CELEBRATING VIBRANT AND DIVERSE WORK AROUND GLOBAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Featured Articles: The Holocaust as Adventure in Uri Orlev's Children's Books • The Giving Trees: Elsa Beskow, Ecocriticism, and the Benevolent Forest • Othering Authors in the Name of Authenticity: Critiquing Colonialism with The Arab of the Future • Global Rainbow Families: Examining Visual Depictions of Same-Sex Couples in International Picturebooks • Picturing Arab Youth and Societies at the Turn of the 21st Century: Ali Chamseddine, an Illustrator from Lebanon

Bookbird

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A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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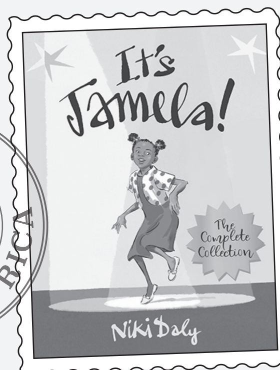
Jamela is every little girl, loving pretty things, wanting to be a princess, trying to be perfect—but often ending up being naughty by mistake! Much loved by her Mama and her Gogo, she is part of a wider community, where her adventures with a chicken destined for Christmas lunch, the lovely African fabric meant for her Mama's special dress, and the hair styling of the singing star Miss Bambi Chaka Chaka introduce a magical cast of local characters.

Daly never falters in his utter understanding of what it means to be small in a world of adults and to have your own ideas about how things should be. Generations of children have loved these stories, and this new edition is set to take them onward to even more young readers. Absolutely endearing in the gentle story and the insightful illustrations, this collection has a well-deserved place at the heart of every child.

Lesley Beake



It's Jamela!

Niki Daly
Cape Town, South Africa:
Tafelberg, 2019, 160 pp.
ISBN: 978-0-624-08742-7
(Picturebook collection; ages 4-6)

Celebrating Vibrant and Diverse Work Around Global Children's Literature

by PETROS PANAOU and JANELLE MATHIS

With five peer-reviewed articles, two Children and Their Books contributions, an author interview, four Letters, an International Youth Library Report, eight Postcards, six Books on Books reviews, and Focus IBBY, this is one of the most content-rich issues we have edited so far. Only now, looking at it in its completed form, do we marvel in its riches and admire the vibrant and diverse scholarly, educational, and creative work around global children's literature it captures.

The peer-reviewed articles in this open-theme issue are indicative of the diverse richness mentioned above. They explore such diverse topics such as play and adventure in Holocaust children's literature, Ecocriticism and the representation of forests by a beloved Swedish author, authenticity and Colonialism in graphic memoirs, rainbow families in global picturebooks, and a Lebanese illustrator's depiction of Arab youth and societies.

In "The Holocaust as Adventure in Uri Orlev's Children's Books," Daniel Feldman argues that, by portraying war as an audacious game and survival as a thrilling adventure, Orlev's juvenile texts about the Holocaust forge a powerful connection between the child victim of the Holocaust and the contemporary reader of children's literature, who unite in imagining the rich, vivid, and sometimes terrifying world of the book as real.

In "The Giving Trees," Rachel Sakrisson analyzes three picturebooks by Elsa Beskow, which present an alternative form of environmental activism. Sakrisson argues that Beskow's picturebooks, written prior to the rise of modern conservationism, promote a more accessible forest space than is typically encountered in children's literature.

Mark D. McCarthy, in "Othering Authors in the Name of Authenticity," argues that the genre of graphic memoir troublingly lends itself to an affirmation of the West while audiences make this affirmation invisible by naming the authors Other. He asserts that when authors are "inside" another culture and their text aligns with Western values, the West and its worldview are affirmed from outside.

And in "Global Rainbow Families," Jamie Campbell Naidoo and Kaitlyn Lynch provide insight into how children's books from specific countries depict physical contact between same-sex couples in picturebook illustrations and how this may influence understanding of LGBTQ families.

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Finally, in "Picturing Arab Youth and Societies," Tina Sleiman highlights visual characteristics and elements observed in Ali Chamseddine's work, as well as how the illustrator's upbringing and social context influenced his depiction of Arabic youth and societies.

The remaining texts in this issue complete the beautiful mosaic of global children's literature and its important place in the world in the current moment. We hope you enjoy reading all of them and share the marvel, admiration, and inspiration they have instilled in us.

Petros Panaou is a clinical associate professor at the University of Georgia, Department of Language and Literacy Education, where he teaches children's literature and literacy courses. He chairs the annual Georgia Conference on Children's Literature and has also chaired the academic committee for the 36th IBBY Congress. Petros currently serves on the Newbery Awards committee and has served on USBBY's Outstanding International Books committee. He has authored a book and several articles and book chapters on international children's literature. He has translated two academic volumes and led multiple international grants. His unpublished novel for children and teens *To Kinito* (*The Cellphone*) was awarded a CYBBY honor in 2017.

Janelle Mathis is a professor of literacy and children's literature at the University of North Texas, where she teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses centered on international children's literature and its applications in research and instruction. She presents regularly at international children's literature conferences, including IBBY Congresses and IRSCL, and has served on award committees, including the Outstanding International Books Award of USBBY. Janelle publishes on children's literature studies, and recently co-edited with Holly Johnson and Kathy Short a book titled *Critical Content Analysis of Children's and Young Adult Literature* (2017).

The Holocaust as Adventure in Uri Orlev's Children's Books

by DANIEL FELDMAN

Daniel Feldman argues that, by portraying war as an audacious game and survival as a thrilling adventure, Orlev's juvenile texts about the Holocaust forge a powerful connection between the child victim of the Holocaust and the contemporary reader of children's literature, who unite in imagining the rich, vivid, and sometimes terrifying world of the book as real.

In a distinguished literary career, Uri Orlev, the sole Israeli winner to date of the Hans Christian Andersen Award, has blazed a new path in contending with difficult, even traumatic history for young readers. His novels do not shirk from the trauma of the Holocaust or tread gingerly over treacherous moral ground but rather deploy adventure and play to relate stories about the genocide. Orlev's evocation of adventure and thematization of play exemplifies his approach to writing for children about traumatic events. His characters are typically avid young readers who give voice to their predicament by framing their experience in terms borrowed from literary tales of adventure. Orlev's *The Island on Bird Street* adapts *Robinson Crusoe* to a boy living alone in the Warsaw Ghetto. The narrator of *The Sandgame* depicts himself as a commander of a toy army. By portraying war as an audacious game and survival as a thrilling adventure, Orlev's juvenile texts about the Holocaust forge a powerful connection between the child victim of the Holocaust and the contemporary reader of children's literature, who unite in imagining the rich, vivid, and sometimes terrifying world of the book as real.

Children's Play and Adventure Stories Representing Traumatic Events

At the start of Uri Orlev's *Mischak HaChol* (*The Sandgame*; 1996), a children's memoir about the Polish Israeli author's boyhood in the Warsaw Ghetto, Orlev's son asks his father a deceptively simple question: "Daddy, how did you get away from the Germans?" (5). Orlev's reply is oblique. He uses the analogy of a children's game, the "sandgame" of the book's title, to introduce the complex topic of the Holocaust to his son and, by proxy, to young readers:

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> When I was a child we played a game called "How Many Children Will You Have?" Usually it was played in a sandbox. One child took a handful of sand, tossed it in the air, and flipped his hand over so that the back of it faced up. As some of the falling sand settled there, he announced: "So many children will you have!"... The sand thrower tossed the sand into the air again, flipped his hand palm-side up, and called out as the sand fell: "This many will die in the forest!"... He kept tossing the remaining sand into the air, catching it now on the back of his hand and now in his palm while announcing: "This many will be run over!" "This many will die of plague!"... When there were less than ten grains of sand left they were counted. That was how many children you would have.... It was like that with the Germans. They kept throwing us into the air and great numbers of us died, but my brother and I landed safely each time. Each time it was a different story, a different adventure. (5-6)

Orlev's answer is both harrowing and illuminating. The Holocaust is likened to a capricious game of chance: trauma is played in a sandbox.

Orlev's answer is both harrowing and illuminating. The Holocaust is likened to a capricious game of chance: trauma is played in a sandbox. The son's question about the past ("Daddy, how did you get away?") is translated into a game about predicting the future ("How many children will you have?") that specifically anticipates the unknowable promise of children yet to be born. Parent and child, past and future, genocidal trauma and children's play trade places in this storytelling sleight of hand, a literary palm flip that casts the Holocaust as a children's game while setting a tone of narrative playfulness with a darkly serious purpose.

Later in *The Sandgame*, Orlev comments on the futility of trying to offer an adult account of his childhood tribulations during the Holocaust, and he elaborates on his assertion that his experience was a thrilling "adventure." He states, "There is no grown-up way to talk, tell, or think about the things that happened to me. I have to remember them as if I were still a boy" (58). Orlev posits that not only is his survival best explained by comparison to children's play, but that he can recollect his experience exclusively in the form of children's stories. To Orlev, this history cannot be told in a "grown-up way"; it can be shared only "as if I were still a boy" recounting "a different adventure." Orlev's statements about play and narrative—that the Holocaust resembled a lethal, grotesque game expressed as a children's adventure story—are linked. In his many children's books about the Holocaust, Orlev brings play and stories together as a joint theme in his depiction of childhood amid the catastrophic circumstances of the Holocaust.

Genocide is depicted in these books as a terrifying adventure made real, a life-and-death version of children's games brought to life. Protagonists see themselves as playing out a dangerous form of their favorite

adventure tales. Games and children's adventure stories unite in Orlev's texts as key elements both of surviving and representing trauma. Rima Shikhmanter links Orlev's portrayal "of survival as a 'game' and of war as an 'adventure'" (12) to D. W. Winnicott's psychoanalytic concept of potential space, "a third area, that of play," in which the bounds of creativity can be tested in a stable interpersonal context (3). Through this masterstroke enlivening grim narrative with daring play and infusing play with narrative depth, Orlev demonstrates that not only can children's books portray horrific events such as genocide without diminishing the force of this history, but that precisely the innate creativity and playfulness of children can be recruited to "talk, tell, or think" about such grave matters.

Orlev's innovative style of writing playful adventure narratives adapted to the serious topic of the Holocaust carries significance for the broader genre of children's literature about violent historical events. Orlev's many children's books about the Holocaust, such as *Ha'Ee Be'rehov HaTziporim* (*The Island on Bird Street*; 1981), *Ha'Ish Min HaTzad He'Acher* (*The Man from the Other Side*; 1988), *Mischak HaChol* (*The Sandgame*; 1996), *Rutz, Yeled, Rutz* (*Run, Boy, Run*; 2001), and *Habayta M'Aravot HaShemesh* (*Homeward from the Steppes of the Sun*; 2010), as well as their translation into more than twenty languages, affirm Orlev's standing as a leading author of international children's literature about the trauma of war and mass human rights abuses.

In 1996, Orlev won IBBY's Hans Christian Andersen Award for his skill in portraying youthful protagonists who "suffer starvation, fear, and disease without losing [their] enjoyment of life" (Glistrup 94). Orlev's body of work thus serves as an influential, pioneering example of children's books about difficult history, a proliferating category of writing whose explosive growth in recent years has been noted in scholarship on children's literature about trauma in such diverse contexts as genocide (Gangi), war refugees (Hope; Warnqvist), and slavery (Connolly; Thomas et al.). Orlev's depiction of the Shoah as a playful adventure drawn from children's books is therefore significant as an early example of literature for young people that addresses unsettling, painful topics in a manner consistent with an intended juvenile readership.

Orlev's depiction of the Shoah as a playful adventure drawn from children's books is therefore significant as an early example of literature for young people that addresses unsettling, painful topics in a manner consistent with an intended juvenile readership.

In this article, I discuss *The Island on Bird Street*, which is the novel that introduced Orlev to an international audience, and *The Sandgame* to demonstrate how Orlev portrays play and children's adventure books as inextricably bound up with each other in representing traumatic events for young readers. This reading dovetails with recent criticism by Daniel Feldman and Krzysztof Rybak on the prevalence and significance of play in children's literature about the Holocaust. They argue that play is a cognitive mode of interpretation that affords children a social means of learning about challenging aspects of collective experience, including the Holocaust. Other scholars, including Adrienne Kertzer, Kenneth Kidd, Lydia Kokkola, and Eric Tribunella, have written about children's

literature as a rich site for contending with traumatic events.

Here I seek to take the next step in advancing those two lines of inquiry by theorizing children's literature about difficult history as an arena of traumatic play and, reciprocally, play as a key element of children's literature about trauma. By traumatic play I mean children's games, sport, and play conducted in perilous circumstances and employed as a means of confronting these conditions (see Eliana Gil's work on post-traumatic play). By traumatic narrative I mean literary depiction that reflects the confusion, terror, and overwhelmed affect of extreme events that necessarily escape coherent understanding or ordinary patterns of experience (see Cathy Caruth's theory of trauma). Orlev's children's books about the Holocaust demonstrate how play is instrumental to traumatic children's narrative and how traumatic story can take the form of play. Play and story unite in Orlev's fiction in a manner that is insightful for the study of children's literature in an age of global precariousness.

Reading Robinson Crusoe in the Warsaw Ghetto

Orlev writes in Hebrew, but he grew up speaking Polish in Warsaw, where he was born to a secular Polish Jewish family as Jerzy Henryk Orlowski. The young Orlev was an avid reader, and he retained his love of literature when we was imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto at age nine together with his family and nearly 400,000 other Jews from Warsaw and its environs. The desperate privation of the ghetto is the backdrop for many of Orlev's children's books. When the ghetto was liquidated, Orlev and his younger brother hid in abandoned apartments inside the ghetto. Orlev later survived Bergen-Belsen, the concentration camp from which he was liberated. But secretly living with his brother in a series of clandestine attics above tenement buildings as the Warsaw Ghetto fell was the formative event of Orlev's life, and, consequently, the terrifying adventure of children hiding to save their lives in the absence of parental supervision is the narrative germ from which many of his texts about the Holocaust spring.

In these works, Orlev portrays children as resourceful, vulnerable, frightened, and brave—a set of characteristics shared by his young protagonists and, the texts insinuate, by juvenile readers. Although Orlev's characters and readers contend with completely disparate circumstances—his readers cannot know the terrible hunger, grief, and morbidity of children fighting for their lives during the Holocaust—they share an important bond. Orlev builds an empathic bridge between readers and characters by dint of what they have in common merely through their literary connection: a mutual appreciation of reading.

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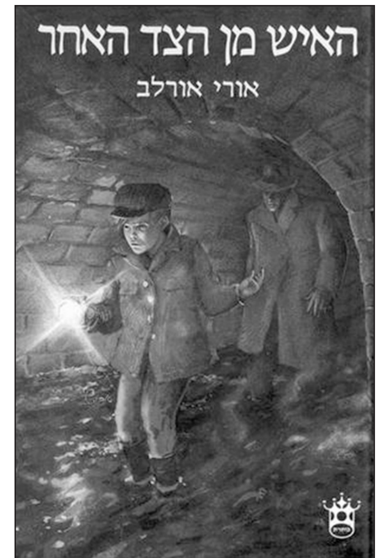
Members of Orlev's young readership are by definition readers, and he likewise presents his characters as readers, first and foremost, before their transformation into victims of unspeakable horror. *The Sandgame*, for instance, introduces the young Orlev as a bookish child:

> I read a lot of books before the war.... My favorites were war and adventure books. I liked to read about heroic grown-ups or children who went through all kinds of ordeals until everything turned out all right.... The more I read, the more I envied the heroes I read about. Why didn't anything ever happen to me? And then the war broke out, although even then it took me a while to realize that it was happening to me. (20-21)

This passage about reading tales of "war and adventure" not only mocks the young narrator's naive fantasies regarding the thrill of battle but also forges a literary connection with the young reader, who is likewise reading a book of war and adventure, albeit one with a more serious purpose than simple entertainment. By the time the narrator understands that the violent adventures he previously imagined for vicarious excitement are in fact "happening" to him, he abandons his romantic idealization of war and swiftly adapts his knowledge of conflict to reality. Seizing on skills he internalized from his prolific reading, he applies his literary acumen to the predicament of survival in the ghetto by using knowledge gleaned from children's books to survive isolation, famine, persecution, and even boredom. His books become instruments of survival as he learns to put their lessons into action.



The most influential literary template for Orlev and his protagonists is a text that is not typically classified today as a children's story, although it clearly constitutes age-appropriate reading for Orlev's young characters. *Robinson Crusoe*, Daniel Defoe's classic 1719 tale of survival on an uninhabited island, serves as both template and inspiration to Alex, the hero of *The Island on Bird Street*, Orlev's best-known text. The novel is a particularly original variation of the Robinsonade, the literary genre of homages to and imitations of Defoe's novel. Maria Nikolajeva demonstrates that the Robinsonade form has prompted a long line of children's books that bend the norms of Defoe's prototype (95-103, 130). *The Island on Bird Street* follows suit by transplanting the genre to a depopulated urban "island" as the Warsaw Ghetto is cut off from the rest of the city. Whole blocks are deserted once their residents are exterminated. Alex, a boy of eleven, is left alone in the ghetto after his father goes on a hunt for provisions and fails to return. With his pet mouse Snow as his sole companion, Alex learns to provide for and defend himself in conditions of extreme peril.

Taking Crusoe as his role model, Alex hones his aptitude for practical resourcefulness by acquiring a host of necessary survival skills, some of which are described in extensive detail, such as how to find food, clothing, fuel, shelter, and defense. Alongside his constant search for physical nourishment, Alex forages for literary sustenance. "I knew exactly what to look for: candles and food. That was all I needed. Except for a good book, if I found one," he says (48). A prize discovery, naturally, is *Robinson Crusoe*, which inspires Alex to reflect that he lives in the ghetto "as though I were living on a desert island" (87), where "he must survive by himself

for many months, taking what he needs from other houses the way Robinson Crusoe took what he needed from the wreck" (xi). Like Crusoe, Alex evolves into a self-reliant and capable survivor. "How had I been any different from Robinson Crusoe?" he asks (104).

Some parallels are exceedingly specific. For instance, Alex follows Crusoe's example by tracking time and keeping a journal. "I counted the days. I marked them off the wall with a piece of coal," he says, but all he ever writes in his journal is one sentence emblematic of his misery: "I'm getting hungry" (50). As the war drags on and Alex's suffering grows more acute, he comes to recognize the difference between fiction and reality: "I realized now that real wars weren't like the ones in adventure books where children fought like heroes at the grownups' sides," he states (102). Plunging a child into the adult arena of war exposes the limitations of adventure literature; children should not actually be battling for their lives alongside adults. Although Alex draws on *Robinson Crusoe* to survive, he eventually discards the Crusoe myth as too fictional.

In transposing Crusoe from the genre of adventure story to the sphere of lived experience, The Island on Bird Street revises some of the more egregious aspects of Defoe's novel.

In transposing Crusoe from the genre of adventure story to the sphere of lived experience, *The Island on Bird Street* revises some of the more egregious aspects of Defoe's novel. For example, instead of relating a Christian morality tale of the prodigal son who spurns his father's advice and earns perdition as a castaway for the sin of forsaking his home, the young protagonist of Orlev's novel dutifully awaits his father's return and is rewarded for his faithful patience at the end of the text. Likewise, rather than lord over a Black slave such as Crusoe's man Friday in a replication of British eighteenth-century race relations, Alex, the Jewish boy hunted by racially motivated Nazi killers, chooses to protect, rather than hurt, runaway boys whom he meets and likens to the "savages" shot by Crusoe.

Playing War

Orlev's novel suggests a correlation between play and narrative. "When I couldn't read, I'd play," Alex says (9), as if play and story were a binary pair. Elsewhere, the text compares the intensity of play to the ferocity of war: observing two men engrossed in a bitterly contested chess match, Alex says, "You'd think it was a war and not just some game" (11). The novel further thematizes the relationship between play and war in its description of children's play: children in the ghetto "play hide-and-seek and all kinds of 'secret' war games" (26). Outside the ghetto, Polish children "play Germans and Poles" and engage in "a real snow war" (133). Alex's bunker on Bird Street is not only an ideal place to hide, "there wasn't a better place to play anywhere" (133). Orlev's evocation of life in the ghetto as an adventure lifted from the pages of children's books has its analogue in children's games that reenact historic events of dire sorrow.

Narrative and play serve a common purpose for inquisitive children confronting conditions of extreme adversity: both convert unimaginable trauma into direct, personal experience. "Even in that hell, children played," Orlev says. Just as Alex searches for books to consume together with food, Orlev asserts, "My need to play was like hunger, just as intense. I will play under any conditions" (qtd. in Semel 20). Story and play furnish children who are enduring violent events with a means of preserving their youthful curiosity and creativity even in abject circumstances hostile to childhood.

In Orlev's case, the confluence of play and adventure helps him survive. Writing in *The Sandgame*, Orlev endows adventure with salvific properties: "I talk about adventures because that's how it seemed to me: I thought of myself as the hero of a thriller who had to survive until the happy ending on the book's last page, no matter who else was killed in it, because he was the main character" (33). In his account, the narrative structure of adventure tales made his actual survival a matter of personal destiny; accordingly, it is the only way in which he knows how to speak of his experience. The improbable excesses of adventure make Orlev's incredible story of surviving the Holocaust as a child seem credible and real.

Perhaps Orlev is right. Maybe there is no "grown-up way" to talk about what happens to children amid the horror of indiscriminate armed conflict. The only accurate way to depict such events is in the language of children, which is to say, through the fanciful vocabulary of adventure and narrative play. Play and war merge here into a single idiom that elides all difference between the destructive reality of conflict and the fantasies of traumatized children. For Orlev, that conflation saved his life, as the climactic scene of *The Sandgame* suggests. Throughout *The Sandgame*, the young author and his brother spend many days engrossed in increasingly elaborate war games in which they deploy vast battalions of toy soldiers across their secret hiding places. Orlev recalls, "We fought with toy soldiers, chess pieces, and huge stacks of playing cards that I had brought back from various apartments" (31). They play their way through war while the world outside the walls of their hidden shelters collapses into chaos and murder. "During the six years of the real war we fought our own imaginary one (30-31)," Orlev says. "I was Tarzan, Commander of the World, and my brother was either my chief enemy, if we were at war, or the friendly head of the neighboring country, if we were at peace" (30).

Perhaps Orlev is right. Maybe there is no "grown-up way" to talk about what happens to children amid the horror of indiscriminate armed conflict. The only accurate way to depict such events is in the language of children, which is to say, through the fanciful vocabulary of adventure and narrative play.

Eventually, the boys' play war and the external adult real war collide. One day, during a particularly extensive engagement of imaginary warfare so intense that the protagonist and his brother forget to guard the entrance to their secret shelter from the real war that lies beyond it, a plainclothes police officer steals upon the door to their hideout.

Panicked, the boys stop their play; they assume that their long-running game of hiding from the authorities is finally over, ended by a fit of playful enthusiasm that distracted them from the actual perils of war in favor of their playful pursuit of pretend war. "Maybe we had made too much noise playing war" (36), the narrator muses, suspecting that their games have finally betrayed them. But in this dynamic and complex environment of confused adult and juvenile games of war, the boys are not the only ones who play at conflict. "The plainclothesman made his way carefully through the regiments of wooden and paper soldiers on the floor" and begins to interrogate the boys. But to their disbelief, the boys' play saves them. The policeman, disguised as if pretending to be a noncombatant, is felicitously charmed by the imaginary war of these hidden Jewish boys pretending to be military commanders. He decides not to make them casualties of the actual war. "Don't worry boys. It will be alright," he says. "Just playing war, eh?" he asks and, miraculously, exits (36).

The episode is baffling. Did the officer's assumption that games are tantamount to leisure fool him into thinking that children at play cannot possibly be children at war, and therefore, these boys were not the intended targets of a genocidal campaign? Or did the evocative array of toy armies and paper soldiers strewn across the floor give the policeman occasion to think about the flimsiness of his own role in acting out the war plans of his superiors? One cannot know. Only through the lens of a game, Orlev insinuates, does this bizarre episode come into focus. For the story testifies to the life-sustaining powers of play and narrative even in the midst of a blood-soaked campaign of genocidal savagery.

War may be the deadliest game of all, but children's play and children's stories can, on rare occasion, combine to preserve a young person's life.

War may be the deadliest game of all, but children's play and children's stories can, on rare occasion, combine to preserve a young person's life. Even when not marked by such high drama, stories of wartime play suggest the possibility of dignity, survival, and remembrance to children buffeted by the horror and distress of armed conflict. To be a child is to play, and to play is to generate story; this does not change during periods of war. When violent conflict strips children of their right to play or read, young people innovate new opportunities for narrative play even in the darkest recesses of human behavior, even if their stories and games are pushed to secret attics above a bombed-out building or to the pages of a children's book about the most harrowing experiences a child or anyone can imagine. Even in moments of historic agony, stories and play persist.

Even in moments of historic agony, stories and play persist.

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The Giving Trees: Elsa Beskow, Ecocriticism, and the Benevolent Forest

by RACHEL SAKRISSON

Rachel Sakrisson analyzes three picturebooks by beloved Swedish author Elsa Beskow, which present an alternative form of environmental activism. Sakrisson argues that Beskow's picturebooks, written prior to the rise of modern conservationism, promote a more accessible forest space than is typically encountered in children's literature.

"The trees were so pretty! And as he went deeper into the forest, they looked even more wonderful. It was like going into an enchanted palace."

Elsa Beskow, *Ollie's Ski Trip* (1907)

Although a number of ecocritical studies have analyzed the forest space within children's literature—most prominently in Sid Dobrin and Kenneth Kidd's *Wild Things: Children's Culture and Ecocriticism*—few have explored the dangers of dominance by a malevolent portrayal of the forest. As Dobrin and Kidd explain, "Children are naturally close to nature" and are the most willing to "be educated into a deeper—or at least different—awareness" of nature's realities, but saturating children's culture with forest spaces that discourage exploration can hinder environmental education (7). The presentation of the forest as dark and dangerous in Helge Kjellin's 1913 Swedish fairy tale "Sagan om älgtjuren Skutt och lilla prinsessan Tuvstarr" ("Leap the Elk and Little Princess Cottongrass") is certainly not a singular instance of the malevolent forest in children's literature. The forests in Tove Jansson's *Småtrollen och den stora översvämningen* (*The Moomins and the Great Flood*) and the Forbidden Forest in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series are just two examples of the malevolent forest that threatens not only the characters in these stories but also any effort to encourage environmental awareness.

The forests in Tove Jansson's Småtrollen och den stora översvämningen (The Moomins and the Great Flood) and the Forbidden Forest in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series are just two examples of the malevolent forest that threatens not only the characters in these stories but also any effort to encourage environmental awareness.

Consciously encouraging environmental activism in children's literature, as seen in Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* (1971),

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is a necessary means of promoting environmental awareness but is often limited in scope. Such efforts address not the prevailing attitude of culture but rather specific problems such as deforestation, pollution, and extinction. For example, *The Lorax* introduces children to a broken, postindustrial forest, without solving the root problem of environmental mismanagement—that is, apathy caused by inexperience with an intact natural space. In addition to such apocalyptic portrayals, authors should present children with ecological perspectives that avoid predisposing them to fear nature and instead provide tools for environmental advocacy from a young age.

The picturebooks *Puttes äventyr i blåbärsskogen* (*Peter in Blueberry Land*; 1901), *Olles skidfärd* (*Ollie's Ski Trip*; 1907), and *Tomtebobarnen* (*Children of the Forest*; 1910) by beloved Swedish author Elsa Beskow present an alternative form of environmental activism. Written prior to the rise of modern conservationism, Beskow's picturebooks promote a more accessible forest space than is typically encountered in children's literature. Like other Scandinavian works, such as Selma Lagerlof's *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* (1906), the majority of Beskow's children's books deal with humans' cohabitation with the natural environment and the seasonal patterns of a Swedish climate characterized by long winters and short springs and summers. And while Beskow introduces children to the natural world through the voices of personified plants (like her British contemporary Beatrix Potter), Beskow's benevolent forest is a departure from the norm. It neither presents an excessively domesticated space conquered by humans, as largely seen in British literature, nor exhibits the excessive danger that characterizes the wild, humanly uninhabited American forest.

Beskow's familiarity with the densely forested landscape of Sweden, where the majority of the country's population lived in the early twentieth century, may explain her largely consistent portrayal of a benevolent forest. Even so, her forest combats a "shallow approach" toward environmentalism (which depends on the isolation of nature from humanity) and aligns with "deep ecology," a concept popularized by Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss in the 1970s ("Deep" 193). Deep ecology denies both severe ecocentrism and excessive anthropocentricism and instead advocates for a middle ground, recognizing that "human and non-human life have value in themselves" and permitting consumption of natural products for "vital needs" (196-98). Næss's ecophilosophy provides a helpful framework for understanding Beskow's picturebooks as a challenge to the malevolent forest. Her forest is not an "other" preserved though isolation; it is a secure, welcoming space that exists in close proximity to human civilization without compromising its identity. This accessibility enables the repeated traversing of the boundary between nature and civilization by its most curious ambassador, the child.

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Environmental Exploration in Peter in Blueberry Land

Peter in Blueberry Land (1901) provides the clearest model for childhood exploration of natural spaces. In the first illustration, Peter, depicted as a lonely figure in a deserted forest, tries and fails to find berries for his mother's birthday (figure 1). A tearful Peter is approached by the "no bigger than an apple" King of Blueberry Land, who promises to reveal where the blueberries grow.[1] This proposed expedition cannot occur, however, until the King of Blueberry Land "[taps Peter] lightly on the toe with his tiny blue wand," shrinking Peter to the proper diminutive size for encountering the true forest. Peter's transformation demands the "modest" attitude of Næss's deep ecology. Næss explains that "the smaller we come to feel ourselves compared with the mountain [or, in this case, the forest], the nearer we come to participating in its greatness" ("Modesty" 367). Peter's literal diminution allows him to understand his participation in the natural community.

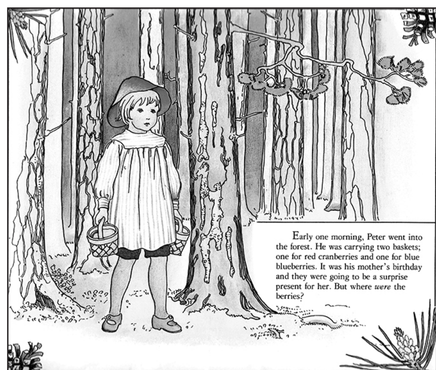

Figure 1

Before Peter's transformation, the anthropocentrism encouraged by dwelling exclusively in civilization obscures the true state of the forest. Peter cannot find the berries because the division between nature and civilization has impeded the transfer of ecological knowledge to children, but the joint venture with the Blueberry King brings increased clarity. The forest is no longer an uninhabited, fruitless space; it is a benevolent, wondrous place that inspires awe at "how different and interesting it all looked." Even the spider, often typecast as an antagonist, offers Peter a friendly welcome. Providing nature with a voice allows it to advocate for itself, so customarily malevolent creatures, such as the spider who "tried to look friendly," can now be represented without external bias.

This paradigm shift primes Peter for the next step in his adventure: encountering the everyday inhabitants of Blueberry Land. Peter's seamless assimilation into the Blueberry Land society indicates that his new environment is not unfamiliar. Without formal introduction to Peter, the cranberry girls welcome him by name, indicating a near preternatural connection. Layla AbdelRahim's argument in *Children's Literature, Domestication, and Social Foundation* (2015), that "the essence of humanity [is] linked horizontally to the origins of nonhumans" (165), clarifies the connection between Blueberry Land and Peter; their common origin has ensured the innate communication between humans and nature. Even Peter's clothing implies his dual citizenship in both the forest and civilization. Though his wardrobe originated in human society, his blue and white smock and red hat correspond so well with the clothing of the forest children that he visually and socially assimilates (figure 2). No longer is Peter a lonely and looming figure in a deserted forest. Clothing and equal stature indicate

Figure 2

his claim of forest citizenship existed even when he was unaware of the forest's true nature.

Peter's original task—picking berries for his mother—is not lost in the playful atmosphere of Blueberry Land. Much as Næss stresses that "it is only through work, play, and understanding that a deep and enduring identification can develop" with natural spaces (*Ecology* 176), Beskow's story notably prioritizes play. Peter becomes so engrossed in the play of Blueberry Land that "he [forgets] all about berry-picking," until his playmates remind him about the demands of the outside world. Peter can realize his goal only through the "joint venture" of human and natural forces, as emphasized by Næss ("Should" 137). Due to its fundamental connection to the human child, the forest is unwilling to damage Peter's relationship with the outside world. It recognizes the responsibilities of its own sphere and human civilization, as the equality between the children of the forest and the children of civilization makes the concerns of both spheres equally significant.

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Peter eventually leaves Blueberry Land because the border between humans and nature, though now bridged by a child ambassador, still exists. Indeed, the King of Blueberry Land notes the passage of time with the comment, "It's getting late and your mother will be worried." Peter's departure from Blueberry Land is marked by a sense of temporary amnesia: "I must have been dreaming." This sense of amnesia is confirmed by Peter's stupefied gaze, which penetrates the reader (figure 3). Any doubts about the veracity of this experience are put to rest by the "two baskets, both neatly filled; one with cranberries and one with blueberries" sitting by his feet. By taking only two baskets of berries, Peter is fully prepared to enact Næss's ecophilosophical dictum of "friluftsliv"—a Norwegian word closely aligned to Næss's emphasis on "tread[ing] lightly in nature" (*Ecology* 178). Consequently, Peter has learned to avoid the exploitation of nature and has received lasting kinship with the benevolent forest, confirmed by the inclusion of his newfound friends in the corners of the final illustration (figure 3).

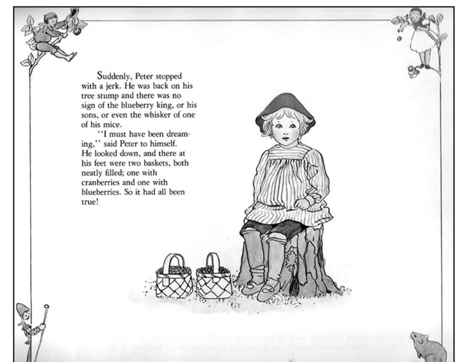

Figure 3

Benevolence and Independence in *Ollie's Ski Trip*

Beskow's later book, *Ollie's Ski Trip* (1907), ensures that readers recognize the independence as well as the benevolence of the forest. Unlike the circular narrative of *Peter in Blueberry Land*, which begins and ends in the same secluded setting, *Ollie's Ski Trip* progresses from a definitive time and place, a twentieth-century Swedish household (figure 4), to a timeless magical forest. While Beskow worked in a specific historical context with which she was intimately familiar, she crafted a work that largely succeeds in transcending the vicissitudes of history and convention. Ollie's eagerness to enter the forest, demonstrated when he flips "head over heels three times on his bed without stopping" when allowed to venture outdoors,

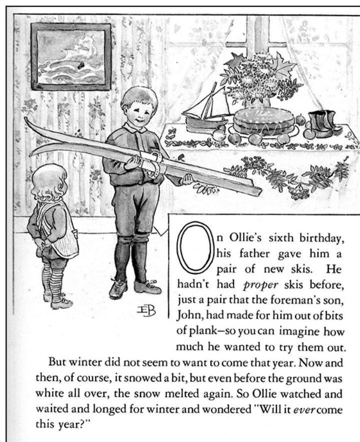

Figure 4

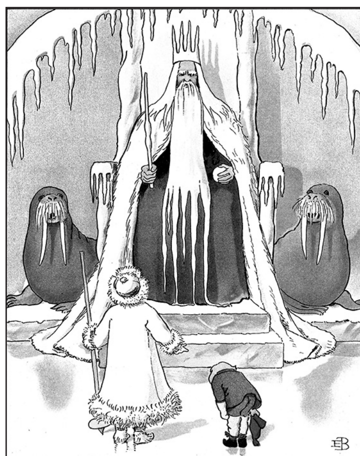

Figure 5

Figure 6

marks the child's claim on natural experiences.

Though Ollie initiates a relationship with the forest when he summons Jack Frost by exclaiming, "Thank you, King Winter. I'm so glad you came!," Ollie's relative powerlessness in the winter kingdom again emphasizes a modest approach to nature. Rather than dwarfing nature as Peter initially does in *Peter in Blueberry Land*, Ollie is dwarfed by the powerful King Winter. Beskow's illustrations of Ollie repeatedly emphasize Ollie's short stature in comparison to the grand forces of nature, such as King Winter and Mrs. Thaw (figures 5 and 6). This visual contrast prevents the sort of excessive romanticization that engenders environmental exploitation by mistaking ecological altruism for weakness.

By highlighting the greatness of nature, Beskow allows it to regain some of its agency and show Ollie that the powers of humans are matched by the power of nature.[2] For example, Ollie is reverently fearful of King Winter. When confronted with the authority figure over the entire forest, "for the first time, Ollie shivered and felt a little afraid." Greg Garrard, a leading contemporary scholar in the field of ecocriticism, explains that such awe is necessary for ecological education; nature must be "admired for its vastness and overwhelming power" or else understanding is lost (71). However, a deep ecological reading of the text demands that the equality of humans and nature must be understood and maintained. Despite the near-deistic power of nature in *Ollie's Ski Trip*, the child is welcomed into the very center of the benevolent forest because his connection to nature grants him the right to enter. The polar bear guards do not bar Ollie from King Winter's palace. Rather, he is unquestionably accepted; they merely "sniff… at Jack Frost [and Ollie] like friendly dogs as he and Ollie [walk] through the gateway." The forest, though looming and powerful, retains an inherent benevolence. Ollie is met with the benevolent smile of King Winter's approval through "eyes [that] gleamed like the Northern Lights." Peter's entrance into King Winter's sphere essentially reconciles the conventionally opposed spheres of nature and civilization.

The border between forest and human society is now effectively blurred. The wintry forest is not an "other"—a space impenetrable by humanity—but rather a familiar extension of Ollie's own environment. When he enters the domain of King Winter, Ollie discovers the forces behind weather: King Winter, Jack Frost, and Mrs. Thaw. King Winter, who holds an icicle as his scepter and a snowball as his globus cruciger, is the creator of winter's splendor. Jack Frost maintains the frost and Mrs. Thaw, "Winter's cleaning lady," melts the snow in preparation for spring. After leaving the forest, Ollie invites his brother on his ramblings through nature and shares his ecological education, ensuring that his brother also encounters nature with the proper modest attitude. Marah Gubar's "kinship model," which claims that children

(like adults) are “social actors” (300), offers a useful analytical framework in this case. Through the lens of the kinship model, Ollie’s initiative action can be viewed as a form of performative agency, a type of social and environmental activism typically reserved for adults.

Imparting ecological knowledge is the first step to unlearning what John McKenzie describes as the “binary opposition of nature versus civilization [that] is deeply ingrained in Western consciousness” (75). Beskow’s benevolent forest offers an alternative to the prevailing malevolent forest; it presents a place where humanity, vegetation, and animal life can frequently intertwine while neither compromising distinct identities nor delineating borders. Rochelle Wright observes a “limited but recurring set of nature images” in Swedish filmography, such as “rolling hillsides, birch trees blowing in the breeze, isolated lakes…comprise a common visual vocabulary, a kind of shorthand that the Swedish audience recognizes” (461). This similarly applies to the landscapes of *Peter in Blueberry Land* and *Ollie’s Ski Trip*; however, the development of understanding at the level of childhood, “standard or shared” among all people, according to Gubar (300), presents an opportunity for all children, whether Swedish or not, to become successful environmental educators for their peers.

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The Danger of Ecological Isolationism in *Children of the Forest*

The lack of healthy symbiosis between children and nature in Beskow’s *Children of the Forest* (1910) appears to contradict Beskow’s benevolent forest in *Peter in Blueberry Land* and *Ollie’s Ski Trip*. However, *Children of the Forest* can be seen as a warning to readers who adhere to a malevolent image of the forest. Garrard appropriately highlights the danger of believing “that nature is only authentic if we are entirely absent from it” (77). Here, the natural world and civilization have limited contact with each other because no human character disturbs the anthropomorphized forest creatures that live hidden “deep in the forest, under the curling roots of an old pine tree.” Instead, humans enter this forest only to perform destructive acts, fueled by desire to conquer their fear of the unknown. The lack of symbiosis between humans, living creatures, and fauna has created the dissonance the Western reader often encounters in literary forest settings. The hunted forest naturally responds to its human predators with fear. The forest children are taught by Mrs. Owl “to keep well-hidden from humans and to be wary of all hunting animals,” as humanity has become a predator from which the forest children must hide their true selves. Figure 7 reinforces this theme of learned self-preservation, depicting the forest creatures’ meeting in a place hidden high in the protection of the trees. As a result,

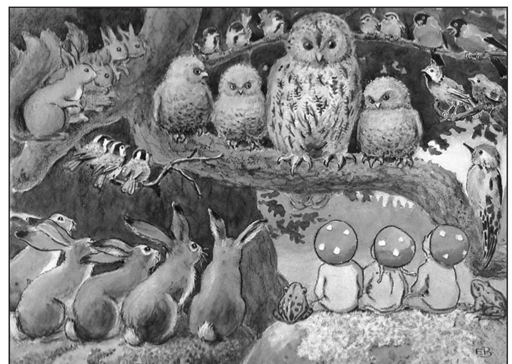

Figure 7

the child-nature relationship has disintegrated because mutual fear of the unknown hinders free interaction.

Dysfunctional interactions within the forest community of *Children of the Forest* are a microcosm of the greater dissonance between humanity and nature. The forest, says Timothy Clark in *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment*, is "an opaque mirror of the civilization that exists in relation to [nature]" and is thus directly impacted by human behaviors and attitudes (62). To protect his family, the father in *Children of the Forest* must slay Vara the Viper, who "once [laid] in wait for the children as they played under the pine tree." The children's lack of concern about their morbid task—they are depicted carrying the snake and calmly asking, "Where shall we bury him?"—implies that contact with death has become habitual (figure 8). Just as mutual fear of the unknown has hindered the free interaction between humanity and nature, relationships within the forest have become fragmented.

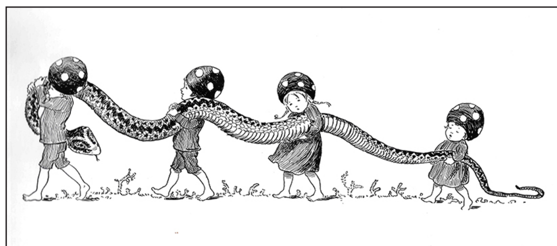

Figure 8

The consequences of human isolationism are similarly illustrated in Beskow's short tale "När trollmor skötte kungens storbyk" ("When Mother Troll Took in the King's Washing"), originally published in the fairy tale annual *Bland tomtar och troll* (*Among Gnomes and Trolls*). In children's literature, destructive human domination of the environment is nearly always the result of misunderstanding. Næss explains that "to 'only look at' nature is extremely peculiar behavior" as only "by doing something in it, by living in it, mediating and acting" can it truly be understood (*Ecology* 63). In Beskow's fairy tale, the trolls of the Great Forest have retreated deeper into its recesses; their life has become "unpleasant for men were intruding on them more and more," resulting in food shortages and a decline in their population (7). The trolls' suffering remains unacknowledged until contact with humans resumes with the kidnapping of the human girl Inga. Though against her will, Inga traverses the barrier between civilization and the forest, an experience that ultimately allows her to gain compassion and to hope "that [the trolls'] life was not too hard" (18). Her abduction by the stereotypically ill-behaved trolls forces humanity to once again live in nature while also enabling the trolls to reveal their troubles.

the juxtaposition of harmony in Peter in Blueberry Land and Ollie's Ski Trip with the disharmony of Children of the Forest reveals that the forest is best understood when humanity is exposed to it.

Likewise, the forest in *Children of the Forest* expresses hope that a child-nature relationship can reemerge and the malevolent view of the forest can be resolved. The parting sentiment of the story leaves the undertaking of this endeavor in the reader's hands: "A new year was beginning in the forest and this is where we must leave the children. But if you like, think about them and their forest friends, and that way their story will never end." Even though this forest reflects Næss's claim that nature can be "independent of any usefulness to humans"

(Glasser 60), the juxtaposition of harmony in *Peter in Blueberry Land* and *Ollie's Ski Trip* with the disharmony of *Children of the Forest* reveals that the forest is best understood when humanity is exposed to it.

The Ecological Implications of the Benevolent Forest

Despite being published in the early twentieth century, Beskow's *Peter in Blueberry Land*, *Ollie's Ski Trip*, and even *Children of the Forest* transcend time and introduce today's child reader to a balanced, benevolent forest where humans and nature coexist, providing a model for how such an egalitarian relationship can persist into adulthood. Just as Gubar's kinship model "nudges us to embrace an even more interdisciplinary future" in children's studies (302), modern Western readers would do well to remember and reembrace the potential usefulness of the environmental perspectives of past readers. Lawrence Buell, in his contribution on children's literature to *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism*, explains that modern isolation from nature harms society because it causes a "'nature-deficit disorder,' or malformation of adult identity arising from limitation of children's… exploration of wild places" (16). Similarly, Næss's deep ecology requires childhood, and perhaps childlike, experiences of nature as it claims that "from early childhood we need to have access to areas of nature not completely dominated by human activity" ("Arne" 111). Without depictions of modest and childlike approaches to nature, such as those depicted by Beskow, children will not be encouraged to explore and learn about nature of their own volition.

Failure to question the dominance of the malevolent forest within children's literature only hinders efforts to create the positive ecological attitude necessary for our commitment to the environment. If children never enter nature, a sphere intrinsically connected to the childhood self, then, as Dobrin and Kidd argue, "they may never achieve the familiarity with nature that is vital to environmental planning and activism" (7). When even an ecocritical luminary such as Bruno Latour contends that "things have become so urgent and so violent [in nature] that the somewhat pacific project of a contract between parties seems unreachable" (6), works like Beskow's offer a particularly crucial intervention via children who still have the potential for utopian thinking. Through repeated exposure to positive (or at least neutral) images of the natural environment, children can convert their affinity for nature into a healthy and hopeful ecological attitude as adults. An increased consideration of a benevolent forest like the one in Beskow's picturebooks would promote ecocritical efforts to prevent human dominance of nature and encourage a genuine love for the environment.

Through repeated exposure to positive (or at least neutral) images of the natural environment, children can convert their affinity for nature into a healthy and hopeful ecological attitude as adults.

Author's Note

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Notes

1. The Floris book translations of Beskow's texts have been used as the primary source material since they are the most physically accessible English translations. These translated versions do not include page numbers. All quotes without explicit citations are from the Beskow book identified in the section.
2. Ollie's exposure to the power of nature obviously has strong parallels to Kai's experiences in Hans Christian Andersen's "The Snow Queen." A key difference between these texts, however, is their contrasting tones in relation to the environment. Beskow employs a light-hearted treatment of the interactions between humans and weather, whereas Andersen uses a serious tone.

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Othering Authors in the Name of Authenticity:
Critiquing Colonialism with *The Arab of the Future*

by MARK D. MCCARTHY

Mark D. McCarthy argues that the genre of graphic memoir troublingly lends itself to an affirmation of the West while audiences make this affirmation invisible by naming the authors Other. He asserts that when authors are "inside" another culture and their text aligns with Western values, the West and its worldview are affirmed from outside.

Graphic memoirs about childhoods in the Middle East, often considered authentic, can serve to affirm the West. I focus on *The Arab of the Future* by Riad Sattouf to assert that the presence of negative portrayals of characters makes visible white supremacist ideologies, ultimately driving audiences—particularly selectors of texts for children—to reject this story more than the others. However, Sattouf's work has potential for critiquing the contemporary complexities of the legacy of settler colonialism. I use this article to explore the issue of how Western (white settler) audiences use and come to accept narratives of the culturally—and geographically—distant Other: selecting books written by authors from a range of cultural backgrounds, but labeling an author "insider" and maintaining binary categorizations derived from Othering. When authors are "inside" another culture and their text aligns with Western values, the West and its worldview are affirmed from outside.

Introduction

Since 2000, a few popular graphic memoirs about childhoods in the Middle East, translated from French, have been published in the United States: Marjene Satrapi's *Persepolis* recounts her rebellious youth in Tehran during the Islamic Revolution; Zeina Abirached's *Jeu des Hirondelles* (*A Game for Swallows*) relates the stresses of a community living through the Lebanese Civil War; and Riad Sattouf retells his transient years following his father from France to Libya and Syria in the time of Pompidou, Gaddafi, and Hafez al-Assad in *The Arab of the Future*. Although these stories are perhaps more different than they are the same, in common they represent the Middle East and Middle Eastern characters to a Western audience from the perspective of an *insider-author* who left the Middle East for the

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West; they might all be described as authentic.

These graphic novels were contemporaneous with Muslim outrage at cartoon depictions of the prophet Muhammed (Peace Be Upon Him—PBUH), highly publicized provocations that led to protests and attacks in Denmark and across Europe in early 2006, including France, where these graphic memoirs were first published. The satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*—where Sattouf was once a cartoonist—was later targeted in well-known attacks in November 2011 and January 2015, and yet again just recently. In this context, the graphic novel becomes a symbol of free speech and artistic expression—values associated with Western democracies—contrasted with the censorship-by-violence of the Othered Muslim extremist.

Western (white settler) acceptance of a narrative, in this context, perpetuates the us/them dichotomy by absorbing the author into the West as an accepted Other. While stories of and by the Other(ed) may intend to shift Western readers away from exclusionary primary group identification, my/our/your/their[1] desire to understand the Other on specific terms remains problematic. For example, while I/we/you/they may accept Muslim author-illustrators, many Western readers did not come to respect the Muslim desire to omit Muhammed (PBUH) from graphic representations.

Western (white settler) acceptance of a narrative, in this context, perpetuates the us/them dichotomy by absorbing the author into the West as an accepted Other.

Broadly, I argue that this genre—the graphic memoir—troublingly lends itself to an affirmation of the West, while audiences make this affirmation invisible by naming the authors Other. Here I focus on *The Arab of the Future* to assert that the presence of negative portrayals of characters makes visible white supremacist ideologies, ultimately driving audiences—particularly selectors of texts for children—to reject this story more than the others. However, I believe Sattouf's work has the greatest potential for critiquing the contemporary complexities of the legacy of settler colonialism. I will continue to name "white settler" in reference to how this legacy continues to shape how I/we/you/they view the world.

I enter into this dialogue with respect for the #OwnVoices movement. I recently heard the distinction that texts should be not just about representation, but a political stance and message. To truly empower storytellers, I/we/you/they might do well to deeply examine the role of the adult consumer/selector of these narratives to understand better how that political message gets taken up in public discourse by dominant groups. I ask, do I/we/you/they truly move away from the desire for representation into the political stance that underrepresented authors take, especially when this stance is unpopular, disagreeable, or challenging?

Issue, Purpose, and Methods

I use this article to explore the issue of how Western (white settler) audiences use and come to accept narratives of the culturally and geographically distant Other. I use "white settler" throughout this article to broadly refer to a mindset influenced by a cultural position built upon a legacy of

colonialism and White supremacy, which may not be actively endorsed but certainly resonates through generations and thought. Readers (including students) should access stories told by members of a variety of cultural groups and should have access to stories by and about identities and communities with which they associate—narratives are powerful. Here, I raise my concern about what is possible if a Western (white settler) audience is not cautious about my/our/your/their desire for the Othered author.

In seeking out authentic stories to bolster representation on Western bookshelves and reading lists, I/we/you/they must be cautious of the colonialist tendencies that can accompany this pursuit despite its noble intentions.

In seeking out authentic stories to bolster representation on Western bookshelves and reading lists, I/we/you/they must be cautious of the colonialist tendencies that can accompany this pursuit despite its noble intentions. First, seeking out these books may be an example of what Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang call *external colonialism* that feeds the appetites of the colonizers. My/our/your/their appetite, I believe, could be understood as a *move to innocence*, according to Janet Mawhinney, or one of "those strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all" (Tuck and Yang 10). I wonder, are these books, to adapt Tuck and Yang's thinking, serving "to allow *conscientization* to stand in for the more uncomfortable task" (19) of shifting from reconciliation to incommensurability? In other words, is reader consumption of the Other in narrative leading to knowing *of/about* as opposed to more meaningful action or more insightful considerations or knowing *with*?

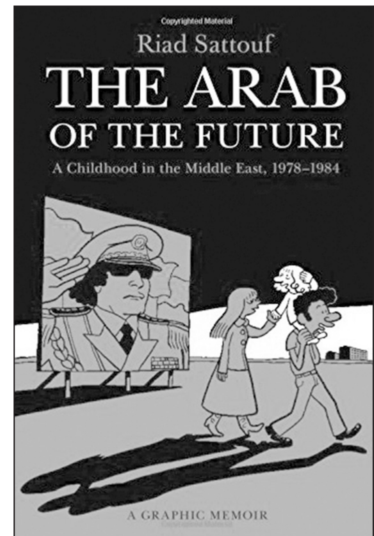
Further, in seeking to know of/about, I/we/you/they desire representation and risk valuing these works exclusively through the White gaze: a filtering of experience, discourse, knowledge, values through a dominant lens, which Toni Morrison elaborates by noting it is "as though our lives have no meaning and no depth without the White gaze" (qtd. in Paris 218). As Eboo Patel describes: "Every society has dominant groups that, either overtly or unconsciously, organizes the patterns of life around their preferences." The framing of characters as Other and naming books "diverse" to justify their "inclusion" on reading lists and in curricula parallels what Paris calls out in another field: "educational researchers name people and communities not as they are but as the academy needs them to be along damaging logics of erasure and deficiency" (217). He also notes: "'Diversity' and 'inclusion' may be the subtlest, and so in some ways the most dangerous, in their centering of whiteness" (219). I suggest that I/we/you/they too often name within the white settler colonial gaze.

This study emerges from my work as an instructor of a children's literature course for mostly white, female, undergraduate education majors—a demographic I define as a subset of a Western white settler audience. I used Clare Bradford's critical content analysis to contextualize and consider *The Arab of the Future* in relation to the notions of insider-author, positive representation, and upholding the West. I selected this graphic memoir as

a course text, reading it before the fall 2015 semester. My initial reading was personal, but I was deeply engaged pedagogically, considering what content, contexts, and perspectives were made available. Specifically, the settings—France, Libya, and Syria—stood out to me as ways to connect literature to global events. I considered how progress was entangled with Eurocentrism and settler colonialism, and referred to book reviews (by Nader Atassi, Leila Lalami, and Adam Schatz) to understand wider social response as represented in mainstream media—and I considered this reaction through a lens of critical whiteness.

The Case

Evidence from my teaching and the broader response to *The Arab of the Future* suggests it is less readily accepted by a settler audience—*Persepolis* continues to be a common recommendation among teacher candidates. I believe this dismissal or rejection has to do with the bigotry expressed by Riad's father, Abdul, the primary Arab character in the story. As a result, I find this case to be both intrinsic and instrumental—using Robert Stake's method of case study—in understanding how Western (white settler) audiences might problematically come to accept the narrative of the Other in addition to literary merit (if such a thing can be defined): namely, by labeling the author Other to feel less complicit in bigotry, and to have their Western perspective validated from the perspective of the Other.



Sattouf is inside multiple cultures by virtue of birth, and therefore might also be outside each of them. His ability to both claim and distance himself from his Arab identity muddies the waters for determining his insider-ness. Sattouf is an *insider* based on his paternal lineage, and is therefore allowed to write about the Other because the Western (white settler) audience can view him as "Other." But he is also French and he holds Western values. Most importantly, Sattouf resists cultural and national labels in referring to himself (Schatz). He does not name himself or his community, so the naming is applied from without—as Paris put it, I/we/you/they call him out his name.

I/we/you/they might use graphic memoirs, or multicultural texts more broadly, to know about or of an unfamiliar culture, country, or people. As a result, these narratives can become a mechanism for transformation.

My/our/your/their desire for the *insider-author* to represent a culture to be consumed for my/our/your/their transformation places at least two obligations upon the author: that stories pose little challenge to the powerful position of the West, and that representations of a culture are positive. In large part, these characteristics of the stories are inevitable: the authors often leave their culture and embrace the West, where they are then published, and regardless of their feelings about the culture they left, they must embrace the liberal Western value of not presenting offensive images, or *political correctness*—defined as "characterised by the advocacy of approved views and the rejection of language and behaviour considered discriminatory or offensive" (Knowles and Elliott). Offensiveness is taboo

even when it represents the author's truth.

However, these narrative obligations also serve a broader function as *moves to innocence* (Mawhinney), which allow the audience to avoid feeling bigoted or complicit. The continued perception of oppression as interpersonal—as opposed to systemic or structural—allows readers to assert their innocence through their reading of diverse books. However, I/we/you/they so badly wish to avoid confronting the systems of oppression in which they are complicit that they reject those narratives that truly challenge them to confront the "uncomfortable tasks."

However, these narrative obligations also serve a broader function as moves to innocence (Mawhinney), which allow the audience to avoid feeling bigoted or complicit.

If Sattouf is inside another culture, readers can view his representations as accurate, leading to two issues. First, I/we/you/they can feel, momentarily perhaps, discomfort as they are confronted with Abdul's racism, a characteristic of whiteness is to shut down or become defensive in this situation (for example, see Matias). However, Abdul's racism creates an opportunity for a move to innocence. Mawhinney explains this notion using an example: "The rush to the margins is expressed in the simple bipolar assumption that 'if I am a victim/oppressed, I am innocent'" (109), which assumes "*there is only one axis of power and therefore only two fixed subject positions to occupy*" (111). I argue the rush to nonracism is a similar move, wherein the bipolar axis is created from the assumption that "if I am not spouting slurs, I am innocent." My/our/your/their response to the text might then reaffirm perceived innocence, but in doing so will categorize this narrative as morally wrong, never having to confront the text from another subject position.

Second, from a White gaze vantage point, Sattouf's Western-ness is invisible while reinforcing a Western perspective of the world and the Other. Once readers have named authors "insiders," I/we/you/they use that status to validate the Western ideologies to which these authors and texts conform. I/we/you/they will observe the Other affirming the "truth" they already have come to know: that my/our/your/their privilege is real and justified.

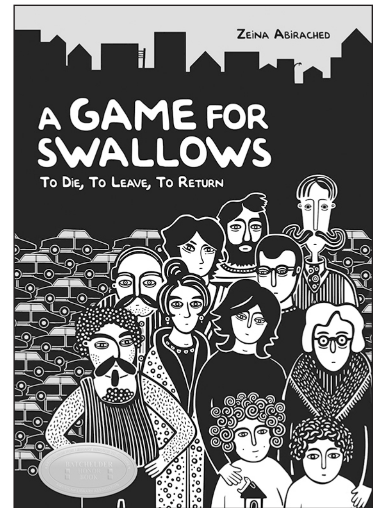
Descriptive Detail

Abdul, the primary Arab character, desires and rejects the West. He desires Western modernity, but he cannot be Western, despite his efforts, because he is marked as Arab, as Other, not of the West. According to Tuck and Yang, "becoming a subordinate settler is an option even when becoming white is not" (18), but Abdul becomes trapped in this "colonizing trick… certain minorities can at times become model…in times of crisis, revert to the status of foreign contagion" (18). The resulting resentment he has for both Arabs and the West is difficult for him to reconcile.

However, his identity tension is overshadowed by his racism, and I/we/you/they are compelled to dislike him and to fail to sympathize with him. To focus on the stereotypes Abdul expresses is to overlook his experience *as* a stereotype in the West, and ultimately to disregard the most poignant

critique Sattouf offers of the West: the Arab of the past has no place in the world constructed by the West. Again, I/we/you/they are unlikely to take up another subject position that challenges my/our/your/their move to innocence: *Abdul is racist, so I/we/you/they are not*.

But white supremacy is evident from the beginning of the narrative: Abdul becomes disenchanted with the West, his exodus from Europe precipitated by institutional racism (his degree is conferred without the highest honors, and a job offer misspells his name on page 6). He recognizes that to be an Arab in the West is always to be Other. Justifiably, he harbors resentment: "Westerners think the whole world should be exactly like them… Just because they're the most powerful" (151). In the preceding frames, Abdul is laughing and arrogant, sipping his wine. His eyebrows are raised in concern and he appears more vulnerable as he ponders the reality of power dynamics. This scene is cast in blue as all those that occur in France are. While his views of his own culture are troubling, the racism that he experiences fails to garner more sympathy because I am likely to respond to *his* bigotry. The image of the bigoted Arab overrides his identity, his humanity, in service to my move to innocence through comparison.



The text juxtaposes Riad's parents' positions toward bigotry: the modern, Western perspective is contrasted with the lesser values of the Arab of the past. However, this oversimplified dichotomy obscures how the West created and perpetuates racism—a reality that Sattouf critiques through the experiences of Abdul. I/we/you/they can rest assured in a performance of sympathy (Tuck and Yang) for those made victims by Abdul without needing to confront the colonial history that fostered racism and division for my/our/your/their material gain—and that continues in the present across the Middle East and Africa, among many other places—that makes Abdul a victim.

For instance, in Libya, Abdul reads Gaddafi's Green Book, giving voice to his resentment of colonialism and white supremacy. In the following panel, however, Abdul is upset that Gaddafi "thinks Arabs are black" (15). His critique of the West is interrupted by his desire to distance himself from Others perceived as less—and I am offered a reprieve from engaging with the uncomfortable task. Throughout the scene, little Riad plays and climbs over his father, while Abdul is engrossed in his reading—only looking away to cast blame on his white wife, who responds with annoyance or disdain. All of the scenes in Libya are cast in a bright yellow, against which the green book stands out.

Even with the momentary critique of white supremacy, undermined as it was, Abdul affirms the West. He elaborates a vision for the future derived from a Western notion of progress: "I would change everything in the Arab world. I'd make them stop being such bigots, get educated and join the modern world" (5). Abdul's initial desire to educate bigoted Arabs remains

Even with the momentary critique of white supremacy, undermined as it was, Abdul affirms the West. He elaborates a vision for the future derived from a Western notion of progress.

unchanged throughout the story despite his changing views toward the West. Abdul reasserts his perspective in a dinner conversation with his French in-laws toward the end of the book:

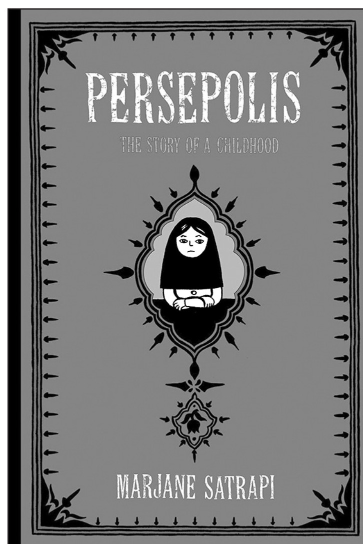
> You have to be tough with [Arabs]. You have to force them to get an education, make them go to school... If they decide for themselves, they do nothing. They're lazy-ass bigots, even though they have the same potential as everyone else. (150)

However, Abdul is both bigoted and educated. His characteristics challenge the binary he sets up as the difference between Arabs and the West. While I might explore this deconstruction, more likely than not I will have written off Abdul as a racist not worthy of my sympathy or any further consideration.

What I/we/you/they are left with: Arabs, bigoted and uneducated, have yet to progress to the developed state of the West. This troubling perspective effectively validates Eurocentrism.

Assertions

To see Abdul as more than the story of one character is troubling: "Sattouf...seemed to want people to read as little into his work as possible and insisted that his project was to write about his childhood in a remote village, not about Syria, much less about the Arab world" (Schatz). The scathing portrait of his father is meant only as that, not to be understood as *the* narrative of Arabs. However, Schatz points out, "Sattouf didn't call the book 'The Boy from Ter Maaleh'; he called it 'The Arab of the Future.'" With such a title, I/we/you/they are positioned to take this story as representative, considering everything Abdul says to be racist and stereotypical of Arab men while ignoring the systemic injustices that victimize him and that he fights against.



My/our/your/their appetite to know the Other should not go unquestioned. By asking "Who has the right to write?" we dive into a complex discussion of cultural appropriation: of narratives and of authors. My hope is that the appropriation of authors by an audience does not become lost in my/our/your/their liberal desire to avoid authorial appropriation of narratives and to diversify bookshelves. Readers seeking out authentic stories to represent diversity need to be cautious of the colonialist tendencies that accompany this pursuit.

In closing, Tuck and Yang request of us that "we can be more impatient with each other, less likely to accept gestures and half-steps, and more willing to press for acts which unsettle innocence" (10). They go on:

> We don't intend to discourage those who have dedicated careers and lives to teaching themselves and others to be critically conscious of racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, xenophobia, and settler colonialism. We are asking them/you to consider how

> the pursuit of critical consciousness, the pursuit of social justice through a critical enlightenment, can also be settler moves to innocence—diversions, distractions, which relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility, and conceal the need to give up land or power or privilege. (21)

Their message resonates with me as I attempt to bring texts into the hands and minds of teacher candidates, and through them to their future students.

I/we/you/they may believe a first step toward social change is the inclusion of books written by authors from a range of cultural backgrounds, but labeling an author "insider" does little to break down binary categorizations derived from Othering. Perhaps I/we/you/they want authors to be "inside" another culture when their texts align with Western values, affirming the West and its worldview from outside. The insider-author conceals the pro-Western perspective, so the Western audience hears what they want to hear—a justification for their privilege—from the oppressed minority with whom I/we/you/they sympathize in a move to innocence, which undermines any critique of Western imperialism.

I/we/you/they might begin to ask why they require Others to be less than or to assimilate, and what this means for understanding Othered authors who may be pressured to assimilate to be published, or how these narratives uphold certain values over others. I argue a book like *The Arab of the Future* should provoke readers' curiosity about their beliefs, not just animosity toward the beliefs of a dislikable character. Those who strive to diversify bookshelves might do well to consider how tightly I/we/you/they hold the reins of the publishing industry and the barriers to access that prevent storytellers from voicing dissent and alternate worldviews.

I/we/you/they might begin to ask why they require Others to be less than or to assimilate, and what this means for understanding Othered authors who may be pressured to assimilate to be published, or how these narratives uphold certain values over others.

Note

1. I use forward slashes to reflect the multiplicity of my subject position as one within a community, but not speaking for, while also indicating my self-positioned otherness within this community, and to address an audience that may or may not be complicit, without erasing my confession of guilt in this dynamic—the triad of settler-native-slave (Tuck and Yang): an accusational-confessional stance.

Author's Note
Land Acknowledgement

I acknowledge and work to honorably write this paper on the ancestral Native homelands of those who walked before us and those who still walk here—land taken by the US government as part of Cession 127—keeping in mind the integrity of this territory where area Native peoples identify

as Mvskoke (Muscogee/Creek). I am grateful to respectfully live and work as a guest on these lands.

Adapted from Paris (217)

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Global Rainbow Families: Examining Visual Depictions of Same-Sex Couples in International Picturebooks

by JAMIE CAMPBELL NAIDOO AND KAITLYN LYNCH

Jamie Campbell Naidoo and Kaitlyn Lynch provide insight into how children's books from specific countries depict physical contact between same-sex couples in picturebook illustrations and how this may influence understanding of LGBTQ families.

In November 2014, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) affirmed the universal rights of children and caregivers in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer[1] (LGBTQ) families (also known as rainbow families), and emphasized that they should not be discriminated against. Specifically, the organization iterates:

> All children, irrespective of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, have the right to a safe and healthy childhood that is free from discrimination. The same principle applies to all children irrespective of their parents' sexual orientation or gender identity.... Positive social norms that recognize and welcome diversity in cultures around the world should be reinforced to include the recognition, protection and promotion of the human rights of all people, regardless of real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. (UNICEF 1)

The aforementioned positive social norms can be bolstered in classrooms and libraries through the use of children's books with LGBTQ characters and families. Noted American multicultural children's literature educator Rudine Sims Bishop suggests that children's books can be used as mirrors reflecting the lives and experiences of children, windows allowing children a glimpse into the lives of others, or sliding glass doors providing opportunities for diverse children to interact with each other (ix). International children's picturebooks representing same-sex couples with children have the potential to uphold UNICEF's position and normalize[2] the experiences of LGBTQ families. Through global picturebooks, children can see diverse LGBTQ families in numerous countries participating in daily activities, expanding opportunities for mirror, window, and sliding-door experiences. As children engage with illustrations, rather than the text, which might be written in a language they cannot read or understand,

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they have a stronger potential to cross international borders and better understand global LGBTQ families.

Miroslav Jindra observes that children's books with LGBTQ characters showcase "everyday life in LGBT families, which share the same joys and worries as other types of family forms" (121). Unfortunately, it is this very act of capturing the daily life of LGBTQ families that makes these books controversial. According to the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom, which keeps track of books that have been challenged in the United States because of their content, in 2019, eight of the top ten most challenged books were children's books with LGBTQ content and five out of ten were LGBTQ picturebooks. These numbers have been consistent since the 1990s, with several of the top ten titles being children's books with LGBTQ content. With each passing year, various teachers, parents, and other concerned adults in the United States have attempted to keep the experiences of LGBTQ families hidden from children. A similar trend of complaints against these children's books has been noted in other countries, such as Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, Italy, and the Ukraine (Chapman; Cloughessy and Waniganayake; Hedberg et al.; Jindra; Povoledo; Świetlicki; Tarif). Historically, there are well over five hundred children's books with LGBTQ characters published around the world in a variety of languages. While this may appear to be an impressive number at first glance, when compared to the total number of children's books published each year, it becomes apparent that LGBTQ character representation is quite lacking. In just the United States alone, according to the Cooperative Children's Book Center Diversity Statistics from 2019, of the 3,716 children's books published, only 3.1% (115 books) had an LGBTQ primary character (Tyner).[3]

According to the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom, which keeps track of books that have been challenged in the United States because of their content, in 2019, eight of the top ten most challenged books were children's books with LGBTQ content and five out of ten were LGBTQ picturebooks.

Over the past twenty years, a growing body of international LGBTQ picturebooks has been published via mainstream and small press publishers and self-publishing. Some titles are more successful than others at conveying a loving relationship between same-sex parents and creating a safe space to explore LGBTQ family experiences. This article presents a critical analysis of a sample of international picturebooks with same-sex couples[4] to understand how LGBTQ families are visually depicted. Emphasis is placed on how these couples are illustrated and any discernible differences or similarities across books from different countries.

The study provides insight into how children's books from specific countries represent physical contact between same-sex couples in picturebook illustrations and how this may influence understanding of LGBTQ families. Numerous children's literature scholars iterate that the canon of children's literature features predominantly heteronormative nuclear families comprised of a mother and father plus children (Crisp et al.;

Jindra; Lester; Naidoo, "Representation"; Ryan and Hermann-Wilmarth). Rachel Skrlac Lo observes that "the widespread use of heteronormative family models in children's literature reflects the social power of those who define what counts as an idealized family" (18). Given the preponderance of the heterosexual family in children's books and heterosexism in overall society, the act of a heterosexual couple touching in the illustrations of a picturebook has received scant attention in children's literature scholarship because of its sheer ordinariness. Yet, as we discuss later, physical contact between same-sex couples in illustrations can be steeped with meaning that has the potential to either subvert societal norms or contribute to them, making them appropriate subjects for analysis.

...physical contact between same-sex couples in illustrations can be steeped with meaning that has the potential to either subvert societal norms or contribute to them, making them appropriate subjects for analysis.

Research Background and Design

Previous research on LGBTQ children's books provides a strong foundation for understanding general characteristics, themes, and social aspects of this body of literature (Jindra; Epstein, "Case"; Lester; Skrlac Lo; Naidoo, *Rainbow*; Sunderland and McGlashan; Tarif). Some studies have focused on books in one language or from one country, while others have focused on books in multiple languages, but little research has compared and contrasted how children's books, particularly picturebooks, from different countries depict same-sex couples. This study builds upon this work and addresses the following research questions: (1) How are same-sex couples and caregivers[5] depicted in children's picturebook illustrations around the world? (2) What meaning(s) can visual readers create about same-sex couples and LGBTQ families from the characters' appearance and their levels of physical affection? (3) What notable trends are observable in these books?

Findings from the study expand prior research by Jamie Campbell Naidoo and Mercedes Zabawa that addressed similar questions for a different sample of international picturebooks. Specifically, their study examined thirty books from nineteen countries: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, the Czech Republic, England, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Peru, Philippines, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. Key findings suggest that depiction of physical affection between same-sex couples does not vary significantly from one country to another. Additionally, only slightly more images of lesbian versus gay couples demonstrated physical affection. In many books, across countries, illustrations of physical contact between same-sex couples were often blocked with an object or person obscuring personal contact (e.g., a box, a child's head, a baby, a dog). Most titles avoided nudity, though the children's books that did depict nudity were explicit, and LGBTQ symbols (such as rainbow flags, pink triangles, and pride iconography) were largely absent from illustrations.

The current study includes a sample of twenty-seven books from fifteen countries: Australia, Canada, Chile, England, France, Germany, Israel,

Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United States. Titles represent a convenience sample from a collection of more than three hundred international LGBTQ children's picturebooks, and all titles are unique from the previous Naidoo and Zabawa study. When possible, two books have been selected at random from a subset of the larger collection that represents titles from each country. Titles in the study include both trade and self-published titles with publication dates between 1999 and 2020. Books with same-sex couples without children, single LGBTQ characters, identified LGBTQ children, or genderqueer individuals are not part of the sample as the main focus is couples with children.

Each book in the sample was critically examined using a coding sheet developed in the Naidoo and Zabawa study. The coding sheet, which facilitated a visual content analysis of each title's illustrations, includes general questions about physical contact between same-sex characters, counts frequency of the contact throughout the book, and identifies the presence of nudity and LGBTQ symbols. Nudity is specifically examined as LGBTQ children's literature has held a stigma of being highly sexualized (Chapman; Jindra; Naidoo, "Over"). Similarly, the presence of LGBTQ symbols was discerned to see if illustrators included such symbols to make books appear more authentic. Both researchers completed a coding sheet for each title, and intercoder agreement was established through an in-depth discussion of any discrepancies. Specific categories of physical contact included on the coding sheet were: "kissing," "holding hands," "arms around," "hugging," "lying in bed," and "sitting together." Figure 1 defines each of these categories.

Figure 1. Categories of Physical Contact between Same-Sex Couples from Visual Content Analysis Coding Sheet.

Kissing—kissing on any part of the body

Holding Hands—holding hands or linking fingers

Arms Around—placing an arm around a shoulder or on a back; can include each person in the couple placing an arm on the other person's back in a semi-embrace

Hugging—putting both arms around a person in an embrace

Lying in Bed—reclining or lying in bed

Sitting Together—sitting beside the other person indoors or outdoors with little or no space between the two bodies

Other—touching not addressed in other categories, such as sexual positions, foreheads together, legs across lap, back massage, hand(s) on a breast or buttocks, and so on

In addition to the visual content analysis, semiotics was employed to examine the placement of images, color choices, and the use of any

LGBTQ symbols. Jane Stokes and Theo van Leeuwen each suggest the use of semiotics to examine how images are imbued with meaning from the creator, as well as the potential meaning that readers can get out of the image. Compared to visual content analyses, semiotics is a richer and deeper method for examining an illustration that ascribes meaning to the way images are placed on a page, such as the proximity between same-sex couples and the ways they touch (potentially sexualized,[6] as in a kiss, versus nonsexualized, such as sitting next to someone on a sofa). This use of semiotics is consistent with other research on LGBTQ children's picturebooks (see Sunderland and McGlashan; Naidoo and Zabawa) and within the larger world of children's literature. Although illustration styles varied across the book sample, illustrations still attempted to portray representative relationships between same-sex couples and family members in LGBTQ families, regardless of whether the images were realistic drawings or caricatures.

Collectively, information from the coding sheets and semiotic analysis was entered into a spreadsheet to identify trends, similarities, and differences. Descriptive statistics are used to illustrate the most noteworthy findings, discussed in the subsequent sections.

Results

While the picturebook sample represents fifteen distinctly different countries, notable observations were recorded related to character demographics, physical affection between same-sex couples, topical trends, nudity, and LGBTQ symbology.

Character Demographics

Children's books have an overwhelming history of showcasing predominantly cisgender, white, heterosexual, and abled characters. While diversity in children's literature has been improving in Europe and the United States, there is still relatively little representation of ethnic and racial minorities when compared to the overall number of books published. For instance, according to the infographic released by Sarah Park Dahlen and David Huyck, of the 3,134 American children's books published in 2018, 50% of those books starred white characters, with the next leading category being animals and other animate objects, at 27% (SLJ Staff). Similarly, a 2020 study by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, found that in 2019 of the 6,478 children's books published in the United Kingdom, only 10% featured ethnic minority characters. While a majority of the picturebooks we analyzed were not published in 2018 or 2019, nor in the United States or the United Kingdom, the aforementioned statistics are consistent with the research we present here as well as other research on LGBTQ children's books. Of the twenty-seven picturebooks analyzed, 59.3% feature same-sex couples with partners who are both white. Even in the five books that feature interracial couples, one member of each of these couples was white. Only *Mes Deux Papas* (*My Two Dads*;

Children's books have an overwhelming history of showcasing predominantly cisgender, white, heterosexual, and abled characters.

Parachini-Deny and Béal, 2013) features an animal couple, represented by male birds.

Compared with the Naidoo and Zabawa study, though, our sample contains about 7% fewer white, same-sex couples. Despite this decrease in white characters, there is still an overwhelming whiteness in our sample. A majority of the books analyzed lack intersectional identities, which is important when portraying accurate and realistic individuals (Taylor 139.) Even though LGBTQ populations remain underrepresented in children's literature, there is still a normative storyline that is blatantly apparent in picturebooks that contain LGBTQ individuals. This storyline is one mainly based on white, middle-class, gay and lesbian couples that represent socially acceptable ideals of gender performance (Bronski; Eposito; Lester; Naidoo, "Representation"; Skrlac Lo; Taylor). LGBTQ people of color, those with disabilities, lower-class individuals, and people who identify outside of "lesbian" or "gay" are traditionally underrepresented.

A majority of the books in this study feature white, middle-class, young couples. There are no older couples, and only one couple includes a transgender man.

A majority of the books in this study feature white, middle-class, young couples. There are no older couples, and only one couple includes a transgender man. Additionally, only four titles feature two caregivers who are both people of color: *Las tres Sofías* (*Three Sofias*; Matus, 2008) features a Mexican couple; *Primeiro Cresci no Coração* (*First I Grew Up in the Heart*; Bruxelas, 2013) features a Portuguese couple; *Zak's Safari: A Story about Donor-Conceived Kids of Two-Mom Families* (Tyner, 2014) features a dark-skinned couple; and *Dalawa ang Daddy ni Billy / Billy Has Two Daddies* (De Guzman, 2017) features a Filipino couple.

According to a study conducted by Gary J. Gates for the Williams Institute in the United States, "[s]ame-sex couple parents and their children are more likely to be racial and ethnic minorities." Accordingly, there needs to be a more concerted effort to showcase ethnic minorities in LGBTQ children's literature. But book creators (authors, illustrators, editors, and publishers) need not stop there; rather, they should also aspire to include characters with diverse abilities, neurodiverse characters, and characters from all over the gender spectrum. Showing intersectionality in LGBTQ couples more fully captures the diversity within global LGBTQ families. Jennifer Esposito states, "Representations do not just reflect. They create as well. Therefore, representations should be complex; they should be as multiple and varied as lived experience is" (76-77). Characters should reflect human life because it is the connections the readers make with those characters that reveal the mirrors, windows, and sliding-glass doors that play a large part in building bridges and acceptance.

Of the sample books analyzed, there is fairly equal representation of gay and lesbian couples. Just over half (55.6%) feature a lesbian couple, while 44.4% feature a gay couple. An area of unequal representation is in the gender of the children. In our sample, 44.4% of the time, couples had a daughter. Male children fell far behind, only appearing 29.6% of the time. Couples with children of both genders and couples where the gender of

the child could not be determined filled the remaining 25%. This discrepancy becomes even more apparent in the gender of the child associated with each couple type. Among lesbian couples in this sample, female children appear just as often as male children. For gay couples, female children appear 58.3% of the time, while male children appear only 25% of the time. A reason for this gender difference in children between gay and lesbian couples may be attributed to the stereotype that gay men are hypersexualized and are more likely to sexually abuse or recruit their male children to join the "gay lifestyle." This misnomer is incredibly false and often a barrier for gay couples when they want to adopt children. Leslie Cooper and Paul Cates's research for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) determined that there is no evidence that gay couples are more likely to sexually abuse children than heterosexual couples (14). Showcasing gay couples with male children in picturebooks can help negate this stereotype and bring support to gay couples who wish to adopt.

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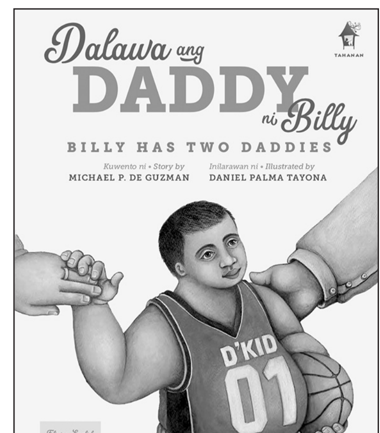
When analyzing these books, it is important to recognize that 51.9% did not include any other couples. One third include a straight couple along with the main same-sex couple, but there are no books that pair an additional same-sex couple with the featured couple. If an additional same-sex couple is shown, they appear alongside a straight couple. When a LGBTQ couple consistently appears alongside a straight couple and no other LGBTQ couples are acknowledged, the book then starts to "other" the LGBTQ couple when they should be seen as just another couple in the story. Additionally, it is isolating when LGBTQ couples appear singularly and not interacting with other people. This implies that these couples exist only by themselves and do not interact socially with other families.



Physical Affection

As previously mentioned, too often complaints arise from would-be censors when same-sex couples appear in children's picturebooks because some people believe that this pushes a (nonexistent) "homosexual agenda" and a LGBT lifestyle on young, impressionable children (DePalma 833; Naidoo, *Rainbow*). Because of this associated stereotype, some LGBTQ picturebook creators attempt to appease these individuals through a lack of physical touch or blocked intimacy in illustrations (Sunderland and McGlashan).

In our sample of books, lesbian couples show affection more often than gay couples. This difference becomes more apparent when comparing couple affection in front of children. Out of the number of total touches in the sample, lesbian couples show affection in front of their children 60.7% of the time versus 39.3% for gay couples. Affection may appear more often between lesbian couples because affection between women is regularly

sexualized in the media and lesbian affection is often appropriated for straight, male arousal (Randazzo et al. 107). Therefore, their physical touch is normalized within society, making their affection "more acceptable" than that of their male counterparts.

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Similar to other studies of physical affection of LGBTQ couples in children's books (Naidoo and Zabawa; Sunderland and McGlashan), a number of books in the sample depict implied touching that is often blocked or hidden by a child or a body part. Instances of child-blocking occur in *Tres Sofias*, *Perché hai due mamme?* (*Why Do You Have Two Moms?*; Pardi, 2011), *Mes Deux Papas*, and *O Livro do Pedro (Maria dos 7 aos 8)* (*The Book of Peter [Maria* Ages *7 to 8]*; Bacelar, 2008). In three books, there are instances of a child interfering with a couple's touch—for example, a child standing in between a hug. This occurs in *My Two Super Dads* (Fallens, 2011), *Perché hai due mamme?*, and *Two Mums and a Menagerie* (Robertson, 2015).

There are also a few titles in which touching occurs in a background photo: *Ulysse et Alice* (*Otis and Alice*; Bertouille, 2006) and *Filola wil een Krokodil* (*Filola Wants a Crocodile*; Hornsveld, 2013). In fact, in *Ulysse*, the only form of touching occurs in these background photographs. These instances of blocked, interfered, and hidden touching are all examples of ways in which these LGBTQ books may attempt to appease those who dislike or are uncomfortable with affection between same-sex couples. After analyzing the books, it appears a number of titles attempt to mollify censors when they should instead be painting an accurate portrait of LGBTQ couples. Indeed, Sunderland and McGlashan suggest that instances of blocked or close proximity between same-sex couples in the illustrations can create an impression of physical contact without actually showing it. Impressionistic versus actual touching could be potentially less offensive to individuals who find images of same-sex couples in children's books problematic.

Additionally, there is not a significant difference in the amount of touching between the Eastern and Western world, though Mexico was a clear leader in portraying touch, with both of this country's books having a significant number of pages featuring physical touching between same-sex individuals in the illustrations. The books that featured the greatest and least amount of touching can be seen in figures 2 and 3.

In regard to the type of touching found most prevalent in the books' illustrations, the "arms around" category appears the greatest, at 66.7%; "holding hands" comes in second, at 33.3%; and "kissing" and "hugging" tie for third at 22.2%. The Naidoo and Zabawa study had similar results, with their top two categories of physical touch being "holding hands" and "arms around."

Figure 2. Countries with the Greatest Amount of Physical Touching between Same-Sex Individuals.

Greatest Percentage of Physical Touch		
Book Title	**Country of Origin**	**Percentage of Pages with Physical Touch**
Tengo una tía que no es monjita	Mexico	100%
Zwei Mamas Für Oscar	Germany	75%
Tenemos dos Mamas	Spain	66.7%
Las tres Sofías	Mexico	66.7%
My Two Super Dads	Australia	60%

Figure 3. Countries with the Least Amount of Physical Touching between Same-Sex Individuals.

Lowest Percentage of Physical Touch		
Book Title	**Country of Origin**	**Percentage of Pages with Physical Touch**
Wie Lotta Geboren Wurde	Germany	0%
La Bambina con Due Papa	Italy	0%
Toch Moederdag voor Tommy	Netherlands	0%
האבות של גל ונועה/ ha-Aba' im shel Gal ṿe-No'ah	Israel	16.7%

While these statistics are not very promising, they become much worse when looking at the type of touching performed by each couple type. Gay couples fall behind lesbian couples in every physical contact category except for "sitting together," a category that does not involve much touch compared to the others. It is interesting to note that the most salacious "sitting together" instance occurs in the Spanish book *Cho-Lí y el tesoro más valioso del mundo* (*Cho-Lí and the Most Valuable Treasure in the World;* Bueno, 2013), where a gay man is shown sitting on the couch next to his partner and holding his partner's leg in his lap. The

Gay couples fall behind lesbian couples in every physical contact category except for "sitting together," a category that does not involve much touch compared to the others.

significance here is that the man is actually touching his partner's leg, whereas in the other books gay men are just sitting next to each other in close proximity but not actually touching.

The two types of physical affection that show a vast difference between lesbian and gay couples are "lying in bed" and "kissing." Out of the four times couples are shown in bed together, a gay couple is only seen in bed together once, in the Australian book *My Two Super Dads*. For the kissing category, gay couples are never seen kissing, while lesbian couples are seen kissing six times. *Zwei Mamas Für Oscar* (*Two Moms f*or *Oscar*; Scheerer, 2018) shows a topless lesbian couple bathing together (an illustration that will be discussed in greater detail later) and in other potentially sexualized positions: one image shows a female in a dress straddling the other fully clothed female while kissing and hugging, and another image depicts both females fully clothed, holding onto one another in a "sixty-nine" sexual position.

The absence of males kissing is troubling. An illustration of two men kissing is symbolic as it depicts them as romantic individuals who are "in love" and challenges the narrative that homosexual love is purely sexually driven (Carlson and Linville 898). In order for LGBTQ picturebooks to be more realistically representative of the couples they are attempting to portray and to make LGBTQ families and experiences more familiar to readers, book creators should not be afraid to depict intimacy between two individuals in love. Indeed, Rosa Hessel Silveira and Gládis da Silva Kaercher argue for picturebooks that are good stories that excite discussion and delight the senses, while organically introducing LGBTQ families and same-sex couples in love as just a situational part of the polymorphic world in which children live (1204). Avoiding the depiction of intimacy between LGBTQ couples in picturebooks might be interpreted as book creators conceding to individuals who believe same-sex couples are in some ways "wrong."

Assisted Reproduction

Although not a significant theme in the Naidoo and Zabawa study, a common topic that appears in multiple books' illustrations in our sample is assisted reproduction. This topic generally focuses on explaining to young child characters in a same-sex family how they were conceived and is becoming increasingly common in LGBTQ children's literature. Patricia Mendell and Patricia Sarles note,

> As the number of donor-offspring children created through a third party has grown, so has the demand by parents and their donor offspring for literature that would help parents explain to their children, as well as to others, the special circumstances of their child's conception.

If these books are meant to help children understand assisted reproduction, it is important that they are developmentally appropriate and clear in

their explanations. However, it is equally useful to remember that not all picturebooks that include the topic are meant to be instructional, nonfiction books.

Approximately one-fourth of the book sample (seven titles) illustrates assisted reproduction to varying degrees of detail and includes titles from Israel, Italy, Germany, Spain, Sweden, and the United States. Several books depict cartoon sperm and eggs with smiley faces, perhaps as a way to endear the sperm to the intended young child audience. And, in the American self-published title *Zak's Safari*, sperm are very childlike, wearing hats and scarves. Some books, such as the German self-published title *Zwei Mamas*, provide explicit detail about the assisted reproduction process in specialized sections, while others, such as the Italian book *Perché*, simply show a small squiggle in a bag full of water held by a nurse. The Swedish title, *Malins mamma gifter sig med Lisa* (*Malin's Mother Marries Lisa*; Lundborg, 1999) has even less specificity, with a single illustration of a jar with sperm that could easily be mistaken for tiny fish or tadpoles.

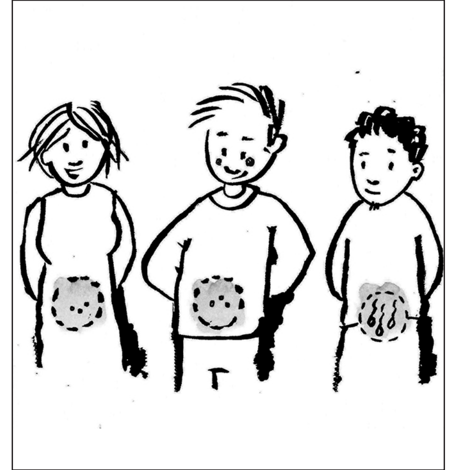

Image copyright 2013, Ka Schmitz from Wie Lotta Geboren Wurde by Ka Schmitz and Cai Schmitz-Weicht.

This variance in the way assisted reproduction is illustrated influences how well children comprehend this method of conception. More detailed sperm in the illustrations may spark questions from children about what they represent. Even anthropomorphized sperm with their clothing can lead to questions and discussion. The ill-defined sperm may appeal less to children and not prompt any questioning unless a child has an affinity for fish or tadpoles. Nonetheless, the varied representations of the sperm, while distinctly different in the level of detail, hold the opportunity to be used to help children in same-sex families understand assisted reproduction, though, some illustrations may take more effort on the part of an adult to spark conversations. Similarly, the levels of detail can also coincide with the developmental level of the child, with more details being added as children are ready.

Five of these books feature female same-sex couples: one from Israel portrays a male same-sex couple, and the German self-published title *Wie Lotta Geboren Wurde* (*How Lotta was Born*; Schmitz-Weicht, 2013) depicts a couple with a trans-male father and biological male father. The latter title cleverly shows an illustration with three characters—one presenting as female and two presenting as male. However, strategically placed coloring highlights that two of the characters have eggs and one character has sperm. This is the only indication in the illustrations that one father is transgender and helps to explain why he is illustrated as having a large belly and giving birth later in the book. Although the sample size is quite small, it is telling that both German titles provide nuanced information about assisted reproduction that is not clearly evident in the illustrations in books from other countries. Could

Could this suggest that Germany has more open-minded views for explaining human reproduction to young children by approaching topics such as trans parenthood?

this suggest that Germany has more open-minded views for explaining human reproduction to young children by approaching topics such as trans parenthood? Or, is it simply coincidental that the German book creators of these self-published books are LGBTQ parents who needed to explain a topic to their children and thus created books on the topic?

Adult Nudity

Previous research on LGBTQ children's books and librarian attitudes indicates that these books are often perceived as being sexualized simply because they feature LGBTQ characters (Chapman; Jindra; Naidoo, "Over"). While most LGBTQ picturebooks do not contain sexual content, some do contain adult nudity that select parents, educators, and librarians find offensive, sexualized depending on the societal norms of their country, and inappropriate for children. In a previous examination of Spanish-language and English-language LGBTQ children's books, Naidoo (*Rainbow*) noted that adult nudity appeared more often in these books than in children's picturebooks with heterosexual characters. Naidoo and Zabawa's study of international LGBTQ picturebooks found a Swedish book with insinuated nudity and a Spanish book with explicit nudity. The authors note that the Spanish title "depicted considerable nudity and sexualized imagery," both heterosexual and homosexual, as well as "monsters that were in the shape of penises while other images highlighted naked men leaning together with their genitals touching, nude women with large breasts floating in water, and unclothed couples hugging."

While our sample does not include titles as explicit as the Spanish book mentioned by Naidoo and Zabawa, three titles include implied or explicit adult nudity, which varies greatly. Also, this study includes more female versus male nudity. The book *Tenemos dos mamás* (*We Have Two Mothers*; Morales, 2013) from Spain was the most benign book, with one image of the main same-sex, lesbian couple breastfeeding their babies. While breastfeeding is not a sexualized image in this particular title, B. J. Epstein emphasizes that it is still considered sexualized in some countries and often does not appear in English-language picturebooks ("Breast Versus Bottle").

On the other hand, the Mexican picturebook *Las tres Sofías* goes further in its depiction of nudity to show a completely nude woman. While the character's breasts and genitals are not depicted (blocked by arms and legs), the illustration does appear to be more sexualized than in *Tenemos*, with one adult female gazing upon the other female adult sitting naked on a window ledge. Perry Nodelman notes that this overt gazing upon the female body positions the unclothed female as an equivalent to a pin-up model to be objectified (30).

The final book, *Zwei Mamas*, contains considerably more frequencies of adult nudity. Like the other two books, this German title includes visuals of naked women but also adds in naked men. Within the main story, one nude illustration can be considered distinctly sexualized in many countries, showing the main same-sex, lesbian couple sitting in the bathtub together with exposed breasts and surrounded by phallic-shaped objects,

while holding hands and gazing meaningfully into each other's eyes. It is not solely the nudity of the women that makes the image appear sexualized but the collective illustration and its placement just after images of the couple groping each other and in what appears to be a "sixty-nine" sexual position. The final two-page spread of the book features an informational section on sexual reproduction, presumably since the main characters conceived using assisted reproduction. This section depicts an anatomically correct naked adult male and female, assisted reproduction between two women, a pregnant woman, and a couple engaging in heterosexual intercourse.

While these three books certainly reflect the minority of the books in the sample, the presence of adult nudity in their illustrations can be used by would-be censors to bolster the erroneous belief that all LGBTQ picturebooks are about sex. Arguably, books with naked heterosexual adults might be considered to be sexual in nature; however, there is the overwhelming propensity in society to equate same-sex couples with the act of sex, even if their relationship is no more about sex than their heterosexual counterparts' relationships are.

In a discussion on nudity in children's books, Leonie Rutherford observes that many people, as well as institutions, have roles in gatekeeping what is or is not appropriate for children, with nudity in children's books being high on the list of problematic elements for censors. Rutherford notes,

> Nudity in children's literature is a flash-point because it triggers debates about how knowledge of sexuality should be regulated.... How much should children be told about their bodies and their various capabilities?... This is in no small part due to a residual belief in the meme of childhood innocence. (2)

It is protection of this childhood innocence that keeps LGBTQ children's picturebooks out of some classrooms and libraries (Chapman; Cloughessy and Waniganayake; Povoledo; Jindra; Hedberg et al.; Naidoo, *Rainbow*; Świetlicki; Tarif). The addition of nudity adds another layer of contention for concerned gatekeepers who often conflate nudity with sex, reinforcing the inappropriateness of LGBTQ picturebooks. We are not suggesting that all nudity in LGBTQ children's books is problematic; indeed, it may be necessary in informational titles. However, we do believe that nudity should be used purposefully to allow children physical access to these books, rather than relegating the titles into a censored pile before they reach children's hands.

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Pride Symbols

LGBTQ symbols such as rainbow flags, pink triangles, and pride iconography have been used in the past by some children's book creators to make the books appear more authentic. Understanding that some LGBTQ symbols may be regional or indicative of a particular country, special care was taken to identify any symbols that might not be as internationally recognized as a rainbow or bisexual flag. Websites for rainbow family organizations and for LGBTQ publishers were examined, when available, for all the countries in our study to assist in the identification of symbols. While there were slightly more books in our sample that had these symbols as compared to the previous Naidoo and Zabawa study, that study included a picturebook from Argentina that had several pride symbols (multiple rainbow flags, a pride parade, and an equality symbol) used to convey the pride the child protagonist has for her lesbian mothers.

For this study, eight books include LGBTQ pride symbols or colors and encompass titles from Australia, England, Israel, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Portugal, and the United States. All of these took the form of rainbows that were embedded within the illustrations: rainbow on T-shirts in *Zak's Safari* and *My Two Super Dads*, rainbows on curtains in האבות של גל ונועה / *ha-Aba'im shel Gal ṿe-No'ah* (*Gal and Noa's Daddies*; Pinkas, 2012), and rainbow lanterns on a house in *Filola*. The book with the most overt LGBTQ pride symbology was *Dalawa*, published in the Philippines. The last two-page spread features the main child character raising his fist in unity/resistance with a rainbow background emanating from his body across the pages. A semiotic analysis suggests the use of the fist and spreading rainbow is the illustrator's attempt to communicate to children that LGBTQ pride begins within and can include them.

This iconography could be particularly salient for children who rarely see representation of themselves or their families in picturebooks.

Whether overt, as in *Dalawa*, or more covert, the pride symbols in the illustrations are not obtrusive and can add an extra layer of meaning for children in LGBTQ families. Children whose families fly specific flags, march in pride parades, or wear clothing with certain symbols may recognize their presence in illustrations and understand that a title is about a family similar to theirs. This iconography could be particularly salient for children who rarely see representation of themselves or their families in picturebooks.

However, considering that many titles do not include any type of symbology, what is meant by this absence? Are book creators avoiding visual imagery that some may perceive as stereotypes, or are they attempting to make the books more palpable and "less queer" for a wider audience in countries with high anti-LGBT sentiment? Taylor suggests that any type of behavior that depicts LGBTQ characters outside of the socially acceptable homonormative lens (white, cisgender, middle class, etc.) is largely avoided in children's picturebooks. For example, if a family with same-sex parents exhibits their pride, that could put them into the

"socially unacceptable" category, making them almost as invisible in picturebooks as their trans and bisexual counterparts.

Study Limitations

This study employed a purposeful, random sampling approach to select books from our existing collection of international LGBTQ children's picturebooks that also did not overlap with books in the previous study by Naidoo and Zabawa. Different titles would invariably produce varied results, as would the inclusion of books with singular LGBTQ characters (adult and children). Similarly, adding all the titles available from a particular country would provide a broader understanding of how specific countries holistically approach LGBTQ topics in children's books.

Due to the limited number of titles analyzed, the study's results are not statistically generalizable, yet they do provide a platform for discussing how multiple countries depict LGBTQ couples in children's picturebooks. Additionally, because of language capacities, we only examined the illustrations in these books as a way to see how international illustrations can potentially cross linguistic and physical borders. Future research could expand this study and provide richer information by analyzing both textual and visual depictions. For instance, as researchers, we comprehend Spanish and understand the book *Tengo una tía que no es monjita* (*I Have an Aunt Who Is Not a Nun*; Cardoza, 2004) is about a child's lesbian aunt. Without this textual information, it just appears the couple could be her two mothers.

Concluding Thoughts

Despite having analyzed only a small portion of international LGBTQ picturebooks, this study reveals that there are still necessary strides to provide more accurate representations of people within the LGBTQ community. Specifically, we suggest the need for children's picturebooks in which intimacy is normalized between couple types, characters represent more diverse backgrounds and communities, and LGBTQ families are not isolated. These steps rely on both book creators and buyers. Not only should book creators publish more diverse, #OwnVoices works, but librarians, teachers, and parents need to purchase these books for children to read.

Normalizing LGBTQ characters in children's literature can potentially help eradicate the bullying and harassment members of LGBTQ families face and may even push society to see outside of their preconceived norms and accept the people who are simply trying to live alongside them.

LGBTQ families are present in communities throughout the world. As such, LGBTQ representation is incredibly important within children's literature to afford children in LGBTQ families the opportunity to see themselves in what they read and to provide other children the chance to learn about those who are different from themselves. Normalizing LGBTQ characters in children's literature can potentially help eradicate the bullying and harassment members of LGBTQ families face and may even push society to see outside of their preconceived norms and accept the people who are simply trying to live alongside them. With studies like this, we highlight

the limited diversity within these titles so that book creators may strive to ameliorate the aforementioned issues and provide stronger book bridges for cross-cultural understanding and clearer mirrors and windows that capture the range of diversity within LGBTQ families.

Notes

1. Note that *queer* is used here to represent other identities of families with children and caregivers that identify as having a nonbinary gender identity and/or are nonheterosexual.
2. The term *normalize* is used here to capture the belief that repeated exposure of a particular culture in a book will eventually make the culture less foreign, unusual, or exotic to the reader. In this instance, continuous exposure of LGBTQ families in picturebooks can potentially help children feel more comfortable with seeing same-sex characters, rainbow families, and queer characters; thus, exposure to these characters becomes a regular or normal occurrence and can lead to the normalization of their experiences in book. "Normalize" is not meant to suggest that the characters are less "queer" or behave in more socially acceptable, heterosexual ways. Indeed, Taylor notes that representation in these books must go beyond acceptance to encompass the subversion of normalized structures in society.
3. Some books were counted twice toward these statistics if the primary character fit into more than one category.
4. All of the titles in this study were identified as having gay or lesbian couples using various publisher or recommended lists from around the world. However, since the focus of our research is on illustrations and not text within our picturebook sample, we do not make assumptions as to the sexual orientation of characters. Couples that appear as gay or lesbian might also be bisexual or pansexual. Similarly, a character might present as male or female in an illustration, yet it is difficult to make assumptions about whether or not their gender identity aligns with their apparent sex since we are not examining the text of the book. To aid in a discussion of how children might infer a character's sex based upon their presentation, we suggest that if a character appears to have a male appearance, then their sex is male, and if a character has a female appearance, then their sex is female. Only one title in the sample, *Wie Lotta Geboren Wurde* (*How Lotta Was Born*), clearly indicates that one of the characters in the gay couple is a transgender male. Since that character presents as male, we will still use the term *same-sex* for this study to identify these characters, with the understanding that this label is problematic in capturing the full nuances of LGBTQ couples. The term *LGBTQ couples* is used throughout this article when describing the population in general terms.
5. The term *caregivers* is used here as information about parenthood is not necessarily included in illustrations. An illustration of a presumed same-sex couple with a child does not necessarily suggest that the couple are the child's parents.
6. Note that the results of a semiotic analysis could vary slightly depending

on the cultural context of the researchers. In some countries, the use of any nudity or kissing between same-sex characters in a children's book could be considered sexualized.

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Granny McFlitter is a knitter beyond compare. Her family is concerned because they can't wear everything she knits. This dilemma is solved when Granny discovers penguins recovering from an oil spill (a true event) who need little vests to keep warm while their new feathers grow. As with any quality picturebook, the marriage of the rich illustrations and the perfectly metered rhyming text is excellent. Lael Chisholm, who won a prestigious New Zealand illustration award as an eighteen-year-old, is an illustrator to follow. The color and curve of the illustrations are rich and humorous, and the placement of the text and the play with font sizes contribute to the pleasing aesthetics and fun of this story.

Nicola Daly

Granny McFlitter the Champion Knitter
Heather Haylock
Illustrated by Lael Chisholm
Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin Random House, 2018, 32 pp.
ISBN: 978-0-143-77054-1
(Picturebook; ages 4-7)

Picturing Arab Youth and Societies at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century:
Ali Chamseddine, an Illustrator from Lebanon

by TINA SLEIMAN

Tina Sleiman highlights visual characteristics and elements observed in Ali Chamseddine's work, as well as how the illustrator's upbringing and social context influenced his depiction of Arabic youth and societies.

Children's literature in the Middle East has had a rich history from the 1950s to the 1970s. In later decades, however, as the majority of publishers resorted to translating foreign literature, the evident consequence was a decline in authentic cultural productions. Still, some publishers, authors, and illustrators strived to advance and promote locally made Arabic children's books. Ali Chamseddine has been and still is a key figure in the development of illustrations for children's literature in Lebanon. He has illustrated to date about a hundred books, including folktales, poems, fables, and realistic fiction tales, in addition to cover art, character design, and drawing of comic strips for a variety of Arabic children's magazines. This article seeks to highlight the visual characteristics and elements observed in Chamseddine's work, as well as how the illustrator's upbringing and social context influenced his depiction of Arab youth and societies. It further explores the evolution of his style within the contemporary rebirth of Arabic children's books and the resurfacing of his childhood memories following the loss of associated material objects.

Image 1: Ali Chamseddine during the 1980s

While new approaches explored in Arabic children's publications of the 1970s are widely discussed in the literature (Karray; Chèvre), the de-

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cades that followed are largely undocumented. This lack of representation is due to several reasons. On the one hand, political unrest in the region hindered the production and promotion of visual material that was not directly linked with political issues. On the other, most publishers in the region were largely relying on translating foreign works, rather than promoting local works (Retnani and Dod; Khoury). In spite of this fact, some publishers, authors, and illustrators have tried to advance and promote locally created Arabic children's books.

Ali Chamseddine has been and still is a key figure in the development of illustrations for children's literature in Lebanon.

"Books with strong visual images hold special appeal and meaning because children are immersed in a visual culture in which images are integral to their experiences and interactions" (Johnson et al. 7). From the onset of his career in the 1980s until the present, Ali Chamseddine has been a key figure in the development of imagery in children's literature in Lebanon, illustrating folktales, poems, fables, and realistic fiction tales. In spite of his various contributions, very little information has been published about him. This article focuses on the meanings and aesthetics employed in images created by Ali Chamseddine for children's publications. It also seeks to highlight how various factors have influenced Chamseddine's depiction of Arabic youth and societies. Factors include the illustrator's upbringing, education, and practice, as well as visual characteristics observed in his work.

The methodology utilized for this study comprises a face-to-face biographical interview of the illustrator conducted in Lebanon in July 2018 and followed by virtual communication; site visits to bookstores in Lebanon and Tunisia and booths at book fairs in Tunis and Sharjah as well as in Abu Dhabi; and a visual analysis of the illustrator's body of work within magazines and books addressed to children.

An Overview on Chamseddine's Contributions in the Field of Illustration

The Start of a Career

Picturebooks can "cultivate the social imagination and help us imagine new possibilities for ourselves and the world" (Wissman 23). Chamseddine's work has not only communicated ideological messages on social values, identity, and relationships in a local and regional context but also helped him embark on a journey of renewed self-discovery. A native of south Lebanon, Ali Chamseddine was born on January 3, 1955. He pursued a degree in fine arts at the Lebanese University, where he studied painting and sculpture. Upon graduation, in 1982, Chamseddine saw his entire childhood possessions of close to three decades destroyed by the atrocities of war and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Nevertheless, he was able to look toward the future and establish a career triggered by a meeting with Wafaa Al Hosaini, the founder of *Samer* magazine. The magazine was a pioneer in the production and diffusion of original local illustrations for an Arab audience, with popular writers such as Nouhad Kalai and Adel Abou Chanab (Khoury). Chamseddine welcomed the offer to

illustrate scenarios for the magazine, followed by covers for several issues. When renowned publisher Dar Al Hadaek was created in the late 1980s, Chamseddine was invited to become a contributor, and he worked with Dar Al Hadaek in parallel to Dar Kitab Samer. In addition to regularly contributing to magazines, Chamseddine illustrated more than forty books for children during the 1990s and early 2000s. To date, he has worked with several publishing houses in Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, creating imagery and visualizing narratives for a variety of books.

Image 2a: Cover of *Ahmad* magazine, December 1988

The Role of the Image Maker within a Sociocultural Context

Throughout his career, Ali Chamseddine worked with several renowned writers, including Wafaa Al Hosaini, Nabiha Mhaidly, and Taghreed Al Najjar, directors of their respective publication houses. He illustrated various books by Nazek Khraiss, who is well respected in the south of Lebanon for her social work and humanistic service provided to the wounded. He has also illustrated books by Zakariya Tamer, an award-winning writer of Arabic short stories from Syria, and Ghazi Hussein, an outspoken poet exiled from Palestine. Both Tamer and Hussein have promoted freedom of speech, denounced social injustice, and found exile outside of their home countries, while contributing to the field of literature. Emer O'Sullivan discusses the relationship between imagology, or the literary representations of cultural groups and intercultural relations, and children's literature "since in it a culture's identity is formulated." She continues: "[I]n this respect, [children's literature] functions as a reservoir for the collective memory of a nation" (7). In Chamseddine's work, the representations of home and nation, alongside family and friendship, are highly represented with the notions of social responsibility, freedom, education, and cultivation. Sociopolitical issues such as war, occupation, and pollution are raised, while always ending with the triumph of good versus evil.

Image 2b: Scenario from *Ahmad* magazine, December 1995

Clare Painter, J. R. Martin, and Len Unsworth discuss the power of children's books "as a key means of apprenticeship into literacy, literature and social values" (1) and observe that "a verbal text unfolds over time in a dynamic, sequential way…in contrast with the 'instantaneous' holistic apprehension of an individual image" (133). It can thus be inferred that the illustrator has a key role in shaping the messages presented in verbiage through their selection to visualize a particular moment in time. Throughout the book, Painter and her colleagues stress the importance of bimodal systems of analyzing text and imagery. In *When the Grandmother Ate the Wolf* (2017), authored by Sawsan Awwad and illustrated by Chamseddine, the folktale is reversed both textually

and visually, while allowing space for interpretation in the final spread of the book, where the text reads, "And that night, Jad and Rana's dreams were very strange, as strange as Mama's peculiar story." The illustration depicts Layla running after the wolf and other animals, with a landscape of flying fish and butterflies and birds that grow like flowers. This is a rare book that highlights the imagination as a central topic, considering that the majority of published and awarded Arabic children's books underemphasize the imagination and favor realistic fiction (Thomure et al. 332-33). This particular work employs surrealism, which has been one of the most preferred artistic movements among illustrators for children's literature internationally (Beckett 153) besides impressionism, the latter style often being used by Chamseddine in his representations of nature.

This is a rare book that highlights the imagination as a central topic, considering that the majority of published and awarded Arabic children's books underemphasize the imagination and favor realistic fiction

In *Everything Is Going to Be Alright* (Al Atabi, 2018), a teenage boy deals with the loss of a family member. Chamseddine depicts the individual emotions of the character across different stages of the book. In *Who Am I?*, which Chamseddine also wrote, he illustrates poems such as "Me and Myself," "Me and My Dreams," and "Me and My Friends," which focus on the individual's experiences, in agreement with Mathilde Chèvre's observation that while late twentieth-century books focused on collectivity and pan-Arabism, contemporary Arabic publications tend to favor the individual, whose mind, as presented above, is often engrained in the sociocultural-political web of events and values.

Graphic Elements and Visual Style

The vivid color palette utilized in Chamseddine's work is reminiscent of Western approaches taken by the Push Pin Studio in New York or the illustrators for Harlin Quist and Ruy-Vidal books in Paris, while his drawing styles sometimes allude to the works of Iraqi painters, to Egyptian designer Hilmi Al Tuni, and to Syrian illustrator Lujaina Al Assil. Syrian illustrator Lujainah Al Assil was, for Chamseddine, a reference point in children's books illustrations from the 1970s to present. In a recent interview conducted by Chadi Nassir, Al Assil compared the process of creating illustrations for children to a wave of joy and passion, where she digs into her own childhood and strives to provide an honest representation that respects the child's subtle feelings and open mindset, a process that has certainly inspired Chamseddine. Ali Chamseddine has experimented with a variety of media, preferring liquid watercolor, also known as "ecoline," at the start of his career but later moving on to solid watercolor for smoother color blending. Over the past ten years, his work has become more eclectic, featuring a variety of innovative techniques, of-

Over the past ten years, his work has become more eclectic, featuring a variety of innovative techniques, often blending freehand drawings with digital coloring

ten blending freehand drawings with digital coloring, and expanding his portfolio from that addressed to young children to cater to a slightly older group. The following section analyzes the visual elements frequently observed across the illustrator's work.

Representations of Visual Elements

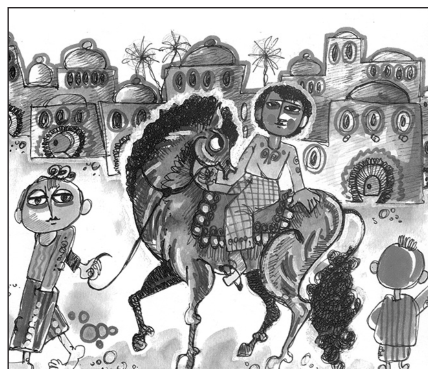

Image 3: Illustration from the cover of *The Ancestors' Mistake*

People

Ali Chamseddine depicts his characters in a cartoonish style, with colored fills contoured with a black outline. The proportion of the head is slightly enlarged, especially in the depiction of children, and the views vary from front facing the reader to side facing other characters in the story. Hand expressions are quite diverse and are attributed almost the same importance as facial expressions. Garments vary from plain to intricate and from traditional Eastern to Western, which reflects the diversity within Lebanese society. Chamseddine's representation of people is relatively homogenous but is more experimental in the following instances: the child in *The Fish and the Sea* (Khraiss, 1993) alludes to Herge's Tintin but with striped locks of golden hair contouring the face, and the cover image for *The Ancestors' Mistake* (Tamer, 2005) is done in a caricaturist style reminiscent of portraits by Pablo Picasso, George Bahjoury, and Dia Azzawi.

Animals

Animals are widely represented in Arabic children's literature. In a spread within a 1988 *Ahmad* magazine issue that displayed twelve drawings made by readers, half of the images represented animals: an octopus, a bird, a gazelle, and a horse, as well as Daisy Duck and Snoopy (Douglas and Malti-Douglas 217-19). In Chamseddine's work, animals make their appearance in every single book and are often depicted with humanistic features and facial expressions. Fish are richly colored and are represented with large eyes, possibly to refer to their ability to perceive not only crimes toward nature but also beauty in nature and in mankind. Their tails are relatively large, almost similar to legs and feet, their lips full, and their cheeks rosy. In "The Polite Bees" story in the book *Story of a Tree* (Farah, 2002), the bees have almost human faces, with eyelashes, hair, hats, and scarves. Their wings give the illusion of movement with their rapid strokes around lightly tinted watercolor patches. A similar interpretation can be seen in the butterfly depicted in *The Newly Born* (Khraiss, 1994) as Chamseddine experiments with new color blending and mixed-media techniques. In *The Ancestors' Mistake*, horses are drawn in a variety of different graphic styles within the same book, likely to represent different generations. *My Loving Friend* (Al Ghanem, 1996) is an interesting case. Animals, specifically the dog and the rooster, are only mentioned on one page of the story, but all

Image 4: Illustration of the boy in *The Fish and the Sea*

other pages include drawings of animals. They are present either as pets (a cat), as stuffed animals (a monkey and a bear), as drawings on the book cover of the book the main character is reading (a fish), as artwork on the wall of the play area (a butterfly), or as a recurring element in the vignette bordering the illustration on each page (a bird). Chamseddine believes he inherited his artistic sense from his mother Zahra, a famous seamstress in town, who knit images—notably birds—directly without prior drawing, onto pillow covers in colored threads. The relationship between his representation of birds and his use of color can be attributed to the admiration he held for his mother and memories he kept from childhood. It would be difficult to find a book illustrated by Ali Chamseddine in which birds are not represented. As for the cat, it is a recurring element in several books, almost appearing as the main character's shadow.

Chamseddine believes he inherited his artistic sense from his mother Zahra, a famous seamstress in town, who knit images—notably birds—directly without prior drawing, onto pillow covers in colored threads.

Natural Surroundings

The young Ali spent his childhood surrounded by vast landscapes in Chiyyah, Beirut, during the winter, amidst lush gardens of orange trees that then covered the majority of the geographical surface of this suburban area. The summers were spent at his native town of Arbsalim in the south of Lebanon, on the tip of a hill under which the Zahrani River went through, surrounded by various types of wild trees and crops grown by farmers. His childhood experiences and long hours of contemplation and interaction with nature seem to have informed his depictions of water, land, and elements in the sky, often drawn in an impressionistic manner. Across different books, Chamseddine utilizes a layering effect of horizontal strips of blues, greens, and purples in his depiction of water. Pointed triangular edges or round undulations constitute waves. Snowcaps on mountains, in contrast, are shown as reverse undulations. Trees, plants, flowers, grapes, figs, and other vegetation feature abundantly in his drawings.

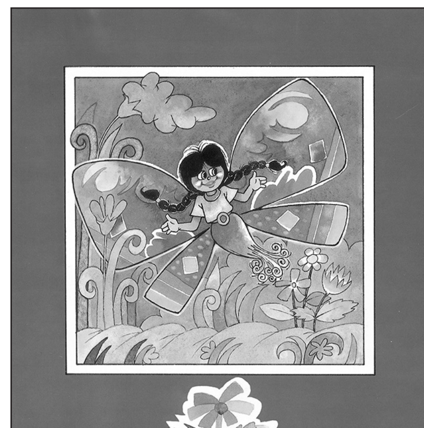

Image 5: The butterfly in *The Newly Born*

An example is *Story of a Tree*, a collection of short stories including "Funny Young Ones," where the shape of the tree turns into that of a three-dimensional sphere around a vertically striped trunk of purple, yellow, and orange colors. In *The Sweet Fruit and the Bitter Fruit* (Yahya, 2004), trees are represented in a variety of ways. Trunks and leaves meander, grow tall, or branch into cacti-looking arms, to be topped with spherical foliage. Valleys and hills are colored with gradients and sometimes marked with hatching. In *The Spring of Layla* and *Layla's Guitar* (Al Hosaini, 2000), oblique bands of color are transposed from the hill to the cloud, and grass and wheat stalks are

Although nature is happy in most of Chamseddine's illustrations, it has succumbed to the effects of war notably in the Layla series

represented through thin parallel vertical bands of color that mimic the harp referred to in the story. Sunrays are visualized in various ways, from concentric circles in pastel colors to a series of rotated cones ending with a twirl. In some cases, the sun loses its circular shape through lines coming in from the negative space to suggest integration with the air surrounding it. Although nature is happy in most of Chamseddine's illustrations, it has succumbed to the effects of war notably in the *Layla* series, where clouds are uncomfortably twisted and braided as a result of harsh twirls of fire that invade the space on the page.

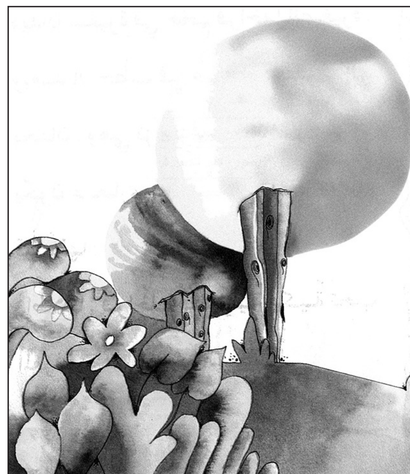

Image 6: Illustration from *Story of a Tree*

Living Spaces

The exterior facades of buildings are highly geometric, richly colored in bright or earth tones, often decorated with basic patterns, and inspired by Islamic and Mediterranean architectural styles. In scenes referring to war and occupation, buildings are stripped of their bright colors, with their pieces breaking apart, as in the *Layla* series, as well as in *Why the Clouds Have Escaped: The South* (Farah, 2003), which deals with the suffering of the Lebanese South. Depictions of smaller residences are inspired by mountain houses in Lebanon, with red roofs, wooden doors, and smoke exuding from heating devices. Windows and curtains are very present in the illustrator's work; they are highly ornate, depicted in a variety of forms across his work, and wide open, perhaps to emphasize the connection between the interior and the exterior, the home and its surrounding, the residents and the community, man-made structures and nature, the warm and the cold, the light and the night. Windows in Chamseddine's work can also symbolize the contrast between safety and insecurity (*Layla's Guitar*) or freedom and confinement (*Mother, the Snow Is Warm* [Abou Chanab]).

Holly Johnson et al. describe the importance of picturebooks as a vehicle for youth to learn about the world that surrounds them (111). As described above, dualities observed in the Lebanese social climate are often present in Chamseddine's depictions of living spaces.

Image 7: Illustration from *Layla's Guitar*

The Text as Image

The plain and standardized use of typography in the text does not do justice to Chamseddine's rich illustrations; this issue is in fact existent across many Arabic books that were made before the start of the twenty-first century. Hand-drawn words and letters incorporated within the illustration have the opposite effect, providing a personalized touch to the otherwise bland text. Similarly, Hilmi Al Tuni has utilized hand-lettering in his illustrations for children's books and notably book covers, with a preference for blending Thuluth and Kufi in a personalized manner (Taan 10), and Hussein Amin Bikar incorporated bold, fluid, handwritten story titles in the *Sindibad* magazine for youth that was launched in 1952 in

Egypt by Dar Al Maaref.

Chamseddine illustrated the novel *The Lanterns of the Enchanted Cave* (Aya Qassem, 2019) about a group of friends venturing in the Borkosh forest, which houses the only ancient cave discovered to date in Jordan. It is said that this cave bears resemblance to the Jeita grotto in Lebanon (Al Salwa Books). In these illustrations, Chamseddine utilizes shapes that seem derived from an ancient Semitic script. The relationship between Lebanon and Jordan in this book is thus threefold: the collaboration between a Jordanian writer and a Lebanese illustrator, the similarity in the depicted caves, and the ancient Syriac and Nabatean scripts from which Chamseddine has borrowed the visualized language.

Image 8: Illustration from *Layla's Guitar*

References to Values: Home and Identity

"What creates a culture, surely, must be a 'local' capacity for accruing stories of happenings of the past into some sort of diachronic structure that permits a continuity into the present" (Bruner 19-20). Accumulated narratives in general, including visual narratives, are eventually shaped and transformed into a cohesive story that we name *culture*. The visual lexicon utilized by Chamseddine and discussed above provides a glimpse of a cultural system pictured through the lens of an illustrator who has witnessed both beauty and tragedy in a nation with a complex perceived identity. What follows is a brief examination of the ideas and messages embedded within the various elements he portrays, as well as connections between the pictorial elements and the sociocultural context of the time. Three aspects are observed: personal, contextual, and social—in other words, the self, the connection with nature, and relationships with others.

The personal involves identity, safety, self-acceptance, and other values that relate to the perception of self. In *Aamer on the Fourth Day* (Hussein, 2004), individualism and the personal journey are presented along with the notion of home and attachment to the homeland. As Aamer dreams of exploring the world and is given the opportunity to explore seas, lands, and skies, he still finds a void and an urgency to return home without knowing the reason, until his grandmother explains that home is the haven of comfort, safety, and freedom. In Chamseddine's imagery, Aamer's smile diminishes on each consecutive page as he ventures further away from home but is regained at the end when he returns home. The book cover shows an uneasy boy exploring the danger of the world but still holding on to a plant, possibly a Mediterranean bay laurel, representing his connection to home. The last page shows a circular reference suggesting that one's home is one's world, juxtaposing the inside and the outside and adding references to relationships with the grandmother

Image 9: Illustration from the cover of *Mother the Snow is Warm*

and a young girl that Aamer is gently embracing, suggesting a future union and family. They are surrounded by trees, flowers, a cat, a bird, and a fish. In this book, the personal, social, and external combine to signify *home*.

In *Story of a Fearful Young Hawk* (Zayour, 2017), the message is reversed, focusing on the courage to grow and explore the world. A young hawk is fearful to leave the security of the nest and the warmth provided by his mother and thus refuses to fly. Eventually, however, he overcomes his fear and sings: "I'm flying, mother, the universe is mine, and I can't stop!" In Chamseddine's depiction, the young hawk stands out in bright yellow-orange, contrasting with the white, green, and blue utilized for other elements. The marvels of nature, being the eventual quest, are represented in detail, contoured with black ink. Moreover, on the final page, the young hawk protrudes out of the limits of the box that holds the illustration, to signify its courage to venture in the wide world.

Image 10: Page from *Sadiqi Allathi Youhibouni Kathiran*

Other books primarily address the social aspect. Goodwill and the blessings received through the act of giving are the overarching topics in *The Most Beautiful Lantern* (Al Hosaini, 2013). In this book, Chamseddine utilizes visual vocabulary to differentiate each of the three tales: a circle to represent the lantern and light, a pointed diamond shape to symbolize the harshness of greed and the crossroads at which a decision needs to be made, and finally the rectangle to represent the window or the connection between home and the outer world.

Researchers agree on the influence of narratives in constructing a young person's identity (Johnson et al. 95-107) and in developing young readers' receptiveness of sociocultural values embedded in narratives (Stephens 61). The role of the image, as described above in Chamseddine's work, is paramount in flavoring the text and expanding its vocabulary while reinforcing personal and collective cultural values.

Image 11: Page from *Sabahou Al Khayr Ya Bahr*, from the *Layla* series

Participating in the Rebirth of the Contemporary Arabic Children's Book

Over the past few years, Chamseddine has shifted his work toward a slightly older, teenage, viewer while continuing to occasionally illustrate for younger children. In *Stories of Clever Ones* (Tamer, 2016), Chamseddine utilizes high contrast with sharp shadows in bright saturated colors, adopting a new approach that is characterized by geometric forms. As described above, the representation of water, air, and land and its bounty is at the core of his work. His infatuation with nature has led him to author and illustrate a series of six books about the sun, the moon, the air, the water, the fire, and the tree, entitled *Who Am I?* In parallel, he developed two new rendering approaches that could be viewed as his absolute best in terms of originality: blending black ink with colored fills for Al Hadaek books and utilizing a variety of techniques,

including digital media and interwoven lines of bright colored pencils, for Dar Samer books. Again, in 2019, exploring new media and shading techniques, he worked with Dar Al Salwa on illustrating books written by Taghreed Al Najjar and Aya Qassem.

Across Chamseddine's scope of work, representations of people, objects, and living spaces have included a myriad of elements from the Middle East in general and from Lebanese culture specifically, with themes drawn from social realities. When asked about the artwork made in his childhood that he recalls best, Chamseddine described a shepherd playing a musical instrument in a green field that he painted when he was eight years old. It seems that the image of the shepherd has left an imprint on Chamseddine: the cover of the poetry book *This Is Me* (Fakhreddine, 2017) features a shepherd playing a musical instrument, with spots of green. While the original painting was destroyed along with other material objects from his childhood, the image reemerges fifty-five years later in one of his most beautiful works, bringing deeper meaning to the image itself. This is proof that what has been taken by war might remain engrained in memory and can resurface in a beautiful expression of peace and tranquility, much more sublime than human feuds that lead to destruction.

Image 12: Illustration from the cover of *Aamer Fil Yawm al Rabe'*

Conclusion

Throughout the years 2019 and 2020, Lebanon witnessed forest fires, social upheavals, an economic crisis, and to top it all, a massive explosion at the Port of Beirut. With the physical damage that affected hundreds of thousands of people and the emotional damage that affected millions following the tragic explosion, one might wonder how this heartbreaking experience would shape visual stories shared by citizens of this nation over the next decades.

The shared ground between a journalist and a children's book illustrator is that they communicate their own expressions of other people's thoughts and feelings to the public. The main difference is that a journalist communicates physical events and people's reactions, while an illustrator communicates conceptual ideas of a writer. They are usually both influenced by the current state of affairs and the general perceptions observed around them. Ali Chamseddine's son Adam, a journalist by profession, has recently been reporting the news on television. While the father, a symbol of the previous generation, produces still images of moments filled with hope, the son is reflecting the current devastating live images in a climate where hope almost feels nonexistent. In the midst of despair, can moments of joy and blessing such as the blessing of faith, the recovery of a wounded patient, and the communal support at the centennial of a nation be captured visually? Moreover, what role can children's books play in bringing back seeds of hope and reminding the youngsters of today that life can potentially be better?

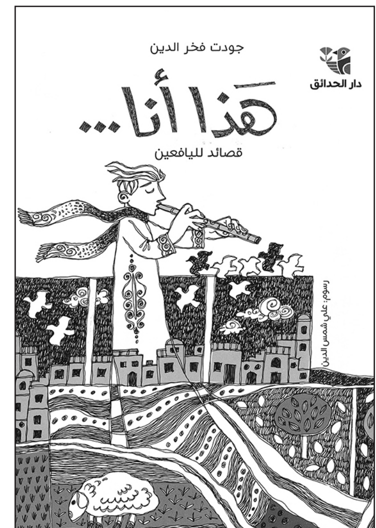

Image 13: Cover of *Hatha Ana*

This article has examined the way that biographical and societal factors have influenced Ali Chamseddine's visual depiction of Arab youth and society at particular moments in time, as well as particular artistic techniques he employed in these depictions. Avenues for future research could include analyzing the cognitive and emotional effect of Chamseddine's works on children, or even adults who were children at the time of their creation. Such studies could help us grasp the perceptions and the extent of visual assimilation of themes addressed through collected interpretations from a variety of audiences. Furthermore, transforming some of the stories to bilingual or even trilingual texts could not only serve to provide alternatives to children of Arab roots who may not have sufficient Arabic language reading skills, such as immigrants, but could also have a potential in "developing intercultural competence" and "sensitizing [youth] towards the specific ethnic other" (Magos 29), ultimately leading to greater understanding of the Arabic culture.

Image 14: Illustration from *This is Me*

Author's Note

I would like to acknowledge Zayed University for funding research trips that provided information on the historical aspect of Arabic children's literature, as well as Sabrina deTurk for her feedback and guidance. Sincere thanks to Wafaa Al Hosaini, director of Dar Samer, Mehdi Ammaar of Dar Al Hadaek, Hasmig Chahinian from Takam Tikou, and Huda Smitshuijzen AbiFares from the Khatt Foundation, as well as my former Arabic teachers at the Lycée Alphonse de Lamartine in Tripoli, Lebanon, who have instilled appreciation of authentic Arabic publications, especially Jinane Azar and Salam Hwalla. Last but not least, I extend my gratitude to Ali Chamseddine, whose work has been an inspiration for me ever since I was a child, and who has been very generous with sharing information about his childhood and practice.

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Una conversación con María José Ferrada

A Conversation with María José Ferrada

by MARCELO E. GONZÁLEZ Z. and ANDREA CASALS HILL

Introducción

Esta conversación es parte del proyecto de investigación posdoctoral Fondecyt Nº 1370134 donde Andrea Casals Hill es la investigadora responsable.

Hay algo secreto en la literatura de María José Ferrada, algo oculto, algo que parece esconderse tras las palabras, versos y oraciones que componen su obra literaria, la que abarca narración y poesía, para adultos y lectores infantiles y juveniles, sin distinción de su parte.

Y es que su obra, aparentemente sencilla, esconde ese asombro que regala la literatura a quienes la han descubierto o a quienes están por descubrirla. Regala ese amor por los detalles, por las pequeñas cosas, por lo cotidiano: revela así, el asombro de la vida diaria, la fascinación que provoca el día a día, y lo que se oculta y lo que se puede encontrar en los intersticios, los espacios vacíos que se generan entre las cosas que aparentemente no significan: es ahí, en donde Ferrada inserta la imaginación, como si aún fuera una niña,

Introduction

This conversation is part of the post-doctoral research project Fondecyt Nº 1370134, in which Andrea Casals Hill is the leading researcher. The conversation was conducted in Spanish and all translations were made by Casals Hill.

There is something enigmatic in María José Ferrada's literature, a kind of mystery, something concealed behind the words, verses, and phrases that compose her literary work. Ferrada's work includes narratives and poetry for grown-ups and young readers, making no distinctions among them. The thing is, her apparently simple works contain that sense of wonder that literature offers to those who have discovered it. Ferrada's writing gifts love for details, for small things, for the ordinary—revealing awe for everyday life and fascination triggered daily. It appeals to what hides and may be found in hinges and empty spaces that emerge between those apparently meaningless things. It is precisely in those spaces that Ferrada introduces

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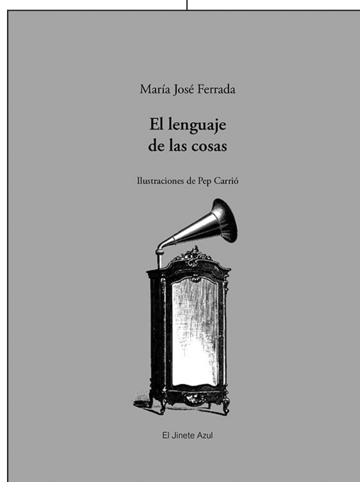
e ilumina toda la realidad, por medio de una obra profundamente lírica y lúdica.

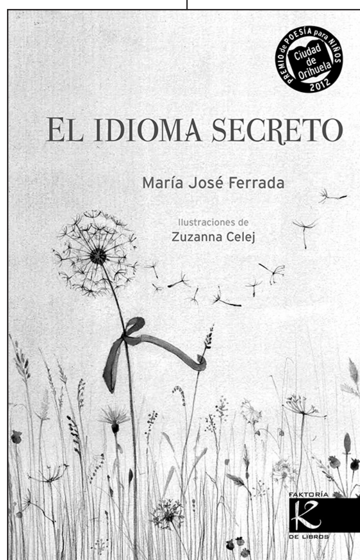
Sobre estos aspectos y otros misterios, quisimos preguntarle en la siguiente conversación.

En muchos de tus textos infantiles como *El lenguaje de las cosas* o *El idioma secreto*, demuestras un particular por el lenguaje y sus formas , lo que lo termina por convertir en el centro de las mismas ¿Cuál es la importancia de este elemento en la literatura infantil en general y en particular para ti?

Creo que el interés, el cariño y la duda frente al lenguaje es algo que compartimos varios de quienes elegimos el lenguaje como herramienta de expresión. En ese sentido siento interés y me hago preguntas contantes en torno a él, porque siempre quiero entender un poco más. La literatura infantil creo que es o puede ser un espacio privilegiado para hacernos esas preguntas y observar el lenguaje, porque muchos de nuestros lectores lo están recién conociendo y por lo mismo, no dan nada por sentado. Las onomatopeyas, por ejemplo, me interesan mucho porque de algún modo las siento como unas especies de palabras recién nacidas o un tránsito entre un sonido y una palabra. Partiendo solo desde este ejemplo, podemos ver cómo la literatura infantil nos da permiso para preguntarnos, entre muchas otras cosas, por los límites de lenguaje.

Tus textos poéticos como *Escondido, El baile diminuto* o las variadas antologías de haikus que has realizado, evidencian





her imagination, as if she were still a girl, illuminating all this reality by means of a profoundly playful and lyrical composition. In the following conversation, we asked María José Ferrada about these features and other mysteries.

In many of your books, such as *El lenguaje de las cosas* and *El idioma secreto*, you exhibit a particular interest in language and its form, which becomes central in your creations. How would you describe the importance of this element in children's literature in general and in your works?

I believe that those of us who have chosen language as our means of expression share interests, doubt, and love for language itself. In that sense, I feel interested and I am constantly asking questions about it; I always want to understand it a bit more. I believe children's literature is and can be a privileged space to make such questions and observe language because many of our readers are just beginning to get acquainted with language and, therefore, they do not take anything for granted. I am very interested in onomatopoeias, for example, because I somehow feel they are like newborn words, or a transition between sound and word. Starting from this example, we can see how children's literature allows us to make questions about the limits of language, among many other things.

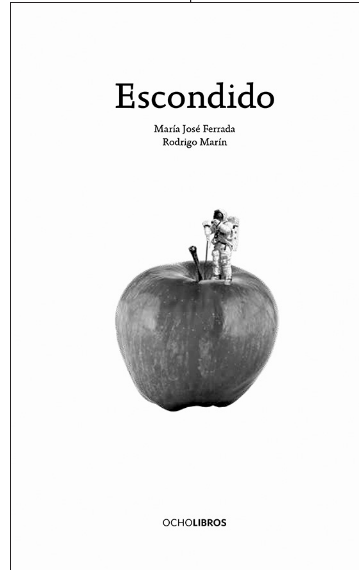
Your poetic texts such as *Escondido, El baile diminuto*, and your haiku collections reveal your close relation to and the influence of Japanese literature in

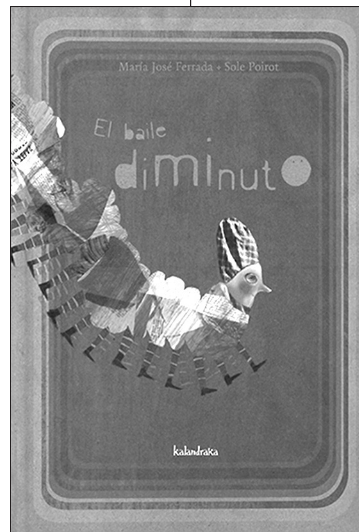
la cercanía y la influencia que tiene la literatura japonesa en general en tu obra ¿Qué elementos de esta literatura tan peculiar rescatas y crees que son importantes a la hora de crear?

De los japoneses yo he aprendido algunas cosas que tienen que ver con la pregunta anterior, por ejemplo, la puesta en cuestión del lenguaje. Me interesan las observaciones que hace el budismo zen respecto al lenguaje como herramienta tramposa, es decir, como una posible barrera entre mi yo y la experiencia. Al nombrar una manzana, por ejemplo, cargo con las connotaciones que mi cultura da a la manzana y en ese sentido mi experiencia con la manzana deja de ser totalmente directa. Por otro lado ¿qué pasa con todo ese abanico de experiencias para las que no hay palabras? Entonces los monjes zen dicen: usemos el lenguaje, porque es nuestra herramienta, pero con conciencia de sus límites, integremos el silencio, juguemos con la lengua y es en ese lugar donde vuelvo a encontrarme con los niños, no solo como receptores sino como maestros.

En este sentido y continando la pregunta anterior, hay en tu obra un intento de rescatar lo cotidiano y la simpleza de las pequeñas cosas. ¿Por qué crees que es importante centrar la atención en este aspecto de nuestra realidad?

Creo que puede ser importante, para mí lo ha sido, pero también creo que existen diferentes caminos para aprender las cosas. Yo, tal ves por una predisposición natural, he aprendido





your works as a whole. Which elements of this specific literary tradition would you highlight and consider relevant in your creative work?

From the Japanese people I have learned some things that are related to the previous question—for example, to interrogate language. I am interested in observations made by Zen Buddhism regarding language as a tricky tool, that is, as a possible barrier between my inner self and experience. When naming an *apple*, for example, I must cope with the connotations my cultural background assigns to the word apple, and in that way, my personal experience with the apple isn't truly direct. On the other hand, what happens with the myriad of experiences for which there are no actual words? Zen monks say: language is our tool, let's use it, but let's be aware of its limits, let's integrate silence, let's play with language. It is at this point that I encounter children again, not only as receivers of language, but also as teachers.

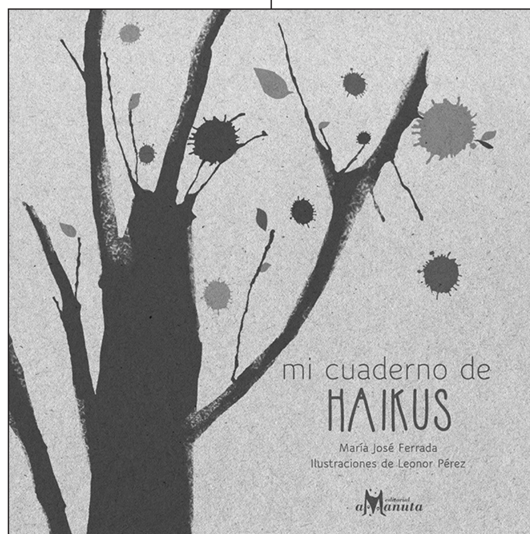
Along these lines, in your works, you draw special attention to plain and ordinary things. Why do you regard it as important to call attention to such things?

I believe plain and ordinary things are important, they are important to me, but I also think there are many different ways to learn things. Probably because of a personal trait, I have learned by observing nature and tiny objects. There are pictures of me from the time when I was a girl where I am portrayed very concentrated

observando la naturaleza, los pequeños objetos. Tengo fotografías de cuando era pequeña en las que aparezco muy concentrada en palitos, caracoles, hojas. Seguro que en ese entonces no tenía un por qué ni lo necesitaba, simplemente eran cosas que llamaban mi atención. Hay otros niños que ponen especial atención en los sonidos, o en espacios más grandes, como el cielo o las montañas y seguro que obtendrán de eso un aprendizaje valioso. En ese sentido creo en dejar que los propios intereses vayan tomando su curso y su propio ritmo. Más que creer que lo simple y lo pequeño es importante, creo que lo importante es buscar un camino propio de comprensión. Habrá quien lo encuentra en las palabras, quien lo encuentra en amasar en el pan y quien lo encuentra en las fórmulas matemáticas.

Hablemos de dos textos tremendos como son *Niños y Kramp*. Ambos, proponen una mirada acerca de la infancia que contrasta con el terrible contexto de la dictadura que sufrimos en nuestro país. ¿Qué te motivó a desarrollar esta temática?

Bueno, creo que como trabajo con niños soy más sensible a lo que les ocurre y la dictadura es algo que los chilenos no nos podemos saltar, porque nos marcó y la comprensión de quienes crecimos en los 80 estuvo fuertemente mediada por ella. Comencé a preguntarme qué había pasado conmigo, qué había pasado con otros niños y así fue como llegué a amabas historias. En el camino me di cuenta de que los niños suelen ser son víctimas bastante silenciosas de la violencia política, creo que porque por un lado los adultos tienden a encerrarse en su propio dolor y también porque no es fácil para una sociedad procesar el hecho de no



looking at sticks, snails, and leaves. Surely at that time I did not have a particular reason to do so, nor did I need it; these were simply things that called my attention. There are other kids that pay special attention to sound, or open spaces like the sky or mountains, and they surely get valuable learning from these. In that sense, I believe in allowing one's own interests and rhythm to lead. More than believing that the plain and simple are important, I believe that it is essential to find one's own path to understanding. Some people will find it in words, others will find it in making bread, and others may find it in mathematical formulas.

Let's talk about two tremendous books: *Niños and Kramp.* Both books suggest an idea of childhood that contrasts with the terrible context of the dictatorship that we suffered in Chile. What motivated you to venture in such topics?

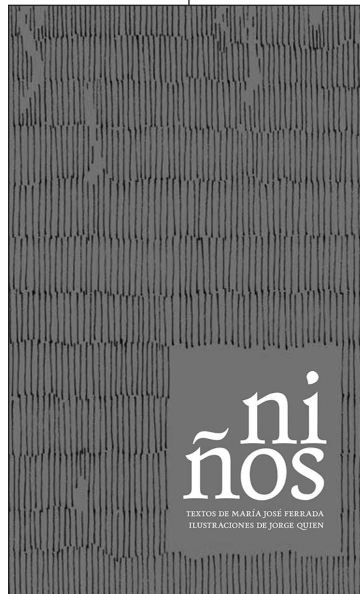
Well, I think that since I work with children, I am very sensitive to what happens to them, and the dictatorship is something Chileans cannot overlook because it marked us, and the understanding of those of us who grew up in the 1980s was strongly influenced by it. I began wondering what had happened to me, what had happened to other children, and that is how I came up with both stories. Along the way, I realized children tend to be quite invisible victims of political violence. On the one hand, this is because adults tend to close themselves up in their own pain, but also because it is difficult for a society to process the fact that it did not know, it does not know, how to protect its children. In Chile there is an institution called SENAME (the National Children's

haber sabido, no saber, proteger a sus niños. En Chile existe una institución llamada SENAME (Servicio Nacional de Menores), un organismo estatal que en teoría protege a los niños cuyos derechos han sido vulnerados y resulta que hace dos años supimos que en un lapso de diez años habían muerto 1300 niños que permanecían bajo su tutela, muchos de ellos por las condiciones precarias en las que vivían y otros directamente maltrato. Se supone que el estado debía cuidar, no matar a esos niños, y ¿qué ha pasado con eso? investigaciones en curso y nada más. Era como para que el país entero se paralizara y no, siguió funcionando y después de un par de semanas ya nadie quiso acordarse de la noticia. Eso habla muy mal de nosotros los adultos, porque el mensaje que le estamos dando a esos niños, a todos los niños, es que no nos importan.

***Kramp*, como sucede con la literatura japonesa, debe mucho a sus silencios y a lo que no se dice en la trama o lo que no se describe en su acción. ¿Crees que su buena recepción se deba a este aspecto o piensas que la obra ha adquirido relevancia debido a otra situación?**

Creo que si algo ha jugado a favor de Kramp es su simpleza. Adultos, pero también niños de 12 años me han hecho llegar sus comentarios. Y a mí me interesa eso, creo que los niños (usé narrador niño en Kramp y también lo estoy usando en la novela que escribo ahora ahora) son capaces no solo de hablar, sino de interpelar al lector, develando los absurdos, la ternura y también las crueldades del mundo adulto. Confío en ese tipo de narradores capaces de observar y nombrar sin calculo, tanto como confío en la sabiduría de los niños.

La LIJ ha venido adquiriendo renom-



Service), which is meant to protect children whose rights have been transgressed. But it turns out that two years ago, we found out that in a time span of ten years, 1,300 children under SENAME's custody had died, many of them because of the precarious conditions in which they live or because of child abuse. The state was meant to look after them, not kill them! And what happens with that? Some prosecutor's queries, but nothing more. This piece of information should have had all the country on strike, but no, Chile went on functioning, making business as usual, and a few weeks later nobody ever remembered the news. This reveals a very ugly trait of us as adults, and it tells those children, and all children, that we adults don't really care about them.

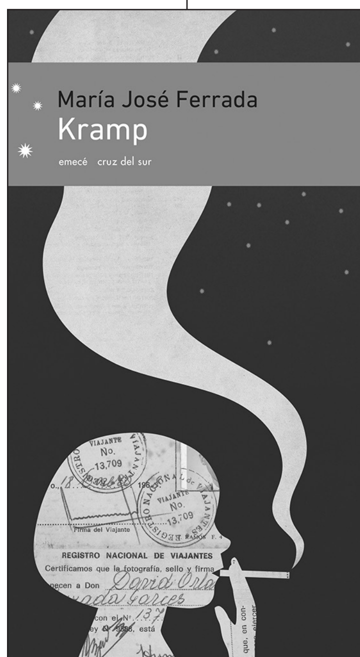
Just as happens with Japanese literature, *Kramp* relies on silences and what is not said or described in the narrative. Would you say that the good reception the short novel has is due to this literary aspect, or do you think it is due to something else?

I believe that if something has favored *Kramp*, it is its simplicity. Adults, but also twelve-year-olds, have sent me their comments. And I am interested in that (I created a child narrator for *Kramp* and I am also creating one now in the narrative I am currently working on); I believe children are capable of speech, and they are also able to question the reader, revealing absurdity, kindness, as well as the cruelties of the adult world. I trust such narrators, narrators that observe and can name without making calculations, just as much as I trust children's wisdom.

In the last decade, children's literature has slowly become recognized and valued among the academic community.

bre y ha comenzada a ser valorada en el mundo académico de forma seria en la última década. En ese contexto, tu obra, ha aportado a expandir los límites de esta y a consolidar su influencia en una nueva generación de lectores. ¿Qué pasa con esos nuevos lectores infantiles y con su relación con la literatura? ¿Cómo crees que les aporta la LIJ en general y tu obra en particular a su formación como lectores y como seres humanos?

La verdad es que me pregunto mucho eso ¿cómo llegan los libros que yo hago a los niños? ¿están siendo esos libros unos buenos amigos? Y es que he observado que los niños, sobre todos los más pequeños, se relacionan con los libros en momentos tan cruciales de su vida como es el momento en que se quedarán dormidos. Si ese niño tuvo un mal día, esa historia puede hacer que el día termine de mejor manera. Los adultos no nos entregamos tanto a una lectura. El niño sí, el niño lee y relee. Ese acto me conmueve y me hace tomarme mi tarea muy en serio. Pienso que ojalá pueda sacarles alguna sonrisa o ayudarles a comprender siquiera un poco este mundo confuso.



Finalmente, si puedes contarnos acerca de tus próximos proyectos ¿Qué nuevas obras de LIJ vienen en camino? ¿Algún texto que nos vuelva a acercar a la literatura oriental o una nueva obra en la línea de *Kramp*, quizás?

En LIJ se vienen segundas partes de dos libros. El primero es la continuación de Ippon no sento Manuel (La línea de Manuel), un libro con pictogramas, sobre autismo, desarrollado en conjunto con el ilustrador Patricio Mena para la editorial japonesa Kaiseisha. Esta vez el

In that sense, your publications have helped to expand the borders of this category and influence a new generation of readers. What happens with these new readers and their relationship to literature? How does children's literature in general, and your books in particular, contribute to their lives, their construction as readers and as human beings?

To be honest, I wonder too: How do the books I write reach the children? Are these books good company?

I have observed that children, particularly the youngest children, relate to books in very crucial moments of their lives, as happens at bedtime. If this child had a bad day, that story can make the day end in better terms. Adults don't give in to reading as much as children do. Kids do; they read and reread. That moves me and makes me take my job very seriously. I hope that I can make the readers smile or help them understand this confusing world a bit better.

Finally, we'd love to know about the projects you are currently working on. Would you share what's cooking? Anything that might take us back to Japanese literature, or maybe back to *Kramp*?

I am working on two second parts of two books. The first one is related to *El día de Manuel*, a book with pictograms about autism, which is developed together with Patricio Mena for the Japanese publisher Kaiseisha. This time the tiny character goes on a picnic with his family, and he teaches us how he relates to the natural world. We picked the idea from some children at a nursery school in Fukushima who insisted on asking if Manuel was interested in insects

pequeño personaje va de pic nic con su familia, y nos enseña como se relaciona con los elementos de la naturaleza. La idea nos la dieron unos niños de un jardín infantil de Fukushima, que cuando contamos el primer cuento insistían en preguntar si a Manuel le gustaban o no los insectos. El segundo es un libro de pequeños poemas, también inspirados en la naturaleza, escrito en braille y que es la continuación de Animal, publicado por Alboroto en México.

También debería aparecer, en abril, mi segunda novela, que cuenta la historia de un niño de la periferia de una gran ciudad que observa por su ventana a un hombre –su tío– que ha decidido abandonar el mundo para irse a vivir al reverso de un cartel de Coca Cola...

Conclusión

Como se puede leer, resulta evidente que la obra de Ferrada es producto de una dedicación minuciosa y profundamente consciente de la representatividad que las palabras pueden lograr en torno a la realidad que nos rodea.

Hay en sus textos una mirada profunda y reflexiva de las situaciones que para cualquier otra persona podrían pasar desapercibidas, pero en sus manos, se transforman en episodios significativos que dan sentido por completo a vidas aparentemente pequeñas, menores, diminutas.

Su obra rescata, entonces, el valor de la expresión oral y escrita y la propia reflexión sobre la posibilidad de las palabras de dar cuenta de un mundo que es infinitamente más grande que lo que cabe en sus páginas. De esta manera, entonces, aparece como una literatura extremadamente consciente de su lugar en la vida de sus lectores, en su vida propia, y en el contexto histórico del país. Para no perdérsela.

when we told them the story. The other project is a book of short poems, also inspired in nature; it is written in Braille, and it continues *Animal*, a book published by Alboroto in Mexico.

In April 2020, my second novel should appear. It tells the story of a boy who lives in the outskirts of a huge city; from his window he observes a man—his uncle—who has decided to leave this world in order to go and live in the back of a Coke billboard.

Conclusion

As you can see, it seems evident that Ferrada's work is a product of much dedication and that she is very much aware of the representative power words can achieve in the world that surrounds us. Her texts reveal depth and contemplation of situations that could be meaningless to other people; yet, in her hands, these are transformed into completely eloquent episodes, that give life to apparently insignificant, tiny, trivial lives.

Thus, her work rescues the value of oral and written expression, reflecting her personal insight on words' possibility to account for a world that is infinitely larger than what fits onto a page. Therefore, her literature crystalizes as writing that is tremendously aware of its place in the life of her readers and in the historical moment of our country. Don't miss her!

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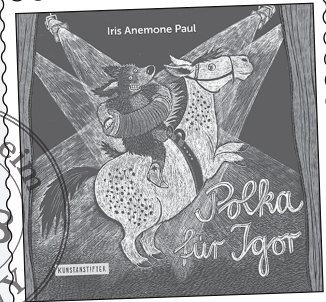
Andrea Casals Hill is a doctor of Literature from the P. Universidad Católica de Chile. She specializes in children's and young readers' literature and ecocriticism.

What does a descendant of Baron Munchausen look like, who happens to be an old Polish circus dog with the name of Igor? In her first picturebook, Paul has convincingly resolved the question. By using hatching to imitate scratchboard, she makes Igor's black fur streaked with white and his eyes sparkle when he fantasizes about his life as an artist. The illustrations celebrate in muted colors the eastern European tradition, while the cast of characters calls to mind that of the "Town Musicians of Bremen." But here animals stand as equals of their human companions. The pictures are permeated with musicality and conviviality, delightfully filled with humorous details. Entertainment is also ensured by a rhythmical alternating between pages of text with minimal illustration and double-spread panoramas with no text at all. This title was nominated for the 2019 German Children's Literature Award.

Jury of the German Children´s Literature Award



Polka für Igor (A Polka for Igor)

Iris Anemone Paul
Mannheim, Germany:
Kunstanstifter, 2018, 48 pp.
ISBN: 978-3-942795-70-8
(Picturebook; ages 5+)

Bookbird **is always looking to publish interviews with children's literature authors and illustrators from around the world. We invite you to submit your interview article to the editors at any time (Petros Panaou – ppanaou@uga.edu & Janelle Mathis – janelle.mathis@unt.edu).**

A Place to Play in Astrid Lindgren's Stories

by MARK WEST

Toward the end of her life, Astrid Lindgren was approached by Staffan Götestam, a popular Swedish actor and director, about establishing a cultural center in Stockholm devoted to celebrating her many children's books. Götestam had starred in a film version of Lindgren's *The Brothers Lionheart* in the 1970s, and this experience sparked his deep passion for Lindgren's stories. Initially, Lindgren rejected that idea of creating a center focused entirely on her and her books, but she gradually warmed up to the idea of establishing a place that celebrated children's authors and illustrators from Scandinavia. This idea eventually resulted in the creation of Junibacken. Promoted as a "children's cultural center with books at its heart," Junibacken combines the elements of an interactive children's museum, a children's theater, and a children's bookstore. Junibacken opened to the public in June 8, 1996, and Lindgren, along with the King and Queen of Sweden, attended the grand opening.

During Junibacken's first year of operation, a girl named Sanna Pedersen visited the center along with her family. She was six years old at the time, and she enjoyed exploring the center and pretending to be characters from her favorite children's books. She especially liked to play the role of Ronia from Lindgren's *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter.* The center entranced her, and that spell persists to this very day. In 2011, Sanna joined the staff of Junibacken, and she is now the manager of public operations.

I recently traveled to Stockholm to visit Junibacken and interview Sanna. Stockholm is a city of interlinked islands, and the island where Junibacken is located is often called Museum Island. On my walk from the hotel to Junibacken, I passed several other museums, including a museum devoted to the Swedish pop band ABBA and the Vasa Museum, which houses the historic Swedish warship *Vasa* that sank on its maiden voyage in 1628 but was raised and restored in the 1960s.

As I approached the entrance to Junibacken, I spotted a bronze statue of Lindgren. Created by the sculptor Hertha Hilfon, the statue depicts

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Lindgren seated, holding an open book in her lap. I arrived early for my appointment with Sanna, so I paused and spent fifteen minutes looking at the statue and reflecting on how Lindgren came to call Stockholm her home. Since I had just read Jens Andersen's *Astrid Lindgren: The Woman behind Pippi Longstocking*, the details of Lindgren's life were still fresh in my memory.

Lindgren lived in Stockholm for most of her life, but she did not grow up in the city. She was born in the Swedish town of Vimmerby in 1907, and she spent her childhood on a farm that was then on the outskirts of the town. Her parents expected her to help in the fields and do her fair share of chores, but Lindgren had plenty of leisure time (Andersen 23-25). As Lindgren later recalled, these were happy years during which she and her siblings spent countless hours playing. "In our play life," she wrote, "we were wondrously free and never supervised. And we played and played and played so much so, it's a wonder we never played ourselves to death" (*Whole World* 15).

Lindgren's happy childhood years were followed by a period of rebelliousness. While still a teenager, she had a scandalous relationship with the married editor of the town newspaper, *Vimmerby Tidning*. When she got pregnant, she and her parents felt it best for her to leave Vimmerby. She moved to Stockholm in the summer of 1926, initially thinking that she would stay there for the duration of her pregnancy, but in the end, she never moved back to Vimmerby. She landed a job in Stockholm at the Royal Automobile Club, where she met her future husband, Sture Lindgren. They married in 1931, and they set up their home in Stockholm (Andersen 90-91). However, once she became an author, she often drew on her childhood experiences in and around Vimmerby in her stories for children.

After spending fifteen minutes thinking about Lindgren's life, I realized that the time for my scheduled meeting with Sanna had arrived. I entered Junibacken surrounded by a crowd of excited children. Sanna met me just inside the main entrance, and she then gave me a guided tour of the center. Unlike a conventional museum, Junibacken does not devote much space to static exhibits or glassed-in display cases. Instead, most of the rooms feature interactive play spaces, all of which are loosely structured around children's stories. Many of the play spaces revolve around Lindgren's stories, but some of the spaces relate to children's stories by other Scandinavian authors. As Sanna and I wandered from one play space to another, we saw children of all ages pretending to be characters from stories or using blocks to construct buildings or scenes from their favorite stories. Sanna explained to me that these spaces are intended to provide children with opportunities to immerse themselves in stories. "We want them to fill in the gaps in the stories through their play," she said. "We want them to engage with the museum as a sort of playhouse."

Numerous children's books are represented in the play spaces at Junibacken, but the centerpiece is a full-scale replica of the home of Pippi Longstocking, Lindgren's most famous character. Called Villa Villekulla, this structure perfectly matches Lindgren's description of Pippi's home, complete with a ramshackle front porch with a large horse standing near-

by. Children are free to explore both the exterior and the interior of Pippi's house. The interior is furnished exactly as it is described in Lindgren's three Pippi Longstocking books. On the day that I toured Junibacken with Sanna, we saw swarms of children climbing in and out of Pippi's house. Some were pretending to be Pippi or other characters from the books, while other children used Pippi's house as the setting for their own stories. For the most part, the parents stood outside the house and just waved to their offspring when the children poked their heads through the window openings or suddenly materialized on the porch, but some parents ventured into Pippi's house and seemed to enjoy the experience of playing in the house alongside their children. I noticed one father who was pretending to be Pippi's father, an adventuresome sea captain.

Junibacken also includes a theater where plays based on children's books are regularly performed and a special interior ride known as the Story Train. The ride takes visitors through three-dimensional scenes based on six of Lindgren's children's books, including *Karlsson-on-the-Roof*, *The Brothers Lionheart*, and *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter.* Designed by artist and illustrator Marit Törnqvist, these scenes are combined with a narration written by Lindgren herself. In fact, the narrative that Lindgren wrote for this ride was the last text that she wrote before her death in 2002.

As Sanna mentioned to me, both the theater and the Story Train provide visitors with immersive experiences based on children's stories. She went on to say, "Everything we do starts with books and ends with books. Our hope is to encourage children not just to play in stories but to read the stories that are at the core of Junibacken."

In many ways, Junibacken promotes literacy education through its emphasis on learning through play. As Ulla Lundqvist points out her article about Astrid Lindgren's Pippi Longstocking series, Pippi "plays all day; for her, work is play and play work" (100). Pippi's propensity to play reflects the high premium that Lindgren placed on children's play. Play, especially dramatic play, figures prominently in all of Lindgren's stories for children, so it seems fitting that dramatic play is such an important part of the experience of visiting Junibacken.

During my visit to Junibacken, I spent much of my time observing the playful behavior of children as they explored the center. As Brian Sutton-Smith explains in *The Ambiguity of Play*, there are many different types of play. However, the type of play that most directly relates to the children's responses to Junibacken is dramatic play or, as it is sometimes called, pretend play. This type of play usually involves a narrative element. Through their play, children not only act out stories, but they transform the stories

in the process, often taking a collaborative approach. The child players bargain and compromise as they assign roles and revise plot elements. "What they reproduce," writes Sutton-Smith, "is a playful theatric adaptation" (154). I saw this pattern over and over again as I watched the children interact with the play environments provided for them at Junibacken. These children incorporated in their play elements of Lindgren's stories (or other authors' stories), but they made up their own stories and acted them out through their dramatic play.

Jerome Singer and Dorothy Singer are two of the most influential child psychologists to study this topic. In their book *The House of Make-Believe: Children's Play and the Developing Imagination*, they discuss at length the importance of dramatic play in children's psychological and cognitive development. They argue that through this type of dramatic play, children explore social roles, improve their communication skills, and cultivate their imaginations. The Singers also stress that this type of play contributes to the development of literacy among children. By playing in stories, children began to understand and eventually internalize narrative structures. By pretending to be various characters, they began to discern character traits. By speaking for characters, they began to learn about the importance of voice and point of view (135-37).

Another benefit of children's dramatic play, according to the Singers, is that it can help children develop a sense of empathy. Jerome Singer addresses this topic in his book *The Child's World of Make Believe: Experimental Studies in Imaginative Play.* In this book, he writes:

> An important feature of sociodramatic play that goes beyond its value in maintaining subject matter interest and in developing cognitive skills lies in the area of social skills. It can initiate the children into techniques such as *role reversal* in developing empathy and as a means of resolving conflicts and setting up bases for agreement. (247)

I observed several examples of this type of conflict resolution while I was touring Junibacken with Sanna. I remember seeing two boys—I think they were brothers—building a fort with the large blocks provided in one of the play spaces. I could not understand what the boys were saying since I cannot speak Swedish, but Sanna explained to me that they were building their version of the fort featured in Lindgren's *Ronja, the Robber's Daughter*. I noticed that they were having a disagreement over the fort's tower. From what I could gather, the older boy was claiming the tower for

himself, and the younger boy felt left out. They resolved the conflict when the older boy helped his younger compatriot build a second tower over which the younger boy could preside. Even though I could not understand what these boys were saying to each other, I had a sense that the older boy was empathizing with the younger boy and used the flexibility of play to work out a compromise that satisfied both of them.

The interactions of these two boys underscored for me how Junibacken facilitates children's dramatic play. This center is designed to provide children with an interactive play environment in which they can immerse themselves in Lindgren's and other authors' stories, play in settings based on these stories, and pretend to be characters in these stories. By fostering this type of story-based dramatic play, Junibacken contributes to children's literacy education and promotes their developing sense of empathy.

Sanna ended my tour of Junibacken by showing me their bookstore, which is the largest children's bookstore in Sweden. Sanna has a special affection for the bookstore since she worked in the store for several years before being promoted to her current position. Sanna helped me find English translations of several of Lindgren's children's books, and she stood in line with me behind a large family waiting to pay. All of the children in the family had selected books for their parents to purchase. Sanna looked pleased. "I am always happy," she said to me, "when children leave Junibacken with books in their hands."

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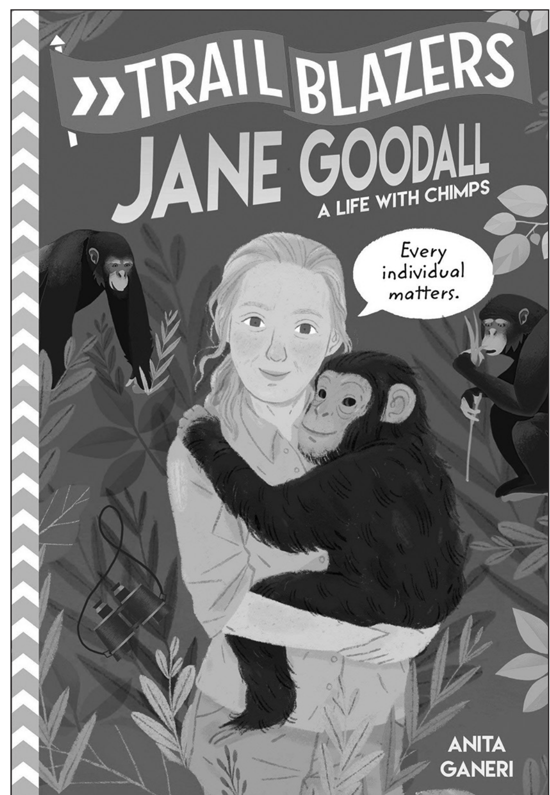
Mark West is a professor of English at the University of North Caroline Charlotte, where he has taught since 1984. He regularly teaches courses on children's and young adult literature. He has written or edited sixteen books, the most recent of which is *Shapers of American Childhood*, which he co-edited with Kathy Merlock Jackson. His articles have appeared in various national publications, including *The New York Times Book Review*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Americana*, and *British Heritage*, as well as many academic journals. Before entering academia, he worked as an early childhood educator and professional puppeteer.

The Legacy of Jane Goodall: Using Children's Literature to Teach about an Iconic Scientist

by DAVID CAMPOS

When I was a boy in the 1970s, I watched a National Geographic documentary about a young woman scientist who traveled from her native United Kingdom to live in the forests of Tanzania to learn about chimpanzees in their natural habitat. The documentary, *Miss Goodall and the Wild Chimpanzees* (1965), left me inspired by her unbridled enthusiasm. Indeed, Jane Goodall's lifelong passion for observing animals compelled her to leave the comforts of her home to live in the remote forest and study as much as she could about chimpanzees. For years throughout my schooling, I would think about Jane Goodall and wonder what had become of her. Without the aid and benefit of the Internet at that time, I was left speculating whether her adventurous quest proved valuable.



Two decades later, I was teaching second grade. By happenstance, I found a videocassette of that documentary that had piqued my curiosity for the dedicated woman who had a penchant for observing and socially connecting with chimpanzees. I decided to show my students the documentary with the aim of introducing the living scientist and recognizing her contributions to primatology, while stimulating their inquisitive nature to pursue their own study of animals. At the time, children's books about Jane Goodall were not readily available, so I used encyclopedic entries that my students and I read together to learn more about her life work.

Indeed, the children's literature on Jane Goodall while I was growing up and available to me as a young public-school teacher was scarce. At the time it seemed nonexistent. Today, however, there is a wide range of children's books that teachers, librarians, and parents can use to offer insight into Goodall's legacy, such as the 2012 Caldecott Honor book *Me...Jane* (McDonnell; 2011). My goal in this article is to share how you can use these children's books as instructional tools to help students develop historical

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knowledge about Jane Goodall and recognize her contributions to science. Through their reading endeavors, I expect that students can become inspired to pursue their own research or take action against injustice to animals or humans alike.

Exploring the Lived Experiences of Jane Goodall through Children's Books

There are many contemporary children's books on Jane Goodall. Plenty of them share the same elements of her inspiring story through salient pictures and photographs and powerful messages, leaving young readers with lasting impressions. The principal advantage of having a spread of books that recount these aspects of Goodall's life is that you can use the inherent text variations to scaffold instruction and support all learners. You can choose from these books to meet the unique needs of individual children predicated on different features.

Reading levels: A range of publications exist, from a board book to picture and chapter books and a graphic novel. You can present the books first, allow the students to browse the content and text features, and then help them select ones that align with their reading level: not terribly hard or easy, but challenging enough.

Preferences: Of course, students should be given the opportunity to select their own books. However, you may want to demonstrate how the presentation of content differs among them. You can compare the books composed of hand-painted pictures with those that display vivid photographs and those that offer differing mediums. The students can then select the books they favor based on the graphic representations they find appealing.

Reading purposes and interests: You can remind students that readers often have a purpose when they select books: to be entertained, to strengthen their understanding of a topic, or to learn a new skill, among others, not to mention a blend of these intentions. Moreover, you can emphasize that knowing their purpose enhances the reading experience.

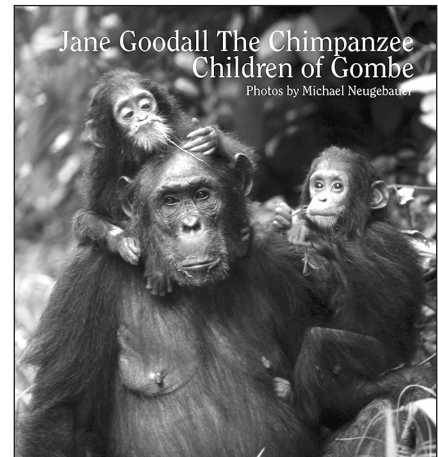
As all teachers and librarians can attest, when presenting books to children, certain factors certainly matter: the literary merit; the authenticity of the content; the unification of text, illustrations, and overall design; and so forth. The long-range intention is to inspire readers through fun, engaging, and thought-provoking books about Jane Goodall, not books that could disenchant, bore, and induce disinterest in her life story, her drive, and her deep-rooted activism. Below are books that are embellished with beautiful illustrations and photographs, depict an empowered protagonist, contribute an understanding of chimpanzee culture, and gently encourage environmental and social advocacy. Any one of these can prove valuable in sparking students' curiosity and enthusiasm for reading further.

Books for Early Readers

These picture story books have text with illustrations and are ideal for emergent readers, English learners, and children with identified special needs who can use the pictures as a guide to practice reading. These are ideal for a read-aloud, shared reading, and guided reading instruction.

In the picture story book *Me...Jane*, readers are transported to a simple time and place through warm, soft, muted-color artwork. The young protagonist graces the pages with her trusting smile that conveys innocence and evokes affection as she plays outdoors, watches birds and animals, climbs trees, and dreams of a future living with animals. Readers will identify with the easy-going Jane because they too know what it feels like to own a treasured possession they want to take everywhere they explore. Pages 10 and 11 show Goodall's original sketches and notes from when she was a young girl, which help readers see how precise she was in recording what she learned about the animals she observed.

Because of the simplicity of the story, this book makes a great starting point for any reader first learning about Jane Goodall. While little background matter is embedded in the story, an "About Jane Goodall" and "A Message from Jane" are included at the end. You can read these to and with children, so they have a deeper understanding of who she is.



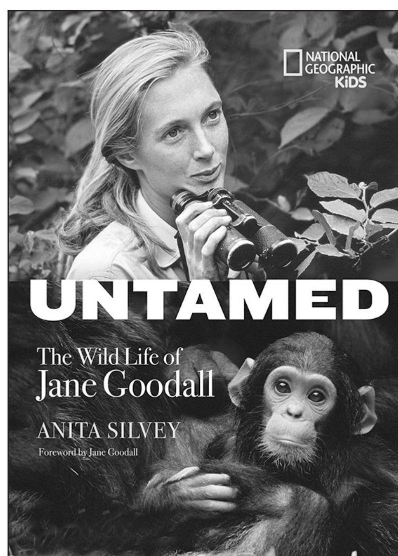
For those who expect to stimulate readers' curiosity and critical thinking about Jane Goodall with a read-aloud of this book, I suggest starting with a book walk as a preview exercise. Show the front and back book cover, read the title and author name, and point out that the Caldecott Honor silver medal seal recognizes it as an award winner. Next, present text and illustrations and underscore features in the graphics. As the pages are turned, invite the students to comment on what they see. Encourage them to make personal connections by asking questions that relate to their lives. The central idea is to build anticipation and interest in the narrative. At this point, ask the students to make predictions about the story; to generate questions they may have about the character, her role in the narrative, setting, and so forth; and to make comparisons between the book and others they have read. The purpose of this exercise is to reinforce that their background knowledge is mutually related to what they are about to learn.

The picture story book *The Watcher: Jane Goodall's Life with the Chimps* (Winter; 2011) similarly addresses the fundamental aspects of Goodall's life. In this story, however, young readers get a broader perspective of her history: how she worked and saved her money, traveled to Africa, and met Louis Leakey, who encouraged her to study the chimps. The author illustrates Jane exploring the forest in search of the elusive chimps, waiting patiently for them to accept her, and bonding with an elder chimp. As the closing emerges, readers learn about some of her discoveries from watching the chimps and her present-day endeavors raising awareness about deforestation, poachers, and chimpanzee extinction.

The artwork in this story is stylistically different than that in *Me...Jane*.

Colorful pastel hues are used to show Jane growing from an inquisitive child to a mature woman who publicly advocates for chimpanzees. The protagonist featured in this book seems less endearing and more determined (than the one in *Me...Jane*), but admirable nonetheless, because she has big dreams that she works toward, she endures despite setbacks, and she understands her purpose in life. Moreover, her candid messages for readers are authentic without sounding sermonizing: work to make dreams come true, be patient and do not lose hope, and defend the lives of animals.

If your aim is to do a read-aloud, start with a book walk drawing attention to the title, *The Watcher*, which is a theme that runs through the narrative. After flipping through some pages and drawing students' attention to the vibrant pictures, point out features such as, "If you look carefully at these two pages, you can barely see these small brown animals. What do you think they are?" Again, the students can be invited to make predictions, generate questions about the story beforehand, and begin making connections to the story. This book offers opportunities for open-ended questions that invite students to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the information presented to them.



Another picture story book that lends itself well to a read-aloud is *Jane Goodall* (Vegara; 2018). In this story, readers find two pages dedicated to Goodall's childhood; the rest is devoted to her life as an adult, retracing her steps toward her current work. Two-page layouts portray Goodall's method of naming the chimps, recording their behavior, and pursuing a doctorate at Cambridge University. A timeline with four photos from her life is found at the end of the story.

Readers will appreciate the artwork, which is unique and reminiscent of children's books from the 1960s: simple, yet charming. Perhaps the style is intentional, to convey the notion that Goodall's childhood and her early research on the chimps are from a period relatively long ago, but her advocacy work is current. While most of the illustrations are composed of darker colors, the characters and chimpanzees alike are smiling throughout the book, giving a warm and inviting impression.

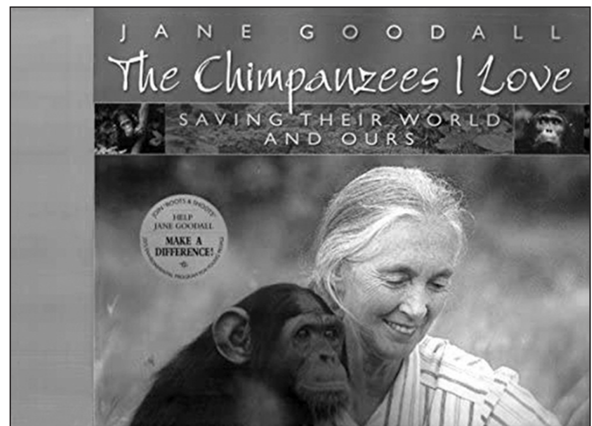
Books for Independent or Silent Reading

These next books are more informational in nature and are ideally suited for students to read on their own. Of course, you can read aloud parts of the text to excite students about content they can pursue individually. However, these books have more sentences of varying lengths, introduce more advanced words, and impart longer content that can be complex.

I Am Jane Goodall (Meltzer; 2016) reads much like a graphic novel, with illustrations in panels, speech balloons that complement narration, and eye-catching drawings composed of vibrant colors. Readers will find the protagonist portrayed as a happy-go-lucky child with wide-eyed enthusiasm throughout the story, narrating life events with more explicit commentary than the books referenced so far. In this story, perseverance and

dedication are clear messages because Goodall explains how girls during her childhood were expected to fulfill gender roles that did not include becoming a scientist or living alone in the forest. Her determination to travel to Africa to study chimpanzees helped her overcome those obstacles. The book ends with actual photographs that accompany a timeline of her life. Students might read this book alone, after which you might pose personal response questions to spark a conversation about the book, followed by critical questions.

I would be remiss if I did not include these two children's books penned by Jane Goodall herself: *With Love: Ten Heartwarming Stories of Chimpanzees in the Wild* (1994) and *The Chimpanzee Children of Gombe* (2014). They are notably distinct from the books presented thus far because they focus on the chimps rather than her biography. In the former, Goodall narrates a firsthand account of her experiences in the Gombe National Park, with stories about the relationships specific chimps have with each other. Readers get a glimpse of what she learned from studying the chimps and how they grew increasingly present in her life. While there is no traditional narrative arc that children are used to, the vignettes are fascinating nonetheless, because they give readers powerful insight into chimp behavior. In the last few pages, Goodall explains the plight of chimpanzees across Africa and the world, and ways readers can get involved with her two global organizations, the Jane Goodall Institute and Roots & Shoots. The colored pencil and muted watercolor illustrations reveal chimps with dramatic expressions or in active movement.



The latter is a larger book with a strong visual appeal because of the colorful and thought-provoking photographs. Here, Goodall invites readers to join her on an expedition through the Gombe National Park to experience what she sees during her purposeful explorations. Drawing attention to the photos of chimps teeming with a great show of energy contrasted with chimps in tranquil moments, Goodall calls attention to specific chimpanzee behavior, and in a roundabout way encourages readers to make connections from chimp culture to their own. All the while, she nudges readers to be curious about nature and chimps.

Conversation starters for both books can include critical thinking questions specific to the chimps and to the importance of Goodall's global organizations. Inquiry on the Internet can support students' interest as well as teach research skills.

Books for Intermediate Readers

Readers who can sustain reading longer texts, apply a variety of strategies as they read, and use reading to build knowledge will appreciate these books. They are more informational in nature, cover real-life events through multiple levels of detail (e.g., chimps mistreated in captivity,

chimps that are kidnapped and sold, chimps that are orphaned), and are organized into chapters. More advanced readers can read the book from cover to cover, but less skilled readers who want to examine the pictures, read some of the content, and review captions, sidebars, and other features can benefit from these books as well.

Untamed: The Wild Life of Jane Goodall (Silvey; 2015) and *The Chimpanzees I Love: Saving Their World and Ours* (Goodall; 2001) are victorious in providing high-quality content that is likely to engage the most reluctant of readers. Nestled in alluring photographs, the books are comprehensive about Goodall's life work while providing useful maps, timelines, sidebars of tantalizing information, and other facts and resources. Because of the coverage of Goodall's work in protecting the chimpanzees, a good takeaway is a strong sense for her current mission in life: to protect and improve the lives of chimpanzees worldwide. After reading about Goodall's organizations, students can decide for themselves how to make the world a better place by getting involved.

The chapter books, *Jane Goodall* (Romero; 2019), *Jane Goodall: A Life with Chimps* (Ganeri; 2019), and *Who Is Jane Goodall?* (Edwards; 2012), are standard biographies that each present Goodall's life in a unique way. Readers who seek more detailed information coupled with illustrations, photos, and text bites about her biography will not be disappointed. While these lack the stunning photographs that *Untamed* and *The Chimpanzees I Love* offer, the traditional narrative arcs are meaningful and leave readers positively impacted.

Conclusion

Jane Goodall is a modern-day icon, a scientist whose current core mission is to educate others about chimpanzees and, at the same time, protect their well-being. Young readers can be inspired by reading about her captivating life's work, in children's literature that ranges from picture story books to chapter books. Through a variety of approaches to format, text, and visual appeal, these books address the pivotal points in her decades-long biography, but they do so in unique and interesting ways that captivate readers, provoke their curiosity, and inspire them to contemplate how they, too, can make a difference of their own in the lives of animals.

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David Campos holds a Ph.D. from The University of Texas at Austin in Learning Disabilities and Behavior Disorders. He is a professor at the University of the Incarnate Word. David has written books on issues that impact education, which include *Cultivating Creativity Through World Films* (2020), *Educating Latino Boys* (2013), *Jump Start Health* (2011); and *Understanding Gay and Lesbian Youth* (2005), among others.

Yellow Hats as Yellow Stars

by GEORGIA KARANTONA AND TASOULA TSILIMENI

The visualization of the horrific massacre scenes of the Holocaust is either difficult or impossible for someone to imagine. In Greece, only a few authors and illustrators of children's literature have engaged in dealing with the Holocaust. A remarkable exception is the picturebook *Yellow Hats*, written and illustrated by Kelly Matathia-Kovo. As a second-generation survivor, the writer and illustrator presents her own family story in a way that is accessible to children and to everyone who wants to learn about a true Holocaust story. The first word of the beginning of the book, *remember*, indicates that the story is based on true events, declaring that the writer is a member of the Jewish Society.

A glance at the cover of the book reminds one of nothing regarding the Holocaust, the Jews, or World War II. Only the yellow-drawn word *Hats* in the title and the word *yellow* itself can be associated with the yellow stars. The story describes the survival of a Jewish family from *therio*, the Greek word for *beast*, during WWII. Multiple meanings, various symbolisms, narration that emulates the illustrations, and a happy ending compose an appealing story, which enables the reader to think deeper and concentrate on the fear and despair of the dark ages of the Third Reich.

The heroes of this book are a Jewish family who, absurdly, are not portrayed as humans but as animals—sheep. Orwell's famous representation technique seems more powerful than ever in this children's picturebook, as it can offer latent symbolisms to the reader in an easy and direct way.

Mr. and Mrs. Be, with their seven sheep, used to live in harmony with the other animals on the green farm. Suddenly, there are rumors that wild beasts are looking for the sheep. An adventure is beginning for the sheep family as the rumors come true. The writer's skillfully used imagination makes the reader feel familiar with the story. The number seven she craftily presents was used in a famous Grimm's fairy tale, "The Wolf and the Seven Young Goats." In general, illustrations seem to follow a cycle: from colorful at the beginning, when the family lives in harmony before the war, to black and gray tones when the Nazi danger is emerging, and back to colorful again at the end, highlighting their safety and security after the Allies win and the war is ended.

Even though recognizable Nazi symbols such as the swastika, the Nazi salute, or the Nazi insignia are totally missing from illustrations, the yel-

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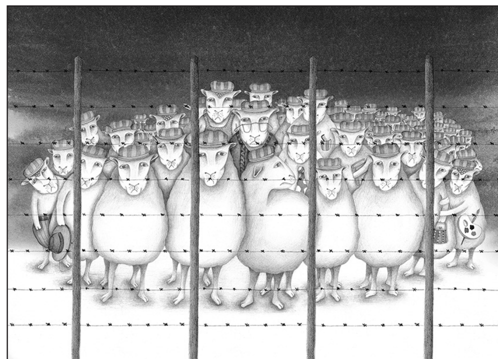
low striped hats refer to yellow stars that all Jews were obliged to wear as a symbol of discrimination. On the visual level, perpetrators are unseen and covered carefully behind the dark sky, which makes the sheep feel and live in fear and anguish. In two spreads, though, the black sky and the gray-tone illustration compose a scene of fear and dread, with the airplanes flying threateningly in the sky, releasing their bombs. Nazis, called wild beasts, intended to imprison the sheep "in dark places." Obviously, the dark place is either the ghetto where the Nazis transferred the Jews or a concentration camp, as the illustration with the sheep behind a barbed-wire fence depicts.

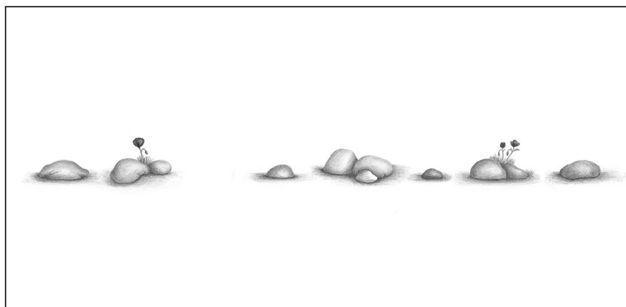
In one spread, the circumstances under which the sheep are forced to live constantly are described as simply as possible. Sheep could neither go to their work anymore nor to school nor out in the range. They could not play with their friends, and they are obliged to wear yellow hats instead of the common yellow stars. These obligations are noticeably referred to in the Nuremberg Laws as constituting the beginning of the end of the Jews' freedom and as showing the increasing radicalization of policies toward the Jews, which culminated in massive murders.



While Jews are symbolized as sheep, the people who risked their lives to protect and save them from Nazi persecution are symbolized as the rabbit, the cockerel, and the mouse. It is this remarkable choice of the rescuers that reminds us of the "Righteous Among the Nations," non-Jewish people, who took great risks to save Jews during the Holocaust (Yad Vashem). Rescue took many forms and the Righteous came from different nations, religions, and walks of life. In *Yellow Hats*, the sheep find shelter in a small cabin on the mountain at a time when hostility and indifference are prevailing. Rescuers' actions were extraordinary as they did not act in a passive manner by enjoying the security and comfort their houses could offer. As is pointed out, all of them, with no exceptions, kept their secret safe, without revealing it to the Nazis.

This story has a happy ending as the family is safe and secure, thanks to their friends' altruistic efforts. The rabbit, the cockerel, and the mouse proved to be faithful friends who risked their lives to save the family. The story decries intensely those who were blind to the deportation of, persecution of, and discrimination against the Jews in Greece and in other countries. It is the adult reader again who can realize the secret meanings, and only he or she can manage to explain it to the younger audience.

The book is an anthem of life, resilience, and fortitude as the sheep heroes make their lives again, finding ways to overcome the fear, the darkness, and the traumatic experience, despite their sufferings. The book indirectly addresses the strength that people and systems demonstrate that enable them to rise above adversity. Holocaust survivors considered themselves resilient and felt they were transcendent or had engaged in behaviors that helped them grow and change over the years since the Holocaust. This included leaving a legacy and contributing to the community.



In the next-to-last spread, the author refers to modern anti-Semitism, indicating that history is repeated and all of us should stay alert as "the wild beasts...are still up on the mountains." In the last spread, a row of stones is depicted, referring to all those who were lost but never forgotten. Red poppies seem to flower through the stones as the most well-known symbol of remembrance.

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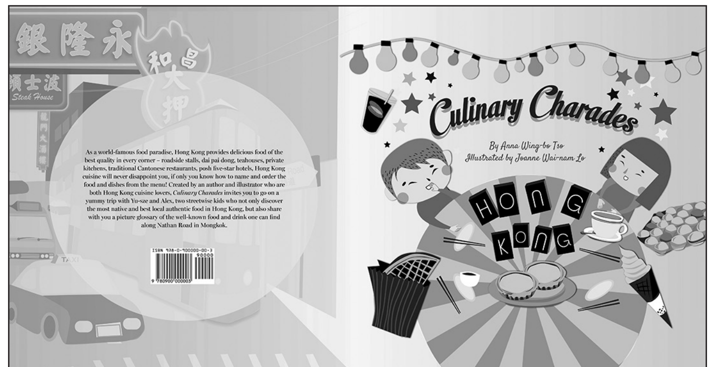
New Adventures in Hong Kong

by HELENA HING WA SIT

Hong Kong, a remarkable blend of Western and Oriental traditions, has long been known as Asia's capital of connection. With its notable history of British colonization, which lasted over a century, to its present status as Special Administrative Region of China since its handover in 1997, a new, modern Hong Kong emerges, uniting the cultures and traditions of both East and West—a fascinating melting pot of the world. In the Hong Kong children's book series, Anna Tso, born-and-bred local Hong Konger, scholar in language arts, and associate professor of children's literature, teams up in an informational narrative with the vivid drawings of Joanne Lo, a Canadian-born illustrator raised in both Toronto and Hong Kong. The book series provides local and international audiences alike with an amazing opportunity to explore Hong Kong, with its own unique history, cultural fusion, and way of life. The useful recommendations and tips from Tso and Lo on navigating life in Hong Kong are impartially presented from a fresh perspective.

As a collection of six English stories set in the local Hong Kong context, which includes *Culinary Charades*, *The Summer of 1997*, *Unforgettable Neighbours*, *Taming Babel*, *Herstory*, and *A Tale of Two Haunted Universities*, the book series is rich in detail, touching on topics that will both delight and interest curious young readers aged from eight to twelve. Covering a wide range of themes, this wonderful series of children's stories is a portrait of daily life and a reflection of the times, both past and present. These theme include Hong Kong's culinary roots; its sovereignty history, culture, and identity; the local vernacular Cantonese language; the complexities of juggling life, work, and family for professional Hong Kong women; and Hong Kong's architecture, nature, and animals. Cleverly conceived, and at times also moving, the stories include plenty of vocabulary words, phrases, and sentences that are easy for ESL/EFL[1] readers to learn and understand. Following are some book highlights.



World-renowned as an Asian food paradise, Hong Kong has something to offer for everyone. In *Culinary Charades*, readers embark on a food journey through the cultural dining experience of drinking Chinese tea and eating dim sum. From the most typical, popular street food, such as chou do fu (sticky tofu) and curry fish balls, to three-stuffed treasures, a

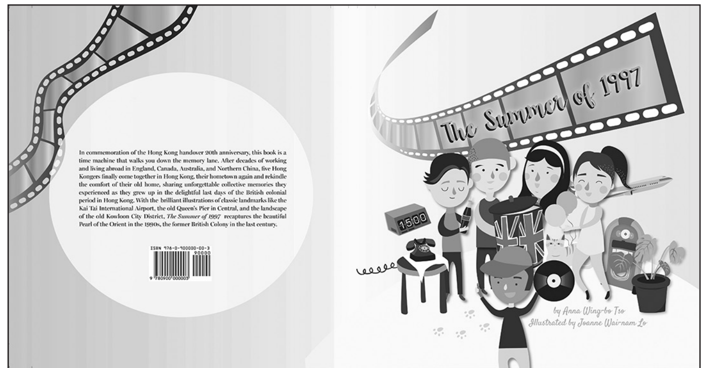
snack that allows you to choose your own adventure, the story reveals the uniqueness of this specialty among Canton's diverse culinary roots. What are some of the other attractive and sensational dim sum or street snacks that entice your tastebuds? Read and name more in this food tour story.

There is great fun to be had learning Cantonese with *Taming Babel*. Due to its complicated tonal system, learning Cantonese is often thought to be difficult. This handy collection offers some unique ways of acquiring Cantonese words and expressions that would be especially useful for those visiting Hong Kong. In this story, the effectiveness of the narration lies in its humor, simultaneously engaging and entertaining, raising learners' interests as they explore this beautiful language in relation to their daily lives. Detailed, fresh learning examples are used to explain why speaking Cantonese is not as hard as people think, while amazing tips and tricks shared by the foreign characters show readers how to make the language fun to acquire.

Herstory is a semiautobiographical tale about the core values of the Hong Kong people—the Lion Rock Spirit—which emphasize hard work, flexibility, continual improvement, and a pioneering attitude. Drawing from her own experiences growing up in Hong Kong and inspired by the true stories of female family members who succeeded in balancing family and caring responsibilities with their professional careers, in *Herstory* the author challenges the traditional Chinese notion that men are breadwinners while women are homemakers. In doing so, she sheds light on the realities faced by Hong Kong women—the conflicting expectations between achieving success in the workplace and undertaking caregiving duties within the home. The story also highlights the importance of filial piety, shown through the mutual support of parents and children, and demonstrates how cultivating a positive learning environment within the home is closely related to the growth of children.

Then, in *Unforgettable Neighbours*, readers are introduced to Hong Kong's fascinating culture and deep spiritual wealth, themes that are explored through architecture and their connection with both nature and family relationships. Nestled among its streets and laneways, the distinc-

tive historical buildings that can be spotted throughout Hong Kong reveal the shared memories of its inhabitants—each brick with its own story. The author writes in the hope that more young readers come to understand and appreciate how Hong Kong's landscape, the contrast of old and new surrounded by nature, forms part of the more beautiful aspects of this city. There is a call for the historical spirit and culture of the city to be integrated into modern living and tourism to ensure that the essence of what makes Hong Kong so unique is not lost. These ideals are depicted through the memories of three brothers and sisters, who revisit their childhood in their old home with their granny. Together, looking out at Hong Kong's marvelous night sky with its twinkling stars, they reminisce about adventures from years long gone, remembering cherished family members and unforgettable neighbors.



Published in 2017, *The Summer of 1997* was written to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the return of Hong Kong. The story tells of five friends who reunite in Hong Kong twenty years after graduating from secondary school. Read and share with these old friends their collective memories of growing up in Hong Kong, set against the backdrop of unforgettable 1990s classic landmarks, such as the Kai Tai International Airport, the old Queen's Pier in Central, and the bustling landscape of the old Kowloon City District. The friends take readers down memory lane, poignantly conveying how—regardless of how much time has passed—coming home to the most heart-warming place in the world is always the best.

New to the series is *A Tale of Two Haunted Universities*, a ghost story that young readers will enjoy. Children are naturally drawn to good ghost stories and tales of the supernatural, which allow them to experience the thrill of being scared within the safe confines of a book's pages. Vivid and easy to understand, this spook-tacular ghost story is a reflection of the life of human beings, an expression of beauty, good, and evil. Hong Kong, while highly urbanized, retains many traditional folk customs and even taboos, and thus provides the ultimate setting for this ghost story, adding to the chills that will captivate young readers. Explore more with Anna to see how she was taught the consequences of not adhering to local rituals, such as "Do not stay out late, spirits may follow you home," "Do not walk in the dark near walls," and "Be mindful not to step on or kick any offering items or joss sticks on the roadside"—

which serve as a reminder of the importance of following rules to avoid the potential real-world dangers around us.

This collection, which brings together original short stories and pictures about everyday life in Hong Kong, is highly recommended by academics around the globe not only for language learning but also for its accessibility. I am very excited that you will be meeting these amazing characters soon and hope you enjoy your new adventures in Hong Kong.

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Helena Hing Wa Sit is a senior lecturer at the School of Education, University of Newcastle, Australia. Her expertise includes international education, second language education, English language teaching strategies for ESL/EFL learners, and cross-cultural studies. Her research experience at the University of Hong Kong, the University of Newcastle, and Macquarie University is concerned with internationalization, transformative learning, and innovation in language education programs. She is currently supervising multiple PhD students in education and her contributions have been recognized at both the national and international levels.

Lică Sainciuc:
As Happy as a Lark, across the Years

by VLADIMIR KRAVCHENKO

The aesthetic aspects featuring images of innocence are scarcely evaluated in the Republic of Moldova, a small sovereign country situated in the extreme east of Europe. That is why the publication of a hardcover album on children's book art by Lică Sainciuc, a renowned Moldavian children's book illustrator, designer, and researcher soon became an important literary event. It is Sainciuc who has been promoting the images of national childhood for the last four decades, both until and after the establishing of the IBBY Moldavian national section in 1997.

The brightly colored album, published by the Lumina Publishing House in Chisinau, is titled *Grafică de carte pentru copii* and contains more than two hundred illustrations by Lică Sainciuc for books authored by the most famous children's writers of the country. Among them is Spiridon Vangheli, the only Moldavian nominee for the Hans Christian Andersen Award and the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. Illustrations carefully examined and reproduced in the present album were carried out from 1963 until 2018, and were published mainly in Moldova and Romania. In 2019, the album was recommended by the Selection Committee of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research to be published with an introductory text by Vladimir Kravchenko, researcher of the Institute of Cultural Heritage, Department of Visual Arts.

As a culminating point of his brilliant activity, Sainciuc was endowed a National Prize 2019 for his children's book illustrations. It is the first time in the Republic of Moldova that this distinction of great national value was awarded for this kind of contribution. The Romanian Cultural Institute had previously awarded Sainciuc the Vieru Prize, while the Union of Artists had awarded him another special prize. The award ceremonies for the National Prize 2019 took place at the International Book Fair for Children and Youth in Chisinau, the only fair event at the international level dedicated to children's books in the country, organized with the support of the Moldavian IBBY since 1997. Sainciuc was laureate of the Igor Vieru prize in 2010 at the fourteenth edition of the fair. Also, he authored the graphic layout of *Cartier Codobelc*, a highly ranked, prize-winning collection of children's books. For the twenty-two-year history of the fair, the artist has illustrated *Book-surprise* [*Cartea-surpriză*], a picturebook distributed free of charge to all young visitors to the fair, as well as two Books of the Year. One of these, both authored and illustrated by Sainciuc, was translated into English.

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Lică Sainciuc has proven to be an expert in the psychology of the youngest children. All along his artistic career, he has targeted comic vision, introducing eloquent details to approach authenticity, emphasizing on characteristic gestures without overloading composition with trivial expressions, and combining the grotesque with romantic intonations and documentary replicas. Although highly inspired by the art of world-famous cartoons and comic strips, Sainciuc provided an original graphic style of the character of jolly games. This is brought out by masterful use of traditional techniques (pen-and-ink drawing, ecoline, airbrush, felt-tip pen, gouache, appliqué) and also of digital ones (mix of contours, hues and color gradations, other elements of professional designer apps) during the last twenty years.

In the album, illustrations representative of the evolution of Moldavian children's literature and art are described and analyzed. The refined illustrations by Sainciuc are commented on in Romanian and English, attracting national and international interest in the album, which is addressed to children and adults of all nations.

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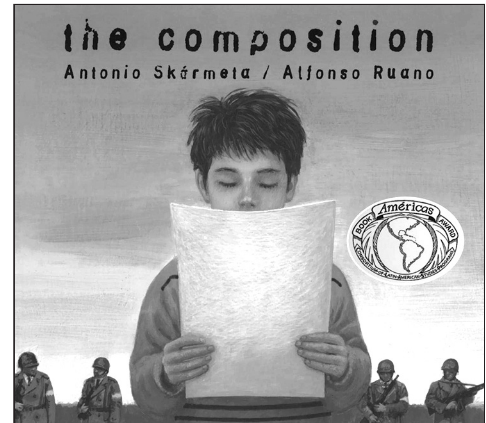
Vladimir Kravchenko is a scientific researcher at the Institute of Cultural Heritage in the Academy of Science of Moldova.

Reflections on the Aesthetics of Antonio Skarmeta's Picturebook, *The Composition*

by RITWIK GHOSH

Antonio Skarmeta's picturebook, *The Composition*, masterfully illustrated by Alfonso Ruano, delineates the development of political consciousness in the mind of its young protagonist, Pedro, and does so by combining the arts of literary narration and artistic illustration. A critique of military dictatorship, the book imaginatively depicts the effects of dictatorship and right-wing military repression on the lives of children and their parents. The illustrations are realistic and depict mundane scenes of daily life to bring into focus the uncertainty, fear, and arbitrariness of life in authoritarian political situations.

The pictorial immediacy of Alfonso Ruano's illustrations heightens our awareness of the social and political relationships between children and adults and the political context of their education in and outside school. They point out that political conflict affects children, forcing them into developing critical thought, independent of their parents, where the urban public experience is inevitably disputatious. In Skarmeta's story, Pedro struggles to make sense of the effects of the military dictatorship, the presence of soldiers on the streets, and his parents' interest in political news on their noisy radio. Pedro's incipient competence as a soccer player is impressive. The kidnapping of Don Daniel, the father of his friend, shocks Pedro into thought concerning the meaning and consequences of dictatorship. Daniel's parents give him the freedom to be a child and develop his political stance independently. Pedro's school is visited by a military captain who wants the children to write a composition entitled "What My Family Does at Night." In the story, a number of events show the difficulty and decay of life under the dictatorship, including the kidnapping of a teacher, the absence of the garbage truck, and the felling of a tree. The disruption of normal life is conveyed by the rarity of people on the streets and the priest not wanting to say Sunday mass.



The classroom has become an area of surveillance, where children are used to discover family secrets and political positions. The military

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captain attempts to ingratiate himself and his regime with the children. The use of a picture of the dictator to be put on the classroom wall signifies the ubiquity of authoritarian power and its dangers.

Pedro's growing political consciousness is proved by the essay he writes, in which he gives away nothing incriminating or of evidentiary value, thus protecting his family from reprisal and keeping his family's political dissidence a secret from the regime.

Of particular aesthetic interest is the illustration of Pedro and his school friend Juan sitting beside each other, with a picture of their military dictator directly behind them, and with a clothes rack attached to the wall to their right. Long lines and indentations on the wall lend a harsh realism to the painting, adding a sense of the foreboding, gravitas, and depth.

Skarmeta is widely considered a leading writer of the post-Boom of the Spanish American novel (Leslie Williams). The Composition *exemplifies his commitment to writing about common folk and working people.*

Skarmeta is widely considered a leading writer of the post-Boom of the Spanish American novel (Leslie Williams). *The Composition* exemplifies his commitment to writing about common folk and working people. The interaction of politics and the arts, and the volatility of Latin America's political institutions, have been given expression in a number of artistic styles, including muralist art, magic realism, and expressionism (Lucie-Smith). While conceptual and site-specific art has significantly conveyed the desolation and trauma of military dictatorship and its crimes, Ruano returns to a realistic depiction and engagement with the issues surrounding military dictatorship, state terrorism, and the intrusion of the military into the lives of the young. The representation of the body in Ruano's pictures points to both the emotions of the subject and its materiality. Ruano's illustrations are critically self-conscious in that they select key moments in Skarmeta's text and give them an emotionally deep yet unsentimental interpretation. Ruano's interpretation or viewpoint is not explicit, but it is not detached, either. Given that the readership of the book is young children, and that many of the events described are disturbing, Ruano settles on an approach that offers moments of both emotional comfort and intellectual reflection. At times the illustrations, on deeper reflection, give an unsettling perspective into the relationship between children and the state, and the implicatedness of growing up in the public sphere of political contention. The narratives of social involvement here are replete with insinuations of the dangers and uncertainties of everyday life.

Skarmeta's story is a brief bildungsroman that responds to the deep challenges of growing up in trying circumstances. Skarmeta's aesthetics is focused on the urban and the psychological, rejecting exoticism and improbabilities. In a paradigm shift away from magical realism, Skarmeta moves toward an urban realism that engages with the formation and challenges of individuality and the alienation produced by political volatility under dictatorship. The new artistic sensibility achieved by Skarmeta and Ruano succeeds in synthesizing political concerns with literary quality.

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Ritwik Ghosh is a PhD student of English Literature at St. Xaviers University, Kolkata, India.

This picturebook concerns a boy's misunderstanding of an idiom. The main character, Memo, whose mother uses the idiom "My mind is on Memo," thinks that his mother forgot her mind in Memo literally. Memo tries to give her mind back since he thinks that his mother would be lost without her mind. After Memo completes a quest, the story ends happily.

The story develops an understanding of idioms for children while leading them to question metaphorical sentences that adults use. The narration reverses traditional gender roles, with the mother working and the father looking after the child. A pastel color palette creates a calm tone for the story, while large-sized human figures in close-ups signify the emotional status of the characters. Overall, the book provides a starting point for children to learn idioms within a catchy adventure story.

Barış Özcan

Annemin Aklı Bende Kaldı
(My Mother's Mind Is on Me)
Özge Bahar Sunar
Illustrated by Mert Tugan
Istanbul, Turkey: Nesin Publications, 2018, 24 pp.
ISBN: 978-605-4883-99-8
(Picturebook; ages 4-6)

LiteratureCAMP, "The World Is Unjust": Show Us Texts That Move You

by CHRISTIANE RAABE

Youth Literature and Society

Against the background of increasing social tensions and political polarization due to globalization and migration, there is a boom of young adult novels about escape, expulsion and integration, about populism and racism, as well as culturally pessimistic dystopias warning of political totalitarianism, environmental destruction, and digital dictatorships. Authors of books for young people take up political debates to highlight the importance of solidarity, empathy, tolerance, and civil courage or to denounce processes of radicalization and dehumanization.

Picking up on this trend, the International Youth Library created a project that explores the relationship between young adult literature and society. They developed two formats for this purpose: a workshop series for authors and literature camps for adolescent readers.

Workshop Series

In workshop discussions, authors, journalists, and bloggers from around the world discuss the political aspects of youth literature. Can literary writing be political? What contribution can literature make to society? Can literature shape and change the worldview of young people? Are there social issues that particularly appeal to young people, such as the question of justice? Or are literary writing and the forming of political opinions mutually exclusive? These and other questions are being considered in the workshop discussions.

The workshop series was kicked off in 2019 by the Norwegian author and activist Nancy Herz, who together with two young women wrote down their experiences as migrants and young Muslim women in Norway in an unusually candid nonfiction account. Unfortunately, a workshop discussion on "Writing for the Generation Fridays for Future" planned for 2020 with a German, a French, and a Ukrainian author had to be postponed due to the pandemic.

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The LiteratureCAMP, "The World Is Unjust"

A second part of the program involves the young readers in the project. The idea is to give the young people a voice here. The International Youth Library would like to find out from them whether books have changed their view of society, whether there have been reading experiences that have opened their eyes to social issues or sensitized them to the past, present, and future world around them. Ultimately, it is about the big eternal question of whether reading can change the world.

The International Youth Library came up with the format of a literature camp for young people aged fifteen to eighteen and won the Literaturhaus München as a cooperation partner. The first literature camp took place in February 2020 in the Literaturhaus München under the title "The World Is Unjust. Show Us Texts That Move You." Justice, a sense of justice, and injustice are central themes that young people deal with. This is why questions of social justice were made the focus of the camp.

Do I really have to give up meat now out of concern for future generations, whom I myself will never meet? Am I really responsible for the problems of people living on the other side of the globe? And should I stand up for feminism, or will it end up marginalizing men? These questions launched the appeal of the International Youth Library and the Literature House to young people through schools, libraries, newspapers, and social networks, calling on them to participate in the two-day literature camp. They invited young people to join an author of young adult literature, a philosopher, and a journalist to talk about what is just and unjust and how they developed their feeling for justice from novels, nonfiction, short stories, poems, or songs.

The call was answered by thirty young people from Munich and the surrounding area. Most of them were young high-school women between the ages of fifteen and eighteen. Hardly anyone knew each other from school or other contexts before the camp. In their application to participate in the literature camp, they named the titles of novels, nonfiction, poems, and songs that had been particularly formative or significant for their sense of justice or injustice and selected a quotation from the texts that resonated with them.

The International Youth Library and the Literaturhaus had commissioned the philosophy professor Christine Bratu and the author Tobias Elsässer to lead the literature camp. Christine Bratu is one of the first women to hold a chair for feminist philosophy in Germany, while Tobias

Elsässer has received several awards for his committed young adult books.

The two opened the camp with a philosophical-literary performance to attune the young people to the topic. While the philosopher provided food for thought and involved the participants in a lively question-and-answer game, the author presented narrative effects and tricks that clearly showed how fiction can lead the reader on the wrong track and how well-worn thought patterns can be broken down and empathy promoted by changing perspectives in a story. Afterward, the young people split up into groups, took up the impulses from the performance, and explored the questions that were raised in the plenary session.

In the second session, the young people formed four new groups in which they presented their "significant" books submitted with their application. The spectrum ranged from modern classics such as Ernst Toller's *A Youth in Germany*; to books for young readers such as J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*, Angie Thomas's *The Hate U Give*, and Markus Zusack's *The Book Thief*; to nonfiction books such as Michelle Obama's *Becoming*. The young people talked about what moved and touched them in their reading and why they had chosen these books for the literature camp. Many mentioned having been strongly personally affected by their reading or admiring the courage of a protagonist as reasons for their choice. The results of the intensive group work were then shared with the others in the plenum before the author Manja Präkels was given the stage. Manja Präkels has written an autobiographical youth novel about the time of reunification in East Germany, when an aggressive youth movement of Nazis grew out of the chaos of the collapsed system. In her reading and the conversation with the young people, it became clear how deeply political youth literature can move and call for civil courage.

The third part of the literature camp was held under the motto "Save the World." The young people worked for a day with the two leaders of the literature camp, Tobias Elsässer and Christine Bratu, and with the journalist Mareike Nieberding. Nieberding had founded a political movement on social media because she was shocked by the election of Donald Trump in 2016 and has since been visiting schools regularly to talk politics with young people. While Nieberding offered a journalism workshop and sent the camp's young people to downtown Munich for interviews, Elsässer offered a workshop on empathic writing.

In her group, Bratu explored ideas about a better world using the tools of philosophy. The results of the full-day workshops were presented on stage in the plenary session at the end.

The literature camp has its own web page, which documents the activities with pictures and publishes the texts that the young people wrote during the camp (www.literaturhaus-muenchen.de/literaturcamp/). During the camp, two young social media experts accompanied the event on Instagram, recording interviews, making videos of the workshops, posting photos of participants and publishing quotes and statements (www.instagram.com/lit.camp/).

Conclusion and Outlook

The LiteratureCAMP was a great success, far exceeding the expectations of the organizers. They witnessed lively, interested, open-minded, and curious young people, passionate readers who were thirsty to meet like-minded people. All of the participants brought with them many years of reading experience, great communicative skills, and a high degree of reflection. However, it was striking that there were hardly any young people with a migration background from the global South among the participants. The young people agreed that literature can change the world in the sense that every book read sharpens the reader's view of the world, generates new attention, and contributes to gaining new insights, thereby changing the world a little. Not in the sense of a profound transformation or violent revolt, but always for the better.

A sequel of the literatureCAMP is in preparation. This time, it is aimed at young people with more difficult access to education and different reading experiences. The organizers are collaborating with schools in order to reach pupils with a personal history of migration. In addition, the project is to be expanded by organizing several camps in different German cities and also in the countryside in a smaller community.

Christiane Raabe is the director of the International Youth Library in Munich, Germany.

Focus IBBY

by LIZ PAGE

IBBY General Assembly 2020

2020 has been a difficult year worldwide. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the 37th IBBY Congress that was due to be held in Moscow, Russia, in September 2020 had to be postponed until September 2021. Thus, IBBY had to decide how to undertake its biennial General Assembly. This membership meeting could not be postponed for a year because of the legal obligations that are fixed in the IBBY statutes:

Clause III: Governing Bodies

There shall be two governing bodies for the management of the affairs of the International Board on Books for Young People: the General Assembly and the Executive Committee which, together with the President, acts on behalf of the General Assembly between its meetings and reports to the General Assembly.

1. General Assembly. A meeting of the members shall be held at least every other year and at a time and place to be determined by the Executive Committee.

1.1 Regular Meetings

A meeting of the members shall be held at least every other year and at a time and place to be determined by the Executive Committee. The purposes of such meetings shall be to:

1.1.1 Verify the legality of the meeting and accept the agenda; no decisions may be taken on any matter not on the agenda as accepted, except to call for a Special Meeting, as provided in Clause III, Section 1.2

1.1.2 Approve the report of the activities of the International Board on Books for Young People since the last regular meeting

1.1.3 Review the Treasurer's report on the financial status of the International Board on Books for Young People for the two complete calendar years prior to the year of the regular meeting

1.1.4 Review the Auditors' report for the two complete calendar years prior to the year of the regular meeting

1.1.5 Approve, or register disapproval of, the management of the funds of the International Board on Books for Young People for the two complete calendar years prior to the year of the regular meeting

1.1.6 Discharge the Treasurer, Executive Director and the Executive Committee

1.1.7 Receive information about and comment freely upon any current and projected activities of the International Board on Books for Young People, as presented by the Executive Committee

1.1.8 Suggest guidelines to the Executive Committee as to the appropriate dues to be assessed under Clause II, Section 6

1.1.9 Vote on amendments to the Statutes of the International Board on Books for Young People

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1.1.10 Elect
- The President of the International Board on Books for Young People
- The members of the Executive Committee
- The President of the Hans Christian Andersen Jury
- The Auditors

1.1.11 Consider any other business brought before the regular meeting by any member.

With all this to achieve even without a congress, an IBBY General Assembly had to be called in 2020. After discussion and a date selected by the Executive Committee (EC), Saturday, September 12, 2020, was chosen. After that, the procedure went ahead as usual, although with some necessary major changes. The meeting was held virtually using an online video conference software.

Because of the problems of voting at the virtual meeting, an online voting platform was set and the National Section delegates had a week to vote using the platform. The matters to be voted on were sent to the members in advance, including the candidates for the EC 2020-22. Each candidate was asked to submit a three-minute film to introduce themselves and to say why they should be elected—very much as the in-person elections are held. Although we all prefer to meet in person, the virtual presentations worked very well, allowing the members to take time to make their selections.

Because no traveling or long trip away from home was involved, the virtual meeting allowed more sections to be represented. Although members from some sections could not join the online meeting because of technical difficulties, seventy-one national sections were able to vote. Around 120 members joined the virtual meeting from nineteen different time zones! It was a wonderful sight to see so many friends from around the world, even if it was as small images on the screen.

The meeting was declared legal and IBBY President Mingzhou Zhang gave the welcome and opening speech. He thanked all the members for their work, especially in the current circumstances.

> *Coronavirus has changed the world, but our affection and responsibility for children remain unchanged: under the black cloud of the pandemic, IBBY national sections and IBBY international have tried our very best to carry out planned programmes and promote reading among children in various creative ways. Congratulations to you all, in IBBY we have an amazing international network of people who are committed to bringing children and books together and to promote international understanding through quality children's books!*
> *...And if the IBBY founder, Jella Lepman were still alive, she would also be very happy with our gathering today, and for your continued solidarity to continue to work for the ideals she gave us so many years ago.*

The agenda followed the usual pattern for an IBBY General Assembly, even though the voting had already been accomplished online. The IBBY

Biennial Report 2018-20, the IBBY Financial Statement 2018 and 2019, and the Auditor's Report were all accepted. Two changes were proposed to the current IBBY Statutes: (1) the official inclusion of the Chair of the IBBY Trust as an *ex officio* member of the Executive Committee without a vote, and (2) striking from the statutes the requirement that the President of IBBY is an *ex officio* member of the HCA Jury. Both of these proposals were accepted by the voting members, and the IBBY statutes will be updated. The members also voted on the 2020-22 EC. Mingzhou Zhang (China) was reelected as IBBY president for his second term of office, and Junko Yokota (USA) was reelected for a second term as Hans Christian Andersen Award Jury president. The following members of the EC were elected from sixteen candidates: Denis Beznosov (Russia), Doris Breitmoser (Germany), Sophie Hallam (UK), Basarat Midhat Kazim (Pakistan), Redza Khairuddin (Malaysia), Shereen Kreidieh (Lebanon), Constanza Mekis (Chile), Akoss Ofori-Mensah (Ghana), Elena Pasoli (Italy), and Sylvia Vardell (USA). Congratulations to all! From these ten members, Sophie Hallam and Basarat Midhat Kazim were chosen as vice presidents by the committee for the term 2020-22.

The *ex officio* members of the EC were reconfirmed: Executive Director Liz Page (Switzerland), Treasurer Ellis Vance (USA), and newly appointed Chair of the IBBY Trust Patsy Aldana (Canada). *Bookbird* editors Janelle Mathis and Petros Panaou were also reconfirmed.

Legend: l-r, top row IBBY President Mingzhou Zhang, HCAA Jury President Junko Yokota, EC members: Denis Beznosov, Doris Breitmoser, Sophie Hallam, Basarat Midhat Kazim, Redza Khairuddin; 2nd row Shereen Kreidieh, Constanza Mekis, Akoss Ofori-Mensah, Elena Pasoli, Sylvia Vardell; 3rd row ex officio members: Liz Page, Ellis Vance, Patsy Aldana; Bookbird Editors: Janelle Mathis and Petros Panaou.

The 2020 General Assembly also included news about the IBBY activities. Visit the IBBY website (www.ibby.org) to catch up on all the news.

IBBY President Mingzhou Zhang closed the meeting by saying:

> *In the next two years, unusually, we will have two IBBY World Congresses: in Moscow, Russia 2021 and in Putrajaya, Malaysia in 2022. This will be a challenge not only for the sections who are organizing these events, but for all of us. I would like to warmly thank both organizing committees, in Russia and in Malaysia, for their commitment and determination to bring you these wonderful events. The Russian Programme Committee has launched a series of online projects that will maintain interest and attract more attention and a wider audience.*
>
> *Thank you all for taking the time to "zoom" into this meeting. We know that it has been difficult with the vast time differences; it has been a challenge for everyone, but it is heartening to see so many. Like all of you, I sincerely hope that we shall meet once again in-person next year. We are planning a special event for the sections in Moscow instead of the General Assembly; the next General Assembly will be held in Putrajaya, Malaysia in 2022.*

News from the IBBY Secretariat

On November 1, Nina Garde took up her position as IBBY Administration and Communications Manager. Nina was born and raised in the south of France. She studied art history at the Ecole du Louvre in Paris and at the University of Heidelberg. After that, she worked as a project assistant, and later as a product manager, at the Frankfurt Book Fair from 2017 to 2020, where she was in charge of international projects and the Kids and New Generation activities of the fair. IBBY has increased the part-time position from 60% to a 100% position to include a larger social media presence.

Participating in the Jury of the Andersen 2020 Award

by Viviane Ezratty, member of the Hans Christian Andersen Award Jury 2020

The "Little Nobel Prize in Literature" 2020, as the Andersen Prize is often called, was awarded on Tuesday, May 4, 2020, to the American author Jacqueline Woodson and the Swiss illustrator Albertine. One of the jury members looks back on the collective work that led to this selection and opens the door a little to the debating room for us.

Here is another well-thought-out schedule that was shaken up last spring: in January 2020, the jury for the award met and deliberated for a week, and then the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) released the names of twelve finalists. Traditionally, the announcement of the final winners is made during at the Bologna International Children's Book Fair. However, in 2020 the fair was postponed and then canceled. Thus, IBBY made its announcement at a virtual press conference, and in 2021 a worthy tribute will be paid to the winners and nominees. Viviane

Ezratty gives us the stages and the aims of this selection.

AN HONOR

It is both an honor and a big responsibility to have been appointed as a juror for the Andersen Award, which has been awarded every two years by IBBY since 1956 to an author and since 1966 to an illustrator for his or her contribution to children's literature.

The aim of this honorary award is to stimulate and promote literary and artistic creation, and to encourage the translation and circulation of outstanding books by rewarding a living author or illustrator "for the exceptional quality of his or her body of work."

In 2020, thirty-nine IBBY national sections nominated thirty-four authors and thirty-six illustrators. Ten jurors from different professional and geographical backgrounds, under the chairmanship of Junko Yokota, were appointed by IBBY.

It was an exciting and stimulating experience, but also months of intensive work to get through the reading and analysis of seventy dossiers (30 to 160 pages each) and the five books proposed for each candidate. It was really exciting to plunge into very different worlds, to get immersed in such different styles and cultural contexts—as much as possible without any prejudices—as well as to ask oneself the question of the selection criteria to be adopted.

IN PRACTICE

In April 2019, each juror received a USB key containing the dossiers and books in their original language with at least summaries or chapters translated into English or other languages, as well as an Excel table for each candidate with a list of his or her books submitted, their titles in the original language and in English, if translated. The most difficult thing was to get organized, given this mass of information. I first checked if the books existed in French to get them from the library or to study them at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (National Library of France), in particular the picturebooks collected by IBBY France.

I started with the countries I knew nothing about (Azerbaijan, Jordan), so as to finish with the authors and illustrators I knew better—logically, the nominees of the French section of IBBY: Marie-Aude Murail and François Roca. I filled in my Excel sheet gradually as I read the books, with notes on the subject of the book and especially on the style or techniques used, and a color code that reflected my appreciation of these books. At the same time, in a large notebook, organized by country—one page per author and one per illustrator—I summarized the information from the dossiers: the author's life, age, education, interests, and also what characterizes him or her.

I finished this work of discovering the dossiers and books around October, right in time to make a summary in November and December. This allowed me to "digest" the mass of data and, *in fine*, to form my opinion. This led me to work on four or five nominees each week.

An internal discussion blog had been set up where each juror was invit-

ed to post, in English, his or her comments on the selection criteria for the titles or on the authors and illustrators. Although only a few jurors participated, their comments helped me a lot, giving me an idea of what they thought… I must confess that for my part, I only made rather general remarks and mostly asked questions, finding it too difficult to express in English more specific analyses.

At the end of November, each juror sent in a list of his or her top ten choices in each of the two categories, which allowed everyone's preferences to emerge, even if at this stage no one was eliminated.

DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATES

The jury meeting took place for one week in January 2020 at the International Youth Library (IYL) in Munich. The library was established by Jella Lepman in 1952, followed quickly by the founding of IBBY. The library is now housed in the beautiful fifteenth-century castle, Schloss Blutenburg, ten kilometers from the historic center.

IBBY took the excellent initiative to plan a first day of making contact, taking the group to visit Munich and enjoy a guided tour of the Haus der Kunst built by Hitler, a monumental art museum with contemporary exhibitions. The weight of history cannot be forgotten: in front of the castle, a memorial to those who perished in the death march from the Dachau camp near Munich was built. It is a reminder that Jella Lepman founded the IYL and IBBY to promote peace and "reeducate" the children in the aftermath of the Second World War by creating a traveling exhibition of the best children's books from around the world; this exhibition was held at the Haus der Kunst and is the origin of the IYL collection. The question of the "values" of openness to the world remains very much present in IBBY, and these values came up during the jury's discussions.

This day trip was an opportunity to get to know the other jurors better and, by visiting exhibitions, to get to know each other's way of approaching the collective and to discover each other's cultural and personal awareness. Throughout the week, we enjoyed listening and learning from each other. On the second day, we visited the IYL, including the small Michael Ende museum, the room dedicated to Erich Kästner, another dedicated to James Krüss, a beautiful exhibition of letters and envelopes illustrated by Binette Schroeder, and a soon-to-be-traveling exhibition of books in Arabic.

Then, to "warm up," we spent the afternoon looking at the actual copies of the books, in particular the books that can suffer from being read in PDF format. We exchanged views informally and cautiously, each of us gauging a little—such is the law of juries—about our impressions or questions.

JURORS AND CRITERIA

Things really started to get serious with the discussion of the selection

criteria, which can change from one jury to the next, depending on the personality of each and every member. All this in English—a foreign language for most of us.

The criteria chosen by the Jury 2020:

- Do not compromise on literary and aesthetic excellence.
- Do not keep works whose didactic intention harms these qualities, even if the "good" children's book always has pedagogical virtues.
- Awaken children's curiosity and stimulate their imagination: literature can be intentional, but not didactic, can offer clues for managing situations but without dictating what to do.
- Give children the essential message that they are not alone in the world.
- Empathy is a central notion.
- The relation to childhood must be genuine.
- Expressing diversity is an important notion: How does it impact the reader's own cultural experience? The culture of the other should not seem artificial.
- Does the author or illustrator portray the world from his or her own cultural perspective?
- Look for the qualities of freshness and innovation, especially the more perennial ones.
- The author's or illustrator's complete body of work is taken into account.
- What does this or that book as a medium bring to a child in today's society?

> *"The book you create must be indispensable, otherwise it's of no interest. So why is the story valuable? Does it transport us elsewhere?"*
>
> *Gro Dahle, Norwegian author*

Wednesday and Thursday were dedicated to voting. Each juror presented the works of one of the nominees, in ascending order of votes already collected in November. I had previously been surprised to see that some authors and illustrators who I thought were very interesting had received few or no votes—sometimes not even from the jurors of their own country. The open discussion gave me a better understanding of the reticence.

When discussing the authors, there was soon a consensus on the twenty names to be eliminated in the first round of discussions—they were certainly interesting, but they did not meet the criteria defined. But for the illustrators, the discussion was much longer. Why this difference? Were there more illustrators than authors known by us all? Is an analysis of images more complicated to make objectively than an analysis of texts?

For the illustrators, therefore, making a decision proved to be more complex. We reconsidered earlier choices—both for and against—and finally selected some nominees who had initially had very few votes. This was either because the quality of the work required looking at the "real" books and not PDFs, or because some criteria deserved more thought.

The question of literary or artistic genre was also a big challenge: How can poets and novelists be compared? What status should be reserved for illustrators specializing in nonfiction? The discussion on the interest of the works submitted in relation to the whole body of work came up repeatedly. It is difficult to be more precise because there is an obligation not to reveal the content of the deliberations.

A few questions were debated at length:

- What do you do when an author has produced a masterpiece, but the rest of his or her work is very unequal?
- Should we keep an artist who made a great contribution at one time, but who has not tried anything new since?
- What about cultural appropriation? Nowadays, it seems difficult to credit a white creator who takes over the tales or stories of cultures other than his or her own. The position of the jurors seemed quite unequivocal, far from the more subtle vision defended by Marie-Aude Murail or Zadie Smith.
- How to address the question of stereotypes?
- How to combine literary and artistic quality with proximity to childhood?

Depending on their country or culture of origin, the jurors did not have the same sensitivity, and in the unsaid, the weight of geopolitics did play a role. Even if a juror was not there to represent his or her country, the light he or she could shed on the context, the author, and so on could still influence debates on the margins.

If the first criterion remained artistic and literary quality, was it necessary to ensure that the shortlist was representative of the different continents, even though western and northern Europe and the Anglo-Saxons were overrepresented?

It seemed fairer to select a short list of six rather than five nominees, since the jury had the freedom to set the number.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

The suspense lasted right up to the end, and the open vote created some surprises. Major and internationally known authors or illustrators were eliminated from the shortlist, while more unknown candidates were selected.

The final task was to draw up a list of books recommended for translation in order to bring back to the forefront some outstanding works whose authors or illustrators were not among the finalists.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, it will be 2021 before the winners and nominees will be honored at the 37th IBBY Congress in Moscow, which had to be postponed. The Hans Christian Andersen Award is one of the most important international awards for children's literature and should be further promoted.

Viviane Ezratty

This article first appeared in *La Revue des livres pour enfants,* #314, September 2020 (translated by Franca Salerno, IBBY Secretariat).

Since 2011, Viviane has been the director of the Parisian public library Françoise Sagan, which now includes the l'Heure Joyeuse historical children's book section, with French and foreign books from the sixteenth century onward. She has written regular book reviews for the *Revue des livres pour enfant* and several publications abroad and has been a member of the jury for several children's book prizes in France. Viviane worked with Libraries without Borders in 2011 on children's books for Haiti and in 2015 and 2016 on the project "ideas boxes." She has been a member of IBBY France for thirty years.

Those interested in the international dimension of children's books should not hesitate to participate in the work of IBBY France, hosted by the National Center for Children's Literature at BnF: cnlj.bnf.fr/fr/ibby_france.

Sybil Wettasinghe (October 31, 1927 – July 1, 2020)

Sybil Wettasinghe was Sri Lanka's equivalent to Beatrix Potter. Beginning with her first illustration commission at fifteen, her work as an author and illustrator spanned more than seven decades. The result was over two hundred storybooks, many of them still in print.

While her stories are quintessentially Sri Lankan, her illustration style is remarkable and unique due to its sheer simplicity. Her human and animal characters, drawn with bold, curvaceous lines, appeal to young readers everywhere. Consequently, authors and publishers alike sought Sybil's services as an illustrator.

Photo: Credit:
The Sunday Times, Sri Lanka

Sybil was a trailblazer in several ways. She introduced Sri Lankan children's literature to the world, while winning many international accolades. In 1965, her book *Vesak Lantern* won an Isabel Hutton Prize for Asian Women Writers for Children. The *Umbrella Thief*, her first book, initially published in 1959, won the Best Children's Picture Book award presented by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Japan in 1986. Popular to this day, the book is still in print and has been translated into seven languages. Her awards and achievements are too numerous to mention here, but her last one merits attention. On March 6, 2020, the Guinness Book of World Records recognized Sybil Wettasinghe as the creator of the storybook with the highest number of alternate endings. Out of 20,000 endings submitted by children from all over Sri Lanka, the best 1,200 entries were published in print format, together with the story titled *Wonder Crystal*.

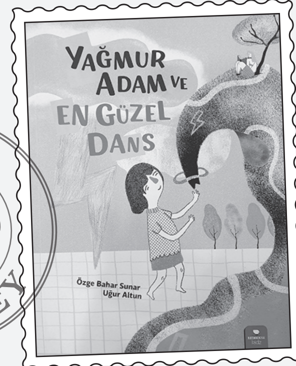
It was also Sybil who introduced Sri Lanka to IBBY circa 1983. Consequently, she widened the horizons of Sri Lankan authors and illustrators, notably leading to one illustrator winning an international award.

Sybil Wettasinghe was a Sri Lankan cultural icon in every sense of the word. Although her presence will be missed, her work will continue to delight and inspire generations to come.

Liz Page was born in Britain and moved with her family to Heidelberg, Germany, in 1983. After nearly two years they left Germany and settled in Basel, Switzerland. Through her interest in children and books, Liz helped to establish the Intercultural Children's Library in Basel—JUKIBU, which opened in 1990. She was a member of the managing board with responsibility for the day-to-day running of the library for the first years and was elected President of the Intercultural Children's Libraries Association of Switzerland, now called INTERBIBLIO. She joined IBBY as Assistant to the Executive Director in 1997 and in 2009 was appointed Executive Director.

This story about the importance of rain is told from the perspective of a deaf girl. After a sunny day, Rain Man covers the city as people run away and complain about the weather. He decides not to rain again. Drought is big problem for everyone, but especially for a deaf girl who can only dance with her bare feet feeling the rhythm of the raindrops. This poetic narrative ends with how people and children may enjoy and benefit from the rain. The author presents empathy not only with a deaf girl but also with Rain Man. Abstraction, patterns, shape manipulation, and color contrasts are used to catch visual attention by the illustrator.

Büşra İzgi



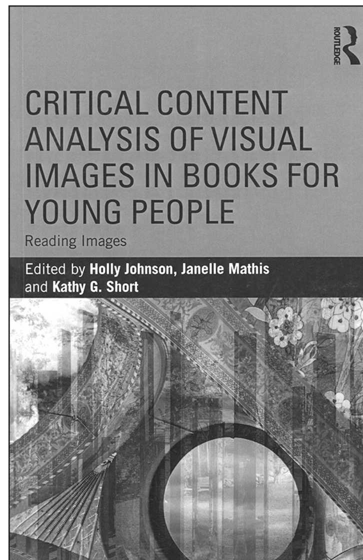
Yağmur Adam ve En Güzel Dans
(Rain Man and the Most Beautiful Dance)
Özge Bahar Sunar
Illustrated Uğur Altun
Istanbul, Turkey: SEV Publications, 2019, 32 pp.
ISBN: 978-605-2079-53-9
(Picturebook; ages 4+)

Books on Books

edited by JUTTA REUSCH—INTERNATIONAL YOUTH LIBRARY

CRITICAL CONTENT ANALYSIS OF VISUAL IMAGES IN BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. Reading Images.
Edited by Holly Johnson, Janelle Mathis, and Kathy G. Short. Routledge, 2019, 288 pages.
ISBN: 978-1-138-38706-5

Editors and contributors Holly Johnson, Janelle Mathis, and Kathy Short have been working in the field of critical content analysis for several years. Whereas their 2016 book, *Critical Content Analysis of Children's and Young Adult Literature: Reframing Perspective*, featured articles on children's literature in general, their new edited volume specifically focuses on the analysis of visual images in books for young readers, namely in picturebooks and graphic novels. Geared toward researchers, educators, and students, this academic collection gathers a variety of essays that provide interesting insight into a wide range of critical lenses and will be useful to anyone who is interested in interpreting visual images—be it in literature or in real life—to find the right tools and procedures.



The book, which is divided into five parts, starts with a thorough section on the research methodology and the analytical tools the various contributors used.

In the opening chapter, Kathy Short first offers a definition of the general term *content analysis* as "an umbrella term used to indicate different research methods for analyzing texts and describing and interpreting the written artifacts of a society" (4). She explains the specifics of critical content analysis: "[T]he researcher uses a specific critical lens as the frame from which to develop the research questions, select texts, analyze the data, and reflect on findings" (5). Over the following sixteen pages, she then provides a detailed description of the step-by-step process the researchers of this book followed for the examination of visual images.

In this introductory chapter, Short stresses the great flexibility of critical content analysis, which allows scholars a wide range of viewpoints to choose from, depending on their specific research purpose.

In chapter 2, Australian researcher Clare Painter, coauthor of a 2013 book about image analysis of children's picturebooks, provides a short introduction to the theoretical framework employed by all the contributors: systemic-functional semiotics. In particular, she introduces the three functions—ideational, interpersonal, and textual—that every text fulfills, and delineates the various visual meaning systems and their visual realizations in (verbal and) visual texts.

Parts II through IV constitute the main part of the book, with twelve different chapters exploring a wide range of texts and research questions.

Part II gathers four studies on "Visual Images in Counter-Narratives" that share a number of aspects but focus on different cultures and employ different lenses for their analyses. Desiree Cueto and Wanda M. Brooks in chapter 3 use the research question "How do Black illustrators address antiblackness through their portrayals of Black children?" (44) as a guideline for their analysis of four picturebooks published between 1998 and 2017 through the lens of Critical Race Theory and BlackCrit theory. In chapter 4, Janine M. Schall, Julia López-Robertson, and

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Jeanne G. Fain employ Critical Race Theory and LatCrit theory and focus on "the centrality of experiential knowledge" when examining three picturebooks telling immigrant stories of Latinx characters. In chapters 5 and 6, the respective authors provide an in-depth analysis of one picturebook each: Angeline P. Hoffman concentrates on the influences of Apache culture on the visual symbolism in *Antelope Woman* (1992), and Janelle Mathis enquires how interpretative play empowers children in *Niño Wrestles the World* and how it gives them a sense of agency and identity.

The three essays in part III, though grouped under the heading of "Visual Images and Positioning," are very different as to their scope and the themes they tackle. Holly Johnson's "The Power of a Gaze" (chapter 7) looks at how a character's gaze positions the readers and divides a large corpus of fifty-nine international picturebooks into two distinct text categories: those with direct gaze versus those without direct gaze. Chapter 8 features an in-depth analysis of four picturebooks about depression through the lens of Critical Disability Studies, in which Desiree Cueto, Susan Corapi, and Megan McCaffrey address the visual construction and deconstruction of ableism. Chapter 9 moves into a multimodal field when Deanna Day compares illustrations in the picturebook *Grandma and the Great Gourd: A Bengali Folktale* (2013) and the interactive app (2016) based on the book, analyzing them using Critical Multicultural Analysis in respect to culture, power, class, and gender.

Part IV, "Visual Images and Ideologies," encompasses five essays. In chapter 10, Carmen M. Martínez-Roldán and Denise Dávila draw on postcolonial theory and decolonizing research combined with five theoretical tenets to examine how text and illustrations of the picturebook *Holy Molé! A Folktale from Mexico* (2006) reproduce and reinforce a colonialist perspective. Junko Sakoi and Yoo Kyung Sung also work with a postcolonial lens in combination with several critical theories for their research on Japanese nationalism, homogeneous ideology, and postwar escapism in four Japanese picturebooks about World War II (translated into English) in chapter 11. Seemi Aziz, in chapter 12, focuses on four graphic memoirs set in the Middle East, analyzing them through the lens of postcolonialism and in relation to the theoretical tenets of hybridization, othering, and imperial gaze. She aims to uncover "concepts of hegemony and power" by specifically looking at the authors' presentation of their own experiences of life in a conflict zone. Chapter 13 is the only one in which queer theories are used. In an in-depth analysis of two different editions of the picturebook *Heather Has Two Mommies*, published in 2008 and 2015, Mary L. Fahrenbruck and Tabitha Parry Collins question what impact the changes in the illustrations have and whether this influences the (de)queering of the story. The final chapter in part IV tackles the problem of hidden ideologies in texts. Hee Young Kim and Kathy G. Short combine critical discourse analysis with social semiotics and multimodality for an analysis of the picturebook *Smoky Night* (1994) to uncover how the decontextualizing of the events described in the story reaffirms dominant discourses as truth.

In her final summary (part V), Kathy G. Short elaborates how the analytical tools they discovered can be used in teaching both graduate and undergraduate students in education classes as well as children in classrooms, and provides a detailed overview of the most useful tools for this purpose, specifically those relating to the interpersonal metafunction of texts.

Thus, this volume of collected essays is not only an insightful and varied study for scholars in the field of literature studies but also offers valuable guidelines and suggestions for educators working with literature for children.

Claudia Soeffner
International Youth Library

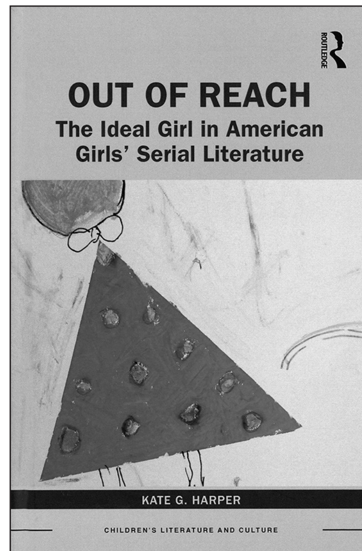
OUT OF REACH. The Ideal Girl in American Girls' Serial Literature.

By Kate G. Harper. Series: Children's Literature and Culture. Routledge, 2020, 144 pages.
ISBN: 978-0-367-33081-1

Out of Reach identifies "the ideal girl as white, wealthy, able-bodied and presumably

heterosexual" (30). The author, Kate Harper, demonstrates how the "trope of the ideal girl" continues to flourish through repetition, resisting disruptive changes in the evolving society. Serials for children are built on the replication of the same basic concept in every story.

Harper follows the "ideal girl" throughout the twentieth-century girls' serial literature in the United States. The first chapter starts in 1908 with a reading of Dorothy Dale, followed by Nancy Drew in the 1930s and '40s, and Vicki Barr with Cherry Ames representing the '50s and '60s. The last two chapters discuss *The Baby-Sitters Club* and *Sweet Valley High* from the 1980s. Despite the stories spanning almost one hundred years and thus bearing witness to major societal changes in terms of gender roles and civil rights, Harper argues that the alterations to the "trope of the ideal girl" have been minimal. The author illustrates how the girls depicted increasingly go out on adventures or start working. However, these options are always stabilized within the realm of the safe, the domestic, and the decidedly feminine—such as working as babysitters.



Harper offers thoughtful readings of the shift from blatant racist and stereotypical portrayals of people of color in connection to poverty and criminality in Dorothy Dale to the tokenism of a few characters of different ethnicities in *The Baby-Sitters Club*. These changes, no matter how great, prove of little importance in terms of the position of the "ideal girl" in the novels. Girls of color or girls with disabilities represent the Other through which the centrality of the main white, well-to-do, able-bodied character is continuously reiterated. The study further confirms Susan Douglas's (1994) central paradox of girlhood—the tension between the constructions of femininity as domestic and passive and, Americanness as independent, strong, and brave (56).

The quick turnaround of serial literature for children depends on ghostwriters, who put new books on shelves at top speed. The study draws out the ways capitalism and consumerism play an increasingly crucial role in the stories themselves. Girlhood is constructed as inherently defined by consuming, shopping, and spending money, which the main character(s) never seems to lack. Girls who do not enjoy the comforts of the suburban middle-class life are again relegated to the role of the opposing, even threatening Other.

Harper articulates the danger of exclusion and misrepresentation of difference in girls' serials. "Despite the fact that the ideal girl only exists as a constructed image, her continued presence impacts our expectations of lived girlhood" (2). The study critically engages with the stories, developing an argument grounded both in the literary texts and in the thoughtful connections to the possible impact on the girls outside the book. The author delivers her arguments through lively language with a touch of humor. The conclusion takes a look into the twenty-first century by identifying the continuation of the ideal girl trope in two of the latest Disney princess films, *Brave* (2012) and *Frozen* (2013).

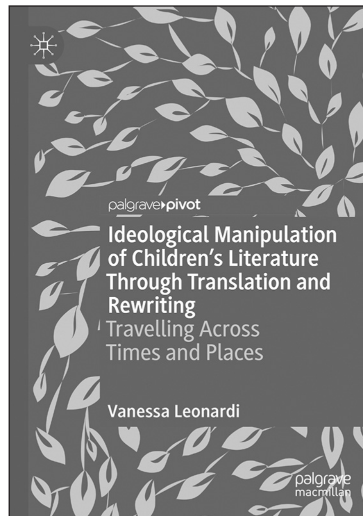
Many of the stories analyzed in this volume have received new film and TV adaptations in recent years—such as *The Baby-Sitters Club* series released on Netflix in July 2020. These are sure to win over a new generation of readers, but also to spark further scholarly interest in this area of literature for children. In a world where the rights of women and girls have to be constantly reasserted, the critical points Kate G. Harper presents in *Out of Reach* could perhaps bring about positive change in the publishing strategies of girls' series.

Tereza Kalová
University of Vienna

IDEOLOGICAL MANIPULATION OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE THROUGH TRANSLATION AND REWRITING. Travelling across Times and Places.

By Vanessa Leonardi. Series: Palgrave Pivot. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, XV, 136 pages.
ISBN: 978-3-030-47748-6

Palgrave Macmillan publishes a wide range of titles that explore the subject of translation from different perspectives. One of the most recent titles is the study by Vanessa Leonardi, associate professor of English and translation studies at the University of Ferrara (Italy). Using children's and young adult literature as an example, she illustrates the cultural and ideological changes that literary works can undergo through translation.



Following current scientific consensus, Leonardi considers that the translation of a literary work is not a purely technical, neutral process, but an “ideological activity” that is influenced by factors such as the target language and culture, the target audience, the historical and political context, cultural and religious ideas and taboos, and last but not least, by the person of the translator and his or her individual approach to the subject. According to this view, literary translators do not create a “derivative and servile copy” of the original language work, but rather rewrite or recreate it. Since the original work is inevitably changed by this process, such a transformation through "manipulation" or, phrased more neutrally, "intervention" is inherent in every translation.

In her monograph, Leonardi focuses on a particular aspect of this intervention, namely the question of what role, for example, morality, ethics, and politics or even taboos and censorship play in translation. According to her, children's literature is very well suited as an object of investigation. In the course of time, popular genres such as fairy tales or children's book classics have repeatedly been translated into different languages and cultures and thus changed ("manipulated") or transformed in different ways. In addition, one can observe frequent and significant simplifications, modernizations, adjustments, omissions, and other adaptations to the target language and culture, especially in translations of children's literature.

The slim volume, about 140 pages, is clearly structured. Apart from the compact introduction and the concluding chapter, which gives an outlook on possible questions of future, in-depth research on the topic, the book contains three main chapters, which in turn are divided into several short subsections.

The first chapter deals with fundamental aspects of the translation of children's literary works. After brief explanations of the definition and historical development of children's literature, it deals with the actors in the translation process (translators, editors, publishers, and others). The following two main chapters deal with the ideological manipulation of both intra- and interlingual translations—that is, the rewording and rewriting of a literary text within one language or during its transformation into another language. Leonardi demonstrates different forms of this manipulation with short case studies of internationally known children's literary works.

In the chapter on intralingual translation, she discusses the rewriting of Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* during the fascist regime in Italy as an example of the politically motivated, ideological manipulation of an original text. The feminist rewritings of *Snow White* by Angela Carter and Emma Donoghue are further examples of the ideological manipulation of traditional fairy tales. In *Harry Potter*, Leonardi shows how the original text is decontextualized and adapted to the target culture through the intralingual translation from British to American English.

Pinocchio and *Harry Potter* are also the object of analysis in the chapter on interlingual translation. Using British and American *Pinocchio* editions, Leonardi examines how the subject of violence is dealt with in the two different translations. In this case, different sociocultural as well as historical contexts played a role in the ideological manipulation of the Italian original text. Using the example of names in the French, Italian, and Spanish *Harry Potter* translations, Leonardi explains strategies to either meet the expectations and cultural understanding of the audience in the target culture or to preserve the "flavor" of the original in the translation by retaining or only minimally changing the names, even though this may be at the expense of understanding cultural connotations. Finally, the subsection on the novel *Bibi* by the Danish author Karin Michaëlis deals with strategies to avoid possible censorship by state authorities through preventive self-censorship in translation. Leonardi had already published this analysis in one of her earlier publications (2018).

In the two chapters on intra- and interlingual translation, Leonardi has selected interesting examples of international children's literature, using them to explain forms, strategies, and reasons for the translator's intervention. One only wishes Leonardi had worked with a larger text corpus and illustrated and supported her observations with further examples and analyses to give her conclusions more credibility and weight.

All in all, however, Leonardi gives a solid overview of basic aspects of the translation of children's literary works. The examples she uses make it clear why and how literary texts are "manipulated"—that is, changed, edited, and adapted to the target culture—due to linguistic, cultural, ideological, and other conditions in the translation process. Leonardi presents the current state of translation science in a compact manner, referring in its presentation and analyses to important and seminal publications by other scholars. The book thus provides extensive bibliographical references to specialist and research literature, which can serve as a basis for further studies on the topic of her book.

Jochen Weber
International Youth Library
Translated by Nikola von Merveldt

L'AFRIQUE DANS LES ROMANS POUR LA JEUNESSE EN FRANCE ET EN ALLEMAGNE 1991-2010. Les pièges de la bonne intention. [Africa in the Novels for Young People in France and in Germany.]

By Élodie Malanda. Series: Francophonies; 12. Honoré Champion éditeur, 2019, 583 pages.
ISBN: 978-2-7453-5071-8

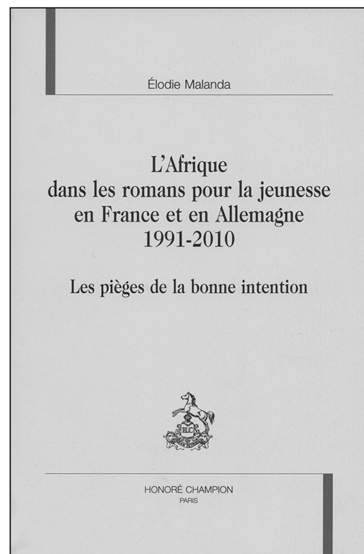
About seventy years ago, certain colonial structures changed in many of Africa's fifty-four states. African men and women fought for formal independence from the former colonial powers then and in the following decades. However, these "formal" forms of independence were only snapshots of the ongoing political, economic, and cultural struggles for Africa's real and lasting independence, not only from Europe. One of the decisive steps of decolonization is cultural in nature, as the Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiongo points out in his seminal essays "Decolonising the Mind" (1986) and "Moving the Centre—the Struggle for Cultural Freedom" (1993). In these essays, Ngugi calls for cultural self-empowerment and the self-liberation of African people from colonial projections or racist violence by Europeans. This call was also addressed to white Europeans and white authors, with the appeal to engage in self-critical self-reflection, to be aware of one's own privileges, to think about "whiteness," to question socialization with colonial clichés regarding Africa and African people, and to challenge racially grounded stereotypes in one's own writings and thoughts and actions. In times of Black Lives Matter, this call has gained new urgency.

In her doctoral dissertation *L'Afrique dans les romans pour la jeunesse en France et en Allemagne* (published by Honoré Champion, Paris, 2019), the Luxembourg researcher Élodie Malanda expertly examines the question of what "African images" contemporary children's and youth literature from France and Germany, both former colonial powers in Africa, "send" to their readership today: of the continent in general, of

individual countries, and of African men, women, and children.

She bases her analysis on 150 selected novels of contemporary children's and youth literature published in France or Germany between 1991 and 2010, including some translations from English.

In her book, Malanda examines the important question of the extent to which colonial discourse and colonial "fantasies of omnipotence" are perpetuated in contemporary children's and youth literature, or whether and to what extent there has been a change in discourse, a disruption or a critical reflection of the "forms of representation" of Africa and African people in French and German children's literature.



The subtitle of the doctoral thesis, *Les pièges de la bonne intention* (*The Pitfalls of Good Intentions*), already dampens expectations of great changes in the "Africa images." It may remind readers of the saying "The road to hell is paved with good intentions," pointing out the jarring contradiction between the intention and literary outcome of many of the novels examined.

Many of these books are indeed imbued with the authors' and characters' sense of mission to promote understanding among nations, to sensitize the readership to political problems, and to put the colonial idea of white superiority in the text itself in its place. Forewords, blurbs, and biographical information about the authors also bear eloquent witness to this. In addition, some of the authors (such as Yves Pinguilly, Hermann Schulz, Nasrin Siege, and many others) claim the status of "friend of Africa," "white African," or "Africa expert" for themselves, and insist on their intimate knowledge of the countries based on regular visits or longer stays. But this does not save them from traps in their own texts, which sometimes reproduce subtle or even crude colonial clichés, as Malanda can demonstrate with her astute interpretative work.

Malanda investigates how these contradictions between good intentions and controversial outcomes arise by addressing different questions: Which narrative and stylistic decisions of the author have the effect that the intended anti-colonial message sometimes does not correspond to the actual message? And what are the narratological mechanisms that sabotage good intentions from the outset?

Malanda divides the novels studied into the following four categories: adventure novels, "novels on humanitarian, developmental themes (poverty, disease, war...)," "encounter novels," and "novels with historical or contemporary historical references." She analyzes how the complex relationship between "self-image and the image of others" is expressed in the thinking, speaking, and acting of Europeans, and where—despite the alleged anti-colonial narrative style—subtle strategies of legitimation of colonial presence and white dominance emerge.

In all four categories of novels, Africa frequently appears as a supposedly hopeless continent of "crises, diseases, catastrophes and wars." However, there is no debate about the complex causes, enabling structures, and underlying conflicts of interest. Many of the texts are populated by "white figures of light," all of them "saviours" who work within the framework of humanitarian, human rights, or environmental organizations. They contrast with the depictions of African people as immature, dependent, apathetic, defeatist, or ridiculous, who often leave action to the "white saviors." In this toxic dichotomy of "white dominance" and "miserabilism," the reader ends up in a concoction of so-called Afro-pessimism, of white feelings of superiority, "pity," and a new installment of colonial phantasms.

By pointing out the pitfalls and contradictions

of well-intended narratives, Malanda vehemently and eloquently calls for no less than the decolonization of the Africa discourse in the German and French publishing landscape of literature for children and young adults.

I wish her many readers and the book the impact it deserves.

Sibylle Weingart
International Youth Library
Translated by Nikola von Merveldt

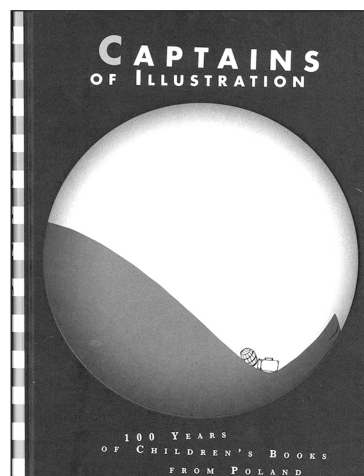
CAPTAINS OF ILLUSTRATION. 100 Years of Children's Books from Poland.

Edited by Anita Wincencjusz-Patyna. Translated by Agnes Monod-Gayraud. Adam Mickiewicz Institute / Wydawnictwo Dwie Siostry, 2019, 498 pages.
ISBN: 978-83-60263-57-02

With almost five hundred pages, the volume *Captains of Illustration* offers a comprehensive tour of Polish children's book illustration between 1918 and 2018, with short articles in English and nine hundred illustrations. Eleven contributors give brief insights into aspects, trends, and characteristics of Polish illustration art, following one hundred keywords. In addition to editor and art historian Anita Wincencjusz-Patyna, colleagues, illustrators, designers, book historians, and many others contribute their knowledge. The extremely heterogeneous perspectives on the topic highlight the diversity and complexity of the Polish art of illustration and make for a highly readable volume. Some of the contributions, which are each only one or two pages long, are written in a conversational, at times casual tone, while others are more descriptive and analytical.

The playfully phrased keywords, which organize the many, well-chosen sample illustrations by 230 Polish artists, cover a wide range of topics. Thus, "Alice in Wonderland", "Elephants on Parade," and "Shopping Trip" are to be found among them, as are "Naked Truths," "Typographic Tricks," and "Pop Art Power." This free mix of themes, motifs, artistic techniques, and stylistic tendencies, as well as art historical epochs and illustrations of children's book classics, creates a broad panorama of illustrated children's literature in Poland. Since illustrations from almost all decades are shown for each keyword, artistic and stylistic lines of development can be traced and comparisons made. Many artists are represented with examples under several keywords, enabling readers to discover the peculiarities and characteristic traits of a particular illustration style.

While the motifs from the everyday world of children's experience and life, such as the family, the telephone, the post office, or animals (cat, bird, fish, etc.) are commonplace in children's literature, other chapters focus on specifically Polish motifs, such as the significance and representation of the Polish cities of Gdansk,



Cracow, and Warsaw in Polish children's book illustration; the national colors, red and white; and important personalities such as Janusz Korczak, or artists such as Bohdan Butenko and Franciszka Themerson, as well as well-known Polish children's book characters. Furthermore, the chapters "Polish School of Illustration," "Socialist Realism for Kids," "Occupied Poland," and "Watch Out! Bulldozers" take a look at landmarks, special periods, or events in Polish illustration history. "Read to Me, Mummy!" and the "Squirrel Series" present the two most important book series that have been and continue to be published in Poland over several decades.

The literary and art historical periods are visualized at the end of the volume in a timeline.

There, *Captains of Illustration* offers an alphabetical overview of all illustrators presented in the volume, with brief biographical notes, including "classic" artists such as Bohdan Butenko, Adam Kilian, Zbigniew Rychlicki, Janusz Stanny, Jan Marcin Szancer, Franciszka Themerson, and Józef Wilkoń in addition to younger representatives such as Edgar Bąk, Jan Bajtlik, Monika Hanulak, Marta Ignerska, Aleksandra and Daniel Mizieliński, Marianna Oklejak, and Paweł Pawlak. The eleven authors of the keyword contributions are also presented.

Katja Wiebe
International Youth Library
Translated by Nikola von Merveldt

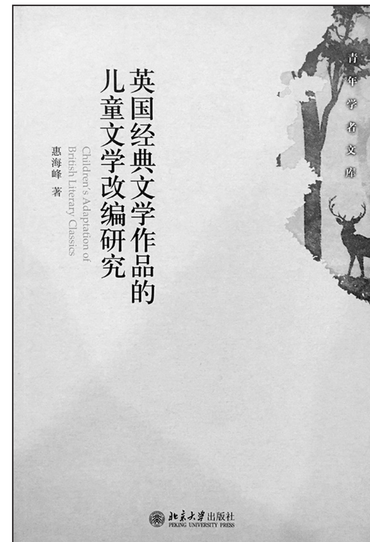
英国经典文学作品的儿童文学改编研究 [Children's Adaptation of British Literary Classics.]

By Haifeng Hui. Peking University Press, 2019, 245 pages.
ISBN: 978-7-301-30854-7

Haifeng Hui presents an illuminating study of children's adaptations of British literary classics, especially focusing on *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). This book is impressive for its scope of the children's versions selected for examination, ranging from earlier editions in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain to contemporary ones aligned with the US Common Core State Standards Initiative and China's New National Curricula.

The first body chapter examines how the six children's versions of *Robinson Crusoe* deal with the religious elements in Daniel Defoe's original work. For instance, the Stockdale version (1789) amplifies the theme of religion by portraying Crusoe as a steadfast believer in God, which reflects the efforts in the field of children's literature to inculcate religious beliefs and enhance moral education in the morally declining eighteenth-century Britain. However, the John Lang version (1906) not only portrays a purely secular fictional world but also weakens the significance of family ties for Crusoe. Tracing such changes in the six editions, Hui shows that children's adaptation is subject to the image of childhood, religious forces, and the dominant paradigms of thinking in a sociocultural context.

The second chapter investigates three versions of *Gulliver's Travels* and sheds light on how the concerns of taboo and political censorship impact the adults' view of what is appropriate for children. Hui notes an interesting phenomenon in the two editions of the nineteenth century: though both remove some passages in the original novel, neither of them alters the wording in the remaining parts (82-83). This practice conforms to the prevalent view of English education at the time: that children should read a literary work without its language being altered (82).



The third chapter returns to *Robinson Crusoe*, yet with a different focus on how the view of education underpins the way the theme of economic individualism is weakened in the children's editions. Hui brilliantly demonstrates that the use of embedded narrative and a heterodiegetic adult narrator can work successfully to deliver moral education and encyclopedic knowledge to child readers (119-25).

Chapter 4 forms a parallel to chapter 6 because both discuss the adaptation of *Robinson Crusoe* in the contemporary educational book market. In terms of structure, these two chapters might be better if placed together. Comparing an American Common Core edition and a Chinese New Curricular edition, chapter 4 reveals that

the incorporation of literary classics into national educational systems is subject to the influence of both curricular requirements and critical traditions. Chapter 6 explores how *Robinson Crusoe* is turned into a commodified literary and educational text in China against the backdrop of the country's new curricular reform.

Chapter 5 offers an attempt to investigate the differences between children's literature and adult literature in terms of the cognitive demands they put on readers. It draws on the concept of mind-reading to look at the children's versions of *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and *Tom Jones* (1749). To put it simply, mind-reading means deducing and understanding others' mental states. Studies of mind-reading in fiction pay attention to both the technique of representing characters' mental states and readers' capacity for understanding the mental states of characters, the narrator, or the implied author. These aspects are interrelated, because the difficulty for readers increases with the embedded levels of mental states of fictional characters. In other words, it is less difficult to understand what A knows, but more difficult to unravel that A knows that B knows that A knows. The latter involves three levels of mental states. The Penguin version (1999) of *Pride and Prejudice*, in which mental states of three levels are retained, remains most close to the original novel, while both the Calico (2012) and the Saddleback (2003) editions reduce the three levels of mental states to two or even none.

Drawing on narratology, stylistics, and theories of adaptation, Hui provides a convincing illustration of various sociocultural factors, religious concerns, and conceptions of children and childhood underpinning the adaptation of books for children, thus challenging the assumption that sees the adaptation from adults to children as a sort of dumbing down. This study affords a pleasant and enlightening read for all scholars who are interested in the ever-evolving children's adaptation of literary classics viewed through intersecting theoretical lenses, and the expanding field of children's literature research in China.

Xiaofei Shi
Soochow University, China

Ben's mother is gone. When her heart suddenly stopped, so did the life of her family. The brothers Ben and Karl have difficulty coming to terms with the sudden death of their mother, although six-year-old Karl seems to manage better than the rest of the family. Their father falls into deep depression and his sons hardly know how to comfort him. Other people close to them also find it difficult to accept the death, reacting with awkwardness or wordlessly. Only one person says what she thinks: Ben's school friend Lina. She helps Ben during this period of mourning, and their feelings of affection for one another grow.

Höfler depicts strong characters and takes her protagonists seriously; her writing is engaging. Masterful and never sentimental, this contemporary novel deals in a peerless manner with death, but also with life. It was nominated for the 2019 German Children's Literature Award.

Jury of the German Children´s Literature Award

Der große schwarze Vogel (The Big Black Bird)

Stefanie Höfler
Weinheim, Germany:
Beltz & Gelberg, 2018, 182 pp.
ISBN: 978-3-407-75433-2
(Fiction; ages 12+)

Mun was an ordinary fish seller who lived in the Joseon Dynasty (now Korea) in the late nineteenth century. At that time, Joseon was not open to accepting foreign cultures into its society. One day, Mun went sailing with others to buy fish, and his ship drifted due to the severe storm. Luckily, they landed in a foreign country; however, Mun had to move from country to country, including current Okinawa, Philippines, and Macao. It took more than three years for Mun to make it back home to Joseon. In difficult circumstances, Mun did not give up hope. While he stayed in the foreign lands, he appreciated people's hospitality, learned their languages, and practiced their customs. Mun's experience in the nineteenth century is a true adventure, and his open mind to other cultures teaches a valuable lesson to children in the twenty-first century.

Jongsun Wee

홍어 장수 문순득 표류기
(The Drifting Records of Fish Seller, Mun Soonduk)
Pong Lee
Illustrated by Yoonjung Kim
Paju, South Korea: Fish in a Book, 2018, 140 pp.
ISBN: 979-1-163-27012-6
(Biography; ages 10+)

Margery Williams's **The Velveteen Rabbit** was translated and adapted by Linda Rode into Afrikaans as **Die hasie van fluweel**. Like with many others, Rode has once again managed to put a classic children's book within the frame of reference for South African children. In this charming version, a stuffed toy rabbit learns from a rocking horse that real love from his owner, a little boy, would lead to real life. He is, however, warned that this process takes time and hurts and that he might not look his best by then. After a serious illness, the boy's little companion is doomed to be destroyed, but the magic nursery fairy intervenes, and the rabbit is transformed to a real rabbit. Love conquers all. Theodore Key's modern though nostalgic and sensitive portrayal of the story from a child's perspective earned him the 2020 M.E.R. illustrated children's literature prize for his watercolor illustrations. This new adaptation is a valuable addition to Afrikaans children's literature.

Magdel Vorster

Die hasie van fluweel (The Velveteen Rabbit)
Margery Williams
Illustrated by Theodore Key
Translated by Linda Rode
Cape Town, South Africa: Human & Rousseau, 2019, 60 pp.
ISBN: 978-0-7981-7920-1
(Picturebook; ages 4-9)

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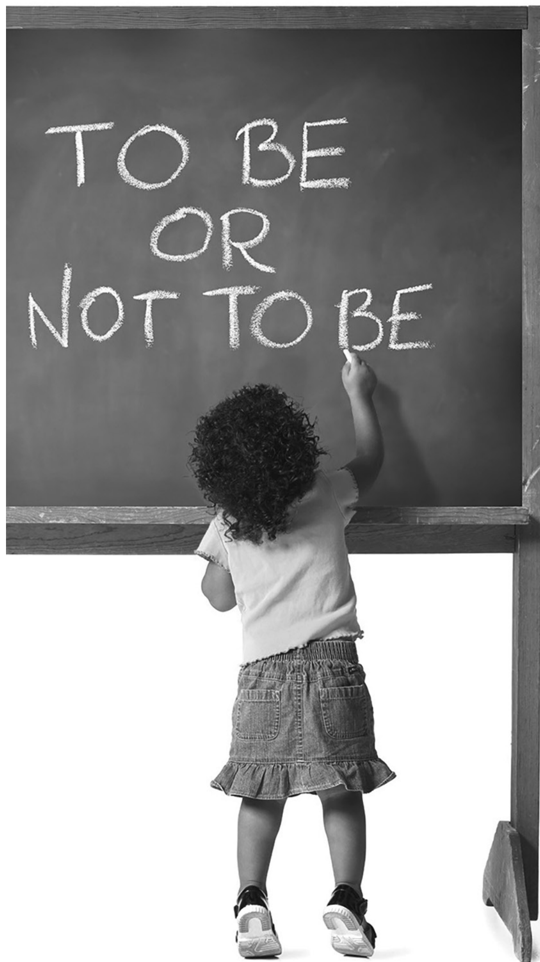

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