cornucopia: Fairy Tale and Myth in Contemporary Australian YA Fantasy

Sophie Masson and Elizabeth Hale

Since the 1990s, Australian Young Adult fantasy has flourished as a genre, buoyed by the increasing interest in fantasy literature world-wide and at home. From fully realized secondary fantasy worlds, to intrusion fantasy that incorporates fantasy and the real world, to portal quests with one foot in the contemporary Australian scene, Australian writers of Young Adult (YA) literature have been adept at exploring the literary opportunities offered them by this genre. In this essay, we explore some of those literary opportunities—namely, the adaptation of fairy tale and myth in Australian YA fantasy. These two strands have emerged in recent years, and they demonstrate Australian writers' engagement with their cultural heritage and their ongoing interest in interweaving local interests with a universal experience. We use the terms "mosaic and cornucopia" to point to the rich array of influences visible in Australian YA fantasy: mosaic referring to the incorporation of elements put together in ways that create new material; and cornucopia referring to the idea that fantasy writers work in a context of a plenitude of influences, references, and ideas from myth (ancient and modern).

This essay is not intended to be a complete survey of the contemporary Australian YA fantasy in these twin sub-genres. Writing respectively from the perspectives of a creator of YA fairy tale fantasy and Creative Practice PHD student interested in fairy tales (Sophie) and a scholar of children's and YA literature scholar interested in mythological influences (Elizabeth), we look at how the mosaic and

cornucopia of myth and fairy tale connect with key issues in Australian YA fantasy—especially issues of landscape, place, and identity; the interpretation of fairy tale and myth in contemporary contexts; and the impact of cultural changes in Australian society.

## A Fairy-Tale Mosaic (Sophie Masson)

"Fairy tales are everywhere in Australian fiction" proposes Lisa M. Fiander. Observing that "fiction writers are most likely to draw upon fairy tales when they are framing, in writing, a subject that generates anxiety in their culture," she describes how writers from different cultures have approached this: with British writers using fairy tales to "chart the movement of the lonely into communities," whilst Canadian writers employ them to explore anxieties about identity (Fiander). Australian writers, Fiander contends, often use fairy tale to express the landscape, to describe geography, and to articulate anxieties about not belonging in a land whose ancient Aboriginal roots are not truly accessible to a settler society.

Fiander writes about contemporary Australian literary fiction for adults, but her research makes an interesting starting-point for a look at contemporary Australian fiction for young people which uses fairy tale either as direct inspiration or as an element within the narrative framework. Are contemporary Australian writers for young people similarly using fairy tales to express landscape/settler anxieties, or are other themes more dominant?

The vast majority of fairy-tale fiction published

in Australia before the 1960s was for children, not young adults, and reveals writers' anxiety about their mixed heritage (European and Australian) as they transpose European fairy tale frameworks, creatures, and tropes onto an Australian bushland setting. The works of May Gibbs (1877–1969), Ethel Pedley (1859–1898), Ida Renthoul Outhwaite (1888–1960), and Pixie O'Harris (1903–1991), which are all now considered "classic" Australian texts, all demonstrate that "geography anxiety" as writers negotiate a desire to create a unique Australian fairy tale corpus as familiar to Australian children as the original European stories—an ambition arguably realized by such works as Gibbs' *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* (1918)—and partly a wish to domesticate a landscape which could otherwise seem alien to original fairy tales based on European tradition. Some early authors, such as Atha Westbury (1838–1901) and Jessie Whitfield (publishing in 1898), also made an attempt to unite Aboriginal and settler cultural elements in creating their fairy tales, a theme continued later by Alan Marshall in his 1969 fairy tale novel, *Whispering in the Wind*, and rather more successfully by the great Patricia Wrightson in such novels as *The Nargun and the Stars* (1973) and *The Song of Wirrun Trilogy* (1993).

From the 1990s onwards, fairy tales entered the realm of young adult fiction as the fantasy genre became of greater interest to Australian publishers. Fantasy tropes and structures influenced a different approach to the fairy tale, including the three main types of fantasy structures: secondary world, intrusion, and portal. Secondary world fantasy is set in a wholly imagined world (which is usually influenced or inspired by real-world places and periods). Intrusion fantasy is where the secondary world intrudes on the "real" world—and vice versa. Portal fantasy is where a portal into another world opens, and the main characters go through. (These structures can overlap.) Some examples of Australian authors first publishing young adult fantasy fiction in the early to mid 1990s include Victor Kelleher and Caroline McDonald (intrusion structure) and Isobelle Carmody (a mix of secondary world and intrusion). My own first fairy tale fantasy (also structured on a mix of intrusion and secondary world), *Carabas*, was published in the Hodder Silver list—which was centered on YA fantasy fiction—in 1996.

However, it was the Harry Potter phenomenon that was possibly the biggest single factor in trans-

forming the Australian scene. From the appearance of the first Harry Potter book in 1997 to well after the release of the last book in 2007, local authors already interested in fantasy (including that inspired by fairy tales) have been able to take advantage of a much more encouraging local, and international, publishing climate. The "Harry Potter effect" had another result: The old preoccupation with transposing traditional fairy tale narratives and tropes into recognizably or identifiable Australian settings faded and was replaced with something that also characterized the Harry Potter series—a reinvention of motifs from ancient stories, fairy tales amongst them, and a rich blend of folklore from many lands, spiced with contemporary references and concerns. This mix in Harry Potter, examined in such full-length studies as *From Homer to Harry Potter: A Handbook on Myth and Fantasy* (2006) by Matthew Dickerson and David O'Hara, has been perhaps the most enduring legacy of the phenomenally successful series, including in Australia.

Since then, Australian authors of fantasy for young people adopted settings and influences that were more global and culturally mixed, reflecting a growing interest in multicultural themes. In children's literature, contemporary writers such as Anna Ciddor (*Viking Magic* [2003]), Carole Wilkinson (*Dragonkeeper* [2003–2005]), and Pamela Freeman (*Victor's Quest* [2008]) have created books rich with diverse cultural influences from global folk, fairy tale, and myth. Another theme is that of the retelling (popular in the 1990s and 2010s) with the publication of such books as the *Once Upon A Timeless Tale* series, retold by Margrete Lamond and published by Little Hare (2014), and the *Two Tales* series of folk and fairy tales, myths, and legends, published by the small publishing company I am a founding director of, Christmas Press (2013–).

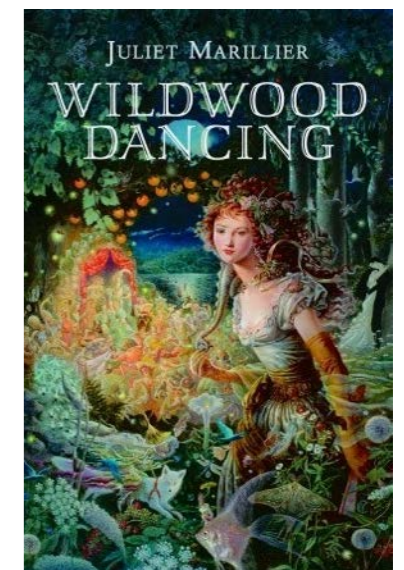
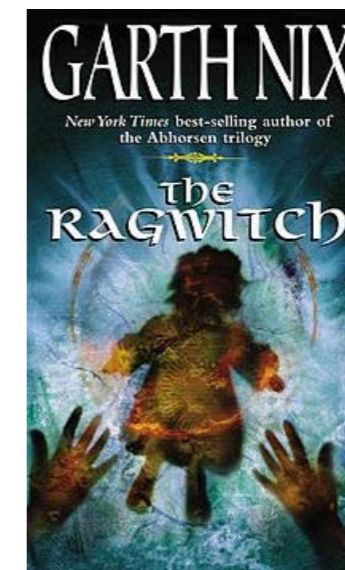
It is in the rise of fairy-tale fantasy for older readers that the "Harry Potter effect" has been most marked. By "fairy-tale fantasy" I am specifically referring to texts that have been directly inspired by fairy tales and are reinventions of fairy-tale motifs, characters, and themes. The structures of these texts may range across classic fantasy structures, from secondary world to intrusion to portal; although a portal structure is relatively rare in fairy-tale fantasy, intrusion and secondary world structures are common. It is noteworthy that whilst the 2000 edition of *The*

*Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* had very few entries for Australian writers for young people—apart from classic authors such as May Gibbs and Ethel Pedley, who wrote for children—and no Australian YA authors, the new edition of the *Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* (2015) has substantial entries for several contemporary Australian YA authors: Margo Lanagan, Isobelle Carmody, Garth Nix, Keith Austin, Kate Forsyth, and myself. Clearly, in those fifteen years, Australian YA writers who use fairy tales to create their own fantasy fiction have come to the attention of an international group of scholars, reflecting the growing international success of Australian writers in this field. It is important to add that the list in the Companion is by no means complete, and other writers—including Lian Hearn, Juliet Marillier, and Allyse Near, who have written novels in this genre (in both Hearn's and Marillier's case, in adult fiction as well as YA)—are also important figures in this field.

Looking at the works of these YA authors, it is clear that the fairy-tale-as-geography-unease theme suggested by Fiander no longer holds true for Australian YA fiction, at least overtly. For instance, Margo Lanagan's stories and novels mostly roam widely through world settings, cultures, and influences from Ireland to Africa, from folk to fairy tale to classical mythology to Christian iconography. Only a few of her stories are identifiably set in Australia, and she has said in an interview that one of these, *Significant Dust*, is her "most Australian story" (Morton). Keith

Austin's "fractured-fairy-tale"—cum-horror novels are darkly-layered evocations of some of the more fearsome aspects of fairy tales, set within landscapes of urban or rural blight that have echoes both of Australia and of the author's native Britain. While Garth Nix's first novel, *The Ragwitch* (1990), moves between "real" Australia and the frightening otherworld (that of the ragwitch), in his later, very successful fantasy series—such as the *Old Kingdom* series (1995–2003) and the *Keys to the Kingdom* series (2003–2010)—there are no longer identifiably Australian landscape elements with the books based on many different cultural influences. In an online interview with fellow writer Angela Slatter, Nix has spoken of the appeal to writers of using fairy tales as a basis for creating fantasy: "It provides a recognizable foundation on which to build something different and new. People like the familiar made somewhat different, if you can get this mix right then you may well create a story that will have a strong life of its own" (Slatter).

Juliet Marillier, best-known for her sweeping fairy tale fantasy novels for adult readers, such as *Daughter of the Forest* (1999), has also produced two YA novels in this genre: *Wildwood Dancing* (2006) and *Cybele's Secret* (2007), neither of which featured Australian-inspired settings. Lian Hearn's globally successful *Tales of the Otori* series (2002–2007) are based purely on Japanese fairy tale, legend, and history. Kate Forsyth—well-known for her multi-layered reinventions of fairy tales in adult novels such



as *Bitter Greens* (2012), based on Rapunzel, on which Forsyth also has written an academic work—has also written a fantasy trilogy for older readers inspired by fairy tales, the *Estelliana Chronicles* (2002–2011), which also has no connection with Australian settings. However, she has said in an interview,

I find it very interesting that so many Australian writers are drawn to retelling fairy tales. Perhaps it is because these stories are very old, and have never been confined by geographical borders. Perhaps it is because fairy tales connect us to a universal subconscious that speaks across cultural and ethnic divides. I don't know why – I do know that I think they do it wonderfully well!  
(Masson, "On fairy-tale inspirations")

Meanwhile, award-winning young writer Allyse Near's debut YA novel, *Fairy tales for Wilde Girls*, inspired by fairy tales, Gothic tales, and many pop culture as well as traditional folklore references, has been described by the author as being set in a town called Avalon that "isn't designed to fit in the faeries and mermaids and other such creatures—I never felt that I had to explain myself to the readers in that way. Rather, the folklore archetypes are transported to the 'real world'" (Near).

Since the 1990s, then, creating a multicultural, mosaic world out of kaleidoscope shards of the real and glowing fragments of the traditional imaginative worlds of many different cultures seems to be the norm for contemporary Australian writers of fairy-tale-inspired YA novels. But it is not merely the effect of Harry Potter on a global demand for fantasy literature. To my mind, the cultural diversity that has transformed Australian society has also greatly impacted on this genre, with a positive treasure-house of imaginative traditions for writers to draw on. Another aspect of this literary cultural diversity in fairy-tale fantasy, of course, is the international success of many Australian writers in this field.

There's another aspect to this bright contemporary mosaic: it stays true to the fairy tale genre itself. By their very nature, fairy tales are multicultural shapeshifters; their motifs and tropes transformed, retold, reinterpreted, reinvented over oral centuries and different cultures, so that finally written down, they exemplify a pattern of influence and under-

standing which is both robust and flexible, deep, and light—the perfect framework for many writers.

In my own most recent novels in this genre—*Hunter's Moon* (2015), *The Crystal Heart* (2014), *Scarlet in the Snow* (2013), and *Moonlight and Ashes* (2013)—the background was based on a blend of European fairy tale and the "real" setting of late nineteenth century Central and Eastern Europe. Earlier, in the four-volume *Chronicles of El Jisal* (2004–2007), I explored an alternative-world magical version of the modern Muslim folkloric world; in others, I used Russian, British, and French fairy tales. And it is not just because those varied cultural influences interest me as a writer. It is because, for myself, as a first-generation immigrant who came to Australia as a non-English-speaking child of mixed ethnic origin, it comes naturally. It has never been fairy-tale-as-Australian-geography that is at the heart of my own preoccupations in this genre. Rather, it is something else. Changelings, shape-shifters, creatures of divided natures, in-betweeners, exiles, displaced persons, and even traitors—those, I have come to realize, populate a great many of my fairy tale novels wherever they are set, just as the experience of being in between worlds and cultures has been at the heart of much of my personal and creative life.

Interestingly, however, dominant themes of YA fiction generally, such as the quest for identity and the conflict between authority and rebellion, are also strongly embedded within many contemporary Australian novels with fairy tale inspirations. And these could be said to be characteristic of classic Australian cultural attitudes as well. For just because a work does not specify an Australian locality, it does not mean writers are not inspired by the fact they live here, and the forthright, direct manners of Australians, a lack of true class distinctions, and the struggle between authority and the spirit of rebellion that has been a feature of society in Australia since convict days, also influence the atmosphere of the novels.



### Classical Cornucopias (Elizabeth Hale)

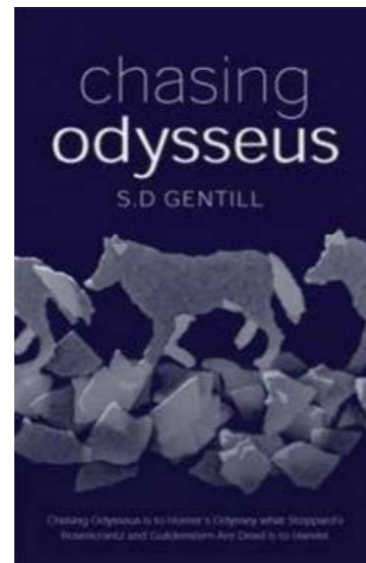
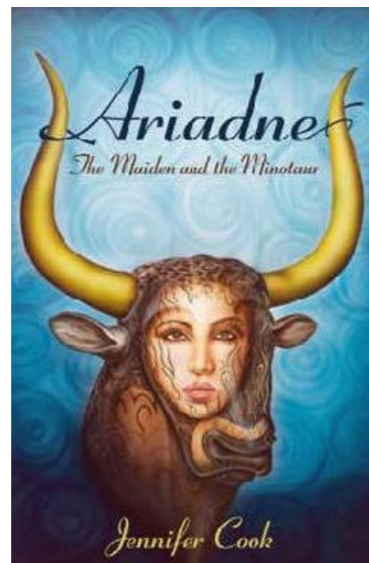
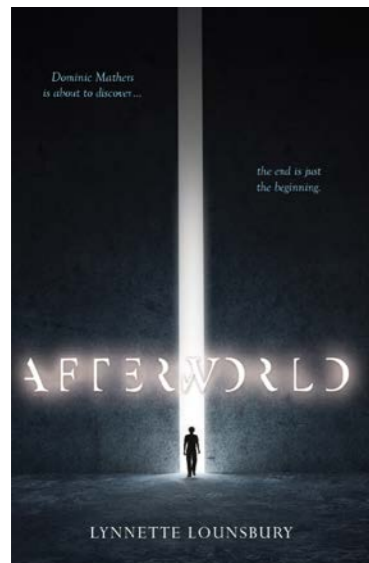
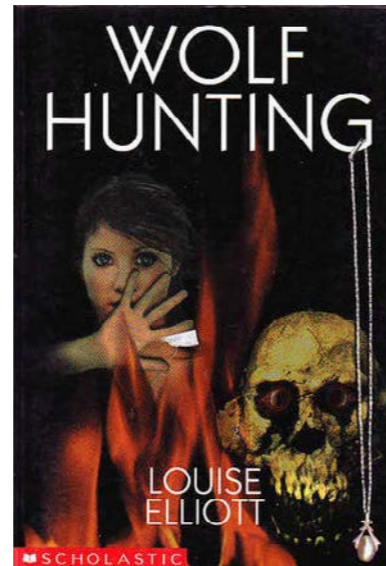
Sophie has outlined the growth of fairy-tale fantasy as a major strand in Australian fantasy literature for young adults and reflected on ways that Australian writers incorporate European fairy tales into their writing for young readers. How Australian writers engage with the myths of Europe is a different story: we see far fewer early local retellings of classical material, and very few that attempt to engage with the Australian landscape. My analysis, then, focuses on the recent emergence of classical material as a pre-occupying concern for Australian writers of young adult fiction, and I provide close analysis of the approaches taken. But while my sample is somewhat smaller, the concerns revealed are broadly the same: Australian writers are concerned with local matters of landscape and identity, and grappling with the mixed heritage common to most post-colonial countries. Fantasy literature and classical myth provide opportunities for writers to locate their discussion in a universal context, one that maps readily onto issues of adolescence and childhood, as well as of writing the local scene.

Some writers are conscious of classical myth's "foreignness" to the Australian scene and deliberately exploit that fact. Nadia Wheatley's 1994 short story, "Melting Point," is a case in point. In this story, Xenia, a second-generation Greek Australian teenager from Sydney, works out her thoughts about her dual identity while translating the Fall of Icarus in her Latin class. Xenia is in conflict with her grandmother, "Yaya," a traditional Greek woman who is shocked by her modern Australian ways (speaking her mind and wearing short skirts). As she translates the passage from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that deals with the story of Icarus, his conflict with his father, and his untimely death, Xenia reflects on her own relationship with Yaya, and, as Miriam Riverlea observes, "gains a more sympathetic understanding of her Yaya's longing for her homeland after forty-four years in Australia." Here, Wheatley engages with issues of multiculturalism in this settler nation: as well as referring to the moment when the wax on Icarus's wings gives way, the story's title refers to "the Australian government's 'melting pot' integration policies," in which immigrants were expected to assimilate into Anglo-Australian society. Wheatley's story is perhaps the strongest reflection on the possible clash between European myth and Australian

culture; though at its heart is Ovid's retelling of the Icarus myth, the story is significantly realist, set in a classics classroom, and reflecting on strong contemporary issues of politics and identity.

Young Adult fantasy that engages with myth is generally less politically oriented, such as Joanne Horniman's YA novel, *Loving Athena* (1997), which integrates classical myth into the Australian landscape. Near the hippie enclave of Byron Bay in Northern New South Wales, nineteen-year old Keats is a self-taught poet who receives regular visitations from Euterpe, the muse of lyric poetry. Keats falls in love with Etta, a recent arrival in town, and privately names her "Athena," an act that is confirmed by Etta's frequent references to "Artemis," her best friend from Sydney. As Keats pursues Athena/Etta, in company with Euterpe, it emerges that Artemis has died of leukaemia and that Etta is processing her grief, as in fact is Keats, whose mother had killed herself some time before. Classical figures, therefore, float above and around this serious engagement with issues of identity, friends, and family, offering an otherworldly way of thinking about them. But Keats is continually aware of the almost out-of-body strangeness of conversing with Euterpe in this ordinary Northern New South Wales town. Is this intrusion fantasy, in which the otherworld or supernatural complicates life in the real world, or psychological fantasy in which the classical gods serve as referents for adolescents as they work out their issues? Despite Keats's reflections, Horniman seems content to leave her classical matters unexplained, and existing at the level of metaphor.

Further integration of classical matters into the fabric of modern Australian life can be seen in Louise Elliott's *Wolf Hunting* (2001). Set in contemporary Brisbane, it is the story of a group of teenagers "sucked into a vortex of primeval forces"<sup>1</sup>. Sixteen-year-old Erin moves to Brisbane with her divorced mother, where she falls in with Moon and Wolf, an eerily beautiful brother and sister whose intense mother Athena has abducted them from their father. Wolf has been possessed by an ancient Mesopotamian spirit, and Erin makes friends with another pair of siblings, Jack and Cassie, themselves also ancient spirits. Together, invoking the spirit of "Fata Morgana" (a mummified totem that resides at Jack and Cassie's cottage and with whose identity and powers Erin becomes intertwined), they engage in a prime-



val battle to save Wolf's soul. In this novel mingle shamanism, classicism, Egyptology, Assyriology, and more, in the contemporary setting of modern Brisbane. Perhaps the remarkable thing about this book is that no one bats an eye at this strange cornucopia of mythological influences, simply accepting it as part of the mixed heritage of the post-colonial Australian scene.

The British critic Alison Waller uses the term "fantastic realism," to refer to this kind of intrusion fantasy, in which fantasy and realism blend, are accepted in the novel as part of the adolescent's world,

and in which the adolescent psychodrama is worked out through engagement with fantasy elements (Waller). Indeed, fantastic realism seems an apt way to describe this Australian YA engagement with classical material, whereby fantasy elements intrude into real life, supporting common issues such as family, identity, coming of age, grief, loss, romance, and career interests. Erin, Keats, and their friends operate in this context with a well-informed general feeling of comfort with their ancient forebears or cultural influences. And as with Australian YA engagements with fairy-tale, these elements seem to swirl together

in a cornucopia of mythical referents, which, more than engaging simply with local issues of landscape and identity, situate Australian adolescent culture in a global context.

Lynnette Lounsbury's rich portal fantasy, *Afterworld* (2014), moves the context from Australia to the underworld. In it, a boy named Dominic dies young, and enters Necropolis, a place between death and what comes after. Battling with Satarial—a cruel Nephilim who wants to keep Dom's soul, and who kidnaps and holds to ransom his still-living sister, Kaide—Dom has to negotiate a series of gladiatorial games and find his way through the Maze, a giant labyrinth which leads to the next phase of death, a flowing river of lost souls. This cornucopia of ancient material reveals the emotive possibilities of pastiche in global terms. Though Lounsbury is Australian, Dom and Kaide are multi-cultural globe-trotters, comfortable with a technologically advanced and globalized existence. And the world of the Necropolis is similarly multi-cultural, drawing on Biblical, Classical, and other material from antiquity. Perhaps because of this multicultural emphasis, Lounsbury takes care to validate myths and beliefs from a range of cultures. But while it is possible that this multicultural pastiche of Classical and Biblical fantasy could remove a sense of affect and depth from the story or engage in moral relativism, *Afterworld* asks big questions, about life and death, about death too soon, and about the ability of spirituality to come to terms with both. Perhaps ironically, Lounsbury refers to herself as a "historian as much as I am a writer," and to her love of Egyptian and Roman history, and *Afterworld* reads a fictional attempt to reconcile her fascination with history and with the mythology that influences past cultures:

So many people across history have so whole heartedly believed in a journey after death that I figured it might actually be something that was real—just by sheer force of all that belief! And I thought it would be interesting to follow a young guy – someone who hadn't believed in anything – through that journey. (Belinda)

For Lounsbury, it seems that classical myth is important because it enables her to reflect broadly, and mythically, with ideas about death and the afterlife.

While the portal fantasy of *Afterworld* invokes iconic classical storytelling motifs, such as the hero's journey through the Labyrinth, and engages in deep reflection, lighter approaches are also to be seen in Australian YA fantasy. A case in point is Ian Treviskis's portal fantasy novel for tweens: *Hopscotch: Medusa Stone* (2009). Here, friends Hannah and Jake, are transported from Pelican Bay, a quiet coastal village, to the world of ancient myth, in which they have to solve puzzles that take them through recognizable elements of Greek myth in order to get home. *Hopscotch* offers an easy way for children to grasp the basics of Greek myth and legend, using the portal fantasy as a convenient device and the presence of the contemporary Australian protagonists as mediators for their readers, asking questions, speculating about the myths, and interpreting the difference between the mores of classical antiquity and contemporary Australia. (Further, the novels supply glossaries of terms in order to facilitate understanding.)

In contrast is Karen Brooks's Cassandra Klein series (2001–2004), in which Cassandra receives a necklace from her estranged mother which turns out to be a portal device enabling her to travel to Morpheia, a fantasy realm in which the myths come to life. Chased by Hecate, and kidnapped by Charon, Cassandra must escape to rescue her father from the evil Dr. Proteus. Cassandra's adventures continue in three further novels, engaging in more melodramatic battles with Dr. Proteus, Hecate, and the interesting but sinister world of Morpheia and the classical pantheon. Brooks comments on the power and complexity of classical myth, noting especially that the gods are "feisty, flawed, and while often narcissistic, under[go] their own trials and lessons, which mirror those of my protagonists" (Daniells). Though portal fantasy tends to remove the fantasy elements from the "real world," and protagonists travel to the fantasy world using some device (the necklace, the hopscotch stone), writers nevertheless emphasize the psychological relevance of mythical matters to the modern teenager's condition.

Moving away from Australia entirely, into the classical world, we see Jennifer Cook and Sulari Gentill take a different turn, offering modern revisionist representations of classical myth and literature. Cook's *Ariadne: the Maiden and the Minotaur* (2004) recuperates the figures of Ariadne and the minotaur, offering an insight into the house of Atreus

from the perspective of Ari, a self-described gawky teenager, who is jealous of her prettier sister, fascinated and repelled by Theseus, and deeply protective of the minotaur, her disabled brother, Tori. Similarly, Cook's *Persephone: Secrets of a Teenage Goddess* (2005) is a redemption narrative in which Persephone redeems the awkward shy-boy Hades. These novels engage in a feminist revision of ancient myths, giving a somewhat modern voice to the otherwise silenced or passive female classical characters and perhaps picking up on Ovid's *Heroides*, in which famous mythical women tell their stories.

Sulari Gentill's *Chasing Odysseus* (2011) is similarly revisionist. Here, three boys and a girl, the children of Agelaus, leader of a tribe of herdsman recorded in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as having helped conspire to bring down Troy, engage on a roller-coaster adventure to find Odysseus in order to clear their father's name. Gentill writes "It seemed to me that the *Odyssey* was a story told by the winners of the war and I wondered how the losers would see the King of Ithaca." This revisionist stance is encouraged, she writes, by the way that the *Odyssey's* structure works, and the way that "each story seems to lead to other stories, so how each minor player has a tale of his/her own." As a multicultural "typical publically educated" Australian herself, Gentill "wrote *Chasing Odysseus* as a map for my younger self, a guide to engaging with the original and to understanding and appreciating it."<sup>2</sup>

The power and flexibility of classical material lends itself well to retellings, adaptations, and to considerations of the adolescent condition, in Australia or elsewhere. Considered alongside Sophie's discussion of fairy-tales and folklore, classical fantasy and adaptations offer further examples of the ways that Australian young adult writers are engaging with their own culture. As Gentill remarks,

I suspect that there is a kind of DNA that classical/ancient myth has contributed to all the stories that have come after them in Western literature. Consequently there's a strange familiarity to them even if one has never heard the particular legend before. They add to our appreciation of new stories and we feel a connection even if we don't know why.<sup>3</sup>

The New Zealand writer, Margaret Mahy, wrote of her childhood reading in rural New Zealand as being predominantly European, causing in her literary psyche a kind of "imaginative displacement." Several of her many novels for young adults, written in the 1980s and 1990s, engage with classical myth and fantastic realism to overcome that imaginative displacement—integrating the New Zealand of her novels firmly in the European literary setting, while acknowledging the specificities of place that make it its own distinctive location.

The Australian writers I have discussed do not specifically acknowledge that same sense of imaginative displacement. But their integration of classical myth into Young Adult Australian literary experience, and their integration of contemporary Australian ways of looking at the world into classical material, demonstrates significant innovation taking place in a small subsection of fantasy literature. As such, it is worthy of further attention.<sup>4</sup>

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- 1 Cover blurb, Louise Elliott, *Wolf Hunting*. (Sydney: Margaret Hamilton Books, 2001).
- 2 Sulari Gentill, pers. comm
- 3 Sulari Gentill, pers. comm.
- 4 I have not covered the depiction of classical material in educational texts, or the gathering of short story format retellings of classical material (such as Ursula Dubosarsky's "Two Tales of Twins from Ancient Greece and Rome," a retelling of the stories of Apollo and Athena and Romulus and Remus, published in Sophie's Christmas Press imprint). Scope remains for discussion of this and other work and to understanding artists' and illustrators' engagement with classical myth, fairy tale, and other folkloric elements.



**SOPHIE MASSON** is the award-winning and internationally-published author of over 60 books for children, young adults and adults. Her most recent books are YA fairy tale novel *Hunter's Moon* (RHA 2015) and adult novel *Trinity: The False Prince*, second in the *Trinity* duology (Momentum, 2015). At present, she is undertaking a PHD in Creative Practice at the University of New England. Sophie is also a founding partner and co-director of Christmas Press, [www.christmaspresspicturebooks.com](http://www.christmaspresspicturebooks.com), a boutique publisher specialising in beautiful picture books and illustrated fiction for children.



**ELIZABETH HALE** is a Senior Lecturer in English and Writing at the University of New England. She has written extensively on children's literature from 1800 to the present day, with particular focus on the New Zealand children's novelists Margaret Mahy and Maurice Gee, and on children's literature engagements with classical antiquity.

*Olinosters op die dak* tells the story of Daniël staying at his grandparents' house where unfamiliar noises and surroundings combined with a vivid imagination lead to scary bedtime encounters.

According to Marita van der Vyver, this reissue, designed and illustrated by Dale Blankenaar, could be a game-changer for South African picture books. The text is exactly the same as in the 1996 edition, illustrated by Piet Grobler, but Blankenaar has shifted the focus to Daniël's imagination. Using black pages with white text and different perspectives as if from cupboards, keyholes, and other angles in Daniël's room, the illustrations brilliantly match the little boy's fears of the dark.

The layout of the tall, narrow book was also changed to allow for textless double-page spreads filled with Daniël's imaginary monsters. In Blankenaar's world, the delightful, old-fashioned animal blends (rhinocephants, crocopotamus, etc.) are modern, robot-like monsters that become less scary as Daniël and his grandparents "fight" them off to get to a baborilla under the bed (that strongly resembles a Sendak creation) and end with a real but friendly lion reminiscent of Narnia's Aslan. A must for your South African picture book collection.

Magdel Vorster

BOOKBIRD POSTCARDS



**Olinosters op die dak  
(Rhinocephants on the roof)**

Marita van der Vyver  
Illus. Dale Blankenaar  
Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2015. Unp.  
ISBN: 9780624069171  
(Picture book; ages 4+)

# The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature: A "Unique and Significant Collection"

Belle Alderman and Trish Milne

## Laying the Foundation

The story of the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature (formerly the Lu Rees Archives) began with the vision and enthusiasm of one woman. As early as 1973, Lu Rees had established the basis for what the Centre has become today. Her passion for the task was fuelled by her belief that the creative work of authors, illustrators, publishers, and others engaged in producing Australian children's books formed an important part of the nation's cultural heritage and must be preserved. In 1974, the Australian Government provided a grant of \$500 to each branch of The Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA). Lu Rees, the President of the ACT Branch, proposed to all branches that a national collection of children's literature be established with files about the authors and illustrators and their books.

Viewing translations as an essential part of an author's works, Lu Rees wrote to authors, illustrators, and publishers in 1979 asking them to donate their translations. Our largest collection of translations is the works of Emily Rodda with 1,200 editions.

In 1981, again writing to authors, illustrators, and publishers, Lu Rees asked them to donate copies of all their books. Today thirty-four publishers and their

imprints routinely donate copies of their children's books, and most have been doing so since 1981.

When a permanent home needed to be found for the growing collection, an informal agreement between the CBCA and the Canberra College of Advanced Education, now the University of Canberra (UC), saw the collection moved to the College in 1980. At that time, the collection held 2,900 books and 170 research files. Today, there are almost 29,000 books in 53 languages and 450 research files. In 1988, the Lu Rees Archives achieved deductible gift recipient status enabling it to collect authors' papers and manuscripts, illustrators' artworks, two publishers' archives, audio recordings, photographs, theses, reference material, and ephemera.

In 2012, the Lu Rees Archives became an incorporated body in the ACT and in 2015 changed its name to the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc. These steps were taken in order to focus its aims, enhance its strength, and pursue a more strategic role in the field of Australian children's literature.

Over all this time, the work of the Centre has been completed by a loyal band of volunteers. Today volunteers contribute the equivalent of hav-

ing 2.5 full-time staff. Many come with high levels of expertise; others develop expertise for the Centre. This invaluable group offers a loyal, highly skilled, and richly diverse pool of talent.

### Building the Collection

A modest idea can achieve extraordinary results where there is vision and resolve. Although the collection has developed in so many ways, Lu Rees' vision is still recognizable within the Centre's activities today. She knew that for Australian children's literature to be accepted as a discipline of study in its own right, it needed a diverse and strong collection which would lay the foundation for knowledge building and sharing. No other organization in Australia has accepted this challenge to the same degree as the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature. Today, the collection is valued at over eight million dollars, and each year it enhances in value.

In 2011, an external expert assessed the significance of the collection. He reported that "it has established a firm reputation among researchers, students, bibliographers, librarians and the general public as one of the most important collections of children's literature in Australia" (Powell 1). He described the collection as "significant" and "unique." In benchmarking the collection against national holdings, he demonstrated that the collection, specifically for its post-1960 items, equaled those at the National Library and several state libraries. Frequently, the Lu Rees Archives held the only copy of a particular translation.

Since we aim to collect all Australian children's books over time, we have discovered two invaluable sources for filling gaps in the collection, particularly of pre-1960 editions. Canberra's Lifeline Book Fair has provided many gems. So, too, have our "wish lists," published on our website. We have completed several important collections in this way, and the strategy is very satisfying for both the Centre and the donor.

In 1988, the Lu Rees Archives gained deductible gift recipient status. This has enabled us to develop major collections of works created by authors, illustrators and publishers. Through the Cultural Gifts Program, sponsored by the Australian Government, donors can claim a tax benefit based on the market value of their donation. We have accepted forty-five such collections with several more in the pipeline.

Each collection differs in scope and content and can include manuscripts, papers, books, artwork, correspondence, media, and ephemera. These are particularly important for researchers as they reveal the creative process. There are examples of the staged development of manuscripts, preliminary artwork and correspondence between creators and their book designers, editors, and publishers.

The Centre holds the manuscripts and papers of some of Australia's most respected authors including Emily Rodda, Gillian Rubinstein, Gary Crew, Margaret Wild, and Jackie French and artists such as Bob Graham, Graeme Base, and Shaun Tan. Their collections are a rich resource for researchers (Milne and Alderman 57). Detailed finding aids, guides, and artwork frameworks prepared by Centre staff and available on the website provide entry points to the collections for researchers.

Publishing archives in public institutions anywhere in the world are extremely rare. Only a handful of them are held in Australia. Of these, two are the archives of children's publishers, and both are held in the Centre. The Walter McVitty Books archive was acquired in 1992 and the Omnibus Books archive in 2004. These archives provide unique perspectives from publisher, author, and illustrator. They reveal how manuscripts are selected, how books are marketed, the publishing philosophy of a particular company, how international editions are negotiated, a comparison of practices with similar publishers worldwide, and the financial side of publishing.



Omnibus Publisher Archive

While individual parts of the Centre's collections are themselves significant, the great strength of the collection overall lies in the relationships and interconnections between the various parts. Here is the detailed story of the creators' journey, their relationships with illustrators and publishers, the progress from the first draft, and sometimes, the many iterations along the way.

### Encouraging Life-long Learning

It is these relationships and interconnections that draw people, young and old, to learn from the Centre.

Our collections offer endless possibilities for life-long learning. Using original artworks and manuscripts, we, as educators, explore the inspiration and artistry of creators with young children in primary schools.



Children explore *Dinosaurs love cheese*

Secondary school students delve more deeply into the creators' art through exploring examples of authors and illustrators working together and singly as they create various jacket covers and alternative illustrations and work through various drafts searching for that perfect sentence or word.

We support learning experiences for emerging

professionals through internships and individual learning experiences at university level. We know that linking theory and practice deepens the learning experience and produces experienced professionals. Students studying Museum Practice, Cultural Heritage, Literary Studies, Creative Writing, Teacher Librarianship, and Information Studies come from around Australia. Some of the learning experiences have included students of graphic designers and creative writers creating picture books for the *Get Real!* Project.

Other projects have included creating guides to an author's papers, researching rare books, documenting original artwork, researching Australian children's publishers, and developing teaching and learning materials based on the Centre's resources. Over three years, students studying Museum Studies at the Canberra Institute of Technology have worked in small groups to curate public exhibitions using our collection.

In 2016, the UC's Cultural Heritage Collective students worked with the Centre, academics, University art curator, and educators to produce the exhibition *Seeing Stories* featuring forty-eight framed original artworks from Australian children's books. Students were involved over four months in all aspects of this exhibition, including the planning phase. They were involved from the moment the artwork was delivered by a specialist art courier, through the unpacking and inventorying, to the moment of guests arriving on the opening night.



Jackie French opens *Seeing Stories*

Such interactions between experienced professionals and university students produce enthusiastic, committed, and knowledgeable professionals. We know, too, that the future of any country's heritage lies with the current and future generations.

### Inspiring Researchers

The Centre holds unique materials enabling researchers to produce original material, thereby laying the foundation for future research. Such was the case with a researcher comparing children's and adults' views on Australian award-winning books. The Centre holds Australia's only full run of fifty-seven issues of *Rippa Reading*, a magazine produced by a teenager with young people writing all the reviews. The researcher compared these reviews to adults' reviews appearing in our full runs of all Australian children's literature journals. A researcher from Canada appreciated our unique background material about an award for culturally diverse material. She compared government support of culturally diverse material in Canada, Africa, and Australia.

Researchers appreciate the Centre's unique and comprehensive research files on authors, illustrators, publishers, and critics. These date from the 1950s, before the flourishing development of Australian children's literature began in the 1970s. Such material is categorized into thirty different types of material, thus facilitating comprehensive research. Most recently, the Centre completed documenting the publishing archive of Omnibus Books Publisher, Australia's first independent children's publisher, which began in 1982. This archive reveals unique insights into publishing. Digitized audiotapes with accompanying digitized photographs of Australia's authors, illustrators, publishers, and critics discussing the field of Australian children's literature from 1975 to 1998 are, as yet, undiscovered gems.

### Engaging Communities

It is our goal not only to collect, preserve, and document our collections but to share these widely with diverse groups. We run exhibitions, festivals, programs for special groups, and smaller events celebrating particular creators.

Our exhibitions are often ambitious as we collaborate with expert partners. With Ann James and Ann Haddon from Books Illustrated (Melbourne), their colleague Nicky Lo Bianco, and the Canberra

Museum and Gallery, we celebrated the thirty-year career of Bob Graham, picture book writer and illustrator, whose body of work we hold in the Centre. Our exhibition, *A Bird in the Hand! Bob Graham: A Retrospective*, ran for four months in 2014 with over 12,000 people attending.



*Bob Graham exhibition*

A goal of the Centre is to encourage and inspire current and future authors and illustrators. Our programs assist in their recognition and promote their contribution to children's literature around the world. Our recent festivals, *Boundless* in 2012 and *Showcase* in 2013, together featured over twenty events, twenty speakers, and one large and six mini-exhibitions across Canberra with a wide range of collaborating partners. During these festivals, over 2,800 people gathered together to celebrate Australian children's literature.



*Virtual reality exhibit Showcase Festival*

Sharing with other cultural institutions provides unique opportunities to revisit books that have reached "classic" status. Our Colin Thiele Festival

coincided with the Canberra Theatre's production of *Storm Boy* in 2015. *Colin Thiele: His Work and Legacy*, featured family, publisher, theatre director, and scholar, each giving a unique perspective on Colin Thiele's life and work. There is a permanent record of these talks on YouTube. A month-long exhibition at the Civic Library featured Colin Thiele's translations, original artwork, realia, and family memorabilia along with children's activities on our website.

Family, friends, and others shared the art of Pixie O'Harris (1903-1991) through talks and an exhibition. Hazel Edwards, spoke about her memoir surrounded by her papers she had previously donated to the Centre. Our events with Emily Rodda reached diverse audiences. Over five hundred school children were thrilled to hear her speak and answer their questions. Many later filled the National Library foyer queuing as she patiently signed their books. Some two hundred people attended an event to celebrate the cataloguing of over 470 Rodda translations and the formal acceptance of her papers and manuscripts and to hear her talk *Children's Books Unite the World*.



*Emily Rodda @ child Harmony Week Event*

With an ACT Government grant, we developed a program for residents in two retirement villages. *Story: Mental Stimulation, Self-reflection and Reminiscence, Social Interaction and Wellbeing* offered residents a unique experience which they enjoyed and valued. With our current multicultural grant-funded project, *Sharing Story and Culture*, we are working with the Chinese community to provide Australian children's books translated into Simplified Chinese. The collection will rotate among their schools and be available for the children to borrow and share with their family at home.

This year, we are planning two small-scale exhibitions. One features May Gibbs (1877-1969), an iconic illustrator for children, to be held at the Canberra Museum Gallery and in concert with the Canberra Theatre's production of May Gibbs' work. We are also celebrating the centennial of *The School Magazine*, Australia's oldest magazine for children. We will be exhibiting selections from our full run of this journal. People across Australia have shared their memories of this magazine, some of whom say it inspired them to become writers and illustrators. This exhibition in the Civic Public Library will feature original artwork from creators who appeared in this magazine over the years.

Every opportunity is taken for sharing and promoting our national heritage of Australian children's literature. It is the primary reason for everything we do. Through sharing of stories we deepen our understanding of who we are, where we have come from, and where we are headed.

We realize that our ongoing program of events, festivals, and exhibitions must be promoted, and so our move into social media. We began our Facebook, Twitter, and quarterly e-newsletter a year and a half ago. By mid-year 2016, we have 700 friends who receive our e-newsletter, 929 Friends on Facebook, and 2,237 Followers on Twitter. Recently, we traveled across Australia to share our vision and seek comments and support from our inner circle of stakeholders—including authors, illustrators, publishers, and children's literature organizations. We are enormously encouraged by the level of support and enthusiasm for what we are striving to achieve.

### Achieving the Vision

Much has been achieved with limited resources. The Centre is the pre-eminent institution where Australian children's literature and related artworks are the

source of joy, learned review, and celebration by the young, researchers, educators, and families. It documents and shares the creative process and inspires the next generation of readers with research collections and outreach activities. We are guided by our vision:

*Our literary past, present and future are preserved in the Centre, through the stories that touched our hearts and stirred our imaginations as children. It documents and shares the creative process and inspires the next generation of readers with research collections, exhibitions and outreach activities.*

The Centre is now poised for a new stage in its development as it takes its place alongside the other national institutions. The Board has accepted this challenge and is launching a major fundraising campaign this year. What do we need? We need operational funds, staff, and space to accomplish our goals. We cannot achieve this by the Centre working alone. We are inviting others to share our vision and play a part in seeing it achieved.

The Centre is already acknowledged as a nationally significant and unique collection. It is successful on a small scale. There is no similar institution in Australia. Like all countries, we must preserve, promote, and share our cultural heritage. It

expresses who we are, fosters our common interests, and enables us to appreciate our differences. We are on course to be Australia's next National Centre in a field of endeavor that is the basis of who we are.

#### FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Website: <http://www.canberra.edu.au/national-centre-for-australian-childrens-literature>  
Facebook: National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc.  
Twitter: @NatCentAusChLit  
Newsletters: <http://www.canberra.edu.au/national-centre-for-australian-childrens-literature/news-events>  
Events: <http://www.canberra.edu.au/national-centre-for-australian-childrens-literature/news-events>  
YouTube recording of event *Colin Thiele: His Work and Legacy* on 2 June 2015: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1oyHWhvM6k>

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—. *Showcasing Treasures: The Lu Rees Archives of Australian Children's Literature*. Canberra: The Lu Rees Archives of Australian Children's Literature, 2014.  
Powell, Graeme. "Lu Rees Archives of Australian Children's Literature: Assessment of Significance." 2011. Report.



#### DR BELLE ALDERMAN

Dr Belle Alderman is Emeritus Professor of Children's Literature at the University of Canberra and is currently the Director of the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc, an internationally known research collection. Dr Alderman was awarded the Dromkeen Medal in 1996, the Nan Chauncy Award in 2000 and in 2007 made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for services to Australian children's literature.

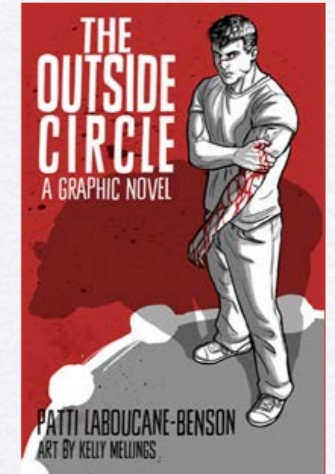


**DR TRISH MILNE** is the volunteer Project Manager at the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature and co-author of *Showcasing Treasures* that celebrated the Centre's first 40 years. Before retirement she was the Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor, Education at the University of Canberra.

Joey and Pete are urban Aboriginal Canadians for whom poverty, violence, and centuries of injustice have taken their toll. When Pete finds that his drug-addicted mother has sold all their possessions and has been beaten by her boyfriend, he kills him in a rage. Consequently, both brothers end up in the system: Joey, the younger brother, is taken into custody by Child and Family Services and eventually becomes a ward of the state. Pete is in jail with a state-appointed attorney who is not invested in the case. With the help of a rites of passage program for Indian men and associated counselling, Pete is able to address the cause of his anger—the impact that generations of racism has on families.

Derived from Laboucane-Benson's work with indigenous Canadian men who are gang-affiliated or incarcerated, *The Outside Circle* is a graphic novel not to be missed. Laboucane-Benson embeds First Peoples' history and social issues within the story to give context and avoid simplistic explanations of the reasons for the characters' behavior. The book would be a great addition to a classroom or community-based organization that works with adolescents because of its themes.

*Laretta Henderson*



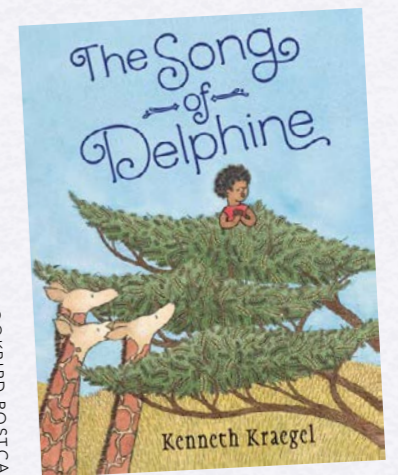
BOOKBIRD POSTCARDS

#### The Outside Circle

Patti LaBoucane-Benson  
Illus. Kelly Mellings  
Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2015. Unp  
ISBN: 13-978-1770899377  
(Graphic Novel; ages 13+)

Kraegel's *The Song of Delphine* tells the story of an orphan who seeks solace in music to deal with her loss and other challenges she faces as a servant in Queen Theodora's palace. The picture book opens with a black and white double-page spread of an African savannah setting. The story follows a conventional opening typical of fairytales as it introduces the setting and Delphine, the protagonist. It also echoes a Cinderella motif, for Delphine is the one who does all the chores in the big palace. Her life gets complicated when the queen's niece, Princess Beatrice, visits the palace. At first, the princess is mean to Delphine, making Delphine's life more miserable, but with the support of her animal friends, she is able to cope better. Eventually, the girls become friends. This is an inspiring story that demonstrates how children can use music to express their feelings. Though the African savannah is used as a backdrop, its universal themes of friendship and kindness will resonate with many readers. The illustrations enliven the text. This is a picture book that will be cherished for a long time, not only for the simple story but also for the exquisite illustrations!

*Vivian Yenika-Agbaw*



BOOKBIRD POSTCARDS

#### The Song of Delphine

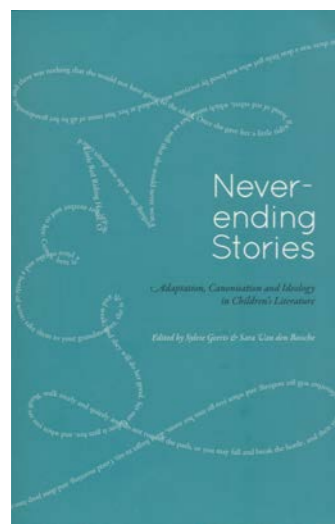
Kenneth Kraegel  
Somerville, Massachusetts:  
Candlewick, 2015. Unp.  
ISBN: 978-0-7636-7001-6  
(Picture book; ages 3+)

# Books on Books

Compiled and edited by Jutta Reusch and Christiane Raabe



**CHRISTIANE RAABE** is the director and **JUTTA REUSCH** is the head of the library services of the International Youth Library in Munich, Germany.



**NEVER-ENDING STORIES: ADAPTATION, CANONISATION AND IDEOLOGY IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE.** Ed. by Sylvie Geerts and Sara Van den Bossche. Ghent: Academia Press, 2014. 254 pages. ISBN: 978-90-382-2254-7

## The Inter-relationship of Adaptation and Canonization

For years, adaptations have been at the center of attention within children's literature studies, which is why it was a risky decision to devote yet another symposium and book to the topic.

Tarzan, Cinderella, who has not heard of them? Their narratives belong to the canon of (children's) literature, but in many cases, we are

not familiar with the original stories but rather with strongly simplified retellings of those originals. Even more often, we are only acquainted with them through film adaptations, by means of which these figures have come to belong to our collective cultural heritage. The original stories are still known mainly because they are adapted for new audiences in different times. Hence, Geerts and Van den Bossche argue, canonization and adaptation are inextricably entwined. The canonical status of a text can be a motivation to adapt it, while at the same time adaptations can guarantee that the canonical status of a given text is maintained. As such, they facilitate the creation of "never-ending stories."

In a clear and well-researched introduction, the volume editors distinguish between three ideology-laden components, which determine the process of adaptation: socio-political, socio-cultural, and transmedial aspects. The contributions in the book are organized according to this categorization.

The section on socio-political aspects covers transformations of a text that are explicitly laden with political ideologies. Sanna Lehtonen shows how, in a Finnish adaptation of the *Tarzan* stories, the tension between a discourse highlighting a common national identity and a reality characterized by differences among people is used to present a hierarchy within one's own group. At the same time, she offers a considerable contribution to the theoretical foundation of this area of research. Convincingly, she connects the adaptation of the *Tarzan* stories with Finland's national history as well as with the adapter's personal history. The other two articles in this section are more descriptive. Tahereh Rezaei and Mohsen Hanif demonstrate the interconnection between Iran's tumultuous history and the ideologically charged adaptations of the canonical text *Shahnameh*. Sylvia Warnecke discloses how in the former GDR adaptations of canonical texts were used explicitly to spread the socialist ideology among children.

The section on socio-cultural aspects zooms in on the role of adaptations in the canonization of narratives. Even here, ideology plays a crucial role, as Geerts and Van den Bossche emphasize. This can work in two ways: either because an adaptation subscribes to a dominant ideology or because it contradicts it and finds an audience for that subversion. Vanessa Joosen reveals that the fame the Grimm fairy tales acquired is not entirely self-evident. She proves that the selection of the tales and the adjustments with regard to content and style caused differences in reception. Lien Fret demonstrates how the cultural context in which fairy tales are received can be decisive. She does so by dealing with the different guises Cinderella's fairy godmother has taken on over the course of time. Jan van Coillie compares Andersen's little mermaid with her alter ego in Disney's

movie adaptation and notices three significant shifts: from earnest to entertainment, from tragedy to romance, and from an inner moral conflict with a religious message to an outer conflict with a pedagogical message. Finally, based on an analysis of the reception of E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Nussknacker und Mausekönig* both in German and in international (children's) literature, Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer concludes that canonization depends not merely on adaptation but also on the appreciation of literature written for children as a whole.

Section three, covering transmedial aspects, contains contributions that deal with transpositions to different media. By *transmedial aspects*, Geerts and Van den Bossche mean both the aspects involved in adjusting a text to a different medium and the juxtaposition or even postmodern mixing of elements from different traditions in different media. Perhaps the most innovative and stimulating of all the contributions is the one by John Stephens and Sylvie Geerts. They manage to develop a model capable of analyzing works that use old stories to tell an entirely new narrative. Using several convincing examples, they demonstrate that this model truly is applicable in research. Throughout their chapter, they stress the importance of contemporary technical possibilities to quickly locate the source of certain references. The remaining three articles in this section deal with, among other things, the reworking of canonical fairy tales in South-African "grassroots literature," an argumentation in favor of the inclusion of comics and of digital fairy tale journals in adaptation studies. All three contributions have in common that they transgress the domain of children and their reading and return the genres to their adult readers, a process that Pazdziora terms "reverse adaptation."

## Adaptation Studies

By organizing the symposium in which children's literature scholars from different countries were given a forum for discussing contemporary adaptation studies and by publishing this volume, Geerts and Van den Bossche contributed to this type of research by providing a kind of "state of the art."

All chapters demonstrate that there is a clear link between adaptation and canonization. Some of the essays contribute significantly to theorizing the topic, as do Geerts and Van den Bossche in their introduction. Simultaneously, the contributions in this volume show that there is plenty left to explore and that these "never-ending stories" indeed will never end.

## Toin Duijx

Associate Professor of Children's Literature, Tilburg University  
**Sanne Parlevliet**  
Associate Professor Groningen University



**JAKTEN PÅ FORTELLINGER. BARNE- OG UNGDOMSLITTERATUR PÅ TVERS AV MEDIER** (In the Pursuit of Narratives: Children's and Youth Literature across Media). Ed. by Elise Seip Tønnessen. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2014. 300 pages. ISBN 978-82-15-02384-7

Literary texts today are situated in a complex network of different forms of presentation and production—print editions, e-books, picture-book based apps, and film and game adaptations as well as genuinely digital literature which permanently evolves due to advice and comments from readers. The "new" forms of literature change the ways books are produced and

received; at the same time, they are a part and an expression of this change. "Text" is being redefined; processes of reading and receiving are transformed, along with the roles of the author, distributor, and reader. The transgression of previously fixed boundaries as well as the dissolution and hybridization of traditionally clear-cut categories are hallmarks of the digital age.

The essay collection takes a closer look at the combination of traditional and new forms, at the resulting potential and challenges. The first of four sections, "Bakgrunn og teorie" (Background and theory), sketches the state of affairs, beginning with the status of the book, reading, and media consumption and followed by theoretical foundations and terminology. Drawing on research in picture books, semiotics, reader-response-theory, and scholarship in theatre studies, concepts such as interactivity, performativity, and aesthetic experience are explained: A text is no longer considered to be a fixed entity but rather an open-ended semiotic system, updated through the interaction with the recipient. In "traditional" print as well as in digital formats, individual participation and dynamic interaction between text and reader are based on the possibilities of the "social" web 2.0 and reflect them. Reading is thus reconceptualized as "active action" and "event."

The second chapter, "Litteratur på nye plattformar" (Literature on new platforms) focuses on the transformation of traditional to new media. Contributors analyze film adaptations of picture books, the reception of books and apps, or the narrative structure of picture book apps. They show how gaming elements are integrated into literary narratives, thereby transforming traditional storylines: the constraints of spatial and temporal causality can be thrown overboard, and an "imperative narrative" can incite readers to participate.

On the one hand, the third chapter "Medieerfaringer i barne- og ungdomslitteraturen" (Media experiences in literature for children and young adults) asks what literary possibilities the "new" media have to offer; on the other, it debates how literature can reflect the processes of new media experiences on a formal and thematic level. While the response to the

assassinations of Utøya on July 22, 2011 demonstrates how the different platforms like internet, magazines, newspaper, and books collaborate in the collective processing of trauma, it also reveals that print and literature have the capacity to open up spaces for reflections that extend beyond the ephemeral cyberspace.

The fourth and last part, "Estetiske praksiser" (Aesthetic practices), explores aesthetic procedures. For example, how can the picture book with its polysemiotic pictorial and verbal text develop the "character of a performative event" in different reading situations for the adult reader and for the child viewer or co-reader?

The individual contributions do not always align with the section's topic, but they all share a broad concept of text and literature. They define the text as multi-modal—meaning they understand texts as complex sign systems, which in turn are composed of several complementary sign systems that can be updated and combined by the reader. This approach levels the difference between highbrow and lowbrow literature, valuing the "experience" higher than the cognitive gain. The reader takes center stage: The recipient is no longer a passive consumer but an active co-creator who graduates to "co-author" by commenting and exercising agency. How readers take on that role is shown by empirical studies, on which many of the contributions are based. Even if these are not new methods for text analysis, they prove remarkably productive for research into literature and media for children and young adults. Overall, the book's tone is optimistic: While statistics confirm that the traditional book is far from outdated—at least with kids—the collected essays reveal how an open understanding of text and literature can help approach the "new" phenomena.

Even though it focuses on Norwegian literature and media, the volume offers a good and readable introduction to the world of digital literature overall, thanks to the theoretical grounding and detailed analyses.

#### Ines Galling

International Youth Library  
Translated by Nikola von Merveldt



**KINDGEMÄSS UND LITERARISCH WERTVOLL. UNTERSUCHUNGEN ZUR THEORIE DES „GUTEN JUGENDBUCHS“ – ANNA KRÜGER, RICHARD BAMBERGER, KARL ERNST MAIER** (Suitable for children and of literary value: Studies on the theory of the "good children's book"). Sonja Müller. Series: *Kinder- und Jugendkultur, -literatur und -medien*; 88. Frankfurt am Main u.a., Peter Lang Edition, 2014. 326 pages. ISBN: 978-3-631-64501-7

In her doctoral thesis "Suitable for children and of literary value," defended in 2012, Sonja Müller examines a brief and little studied phase in the development of children's literature theory in the young German federal republic.

In the 1950s and 60s, theories on the "good children's book" were built on the visions of the postwar period for international understanding, as exemplified by the International Youth Library in Munich; they became established with the creation of institutions promoting quality children's literature, such as the Arbeitskreis für Jugendschrifttum (Working committee for youth literature) or the Deutsche Jugendbuchpreis (German children's literature award), and they paved the way for more intensive scholarly research in children's literature—as in Frankfurt, where Klaus Doderer founded the Institut für Jugendbuchforschung (Institute for the Study of Children's Literature) in 1963. In the

study "Histories of children's literature" (2013) by Andrea Weinmann, this theory is hardly mentioned and is dismissed as irrelevant. Following the paradigm shift of the 1970s, theories of the "good children's book" appear dated, even though their prime time coincided with the rise of a new kind of children's literature, practiced by James Krüss or Otfried Preußler, which advocated the autonomous child.

Müller's study chronicles the histories both of the institutions and of the theoretical debates; she sketches the prehistory beginning in 1896 with Heinrich Wolgast's call for aesthetically valuable children's literature, followed by theories of reading-age, all the way to the "filth-and-trash" debates of the 1950s. Her focus is on three scholars who discuss children's literature in different ways—looking at its aesthetic qualities, the suitability of its forms and media for children, and last but not least, its pedagogical benefit.

The first of these chapters, which explore both the theories and the practice of contemporary literary criticism, presents Anna Krüger, who meticulously defined the concept of the good children's book and attributed particular importance to the linguistic and literary qualities. Pedagogical issues are less important in her eyes; instead, she welcomes imagination and creative freedom, invokes Astrid Lindren, and supports the young generation of German-speaking authors. Despite all this, she considers even the best children's book to be inferior to first-rate adult literature because writing for child addressees imposes limitations, such as not using experimental narrative devices. From the work of Krüger, who was denied a brilliant academic career, Sonja Müller goes on to present the ideas of the influential Austrian literary historian Richard Bamberger and of Karl Ernst Maier, whose literary histories continued to serve as textbooks in the 1980s. Bamberger and Maier share more conservative positions: Bamberger attaching more value to literacy, Maier to pedagogy.

The three main chapters are accompanied by several shorter ones which sketch the contributions of other leading figures to the debate on what was to be considered good

children's literature. These figures include Walter Scherf, long-term director of the International Youth Library, and Malte Dahrendorf, who radically revoked his own theory on the good book in the 1970s. Building on the groundwork of her supervisor, Hans Heino Ewers, Müller succeeds in giving a dense account of the spectrum of theoretical concepts, teasing out the various constellations of progressive and conservative ideas underpinning them. The theories of the "good book" for young readers emerged when the prosperity in the young federal republic opened up new realms of experience for children; they declined in the mid-sixties when youth culture encouraged a massive culture of protest which led to a new view of literature for children and young adults, which was supported by other theories and by young, new publishers.

The comparatively slim volume thus serves as a compact introduction to a pivotal period in children's literature. Contemporary debates about children's literature still echo those of the fifties and sixties, albeit mostly unwittingly because literary and theoretical history are still underrated in children's literature scholarship. The initially sober concept of the "good children's book" is ridiculed by critical minds in the sixties, and it keeps deteriorating as this prized good degrades into a fetish used to ward off the present changes in media and communication. Sonja Müller serenely recovers the core of this soggy concept and demonstrates how to conceive and write a convincing history of science of her discipline.

#### Michael Schmitt

Literary editor ZDF/3sat-Kulturzeit  
Translated by Nikola von Merveldt



**LEHRBUCH LITERATURPÄDAGOGIK. EINE EINFÜHRUNG IN THEORIE UND PRAXIS DER LITERATURVERMITTLUNG** (Textbook literacy instruction: An introduction to the theory and practice of teaching literacy). Stephanie Jentgens. Weinheim und Basel: Beltz Juventa, 2016. 244 pages. ISBN 978-3-7799-3330-4

Combining the theoretical foundations of teaching literacy with practical examples and advice, Stephanie Jentgens, lecturer for the teaching of literature at the Akademie Remscheid für Kulturelle Bildung (Remscheid Academy for cultural education), presents a solid and, above all, inspiring textbook.

The two introductory chapters offer an overview over definitions and domains of literacy instruction. They address the four key domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing and how these central skills can be practiced over the different phases of development. Building on the theoretical foundations of literacy instruction, Jentgens encourages readers to engage in critical self-reflection of themselves as students and teachers. She also gives a brief account of the history of children's literature, provides information about various formats and genres, introduces analytical methods, sketches the media context, and offers an overview over the book and media market.

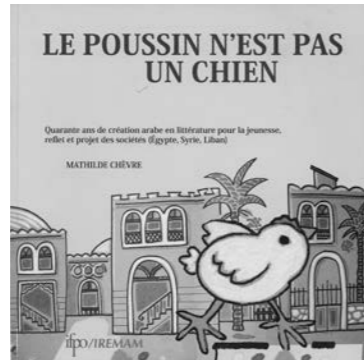
The middle section is devoted to

the main topic of the book: practical literacy instruction. Dividing childhood and youth (from infancy to age sixteen) into five age groups, Jentgens describes age-appropriate methods of teaching literacy and provides one detailed exemplary book analysis per section. This section is especially useful because it is based on tried-and-tested methods, includes a focus on digital media, and suggests further reading.

Along with a list of relevant resources (institutions and reference works or sites), the concluding chapter not only gives helpful logistic support for planning and seeing through projects but also offers tools for evaluating literacy projects. Throughout the book, the author stresses the importance of self-reflection as a key to quality control of literacy projects devised by beginning and more experienced instructors. Thanks to the strong focus on the dialogue with children and young adults as well as on interaction and participation, this textbook on literacy instruction will prove especially valuable.

**Katrin Stimmer**

International Youth Library  
Translated by Nikola von Merveldt



**LE POUSSIN N'EST PAS UN CHIEN: QUARANTE ANS DE CRÉATION ARABE EN LITTÉRATURE POUR LA JEUNESSE, REFLET ET PROJET DE SOCIÉTÉS (EGYPTE, SYRIE, LIBAN)** (The chick is no dog : Forty years of Arabic literature for children and young adults, reflecting and imagining society). Mathilde Chèvre. Aix-en-Provence, Marseille: Presses de l'Ifpo/Iremam et Mathilde Chèvre, 2015. 203 pages. ISBN 9-780201379-62-4

The reading pleasure already begins with the title, *Un Poussin n'est pas un chien* (A chick is no dog). The author of this lively literary history, Mathilde Chèvre, is a true multi-talent: She works as an author, illustrator, and publisher for the publishing house "Le port a jauni" (Marseille) and as an educator. She is also a scholar at the IRCAM in Marseille and teaches in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Aix-en-Provence. The present volume, her revised doctoral dissertation, not only meets the requirements of "open science" but also engages in cultural work by combining "instruction with delight." With admirable lightness, Chèvre captures the essence of Arabic young adult and children's literature from Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon, making it accessible for a broader audience. Her style is vivid, elegant, and entirely lacking in the pretentiousness of deadening scholarship prose.

At the same time, attentive readers will appreciate that this pioneering achievement is the result of years of dedicated research. The author masterfully builds bridges to the Arab world, combines scholarship with personal encounters, and rightfully

honors the Arab artists, their work, and their achievements. Chèvre met with the key writers, illustrators, and publishers of the children's literature sector in Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. These encounters come alive in the text, which resonates with the voices of the artists and personalities. The illustration and overall design of the book reveal loving attention to detail; the distinguished graphic design is a delight for the eyes.

Chèvre explores the children's literature landscape of Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon with seven-league boots (i.e., in seven large chapters), describing their long publishing traditions and their dense and diverse production.

The journey begins with the first cultural awakening of the Arab children's book scene in 1967, characterized by the memory of the Nakba of 1948 (the exodus of Palestinian Arabs from the former British Mandate of Palestine) and influenced by the critical transitional period in the Arab countries following the defeat in the Six-Day War of 1967. Following the 1970s, which had been rich in initiatives and publications, children's literature in the Arab world experienced a long lean spell and lingered in a sort of "cultural ice age" for almost two decades.

Only the twenty-first century sparked a "cultural re-ignition": individual publishing houses not controlled by the state were founded and major books were published—including the seminal Egyptian picture book which inspired the study's title, *Al-katkût laysa kalban* (The chick is no dog), written by Jâr al-Nabî al Halû, illustrated by Hilmî al-Tûnî, and published in 2003 in Cairo by the Dâr al-Churûq publishing house. Authors and illustrators were acting as trailblazers and participants in the "Arab spring" by denouncing the existing social inequality, questioning established points of view, and criticizing the morals of adults in their respective countries.

The book traces the thematic shifts in Arabic children's literature: From the focus on the Palestinian question (stories of escape, forced migration, exile, and resistance) in the 1970s to more local, national questions, more closely connected to

the specific political developments of the individual countries. This thematic shift in children's literature was paralleled by new ways of thinking about "child" and "childhood," both in the societies and literatures of the three countries: The child is no longer primarily portrayed as a being to be disciplined and easily manipulated. Instead of using literature as a tool to imprint ideological and political role-models on children (the "little soldier," or "willing mouthpiece" of adult slogans), the newer books feature child protagonists who claim their own place in the adult world and who are persons in their own right.

This new cultural orientation also poses a literary challenge: A new language has to be found for children's books. Beginning in the last decades of the twentieth century, authors increasingly opt to write their picture books in dialectal variants of the three countries instead of using the traditional classic Arabic. But the quest for a new language transcends the linguistic: Chèvre insists on the innovative visual language and the interaction between different semiotic systems (pictures and words) in picture books.

Detailed bibliographical and biographical references complete this book and invite readers to explore this rich world further.

It is rare that scholarship on children's literature addresses such a wide audience and is even reviewed in political magazines. In February 2016, the prestigious monthly *Le monde diplomatique* recognized the importance of this study for cultural politics and gave it exceptionally high praise.

**Sibylle Weingart**

International Youth Library  
Translated by Nikola von Merveldt



**EESTI LASTE- JA NOORTEKIRJANDUS 1991-2012** (Estonian literature for children and young adults 1991-2012). Krista Kumberg, Ilona Martson, Ave Mattheus, Mari Niitra, Jaanika Palm. Tallinn: Eesti Lastekirjanduse Keskus, 2014. 317 pages. ISBN: 978-9985-9198-5-9

Anyone curious about Estonian children's literature of the last two decades should definitely consult this 317-page compendium. The overview of the literary history, which can claim to be representative, begins in 1991 (the year of Estonian independence from the crumbling Soviet Union) and ends in 2012. It is the first comprehensive and systematic study of contemporary Estonian children's literature.

Published by the Estonian Children's Literature Centre, the most important institution for the collection, research, and promotion of children's literature in Estonia, this volume addresses a broad group of readers—including scholars, students, and librarians as well as educators and parents; publishers should equally be interested.

The five contributors to this volume are well known in the field and have helped shape Estonian children's literature as researchers, translators, and mediators. They meticulously trace the gradual evolution of a new Estonian literary landscape and the processes leading to the reconstruction of the children's book scene. Given the immense political and

cultural transformations of the early 1990s, which also hit the book sector, the volume starts by sketching the socio-cultural context in which Estonian literature for children and young adults developed. They mark two pivotal dates: 1990 for the "collapse" and 2000 for the "blossoming" of children's literature in Estonia.

Against this backdrop, *Eesti laste- ja noortekirjandus* introduces realistic and fantastic fiction for children as well as non-fiction published between 1991 and 2012, arranged by reading age ("Literature for early childhood," children's books, and young adult literature). Realistic fiction is subdivided into the categories of gender and genre (books for girls and for boys, problem books, crime and adventure novels) and into subject groups (orphanage, school, animals). Fantastic fiction provides an overview of the genres fairytales, the absurd, and science fiction and offers genre-specific characteristics, such as the irruption of the fantastic into the supposedly "normal" world and the departure of the familiar into the unfamiliar fantastic world. Separate chapters are dedicated to the genres of poetry and drama or theatre as well as to magazines for children and young adults and to the place of children's literature within the digital, interactive media ecology.

A unique feature of this book is the strong focus on "History and childhood memories." A long section explores how children's literature since 1991 addresses the seven critical phases or events of Estonia's history. The twentieth century takes center stage with topics such as Estonia's first republic, the Second World War, the occupation, or the early and late phases of the Soviet era.

Furthermore, the compendium gives statistics on the Estonian children's book production and awards. An extensive index of authors and illustrators completes the volume, which presents an indispensable resource on Estonian literature for children and young adults of the recent past.

**Katja Wiebe**

International Youth Library  
Translated by Nikola von Merveldt



# Authors & Their Books

## Interview with Tulia Thompson by Angelina Sbroma

**Josefa and the Vu is about Josefa, a boy growing up in a large Fijian family in Aotearoa, who is plunged into an adventure that comes directly from his own culture and history. Josefa seems to have a lot in common with other child protagonists—he is isolated, he is a subject of prophecy, and his adventure is supernatural. Is that why you chose a children’s book to tell this story?**

In terms of his relationship to other children’s literature protagonists, yes, I think he grows into himself and is the subject of a prophecy. He is an “outsider,” but if he is isolated, he is isolated in quite a different way from other protagonists—in that he is surrounded by three older brothers who love him and look after him, loving parents, and extended family. None of his immediate family is evil or even unlikeable. If isolation is a form of trial or hardship that acts as a device that allows things to happen, Josefa experiences more the trial of being constantly surrounded by others; that is, at various points, Josefa does not want to tell his brothers what is happening because he knows they will intervene.

I experienced a strong drive to write for children, particularly because my love of reading stemmed from the joy I had experienced reading as a child, and I felt a sense of wanting to complete the circle. I’d also always felt that I had a strong memory of what it was like to be a child, and a very visual imagination. My initial imaginings were of the scene where Josefa first sees the Vu, and also the dragon diving to catch Ming. I had loved fantasy-adventure when I was a child, especially *The Lion*, *The Witch*, and *the Wardrobe*, so yes, it was defi-

nately about the appeal of fantasy and the supernatural. I had been thinking about the eurocentricism of children’s literature and how Pacific communities in New Zealand have lower literacy. I wanted to write a children’s novel that offered a Pacific/ Fijian world-view. A relationship to the spirit world was also a big part of how I was raised and what seemed natural and every-day.

I think the other aspect of writing for children that appeals to me is that children ask really big questions about how the world works in a way that adults often don’t. I felt like I could touch on some big social justice themes that are close to my heart—racism, colonialism, class, environmentalism—and children would probably engage with them.

**Both Josefa and his best friend, Ming, chafe at cultural expectation: Josefa sucks at sports, and Ming wants to be a stuntwoman rather than an academic achiever. Can you talk about your portrayal of cultural expectation, especially in an immigrant context?**

Josefa sucking at sports and Ming wanting to be a stuntwoman instead of an academic achiever is more chafing at the expectations of the dominant Pakeha (white NZer) culture than their own cultural expectations. It’s multilayered: sports—especially rugby—is valued in Fiji, but then, rugby achievement is often all that Pakeha know about Fijians. Likewise for Ming, academic achievement lines up a cultural value with the way that she can be recognized at school. Josefa and Ming form a friendship that is very much about outsidership. They have curiosity and respect for each other’s cultures not

tainted by an aversion to difference.

The Aunty acts as a vehicle for voicing cultural fears and doubts. There is a terse family conversation where Aunty says “NZ children are different from Fijian children” meaning they are disobedient compared to children in Fiji. It is true that a higher level of obedience (especially in public) would be expected from Fijian children. The obedience issue has been most polarized in the different responses within Pacific communities to the “No Smacking” legislation brought in in New Zealand. Many Fijian people have been influenced by Old Testament Christianity in Fijian churches and might have been taught, “Spare the Rod, Spoil the Child.” This is changing, though. I don’t believe children should be hit or smacked. There’s been a great anti-violence ad campaign in Fiji more recently which shows men with their families with the slogan “Not My Culture.”

There’s also a conversation between the Aunty and the Mum where she is criticizing her for working. Fiji women have always worked incredibly hard; they are the traditional fish-spearers in villages. My Aunty Noa was the most hard-working person I knew. She would get up, get flowers and eggs to take to market at 5am, and not stop working until late at night. The Aunty’s criticism of the Mum is more about intergenerational fears intermeshed with sexism; she has limited ideas about what the Mum should do.

Josefa’s parents’ lives, and in turn Josefa’s life, are also shaped by neoliberal capitalism in New Zealand. His dad is working in a factory that is facing cuts. His mother is working as a cleaner. They are finding it difficult to manage shift work with looking after their children, which is why Aunty comes to stay. In children’s books, there is a common strategy of having the parents “away,” which allows magic to unfold. In the Narnia books, it was the Second World War, and the children were at a house in the country. In *Josefa*, both parents are absent because they are working.

My point is that, to an extent, cultural traditions respond to the demands of particular geographies, which are also socio-economic. Migrant communities often become tied to particulars of the labor market, which in turn defines what it means to be a migrant community.

**For all that the book is set very firmly in contemporary Auckland and centered on Josefa’s family life there, the story is driven by Josefa’s relationship to the past, particularly in terms of his Fijian identity.**

Josefa has a relationship to an immediate past—he is mourning the death of his grandfather who he dearly misses—and a distant past: he is connected to his ancestral spirit, the Kalou-Vu or Vu. These pasts end up converging as Josefa uncovers his grandfather’s story.

It is usual for Fijians to experience an ongoing sense of relationship with the Vu of their particular *vanna* (land/people). I have heard people describe the presence of an ancestor in terms of hearing a particular bird sing or seeing a particular color associated with their Vu. I have the Vu often appear with blue light, as an approximation of this.

**What about your portrayal of Fijian culture and identity in relation to gender?**

Yes! In transforming the concept of the Vu into a fantastical, supernatural figure within the story, I gave him the form of a giant Fijian warrior holding a club. He is a shape-shifter, so he also appears briefly as an eel, and as a shark. In terms of narrative, this opened up relational possibilities: the Vu is overtly powerful while Josefa lacks power, and when Josefa breaks into the Bucksworth’s house, the mis-recognition of the Vu (He is mistaken for Josefa’s father, then brother Mosesi) has challenging consequences. We also eventually hear the story of Josefa’s grandfather as a young warrior.

Retrospectively, having spent more time thinking about hegemonic masculinity in a Fijian context, I’ve wondered whether I could have depicted the Vu differently, without the same musculature and physical strength which is such a pervasive aspect of privileged Fijian masculinity. I think that depicting Fijian masculinity in terms of physical strength has damaging consequences for those who do not fit the mold.

I think it also relates to the New Zealand context. In New Zealand, there are so few depictions of Fijian culture that any positive representation feels useful, and of course, warriors have their own efficacy and currency. Literally, mana (power,

prestige). It was like catching hold of a strong strand and knowing I could weave something with it. But because within Fijian community representations of powerful Fijian masculinity might be the only representations of power we see, it is important to offer alternative stories.

That said, Josefa’s story is very much about finding his own power, which comes from his warm-heartedness and kindness and from his connection to family via stories. Josefa frets that his brothers would know better than him but comes into his own during the adventure into the forest, where he ends up going back to rescue the bully, Jack Bucksworth.

There’s also a really interesting relationship between Josefa and his best friend, Ming, in the book. Ming is a strong and confident girl; she really holds her own. In parts of the narrative where Josefa is being cautious, Ming is leading them forward.

**Josefa was, above all, a story about transplantation—I liked the image of the banana palms that Josefa’s father planted at the gate of their Onehunga house “to remind them of home,” and Josefa’s parents speak of their lives and work in NZ as sacrifice for their children. Can you talk a little about your portrayal of the family and their Fijianness in the book? For example, a lot of details of language and behavior—Fijian vocabulary, the meke (dance), the tabua (whale tooth)—were saved for inside the family home as opposed to the NZ world outside it. What does that kind of duality mean in terms of identity?**

Yes, the duality you mention plays out between Josefa’s home and school environment, where the cultural knowledge and values that operate in his home can’t be made to run. When his classmate Jack steals the *tabua* (whale’s tooth), this is really case in point, because the *tabua* doesn’t have any significance for Jack beyond being unusual, whereas for Josefa it is a sacred object.

Framing Josefa’s parents’ immigration and work life as sacrifice resonated with my own experience as a second generation Pacific migrant such that I couldn’t resist building it into this story. My father was actually deported back to Fiji during the dawn raid era and returned to New Zealand illegally. There was a period during my childhood when

Dad couldn’t return to Fiji, and our family life was colored by the ever-presence of his homesickness for Fiji. In Pacific communities, the parents’ sacrifice takes on the weight of biblical associations. An aspect of depicting Fijianness that really mattered to me was the relationships between the siblings. Josefa has three older brothers that are always ready to intervene on his behalf, and that likewise he would do anything for. In Fijian culture, there is an age hierarchy with children, and older children are often left in charge of younger siblings. I wanted to depict the noisiness, love, and teasing of large families. At a plot level, it sometimes felt unwieldy to have three brothers as well as a protagonist and a best friend to move forward. I was really glad I stuck with them, though, because the scenes between the brothers have ended up being what I like best about the book.

In terms of “transplantation,” I think there is a point in the book towards the end where it makes an imaginative claim for something beyond “transplantation”—towards emergent cultural hybridities in a new land, in the way the Elenpi (brownies) elect a new name, and in the way the dragon lives beneath the sea on the West Coast. The friendship between Josefa and Ming is also a kind of dialogue between migrant voices that I imagine could go on to be transformative.

**TULIA THOMPSON** is of Fijian, Tongan and Pakeha descent. She has a PhD in Sociology from the University of Auckland. She has published fiction in *Niu Voices: Contemporary Pacific Fiction 1*, and poetry in *Blackmail Press 34*, *Overland 219* and *JAAM 33*. Her young adult novel *Josefa and the Vu* was published by Huia in 2007.

**ANGELINA SBROMA** is currently completing a PhD in children’s literature at Victoria University of Wellington.



# Authors & Their Books

## On being an unofficial ambassador for children's poetry in New Zealand

Paula Green

### Poetry

When you unwrap a poem you might find  
sizzling butter in the pancake pan

the flight of a kite in the deep blue sky  
crackling laughter when you all say cheese

the look of love in your grandmother's eye  
words that taste sweet and words that hop

doorways and windows and rickety gates  
tickets to space and a wild west wind.

Poetry is a vital playground where children can squelch knee deep in the possibilities of words. Here words can tower and tilt and connect. A few years ago, with a number of poetry books for both children and adults out in the world, I invented a role for myself as an unofficial ambassador for children's poetry in New Zealand. My key aim was to get parents, teachers, and children to fall in love with the delights of poetry. Poems can hook the most reluctant reader and writer and advance the most sophisticated. There are no rules in the poetry playground, unless you choose to make them. Poetry offers the child a most liberating scope for reading and writing.

To put my plan into action, I wrote new poetry

collections, edited *A Treasury of NZ Poetry for Children*, undertook a Hot Spot Poetry Tour of the country, visited schools through the NZ Book Council, and kick started a children's blog called *NZ Poetry Box*.

### On writing poems for children

a Jack on a camel  
a Jack and his flannel  
a Jack climbing rocks  
a Jack in a box.

(From "Which Jack")

Some authors write poems for children with the adult reader in mind as though any other option will compromise the poetic complexity and reduce potential levels of engagement. My primary aim is to catch the attention of the child reader to the point they fall in love with poetry. Poems that hook the child's ear and eye ignite crucial sparks in their reading life. For me, children's poetry begins with *sound* as the poems need to live in the air (ear) as nimbly as they reside on the page. Rhyme may or may not play a part. What matters is the electric charge between one word and the next that may produce a quiet hum or a hubzbadrub and everything in between. When I do use rhyme, I am as fond of the Dr-Seuss-type rhyme (dog, sog, log, frog)

as I am of words that almost rhyme (escape, alligator, skateboard). Tricky rhyme, as I tell children, is an extremely fun thing to hunt for and adds musical zest to their poems. Hiding the rhyme adds another level of excitement for hungry ears.

Poems can feed the eye with detail that gleams like little gold nuggets on the line. The detail can have anchors in the real world and help a poem relate little snippets of experience. Conversely, the detail might scoop the child up and carry them through the window into the tunnels and train tracks of the imagination. Good detail can produce laughter (a necessary ingredient in my collections), but it can also provide a landing platform to ponder things that surprise or challenge or move. Children, who have caught the poetry spark, will engage with poems that offer a more thoughtful flipside to zany humor.

Poems on the page can catch the eye through form. In my latest collection, *The Letterbox Cat*, I have played with the tradition of concrete poetry to create poems that produce pictures. Trying to read these sometimes involves a lot of squirming and twisting and getting off the chair to follow the tumble of words (one poem is a rollercoaster; another is a dripping ice cream).

When I write a book of poems for children, I want to show that poems can do a thousand things and, while you might experience all kinds of moods as you read, poems make you feel good. Poetry is a way of reading for delight.

### On performing poems with children

#### *The Orange*

I saw little ships instead of pips  
on a sea of orange waves.

All I need is my voice, my books, and a room full of children. Some teachers are fearful of teaching poetry, of giving children the freedom to enter the poetry playground. A common practice is to provide a model poem where children fill in the gaps, so it is a little like a poetry coloring book. This approach does not set the child loose in the playground and inhibits poetry play to certain degrees. However, poetry models are like safety nets for both teacher and child and can produce stunning results.

For me, the key place to start is not on the page but in the performance space. Reading poems out loud so that you are part musician, part explorer, part hot-air balloonist, part electrician, and most definitely wordsmith opens up the poetry playground. During my poetry performances, I always make up poems with children because it heightens the level of engagement and personal investment. Often I use one of my poems as a launch pad, sometimes not. I have a skeleton plan of poetry techniques to explore in the poems we make up that boost the way eye and ear connect with a poem. Here are some starters:

- playing with how many words go on line
- paying attention to the last word on the line
- finding detail that fascinates
- adding a surprise, secret or twist on a line
- hiding tricky rhyme on a line
- mixing up long and short words to change the beat

This works with anything from ten children in a classroom to six hundred students in a hall. Having picked a topic, I set a challenge and the children then sample lines. For example, find a two-word line that shows me something different about the bird. Find me two words that almost rhyme with crocodile and put them in the next line. Show me something surprising about our cat using no more than five words. My challenges are designed to show that making up poems can be both fun and easy and that there are choices within the grasp of all children that help a poem sound good. Each child stands up the front with their line, and we perform the poem both in unison and individually. With large numbers of children wanting to participate, it is the golden opportunity to encourage children to use their lines as starting points for poems of their own.

In 2015, I was part of the NZ Book Council's project to bring authors into low decile schools in South Auckland. Over six days, I worked at Fairburn Primary School in Otahuhu. I did interactive performances with syndicates in order to create a school-wide poetry buzz, and then I provided ongoing writing workshops with targeted students. My key aims were to make the poetry playground accessible for teachers and children in ways that were both fun and stimulating. That the school hummed with poetry fed into a Family Sharing Day and a

published book of the children's writing (not just from my workshops but from classrooms taking up my performance challenges). Here is a sample poem where a Fairburn syndicate created a list poem with me on a very foggy morning. The challenge I set was to use ears and eyes to build the line.

#### *Out of the Fog*

Out of the fog the icy grass  
Out of the fog the blackbirds squawking  
Out of the fog the blue grey mountains  
Out of the fog the white dog barking  
Out of the fog the moving shadows  
Out of the fog the humans walking  
Out of the fog the hedgehogs crawling.

### On poetry writing freedoms

After my poetry performances, children are itching to write a poem. I take them on the kind of expedition that I might go on as I write a poem. It is always a passage of discovery as I never know what might happen with my own writing and when I work with children. That is immensely liberating. Words are the building blocks of poems, the musical notes, the stepping stones to an imaginative elsewhere. Thus, that is where we begin. By asking questions and using my stopwatch, I get the children hunting for words. Two minutes to find verbs that show me how that bird moves. Go! Three minutes to find words for all the things you see on the sand. Go! Before you know it, the whole room is in a poetry zone with bent heads and scratching pens. Once we have a pool of words, I get the children to play with them. I might ask them to find three words that sound good together or two words that almost rhyme. We might make words patterns that please the ear.

Having shared my love of tiny poems in my books, we always write tiny poems to begin with (using around sixteen words). At this point, I talk about the way there are no rules in poetry that cannot be broken but that it is really fun seeing what you can produce with just a handful of words. Later, we try writing longer poems, and I always set a few challenges. Playing with how many words go on a line always changes the music of a poem and is an easy and a fun way to transform writing. Hunting for the gold-nugget detail makes the poems gleam.

An important thing for me as a visiting author is to interact with the child and set individual challenges. I identify what I love about the writing, and then I give them little things to explore. I might challenge a child to test out four different verbs and then choose the one they love best or to solve the problem of clashing facts.

What matters is that poetry generates avenues into reading and writing with delight. Poems can delve deep into human experience and range across a broad spectrum of subjects. Poems can embody an infectious sense of humor, a playful relationship with words and ideas, and enable readers to see the world and the people alongside in new and energizing lights. Poetry does not need to be limited by national standards, arbitrary rules, or narrow expectations on what a poem might do or be. Whether I am writing the book, performing the book, or prompting writing, I want the child to experience delight. I am never going to enforce a child to conform to my challenges and expectations when I see delight driving the ink their pen, the lead in their pencil. Poems are where you set sail for the moon in pink pyjamas, discover an alligator that skates, and what lives in the tree at the bottom of your garden.

#### *Cat*

Orange like mandarin skin,  
my cat purrs  
and plays with silvery  
wool like pillows.  
She sleeps  
in a beanbag  
and in a wood box  
and on the rainbow couch.  
But her favourite place  
is a knitted basket.

(Made up with 5 year olds at  
Ormond School, Gisborne)

### On creating a centre for NZ poetry for children

I established my blog, NZ Poetry Box, to spread the poetry net wider and involve families as well as schools in my poetry mission. The blog is a place to set challenges, offer poetry tips, promote NZ poetry books, and interview local authors. Children are involved as poets, reviewers, interviewers. In the

year of my Hot Spot Poetry Tour of New Zealand, around seventy children interviewed NZ authors either individually or as a class. Most importantly, I post poems by children as a result of my challenges and my school visits, along with some I have written when a starting point strikes.

### Moon

The moon glows in the night  
it twinkles in the dark sky  
it's like diamonds in a cave  
the moon reminds me  
of apples

(Adelphi, Year 2,  
Port Chalmers School, Dunedin)

As an informal ambassador for children's poetry in New Zealand, I showcase ways for children to dive into the playground and play with words no matter who they are and what they can do. Poetry switches on a torch so the whole world is illuminated. It can make children feel very, very good about what they are doing and what they might do.

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**PAULA GREEN** is a poet, reviewer, anthologist, children's author, book-award judge and blogger. She has published nine poetry collections including several for children. She runs two blogs: NZ Poetry Box and NZ Poetry Shelf. She edited the much lauded *A Treasury of New Zealand Poetry for Children* (Random House) and her latest collection, *The Letter Box Cat and other poems* (Scholastic) won Children's Choice at the 2015 NZ Book Awards. Several of her children's books have made Storylines Notable Book lists. She lives near Auckland's West Coast and is currently writing a book on NZ women's poetry.

Third in Lin Baiting's award-winning *Monkey Child* series, *Sweet Potato Sprout* is a sparsely texted, lively picture book celebrating the pleasures of everyday life and encouraging open-ended curiosity. After *Monkey Child* discovers a sprouted sweet potato, his whole family becomes involved with its growth. Warm, naïve-style pastel illustrations cross double-page spreads printed on brown craft paper, creating a strong empathetic connection with young readers. Adding to the delight is the parallel wordless story of a mouse family living under *Monkey Family's* floorboards told in humorously detailed pen and ink drawings. The mice have discovered a huge potato that, step by step, they manage to peel, cut up, and convert into delicious French fries. Meanwhile, *Monkey Grandmother* has made a tasty snack of honey candied sweet potatoes. In a climactic scene that requires the book to be held vertically, *Monkey Child* and *Mouse Child* share their respective snacks while fireworks light the sky behind them. With illustrations that reward careful scrutiny, this book encourages positive speculation about such ordinary topics as vegetables, their growth, family life, relationship with neighbors, and sharing.

Jonathan Klassen



BOOKBIRD POSTCARDS

地瓜發芽了  
**(Sweet Potato Sprout)**  
**(The Best Songs), 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.**  
Lin Baiting (林柏廷)  
Taipei: Linking, 2015. Unp.  
ISBN: 9789570845952  
(Picture book; ages 3+)

The summer of 2015 brought the announcements of newly discovered planets. One such planet seemed to be a “close cousin to Earth; another appeared to be a “young, Jupiter-like” planet. So what a timely book *When Dad Showed Me the Universe* turns out to be.

When Dad tells his young son that he is now old enough to be shown the universe, the child is quite excited to discover this new place. Walking far enough out of the town to get to an area with no streetlights allows the twosome to arrive on a small, grassy hill. The boy notices a snail from the “universe” of this hill, when he spots grass swaying in the wind. But his dad has him look to the sky instead, pointing out clusters of stars and telling his son their names.

A “return to earth” is quite sudden when they realize Dad has stepped in something left in the field, also used as a dog park! Stark's compact text—accompanied by Eriksson's warm, lovely illustrations—provide a reminder that relationships may well be the most important discoveries in our universe.

Ann Neely



BOOKBIRD POSTCARDS

**When Dad Showed Me the Universe**  
Ulf Stark  
Illust. Eva Eriksson  
Trans. Julia Marshall  
Wellington, New Zealand:  
Gecko Press, 2015. Unp.  
(First published in Stockholm,  
Sweden, 1998)  
ISBN: 978-1-927271-81-0  
(Picture book, ages 3-8)

# BIB beyond the Borders

Timotea Vráblová



Illustration by Marian Murawski

In the contemporary world, we tend to go beyond national borders and instead reflect on the global, the bigger, context. The raison d'être of the BIB (Biennial of Illustration Bratislava), the oldest illustration award in the world, is to produce such a representative "picture"—one that uniquely manifests the creativity of illustrators from different nations as well as cultural tendencies, specifically to do with children's culture. It is a big effort for the organizer, BIBIANA (the International House of Art), in co-operation with IBBY, to regularly bring together a representative international collection.

Now, as BIB celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, it is possible not only to look back and see regular biennial presentations of countries and their artists but also—retrospectively looking at fifty years of contributions—to discern movements, trends, and developments. Such a perspective is provided to anyone who is interested in studying the individual catalogues of the biennial collections, commemorative books, and digitalized materials.

BIBIANA, the International House of Art for Children in Bratislava (Slovakia), holds a gallery mostly comprised of awarded illustrations. It is also the seat of the BIB Secretariat and the methodical and archive headquarters that processes and publishes the documentation. Altogether this makes BIB a really unique and complex cultural institution. The balance is not small: within fifty years of BIB, there have been 59860 exhibited pictures from 111 countries created by 7580 illustrators. The illustrations have promoted 10,000 books. Last year, 2015, BIB hosted fifty countries, represented by 355 illustrators and 2426 illustrations from 441 books.

The BIB "year of jubilee" was also a fruitful

year for some new achievements. We welcomed a new exhibition in the "room of honour." With the exception of an exhibition of H. C. Andersen award laureates 2014, writer Nahoko Uehashi (Japan) and illustrator Roger Mello (Brazil), this was the first time we hosted an exhibition of the ALMA winner 2014—Praesa (South Africa). Helen Sigeland, the director of ALMA, was one of the speakers at the BIB Symposium.

Another "new baby" dedicated to celebrating the BIB fiftieth anniversary was the IBBY INSTITUTE BRATISLAVA started by the Slovakian IBBY. It is a new international platform focused on increasing literacy. The Slovakia IBBY Committee saw that the time was ripe to create a complement to BIB which would include aspects of books and reading other than those to do with illustrations. As of now, IBBY INSTITUTE BRATISLAVA conferences are planned to be regular events during the time of BIB. But some activities will also take place during the biennial term. So far, there have been nineteen speakers (both from Slovakia and abroad) at the two conferences of the institute: *Seeing differently or How to Read Picture books* and *Stop Reading Crisis! Reading and Children's Development* addressing a wide audience of parents, teachers, and librarians.

To bring the celebration of BIB out to the streets, we also started an open air reading festival, *Knižné hody* (The Book Feast). The activities took place in one of the main city squares, filling it with shows and artistic activities promoting reading and books. The festival was broadcasted live by the Slovak Radio. Our big BIB heroes—such as Dr. Dušan Roll, one of the founders of BIB—were special guests.

Over 12,000 children visited the main BIB 2015 exhibition (from September to the end of October). They had the chance not only to see the illustrations but also to actively engage in the work of illustrators, talk to them, and work with them on little creative projects. Events such as workshops and talk shows with illustrators are traditionally a part of BIB, and child audiences like it. In connection with the BIB exhibition, the child audience could experience puppet theatre performances or watch the movies from Biennale of animation Bratislava (BAB). Children also liked the new interactive game GRAND PRIX CUBES, which presented for them all the Grand Prix BIB Winners and their illustrations. Six side-exhibitions of children's illustrators were placed in the BIB program. They were situated in the Slovak national theatre and some galleries.

In BIBIANA, we prepared inspirational interactive exhibitions of Albín Brunovský and Miroslav Cipár, two of BIB's fathers and great teachers of many Slovak illustrators in the 60s and 80s. Children loved taking a break to rest on Gulliver's hand and to experience Lilliput through another interactive exhibition of illustrations by Peter Uchnár.

The BIB celebration last year was also especially honored by the presence of IBBY Executive Committee having their session in Bratislava. Wally de Doncker, the IBBY President, was one of the main speakers at the opening BIB gala ceremony, together with Lynne Patchet, the official UNESCO representative. Liz Page, the IBBY Executive Director, received a special BIB Plaque for her contribution in advancing BIB's vision during the years of co-operation between IBBY and BIB.



Illustration by John Rowe



Illustration by Michael Kallay

In his talk Dr. Dušan Roll, the founder of BIB, quoted Jella Lepman's words about the "wonderful demonstration of progress" seen already in 1969. Today, Roll says, "For children, art is a matter of the heart and I believe that children's books will never disappear from their hands. As far as my successors are concerned, I believe the work for BIB will become their purpose in life as well."

#### BIB 2015 and AWARDS

The international jury was chaired by the laureate of Hans Christian Andersen Award 2014, Roger Mello (Brazil), with members Anastasia Arkhipova (Russia), Helena Bergendahl (Sweden), Nazan Erkmén (Turkey), Karol Felix (Slovakia), Piet Grobler (Great Britain), Maria Jesus Gil (Spain), Agnes Gyr (Rwanda), Yukiko Hiromatsu (Japan), František Skála (Czech Republic), and Nina Wehrle (Switzerland).

The jury awarded Laura Carlin (UK) with the Grand Prix for *A World of Your Own Iron Man*. The Bib Golden Apple was awarded to Mirocomachiko (Japan) for *Yellow and I*, Elena Odriozola (Spain) for *Frankenstein*, Javier Zabala (Spain) for *Bird in a Cage*, Ronald Curchod (Switzerland) for *The Night when I Sleep*, and Bingchung Huang (China) for *Braid*.



**TIMOTEA VRÁBLOVÁ** is a founder of IBBY INSTITUTE BRATISLAVA. She is a researcher of the history of literature (17th – 18th centuries) and children's literature. She also works at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, teaching lectures on Children's literature, Psychology of Children's Observation, and Creative Writing. She is the president of Sk IBBY.

By Liz Page



**LIZ PAGE** is Executive Director of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY)

## Winners of the 2016 IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award

On Monday, April 4, the chair of the jury for the 2016 IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award, Angela Lebedeva (Russia), announced the winners of the award at the Bologna Children's Book Fair. The winners are *Read With Me* from Iran, nominated by IBBY Iran, and *Big Brother Mouse* from Laos, nominated by the IBBY sections of Switzerland, Germany, France, and Denmark. The two winners

were selected from eleven nominations made by the National Sections of IBBY. The nominations were from Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Indonesia, Iran, Laos, Mexico, New Zealand, and Slovenia.

Angela Lebedeva expressed IBBY's gratitude to the Asahi Shimbun newspaper company in Japan for their many years of sponsorship of this prestigious award.

## "Read With Me" Paints a Brighter Future!

*Read With Me* (RWM) is a reading promotion project designed and implemented by the Institute for Research on the History of Children's Literature in Iran (IRHCLI) to promote reading for/with disadvantaged children who are generally at risk (khanak.org/en). "The Institute for Research on the History of Children's Literature in Iran" (IRHCLI) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization

founded in 2000 to conduct research on the history of children's literature (koodaki.org/en). A major achievement of the Institute is the publication of ten volumes of the history of children's literature in Iran. Reaching out to disadvantaged children has been a major concern of the Institute—in particular those who are deprived of cultural activities, especially books and reading. In 2010, the Institute

developed a new project called *Read With Me*.

Read With Me started as a pilot project in a marginal area of southeastern Tehran close to brick kilns where some 120 Afghan families lived. Since then, the project has successfully expanded to many rural and urban areas in Iran. As the project was designed to be implementable for groups of children of different ages and in all environments, *Read With Me* was carried out in locations as diverse as preschools located in remote villages, centers for working children in cities, nurseries, orphanages, hospitals, boarding schools for children affected by earthquake, and even in a factory for the family members.



By now, about 25,000 children and 1,000 teachers in 13 provinces have joined the project (<http://khanak.org/en/rwm-centers>). Based on the project's methodology, teachers and tutors who participate in *Read With Me* workshops implement the project in their schools and education centers, making about 1,000 teachers indirectly involved in Read with me project.

About half of the children participating in this project are bilingual ones from Sistan and Baluchistan province, which is one of the most deprived areas in Iran. Since the beginning of the *Read With Me* project in Sistan and Baluchistan Province, bilingual children in the Read with me classes who previously had serious problems in learning Persian, now in addition to learning easier and faster, are

involved in book related activities, so their other personal skills and abilities have grown dramatically.

The main objectives of the project are to

- develop lifelong reading habits at home, school and in the community;
- enhance the life of disadvantaged children through reading books and literature;
- keep street and working children and young adults away from violence and crime;
- empower teachers, librarians, and volunteers through workshops to ensure sustainability of the project;
- and set up and maintain dynamic children's libraries in deprived areas.

*Read With Me* offers alternative approaches to education that are based on learning through literature.

The *Read With Me* classes substituted the mainstream educational approach by learning through literature and related activities, specifically drama. The project involves children in games, role-playing, and different crafts—motivating them and, at the same time, empowering them to change their behavior and their environment.

The project focuses on reading aloud to help the children associate reading with building a vocabulary, acquire a reading model, and become familiar with different types of literature and new concepts. Teachers encourage discussion and exchange of views about the story, aiming to develop children's critical thinking.

When *Read With Me* is first set up in a location, a list of quality books is prepared according to the number of children and their weekly reading sessions. The team prepares suitable books and places them in canvas bags ready for dispatch to locations for a period of three months. There are special handbooks for each book in the bag to guide the teachers on how to read the books and carry out the activities. There are also activity sheets for every child in each canvas bag.

Two-day training workshops are organized and conducted by the team every three months for teachers, librarians, and volunteers. The content of the workshops generally consist of children's literature, practicing reading aloud skills and artistic activities, improving literacy skills, living values through literature, setting up a library and the classi-

fication of books and art related to books. Teachers are required to submit feedback and statistics on a monthly basis. To monitor and improve the implementation, all activities are documented for further evaluation of the project.



The *Read With Me* team keeps close contact with centers and provides regular monitoring, mentoring, guidance, and support for the teachers and volunteers by paying monthly visits to the locations; by being accessible through phone, fax, or E-mail as available; and by sending handbooks, reference materials, etc. The team evaluates the progress by collecting data through specially designed questionnaires, taking films and photographs, and recording the reading sessions and finally prepares and submits comprehensive annual report to the Institute. According to the reports we have received by now, this project has made a lot of changes in the regions.

By creative education through literature, the project has made great improvement in the language skills of children, especially in bilingual provinces where children used to have serious problems in learning sounds and alphabets. Several Nomad Schools in Sistan and Baluchestan have been attracted to this project for the same reason (<http://khanak.org/en/workshops-2-zabol-zahedan>). Development of group activities in classrooms, improvement in relations between children, acceptance of differences, avoidance of violence, and promotion of peace are the results reported by teachers. They have indicated that this project has increased the awareness and concerns for environmental protection of children as well. The pictures and films of the Read with me classes show clearly that a great change in the appearance of classrooms has occurred, by adding colors and attractive pictures of the books and related activities. The increase in happiness, vitality, and sense of belonging in the classes is quite visible.

*Read With Me* aims to provide a better prospect in life for deprived children, young adults and children in crisis, and their families. The ultimate goal of this program is to enhance the intellectual and physical capacity of children and young adults so that they can become a part of the community, participate with others, safely avoid natural and social harms, and ultimately be able to build a constructive and fruitful future.

Zohreh Ghaeni  
IRHCLI, Iran



## Big Brother Mouse—Books that Make Literacy Fun!

In 1996, thirteen-year-old Khamla made the long boat journey from his rural village in Laos to the provincial capital of Luang Prabang. His parents thought their son was bright, but their village had only a primary school. As a novice monk at a Buddhist temple, he could get more education.

In Luang Prabang, Khamla coined a last name for himself and his family, which had never before needed one. It was "Panyasouk," combining

the word for "wisdom" and his father's name. He became close friends with another novice, Siphone. And he occasionally saw tourists reading books. "Why would anyone read a book when they're on vacation?" he wondered. The only books Khamla knew were dull textbooks.

At that time, Sasha Alyson had sold his publishing company in the U.S. On a trip to Laos in 2003, he never saw any Lao person reading, nor did

he see any books in Lao. He wondered, “Could I move to Laos and help young people learn writing and publishing skills?” He met Khamla, invited him to try writing a humorous Lao alphabet book, and Khamla produced *Frog, Alligator, Buffalo*. In 2006, the pair founded Big Brother Mouse, with Khamla as the owner and Sasha as an adviser. Siphone joined soon afterward.

Big Brother Mouse’s slogan is “Books that make literacy fun!” Children read more if it is fun; more reading leads to stronger literacy skills. But how would anyone write a good book in a country where most people had never read one? Big Brother Mouse drew inspiration from books that were popular in other countries, but developed them with Lao content. Dr. Seuss’s *Green Eggs and Ham* led to a book titled, “Do you like to read?”

Distribution was another challenge. There is no distribution network for books in Laos. Big Brother Mouse tried several approaches. One was the book party. At these events, four youthful “Mice,” as they became known, go to a primary school. For three hours they read aloud, play games, and teach songs about books. At the end, every child selects a free book, usually the first book they ever owned. The book parties were led by Sonesoulilat, a sixteen-year-old high school student who worked part-time.

Tourists were invited to sponsor a book party and attend it. Support also came from students in wealthier countries: Interested teachers arranged read-a-thons or other fundraisers in their class to raise money for literacy in Laos while also prompting their students to think about what a life without books would be like.



After seven years of strong focus on creating “Books that make literacy fun!” Big Brother Mouse had published 250 books and was ready to do more. It left a set of 70-80 books in each classroom if the teacher agreed to provide a short daily reading time. Similar programs, often called “Sustained Silent Reading” (SSR), are successfully used in many higher-income countries, but Big Brother Mouse found no reports of them in a poorer country. So they also conducted an evaluation, to compare reading improvements in schools with SSR versus a control group that did not have the program. The evaluation found that SSR did improve reading skills, but less than expected. It also revealed the reason: Teachers had grown up in a system of rote teaching with no books, just a teacher and blackboard. Though they agreed to provide reading time, many teachers did not see the point, and did not do it. After Big Brother Mouse addressed that problem, another evaluation the next year showed a bigger improvement from daily reading.

Teachers also asked for aids to help them teach reading; that led Big Brother Mouse to develop a series called “I Can Read!” which introduces the letters slowly, with fun stories that student can read after they have learned as little as one-quarter of the alphabet.

Today, in a country of 6.5 million people,



Khamla’s alphabet book has 55,000 copies in print. Siphone has retold many folktales; his 18 titles have 290,000 copies in print. Sonesoulilat has organized 4,400 book parties in 2,400 villages nation-wide, and 1,300 schools have set up daily reading programs from Big Brother Mouse. Three literacy organizations have translated Big Brother Mouse books and published them in other countries.

Khamla’s parents cannot read. Khamla grew up believing books had to be dull. But Khamla and his wife read to their four-year-old daughter every day.

Occasionally she is at the Big Brother Mouse when the staff eats lunch together. After lunch, she will often select a picture book, stand at the end of the table, and “read” it to everyone. Not because anyone suggested she do so—simply because she wants to share something that is special to her.

Sasha Alyson  
Big Brother Mouse  
www.bigbrothermouse.com  
logo BBM



## The Syrian Children’s Bibliotherapy Project in Lebanon 2016

This is a continuation of the successful project implemented in 2013, which was impressive. Since the influx of refugees into Lebanon has increased, the need has become even greater.

During the month of November, a request from IBBY Lebanon (LBBY) was submitted to the Lebanese Ministry of Education to secure permission for implementing the Bibliotherapy project in two public schools that accommodate Syrian children. The permit was eventually granted in January after several trips to the Ministry. Training was given at the end of January to a group of fifteen teachers from the Shakib Irsan Public School in the use of the program. Four teachers were selected to proceed with the project along with one coordinator. One hundred children were recruited from the student body of that school that qualified for the project. Attendance has been very encouraging and there is very little absence.



The program with the children was started at the beginning of February 2016 and continued until mid-May, at which time the final State exams took place and the school premises were not available for our use. Friday was their day off and the children attended from 8:00 to 11:00; after that, many of the children went to the mosque for Friday prayers.

The program included a fifteen minutes break and a snack that the children thoroughly enjoyed.

The 2015 program in the Burj Hammoud School was interrupted at the end of July, and because of changes in personnel in the Syrian-refugee national program, the sessions could only restart in February 2016 and ended in March. On the last day, the teachers and the children cooperated in making pizza and some local dishes that everyone enjoyed. The head of the project wrote to say that it was hard to describe the children's happiness. On March 12, a new session began in the school with a new group of eighty children, four teachers, and a Coordinator. This went through mid-May, this time for four hours every Saturday, the day off in this school, from 8:00 to 12:00, with a break of half an hour and a snack.

Julinda Abu Nasr, who is the leader of the project, was very present during the sessions and moved from one classroom to the next, observing the children's behavior and listening to their trials and tribulations. She wrote, "I also observe the performance of the teachers who are trying their best to change their authoritarian approach to teaching and learn to listen rather than talk. At the end of each session, I sit down with the teachers and together we evaluate the session. I give some of my time to work with individual children who need more attention than others."

The Ministry of Education sent delegates from their Guidance and Counseling office to observe and check on our work. They were so pleased with the program that they asked if their personnel could also be trained in its use.

As in previous groups, the children were reporting horror stories of experiences they have been exposed to of severe violence on them, their families, friends, towns, villages, and schools. A new trend in children's behavior was the use of knives to hurt others. If knives were not available, they used well-sharpened pencils to hit other children with. The anger, hate, bitterness, aggression, and anxiety are so apparent and intense in these children's behavior. Fighting over a ball can create a serious problem: a few children who are playing ball in a group may end up wounded or bruised.

It is rewarding to learn of the changes in their behavior on the playground, in the classroom, and even at home. At the beginning, their immediate reactions in all situations were to hit, kick, curse,



use foul language, snatch what they want, or stab with a knife or a pencil or any sharp tool they get hold of, but after a few sessions, you see a dramatic change in their social skills. Parents are reporting change in the children's behavior at home as well. The parents are very supportive of the program. Although the sessions take place in the children's free time, they insist on coming and the parents cooperate in sending them even though there is no form of transportation for them.

Julinda goes on to say, "There is no doubt in my mind that the work we are doing with these children is lighting a candle in the dark tunnel they have had to cross too early in life. I am sure the love they are given, the opportunity to express themselves in a variety of means, the possibility of meeting characters in books who set examples of good behavior, the privilege of being heard and sympathized with are all saving them from the danger of harping the anger and hate in their burdened souls that may lead them into crime and misbehavior in the future. This program is helping them deal with their hate and anger by trying to channel these negative destructive feelings into more positive venues rather than directing it towards self or others."

We need to continue this worthwhile project. The crisis in Syria is not over, and there is no sign that it will be any time soon. These children continue to flee their homes and continue to have difficulties in returning to their childhood. This project shows how careful training and group sessions can help them get their emotions and thus their lives back. It is a small project that has potential to grow throughout the school system, reaching many more children in need. With your support, IBBY will be able to continue to fund this work.

Julinda Abu Nasr  
IBBY Lebanon

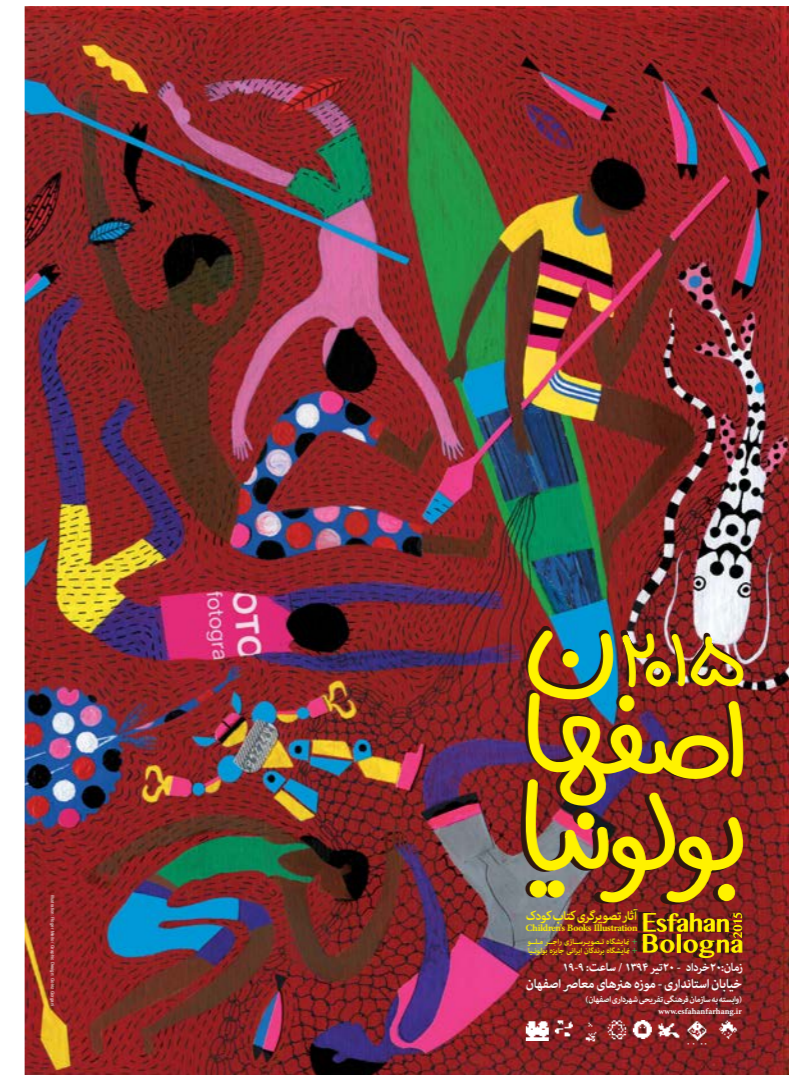
Funds sent to  
Lebanon to date:  
USD 45,000

## International Illustration Exhibitions in Iran, Bologna Children's Book Fair, and the Biennale of Illustrations Bratislava

Iranian illustrators are already familiar with international illustration exhibitions and have always been actively present in the illustration exhibitions in the world. However, many of the Iranian artists who have participated in these exhibitions multiple times and have even won awards are rarely able to

personally attend them. Therefore, following several recent exhibitions of illustrations by Iranian artists in European countries and the USA, we decided to host some of the international events in Iran so that Iranian audiences can attend and benefit from them.

### BOLOGNA-TEHRAN/ISFAHAN



Isfahan-Bologna exhibition poster. Illustrated by: Roger Mello, Designed by: Golriz Gorgani.

The Bologna-Tehran and the Bologna-Isfahan exhibitions were organized in Iran in May 2015, to coincide with the Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF), and included four international components.

- The Bologna illustration exhibition 2015.
- Works by Roger Mello (Brazil), the winner of the 2014 Hans Christian Andersen Award.
- Works by the Iranian artists whose works has been featured in the Bologna illustration exhibition over the past ten years. These include Sious Āqākhāni (2008), Hasan Amekan (2007, 2010, 2013), Nedā Azimi (2006), Sahar Bardāyee (2006, 2009), Behnoush Behzādi (2007), Ali Boozari (2006, 2007), Marjan Farmani (2011), Ali-rezā Goldouziān (2012, 2013), Zhihā Hodāyee (2014), Amin Hasanzādeh (2014), Mehdi Karimzādeh (2009), Rāshin Khayrieh (2007, 2009, 2011, 2013), Āzādeh Madani (2006), Vidā Rabāni (2006), Pezhmān Rahimizāde (2013), Golnaz Mahmoudi (2007), Monireh Mansouri (2009), Ghazāleh Marsousi (2013), Narges Mohammadi (2008, 2012, 2015), Hasan Mousavi (2013), Fereshteh Najafi (2009, 2012, 2015), Afrā Nobahār (2010), Fatemeh Qāsemi (2015), Noushin Safā-khou (2009, 2011, 2012), Zahra Sarmashqi (2009), Amir Shabānipour (2007, 2009, 2013), Farshid Shafi'ei (2009), Syaed Fazlāh Tabātabāyee (2013), Mortezā Zāhedi (2006, 2012, 2014).
- The Iranian books that have won different awards and honors at the International Bologna Children's Book Awards in the past fifty years. These include Farshid Mesqāli: Graphic Prize Fiera di Bologna Award 1969 for the book Māhi siāh-e Kouchoulou

[The Little Black Fish]; Mortezā Esmāil-Sohi: Graphic Prize Fiera di Bologna Award 1985 for the book Barghā [Leaves]; Behrād Amin-Salmāsi: Graphic Prize Fiera di Bologna Award 1991 (Special Mention) for the book Dobāre Negāh Kon [Look again-The Metals]; Bahrām Khāef: BolognaRagazzi Award / New Horizons Award 2003 for the book Hekayat-Nameh [The Anecdotes]; Shabaviz Publishing House, Bologna-Ragazzi Award / New Horizons Award 2004 for all productions; Afrā Nobahār: BolognaRagazzi Award / New Horizons Award 2006 (Special Mention) for the book Tāp, Tāp, Tāp; Rāshin Khayrieh: BolognaRagazzi Award / New Horizons Award 2009 (Special Mention) for the book Arang, arang, begou che rang? [Arang, Arang, Tell Me What Color?]; Hodā Haddādi: BolognaRagazzi Award / New Horizons Award 2010 (Special Mention) for the book Do dust [Two friends]; Ali Boozari: BolognaRagazzi Award / New Horizons Award 2012 (Special Mention) for the book Shenidār-e Pendār [Misunderstanding].

The exhibition opened on 8 May 2015 at Qasr cultural complex in Tehran, with speeches by Roberta Chinni, the Exhibition Manager of the BCBF; Ali Boozari, EC member of The Iranian Illustrators Society (IIS); and Noushin Ansari, the Secretary General of the Children's Book Council of Iran (CBC) and IBBY Iran. Later the exhibition moved to the city of Isfahan and on 10 June 2015 and was shown at the Isfahan Museum of Contemporary Art.

## BRATISLAVA-TEHRAN/ISFAHAN

The history of Iran's cooperation with the BIB goes back to the early years of its establishment. Iranian illustrators started participating in this international event in 1969, when it sent six illustrators. The Iranian participation reached its peak between the years 2003 and 2007, during which twenty illustrators from Iran participated in the competition and two attended the UNESCO-Albín Brunovský illustration workshop. In addition, for many years, Iranian judges have acted as members of the jury. Due to political developments, the strong Iranian participation was minimized during the Iraq-Iran war between the years 1980 and 1988. During the immediate aftermath of the war, no Iranian artist

could participate in the 1989 Biennale. Several Iranian experts were BIB Jury members: Farshid Mesqāli (BIB'75), Sirous Tahbāz (BIB'77), Nouredin Zarrinkelk (BIB'99), Behzād Gharibpour (BIB'03), Abol-Fazl Hemmati-Āhouei (BIB'05), and Mahnoush Moshiri (BIB'07).

The Iranian artists who participated in the UNESCO-Albín Brunovský illustration workshops that are run in cooperation with the BIB are Mehrnoush Ma'soumiān (BIB'89), Nasrin Khosravi (BIB'95), Firouze Golmohammadi (BIB'99), Behzād Gharibpour and Farshid Shafi'ei (BIB'01), Pezhmān Rahimizāde (BIB'03), Hodā Haddādi and Ali Khosh-Jām (BIB'05), Mohammad-'Ali Bani-asadi

and Ali Boozari (BIB'07), Marjān Vafāiyān (BIB'09), Fariddedin Moulāi and Maysam Mousavi (BIB'11), and Aileen Bahmanipour (BIB'13).

The Iranian speakers who took part in the BIB symposium were Zohreh Ghāeni (BIB'99), Farshid Mesqāli (BIB'01), Behzād Gharibpour (BIB'03), Parnāz Nayeri (BIB'05), Mehrnoosh Moshiri (BIB'07), Hamid-Rezā Shāhābādi (BIB'09), Sahar Tarhandeh (BIB'11), Ali Boozari (BIB'13 and BIB'15), and Zohreh Parirokh (BIB'13).

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Biennale of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB), an event was hosted by Iran that included the following exhibitions:

- The BIB grand prix winners in the previous twenty-five Biennales.
- The winners of the eleven main awards of the BIB'15.
- The Iranian participants of the BIB'15 exhibition. Nazanin Abāsi, Mitrā Abdollāhi, Mohammad-'Ali Bani-asadi, Atieh Bozorg-Sohrabi, Rezā Dalvand, Ali Khodāyee, Atefeh Maleki-jou, Atieh Markazi, Lidā Motamed, Pezhmān Rahimizāde, Paymān Rahimizādeh, Mahkāme Shabāi, Noushin Safā-khou, and Zahrā Sarmashqi.
- The Iranian winners of the BIB in the previous twenty-five Biennales. Farshid Mesqāli, Honorary mention BIB 1969 for the book Māhi siāh-e Kouchoulou [The Little Black Fish]; Nouredin



Isfahan-Bratislava exhibition poster. Designed by: Golriz Gorgāni)

- Zarrinkelk, BIB Golden Apple 1971 for illustrations to the book Kalāgh-hā [The crows]; Bahman Dādkhāh, BIB Golden Plaque 1973 for illustrations to the book Toukā-yee dar qafas [An Ortolan in the Cage]; Farshid Mesqāli, BIB Golden Apple 1973 for illustrations to the book Ārash-e kamāngir [Ārash the Bowman]; Mohammad-Rezā Dādgar, BIB Golden Plaque 1987 for illustrations to the book Yek harf-o-do harf [Letters and Words]; Karim Nasr, BIB Golden Plaque 1991 for illustrations to the book Āb mesl-e Māhi [Water means Fish]; Honar-e Norouz Publishing House, Honorary mention BIB'99; Hāfez Mirāftābi, BIB Golden Plaque 2003 for illustrations to the books Bāyad be fekr-e fereshte boud [We must be thinking on Angel] and Elyās; Ali-rezā Goldouziān, Grand Prix BIB 2005 for illustrations to the books Medād-e siyāh va medād-e qermez [The Black Pen and the White Pen] and Jourab-e sourākh [Hole in the sock]; Hodā Haddādi, BIB Golden Plaque 2007 for illustrations to the book Agar man khalabān boudam [If I were a Pilot] and Baz baran [Again Rain]; Farshid Shafi'ei, BIB Golden Apple 2007 for illustrations to the books Peyvand and Zarbal; and Rāshin Kheirie, BIB

Golden Apple 2011 for illustrations to the books Agar man Shahrdar boudam [If I were a Myer] and Moj-hā-ye daryā yek botri rā be sāhel āvardeh ast [The Waves brought the Bottle to the Shore].

This latter exhibition initially opened at Lāleh Art Gallery in Tehran on 13 November 2015 and then moved to the Museum of Contemporary Arts in Isfahan on 14 December 2015. At the same time two seminars were organized; the first was on 15 November at the Author's meeting room in The Book House of Iran when the speakers were Ali Boozari, Lili Haeri Yazdi, director of Kiā Literary Agency, Mahnoush Moshiri and Sahar Tarhandeh. The second meeting was held on 14 December 2015 at Isfahan's Museum of Contemporary Arts and featured special guests Ali Boozari, Sahar Tarhandeh, Hodā Haddādi and Ali-rezā Goldouziān. These exhibitions were held with the supervision of the IIS and in collaboration with CBC.

*Ali Boozari*  
EC member of IIS and member of CBC

Jeju is a beautiful island located in the southernmost part of Korea, but it carries a sad history. Yeonwha in *Unknown Child* tells a story of the Jeju 4.3 incident, when a large number of people were sacrificed over seven years in the late 1940s and early 1950s in the name of suppressing the Reds in Jeju (a shameful piece of Korean history that is difficult to tell children). Yeonwha believes that her older brother went to Seoul, but people believe that Yeonwha's brother became a communist and escaped to the mountain. After her mother was murdered, Yeonwha has to leave her beloved hometown and hide her identity to save her and her young brother's lives. Yeonwha knows that a communist family member endangers not only the family but also the entire town, and her incredible journey to survive will bring readers heartache and anger at the same time.

Sungja Jang, the author, was born in Jeju and lived there until she was nine. Her love of Jeju and childhood memories make Yeonwha's story authentic for young readers, help children to experience what it was like to live in such a harsh time, and learn about modern Korean history.

*Jongsun Wee*



BOOKBIRD POSTCARDS

**모르는 아이**  
**(Unknown Child)**  
Sungja Jang  
Illus. Jinwha Kim  
Seoul, South Korea: Moonji  
Publishing, 2015. 200 pp.  
ISBN: 978-89-3202-7555  
(Realistic fiction, ages 10+)

# Nonfiction for Children and Teenagers

## THE QUEST FOR THE REAL: NONFICTION FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

*Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature* invites contributions for a special issue on "nonfiction for children and young adults." While many children and teenagers prefer to read nonfiction for pleasure (from books of records to military history to sex education) the focus of research and writing about young readers skews extremely heavily towards fiction. Indeed *Bookbird* itself has not focused on nonfiction since 2003 and no winner or shortlisted candidate for the Hans Christian Andersen writing prize has ever been an author of nonfiction. The previous special issue came at a time where color images and computer design were transforming younger nonfiction, and (so it seemed) digital technologies threatened to replace print altogether. Today, though, nonfiction is experiencing a renaissance with, for example, books that take a global approach to history, explore ecological issues, present new scientific discoveries, or inspire readers to take action. A special issue on nonfiction presents an opportunity to explore in many directions, from the publishing practices in different countries to the beliefs and assumptions of adult professionals. If we exclude textbooks and school work, where does nonfiction fit in the reading lives of young people?

Topics for papers might include, but are not limited to:

- A description of the ways in which subjects such as history, science, technology, math, or engineering are crafted for young readers in a country or region – outside of textbooks.
- An analysis of what defines a book as "nonfiction" in a given area. What rules of citation and evidence are expected? Where does memoir fit? What about books that use the forms of nonfiction on a fictional topic (Dragonology, for example).

- Is a preference for fiction or nonfiction linked to gender? Why? Is this a social construct? A matter of concern? Is this true across lands, languages, and regions?
- Are nonfiction books well served in awards and honors, why or why not?
- Fiction is often praised for "story" or "imagination": do these terms have a place in nonfiction? In contrast, nonfiction is often thought of as recounting known facts, but it can also be seen as modeling the never-ending quest for knowledge. How do story, fact, and exploration figure in the nonfiction of an author or authors?
- In many countries nonfiction is presented in series. Why? Are there examples of authors writing individual books out of a passion for a particular subject?
- Most nonfiction for younger readers makes extensive use of images; how is line, color, archival or current photography, utilized in nonfiction? What innovations in design creatively link images and text?
- In schools the focus of history is often the story of that nation, so young people grow up in historical silos. How can nonfiction outside of school serve to connect separate histories?

Full papers should be submitted to the editor, Björn Sundmark (bjorn.sundmark@mah.se), and guest editor, Marc Aronson (bookmarch@aol.com) by 30 January 2017. Please see *Bookbird's* website at [www.ibby.org/bookbird](http://www.ibby.org/bookbird) for full submission details. Papers which are not accepted for this issue will be considered for later issues of *Bookbird*.

# Writing by Children and Youth

## "ANOTHER CHILDREN'S LITERATURE": WRITING BY CHILDREN AND YOUTH

*Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature* invites contributions for a special issue on "another children's literature"—one created by children and youth themselves. Usually, "children's literature" has been assumed to be literature written by adults for children. In this issue, however, we intend to focus on literature created by children and youth. While there has been some critical attention to the juvenilia of canonical authors and considerable educational and psychological interest in what children's writing reveals about children, comparatively little attention has been paid to the literary dimensions of—and theoretical issues raised by—children's and youths' writing.

In the *Routledge Companion to Children's Literature* (2010), Evelyn Arizpe and Morag Styles with Abigail Rokison consider writing by children a "neglected dimension of children's literature and its scholarship," wondering "whether children's writing can be considered 'literature'" and even whether children's writing is "a genre in itself": they conclude that "a serious study of children's writing as literature is still to be written." This special issue on "another children's literature," recognizing with Juliet McMaster that "literature by children is a different matter from literature for children," hopes to undo some of that neglect of literature written by children and youth. As David Rudd writes, "It might still be argued that unlike women and other minority groups, children still have no voice, their literature being created for them, rather than creating their own. But this is nonsense. Children produce literature in vast quantities."

Topics for papers might include, but are not limited to:

- exceptional cases of important texts published by writers before they were adults, including both contemporary and earlier texts written by children and youth

- publication (and obstacles to publication) of children's and youths' creative writing, including submissions to writing contests and literary anthologies in magazines and books
- adult mediation, including censorship, of child- and youth-authored texts
- in addition to fiction and non-fiction, drama, poetry, and song lyrics written by children and youth
- collaborative writings of children and youth with adults
- children's and youths' online "writing," including blogging and fan fiction
- potentially distinctive characteristics of writing by children and youth, including narratology, representation, plot, mode, language play, characterization, focalization, closure, or intertextuality

Full papers should be submitted to the editor, Björn Sundmark (bjorn.sundmark@mah.se), and guest editor, Peter E. Cumming (cummingp@yorku.ca) by 1 July 2016. Please see *Bookbird's* website at [www.ibby.org/bookbird](http://www.ibby.org/bookbird) for full submission details. Papers which are not accepted for this issue will be considered for later issues of *Bookbird*.

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