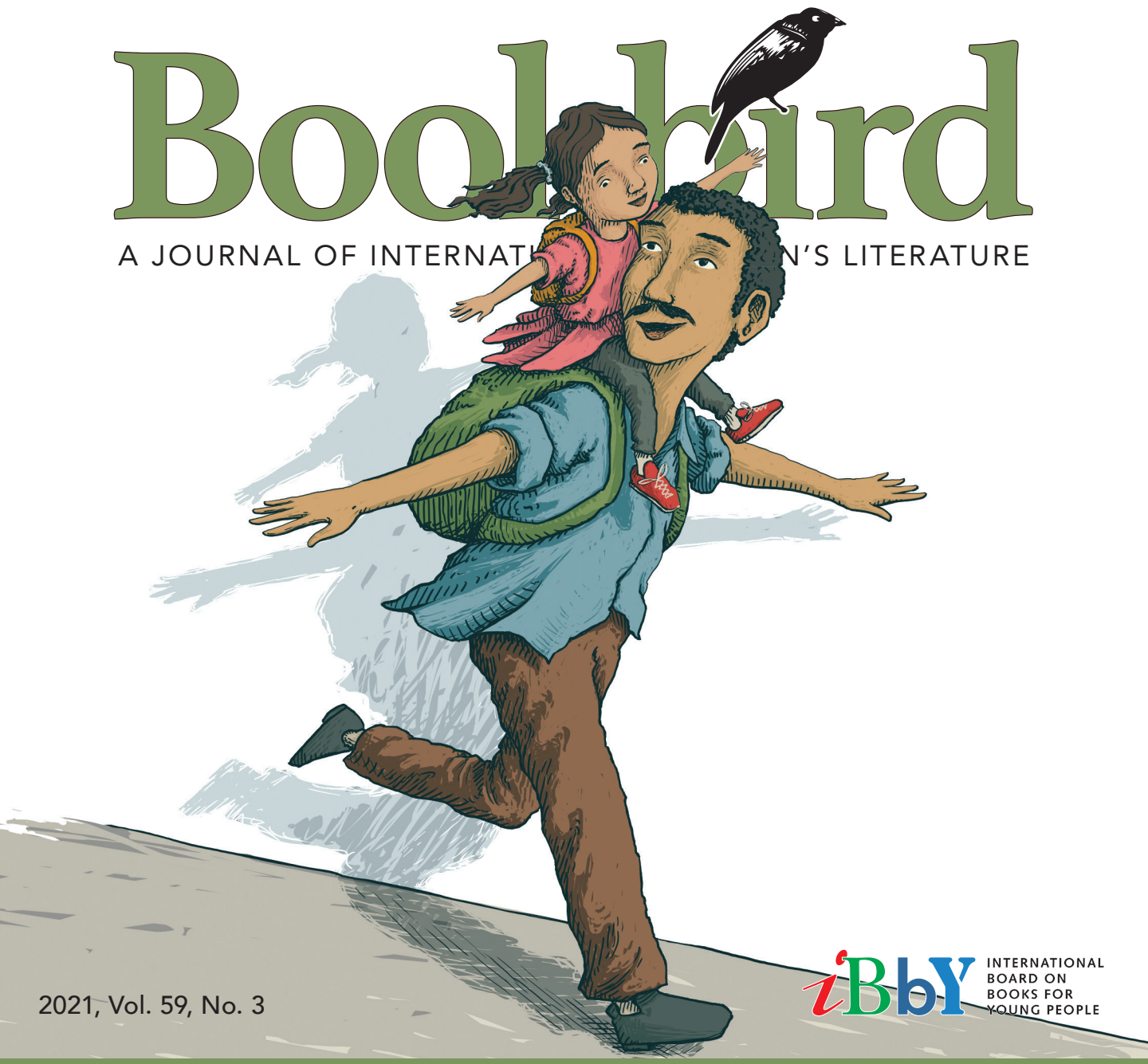
Bookbird

A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE



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Social Justice: Children's Literature as a Source of Information, Transformation, and Hope

Featured Articles: Boundary Crossings and Social Justice in *A Girl Called Genghis Khan* • After They Gave the Order: Students Respond to Canadian Indian Residential School Literature for Social Justice • "No Place Like Home": Immigration, Migration, and Loss in Two American Picturebooks • The Coin in the Rice in the Spoon: Perspectives within Perspectives in *A New Year's Reunion* • Picturebooks and Critical Inquiry: Tools to (Re)Imagine a More Inclusive World • Storytelling as Intergenerational Connection: Challenging Ageism through Metafiction in Recent Writing for Young People

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Bookbird
A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

EDITORIAL

FEATURED ARTICLES

AUTHORS/ILLUSTRATORS AND THEIR BOOKS

CHILDREN AND THEIR BOOKS

LETTERS

Robin's teenager life is boring and lonely until new classmate Leo walks into his life. Leo is everything Robin longs to be: confident and tempting. Robin gets introduced to a new part of life: smoking cigarettes and weed as well as drinking. More and more of Robin's reality glides into a parallel world. After a tough LSD trip and an argument with his mother, intoxicated Robin falls out of a window, gets injured badly, and struggles for life in a hospital. His hope that his new best friend Leo will visit him fades away day by day.

Herden manages to put Robin's need for belonging and excitement into words. Her absorbing tale doesn't downplay the trip and paints it as frighteningly real. The use of second person **you** in addressing the reader irritates and keeps the mystery of Leo's identity until the very end. A literary trip, upsetting and fascinating.

Nominated for the 2020 German Children's Literature Award, young adult.

Jury of the German Children's Literature Award

Keine halben Sachen
(All or Nothing)

Antje Herden
Weinheim, Germany:
Beltz & Gelberg, 2019. 144 pp.
ISBN: 978-3-407-81248-3
(Realistic fiction; ages 14+)

Social Justice: Children's Literature as a Source of Information, Transformation, and Hope

by JANELLE MATHIS and PETROS PANAOU

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
Nelson Mandela

This issue of *Bookbird* was conceptualized with the realization of the complexity of this term *education* and the varied perspectives that situate it across our global readership. We acknowledge that our children need to be "educated" to become part of a global society that strives to build understanding through personal introspection and intercultural competency. However, we also recognize that this is true for us—the adults seeking resources and strategies to nurture readers as they learn to recognize discrimination and equalities. We must also develop a sense of agency to advocate for change in ways that align with the needs of other cultures and to become thoughtful decision makers. This "education" requires resources that inform about and build local and global community through understanding both universal issues and those unique to particular areas or groups. We identified articles that we believe can help to push our understandings as individuals who read and strive to educate through children's literature, a most powerful asset in this process of enlightenment and change.

Just as the Call for Manuscripts uses questions to bring forth current contemplation, both personal and scholarly, around children's literature, so the reading of the selected articles elicits questions as readers confront the ideas of others. These questions keep us motivated in our scholarly work around children's literature as we share literature with all ages of readers as well as bring these books to the forefront where they can be recognized globally, synthesized with the current issues they describe, and serve as a catalyst for transformation within and across our communities of learners. So, we will introduce the articles by sharing some of the questions that evolved and remain as we read and reread the scholarship found in this issue.

"Boundary Crossings and Social Justice in *A Girl Called Genghis Khan*" by Tehmina Pirzada shares the story of Maria Toorpakai, a Pakistani squash champion. This story focuses on "Maria's cross-dressing and her

fight for social justice in her native Waziristan, the Taliban-controlled tribal belt of Pakistan" (6). We questioned our awareness of the struggle of Muslim women for equity and justice as we realized stories of Malala and *The Breadwinner Trilogy* (by Deborah Ellis) were our main sources of information—excellent but limited. What other resources can help expand our awareness of situations as this revealing opposition to the political polarization caused by an "us" versus "them" mentality?

"After They Gave the Order: Students Respond to Canadian Indian Residential School Literature for Social Justice" by Lynne Wiltse was inspired by Deborah Ellis's 2018 IBBY keynote speech, "Before They Give the Order," which was printed in *Bookbird*, issue 57.1. This article shares a focus group conversation with five non-Indigenous elementary students who read a range of picturebooks, memoirs, and novels about the Canadian Indian residential school (IRS) system. We are left wondering how these stories of injustice are being used in classrooms globally that bring attention to situations around Indigenous groups and their long-term effects. In what ways are these stories considered outside of history and in light of current events?

"'No Place Like Home': Immigration, Migration, and Loss in Two American Picturebooks" by Colin Haines returns readers to two older American picturebooks, *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say (1993) and *Amelia's Road* by Linda Jacobs Altman (1993), and discusses these in terms of contrasting idealizations of home using Freud's theory of mourning and melancholia. Familiar with these older books on immigration, the unique contrast here provoked the question of what current titles can be described within the tenets of this theory. How can this discussion support the use of immigration and refugee books in ways to nurture understanding in all readers around the issues that immigrants face when forced or choosing to seek a new home?

"The Coin in the Rice in the Spoon: Perspectives within Perspectives in *A New Year's Reunion*" by Joe Sutliff Sanders and Xia Zhao explores an award-winning book whose English-language translation serves as an important entry point for understanding contemporary Chinese children's books and also serves as a source for understanding the social and economic lives of some of China's population. The experience of the daughter of a migrant worker is respectfully and emotionally shared as the father briefly returns home between construction jobs. The family's situation is not presented as problematic but as a realistic occurrence. How do current readings around migrant work impact how we receive this story? Do we need to understand more about the migrant experience globally to fully appreciate migrant work and its requirements as presented here? Do we need to be more discerning about what situations are unjust and what situations respectfully regard the migrant experiences and the sacrifices made by families?

With a focus on communities of conscience around topics of social justice and activism, "Picturebooks and Critical Inquiry: Tools to (Re) Imagine a More Inclusive World" by Amanda Deliman focuses on research with second-grade students exploring social issue topics through

literature. Acknowledging the potential for children to consider issues of power, equity, and fairness, we ask: Are teachers given the freedom to create such lessons that engage children in the rich stories recently published? Are these experiences ones that are continued as they move into more advanced grades and classes? Are current issues, local and global, synthesized with the messages in this literature—issues that many children live with each day?

Samantha Stephens and Leonie Rutherford offer interesting perspectives on how ageism can be considered justly in "Storytelling as Intergenerational Connection: Challenging Ageism through Metafiction in Recent Writing for Young People." Since often metafiction renegotiates limiting discourses of childhood, it can also reinforce intergenerational conflict. Novels that engage adult storytellers as central characters can, however, create space for more positive stories of age and aging. We wonder about other ways to challenge ageist sentiment in literature. What other texts, including picturebooks, can challenge the discourses of age that are often presented as conflicts between the child and adult?

As other sections of this issue are explored, the many perspectives on social justice continue to be important to keep in mind. Authors/Illustrators and Their Books contains an interview with Robyn Sheahan-Bright, IBBY Australia president and recently appointed Member of the Order of Australia, by Doris Breitmoser. Melanie Duckworth provides a tribute to Christobel Mattingley (1931-2019), prolific and loved Australian author. Without individuals such as these, our efforts to disseminate social justice texts would be difficult if not impossible in many situations. "Alice in Writer's Land: A Dream Quest for Schools Full of Stories, Heroes and Heroines, and Books" by Angela Chalkiopoulou is the feature in Children and Their Books. The article reveals children engaged in creating game scenarios, a process that supports their growth in communication, empathy, and kindness—all necessary to act and take a stand for social justice. The Letters section shares insights by Antonio Causarano around "Children's Books and Curriculum Integration in K-12." Certainly, justice and fairness around equitable access begin in the organization and planning within our classrooms.

Valerie Coghlan, the president of Bookbird Inc. and a former editor of our journal, proudly shares, "*Bookbird: A Flight through Time* Takes Off." This history of *Bookbird* is now available for purchase! Of course, Focus IBBY by Liz Page, continues to showcase efforts to disseminate and educate about children's books and the global community, while Books on Books and the many Postcards throughout offer new titles to explore.

In closing we also want to acknowledge the beautiful and symbolic cover illustration by Rafael Yockteng taken from *Two White Rabbits* by Jairo Buitrago. Those of us who have read this seemingly simple but poignant picturebook realize the social justice around immigration that is questioned through both its illustration and text.

We hope you read this issue with an inquiring mind and leave with many questions beyond the articles that speak to information, transformation, and hope.

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. 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 *Critical Content Analysis of Children's and Young Adult Literature* (2016) and *Critical Content Analysis of Visual Images in Books for Young People* (2019).

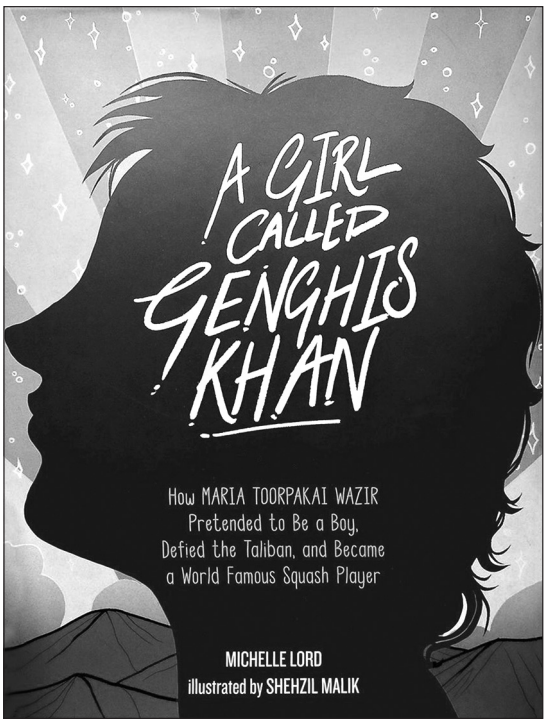
Petros Panaou is a clinical associate professor at the University of Georgia, Department of Language and Literacy Education, where he teaches children's literature and literacy courses. He chairs the annual Georgia Conference on Children's Literature and has also chaired the academic committee for the 36th IBBY Congress. Petros has also served on the Newbery Awards committee and 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.

Boundary Crossings and Social Justice in *A Girl Called Genghis Khan*

by TEHMINA PIRZADA

I feel that it's a blessing for me that I lived life like a tomboy just because I had all the freedom like boys have. I really enjoyed my life when I was young, the freedom, but before that I had some, you know, some incidents that I—as a child I could really sense that it's not fair because I'm different. I'm very strong and I can be equally good as boys. (Toorpakai and Holstein)

In 2016, Maria Toorpakai, a Pakistani squash champion, in her NPR interview with Dave Davies admitted that she lived her life as a "tomboy" because she felt that boys enjoyed greater freedoms and successes, and she was compelled to spend her life bridging those differences. Maria's usage of the term *tomboy* evokes interesting affiliations, as Mary Elliot argues that the prefix *tom* has long been associated with "working class promiscuity and prostitution" (92) throughout Euro-American history. The stereotype of promiscuity was reinforced through examples of highly mythologized young girls, challenging gender norms at discrete historical moments, thereby embracing the title *tomboy*. These tomboy figures include Saint Joan of Arc of fifteenth-century France, Queen Elizabeth, and even Antigone, the heroine of a Greek tragedy by the same name (Proehl 10). However, Maria's tomboyism is uniquely tied to her personal story and her singular gender performance—she was the first girl from Waziristan to play squash by practicing a form of cross-dressing called *bacha poshi*.



Practiced in the Pak-Afghan belt, *bacha poshi* means a "boy in hiding" or a "boy in a dress." (The translation from Urdu is my own.) It denotes a subversive tradition where families who do not have a son raise one of their girls as a son, inculcating "masculine" values such as athleticism, bravery, honor, and hard work and allowing the girls to live, play, and work as boys until puberty. Through her ethnographic

research on *bacha poshi*, Jenny Nordberg offers the *bacha posh* journalistic visibility, emphasizing that the tradition was a subversive response to the deeply patriarchal and honor-bound Pashtun culture (300). However, Maria's emulation of *bacha poshi* does not fully adhere to Nordberg's observations since Maria herself made the decision to be a *bacha posh*. At the young age of nine, Maria burned all her dresses, cut her hair, and cross-dressed as a boy, to the complete surprise and amazement of her parents. In fact, in her autobiography, *A Different Kind of Daughter* (2016), Maria powerfully narrates the moment of her transformation as follows: "I saw my father standing next to me by the cooking fire, a heap of dresses burning. I felt his arm surround me then, and heard his voice whisper my new name [Genghis Khan] and the *azan* call to prayer" (146).

Unlike many *bacha poshs*, Maria's decision to cross-dress was solely hers and was cheerfully accepted by her father. Using the pseudonym "Genghis Khan" (2), Maria continued to play squash until her transgression resulted in death threats to her and her family by the Taliban. At the age of sixteen, Maria was compelled to go into hiding; she then escaped to Canada in 2011. In Canada, she played squash under the tutelage of Jonathan Power, and by May 2016, she was ranked fifty-sixth among female squash players in the world. As of 2020, Maria resides in Pakistan, running a sports coaching facility for children, and enjoys considerable visibility because of her fame and activism.

Maria's story has been narrated numerous times, in newspapers, blogs, and sports magazines. However, for the first time, Michelle Lord, in collaboration with a Pakistani illustrator, Shehzil Malik, decided to retell Maria's story through a picturebook entitled *A Girl Called Genghis Khan* (2020), focusing on Maria's cross-dressing and her fight for social justice in her native Waziristan, the Taliban-controlled tribal belt of Pakistan. Malik contends that when she was first contacted by Lord, the Texan children's literature author, she was surprised upon hearing Maria's story. She told Beth Anderson, "I'm Pakistani and I had never heard of Maria.... It really goes to show that we don't champion the stories of women enough. The reference photos Michelle sent of Maria were shocking to me. More than hearing about the Taliban, it's unheard of for Pakistani women to be wearing shorts and playing an aggressive sport!" (Anderson par. 13). Malik wanted to illustrate Maria's story for "audiences 9 to 99" (Malik) as she could empathize with Maria and her fight for social justice. She further added: "I could relate to Maria's story on a personal level," noting that she feels "both a sense of pride in our people, as well as feeling hemmed in by our conversative norms" (Anderson par. 13).

"I could relate to Maria's story on a personal level," [Malik added,] noting that she feels "both a sense of pride in our people, as well as feeling hemmed in by our conversative norms."

Similarly, Lord, in the same interview, expressed a sympathetic identification with Maria, arguing that Maria's story touched her by evoking emotion, spurring her curiosity, and promoting questions.

I decided the first way to immerse myself in Maria's story was through

images. I began with Google Images and Getty Images. I typed in *Pakistan*, *Pashtun*, *Taliban*, and *squash*. I noted the landscape, the houses, the people, and their expressions. Viewing photographs stimulates a part of the brain that controls empathy and helps us identify with and imagine another's point of view—exactly what I wanted to do (Anderson par. 6)!

I argue that Lord and Malik's sympathetic account of Maria's cross-dressing situates *A Girl Called Genghis Khan* as a crossover picturebook that reaches audiences from ages "9 to 99" to promote social justice through the notion of gender equity. By analyzing the gendered expectations imposed on Maria and her subsequent defiance, this article elucidates upon the agential possibilities of Maria's cross-dressing along with offering a broader questioning of the prevalent heteropatriarchal norms, cross-cultural differences, and boundaries of age that the text challenges to promote freedom of choice, tolerance, and mutual respect. As a result, the article establishes that picturebooks that are committed to cross-cultural exchange, such as *A Girl Called Genghis Khan*, offer visibility to the resistance of Muslim girls by offering a nuanced insight into cultures and geographical locations that are often villainized and stereotyped in Western imagination.

Crossover Picturebook

The crossover status of *A Girl Called Genghis Khan* becomes evident through its implied audiences, which Zohar Shavit in her discussion of crossover fiction describes as "a pseudo addressee [the child] and a real one [the adult]" (71). According to Shavit, "the child, the official reader of the text, is not meant to realize it fully and is much more an excuse for the text rather than its genuine addressee" (71). Shavit's idea of a text centering adults as potential readers by outwardly focusing on children resonates with *A Girl Called Genghis Khan*. Both Lord and Malik were cognizant that their book celebrates a Pakistani Muslim squash player and was being marketed to children in the United States at a time of rising Islamophobia, instigated by President Trump's travel ban on certain Muslim countries. As a result, Lord's crossover writing invites both adults and young readers to decode the picturebook and the numerous events and moments that shape it.

Through their work, Lord and Malik offer an empathetic portrayal of a cross-dressed Muslim girl to oppose the political polarization caused by an "us" versus "them" mentality, and by creating a universal Muslim subject that many could empathize with. Their book invites adult readership through its offer of love and peace instead of the so-called childish political rhetoric peddled to the adults. In fact, contrary to the pervasive political rhetoric, *A Girl Called Genghis Khan* relies on what is dismissively deemed as childish language by offering a keener sense of local texture and dailiness, offering familiarity with a region that many of its readers (both old and young) may know little about.

In addition to offering cross-cultural insights, Lord's crossover writing for children (simplified and in bold), along with detailed descriptions for adults (in Gill Sans typeface), doesn't offer a feel-good story but instead uses its powerful narrative and visual framing to offer insights into an

underprivileged location, Waziristan, where gender is closely tied to one's economic survival. The dual address—emphasized through the large font and simple writing—indicates Maria's desire for empowerment, reinforced through statements such as, "I wanted to play with the boys! There's more Freedom I felt!" There is also more subdued iteration targeting the older adults or parents: "Sweeping the packed mud floor, four-year-old Maria watched her brothers kick ball back and forth with friends. Her feet itched to dash after them. But Pashtun tribal culture demanded that they stay indoors. Moor [Mother] taught Maria to flatten blobs of dough with her palm to make naan" (1). The usage of the first person versus the third person further emphasizes Maria's desire for agency against the expectations of domesticity imposed on her by Pashtun society. However, the scene also portrays Maria's impoverished living conditions and the necessity of domestic labor for feeding one's family, emphasizing how the struggle for gender emancipation is tied to economic freedom as well.

Cross-Dressing as Resistance

The crossing of textual, geographical, and cultural hierarchies enables the picturebook to become a productive extension for the discussion of different kinds of crossings. Marjorie Garber argues that the presence of cross-dressing in a literary text indicates a "category crisis [symbolizing] a failure of definitional distinction, a borderline that becomes permeable, that permits border crossings from one gender category to another" (17). Garber further contends that cross-dressing in literature may not always be concerned with gender difference; in fact, it may also elaborate upon other differences such as young/old, Black/white, Western/non-Western, boy/girl, and so on. On the other hand, Victoria Flanagan, while addressing cross-dressing in children's literature, challenges the dominant cultural assumption that gender is a defining characteristic of an individual's identity (38). In fact, for Flanagan, children's texts take an ideological position that views gender as an artificial construct, or, as David Gauntlett suggests, they use cross-dressing to demonstrate that "rather than being a fixed attribute in a person, gender should be seen as a fluid variable which shifts and changes in different contexts and at different times" (qtd. in Flanagan 30). Flanagan's theorization of gender as a variable entity parallels Maria's subversion and selective reappropriation of gender discourses signified through her act of burning her dresses, cutting her hair, and adopting the persona of "Genghis Khan." Though Maria distances herself from the brute force exhibited by her namesake, she often articulates that she used her aggression to fuel her passion for sport, thereby using her strength for a higher purpose.

On the other hand, Victoria Flanagan, while addressing cross-dressing in children's literature, challenges the dominant cultural assumption that gender is a defining characteristic of an individual's identity.

In fact, Maria's transgressive acts become a rite of passage—a boundary crossing—that enables her to challenge the perceived vulnerability or weakness of women and girls in Pashtun culture in addition to rejecting the

prescriptive femininity imposed upon her through long hair and dresses. Rejecting the artifice of gender binaries also becomes a functional necessity for Maria as she feels that she could only achieve her true potential as a human being and a squash player if she oscillates and *selectively* imbibes both femininity and masculinity. As a result, Maria's portrayal in *A Girl Called Genghis Khan* relies upon the binary classifications of masculinity and femininity even though it seeks to challenge them.

The defiance of gender binaries is further reinforced through Malik's bold illustrations that celebrate Maria's endurance and forceful shots. Maria exhibits her power on the squash court through her physical agility and confidence. Malik's illustration style centered on Maria's corporeality fully showcases Maria's strength by foregrounding her muscular legs as she is playing a long shot. Within Pakistan and outside the country, Maria wears Westernized sportswear, which is often perceived as a violation of *purdah* (modesty) by the Taliban. Therefore, Maria's clothing and physical strength are perceived as anomalies within her own community, but through her corporeality, Maria also subverts the more standardized definitions of beauty imposed on female athletes across the world. Erica Nicole Kendall argues that for a woman to be a "formidable competitor," and to have "a physique that reflects that, you'll find discussion of their reputed sexual desirability (or supposed lack thereof) permeating the conversation." Maria's visual iconography creates an interesting opposition as her bare thighs in shorts defy the modesty expected from Muslim girls, while her pride in her physical strength, coupled with her boyish appearance, subverts the gendered expectations imposed on female players, especially in the West.

Maria exhibits her power on the squash court through her physical agility and confidence.

Unlike her Western peers, Maria does not fit an ideal body type (usually white, slim, and visibly heteronormative), but instead affirms the visibility of a brown/hefty female desirous of being comfortable in her own skin. Maria's defiance of gender binaries is further reinforced by the full-page spread in the beginning of the book that showcases bright yellow and orange squash rackets placed in a symmetrical order in sets of four. The rackets sharply contrast with the blue background of the page and are accompanied by motion lines that indicate the fast pace of the game. When I questioned Malik about this illustration in 2019 and how it relates to the theme of gender crossing, she emphasized "that the overall color scheme of the picture book was based on the desi wedding palette…with its emphasis on vibrant red, blues and oranges. For this illustration, however, my inspiration were *shamianas* [wedding tents] with their geometric patterns in bright orange, red, and blue. However, I use these symmetrical visuals from the *shamianas* to symbolize Maria's love for squash" (Personal interview). Malik's reference to the *shamiana* evokes a particularly interesting South Asian history as a *shamiana* is a ceremonial tent or shelter mostly used for wedding festivities. Its side walls are removable for easy setup and the fabric is dyed using traditional wedding colors. However, in the picturebook, the *shamiana* becomes a celebration of Maria's love for

squash and her defiance of both femininity and its related expectations, such as marriage and domesticity.

Crossing Geographical Spaces

Lord's celebration of Maria's cross-dressing evokes a sympathetic identification in her reader, as she pitches Maria's struggle as universal. Further contributing to the sense of universality is the idyllic representation of Maria's childhood in the picturebook. The illustrations showcase Waziristan, Maria's hometown, as an idyllic space with tall pine trees. The sky is bright red and sharply contrasts with the silhouettes of trees and far-off landscapes. Malik creates an idyllic image through her illustrations that correlate with Lord's fairy tale writing that centers Maria as "the rugged girl" living among the "rugged mountains of Pakistan." The image of the solitary child with a wooden staff in hand is almost prophet-like, as Maria gazes into the horizon, eager to enter open spaces that sharply contrast to the suffocating images of domesticity imposed on her as a young girl.

The idea of crossing into diverse geographical spaces is reinforced through the geographical mapping of Waziristan symbolized through the rugged landscape depicted in the book. However, the depiction does not shy away from the threat it poses to a rebellious figure such as Maria. In fact, the narrative emphasizes that Maria absorbs the ruggedness of Waziristan and loves her homeland despite its flawed treatment of girls and women. It also showcases Maria's acknowledgment of the Pashtun code of honor called *Pashtunwali*, with its emphasis on nobility, martial strength, and unity—qualities that men are expected to honor. Maria emerges as a crossover figure because she recognizes the *Pashtunwali* but also realizes the limitations that it imposes on young girls and women. Therefore, the rugged landscape of Waziristan, along with the celebratory accounts of *Pashtunwali*, highlights the need to accept and celebrate local community members such as Maria, immersed in the local culture, but also keen to change.

In her autobiography, Maria further acknowledges the paradoxical beauty of her native Waziristan, but also condemns its cruelty and violence. She contends:

> For me, the quiet and beautiful [Waziristan] is heaven. Still, when the world thinks of my home, they envision an outpost of hell. South Waziristan is one of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of northwest Pakistan, but in reality, it governs itself through an ancient system of tyrannical tribal laws, and it is the present-day headquarters of the Taliban. My native land is considered the most dangerous place on earth, but it lives in my mind as the tribal home I would go back to without a second thought if I could—if no one there wanted me dead. (Toorpakai and Holstein 6)

Maria's autobiographical account fully addresses the violence meted out to women and girls in the name of religion and culture. The crossover

writing in A *Girl Called Genghis Khan* offers a similarly honest account of Waziristan. Although it is a picturebook with children as the apparent audience, *A Girl Called Genghis Khan* does not shy away from portraying the violent encounters that Maria had with the adults around her because of her cross-dressing.

One such encounter denotes the physical assault Maria experienced while playing volleyball with boys. Suddenly a "man growled at her. When he saw that she was a girl, he slapped her face. Her hands curled into a fist" (2). The response generates empathy for Maria, but also depicts Maria's response to the unfair treatment. Though Maria feels helpless, the moment also enables her to overcome her fear of the adults around her. She renames herself "Genghis Khan" (2) and decides to live her life as a boy. Though the allusion to Genghis Khan is controversial (Khan was known for his militaristic innovation but also his savagery and barbarism), Maria reimagines the name to serve a dual purpose: subverting the time-honored Pashtun tradition of naming boys after powerful military leaders and becoming a self-proclaimed warrior against the tyranny of adults by giving herself an adult name.

Furthermore, Malik represents Maria's oppressive disciplining by the adult through an illustration in which Maria stands awkwardly under the spotlight—her every move being monitored by the adults around her. Maria's hypervisibility as "Genghis Khan" compels her "to fight to play, fight for my beliefs, fight for the right to be just who I am" (12). Maria's evocation of surveillance by the adults also evokes Michel Foucault's definition of the panopticon, which describes the disciplinary power of the community, emphasizing that for certain subjects, their hypervisibility exposes them to oppression and surveillance. In other words, "it is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in [her] subjection" (187). Therefore, in their hypervisibility, children especially feel vulnerable as their lives become a disciplinary narrative controlled by the adults around them.

The hypervisibility that results in Maria's discrimination parallels the oppressive invisibility of the burka-clad women who are touted to the young Maria as role models. Through her illustrations, Malik boldly and unequivocally emphasizes the oppressiveness of the burka, with its cotton mesh, the dark fabric that covers the woman's body, and the noiseless flat shoes that women are expected to wear. Maria categorically rejects this stereotype of Muslim women (repeatedly promoted in her conservative society and persistently critiqued in the West to justify their imperialist control of conservative Muslim communities). For Maria, the oppressive men and the stereotyped Muslim women are both unacceptable. In fact, the young Maria, at one point in the story, dismisses both the fixed positionality of the burka-clad woman and the rough-and-tumble lifestyle of the young boys, emphasizing her desire to cultivate a persona on her terms through her self-disciplining and social activism.

In addition to portraying the overtly gendered expectations imposed by adults, Lord's picturebook deploys geographical spaces to visually document Maria's journey toward self-actualization. Invited by the champion

squash player Jonathan Power, Maria heads to Canada to learn squash at his academy. Malik illustrates this journey through her border crossings. Through a blue and green map, Malik charts Maria's plane journey from Pakistan to Canada. Scrolled in bold cursive writing are the words, "Because life comes once, and you have to take a risk" (14), emphasizing the role of the map as a didactic tool that anchors Maria's struggle in spatial mobility. As a result, the map becomes a pedagogical tool emphasizing the long journey that Maria is compelled to undertake to win back her freedoms. Therefore, the various maps in the picturebook not only enable the readers to visualize the length of Maria's journey to achieve agency and success but also serve as a sharp contrast to the claustrophobic domestic spaces that Maria was confined to because of her gender. Therefore, the map in Maria's picturebook symbolizes a crossing into new and uncharted territories that enable the mental, emotional, moral, and physical transformation of Maria.

The ability to cross over (both literally and metaphorically) situates Maria as a viable role model and social justice icon for girls in Waziristan and beyond.

Maria's ability to subvert and blur gender boundaries through cross-dressing functions as a corollary to her crossing of geographical boundaries. In Canada, Maria enjoys her first snow and also tastes her first hamburger, while diligently pursuing her prayers and remaining true to her faith. The ability to cross over (both literally and metaphorically) situates Maria as a viable role model and social justice icon for girls in Waziristan and beyond. Lord and Malik also portray Maria in a headscarf, saying her *namaz*, emphasizing her desire to remain connected to her Islamic faith, and to practice it on her own terms, without the threat of violence. The image is intended to attract empathy for the cross-dressed Maria, but also to enable her to appeal to more practicing Muslims.

Therefore, Maria's self-actualization, achieved through cross-dressing and cross-cultural experiences, enables her to attain a newfound confidence in her personal and professional life. In fact, cross-dressing advocates a gender identity that transcends the categories of maleness and femaleness, and the cross-cultural interactions in Maria's story become a productive extension of the cross-dressing narrative.

Death Threats and the Fight for Social Justice

Maria's defiant actions as a preteen girl and her ability to circumnavigate tradition are also reminiscent of the experiences of Malala Yousafzai, the girl activist from Pakistan who was shot by the Taliban in 2012 for advocating girls' education. Like her peer Malala, Maria received death threats from the Taliban, subsequently attaining fame and fortune in the West. Maria's success generated controversy, especially in the Pashtun tribal belt, stirring up charges of Maria being "saved" and exploited by the West for political propaganda, which in turn justifies imperialist interventions in Muslim countries for the sake of "liberating" Muslim girls and women. However, unlike Malala, Maria subsequently returned to Pakistan. Propagating social activism through sports in her native Waziristan, Maria and

her family now enjoy considerable political and social clout.

While Malala advocates gender justice through her persona as a femme, hijab-wearing, demure, and educated Muslim girl, well versed in the "universal" discourses of human rights and universal education, Maria explicitly flounts these gendered and disciplinary attitudes toward girls and women. As a result, Maria's tomboyish persona and cross-dressing evoke a different kind of empathy and call for resistance, quite different from those of Malala. Moreover, like Malala's story (which she coauthored in a children's picturebook), Maria's story also became a viable subject for a picturebook committed to promoting social justice.

Overall, picturebooks such as *A Girl Called Genghis Khan* focus on how cross-dressing enables young Muslim girls to defy traditional gender roles that confine them to a life of surveillance and compliance imposed on them by adults and their male peers. As a result, it becomes necessary to promote stories such as *A Girl Called Genghis Khan* to foster the idea of social justice within Muslim communities and beyond. Such picturebooks, with their focus on gender, cultural, and geographical crossings, advocate for a universally empowered female subject in addition to offering a nuanced insight into cultures and geographical locations that are often villainized and stereotyped in Western imagination.

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A grandfather loves to accompany his grandson Billie to visit his old factory, of which he is very nostalgic, so he starts recollecting memories, hearing music coming from the machines and remembering with love the merits of his team. Billie plays and jumps around, exploring the factory; later he is joined by his dad, who bonds with his father in recalling his childhood memories.

The philosophy of this beautiful story is the deep, humane relationship between the generations, the beautiful bond between the grandpa and grandson. When the abandoned factory is destroyed, the three generations shed tears, and Billy embraces his grandpa in solidarity. However, the superb illustrations reflect the main theme here: that material things are gray and dying, though replaceable, while human beings are colorful and vivid. It ends:

The light through the windows has faded.
The bricks are silent.
And the sun is looking for another nest.

Jehan Helou

Billie's Factory
Wally de Doncker
Illustrated by Xu Kaiyun
Translated by Albatul Najaweb
Sjarjah, Emirates, and Cairo, Egypt: Dar Al Bousalah for Publishing & Distribution and Oriental Culture Publishing House, 2020. 48 pp.
ISBN: 978-9948-34-924-2
(Picturebook; all ages)

After They Gave the Order: Students Respond to Canadian Indian Residential School Literature for Social Justice

by LYNNE WILTSE

Deborah Ellis's 2018 IBBY keynote speech, "Before They Give the Order," provided the inspiration for this article, which focuses on components from a larger research study designed to engage English language arts teachers and their students in reading and responding to social justice literature for children and young adults. Drawing on a focus group conversation with five non-Indigenous elementary students who read a range of picturebooks, memoirs, and novels about the Canadian Indian residential school (IRS) system, this article reveals the potential of IRS literature for opening up social justice questions of discrimination and inequality with students as well as for motivating young readers to be emerging advocates for change.

Bookbird's invitation for scholars to consider social justice children's literature as sources of information, transformation, and hope immediately brings to mind Canadian author Deborah Ellis's social justice-themed children's books, which I have been using in my teaching and research for years. But, the call also invokes Ellis's 2018 IBBY keynote speech, "Before They Give the Order," also published in *Bookbird*. Given the difficult topics that Ellis tackles in her books, I could appreciate her comment that "there needs to be a before. We have had plenty of 'After They Give the Order'" (11). Ellis provides examples of the tragedies created after orders are given: close to seventy million refugees are on the move globally, and many animal species are on the verge of extinction. As I write the introduction to this article, it is one year since the downing of Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752, which killed all 176 people on board. More than one hundred had ties to Canada, and thirteen had connections to the university in which I work—current and former students, professors and family members. Iran has admitted to unintentionally shooting down the Ukrainian passenger jet, supposedly having mistaken it for a cruise missile. Ellis's speech reminds us that someone gave that order. This is one of countless examples where "nations made decisions to act or not to act, regardless of the consequences" (Giambastiani 8). Ellis's speech also provokes me to think about the implications of

giving orders in other contexts. For the purpose of this article, I consider the Indian residential school (IRS) system as an example of Ellis's "After They Give the Order" as I explore how children reading IRS texts can play a role in "chang[ing] things so that there can be a Day Before" (11). In this article, I report on one part of a larger study that explored the potential of children's and young adult literature to open up social justice questions of discrimination and inequality with students.

Study Details

The research highlighted in this article is part of a national Canadian research project designed to engage English language arts teachers and their students in reading and responding to a range of postcolonial literature for children and young adults. In the four-year study, researchers (all teacher educators) in six Canadian provinces met with teachers in monthly inquiry groups (a mix of elementary, middle years, and secondary teachers). The research was framed by postcolonial theories of reading practices that emphasize the hybrid nature of negotiating cultural identities in a third space of literary engagement (Bhabha; Bradford) and that consider the position of literary texts in "interrogating the colonial past" (Gandhi 4). In designing the study, we also drew on contemporary theories of social justice that posit teachers as agents of social change attending to issues of race, class, gender, and language (Cochran-Smith; McDonald). At each of the six universities involved in the study, we developed four-year case studies within a collaborative action research framework (Carr and Kemmis). In monthly collaborative inquiry groups, researchers and teachers read and reflected upon their pedagogical understandings of social justice framed by academic readings. Teachers then selected children's literature (funded by the project budget) to teach and developed appropriate pedagogical strategies for their classrooms. Afterward, in inquiry group meetings, teachers reflected on the transformative potential of these texts to encourage social action. Data were collected through audio-recorded teacher discussions and interviews, classroom observations, student focus-group discussions, and analysis of teaching and student-generated materials related to the texts. This article will focus on data from the first year of the study for the site in which I was the researcher. I begin with a brief description of the IRS system and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Between 1831 and 1996, an estimated 150,000 Canadian Indigenous children were forcefully removed from their families and communities by the Canadian government to attend residential schools.

Canadian Indian Residential Schools and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Between 1831 and 1996, an estimated 150,000 Canadian Indigenous children were forcefully removed from their families and communities by the Canadian government to attend residential schools. Known in Canada as Indian residential schools, the government-sponsored schools were run by Christian churches with the intent of assimilating Indigenous children

into the dominant Canadian culture. Students were disconnected from the influence of their own culture—forced to speak English or French, segregated according to gender, and stripped of their traditional clothing and long hair. The school system disrupted the transmission of Indigenous practices and beliefs across generations, leaving a legacy of trauma.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada was established in 2008 to document the history and lasting impacts of the Canadian IRS system on Indigenous students and their families. It closed in 2015 with the publication of ninety-four "calls to action" regarding reconciliation between Indigenous and settler peoples.

Taking up the "Calls to Action" in the Classroom

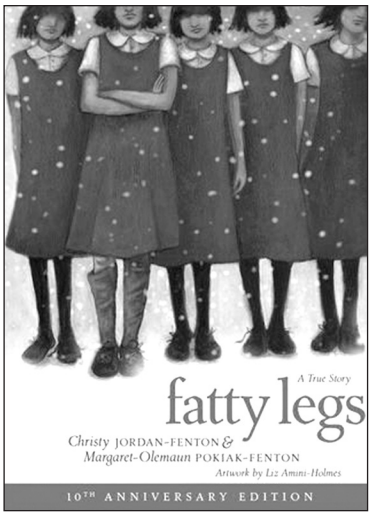
The TRC highlighted the ignorance of many Canadians about residential schooling and its legacy; given this lack of awareness, education for reconciliation aims to make "age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for kindergarten to grade twelve students" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 62.i). In her article "The Triumph of Olemaun: Survivance, Empathic Unsettlement, and Restorying the History of Canadian Residential Schools," Markland conducts a close reading of Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton's picturebook *When I Was Eight* (2013), as an exemplar of how Indigenous-authored IRS children's literature can be used to "unsettle young readers empathetically as part of restorying settler myths about residential schools and implicating young readers in the work of reconciliation" (132). In this article, I highlight the voices of students who learned about the IRS system through multiple sources.

Our inquiry group, composed of ten teachers who taught grades ranging from 4 to 7, at eight different schools, elected to respond to the call with a focus on IRS children's literature. The schools were either urban or suburban, with contrasting demographics. For example, some schools had a significant number of immigrant and refugee students, and few or no Indigenous students. In contrast, we had an Indigenous school; another school had a Cree (one of the major Algonquian-speaking First Nations) language and culture program; and yet another consisted of a mix of First Nations and newcomer students. One school had a predominant settler population. One of the teachers in the inquiry group was Indigenous; the rest were settlers.

This article will focus on how one non-Indigenous teacher, Collette (teacher and student names are pseudonyms), used children's literature as the basis of a unit about residential schooling and the perspectives of contemporary First Nations Métis Inuit, or FNMI (the current terminology used in provincial educational contexts), with her Grade 7 students at a culturally and linguistically diverse urban school with a large immigrant population. Many students were recent or first-generation immigrants, in particular from Middle Eastern and Asian countries. None were Indigenous. Collette explained how these demographics influenced her teaching of the unit: "I have a high immigrant population, so for them to understand

the First Nations story and see it from another perspective was valuable, but also a bit of a long journey."

The reading experience began with a read-aloud of Nicola Campbell's picturebook *Shin-chi's Canoe* (2008). The story of a brother and sister's experiences at residential school introduced the students to the IRS system. This was followed by a whole-class reading of Jordan-Fenton and Pokiak-Fenton's *Fatty Legs: A True Story* (2010), an illustrated memoir of a young Inuit girl, Olemaun, who leaves her village in the high Arctic to attend residential school. The picturebook that Markland examines in her article, *When I Was Eight*, is an adaptation of *Fatty Legs* for younger readers. To accompany the reading, students carried out background research on residential schools, completed mapwork and journal reflections, and participated in sharing circles with a residential school survivor. *Fatty Legs* functions as a mentor text to model how to read IRS literature for the literature circles that would follow. The texts selected for the literature circles included the sequel to *Fatty Legs*, *A Stranger at Home: A True Story* (2011; Jordan-Fenton and Pokiak-Fenton); *My Name Is Seepeetza* (1992; Sterling); *No Time to Say Goodbye: Children's Stories of Kuper Island Residential School* (2001; Olsen); *Goodbye Buffalo Bay* (2008; Loyie); and *Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story* (2011; Robertson and Henderson).



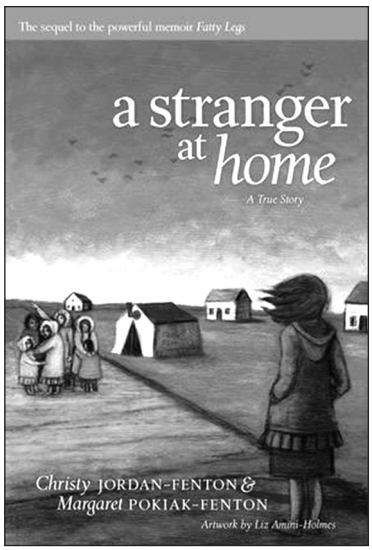
The remainder of this article will highlight the voices of five students (two boys and three girls), from a focus-group discussion I conducted at the end of the unit. Courtney and Melanie were from settler families. Adelina and Warren were born in Fiji and Egypt, respectively, and came to Canada as young children. Mustafa's parents were from Sudan. The students had read *A Stranger at Home* in their literature circle. Inspired by Ellis's keynote talk, I structured the students' insights around the pillars of her speech—after the order, dealing with the order, and before they give the order.

"After They Gave the Order": Indian Residential Schools

Deborah Ellis begins her speech with the words, "Time passes" (1), noting the years that have passed since the Taliban took over control of Kabul, Afghanistan, in September of 1996. The situation in Afghanistan sparked her *Breadwinner* trilogy—*The Breadwinner* (2001), *Parvana's Journey* (2003), and *Mud City* (2004)—written to educate young readers about children trying to survive in the distress and tyranny of war. The year 1996 also marks the closing of the last residential school in Canada, several years before the student participants in this study were born. I began the focus group by asking the students, "What do you know about residential schooling?" The following comments provide a sample of their responses to my question.

> **Melanie:** I know that there was a law for all First Nations kids to be sent to residential schools because the white people wanted to try and make the First Nations and Métis just like them.

Courtney: They would cut off their braids when they were girls, and try to take away their culture and religion and try to get them to speak English.
Adelina: I feel the government had something against FNMI people because they were held as hostages at schools where they were treated poorly and piece by piece their culture was taken away.
Mustafa: I think they were scared of the FNMI, because they were different, so they wanted to change them. But, that's not something that humans should do to other humans.
Warren: Some of them were mistreated there and when they left they were traumatized. They couldn't quite let go of what happened there.



Put in the context of Ellis's speech, the "law" to which Melanie referred could be likened to the order given, and the other comments to "because of 'after they give the order'" (11)—the attempts to eradicate children's culture, language, and religion, and the resulting trauma.

That the students experienced a sense of this trauma through their reading can be evidenced in Adelina's comment about an incident from *A Stranger at Home*, Olemaun's story of the return home to her family: "There were some parts of the book that actually traumatized me because there was a point when Margaret's [the name Olemaun was given at residential school] mother didn't recognize her own daughter. Like I've said before in our reading circle, I thought every mother should know their daughter." Mustafa understood this somewhat differently:

> I don't completely agree with how Adelina said her mother forgot her. I feel like the residential schools took the religion and language out of the children, and that the mother remembers Olemaun but she doesn't want her to be her child anymore 'cause she misses her old child, the one that used to speak the same language. It's harder to communicate with her child. That must be really hard for her.

Yoder and Strong-Wilson explain that Jordan-Fenton and Pokiak-Fenton's *Fatty Legs* and *A Stranger at Home* stand out for their exploration of being away and of coming home. Mustafa's comment suggests that the returning Olemaun is "not the same as the one who left: with different thoughts, even different values, which contaminate and thus threaten an original balance" (Yoder and Strong-Wilson 94). The students' comments draw attention to the unsettlement that Olemaun's homecoming created.

Yoder and Strong-Wilson explain that Jordan-Fenton and Pokiak-Fenton's Fatty Legs *and* A Stranger at Home *stand out for their exploration of being away and of coming home.*

As Magnet and Dunnington indicate, "Bearing witness to the pain of

others may cause pain...for the witness" (8)—in this context, the child reader. Dutro asks: "What does a pedagogy of witness require? Is it the mindful building of safe, intimate, spaces for conversations about books and how they intersect with lives?" (433). This must be a requirement, as reflected in Collette's views regarding teaching for social justice: "You have to create that safe environment. A lot of that is being vulnerable yourself and sharing. To do this kind of unit, it has to be us together, a community of learning, and that takes all year to build."

Jordan examines authorial strategies in children's Holocaust literature that enable contemporary younger readers to "learn about the Holocaust without becoming emotionally overwhelmed" (216). Comparisons can be made to IRS texts for children. One example, the strategy of not "omitting troubling details, but providing a balanced picture, highlighting the good as well as the evil" (216), can be seen in the following exchange, as the students carried on their conversation:

> **Adelina:** Maybe her child doesn't speak her language as well as she did before, but I thought maybe a word popped up in her head but she didn't know how to say it.
> **Courtney:** I also feel like she knew her language but she was too scared to say it because she thought she would be punished because of the way she was punished in residential schools.
> **Melanie:** So, going back into *Fatty Legs*, it made me feel happy for Margaret whenever the Swan came in because she was kind of like Margaret's protector there and she really helped Margaret get through even when the Raven was punishing her [Swan was Margaret's name for the nun who was kind to her, and Raven the name she gave a nun who was particularly mean].

The students' discussion touched on the range of experiences Indigenous children had at residential schools. In the next section, I continue the application of Ellis's speech in relation to the aftermath of the IRS order.

Dealing with "After the Order": Truth and Reconciliation

In her speech, Ellis explains that we have some knowledge of how to deal with "after the order." In the case of refugees, for example, she notes that we can provide food and emergency shelters for people who have had to flee their homes and communities. For the purpose of this article, I liken dealing with "after the order" to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. As the catalyst for the unit was to take up the calls to action of the TRC, students learned from reconciliation efforts, as well as the legacy of residential schooling. I wanted to learn about the students' understanding of truth and reconciliation. I asked: "Residential schooling happened in Canada's past, but we're hearing about it in the news on a regular basis. Why is that, do you think?" William's comment, for example, speaks to the truth aspect of the TRC: "I think they are constantly unearthing different facts about what happened from people who are brave enough to actually speak out their experiences." Adelina's thoughts extended to the

reconciliation component: "I think the survivors want everyone to know what had happened in the past so it can be out there because the government did a horrible job, and it haunts.... We want to say sorry for how much they lost in residential schooling, and for how much pain they're in." The students' remarks reflect their emerging understandings of the suffering that comes with truth telling, and the complexities of reconciliation.

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In his book *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*, Daniel Heath Justice explains that, in the past, too often Indigenous stories have been repressed, hidden, or dismissed. The TRC exposed some of these stories. In contrast, the stories others tell about Indigenous people have frequently been the wounding kind: "To my mind the most corrosive of all is the story of Indigenous deficiency. We've all heard this story, in one form or another" (2). Indeed, the students in this study were familiar with stories of this nature. For example, Adelina had heard "people calling FNMI druggies or lazzies (sic)." In his discussion, Justice notes that "[t]his isn't to say that there aren't profound and challenging social and political problems. Indigenous peoples are vastly overrepresented in all negative social indicators in Canada, the US, and other settler states" (3).

Learning in relation to the IRS system helped students better understand its legacy. A case in point is understanding the cyclical effects of Indian residential schools in relation to parenting, as can be seen in Melanie's (albeit generalized) explanation: "The parents went to residential schools, so all they knew was how the nuns treated them, and so then they don't know how to treat their children other than the way the nuns treated, and so it just keeps going and going." Warren added: "It creates an unhealthy chain." From their learning, the students had gained a sense of how stories of Indigenous deficiency displace "other stories, the stories of complexity, hope, and possibility" (Justice 4). Here, Adelina disagreed with the stories she had heard about FNMI: "But, they're not, because they've actually fought for their lives just to get out of the residential school and go back to learning and being who they were in their own culture." Adelina's reasoning doesn't recognize that there is no going back; however, it does suggest she has a sense of what it means to be a survivor. In this regard, Markland draws on Gerald Vizenor's notion of "survivance," developed to describe the "ways in which Indigenous narratives combine survival and resistance to challenge the domination and victimisation of Indigenous peoples" (Markland 135). Although the students were not familiar with the term, the concept of survivance had been a vital part of their learning. The next time Adelina hears a story of Indigenous deficiency, she may use this learning to counter the speaker's misperceptions.

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What Canadians learned from the TRC regarding the IRS system is informing how we move forward as a nation to heal. As with other orders Ellis mentions in her speech, "[w]e are learning more and more about how to care for the emotional well-being of those who have been subjected to violence in all its many heinous forms" (11). For example, Warren explained that "the government is working on making amends to the FNMI for what they had to go through." This caused Mustafa to "feel relieved because now I know that, as a country, we changed together for the better and now we're more equal." Mustafa's remark, which does not take into consideration present-day discrimination and ongoing inequality, reveals the limits of his understanding. On this note, Ellis cautions us: "There is much more to do, and we are learning" (11). Ellis's words apply as well to Canadian reconciliation. In the next section, I consider the role of children's literature in providing a "new way of looking at the world" (Ellis 12).

"Before They Give the Order": Providing the Alternative Piece

In her speech, Ellis, weary of "after the orders," explains her choice of title—there needs to be a "great Before Day, when the gun is put down, the bomb is dismantled, and the drone stays on the ground" (12). Concerning contemporary residential school children's literature, Yoder and Strong-Wilson juxtapose a "before" with an "after," in which the "before" is "granted reality…as an example of how to live in and with the world" and the "after" (that is, the time spent in a residential school) is "an aberration of the 'before' narrative" (94). Ellis asks, "How can we change things so that there can be a Day Before?" (11). While this is a question worth pursuing, there is no returning to the time "before" residential schools. Even so, Ellis's answer, that "good children's literature can provide that alternative piece" (12), has applicability for this discussion. In the focus group, I asked the students a question that addresses the alternative piece: "So, how can reading books like *Fatty Legs* and *A Stranger at Home* make a difference for students your age?"

Mustafa initiated this part of the conversation: "I feel like it shows how the world used to be. If I was First Nations one hundred years ago, I wouldn't have a right to the kind of education I have. How would I have this opportunity to learn?" Comparably, Adelina noted that she felt "gifted that I actually had the opportunity to go to school and to take advantage of my education." Both students shared stories from their parents' schooling before coming to Canada. Mustafa's mom and dad told him that "when they went to school in Africa, they were treated almost as badly as in residential schools." When Adelina's "parents were in schools, they'd say something that was wrong and they'd get beat. It was almost like residential schools." The ways in which their life experiences intersected with Olemaun's recounting of residential school no doubt influenced their reception of the IRS texts and associated learning. In contrast, Melanie's parents were schooled in Canada. She described what they did and did not learn on the topic:

> So, when our parents were raised, and went to school, they didn't learn about residential schools and how we made a mistake. They learned that the FNMI were bad people, and they shouldn't be treated well. So, our parents have that idea, even though they know that things have changed.

Ellis's view is that while we are responsible for the information that is in our heads, we cannot be faulted for how we are raised: "But the moment a countering piece of information enters our brains, then we are making a choice. We are choosing which information to follow" (12). Applying Ellis's argument to Melanie's account, her parents' generation can't be faulted for what they learned (or didn't learn) in school, but that they now know things have changed indicates which narrative they have chosen to follow. Although it is a sweeping statement, Melanie's assertion corresponds with Markland's observation that "current attitudes and prejudices of many settlers towards Indigenous peoples that are based on ignorance make reconciliation an impossible task" (137). Yet, Markland allows that this may become possible with education, for example, by listening to and reading Indigenous narratives.

Ellis's view is that while we are responsible for the information that is in our heads, we cannot be faulted for how we are raised: "But the moment a countering piece of information enters our brains, then we are making a choice."

In like vein, Ellis claims that "good children's literature can provide...a new way of looking at the world" (12). The IRS texts the students read offered that alternative piece, in particular as they developed their understanding of social justice in literature groups. Warren presented one of the advantages: "You can hear the people's views." Mustafa elaborated: "Sometimes, I have an opinion, but when someone else gives their opinion, sometimes it changes mine 'cause I see it from a different point of view." This is hopeful, given the need in our increasingly polarized world for acknowledging the critical role of multiple perspectives. In addition, the students heard viewpoints outside of their discussion group. Warren provided an illustration: "It was helpful to hear different stories from another person's perspective, like our Elder, telling stories of how he kept his culture close to him when he went to residential school." As Tschida et al. note: "It is only by disrupting single stories with narratives told from other perspectives that we form a more nuanced picture of the people, issues, or ideas at hand" (31). The benefits of learning from others has the potential to extend beyond the literature discussion group, as Adelina's assertion suggests: "When we read these books we can also change people's perspective of what they think and we can give them some ideas." The IRS children's literature helped equip the

The IRS texts the students read offered that alternative piece, in particular as they developed their understanding of social justice in literature groups.

"When we read these books we can also change people's perspective of what they think and we can give them some ideas."

students in their development as advocates for change. In envisioning that "great Before Day," Ellis asserts that "[w]e do not have to repeat the same mistakes and misdeeds of the past. We can create a world where the crimes are stopped—before they give the order" (12). An idealistic cliché, perhaps. But, it is one I hold on to as an educator, despite the lamentation of children's literature author Jane Yolen: "We say, forty years later, 'Never again,' yet it is happening again around the world" (250). Ellis's comment speaks to the past and the future. The students featured in this article currently are the present. Diverging from what her parents learned in school, Melanie expressed that "[f]or us, learning about residential schools at school makes us not repeat the past." How this will transpire remains to be seen. Gebhard acknowledges that harmful colonial discourses are often reproduced in schools; however, based on her work with teachers and students, she is convinced of teachers' "potential to inspire change" (24). For similar reasons, I am of like mind. Collette and her students provide an example of how "space of the school holds tremendous possibilities for producing disruptive knowledges" (Gebhard 24) for reconciliation between Indigenous and settler Canadians.

Conclusion

Ellis's hope for her "own books is that children who read them when they are young will carry the compassion they hopefully learn from the books into their adult, decision-making lives" (9). I echo this hope for the students who participated in the research highlighted in this article, and for other children and youth who will read IRS texts. Yoder and Strong-Wilson make the point that "residential school stories written by Indigenous authors…are arguably read primarily by a non-Indigenous audience" (93). I agree. I wish I'd had such stories during my first teaching position in a remote First Nations community in British Columbia many years ago, though. In the texts I had access to, and was expected to use, the lives and histories of my students were either misrepresented or not represented, marking my teaching of literature by an "explicit naming but also through the power of silence and absence" (Boler and Zembylas 120). My next two teaching positions were in band-operated schools. Due to funding issues, both were housed in former Indian residential schools; new schools have since been built in both locations. I heard disturbing stories of the residential schools from family members, long before the TRC came into being. At the time, though, neither knowledge about the IRS system nor the privileging of Indigenous voices was part of the mandated curriculum. Decades later, I am still troubled by those silences and absences. As part of the TRC's calls to action, the history and legacy of residential schooling are now required learning for all Canadian students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. There are challenges to taking this work up in school settings. Yet, the "imperative for this type of learning demands a truth-seeking stance that includes the ideas of future citizens—children" (Bascuñán 454). Increasingly, IRS children's literature

Yet, the "imperative for this type of learning demands a truth-seeking stance that includes the ideas of future citizens—children."

will be a powerful resource in the reconciliation process, compelling readers to "acknowledge that we are our past just as we are our future" (Yolen 248).

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"No Place Like Home": Immigration, Migration, and Loss in Two American Picturebooks

by COLIN HAINES

Two American picturebooks, Grandfather's Journey *by Allen Say (1993) and* Amelia's Road *by Linda Jacobs Altman (1993), hold contrasting idealizations of home, while common to both is a focus on the immigrant or migrant experience and the loss of home. Drawing on the theory of mourning and melancholia put forward by Sigmund Freud, the author examines the mechanisms by which the different protagonists cope with this loss. As will be argued here, Grandfather, in* Grandfather's Journey, *is perpetually haunted by the loss of a homeland, whether it is Japan or California. Amelia, in* Amelia's Road, *however, responds to the sense of loss in a more productive way, accepting it and letting it go.*

For generations of American children, L. Frank Baum's 1900 novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Victor Fleming's 1939 film adaptation of the same story have provided a central, if not defining, ideal of "home." In both works, "home" is a geographical place, rural Kansas, characterized by, in Baum's words, its unremitting "gray" color, its "flat" landscape, and its unsmiling and "solemn" inhabitants (10-11). In contrast is the land of Oz, to which Dorothy, the protagonist, is swept away in a cyclone. Oz is characterized by a preponderance of vibrant color and by the fantastical beings that inhabit it, both good and bad. Nevertheless, it is rural Kansas that remains Dorothy's "home" throughout the narrative, a place that compels her loyalty and desire to return. There is, for Dorothy, no equivalent or rival that could equal or surpass it. In a statement that may be taken as normative, Dorothy remarks: "No matter how dreary and gray our homes are, we people of flesh and blood would rather live there than in any other country, be it ever so beautiful. There is no place like home" (Baum 44). As a novel (and film) of leaving home, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is also a narrative of emigration—or at least migration—of leaving one's place of origin, however temporarily, for life in another. In this narrative, home is both beginning and end; Dorothy's quest to return is what propels the narrative toward its happy conclusion.[1]

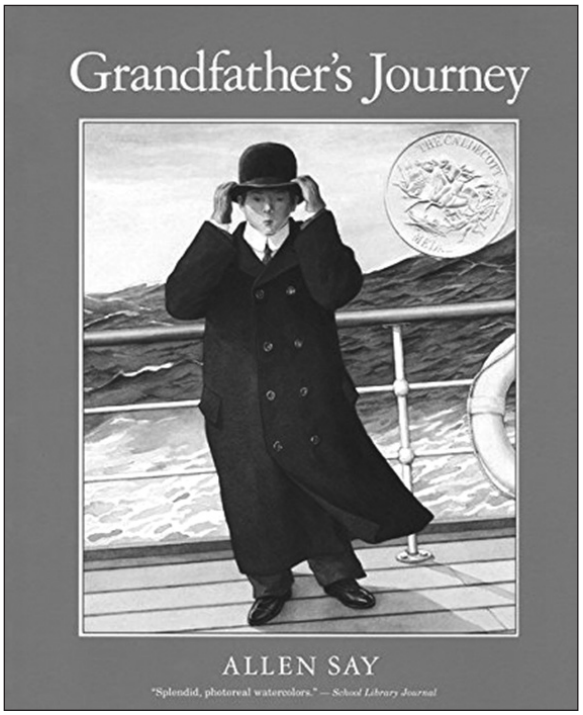
What this ideal of home cannot acknowledge is that the experience of another geographical location is likewise formative both for the individual who travels and even for the ideal of home itself. Indeed, there

cannot be "no place like home" if one has not traveled to and experienced somewhere else. To put it another way, the ideal of home requires an elsewhere—a place where home is lost—if home is to (re)assert itself as superior in the end.

This study focuses on the ideal of home as it is similarly conceived in two American picturebooks from nearly a century later. Common to both the Caldecott Award-winning picturebook *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say from 1993 and the (today) lesser-known picturebook *Amelia's Road* by Linda Jacobs Altman from the same year is a similar idealization of home and the desire to return. As stories of immigration and migration, respectively, both books entail the loss of home—whether real or imagined—and the negotiation of that loss. What sets these books apart, however, from the ideal of home as articulated in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, is the way in which the experience of loss affects the ideal. There is, in these books, no unproblematic return to an ideal home. As will be argued here, it is the second and lesser-known of these two works, *Amelia's Road*, that negotiates this loss more successfully.

The ideal of home requires an elsewhere—a place where home is lost—if home is to (re)assert itself as superior in the end.

Critical reception of both books has tended to focus on cultural representation and the effect immigration or migration has on identity. Jennifer Johnson Higgins, for example, includes both works in a 2002 study evaluating the authenticity of multicultural representation in literature for the classroom. Su-Jeong Wee et al., in a study from 2018, evaluate the authenticity of Japanese cultural representation and perspective in, among others, *Grandfather's Journey*, while Angelica Serrano, in a doctoral dissertation from 2020, includes *Amelia's Road* in a classroom-based study focusing on culturally relevant literature for Latinx students. Hannah Swamidoss examines cultural displacement resulting from immigration and remigration in *Grandfather's Journey* in a study from 2013, arguing that the narrator's homesickness arises in part due to "the difficulty of establishing roots when no one place represents identity" (26). Stuart H. D. Ching likewise considers *Grandfather's Journey* from the perspective of immigration in an analysis from 2015, though he views the narrator's homesickness more positively, as an affirmation of dual identity (132). Though receiving less attention than *Grandfather's Journey*, *Amelia's Road* figures in Judith Reed's 2015 study on immigration and forced migration in a globalized economy. While most of these studies acknowledge the loss of home that occurs in both books, few do so in a sustained way, focusing instead on identity. By way of contrast, this



study will focus on the idealization of home and psychological reactions to its loss. Drawing on the theory of grieving as put forward by Sigmund Freud, this study will argue, perhaps paradoxically, that there can be no successful return home until its loss has been fully accepted.

In a 1917 paper, "Mourning and Melancholia," Freud distinguishes between two different, though not unrelated responses to loss. Both mourning and melancholia, he writes, originate from "the loss of a loved person, or the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal and so on" (252). Not limited to the death of a loved person, as is commonly assumed in cases of mourning, both mourning and melancholia may arise from loss more generally conceived. Both entail "the same painful frame of mind, the same loss of interest in the outside world...the same loss of capacity to adopt any new object of love, and the same turning away from any activity that is not connected with thoughts of [the lost object]" (252). What sets the two apart, however, is the process that both entail. In mourning, attachment to the lost object is gradually, albeit painfully, given up; "reality testing," according to Freud, repeatedly reveals that the object no longer exists, and the loss of it is eventually accepted (253). Melancholia, on the other hand, represents a blockage in this process. Here, the lost object is not given up, but is preserved within the subject's own ego, becoming a part of him- or herself (252). In other words, if mourning represents the gradual acceptance of loss, then melancholia represents the disavowal thereof—in this case, an inability to accept.

If mourning represents the gradual acceptance of loss, then melancholia represents the disavowal thereof—in this case, an inability to accept.

Although none of the central protagonists in *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say and *Amelia's Road* by Linda Jacobs Altman exhibit signs of true melancholia as defined by Freud—"a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminat[ing] in a delusional expectation of punishment" (252)—two of the protagonists in the first of these books, *Grandfather's Journey*, exhibit the inability to accept the loss not only of "home," but of the "elsewhere" to which they travel.

Narrated in the first person, *Grandfather's Journey* is a retrospective account of the narrator's grandfather, who leaves his home in Japan as a young man in the early twentieth century. With no other purpose than "to see the world" (4), Grandfather spends three weeks crossing the Pacific Ocean before arriving in North America. Not unlike Dorothy in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Grandfather travels throughout what is described as a marvelous country. He is "amazed" at "[d]eserts with rocks like enormous sculptures" (8), "bewildered and excited" by "factories and tall building" (19); he "marvel[s] at the towering mountains and rivers" (11) and shakes hands with men of various ethnicities and races (12). At first, Grandfather gives no thought to returning home to Japan, as the "more he traveled, the more he longed to see" (13). He eventually establishes himself in California—the place he liked best—and, after a brief return to Japan to marry his "childhood sweetheart," settles in San Francisco to start a new family (15).

It is only with the birth of his daughter that Grandfather's thoughts harken back to Japan: "As his daughter grew, my grandfather began to think about his own childhood. He thought about his old friends. He remembered the mountains and rivers of his home" (17-18). As if to distract himself, Grandfather adopts pets—"surrounding himself with songbirds"—but they fail to engage his interest; "he could not forget" (18). As Freud would have it, he "turns away from any activity that is not connected with thoughts of [the lost object]" (252). Thus, when his daughter is nearly fully grown, he resolves to move the family back to Japan.

At this point, *Grandfather's Journey* would seem to recapitulate the "home-away-home" narrative as exemplified in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Here, a young man leaves home to experience life elsewhere, though nostalgia or homesickness compels his eventual return. Nevertheless, *Grandfather's Journey* does not end with the protagonist's happy homecoming. For, after resettling amid the familiar landscape and among the old friends of his childhood, Grandfather begins missing what is lost this time, that is, California. For his part, the narrator, who is now a young child, recalls weekend visits to his grandfather's house where the old man reminisces, telling his grandson "stories about California" (24). Once again, Grandfather adopts birds—"warblers and silvereyes"—as a distraction, though once again, they fail to distract: Grandfather "could not forget the mountains and rivers of California" (25). As on the previous occasion, the songbirds fail to turn Grandfather's thoughts to life here and now; they become, instead, a symbol of an unresolved grief.

Eventually, Grandfather plans a return trip California, but such a plan is ultimately thwarted by the outbreak of World War II. After that he is too old: "The last time I saw him," the narrator remarks, "my grandfather said that he longed to see California one more time. He never did" (29). In the coda, the narrator undertakes his grandfather's planned journey himself: "[W]hen I was nearly grown," he says,

> I left home and went to see California for myself. After a time, I came to love the land my grandfather had loved, and so I stayed on and on until I had a daughter of my own. But I also miss the mountains and rivers of my childhood. I still miss my old friends. So I return now and then, when I can not still the longing in my heart. The funny thing is, the moment I am in one country, I am homesick for the other. (30-31)

Here, the narrator not only repeats his "grandfather's journey," but likewise repeats his grandfather's loss of home.

As a narrative of coming home, Grandfather's Journey *subverts any normative claim that would value "home"—one's geographical place of origin—over and against the "elsewhere" to which one may travel.*

As a narrative of coming home, *Grandfather's Journey* subverts any normative claim that would value "home"—one's geographical place of origin—over and against the "elsewhere" to which one may travel. Grandfather grieves the loss of Japan when he is in California and,

equally, the loss of California once he is back in Japan. There is no satisfactory return home. Yet, Grandfather cannot accept the loss of either place. Once he returns to Japan, he tells his old friends and eventually his grandson "many stories about California" and, in this way, preserves the past in the present (21, 24). This melancholia is moreover passed down from generation to generation. Like his grandfather, the narrator too ends up traveling between both countries, feeling "homesick" for whichever country he is not in.

The sense of melancholia in *Grandfather's Journey* is also expressed in its illustration. Hannah Swamidoss points out the likeness of the illustrations in *Grandfather's Journey* to photographs. Focusing on two in particular—those of Grandfather crossing the Atlantic on his first journey to North America (Say 5) and of Grandfather holding his young grandson after he has returned (Say 24)—Swamidoss notes that in each, the figures seem as if "posing for a camera" (Swamidoss 23). A similar point could be made for far more illustrations than she considers: Grandfather posing with a group of men outside the barber shop (Say 12), Grandfather and Grandmother rowing on a boat in Japan (15), Grandfather and Grandmother with their baby daughter in a park in San Francisco (16), their daughter as a young girl (17), the family emigrating back to Japan (19), their daughter as a young woman (22), their daughter getting married (23), their grandson during the war (26), the end of the war (27), Grandfather and grandson at the end of the narrative (29), and the grandson alone in California (30). In each of these, the figures are centered and look directly at the reader as if, indeed, posing for a photograph.

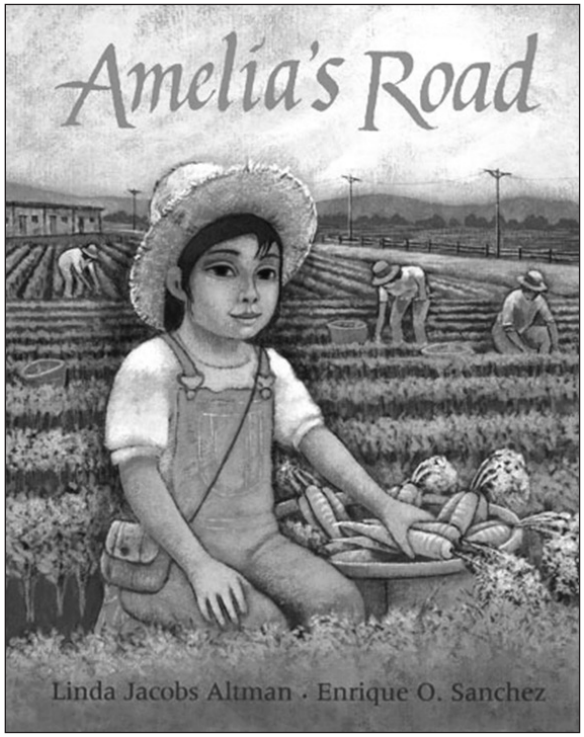
The layout and color palette reinforce the impression of photography. There is one illustration per page and all share the same dimensions, approximately square format, a classic format of mid-twentieth-century photography. Like *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, in which Kansas is rendered in gray, the first illustration in the book—Grandfather in Japan (4)—is monochromatic, though once he travels to North America, the illustrations become more colorful. Unlike *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, however, Japan is not monochromatic upon Grandfather's return. Nevertheless, the color palette is subdued throughout, the use of watercolor giving the illustrations the impression of being faded or washed-out. As Jennifer Johnson Higgins suggests, the overall effect when reading *Grandfather's Journey* is that of reading "a family album. The full-page illustrations are personal snapshots of various times in Grandfather's life." (Higgins, n. p.). Combined with the text, such images provide the reader with not only a sense of Grandfather's—and the narrator's—loss of geographical location, but with the loss of Grandfather as well.

Thus, while *Grandfather's Journey* may be seen to undermine the narrative ideal of home as exemplified in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*—it extends the story beyond the ending in which home is attained, and attaches value to the "elsewhere" to which its protagonists travel—it cannot move beyond the loss of either place. To inhabit one geographical location, "home," is to lose another and to inhabit the other is to lose "home." Both places are preserved in a melancholic reminiscence and retelling.

To inhabit one geographical location, "home," is to lose another and to inhabit the other is to lose "home."

The ability to accept the loss of home, that is, to mourn it, is the subject of another picturebook published in the same year, *Amelia's Road*, written by Linda Jacobs Altman and illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez. Like *Grandfather's Journey*, *Amelia's Road* challenges the narrative ideal of home. Unlike *Grandfather's Journey*, however, it does so by accepting the loss of it.

A narrative of migration, rather than immigration, *Amelia's Road* is different. Strictly speaking, the central protagonist, Amelia Luisa Martinez, has no home at all. As the daughter of migrant farm laborers, what Amelia knows are the roads her family travels from harvest to harvest in search of work. Nevertheless, this does not stop Amelia from grieving the loss of home; she cries "every time her father took out the map" when the harvest is at an end and the family is forced to move on. (Altman [1]).[2] That Amelia should have no place to call home does not mean that she does not grieve the loss of it, for, as Freud notes, the loss of an "an abstraction," or "an ideal, and so on," may be felt as acutely as the loss of an actual person or place (252).



As the narrative commences, Amelia is at odds with her family as none of them share her sense of loss. To her expressed desire for a place to "settle down," to "belong," her mother responds only vaguely: "Maybe someday" (Altman [5]). Similarly, when Amelia asks about her place of birth, both parents are vague: "Where? Let me see," her mother responds. "Must have been Yuba City. Because I remember we were picking peaches at the time" ([8]). Her father confirms this, adding a vague sense of date: "That's right. Peaches...which means you were born in June" ([8]). Nor is Amelia's need for belonging resolved at the various schools she attends; as the daughter of migrant workers, neither classmates nor teachers bother even to learn her name ([11]).

What changes Amelia's situation is her first day at school in a new place. Here, her teacher, Mrs. Ramos, affirms her new pupils, not only by learning their names, but by giving them an assignment: to "draw their dearest wishes" and, in so doing, to "[s]hare with us something that's really special to you" ([11]). For Amelia, that is a white house with a tree in the front yard. Sharing this with the rest of the class gives Amelia a new sense of belonging as, by the end of the day, not only Mrs. Ramos, but all of Amelia's new classmates "learned Amelia's name" ([11]). Amelia attains a sense of recognition from and belonging to a group of peers, something she had not experienced before.

Returning from school to the labor camp that same day, Amelia

stumbles upon a broken-down road, which, when she follows it, she terms "the accidental road because it was narrow and rocky, more like a footpath that happened by accident than a road somebody built on purpose" ([15]). This road terminates beside an old tree, "old beyond knowing, and quite the sturdiest, most permanent thing Amelia had ever seen" ([15]). It reminds her of the tree she had drawn earlier. Over the course of the harvest, she develops a relationship to this place, coming to the tree each day after school and "pretend[ing] she had come home" ([17]).

When the harvest nears completion, Amelia is, at first, unable to imagine leaving this newfound home behind. Neither family nor community knows what advice to give. It is only another, fortuitous "accident" that gives her an idea. Finding an old metal box in the garbage at the camp, Amelia fills it with cherished belongings: a hair ribbon her mother once made for her, a family photograph, the name tag given to her by Mrs. Ramos, and the drawing she had made in Mrs. Ramos's class and to which Mrs. Ramos had attached a red star. Burying the box and these contents beneath the old tree, Amelia makes this place "home": "here was a place she belonged, a place she could come back to" ([24]).

The narrative concludes with Amelia returning to the labor camp to find her family already packing the car to leave. "For the first time in her life," the story ends, "she didn't cry when her father took out the road map" ([28]). Here, Amelia moves beyond the permanence and belonging she had previously lacked. Having established a place to call home, she is able to "turn away," in Freud's terms, from that place and face a future elsewhere without remorse. Exemplifying the difference between mourning and melancholia, Amelia accepts the loss of home and moves on rather than preserving that loss.

Exemplifying the difference between mourning and melancholia, Amelia accepts the loss of home and moves on rather than preserving that loss.

The illustrations by Enrique O. Sanchez differ substantially from those by Allen Say in *Grandfather's Journey*. Here, there is no attempt at photographic realism. As Jody McCoy has pointed out in a review of *Amelia's Road*, "the acrylic-on-canvas illustrations have a folk-art quality" (78). Images are of varying dimensions, including double-page spreads, page-and-a-half spreads, and single-page images. Illustrations of fruit, berries, and chiles—foodstuffs the migrant workers would harvest—accompany text where there would otherwise be blank space. Within the boxed illustrations, the perspective is, at times, distorted and flat. Human figures are more stylized, which, combined with the vibrancy of the color palette throughout, gives an overall impression of, as McCoy points out, folk art (78). In this way, *Amelia's Road* is similar to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, in which Oz is portrayed, verbally, as stylized, bright, and colorful. It differs, however, insofar as the color palette makes no distinction between "home" and "elsewhere." The home Amelia makes for herself is not, in other words, separated visually from the places she travels from and to—both are valued equally.

In terms of narrative, *Amelia's Road* subverts the ideal of "home-away-home." Rather than extend the story, as is the case in *Grandfather's*

Journey, *Amelia's Road* inverts it: Amelia begins her journey on the road—"elsewhere"—and establishes as "home" that place she discovers by following the "accidental road," before resuming her journey to somewhere else. The narrative trajectory is, thus, "away-home-away." Moreover, *Amelia's Road* more explicitly interrogates the notion of "home" itself, what "makes" a home, what "home" actually is. Neither Amelia nor her parents can recall her place of origin in a satisfactory manner; to her repeated inquiries, her parents can only recall the fruit they harvested in the time and place she was born. Mrs. Ramos and her class may provide a sense of affirmation, insofar as they learn Amelia's name, but the home Amelia establishes is entirely incidental or, in the terms of the text, "accidental," the discovery of a place and her actions therein. In this sense, "home" is performative: less a place where one is from, home is a place on which, and in which, one *acts*.

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In this sense, "home" is performative: less a place where one is from, home is a place on which, and in which, one acts.

As literature aimed at children, and in particular, immigrant and migrant children, both *Grandfather's Journey* and *Amelia's Road* offer alternatives to the narrative ideal of home as exemplified in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Yet, they do so differently and with different effects. While *Grandfather's Journey* subverts the narrative—ascribing value to the "elsewhere" to which one travels and extending the story beyond the return home—it cannot ultimately overcome the loss of either place. Repeating his grandfather's journey, the narrator is inscribed into the same narrative of loss, a story passed down to, and relived by, a third generation of immigrants. In the end, *Grandfather's Journey* tells a tale neither of home nor of a journey; rather, it retells the loss of both. A different tale is *Amelia's Road*, one that likewise subverts the ideal of home, insofar as it inverts the narrative and provides for a more open ending. The notion of home itself is brought into question, becoming a site for the protagonist's own agency. Rather than grieving the loss each time she and her family travel, Amelia establishes as "home" one of those places and, having established it, moves on. As stories of "melancholia" and "mourning," respectively, both *Grandfather's Journey* and *Amelia's Road* offer a means to consider and survive the loss of home. Only one of them, *Amelia's Road*, offers a means to survive *beyond* that loss.

In the end, Grandfather's Journey *tells a tale neither of home nor of a journey; rather, it retells the loss of both.*

While both of these books were first published and circulated in the early 1990s, they nevertheless offer insight into the experience of immigration and migration, two global phenomena that have only accelerated in the time since. For both children and adult readers, immigrant as well as nonimmigrant, migrant as well as nonmigrant, works such as these and their many successors serve to enhance an understanding not simply of immigration and migration, but of the sense of loss that those moves

entail. As more recent works—such as Helen Recorvits's picturebook *My Name Is Yoon* from 2003 and Wendy Meddour's picturebook *Lubna and Pebble* from 2019—have demonstrated, loss and the ability to let go remain central to stories of moving on.

Notes

1. I refer here to both Baum's original novel, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, and to Fleming's 1939 film, *The Wizard of Oz*, as stand-alone works. These, I take it, are the most popular and recognized versions of the story. It bears pointing out, however, that both the novel and the film have been the subject of countless sequels and spin-offs.
2. Because *Amelia's Road*, published by Lee and Low Books, lacks page numbers throughout the text, I have indicated page numbers in square brackets for purposes of citation. The page numbers cited here commence "[1]," on the first page that the narrative begins: "Amelia Luisa Martinez hated roads...."

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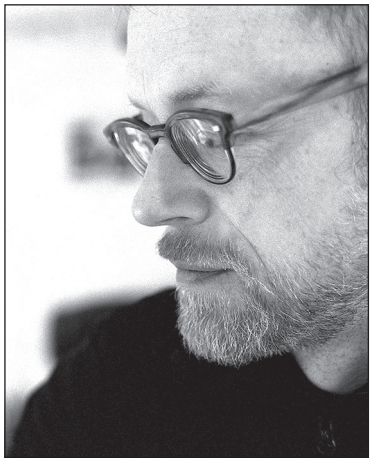


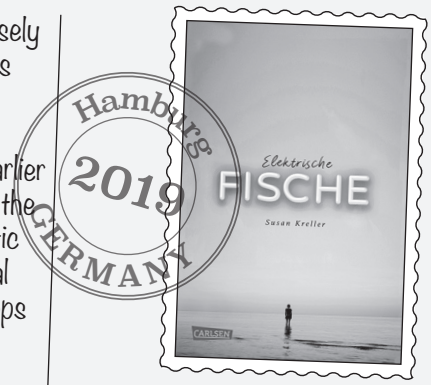
Colin Haines is currently an associate professor of English at Oslo Metropolitan University. He is the author of "*Frightened by a Word": Shirley Jackson and Lesbian Gothic* (Uppsala University, 2007) and of "Challenging Stereotypes: Randa Abdel-Fattah's Use of Parody in *Does My Head Look Big in This?*" (Bookbird, 2015).

In this novel, the protagonist, Emma, experiences how closely related are having a home and being homeless, knowing one's origin and feeling uprooted. Her mother moves with Emma and her two siblings to her original home in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany, after having moved twenty years earlier to Dublin, Ireland, as an au pair. Now, after breaking up with the children's dad, she has to return to the rural area by the Baltic Sea and begin a new life in old surroundings. The siblings deal in different ways with feeling foreign: Emma's little sister stops speaking, her older brother dives into village life, and Emma secretly plans her return to Dublin.

Susan Kreller tells a story about returning and being a stranger and impressively shows Emma's experience of not settling down. The poetic language, combined with Emma's story, perfectly shows that "home" is a feeling first of all.

Nominated for the 2020 German Children's Literature Award, young adult.

Jury of the German Children's Literature Award



Elektrische Fische (Electric Fish)

Susan Kreller
Hamburg, Germany: Carlsen, 2019. 192 pp.
ISBN: 978-3-551-58404-5
(Realistic fiction; ages 12+)

The Coin in the Rice in the Spoon:

Perspectives within Perspectives in *A New Year's Reunion*

by JOE SUTLIFF SANDERS and XIA ZHAO

Yu Li-Quiong and Zhu Cheng-Liang's A New Year's Reunion *(*Tuan Yuan*) was the first winner of the Feng Zikai Children's Picture Book Award in 2009 and has since gone on to become a major text in the emerging canon of modern Chinese-language picturebooks. In English-language translations, it has become available widely outside China and serves as an important entry point for understanding techniques and concerns of contemporary Chinese children's books. Told by the daughter of a migrant worker briefly returning home between construction jobs,* A New Year's Reunion *gives an affectionate, respectful account of the girl's experience of the story, then hints in the final pages at an adult perspective.*

First published in 2008, *A New Year's Reunion* (*Tuan Yuan*) marks a significant milestone in the development of contemporary Chinese picturebooks. Illustrated by the well-established Zhu Cheng-Liang and written by Yu Li-Quiong, a relative newcomer, the book was the winner of the first prize of the Feng Zikai Children's Picture Book Award in 2009.[1] This award has since become one of the most influential picturebook awards in the Chinese-speaking world, and as the fame of the award has grown, so has that of the book. Fang Weiping's *Four Decades of Chinese Children's Literature: A Historical Overview* makes the case that the book is one of the leading works of Chinese children's literature in the last twenty years (113). The book's reputation has also grown outside China, as it was translated into English and published by the prestigious sister presses Walker Books in the United Kingdom and Candlewick Press in the United States, both in 2011. In the same year, it was chosen as a *New York Times* Best Illustrated Children's Book.

A New Year's Reunion *offers a vivid depiction of the childhood experienced by millions of young people in contemporary migrant workers' families in China.*

A New Year's Reunion offers a vivid depiction of the childhood experienced by millions of young people in contemporary migrant workers' families in China. As the story opens, Mummy is preparing for Daddy's return

from his job as a construction worker while Maomao, their daughter of perhaps five or six years old, looks on. Rather than focusing on a didactic message, Yu and Zhu situate the book deep in the perspective of Maomao, as she experiences confusion at her father's return, joy at the comfort and affectionate respect he affords her, and delight at the gifts he shares. As we will explore later, a careful reading spots the grief that her mother feels as Daddy prepares to leave home again for work, but the feelings of adults are largely relegated to the background, as *A New Year's Reunion* instead foregrounds the arc of Maomao's changing feelings.

The emotions and relationships between Maomao and her parents slip and change, reformulate and reconfigure over the course not only of the book but also of multiple readings. *A New Year's Reunion* is primarily a book about Maomao's internal journey, but through multiple ironies, it offers and complicates a loving, sentimental relationship between parents and child with implications for the power relationships between the two. Because picturebooks anticipate a dual audience of adult and child consuming and constructing the story together, a picturebook such as *A New Year's Reunion* is a rich site in which to investigate the mingled reading perspectives of two generations.[2] The purpose of our analysis here, though, is not to untangle the implications of those power dynamics so much as it is to investigate the tangling itself, the ways in which the perspectives nest within and ironize one another.[3]

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Reading with Maomao

Within Chinese traditions of children's literature, *A New Year's Reunion* stands out in part because of its extensive use of collaboration between text and illustration to construct the perspectives that it offers. It was not until the end of the 1990s that Chinese children's literature started thoroughly to embrace the concept of children's picturebooks as characterized by a collaboration between words and pictures.[4] As the picturebook in China has embraced this technique, though, it has experienced a great boom in terms of both quantity and quality in the mainland, making it one of the most prominent genres in the market and criticism of children's books, as the recent launch of prizes such as the Hsin Yi Picture Book Award and *Times* Picture Book Award demonstrates. Some recent critics, such as Xing Chao, have seen one of the main artistic challenges of Chinese picturebooks during this period to be the convincing representation of a child's perspective, and books such as *A New Year's Reunion* have responded to that challenge by investing deeply in the collaboration between text and illustration. Careful attention to the interplay of words and images at each stage of reading reveals the full complexity of the book's nuanced presentation of perspective.

Careful attention to the interplay of words and images at each stage of reading reveals the full complexity of the book's nuanced presentation of perspective.

The perspective on display in an initial reading of *A New Year's Reunion* is one that will be very familiar. As the story proper opens (see figure 1), we see Maomao next to her mother's dressing table, where Mummy sits brushing her hair. Zhu's illustration suggests that we are not to identify with the perspective of the mother, with her back toward us and head in the top quarter of the image. Rather, Maomao's perspective, that of the child, appears to be the more legitimate viewpoint, with her face in profile and eye at the center of the vertical axis (2). Yu's text on the facing page confirms the perspective encouraged by the image, as the narrator confides, "Today, Mummy and I wake up really early because…" (1).

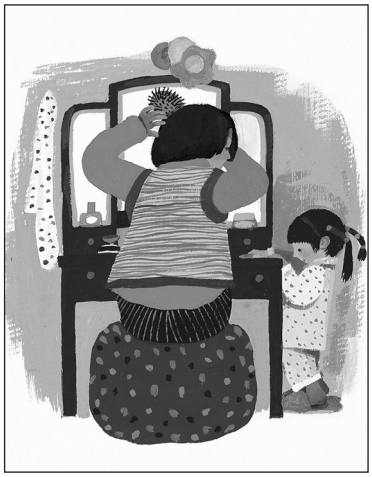


Figure 1

The book's guidance toward Maomao as the viewpoint character is elegant but firm. The first such guidance, obviously, is the identification of the two characters, "Mummy" and "I." Only one of the characters in the image can legitimately be "Mummy," leaving the little girl to be the "I," the person telling us the story and providing the eyes through which the world will be perceived. More evocatively, though, the ellipsis at the end of the page urges not only an explicit understanding of the perspective but also a more visceral experience of being Maomao. Here, the ellipsis signals a moment in which Maomao hesitates, and because it comes at the end of the page, just before a page turn, it coincides with a moment in which we also must pause. One of the great charms of the form of picturebooks is the pause that comes with the page turn, which picturebook creators can use to create suspense, perfect the timing of a punchline, or, as in this case, align the reader with the narrator.[5] As Maomao pauses at the ellipsis, readers, too, pause as we turn the page to find the rest of the sentence: "Daddy is coming home" (4).

Throughout this first reading, as the book repeatedly signals that Maomao's perspective is to be the reading perspective, it also loads that perspective with a respectful affection. After Daddy has started to settle back into life at home, we see the family falling asleep together (see figure 2). Daddy's striped pajamas form the top and left sides of a frame around Maomao, who sleeps on her back, her contented smile turned up to the viewer. Her parents face toward her on either side, their eyes pointing at her rather than each other. Maomao, whose words the proficient reader speaks and the listening reader hears, confides, "I lie between Daddy and Mummy" (12). The page encourages an alignment with Maomao by having her face the readers and using a first-person narration, and the subsequent narration at the bottom of the page adds another sensory experience that grants us a touching participation in the moment. Maomao tells us that she "fall[s] asleep" between her parents, "drowsily hearing them whispering, whispering…." Here the ellipsis gives us the pause that Maomao experiences as she drifts off to sleep, and the onomatopoeia of "whispering, whispering" gives the person listening to the book the sensation of overhearing that lisped conversation. In the original language, the word is composed of two parts: the first,

Figure 2

qing qing de, means "softly," and the second, *shuo'a shuo'a*, means "speak and speak." Both of the consonants (*q* sounds a bit like tʃ, and *sh* sounds like ʃ) convey the sense of whispering, especially when read softly. As the story progresses, we see many similar scenes from Maomao's perspective, and in each instance, the book aligns the reading perspective with that of the little girl and embeds in that perspective an emotional reward. Through moments such as these, the book nudges us toward a perspective familiar in picturebooks: we see and feel with the child.

Through moments such as these, the book nudges us toward a perspective familiar in picturebooks: we see and feel with the child.

In the final moments of the book, though, the story recognizes another perspective, one that allows insights on the same aspects of the story and that suggests that another truth has lain alongside Maomao's throughout. Daddy, who has returned home only briefly from his job building "big houses in faraway places" (1), prepares in the last pages to depart again. Once he has finished packing, he cuddles Maomao and whispers to her, "Next time Daddy's back, he'll give you a doll, OK?" Throughout, Daddy has been the source of many gifts: a hat for Maomao, a coat for Mummy, and a sticky rice ball with a lucky coin hidden inside. To the promise of a doll, though, Maomao shakes her head and tells her father, "I want to give *you* something…" (32). A page turn later, the painting on the verso shows Maomao placing the lucky coin in her father's open hand (see figure 3). The text on the page facing explains:

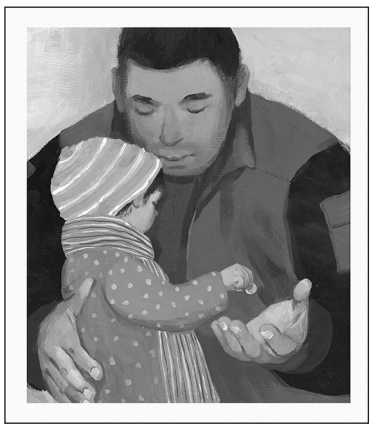


Figure 3

> I put the coin, all warm from being held in my hand for so long, in Daddy's palm and say, "Here, take this. Next time you're back, we can bury it in the sticky rice ball again!"
> Daddy is very quiet.
> He nods, and hugs me tight.

Using the tools with which we have worked earlier in the book to locate the focalization suggests another important perspective here, specifically that of her father. The ellipsis, which has suggested Maomao's perspective in earlier instances, in this moment delays the revelation of information that is already available to Maomao but not to her father: Maomao knows what she wants to give, so the delay in the ellipsis and the page turn alienates us from her viewpoint and aligns us with that of her father, the only character in the scene who does not know what the gift will be. We wait as he waits, excluded from Maomao's knowledge. The painting that accompanies the text (see figure 3) similarly shifts attention toward the father's experience of the moment, as Maomao faces away from us but her father, who huddles over the panel and extends his hand toward us, shows us his face and the sentiment etched across it. Emotion provides the strongest anchor to the father's perspective, as the central feeling of the moment is embedded with Daddy: it is Daddy who is struck by the gesture of the gift. Although the text remains in Maomao's first-person voice, Maomao's gesture is

powerfully meaningful to Daddy, not his daughter, and only by imagining ourselves in *his* position can we access the deepest emotional reward of the moment.

Reading with Mummy and Daddy

A picturebook is a text designed to be read more than once, so let us retrace our steps now and watch for this other perspective parallel to Maomao's throughout the book. Above, we noted that "the story proper opens" with Maomao next to her mother, anticipating her father's return. But if we backtrack all the way to the front matter of the book, an image appears that already hints at that other perspective. On the copyright page, we find a calendar turned to 23 January, the same date (and probably the same calendar) as in the illustration at the end of the book, as Daddy laces up his shoes to leave and Mummy cries in the background (see figure 4). The first calendar appears outside the diegetic space of the story, so we are not to understand that a character in the story perceives the calendar, but all the same, *we* see it, and although we do not understand it on the first reading, in subsequent readings it operates as a foreshadowing of Daddy's departure.

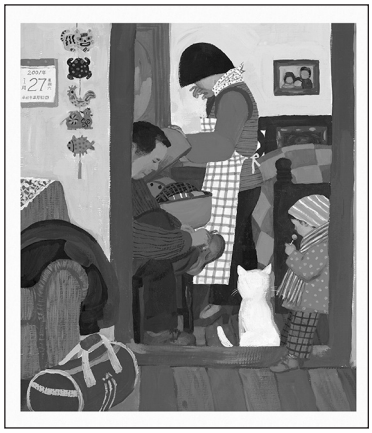


Figure 4

On this careful second reading of the book, we find that Daddy's departure, which is fully known to Maomao only at the very end, has been a heavy weight throughout the story. In the double-page spread where he and Mummy roll his luggage from left to right and into the future of the story (see figure 5), multiple characters on the verso face and indeed move left, and although Daddy's luggage follows him to the right, it straddles the gutter of the page, as though still lodged in the place that Daddy has come from. The composition and content of the spread hint that even as he is arriving, Daddy is being pulled back, away, to the left and the past of the story, before he arrived for his reunion with his family.

On this careful second reading, we can similarly trace the pressure on Daddy to leave again in the way that Mummy is presented to us. We know now that we will eventually see, in the closing pages, Mummy helping Daddy pack, her body in profile to the camera but her face turned away, the back of her hand pressed to her mouth as she stifles her tears (figure 4). That image is in contrast with her appearance throughout the middle of the story, during most of Daddy's happy visit. In these scenes, Mummy's face is more visible to us, often happy and open. But we see Mummy's face obscured elsewhere in the book: not only in the closing image as Daddy leaves but also in the opening image as she brushes her hair (figure 1) and even, indeed, in the spread where Daddy arrives (figure 5). As the calendar in the front matter hints, this reunion is always

Figure 5

In fact, the book repeatedly, subtly hints that Daddy is always already leaving, that even in the joy of his arrival are the knowledge and grief of watching him go away again.

laced with the knowledge that Daddy will soon leave. In fact, the book repeatedly, subtly hints that Daddy is always already leaving, that even in the joy of his arrival are the knowledge and grief of watching him go away again.

Once we know to watch for this double perspective, the book becomes yet richer, and the gift of the lucky coin takes on a much more profound meaning. As they make the sticky rice balls together, Maomao watches Daddy hide the coin in one of them. He promises her that "[w]hoever finds the ball with the coin will have good luck" (12). We know on this second reading that Maomao will eventually give the coin to Daddy, but here, the book hints, Daddy carefully and secretly arranges to make sure that Maomao gets the coin. In fact, when it comes time to eat the balls, Maomao tells the reader that "Daddy feeds them to me with a spoon" (14). If we have only Maomao's perspective, it is luck alone that delivers the right ball to her, but with our new attentiveness to a simultaneous adult perspective lingering in the book, one filled with an awareness of the poignancy of Daddy's brief reunion with his family, there is a hint that Daddy, who after all is in control of who gets which ball, contrives to make sure that Maomao finds the lucky coin.

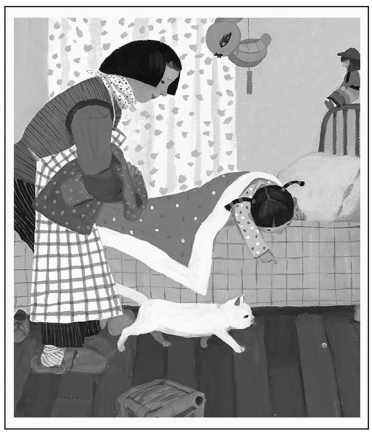


Figure 6

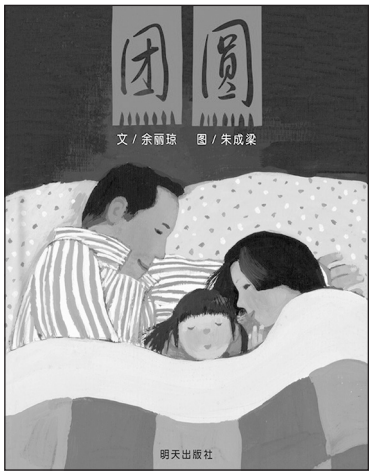
Later, Maomao loses her lucky coin outside while playing with friends and weeps in despair when she cannot find it under the snow. Daddy comforts her and offers her another, but Maomao insists that she must have the original coin and no other. As she takes off her coat at bedtime, she hears something fall to the floor and discovers to her delight that the coin was in her pocket all along (see figure 6). Again, from Maomao's perspective, the return of her coin is a stroke of luck.

Considering, though, that the book has already implied that Daddy delivered the coin to her in the first place, this second reading reveals another possibility. Moments earlier, as Daddy comforts her, he tells her not to cry, explaining, "I'll give you another one. Look, it's exactly the same!" Maomao, however, refuses the imposter coin, rubbing her eyes as she pines for the original. But if the new coin looks "exactly the same," there is no reason to believe that the coin that Maomao finds at bedtime is in fact the original coin; there is every reason to suspect that the coin that falls from Maomao's coat at bedtime is the replacement. Indeed, in the image where Daddy offers her the new coin, Maomao is wearing the coat that she will later remove, hinting that Daddy slips the coin into her pocket after she refuses it. Mummy looks on in the image where Maomao sees the restored coin rolling across the floor, but Mummy's expression is not that of a surprised or relieved parent. It doesn't show delight that her only child's treasured coin has reappeared or shock that the coin has fallen out of a pocket that Maomao checked only two pages earlier. Has Mummy been in on the trick? The book leaves open the possibility that a stroke of fortune has returned the coin to her, but a

careful reading hints that actually her father has slipped her a new coin, one that looks "exactly the same," and that the perspective of Mummy and Daddy has access to a parallel, perhaps truer, version of events.

Grief, Gifts, Tricks, and Power

This second reading position that the book offers is one that confirms adults at a higher position of power. The grief that tugs at every page of the book is a grief that comes from a perspective that is informed by the knowledge that Daddy is always already leaving: it privileges an adult knowledge and the emotional experience of that knowledge. The child's joy in the lucky coin and the adults' small acts of subterfuge as they replace her original coin with a new one highlight the power position of the adults, who manipulate the world around Maomao so that she will take the gift that they want her to have. When Daddy slips the coin into Maomao's pocket and Mummy plays along, they collude in a position of dominance to trick her. We have said that the child perspective will be familiar, and so will this shadowy adult presence: Maria Nikolajeva would relate it to aetonormativity, Perry Nodelman to the hidden adult.



Chinese cover

Nonetheless, there is yet one more reading waiting for us, one, again, spurred by that rich moment at the book's end when Maomao gives the coin to her father with the promise that "[n]ext time you're back, we can bury it in the sticky rice ball again!" Our earlier point about this scene was that it is a scene laden with emotion from the father's perspective, and that observation is still true. However, with a fuller understanding of the subtext of the story from the adult perspective on a second reading, Maomao's gift and choice of words provide several final ironies. Perhaps the most obvious is that although the book has been steeped in adult grief at Daddy's inevitable, ubiquitous departure, Maomao alone escapes that perspective to look to the future, past the loss of Daddy to his restoration. While the adult knowledge weighs heavy with dread, Maomao—who acknowledges the impending absence of her father—escapes that weight to anticipate their next reunion. With these words, Maomao casually upends the perspective of the adult hidden within the narrative.

Although the book has been steeped in adult grief at Daddy's inevitable, ubiquitous departure, Maomao alone escapes that perspective to look to the future, past the loss of Daddy to his restoration.

The final gifting of the coin—Maomao's undoing of her father's gift—takes that process a step further, as she reverses the power structure that has been implicit every time her father has given her a gift. Here, Maomao has literal capital that she is able to withhold or bestow as she sees fit: giving the gift is a demonstration of the child's power. Notice, too, the pictorial language in that powerful moment when Maomao returns the coin to her father (figure 3): although much of the book is illustrated in a more cartoonish style, this moment is conveyed with a quiet naturalism that lends solidity to Maomao's moment, significance to her gift. Finally,

returning the coin and promising that "we" can bury it in rice again injects Maomao as an agent in the trickery of hiding and revealing the coin. Is it possible that Maomao has understood all along that Daddy has been manipulating the presence and absence of the coin, and has she understood herself to have a role in the drama of its secrecy and discovery?

In the interest of space, we have read (and reread) *A New Year's Reunion* only from a formal perspective, ignoring the intergenerational, embodied, simultaneous way in which picturebooks are read, and such a performative reading might further expand the ironies and complexities of this multivalent book. Too, we have glossed over the gendered aspects of the book: the perspectives that the book offers position the mother as a silent participant, an emotional context to the text of the father's arrival and departure. Both of these points, too important and nuanced to explore in these few pages, expand the ways in which the book encourages us to see. Even from our limited (if multiple) perspective, *A New Year's Reunion* is a carefully wrought exploration of the perspectives at stake in picturebooks. As the words and images duck and weave between each other, they unearth ironies that lie at the heart of the multiple and complicated relationships between children and adults.

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Authors' Note

Illustrations by Zhu Cheng-Liang from *A New Year's Reunion* written by Yu Li-Qiong and published by Tomorrow Publishing House. Authorized by Hsin-Yi Foundation.

Notes

1. Throughout, we will present Chinese names with the family name first and given name second, and the bibliography entries will also open with the family name.
2. For more on this foundational quality of picturebooks, see Sanders.
3. Irony, too, has been a major point of conversation about picturebooks. See, for example, Nodelman's *Words about Pictures* and Kummerling-Meibauer.
4. See Fang and Zhao 238 as well as Fang, *Enjoy* 77.
5. See chapter 9 of Nodelman's *Words about Pictures* for one of many scholarly observations about the potential of page turns in picturebooks.

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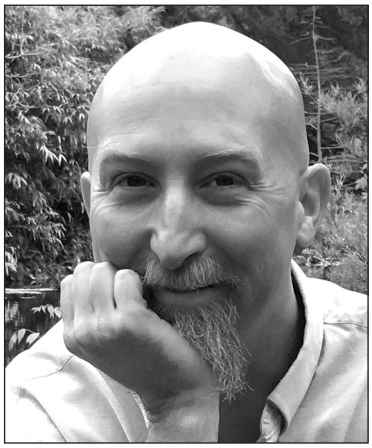


Joe Sutliff Sanders lectures in children's media at the University of Cambridge. He is the author of three monographs, including *A Literature of Questions: Nonfiction for the Critical Child* (Minnesota, 2018), and the editor or coeditor of three collections, including *The Comics of Hergé: When the Lines Are Not So Clear* (Mississippi, 2016).

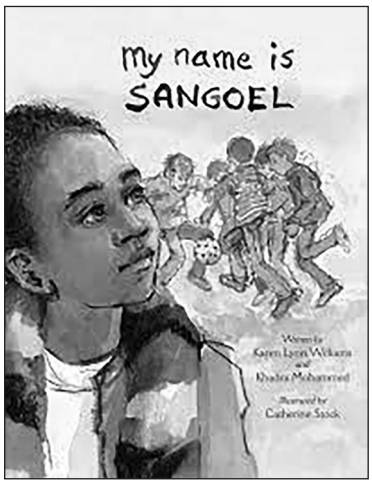
Xia Zhao is an associate professor of the College of Creative Culture and Communication at Zhejiang Normal University. She is the author of seven academic books, including *The Spirit of Childhood and the Redemption of Culture: An Aesthetic Research of Contemporary Cultural Consumption of Childhood* (China Social Sciences, 2017) and *Poetics of the Tender Age: The Arts of Literature for Young Children* (Tomorrow, 2016).

Picturebooks and Critical Inquiry:
Tools to (Re)Imagine a More Inclusive World

by AMANDA DELIMAN

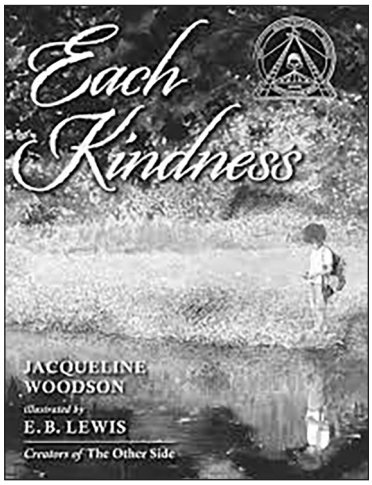
Literature can be used to create communities of conscience around topics of social justice, hope, and activism. Furthermore, when the lens of critical literacy is applied to interactive discussions about books, the messages shared in the texts are not neutral and can be viewed from multiple viewpoints, thereby providing rich openings for readers to think more critically about the world. This qualitative case study investigates how second graders discuss a variety of social issue topics using diverse children's picturebooks. International children's literature can initiate important conversations to help break down perpetuating cycles of social inequality, restore hope, and bring kindness to the world.

Energizing the importance of social responsibility, building critical communities of care and compassion, and advancing self-reflection and critical thinking in our youngest learners can have positive and lasting effects in our school communities and beyond. Utilizing picturebooks as tools for reimagining a more inclusive world can often be the opening needed for children to become inquirers of their own learning and curious investigators advocating for change.



Creating opportunities for young children to develop a richer global competency while attending to personal introspection takes time and deliberate planning. When young readers advocate for the importance of maintaining one's own identity while assimilating into a new culture, as in Karen Williams and Khadra Mohammed's *My Name Is Songoel* (2009), they begin to understand the importance of interrogating multiple viewpoints (Lewison et al. 383). When faced with the questions of becoming environmentally conscious, Miranda Paul's *One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia* (2015) guides readers to investigate topics of personal agency and activism. Examples of bullying, as shown in Jacqueline Woodson's *Each Kindness* (2012), can position readers to consider how to break down barriers that perpetuate this reality in schools, which also permeates society as a whole.

Advancing global perspectives and providing openings for young people to cultivate empathy through collaborative engagements while using literature can serve as a powerful tool for harnessing positive social action. This article showcases discussions and children's responses to picturebook read-alouds that investigate a variety of social issues. Additionally, picturebook sets are offered as suggestions to further examine themes that include, among others, activism and social responsibility, building critical communities of care and compassion, and advancing self-reflection and critical thinking.



Care and Inquiry

Multiple forms of critical perspectives and pedagogies erupted in the latter part of the twentieth century as a way to humanize educational experiences while considering the needs of the whole learner (Freire 38; Janks, "Critical Literacy" 226; Noddings, *Caring* 103; Street 111). These theoretical underpinnings inform instructional practices while giving credence to the use of picturebooks as a way to cultivate empathy in young readers.

Nel Noddings suggested not only that relationships and compassion become fundamental aspects of education, but that these characteristics should be an integral part of our educational goals (*Education* 171). As a researcher and facilitator, I drew on perspectives of Noddings's approach that caring for the self and being cared for can provide openings for the participants to rise to the truest form of self. Building relations of care and trust in the classroom is necessary for participants to feel comfortable to take risks, challenge personal assumptions, and negotiate diverse perspectives.

Paulo Freire urged that people should have the skills necessary to create critical dialogue to avoid the "culture of silence" (12), the inequitable social structures where the oppressed are further marginalized. When time is provided for children to examine critical issues, they can consider what actions are needed to disrupt unequal power relations.

Moreover, rather than focusing strictly on standardization that comes with accountability measures, Maxine Greene asserted that we should "cherish the integrity" of children's meaning making while learning alongside them "to interpret and to cope with the mystified and endangered world" (48). Utilizing these humanizing and critical pedagogies can help our young people become more critically informed about the world.

Utilizing these humanizing and critical pedagogies can help our young people become more critically informed about the world.

Another, more prominent model of critical pedagogy that informs the instructional practices in my research is the four dimensions of critical literacy created by Mitzi Lewison, Amy Seely Flint, and Katie Van Sluys (382). This research team synthesized and condensed thirty years of professional literature to produce the following four dimensions of critical literacy: disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and taking action and promoting social

justice. When interpreting texts using these interrelated dimensions, the role of the teacher is important. Instead of searching for one correct answer, the learning environment becomes a place of inquiry where all participants can contend with understanding multiple viewpoints and differing perspectives.

In many of bell hooks's writings, a central theme emerges that highlights the power of critical thinking. She states that "children are organically predisposed as critical thinkers," and a classroom can become a place of "fierce engagement and intense learning" if the children are shown by example that "learning in action means that not all of us can be right all the time, and that the shape of knowledge is constantly changing" (10). Picturebooks become tools for advancing critical thinking.

Communities of Care

The need to create communities of conscience around topics of social justice, hope, and activism is paramount in a time when social media and news outlets expose viewers and readers to misleading information. Innovative literacy practices that provide an opening for young children to build community and compassion while learning how to challenge misaligned messages and "fake news" could have positive and lasting outcomes for our local communities and beyond (Farmer 2). Social justice picturebooks that examine topics such as anti-racism, climate justice, the refugee crisis, and gender discrimination, among others, can be tools to initiate important and challenging discussions with young people. Generative conversations stemming from picturebooks not only have the potential to increase comprehension abilities, but thoughtful discussions can challenge stereotypes and call into question issues of power and privilege (Leland et al. 147). These practices can simultaneously help create a learning environment where the opinions and ideas of everyone are valued.

Guided by the research question *How do children specifically respond to picturebooks about social issues through discussions, drama, and writing activities?*, this multiyear qualitative study, conducted in one second-grade classroom, investigated how children responded to interactive read-alouds using diverse children's literature. The language and social processes that children used to interrogate issues about diversity and equity through drama and literature (Medina and Campano 333) were critically examined using dimensions of critical literacy frameworks (Janks, "Domination" 176; Lewison et al. 382) and thematic analysis (Nowell et al. 2).

The participants included one classroom teacher (self-identified as a white female) and a primarily racially homogenous population of about thirty-five mixed-gender second graders in one Midwestern town located in the United States. Out of the children represented in the second year of the study (showcased in this article), twelve were female (one multiracial and eleven white) and eight were male (one Asian American and seven white). In the school hosting the study, 43 percent of the students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. As a white female and first-generation college student conducting a study in a classroom quite similar to one that I attended, I continuously questioned power, privilege, my own

understandings of social constructs, and how my identity was influencing the study design.

Over the course of one school year, my weekly visits in the classroom demonstrated how the chosen picturebooks (see table 1) could serve as openings for the children to challenge assumptions, take on new roles, and imagine ways to foster inclusivity while they broadened their own perspectives and made sense of the messages shared in the texts. Based on the findings, this article describes several instructional practices and offers suggestions for text sets that can initiate conversations about building critical communities of care and taking steps toward developing courageous acts of positive social action. The research question generated three themes that will be posed as questions to organize the insights shared here.

Creating Communities of Care

How can social justice literature be used to create communities of conscience where readers' ideas and opinions are valued?

During one of my weekly visits to the second-grade classroom, we read and discussed the picturebook *My Name Is Songoel* and participated in dramatic inquiry. The story is about a child refugee who lost his father in war and was forced to leave his homeland of Sudan. Songoel moved to the United States with his mother and little sister, where everything seemed new and strange. The protagonist felt homesick and lonely until he came up with a clever solution that opened the door to building new connections with his peers.

We wanted the students to consider multiple perspectives, and more specifically, to think about how people may view the wants and needs of a child refugee dissimilarly.

The purpose for choosing this story was twofold. First, we wanted the students to consider multiple perspectives, and more specifically, to think about how people may view the wants and needs of a child refugee dissimilarly. In the story, Songoel moves to the United States and feels out place because everything is different: the clothes, the people, the transportation, the language. While reading and discussing the picturebook, the students quickly noticed the importance of Songoel embracing his identity and the emotions that come with feeling a sense of belonging. In one scene, Songoel chooses to sleep on the floor instead of on the mattress with sheets. As we were reading and discussing that part of the story, the students quickly made an inference that the floor was more like what he was used to. This picturebook read-aloud initiated conversations about caring for others based on their unique individual needs.

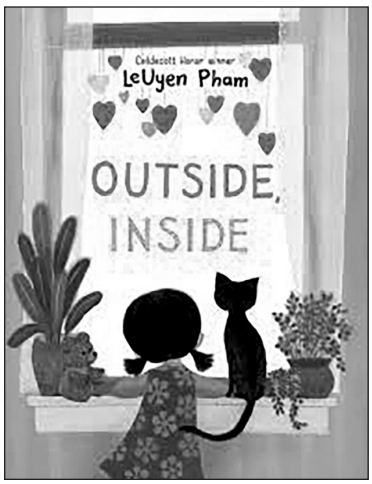
To extend on the conversations about creating communities of conscience, the children participated in role-play. Hotseating is a dramatic engagement where a person (playing in role) sits in the "hotseat" and is asked questions by others, who can be in or out of role.

Ella (all names are pseudonyms) happily obliged when asked to sit in the hotseat. While she was walking to the center of the circle, I encouraged her peers to ask "Songoel" (Ella) some questions. The following excerpt includes a portion of the dramatic engagement.

Rick: "Um, did it seem different when you moved to America?"
Ella: "Yeah."
Me: "How did it seem different?"
Ella: "Um, everything looked different from the refugee camp."
Me: "Can you tell us some of the differences you noticed?"
Ella: "There were big buildings and I don't know what to call them...cars?"
Me: "What are some things that would have helped you when moving to America?"
Ella: "I wish it would have looked a little less different."
Rachel: "What was it like in the refugee camp?"
Ella: "It was very small, but we only had a few things."

Upon reflection of this small excerpt, I noticed several things. First, the students were paying attention to larger social and cultural systems. Ella was pointing out differences she considered between the United States and the refugee camp and how changes in the new environment made her feel. Through trying to imagine herself in Songoel's shoes, Ella was demonstrating highly critical social acts of reading the scenario and adding her own personally meaningful interpretations. She was negotiating Songoel's view of the world through the dramatic exchange with her peers. The students were also fostering notions of empathy by thinking about Songoel's (Ella's) needs, which can be inferred upon close examination of the types of questions that they were asking. The students, while in and out of role, can be seen negotiating diverse perspectives in terms of larger sociopolitical systems. Furthermore, the invitation to participate in the dramatic engagement provided an opening for Ella to take ownership in her own inquiry-based learning. The conversations that emerged using this picturebook read-aloud provided openings for the children to build compassion and love for the protagonist while simultaneously honoring the ideas of one another.

The following selection of texts can be used to further expand on the notion of creating communities of conscience where inclusive practices can be discussed, multiple ideas can be appreciated, and opposing viewpoints can be valued.



The Big Umbrella (2018; Bates) is a book about fostering inclusivity and welcoming others. The story can promote rich conversation as the readers dance between the words and images in this metaphorical tale that embraces hospitality and welcomes diversity.

Outside, Inside (2021; LeUyen) caters to the younger audience through teaching about adversities and successes faced during the COVID-19 global pandemic. As lives were challenged and grief and worry permeated daily life, resilience and compassion were fostered through endless generosity from essential workers and family members striving to persevere during unprecedented times.

One of a Kind, Like Me / Único Como Yo (2016; Mayeno) removes social constructs of gender identity by sharing one child's journey of individual expression as told from his own perspective. This story of unconditional love provides rich openings for young children to discuss what it takes to create a community of care where all people are valued for their uniqueness.

Exhibiting Social Responsibility

What literature can be used to cultivate empathy and encourage personal agency that can lead to positive social action?

During another weekly visit to the second-grade classroom, I started the session reviewing the terms *agency* and *agents for change*. These were terms previously discussed in the study and I wanted to determine how the students were recalling information from our past sessions together. I asked the students what the terms mean.

> Colton said *agents for change* means "to help people be included."
> Brittney said an agent for change "is a person who changes the world."
> Quinn stated: "To make it awesome."
> Rachel yelled: "To make it beautiful."

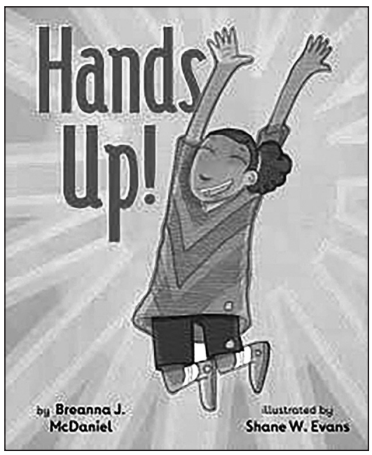
This powerful narrative reaffirms the students' own constructions of agency (Mathis 619) in terms of taking a global activist stance. I see a bridge linking larger global contexts to the smaller classroom context. The critical and reflective responses from the students show that they were thinking of agency as a beneficial act, where you take a problem and find a solution to the problem that will benefit the world. I interpret Colton's response to mean that we, as humans who cohabitate this world, must work together to help everyone feel a sense of belonging. Critical literacy was enacted through the students' responses and interactions. They were building on conversations that we had in a previous session about belonging and agency. At this point of the study, it was profound to see these two constructs become linked in this short exchange.

For this session, we also read the picturebook *One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia* and participated in reflective conversations. The nonfiction book is about five women who used creativity and innovation to solve the local village's mounting trash problem. Activism, empowerment, and perseverance are prevalent themes in the book that initiated insightful conversations with the students about how one small, positive change can having lasting effects. The read-aloud served as a stepping stone for thinking about agency and activism. As a result of this read-aloud and subsequent dramatic engagement activity, the students were talking about the term *volunteer*, because the women in the story were volunteering their time to promote positive and lasting change in their community.

Throughout these meaningful exchanges, it became apparent that the students' notions of being advocates for change were carrying over to their

Throughout these meaningful exchanges, it became apparent that the students' notions of being advocates for change were carrying over to their home lives.

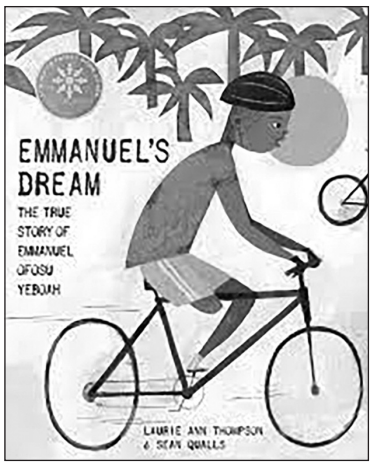
home lives. For example, the dialogic interactions about the topic of volunteerism sparked Quinn's thinking. This conversation triggered him to share a part of his story in which he demonstrated personal agency. He said, "My brother, he volunteered to help me with my idea. Since my mom doesn't have a job, we are gonna, um, we are gonna like sell water for money and give it all to my mom." After that, another student said, "He's using empathy." This complex notion of personal agency displayed in Quinn's story repositions empathy within a larger critical social context. Through Quinn's eyes, he was mediating his experiences of poverty by "using empathy" to try to improve his mother's financial situation. The fact that the other student said "using," as if it is an action, adds complexity to the children's meaning making. This scenario, as mediated through the eyes of the children, draws attention to the curricular space and the literature used as a stepping stone for the children to show empowerment and demonstrate their own personal agency (Ellsworth 310). The social and critical acts displayed by the students emerged as a result of the openings that were provided for them to link the personal experiences to larger social and cultural systems.



As the session continued, it was evident that the critical and reflective responses from the students show that they were thinking of agency as a beneficial act, where you take a problem and find a solution to the problem that will benefit the world. The second graders were engaging in rich and meaningful conversations that developed overtime as a result of using high-quality international children's literature about a variety of topics.

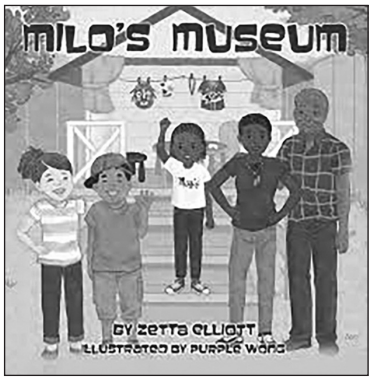
The following selection of texts can be used to discuss advocacy and positive societal change through personal and collective agency.

Hands Up! (2019; McDaniel) is a story that celebrates Black joy and reframes the phrase "Hands up!" to represent strength and resistance. The picturebook provides opportunities for young readers to investigate topics around agency, empowerment, and collective community acts that elevate the importance of social responsibility. Additionally, this book can prompt readers to explore topics about unequal power structures while building on principles of anti-racism. Having conversations about race and about the reframing of the phrase "Hands up" can help address biases and challenge assumptions. Educating for empowerment on topics surrounding race can lead to increased solidarity in diverse groups.



Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah (2015; Thompson) is a true story about a young boy who spreads a message that a disability is not an inability. After biking across Ghana with one leg, Emmanuel's display of personal agency helped make positive changes across his community by drawing attention to the resources needed and other ways to foster

inclusion for those living with disabilities. The story can initiate conversations about activism, charity, and other ways to support the unique needs of all people.



Milo's Museum (2016; Elliot) is a powerful story about the importance of representation. The young protagonist takes a trip to the museum and recognizes that people who look like her are not represented in the museum. As a result, Milo takes action and wants to see change in the form of accurate representations of her family's history. Discussions using this picturebook can include the actions taken by the protagonist to initiate change along with topics about building community and confronting ideas that perpetuate social inequality.

Supporting Self-Reflection and Critical Thinking

How might children's literature support critical thinking, self-reflection, and collaboration?

When choosing literature to use in an early childhood setting, it is important to delve into topics of social issues that may be prevalent in the school community. This can provide space for students to share their ideas and respond to the ideas of others in a way that allows for disagreement, but still values each student's perspective. During one of my weekly visits, the students interrogated multiple viewpoints while investigating the topic of bullying as shown in the picturebook *Each Kindness*. In the story, Maya, the new girl, attempts to make friends with Chloe and the other girls but faces continual rejection after repeated attempts. When Chloe's teacher encourages the students to consider how small gestures of kindness can have a ripple effect, Chloe misses the opportunity. When Maya doesn't return to school, Chloe feels a sense of loss for being unkind and for not trying to make friends with the new student. In response to this interactive read-aloud, the children did not shy away from stating that it was not right to leave someone out.

During the read-aloud, I asked the students to think about why Chloe was having trouble thinking of something nice to say when the teacher asked them to drop a pebble in the bucket, representing kindness rippling out. Rachel inferred, "It was probably because she was being mean to Maya." After that, Lila suggested, "Maybe she is going to lie about something [instead]." It was interesting for me to hear Lila suggest this, as if lying was the follow-up to being unkind.

At the end of the story, when Maya moved away, Chloe was left feeling like she lost an opportunity for showing kindness. As a way to provide an opening for students to make sense of this event, I asked them to create a still scene, using the drama strategy tableaux, to represent how they thought Chloe was feeling. Tableaux is a dramatic engagement where participants make still images in statue-like form to represent interpretations or scenes from the text. When I asked Ella how she was making meaning of what happened in the text, she said, "I was thinking I need to apologize." As the students were digesting this moment in the story and extending the learning through tableaux, it was almost as if a hush fell

across the room. Essentially, the mood of the room changed to match the scene where an opportunity for spreading kindness was missed.

This was particularly powerful for me to watch because this was a very realistic scenario that we were exploring. It is quite possible that in a second-grade classroom, a victim of bullying and a perpetrator could disrupt normalcy and cause a shift in mood just like what happened in this learning encounter. This event was meaningful for several reasons. First, the embodied literacy practices enhanced the learning to include mood and action. In essence, the students were imagining themselves in a real situation by playing with imagination and inquiry. Moreover, the students were very meaningfully negotiating diverse perspectives. Their actions and interactions showed evidence that they were paying attention to larger social systems and that they were defining compassion as a needed action in cases of bullying. This particular event and picture created space and time for the children to critically examine a real social issue.

Their actions and interactions showed evidence that they were paying attention to larger social systems and that they were defining compassion as a needed action in cases of bullying.

The following selection of texts can further advance notions of critical thinking, collaborative inquiry, and self-reflection.

They She He Me: Free to Be! (2017; Gonzalez and SG) is a picturebook

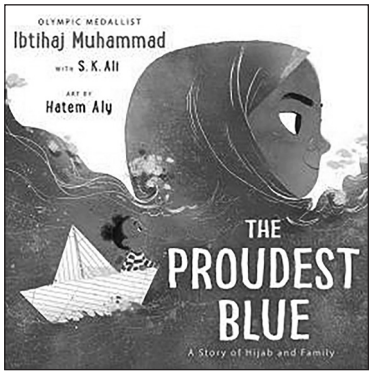
Themes around Communities of Conscience	Picturebooks
Creating Communities of Care	*The Big Umbrella,* Ann June Bates *Outside, Inside,* Pham LeUyen *One of a Kind, Like Me / Único Como Yo,* Laurin Mayeno *My Name Is Songoel,* Karen Williams and Khadra Mohammad
Exhibiting Social Responsibility	*Hands Up!,* Breanna McDaniel *Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah,* Laurie Ann Thompson *Milo's Museum,* Zetta Elliot *One Plastic Bag; Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia,* Miranda Paul
Supporting Self-Reflection and Critical Thinking	*They She He Me: Free to Be!,* Maya Gonzalez and Matthew SG *The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family,* Ibthaj Muhammad *A Different Pond,* Bao Phi *Each Kindness,* Jacqueline Woodson

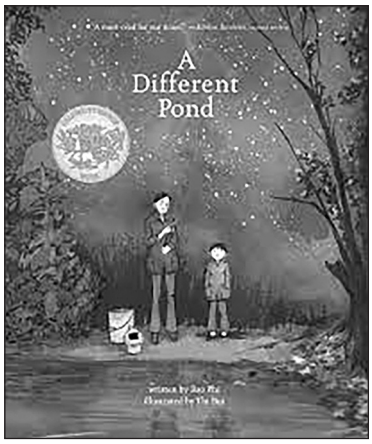
Table 1
Picturebook Sets to (Re)Imagine a More Inclusive World

about pronouns and gender fluidity. This thought-provoking yet minimalist storyline provides opportunities for young readers to explore topics of identity and kindness through the use of nonbinary gender terminology.

The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family (2019; Muhammad) is a picturebook about pride and self-reflection as a young girl witnesses her sister face bullying when she wears her "first-day hijab" to school. This book can be used as an opening to discuss family relationships and ways to show empowerment through self-confidence and resilience.

A Different Pond (2017; Phi) is a story that melds together the experiences of a refugee family from Vietnam, the challenges faced with assimilation, and the love between a young boy and his father. Reviewing this book from the lens of critical inquiry, facilitators could initiate discussions about poverty, discrimination, and the challenges associated with emigrating to a new land.





Moving Beyond Imagining a More Inclusive World

There are many ways to view and understand the world. To challenge the status quo, to enact positive social change, and to stand up for equality and social justice requires an understanding of multiple truths. Through collaborative inquiry in an elementary classroom setting, children can actively and critically create meaning together through multimodal forms of learning. To raise critical awareness, it is necessary to create learning opportunities that are genuine and full of real-world conversations about cultural affiliations, diversity of opinion, and social issues that people face each day. In doing so, the children learn how creative thinking and critical problem solving can tease out tensions and challenge personal assumptions that come up in conversations about social issues.

A variety of complex issues can be explored through the use of children's literature. Careful selection of texts spanning a wide range of topics can be used to broaden perspectives through critical inquiry, introspection, and self-reflection. By providing openings for our young people to foster inclusive practices, to show empowerment by advocating for change, and to continuously reflect on their own perceptions of social justice, we can make great gains and move beyond simply imagining a more inclusive world to putting these thoughts and ideas into actionable change.

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Amanda Deliman is an assistant professor within the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at Utah State University. She teaches courses in elementary literacy education at the Salt Lake regional campus. Her research agenda focuses on the intersections of literacy teacher learning and teacher education at the elementary level, and the language, social, and cultural contexts that drive meaning making. She's interested in examining how empathy literacy influences culturally responsive teaching when utilizing humanizing pedagogies and children's literature to explore social justice issues in the elementary classroom setting.

This beautifully illustrated picturebook portrays a warm friendship between a mystic girl, Lorin, and a stubborn stork, Cemşit, and their mysterious interstellar travels. Having devoted years to traveling around the world, Cemşit now lives on top of a mosque minaret. One day, Cemşit meets Lorin and the story unfolds. Her dedication to catching the stars by jumping on her feet impresses Cemşit, and their voyages across the universe begin.

In the magical world of Yemenici, readers can explore the universal values of the powers of enterprise, solidarity, and benevolence. This well-crafted book not only reveals the important role of these values in a simple yet effective manner but also draws readers into the stunning illustrations with tones of brown and yellow. By embedding Anatolian cultural materials, such as traditional carpets, doors, and crocheted pieces, in the pictures, Yemenici adds another dimension to the harmonic atmosphere of the story.

Emre Altuntaş

Yıldız Tamircisi Lorin
(Star Repairer Lorin)

Elif Yemenici
İstanbul, Turkey:
Redhouse Kidz, 2019. 28 pp.
ISBN: 9786052079546
(Picturebook; ages 3-6)

Storytelling as Intergenerational Connection: Challenging Ageism through Metafiction in Recent Writing for Young People

by SAMANTHA STEPHENS and LEONIE RUTHERFORD

Metafiction and representations of storytelling in texts for young people typically emphasize the young protagonists' abilities to find agency by using reading and writing to question adult authority, to rebel against adult hegemony, and to learn how to gain a measure of control over their own life stories. While such metafictional texts can help to renegotiate limiting discourses of childhood, they can simultaneously function to reinforce generalizations of adulthood that foreground intergenerational conflict and other ageist sentiment, thus limiting the subversive potential of these texts. Novels that engage adult storytellers as central characters can, however, create space for more nuanced stories of age and aging. This article shows that challenging the pejorative juxtaposition between the creative, imaginative child and the largely absent, unimaginative adult creates space for a broader reevaluation of limiting discourses of age.

Young adult (YA) fiction typically features protagonists struggling to find agency and respect due to their youth. Metafiction is often thought to empower writers to subvert limiting discourses of youth and to celebrate young stories and voices. However, YA metafiction's potential to challenge broader age tropes that downplay the vital importance of intergenerational relationships in social life, and efface the importance of constructing new identities through the life course, are rarely discussed. This article explores this potential by examining recent examples of YA metafiction featuring adults as storytellers. It argues that these texts deploy adult storytellers as narrators or focalizers, enabling them, alongside young protagonists, to tell their own life stories. The resulting intergenerational dialogues challenge the pejorative juxtaposition between the creative, imaginative child and the largely absent, unimaginative

adult. Through an analysis of metafictional strategies in Cornelia Funke's *Inkheart* (translated 2003), Geraldine McCaughrean's *A Pack of Lies* (1988), and Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* (1999-2006), the article shows how readers are invited to reflect broadly upon adulthood, aging, and intergenerational relationships.

Why Metafiction?

The term *metafiction* describes fiction that "self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (Waugh 2). Metafiction aims to provide "the reader a solid position from which to prod dominant ideology" (Sanders 353) by encouraging the reader to question established "truths." Metafiction often occurs through "overtly self-reflexive references to storytelling within a narrative" (McCallum 184). These references aim to expose traditional narrative patterns and to destabilize conventional dynamics between characters, authors, and readers. In YA fiction, this destabilization can challenge the adult/child hierarchy and expose adult ideology "through the calling into question of the storytelling process and the undermining of the traditional adult/child bond in relation with narration" (Douglas 84). Thus, metafictional texts are frequently celebrated for their ability to offer "an alternative to and an escape from adult hegemony" (Nelson 233) by encouraging young characters and readers not only to question adult voices but also to participate actively in the stories that they are told.

Because metafictional texts for young people typically foreground youthful stories and voices, and because adults, in these texts, are so often framed as sources of conflict that hinder young protagonists' journeys to agency, adulthood and adult characters are rarely discussed in significant detail. Discussion of metafictional texts for young people that do create space for adult stories and voices, perhaps posing a challenge to the age stereotypes and intergenerational conflict that frequently underlie such texts, is similarly lacking. Because young readers—who themselves will eventually grow into adulthood—must navigate various intergenerational relationships in their own lives, we argue that metafiction's potential to challenge age stereotypes across the spectrum and to celebrate age-diverse voices and experiences warrants further attention.

Rather than focusing solely on metafiction's potential to celebrate youthful agency and to challenge adult hegemony, we examine metafiction's potential to celebrate intergenerational stories and use those stories to "challenge and resist social oppression" (Phoenix et al. 3) related to age. To demonstrate how metafictional novels can broadly challenge ageist sentiment, we critically read Cornelia Funke's *Inkheart*, select novels from Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, and Geraldine McCaughrean's *A Pack of Lies*. These works have been selected because they engage adult storytellers as narrators or focalizers and use these characters to bridge social divides, to invite readings of subjectivity throughout life, and to talk back to stereotypes that implicate children and adults alike. Our reading demonstrates that despite its often ageist implications, metafiction

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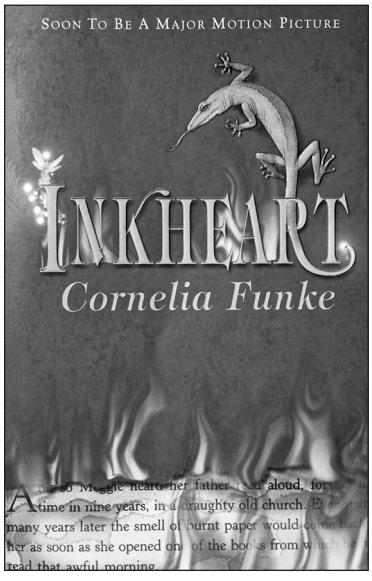
Adult Focalizers and Narrators in Contemporary Metafictional Novels for Young People

Narrative gerontologists recognize storytelling's ability to "provide alternative maps" that can renegotiate prevailing Western narratives about age (Phoenix et al. 2-3). Metafictional novels for young people partially capitalize upon this potential by allowing young protagonists to challenge the adult/child hierarchy through heroic acts of reading and writing (Nelson 233; Sanders 351). However, we contend that such metafictional texts often celebrate youthful stories and voices by downgrading, villainizing, or erasing adults. In doing so, they risk reinforcing "generational conflicts and forms of ageism" (Joosen 138) that serve to cement age stereotypes and hierarchies, such as those in Christina Farley's recent novel, *The Princess and the Page* (2017). The novel follows the young Keira Harding's discovery that she is a Word Weaver who possesses the power to bring the stories she writes to life. Forbidden to write by her mother, whose own experience has led her to believe that "[f]ocusing on things that aren't real and living in an imaginary world is dangerous" (Farley 20), Keira is left to uncover her unique power through clandestine acts of writing. When Keira's story comes to life and begins threatening her reality, Keira's mother is curiously unable to use her own word-weaving abilities to help resolve the situation, and she eventually becomes trapped within the story herself. The conflict is only resolved when Keira realizes that she can erase and rewrite the story in order to gain control over it. Although this act of rewriting frees Keira's mother and validates Keira's desire to benefit from the expanded opportunities that writing promises, Keira's mother remains peripheral, the novel concluding with her ongoing reluctance to embrace her identity as Word Weaver. Furthermore, the novel never seriously explores Keira's relationship with her grandmother, from whom she has derived her own skills. Thus, rather than exploring adult or intergenerational stories and voices, *The Princess and the Page* aligns agentic acts of writing with youth and remains fixated upon the potential for young readers and budding authors to outwit, rebel against, and ultimately save the unimaginative and less capable adults in their lives.



Nevertheless, the rebellious nature of storytelling in metafictional novels for young people "may extend even to the fictional adults" (Nelson 233). Novels that feature adult voices potentially expand on a metafictional critique of constructions of childhood to expose simplistic constructions of aging across the spectrum. Cornelia Funke's *Inkheart* is one example that has leveraged this potential. Its metafictional focus on storytelling emphasizes intergenerational kinship and challenges

generalizations of youth *and* adulthood. Although the novel charts the young Meggie's passion for reading and budding desire to become an author, it almost immediately reveals that she had "inherited her love of books from her father," Mo (Funke 9). The plot itself hinges around Mo's mysterious ability to read people into, and characters and objects out of, books—an ability that resulted in him accidentally reading his wife into, and the villainous Capricorn out of, the story "Inkheart." Although Mo's ability is positioned as highly unusual, his love of reading and storytelling is not. A number of adult storytellers play prominent and focalizing roles throughout *Inkheart*, including Meggie's great-aunt, Elinor, and the elderly Fenoglio, the putative author of "Inkheart" itself. Rather than moving adult characters to the margins of the story in order to focus upon the young Meggie's heroic talents, *Inkheart* allows its various adults to contribute to, and participate in, the stories they tell and admire.

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Adult storytellers and book lovers in *Inkheart* directly challenge the idea of the unimaginative, static adult denied the ability to find agency through telling stories. A bookbinder whose voice "gave a different flavour to every word, made every sentence a melody" (Funke 182), Mo remains central to *Inkheart,* his reading and narrative talents constantly generating the hope, kinship, and magic that prove fundamental to defeating Capricorn. Fenoglio further contests the stereotype of the unimaginative adult who is marginalized and denied access to storytelling agency so that creative young protagonists can save the day. Instead, he exhibits a liminal subject position that enables him to access the sort of imagination that is typically coded as childlike. His fantastic characters, for instance, look "as if they had escaped from the dreams of children" (527). Fenoglio explicitly rejects the notion that imagination is the province of children: "I'm not talking about children's magic. I mean the magic of the written word" (422). By demonstrating that writing has the potential to offer a power that transcends age, *Inkheart* collapses the divide between the apparently imaginative child and the boring, absent adult. In doing so, it invites nuanced reflection upon both child- and adulthood.

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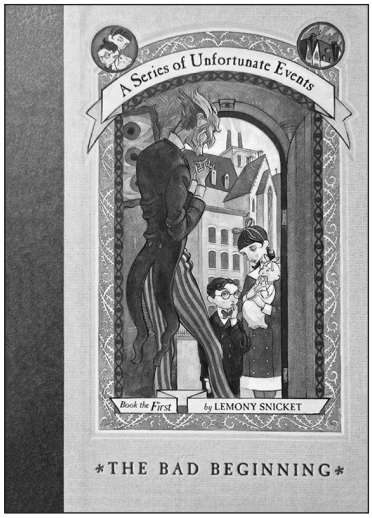
In keeping with this emphasis upon intergenerational storytellers, *Inkheart* foregrounds collaborative acts of storytelling that deploy age-diverse voices, for example when Fenoglio and Mo plan to replot part of "Inkheart" in order to kill off Capricorn. Significantly, the plan is equally dependent upon child and adult; as Fenoglio tells Meggie, "[Y]our voice and my words, beautiful, brand-new words, will see to it that Capricorn's Shadow does *not* do what's expected of him!" (Funke 430). Later, when Meggie stumbles over the new ending, grappling with the moral implications of reading Capricorn to his death, Mo arrives in time to take the

book from Meggie and "in a firm voice read to the end of what the old man [Fenoglio] had written" (519). Mo's act of reading Fenoglio's rewritten story aloud enables him to thwart the villainous Capricorn and ultimately to reconnect with Resa and Meggie. Success thus emerges from a willingness to forge intergenerational bonds between readers, writers, and characters and to utilize these supportive bonds to defy expectations by rewriting the scripts that threaten agency and intergenerational kinship.



Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* and McCaughrean's *A Pack of Lies* also utilize metafiction and adult storytelling characters to invite engagement with life stories, intergenerational relationships, and constructions of adulthood. Unusually in works for young people, these novels focus largely on adult voices: both *A Series of Unfortunate Events* and *A Pack of Lies* cast their adult storytelling characters as narrators. These adult storytellers are slippery characters who make salient the potentially manipulative power that comes with storytelling, thus encouraging young readers to remain critical of the stories they are told and their tellers. However, rather than pitting corrupt, authoritative adults against young heroes who ultimately dispose of adult authority, *A Series of Unfortunate Events* and *A Pack of Lies* encourage more nuanced approaches to intergenerational relationships. In doing so, they create space for children and adults alike to rewrite limiting discourses of age.

Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* uses metafiction, along with an adult storytelling character, to blur divides between fiction and reality. This encourages reflection not only upon constructions of childhood and coming-of-age processes but also upon adulthood and life stories. The novels center on the enigmatic Lemony Snicket, a writer who has dedicated his life to telling the story of Violet, Klaus, and Sunny Baudelaire, following their parents' mysterious deaths in a house fire. Throughout the novels, Snicket narrates the Baudelaires' struggles to endure and escape from one violent, cruel, inept, or ignorant guardian after another, particularly the scheming Count Olaf, who pursues the children wherever they go, intent on stealing their inheritance. Like many metafictional works, *A Series of Unfortunate Events* encourages young characters and readers to approach adults with caution and to question assumed facts about the world. It does this by repeatedly indulging in absurdist plots that, for example, see the infant Sunny Baudelaire engage in a sword fight with her teeth in *The Miserable Mill* (2000) and work as a personal assistant in *The Austere Academy* (2000). Moreover, although Snicket ostensibly authors the novels—each book names him; includes a dedication to his lost love, Beatrice; and concludes with a note to his editor—Lemony Snicket is actually a pen name for real-world author Daniel Handler. By defamiliarizing the otherwise realistic world depicted throughout the series and foregrounding his own fictionality, Snicket encourages readers to critically engage with, rather than passively accept, the information supplied by adult narrators, storytellers, and authors.

The series further challenges the adult/child hierarchy by parodying

didactic Victorian fiction for or about children. Like much neo-Victorian fiction, it "acknowledges the roots of contemporary cultural constructions of childhood while also advancing the moral superiority of the twenty-first century's attitudes toward and treatment of children" (Fritz and Day 3). On the one hand, Lemony Snicket's intrusive, moralistic narration, coupled with the many characters who persist in "adult-splaining" despite the children's repeated insistences of their prior knowledge (*Austere Academy* 20; *Bad Beginning* 8; *Wide Window* 61), mimics Victorian literature that was primarily concerned with "the formation of children's minds and the regulation of their behavior towards a greater social good" (O'Malley 86). On the other hand, Snicket ruthlessly mocks these moralistic tones by offering humorous lessons that question the logic of moral platitudes; he defines the phrase "impressionable age" as one that "here means 'ten and eight years old, respectively'" (*Austere Academy* 39). He further mitigates didacticism by repeatedly insisting upon the importance of questioning both tradition and authority (*Austere Academy* 19; *Wide Window* 57). Questioning tradition is particularly important because, far from beacons of knowledge and wisdom capable of molding children into "good" citizens, the adult characters throughout *A Series of Unfortunate Events* are cruel, inept, cowardly, and condescending caricatures. By repeatedly undermining the value of didacticism, and by offering hyperbolic accounts of mean, manipulative, and clumsy adult figures who possess an inflated sense of their own importance, Snicket aims to transform condescending Victorian tropes into a neo-Victorian tale that celebrates children's capability and right to stand up against adults' unjust authority.

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The novels, however, do not challenge adult authority only to project a false or inflated sense of youthful autonomy and "goodness." For all that Snicket encourages in youthful resistance, he seems equally suspicious of overly sentimental plots that offer clean, optimistic resolutions or that provide a false and exaggerated sense of autonomy and control. Although the series draws inspiration from "early Victorian popular foundling and orphan literature," including "the threatened inheritance" narrative, it breaks from this narrative's conventions by isolating the Baudelaires, leaving them without family, fortune, or future prospects and thus denying its orphaned characters the opportunity to claim "name, inheritance and social place" (Peters 33). By rejecting the conventionally safe, comfortable conclusion of the orphan plot, the series resists this plot's tendency not only to offer inflated accounts of youthful agency but also to homogenize, tame, and rehabilitate children. Moreover, rather than reproducing moral literature's tendency to endorse the movement "towards a greater social good" (O'Malley 86), the series charts the Baudelaires' increasing moral ambiguity as they mature and struggle to navigate the cruel reality of their world. Their decision to burn down Hotel Denouement in *The Penultimate Peril* (2005), coupled with the question of whether their actions place them "in the same boat" (Snicket, *The End* 5) as Olaf, their nemesis, for instance,

blurs divides between apparently immoral adults and moral children, raising significant questions surrounding the degree to which either children or adults can resist external influences. In other words, the series rewrites both didactic and escapist Victorian tropes. Rather than exaggerating the amount of agency that is available to children by allowing them to successfully thwart one-dimensionally immoral adults, this neo-Victorian work ultimately suggests that truth, existence, and morality are hazy for children and adults alike.

The series' refusal to simply vilify adults is highlighted by the glimpses it provides into Lemony Snicket's ambitions, motivations, and relationships.

The series' refusal to simply vilify adults is highlighted by the glimpses it provides into Lemony Snicket's ambitions, motivations, and relationships. Although Snicket remains confined to the frame narrative, following in the orphans' footsteps without actually meeting them or participating directly in the chronicled events, he shares a lengthy history with the Baudelaire family and becomes increasingly entangled with their lives as the series progresses. His lost love, Beatrice, for instance, is eventually revealed to be the Baudelaires' deceased mother, while his siblings, Jacques and Kit Snicket, feature and die at various points throughout the novels. In light of this, Snicket's determination to complete the story of the Baudelaire orphans seems to be less for the children's benefit than for his own. His repeated invocations of Beatrice, coupled with his often emotional interjections—"[A]s I describe it I can almost forget that it was a very, very sad morning for me…" (*Vile Village* 135-36)—imply that his writing forms a sort of therapy for coping with bereavement and for managing the guilt he feels for being unable to prevent his loved ones' tragic deaths. Although the novels remain firmly centered on the Baudelaire children, Snicket's vague hints about his own life, and increasing involvement in the Baudelaires' story, invite readers to reflect upon his personal story, along with the ways in which adults might use storytelling to creatively process and respond to their own life challenges.

McCaughrean's *A Pack of Lies* is similarly about storytelling and the hazy divides between fiction and reality, truth and lies. The novel follows the young protagonist, Ailsa Povey, as she attempts to peel back the mysteries surrounding MCC Berkshire, the strange man who begins volunteering in the Povey family antique shop in exchange for food and lodging. Unwilling to divulge any information about himself or his past, MCC Berkshire diverts attention from himself by spinning fantastic stories about the origins of antiques to rapt customers. The stories, along with MCC Berkshire himself, are constantly placed under scrutiny. Ailsa, for instance, quickly labels MCC Berkshire "a liar" (McCaughrean 6), while Mrs. Povey dismisses his sales technique as "*all lies*" (24). Mr. Singh, the Poveys' neighbor, cautions Mrs. Povey not to trust his kind, while Clive, Ailsa's uncle, rejects MCC Berkshire's stories with particular vehemence: "Tosh and bosh! Never heard such rubbish in all my life" (103). This constant questioning of both MCC Berkshire and his stories encourages readers to view stories not as firm truths, but rather as slippery entities woven in order to manipulate and control.

Far from simply painting fiction as lies and MCC Berkshire as a manipulative storyteller, *A Pack of Lies* draws attention to the confusing intersections of fiction, lies, history, and reality, specifically asking readers to consider how stories might shape discourse and influence behavior in the real world. MCC Berkshire alludes to the power of fiction at the beginning of the novel, countering Mrs. Povey's reservations by insisting, "Not *lies,* madam... *Fiction.* That's the thing to give 'em. That's the thing everyone wants. *Fiction*, *madam*!" (McCaughrean 24). The novel oscillates between a frame narrative and an embedded narrative, with every chapter shifting from the apparently realistic setting of the antique shop to the fantastic story MCC Berkshire spins about the particular antique that has caught the customer's eye. The embedded stories themselves encompass widely recognized and formulaic plots and genres, including the fable, the romance, and the detective story, and these stories often seem to intersect with the brief glimpses that are provided into the customers' lives. The chapter entitled "The Mirror: A Story of Vanity," for instance, tells the story of the arrogant Eustacia Dare, who becomes permanently trapped in a mirror as punishment for her conceitedness. The story clearly serves as a warning for the adolescent customer in the frame narrative, Angela, who reflects Eustacia's spoiled attitude and inflated opinions of herself, indicated by her cruel treatment of her parents (92). Although ostensibly a complete fabrication, the story resonates with Angela, and the chapter concludes with her refusal to buy the mirror (103). By drawing parallels between "real" customers and "fictional" stories and by demonstrating their influence on real behavior, *A Pack of Lies* constantly encourages readers to consider the influence that stories may have over the ways in which individuals approach the "real" world and the stories of their own lives.

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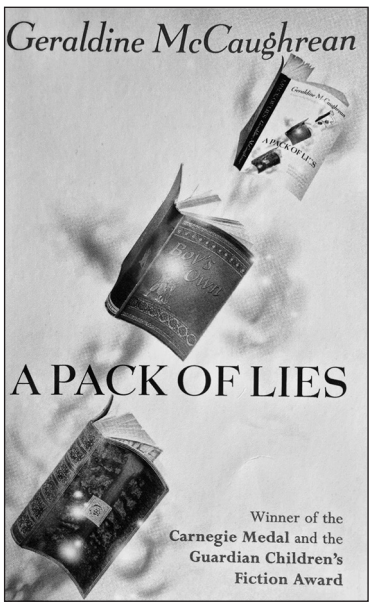

The ways in which stories can provide insight into lives and issues in the "real" world is particularly evident when it comes to MCC Berkshire himself. Although MCC reveals virtually no details about his own life, he clearly uses stories to talk back to those who, like the police, Mr. Singh, and the Poveys, attempt to profile him for his apparent lack of a fixed address. When Mr. Singh, for instance, implies that MCC is lazy and entitled—"Where has he been for such a suntan, I ask you, while poor people like us are working to earn a living?" (McCaughrean 28)—MCC Berkshire reveals his Anglo-Indian heritage before launching into a story set in India during British colonial rule. The story not only secures yet another sale but also forges a shared cultural bond between him and Mr. Singh, effectively dispelling Mr. Singh's prejudice. Thus, in *A Pack of Lies*, stories are not simply lies spun to manipulate those gullible enough to believe them. They can also be shared in ways that encourage critical reflection upon others' life stories, potentially opening

up channels of understanding and communication that serve to bridge social divides and dispel conflict.

Stories can additionally help individuals to process details of their own lives. The use of stories to manage personal challenges becomes particularly evident at the conclusion of the novel, when it is revealed that MCC Berkshire, Mrs. Povey, and Ailsa are all characters in a novel that Michael Charles Christie Berkshire is writing. An unpublished author with poor eyesight and a bad leg, Michael is largely confined to his room, where he is constantly forced to listen to his mother's friends discuss his laziness: "He's just a drain on you, that's what" (McCaughrean 166). Michael uses his writing both to process and escape from his unglamorous reality, inserting himself into his stories and imagining himself as a successful and enigmatic storyteller in order to come to terms with the "drawn, sickly face in the mirror...someone he had spent years trying to avoid" (166). By offering this brief glimpse into Michael's life, McCaughrean avoids stereotyping the adult storyteller as a simplistically manipulative and untrustworthy figure intent upon exploiting intergenerational conflict for personal gain. Rather, she encourages readers to approach authors as complex figures in their own right—people with their own lives, who often use stories to navigate and process their own trauma. Ultimately, the novel's many embedded narratives, coupled with its increasingly expanding frame narrative, showcase multiple tales and suggest that everyone has their own complex and constantly unfolding life story. Thus, the novel ultimately gives voice to the diversity with which age and life itself can be experienced.

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Conclusion

Metafiction and representations of storytelling in texts for young people typically emphasize the young protagonists' abilities to find agency by using reading and writing to question adult authority and to gain a measure of control over their own life stories. While such metafictional texts can help to renegotiate limiting discourses of childhood, they can simultaneously reinforce generalizations of adulthood that foreground intergenerational conflict and other ageist sentiment, thus limiting the subversive potential of these texts. Novels that engage adult storytellers as central characters can, however, create space for more nuanced stories of age and aging. By allowing their adult storytellers to engage in collaborative acts of storytelling and to parody and rewrite the plot conventions that so often stereotype both child- and adulthood, they demonstrate how stories might be employed to bridge social divides while navigating challenges throughout life. The three texts analyzed in this article showcase metafiction's potential to invite readers to renegotiate limiting discourses of age across the spectrum. They demonstrate the benefit of adopting new approaches to metafictional texts for young people, approaches that remain critical of, and sensitive to, both young and old voices and stories.

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Interview: Robyn Sheahan-Bright, IBBY Australia President and Recently Appointed Member of the Order of Australia

by DORIS BREITMOSER

IBBY Australia president Dr. Robyn Sheahan-Bright has been appointed a Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia for significant service to children's literature and to the promotion of reading. Apart from her work for IBBY Australia, Sheahan-Bright has also been an active member of the Queensland Writers Centre, the Children's Book Council of Australia, and the Australian Children's Laureate Foundation. She has previously been recognized, having received the Dame Annabelle Rankin Award (2011) and the Nan Chauncy Award (2012) for her outstanding contribution to the field of children's literature.

Sheahan-Bright cofounded Jam Roll Press in 1987 to publish children's picturebooks, junior fiction, and young adult fiction. She was the inaugural director of Queensland Writers Centre (1991-1997) and was actively involved in establishing Queensland's literary scene, including several literary festivals. Sheahan-Bright received a PhD from Griffith University in 2005 for her thesis "To Market to Market: The Development of the Australian Children's Publishing Industry." She chaired the judging panel Children's Fiction and Young Adult Fiction for the 2010 and 2011 Prime Minister's Literary Awards and is deputy-chair of the board that manages the Australian Children's Laureate Foundation and selects and appoints an Australian Children's Laureate for a two-year term.

Robyn, you have been working in the field of children's literature for more than thirty-five years, and you know it from many different points of view: as a publisher, a researcher, a critic, a writer, and a reading promoter. What makes your heart beat so wildly for it?

I recall that during my first postgraduate degree studies in librarianship, I elected to study a children's literature subject and fell completely in love with the "voice" of young characters in works of fiction by luminaries in the field, including Jane Gardam, Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Ivan Southall, and Margaret Mahy, and with the stunning illustrative work of picturebook artists such as Maurice Sendak, Brian Wildsmith, Pat Hutchins, Quentin Blake, Mitsumasa Anno, Tomie de Paola, Pamela Allen, Ron Brooks, Robert Ingpen, and Bob Graham. What I love about children's literature is that it reminds us of the first pure, unbiased, and honest responses to life which we experience as children. I also love the diversity and inventiveness of the work contained in this field—picturebooks, graphic novels, junior novels, young adult fiction, and creative nonfiction. And, of course, I value the fact that these early reading experiences set us on a path to becoming lifelong readers, which is what we publishing professionals aim to promote via our advocacy work.

You have been actively involved in IBBY Australia's committee since 2010 and are currently the president of IBBY Australia. How would you describe the situation of an IBBY section in such a huge country? And what if you had three wishes free for your cause?

I actually attended my first IBBY Congress in Tokyo in 1986, the year Australians won both the Hans Christian Andersen Awards (HCCAs)—for Writing (Patricia Wrightson) and Illustration (Robert Ingpen). But you are correct that I became actively involved after attending the Congress in Santiago in 2010.

Australia is fortunate to have a number of organizations promoting children's literature, but IBBY Australia is unique in having an international purpose and audience. Despite the size of the country, we are able to promote authors from all parts of Australia by nominating them for international awards and lists, by attending international congresses and conferences, and by online communications. We also work in close partnership with like-minded organizations such as the Children's Book Council of Australia, the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature, and the Australian Children's Laureate Foundation to achieve our goals. IBBY also puts us in touch with our counterparts in other countries (like you, Doris!) and allows us to share information about our authors and illustrators.

Three things I wish for? (1) That every child in Australia would develop a reading habit encouraged by their parents or carers, that their books would adequately reflect the many cultures represented in our society, and that every school or public library would have a dedicated professional teacher-librarian or children's librarian at its helm. (2) That authors and illustrators of high-quality works would receive the financial remuneration and recognition they deserve for their creative output. (3) That Australia's achievements in publishing vibrant, original, and innovative works for young people might be recognized internationally even more than they already are.

You are tightly engaged in the Australian Children's Laureate Foundation (ACLF) programs. How does it work—also in comparison to similar programs in other countries—and what are, in your opinion, the most important impacts on reading promotion?

I plan to give a paper on this at the forthcoming IBBY Congress. Our laureates to date have been Alison Lester and Boori Monty Pryor (2012-13), Jackie French (2014-15), Leigh Hobbs (2016-17), Morris Gleitzman (2018-19), and Ursula Dubosarsky (2020-21). They each focus on a national message or project, and also undertake extensive touring and many speaking engagements throughout the country as well as engagement with a very large audience online. Our current laureate, Ursula Dubosarsky, has the slogan "Read for Your Life!" and a campaign to have every child in Australia join their local public library. The ACLF has also held two national summits attended by other organizations and individuals. The ACLF's response to COVID-19 in 2020 was to develop online resources and videos which have helped to spread the message even more widely. Our laureates have also participated in international events. Every two years, our laureates attend the International Children's Laureate Summit held in conjunction with the Bologna Children's Book Fair, where they exchange programming ideas. The ACLF's program manager, Kristin Darell, recently coordinated a powerful international laureates' message, which can be viewed here: Read Around the World (https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Sd5km50E09Y&feature=youtu.be).

Your PhD thesis was about the Australian book market. What are its peculiarities in general, and specifically for children's books? Are there new developments?

Australia's market was very much influenced by its British colonial origins and fueled by the distribution of books through representatives of overseas publishers, so that many of our authors continued to be published in the UK even up until the 1960s. Australian-originated children's publishing here didn't really become established until the educational boom after World War II, although there were some successful exceptions to that. A thirst for education and for children's books led to the establishment of the Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) in 1945, and of the annual CBCA awards in 1946, and in the 1950s and 1960s to the growth of children's and educational publishing lists. (The late Barbara Ker Wilson emigrated from the UK and was invited to establish such a list at Angus & Robertson in the 1960s.)

But picturebooks really took off in the 1970s, when we saw dedicated children's editors beginning to emerge. Then in the 1980s we saw a growth in new lists such as Omnibus Books, which were no longer simply subsidiaries of international companies. Although many were later subsumed by larger companies, from the 1990s we witnessed our books becoming far more visible internationally, and we continue today to see exciting new lists established. We also have a very lively schools and festivals scene, so

that authors become well-known from their paid performances and tours. We have a comparatively small population in relation to our geographical size, so that sales for some authors aren't high, and being paid for other work (such as speaking and teaching) supplements their incomes.

Visual literacy and graphic novels are very much celebrated in our market. Shaun Tan's international success has made Australian children's publishing more visible internationally. We have also seen groundbreaking works in verse novels by authors such as Steven Herrick and Lorraine Marwood. Several of our fantasy writers, including Emily Rodda, Jessica Townsend, and Garth Nix, have an international audience. Indigenous publishing has grown in recent years, some by Indigenous publishing houses such as Magabala Books, and by other publishers such as UQP and Allen & Unwin. Acclaimed illustrator and writer Bronwyn Bancroft, who was IBBY Australia's 2018 HCAA nominee, is one of our outstanding ambassadors for Indigenous publishing. The Indigenous Literacy Foundation also does brilliant work in not only donating books to Indigenous communities but also conducting publishing workshops and then publishing books created collaboratively with Indigenous students, often in dual languages. We would still like to see more of the rich cultural diversity of Australia's population reflected in our books for young people.

Thanks to the support of the Cultural Fund of the Copyright Agency, IBBY Australia has recently managed to send several HCAA nominees (authors and illustrators) to the IBBY Congresses and to book fairs abroad. That support has also assisted members of IBBY Australia's committee to attend such events as well. What is, in your opinion, the most important factor in being an ambassador for one's country and literature? And how is the perception of Australia's literature abroad?

Liaison with other countries is facilitated by these grants. Not only do we deliver papers at the IBBY Congresses, but we've also been able to attend events such as the Bologna Children's Book Fair and Frankfurt Book Fair. The Australian Publishers Association has a stand at Bologna captioned "Hello from Australia!" and being able to visit that stand, attend functions held by the IBBY Secretariat, and events held by other national sections and organizations such as the International Youth Library and the Arbeitskreis für Jugendliteratur in Munich has made IBBY Australia's international visibility far greater.

For all this outstanding commitment, in January 2021, you were appointed a Member of the Order of Australia. Congratulations! Am I right to assume that children's literature has a high priority in your country? Or are you a kind of a "forerunner" in the Order of Australia?

I don't think that children's literature is valued enough by the general public, given the influence it potentially has on young people's lives in developing skills such as empathy and cultural understanding, as much as the basic skill of reading. Happily, though, several of my colleagues,

including authors and illustrators such as Robert Ingpen, Ann James, and Libby Gleeson, and former IBBY Australia president Dr. Robin Morrow, have also previously received this recognition. In general, however, such honors go to people who work in other fields of endeavor, such as science or politics or sport, so that when a person from the arts sector is awarded one, it is very good news for our industry. Children's publishing represents one of the most vital areas of publishing in Australia, and it is wonderful to see that recognized by these government awards.

How and where will the official award ceremony be held?

The investiture will take place at Government House, Brisbane, Queensland, in May, and a presentation of medals will be made by His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland.

And how will you celebrate this great honor in private and with your IBBY fellows?

I have received many warm messages of support from my colleagues and from many other organizations and politicians. But I am sure to celebrate privately with my close family and friends.

Will this recognition give you the opportunity to reach a wider public for literature and reading promotion?

The responses I've received since the announcement in late January indicate that it is certainly an award which is noticed, and I therefore hope that it will enhance my work with IBBY Australia. It is a very public recognition of the importance of children's literature and reading in Australia, and we will continue to promote that.

Doris Breitmoser studied at the universities of Passau, Germany, and Parma, Italy, and completed an MA degree in international cultural and business studies at the University of Passau. She began her career in a publishing house and has been employed since 1997 at the head office of the German IBBY section, Arbeitskreis für Jugendliteratur, in Munich. In 2003, she became the managing director of IBBY Germany. She has served as coeditor of the quarterly children's literature magazine *JuLit* since 1997. She is responsible for the organizing and awarding process of the state-sponsored Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis and also organizes national and international workshops and conferences on children's literature and reading promotion.

Christobel Mattingley, 1931-2019:
Birthday Letters, a Personal Tribute

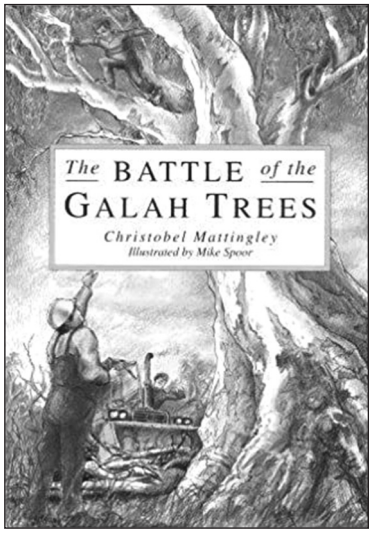
by MELANIE DUCKWORTH

Christobel Mattingley died at the beginning of June, in the week I turned forty. In Adelaide, South Australia, in June, there are wattle blossoms and driving rain. In Norway, there are long, bright evenings, sunsets that last for hours, and fluttering, brand-new birch leaves. Christobel lived in Adelaide, and I had moved to Norway, but every year, for many years, she sent me a birthday e-mail. She would tell me about her garden, about the wattle (little, fluffy, bright-yellow balls with a distinctive smell, that flower in winter) and the koala who visited her gum trees, and she would tell me about what she had been writing and publishing. She said it was perfect to have a birthday in Norway, in June.

> Early summer in Norway is a lovely time to celebrate—so different from winter birthdays in Mt Gambier. It's sunny here today in Stonyfell. The local koala is high in his favourite gum tree by our garage, in view from my study as I write, the last of the leaves on the Manchurian pear hang gold and bright, and the Flinders Ranges wattle is still in fluffy flower, and has been for almost 6 weeks. Quite unusual. (Personal e-mail, June 7, 2013)

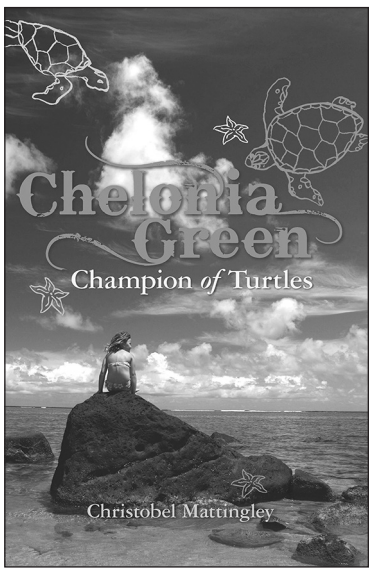
As the Australian poet Les Murray writes, "[T]hings don't recur precisely, on the sacred earth, they rhyme" (281). Christobel was attuned to the rhymes, rhythms, and variations of the natural world, and how our own lives entwine with them. My birthday fell a week before her beloved husband David's birthday, which was very close to my grandfather's birthday. So whenever I had a birthday, I thought of them. Christobel told me that she and David remembered the strawberries in Norway as the best they had ever tasted. One year, she wrote: "We always remember the carpets of forget-me-nots in the summer meadows in Norway and we hope they are blue and beautiful for you today" (Personal e-mail, June 7, 2013).

Christobel Mattingley was a prolific and much-loved Australian children's author. Her publisher's website declares: "She writes as she lives, with compassion, sincerity and a firm commitment to social justice" ("Christobel Mattingley"). She is the author of over fifty books, forty-seven of them for children. In 1990 she received the Advance Australia Award for Service to Literature, and in 1996 she was made a Member of the Order of Australia for service to literature and social justice. With David, she had three children, and worked as a librarian before turning to writing full time in the 1970s. She wrote picturebooks, middle-grade fiction, history, poetry, and biographies. As *Better Reading* puts it:



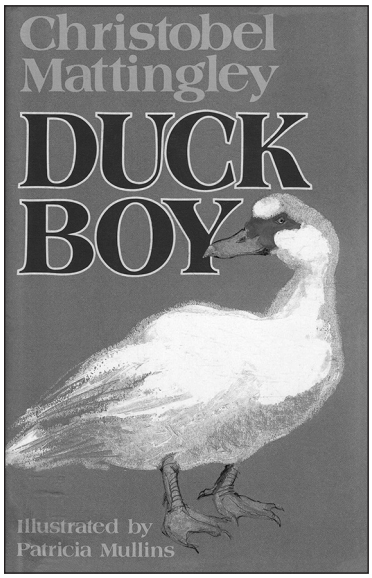
> Christobel was a contemporary of Colin Thiele, Ruth Park and other giants of Australian children's publishing and her books dealt with many significant issues including conservation, Aboriginal social justice and the plight of refugees—well before such themes became widely explored in children's literature, and during times when they were actively considered to be unsuitable or not of interest to a child audience. ("Christobel Mattingley, Iconic Australian Children's Author")

Her book *Rummage* won the inaugural Children's Book Council Junior Book of the Year award in 1982. *No Gun for Asmir* (1993), which was nominated for several awards, told the story of a Bosnian refugee family, and was followed up by two further instalments: *Asmir in Vienna* (1995) and *Escape from Sarajevo* (1996). In a speech she gave when accepting an honorary doctorate from the University of Tasmania in 2015, Christobel reflected: "[L]ooking back, I can see now what my themes have always been—nature, war and courage" ("Acceptance Speech"). Her picturebook *The Miracle Tree* (1985) tells of the effect of the atomic bomb in Nagasaki, and *The Angel with a Mouth-Organ* (1984) tells of refugee experiences during World War II. Her novel *New Patches for Old* (1977) is remembered by many as a childhood favorite—a vivid, poignant, and convincing tale of growing up in Australia. *The Battle of the Galah Trees* (1973) and *Chelonia Green: Champion of Turtles* (2008) attest to her abiding commitment to the natural world.



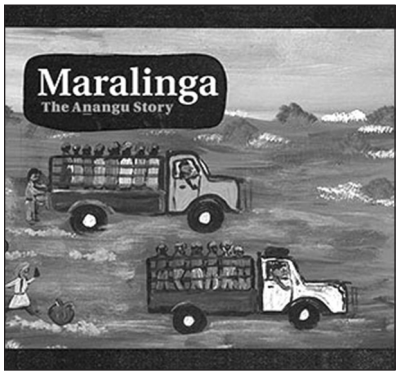
For many years, Christobel worked closely with the Aṉangu people of South Australia. In *Survival in Our Own Land: "Aboriginal" Experiences in "South Australia" since 1836* (1988), she researched and co-edited, with Ken Hampton, the oral histories of almost 150 Aboriginal Australians. Especially struck by the little-known, devastating nuclear tests carried out on the Maralinga Tjarutja lands between 1956 and 1963, she later worked with senior Aṉangu women from the Yalata and Oak Valley communities to tell, through words and pictures, the story of the lasting damage the tests had wrought on the land and their communities. Published as *Maralinga: The Aṉangu Story* in 2009, it was an honor book in the Children's Book Council

of Australia awards and shortlisted for the NSW Premier's History Awards. *Maralinga's Long Shadow: Yvonne's Story* (2016) won the 2017 Young People's History Prize of the NSW Premier's History Awards. Together with Louise Sherman, she also researched and edited *Our Mob, God's Story: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Artists Share Their Faith*, which won the Australian Christian Book of the Year Award in 2017. Her own Christian faith was an unassuming, but sustaining, grounding presence in her life, and connected deeply with her writing.



A personal favorite book from my own childhood is *Duck Boy* (1983), which tells the story of a young boy who, feeling lonely and left out during a family holiday to a farm, finds a purpose by befriending and protecting a family of ducks. I read it around the age of nine or ten, and I'm not quite sure why it made such an impression on me (perhaps, as a Duckworth, I related to the name?). I've been so far unsuccessful in relocating a copy, so I don't remember details, but rather a warm, hazy glow, a sense of connection. In my memory, I read this novel while feeling solitary on a family holiday. While this is not unlikely, I have no way of telling if this is actually the case, or if the plot of the novel has hazed out to encompass my memory of reading it.

I first met Christobel when she gave an author talk at my high school in Mount Gambier, South Australia, around 1995. This took place during one of her many tours of regional South Australia. She told us she wrote, as a child, partly because she felt shy about speaking—this resonated with me. I got back in touch with her as an undergraduate, when I needed a referee for grant and scholarship applications. She invited me to her house for tea and sandwiches with her and David, and she was thrilled for me when I won a scholarship for postgraduate study in England. We met up in York in 2007, when she and David were touring in conjunction with the publication of *Battle Order 204* (2007), the story of David's heroic experience as a fighter pilot in World War II.



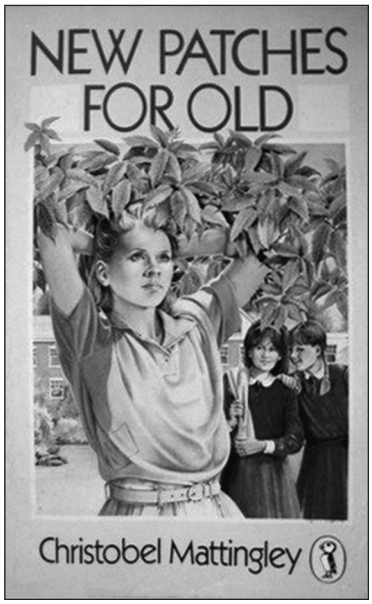
In the years that followed, I visited her often around Christmastime when I was back in Australia to see my family. In 2011, the year my first child was born, she wrote:

> We thought of you on your birthday—your first as a mother! Hope it was wonderful and that you are all enjoying growing together as a family day by day and night by night. What a precious time it is! David celebrated his 89th this week and we feel richly blessed by a wealth of memories going back over 63 years. (Personal e-mail, June 16, 2011)

My eldest two children met her when they were babies, and played with her collection of little plastic monkeys with curling arms and tails that she kept for the purpose. David always joined us—he was a tall, gentle, courteous man, with a sparkle in his eye, and they obviously had a loving partnership. At Christmastime, their house would be decorated

with flocks and strings of Christmas cards from around the world, and I always felt slightly abashed at my own lack of organization around such rituals. They kept a visitors' book in the hallway, and urged all their visitors to sign it, and write a little note, as if we were the celebrities.

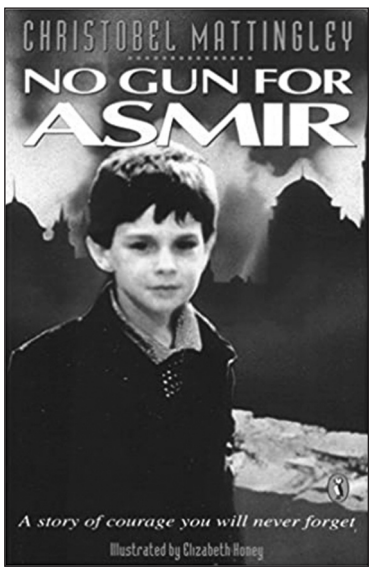
My own memories are but a fragment of the connections she shared with hundreds of others. My treasured collection of birthday e-mails attest to her characteristic warmth and care, her devotion to writing, and the connection she felt to her garden, her family, Australia—its plants, rivers, history, people—and to the world. She wrote:



> The wattle is coming out and the lorikeets are deliriously happy with many eucalypts in fluffy flower. Violets and pansies scenting and brightening winter days, when the wind is whirling away the last of autumn gold. And the waxing moon rose pink with Chile's volcanic ash cloud. A rare sight in the night sky, but not good for all the unlucky travellers whose flights have been grounded. (Personal e-mail, June 16, 2011)

Here she can admire the pink moon while being aware of the distant natural phenomenon that makes it so, and also of the difficulties this causes others. She was chosen as Australia's nomination for IBBY's 2012 Hans Christian Andersen Award (Peters). This delighted her, and she wrote:

> Of course I don't expect to win in a field of 57, but the nomination is in itself a great honour which has touched me deeply, a touching recognition of my 41 years of writing. The icing on my octogenarian cake! Our children are planning a family get together celebration in October, probably on a houseboat on the Murray, which is at last flowing again out to sea. (Personal e-mail, June 16, 2011)

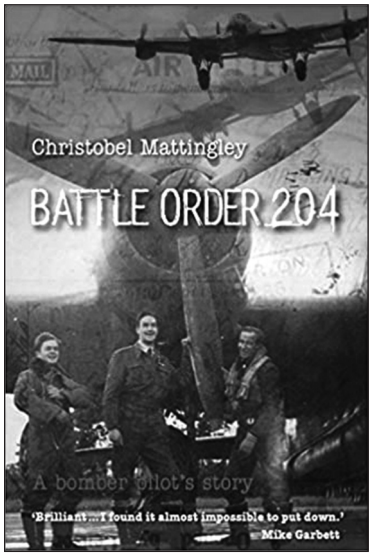


Here again, her sense of connection is evident, as she delights in the international recognition of her writing that so embraces the world. It also shows how engaged she was with the natural world—the Murray River, which winds through New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, has faced serious problems due to agriculture and excessive dam use. She turned eighty at the end of October 2011, and rejoiced at the thought of her birthday, her family, the restored, flowing river, and the recognition of half a lifetime of words. Things worth celebrating.

Christobel's writing has a radiant quality to it. She uses short, poetic sentences. She is alert to plants, to light, to emotion, and to small things. Her writing dwells quietly in the everyday, in the present moment, but does not shy away from big things, sad things, which also, of course, are part of the everyday.

She had a distinctive presence about her—warm, open, receptive, and also a little more present, a little more true, than one is quite used to. She looked into your eyes. I remember leaving her house once, and she stopped me on her front porch, clasping my hands in her large, sturdy hands, and looking into my eyes with her warm, intent eyes. "You," she said, not dropping my gaze, "are a *writer*."

I remembered this after she died, when I stumbled through the forest near my house in a haze of misery and regret. Her death took me by surprise. I first saw a memorial on Facebook, and then a friend e-mailed me. She had been on my mind, and I had recently ordered copies of her books, but I had somehow neglected to visit her on my last couple of trips to Australia. I can claim the excuse of limited time, and my own family to visit, but in truth I think I was afraid of anything changing, afraid of the passing of time. Frantically seeking more information, I discovered that David Mattingley had died at the beginning of June in 2017, two years before Christobel. That year, there had been no birthday e-mail, but I hardly noticed as I was entranced by the birth of my youngest child. Julius was born at the end of May, the cusp of a Norwegian summer, three days before David Mattingley died. I was certain I had e-mailed Christobel to tell of Julius's arrival, but when I look back through my e-mails, I see I did not.



Christobel died a few days before I turned forty, and I thought, bewildered—this is middle age, the death of one's mentors. Turning forty was strange in a way I hadn't anticipated—I didn't exactly feel older, but felt I had been impossibly young only yesterday. I felt terrible that I had not contacted her in three years, that I had not visited her with my chubby, genial baby and flamboyant toddler the Christmas after David's death, that I didn't know. More than anything I wanted to flip the pages back—this was not how the story was supposed to end.

I would like to tell her that here in Norway, in early February, I sit looking out on my snow-covered deck and the frozen fjord beyond, watching tiny round birds with white cheeks and yellow, black-striped bellies hop about the feeder. I remember her gaze, her hands, her words. Her wonderful words, that can still reach us. And I continue the story the only way I can. When June comes, with birdsong, birthdays, pink rhododendrons, and sunlight in the birch leaves, when welcome rain sweeps Adelaide streets, and far away bright wattle glows, I will think of her.

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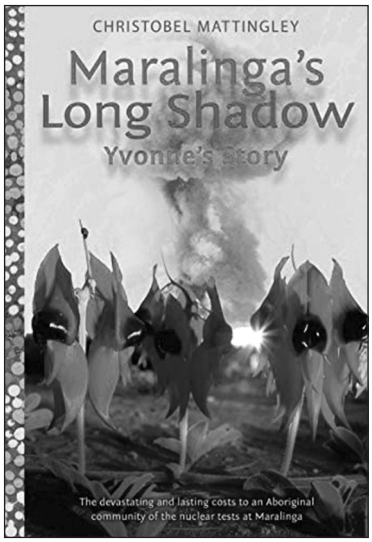

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Melanie Duckworth is an associate professor of English literature at Østfold University College, Norway. Her research encompasses the overlapping areas of Australian literature, children's literature, and ecocriticism. She has published on Australian historical children's fiction in *Bookbird* and *IRCL*, and coedited a book on *Plants in Children's and Young Adult Literature*, which is forthcoming from Routledge. She is working on Christobel Mattingley's biography.

Alice in Writer's Land:
A Dream Quest for Schools Full of Stories, Heroes and Heroines, and Books

by ANGELA CHALKIOPOULOU

Through her innovative program, Angela creatively uses children's literature and storytelling to tackle important issues children face today in a fun and unconventional way. I watched her pupils enjoy the different tools (storytelling, painting, puppets and more) she used to address each theme, thus successfully enhancing their appreciation of books.

—Marina Gioti, children's book author and illustrator

Creating a school reading culture is vital for promoting lifelong reading, enhancing creativity, and improving academic performance. Angeliki takes her passion for reading into the classroom and creates an unforgettable experience for young students.

—Marina Michaelidou Kadi, children's book author

Literacy has always played an important role in my life. I remember myself as a young girl with little or no interest in school subjects except for language arts. Introverted and shy, I thought myself incapable of "smart," A-grade answers. When my father introduced me to the magic of literature with his vibrant, humorous, theatrical presentations of poetry, stories, and heroes, that was the turning point to a more positive life, filled with self-esteem. These possibilities—of being free to follow your own path, of being capable of creating and being resilient with your cause, of being able to be wrong and at the same time being able to find the strength to try again—were offered to me by my quest in literature so that no matter what life put in front me, or how life tested me in my later years, I was able to find my cause and inspire myself and my children. This was before the modern "growth mindset" theories became popular. Years of continuous experimentation with educational programs focused on literature led me to the conclusion that literacy, especially today, is not just about the ability to read and write. Future literacy, as many scientists point out, is about fantasy, creation, resilience, change, inventiveness, empathy, and inclusion.

Successful future societies will be multicultural and share a common environmental conscience. They will need to embrace creativity as well as critical thinking. Sound familiar? Yes, this is what literature is all about. Presented with contemporary ideas, tools, and methods, it cultivates abilities and inspires endless possibilities.

Schools here in Cyprus tend to be multicultural, so this offers the opportunity for a wider variety of stories, more heroes, more books. As for teachers? They are always open and eager to learn new ways of teaching human rights, empathy, friendship, community values, and more. Creating an educational program based on literary heroines and heroes—focusing on their inventiveness, creativity, and resilience—gave me the opportunity to develop a board game. The game is called "Literature Hunting / Find the Phrase—Find the Move." This board game enables teachers to easily and positively convey difficult messages to students while engaging them with stories and books.

The program consists of three steps, or presentations, for each grade level. Teachers choose a book from a list given to them concerning a theme they find crucial to explore with their students. The focus is on the hero or heroine and his or her response to challenges and adventures in the story. Observation, research, fantasy, and creativity all play key roles. Our main goal is to cultivate a love for reading. These are not "lessons," and no one is obliged to read or write. All students take part in the quest, as a challenge, a game, a creative process. Any reading or writing involved is an extra perk, away from any judgmental connotations of right or wrong—a process we hope will lead children to a path full of an everlasting love for stories.

Step 1—Research: Be a researcher. Kids are asked to listen to a radio podcast from our radio show *Alice in Writer's Land*. This is a children's literature show created by me, which is broadcast from Bobos Family Web Radio and has two heroes, Alice and the rabbit "What." In every episode, they find themselves lost in a specific scene from a book, where they follow the heroes and heroines and their adventures. These podcasts also provide information about the author and his or her perspective.

Students are asked to think about questions that could lead us to the truths of the story. They are also presented with a letter, recording, or video from the author, which is addressed to them and is relevant to the story and theme they are exploring.

Step 2—Fantasy: Create your own path or story. Students watch a short video presented to them by "the Artists/Madhatters,"

who try to open for them a "door" into the book's fantasy world. They guide them on how to fill out a hero/heroine map that represents their journey. After filling in the map of the hero or heroine, students are given maps to fill in by becoming heroes or heroines of their own personal journey. Maps include obstacles, mistakes, goals, successes, abilities, possibilities, personal traits, and more.

Step 3—Critical thinking: Find your place in the class community. Students are asked to create their "classroom board game." They choose their board-game pawn (heroes and heroines from books, stories, games) and create their game according to their school life. Obstacles, happy moments, rivals, learning processes, friendships, and more are combined to create their game/book. Communication, empathy, growth mindset, and kindness lead them to successfully playing the game.

One of the most characteristic responses to my presentations is surprise. When children enter the theater where I stage settings from the stories—mostly hand-drawn—they feel as if all the worlds presented to them are coming to life. They also know I love and believe in what I present to them. The first question is always, "Did you draw all this by yourself?" The aesthetic aspect always adds great value. Images amaze children, and emotions evoked by the stories capture them. My presentations have theatrical representations of scenes from the book and "creative toolboxes" in relation to objects from the stories. This step ends with creative projects, such as designing a class board game, that cultivate critical thinking in relation to the theme of the book.

By the end of our project, children come to discover, know, and admire heroes and heroines they like, stories they recognize, and books they had never heard of before or had only superficially met. Many times I just stand there, listening to them asking questions about the hero or heroine and about the story (agreeing or disagreeing), and I find myself feeling so happy as children ask their teachers to take pictures of the book covers, so they can buy them for their school library.

Angela Chalkiopoulou's career in education started when she became the creative director of Alice's Nest, a creative center for children in Lesbos, Greece. There, she organized an innovative Greek and English children's literature library and designed her first experiential learning programs that were based on children's books. In 2016, she moved permanently to Cyprus and created "Little Odysseus," a fresh literature-based educational approach that inspires children to learn, understand each other, and create. Inspired by literature, Angela uses art, multiple intelligences games, growth mindset games, and new educational tools like podcasts, documentaries, and video. In 2021, Angela is preparing a new educational program for children with special needs, which is based on multisensory presentations and activities around children's literature.

Children's Books and Curriculum Integration in K-12

by ANTONIO CAUSARANO

As a former special education teacher supporting students with disabilities in inclusive programs, and as a literacy instructor teaching literacy courses in an urban redesigned program, I have always seen picturebooks as paramount to designing an integrated literacy curriculum that can effectively support students' acquisition of foundational knowledge in content areas (Vučković). The importance of children's books as multimodal texts that scaffold reading comprehension by a balance between illustrations and narrative with content that presents cultural and racial variations is key to see student-centered instruction around the themes created by choosing quality children's books integrated across the curriculum (Zunshine).

The overarching question here is how to create a student-centered curriculum using children's books across the curriculum that expose students to diversity in language, culture, and exceptionalities. One of the many possible answers is to see the learner at the center of the reading process and to provide teachers with the theory and the methodological tools to design effective curriculum integration using children's books as core texts in curriculum and instruction (Roger).

The Reader at the Center of the Literacy Process

Curriculum integration happens when students are placed at the center of the learning process by considering who they are in terms of culture, language, and exceptionalities. This means that the learner is the most important element that determines what texts will be used to design an integrated curriculum that will see students' diversity as the driving force to scaffold the literacy process across the curriculum. The theory that supports an integrated curriculum design is, in my experience, Rosenblatt's reader response theory (*Literature*; *The Reader*), which provides the theoretical framework to put the learner at the center of the reading process by choosing texts that mirror the learner's interests.

Readers, according to reader response theory, come from different walks of life. The diversity and richness in the reader's background knowledge are key in looking at the processes that underlie the response to the same text and also, more importantly, indicate that the meaning is determined by the dynamic relationship between the reader and the text (Rosenblatt, *Literature* and *The Reader*). Reader response theory gives the learner a variety of possible ways in which he or she can contribute to the meaning-making

process during the reading event. In turn, the reader is an active participant in literacy events across the curriculum, where the content of children's books acts as a cognitive stimulus to delve into the dynamics of the content of the text in relation to the learner's background knowledge.

Rosenblatt's (*Literature*; *The Reader*) theory sees the reader, the text, and the context of reading as integrated. The three components cannot be separated in the meaning-making process and represent the blueprint for an effective design of integrated curriculum across content areas. The methodological processes that follow from reader response theory clearly point to assessing the background knowledge of the learners in a classroom to match the concepts of books to children and to create a virtuous cycle of learning where readers, texts, and contexts of learning are integrated across the curriculum.

Assessment of children's background knowledge and interests represents the stepping stone for designing the curriculum from the bottom up (Columba et al.). I will lay out the components of effective assessment teachers can use to acquire a systematic knowledge of their learners and how to apply this knowledge to design integrated curriculum using children's books.

Know Your Students in Depth

The first step is to ask the crucial questions that drive your assessment design in an integrated curriculum using children's books. Columba et al. suggest the following questions to shape authentic assessment of learners' interest in the reading process and to differentiate texts to match them to each learner's ability and intrinsic motivation. (1) What is special about this student? (2) What is the student's background (sociocultural, economic, linguistic, etc.)? (3) What values does the learner hold (e.g., cultural or religious)? (4) What does the learner already know, and what can he or she do? (5) What are the learner's strengths and general developmental needs? (51). I also add to these questions the following: What are my goals and objectives to expose students to diversity that encompasses language, culture, race, and disability?

These questions help to begin to systematize students' interests and experiences and to search for the children's books that will constitute the core of a rich-text, student-centered instruction in an integrated curriculum. This will lead eventually to matching each child with the right book to tap into his or her intrinsic motivation in the reading process. From my personal experience, I can support such a methodological design. When I was teaching six grades in an inclusive language arts class in New Mexico, I and the language arts teacher used Shaun Tan's wordless book *The Arrival* (2007) to integrate language arts, social studies, and diversity to help our students to become aware of and understand the importance of reading by tapping into the immigration experiences of the students in the classroom, since New Mexico is a part of immigration fluxes and has a rich history in language, culture, and people.

We used *The Arrival* to ask students to develop a story about their personal experiences by choosing two significant illustrations from the

book. The task we designed was centered around the idea of immigration and personal experience. Students had to write a narrative in small groups by tapping into their experiences as immigrants, and at the same time researching the history of the place they were coming from in order to create a dynamic process between the text, the readers, and the subjective context of the experiences described by the students (Rosenblatt, *Literature* and *The Reader*). In doing so, the use of language, culture, and personal experience came alive in the narrative of the students and the ownership of their writing in an integrated whole. In other words, using quality children's books tailored to students' interests and reading abilities promotes students' learning across the curriculum, and allows teachers to lay the foundations to develop independent learners and readers in and beyond school classrooms.

Conclusion

This letter has discussed the importance of children's books and curriculum integration in a time when literacy plays a major role in critically shaping our students as future literate and responsible citizens. The use of high-quality children's books across the curriculum is very important for teachers to infuse literacy in the framework of culturally responsive teaching practices (Hougen and Smartt). Students must be as actively engaged in literacy practices across the curriculum as they are in the process of learning language and culture embedded in literacy practices. Children's books are keys to open the door for children's curiosity, creativity, and critical inquiries in core areas of the curriculum beyond language arts (Lever and Sénéchal).

Children's books are keys to open the door for children's curiosity, creativity, and critical inquiries in core areas of the curriculum beyond language arts (Lever and Sénéchal).

Teachers want to tap into the lives of learners by proposing children's books that act as connection agents in supporting an in-depth process of literacy development across the curriculum, where language and culture are core aspects of the intellectual and emotional growth of learners (Columba et al.). As a teacher I experienced this firsthand, and was able to see that the paramount importance of children's books across content areas was the beginning of a journey where students could start to explore culture, language, and identity as their web of meaning to grow as individuals and to find their own identity as informed citizens.

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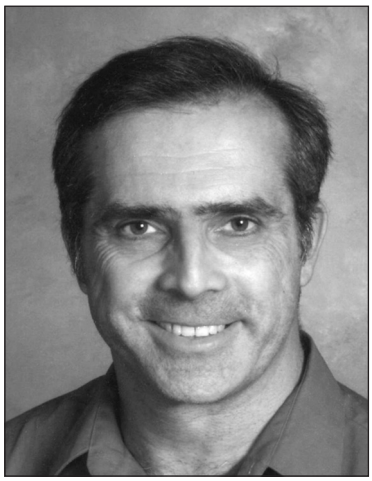


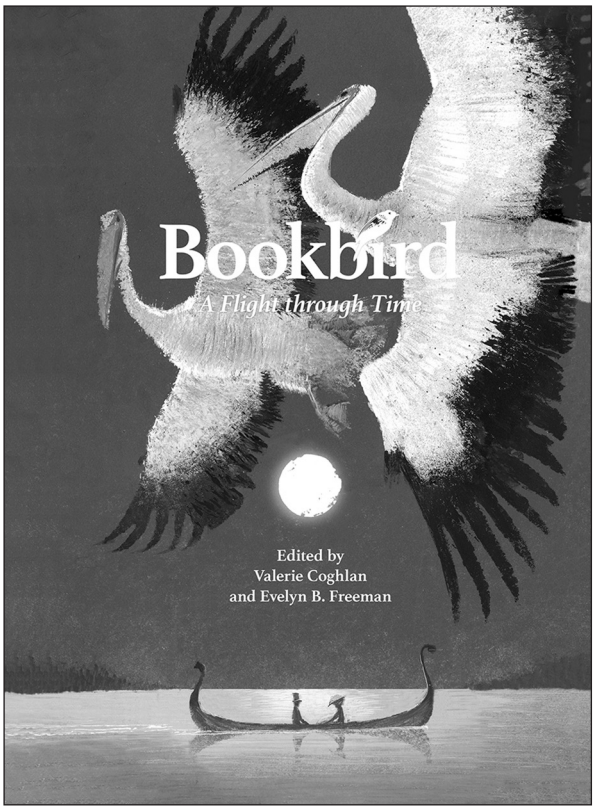
Antonio Causarano is an associate professor of special education in the Department of Special Education at Illinois State University. His research interests are children's books with disabilities, social construction of disabilities in children's books, and culturally relevant pedagogy across the curriculum. Currently, he is writing a children's book on the Middle Passage, *The Journey*, to narrate the stories of the first enslaved African Americans to North America. He teaches literacy courses in the Department of Special Education at Illinois State University within the urban framework to prepare teachers to support students in urban settings and diverse schools.

Bookbird: A Flight through Time Takes Off

by VALERIE COGHLAN

Like many a good tale, the story of *Bookbird: A Flight through Time* began on a dark and snowy night. Members of the Bookbird, Inc. Board were gathered near Lake Michigan, Illinois, in 2016 to review corporate governance and the future of *Bookbird* in a world where institutional management was increasingly coming under scrutiny.

Serendipitously, we suddenly realized that *Bookbird* would be sixty years old in 2017. Somehow the fiftieth anniversary of its founding had been missed, so we were determined to mark the sixtieth birthday of what is now the longest-running children's literature journal in English, and possibly in the world.



With all haste, contact was made with Björn Sundmark, *Bookbird*'s then editor. Like all good editors, Björn had his future issues planned well in advance, but recognizing the significance of the occasion, he said maybe, just maybe, he could put something together to be included in the Andersen Awards issue scheduled for publication late in 2017.

We imagined Björn metaphorically rolling up his sleeves as he set to contacting potential contributors for articles about the first issues of *Bookbird*, Jella Lepman, and the growth of the journal over the intervening sixty years. The ensuing additional twenty-seven pages to the Andersen issue received a warm welcome from readers; some suggested it should be published separately from a regular issue of *Bookbird*, and Liz Page, IBBY's executive director, remarked that it would be a good idea to have this as a separate publication that could be given to IBBY funders and other friends of IBBY.

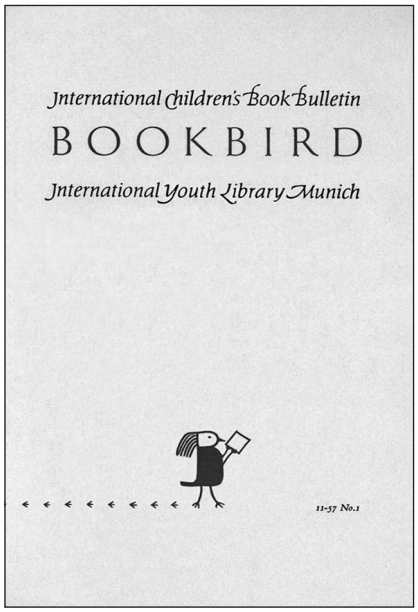
In the sunnier environs of Bologna, at the 2018 book fair, the Bookbird, Inc. Board discussed this, agreeing that there was potential for publishing the supplement in stand-alone form, with the existing articles expanded, and including features on people and events involved with *Bookbird* and IBBY.

Evie Freeman and I were appointed to edit the publication, and arrangements were put in place whereby Bookbird, Inc. would subvent the costs of publication (the editors worked on a pro bono basis). Copies would be

given to the IBBY Secretariat for promotional purposes and distribution of one copy to each IBBY national section, and some copies would be sold.

It was agreed that the enlarged publication would fill one hundred pages. As Evie and I began to dig and delve into *Bookbird*'s past, it soon became evident there would not be a problem achieving this (the final page count is 152 pages). Intensive planning sessions at the USBBY regional conference in Seattle in fall 2018 made us realize that all this was going to be a bigger task than we first imagined. The list of possible contributors and interviewees grew, as past presidents of Bookbird, Inc. and the current and past executive secretaries of IBBY were added to our list. That *Bookbird* had links to many developments in the history of children's literature internationally was apparent, and that many of the great and the good who were involved with this developing field had contributed to *Bookbird* in various ways.

The International Youth Library in Munich was the first organization established by Jella Lepman when she responded to the desperate plight of children in postwar Germany. In its headquarters in an old mansion on Kaulbachstraße, she envisioned further ways of bringing children and books together, not only in Germany, but throughout the world. There, *Bookbird* was initially conceived as a newsletter chronicling the activities of IBBY in parts of the developing world where Lepman/IBBY, supported by the U.S. Rockefeller Foundation, was active in establishing libraries and promoting reading. As *Bookbird*'s first home and first publisher, the International Youth Library also features significantly in *Bookbird: A Flight through Time*. Christiane Raabe, director of the library, traces the library's history from its earliest days to the present and assisted us in the compilation of photomontages that showcase the library's work from the late 1940s to the present.



The cover of the first issue of *Bookbird*

There are a number of photomontages spread throughout the book, which is divided chronologically into five sections: "The Early Years," "The Story Continues," "New Beginnings," "Into the Twenty-First Century," and "Still Flying High." As well as articles and interviews, each section contains an overview and a photomontage featuring images from the period, enlivening the publication and making it more accessible.

Once we had our list of contributors and a work schedule, we decided on our designer, copyeditor/proofreader, and printer. When Siobhán Parkinson and I edited *Bookbird* (2005-2009), we worked with Kieran Nolan of Oldtown Design, Dublin, Ireland, so he seemed just the right person to work with us on a book about *Bookbird*. As I had worked with copyeditor Emma Dunne on another publication, and Polish printer Skleniarz was well recommended, they too slotted in as valuable additions to the team.

Evie and I visited the International Youth Library, now at Schloß Blutenburg in Munich, in 2019. There the library and archives staff were most helpful, allowing us to explore the many boxes of Lepman's

correspondence and other files relating to *Bookbird*. To hold these letters, and especially the first *Bookbird*s, was an awe-inspiring experience, and equally at the Secretariat in Basel to see photographs from early IBBY meetings and conferences. The names of many involved at these events were familiar, but to see their faces was fascinating, as were the minutes from early IBBY meetings at which *Bookbird* was a regular agenda item, and sometimes a contentious one.

We discovered that *Bookbird* had been through periods of stress that we hadn't known about. Publication was halted in 1959 following the cessation of Rockefeller funds, but with funding from Austria, it resumed again in 1963, and later in the twentieth century, there were again issues related to financial stability. There were fears, too, on the part of some involved with IBBY that *Bookbird* would become too academic a publication. These issues and the growth of *Bookbird*, both physically and in its range of contents, are discussed by contributors, and *Bookbird* covers over the years have an article to themselves.

The COVID pandemic interrupted our intentions to meet to edit the book, and plans to revisit the IBBY archive to select relevant images for inclusion once all the contributions were received had to be canceled. Liz Page provided patient help with the latter difficulty, trawling through many boxes of photographs in response to requests for pictures of IBBY personnel, congresses, and meetings. Evie and I met frequently on FaceTime and exchanged many e-mails with each other and with contributors. We discovered that our abilities were complementary, with Evie's eagle eye for even the smallest typographical error and my penchant for working with visual images. We agreed early on that as American English is the lingua franca of *Bookbird*, we would stick with it, and in general we understood each other! The difference between *booth* (American usage) and *stand* (British English) in relation to IBBY's space at book fairs caused us some amusement, but like many other conundrums in the months we worked on this project, it was soon amicably resolved.

Celebrating sixty years of *Bookbird*: P. J. Lynch, Evelyn Freeman, Pam Muñoz Ryan, Sonja Danowski, Ellis Vance, Roger Mello, Cao Wenxuan, Valerie Coghlan, Linda Sue Park, Uma Krishnaswami, and Peter Sís. IBBY Regional Conference, Seattle, USA, 2017

Bookbird: A Flight through Time was to be launched at the 2020 Moscow Congress, but again COVID interrupted best-laid plans when the Congress was postponed, and it launched at the online Bologna Book Fair, 2021. Though it is disappointing not to have a live launch with actual books, the main aim of this project was to record the history of *Bookbird*, along with information about cognate organizations founded by Jella Lepman. That these have grown and prospered is a wonderful testimony to their worth,

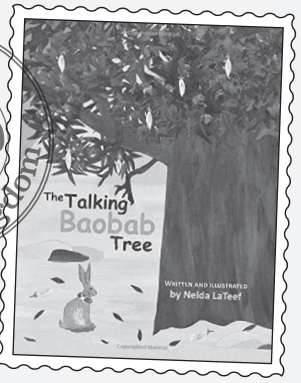
and we, along with our contributors and helpers, are proud and pleased to have played a role in producing a record of significant milestones in the annals of children's literature.

Valeri Coghlan is an independent researcher in children's literature. She is a former editor of *Bookbird* and is currently president of Bookbird, Inc.

The Talking Baobab Tree is a retold Wolof tale about a clever rabbit, a wicked hyena, and a wise, life-supporting baobab. The picturebook is well written, with easy-to-understand moral lessons. The rabbit shows how to handle bullies with brains rather than brawn. The hyena reaps the ill will he sows. The baobab, naturally endowed with life-sustaining resources, is generous and kind but, as the hyena learns, no fool.

Wise proverbs are sprinkled throughout the book: "A good neighbor is better than a relative who lives far away," "Deeds speak louder than words," "An egg shouldn't wrestle with a rock." Lateef's illustrations show the differences between the Sahel, a semi-desert belt with vegetation that supports animal and plant life, and the Sahara, a true desert with little vegetation. In the author's note, LaTeef provides useful, factual information about the baobab and its many uses.

Brenda Randolph



The Talking Baobab Tree

Nelda LaTeef
Oxford, UK: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2020. 40 pp.
ISBN 13: 978-9988860387
(Folklore; ages 5-8)

Focus IBBY

by LIZ PAGE

International Children's Book Day around the World in 2021

International Children's Book Day (ICBD) is celebrated by IBBY members on or around the birthday of Hans Christian Andersen: April 2. Each year a different national section of IBBY has the opportunity to be the international sponsor of ICBD. It decides upon a theme and invites a prominent author from the host country to write a message to the children of the world and a well-known illustrator to design a poster. The 2021 poster and message were sponsored by USBBY; Margarita Engle wrote the delightful poem "The Music of Words," which was accompanied by the stunning artwork of Hans Christian Andersen Award winner (2014) Roger Mello.

These materials are used in different ways to promote books and reading. Many IBBY sections promote ICBD through the media and organize activities in schools and public libraries. Often ICBD is linked to celebrations around children's books and other special events that may include encounters with authors and illustrators, writing competitions, or announcements of book awards.

Below is a brief glimpse of some of the activities organized by IBBY members to celebrate ICBD 2021. A retrospective of more events celebrating 2021 International Children's Book Day can be seen on the IBBY blog: www.ibby.org/ibby-blog.

In **Iceland**, a new short story by a popular children's book author was broadcast on Iceland's national public service broadcaster, Channel 1. The author read her story herself, and then gave a short interview on the radio. The short story was written for all students in primary school, from six- to sixteen-year-olds. IBBY Iceland has celebrated International Children's Book Day in this way for many years, choosing a new author and a new short story every year. The goal is that everyone in Iceland has a joint listening experience on this special day. People who read or listen to the same story have something in common with each other, which will foster tolerance. By allowing all primary school students in the country to listen to the story at the same time, forty thousand students enter the same world at the same time! After listening to the story, children are often given a fun assignment in connection with the story. IBBY Iceland provides the text of the short story online; these can be viewed on the IBBY Iceland Facebook page. In 2020, the short stories from the last ten years were published in a book. Learn more at www.facebook.com/IBBY.is/posts/3033571243340704.

IBBY Nepal chose to distribute children's books to students and school libraries. Members of the section held sessions with teachers about the importance and utilization of children's literature in the classroom. Books were contributed by Room to Read (Nepal Unite). The section also celebrated International Storytelling Day on March 20, with support from the Storytellers' Society and Room to Read, by running a digital discussion

about the importance of storytelling for children's development and imagination.

IBBY Dominican Republic supported the production of three books in Spanish and publishing a presentation of them on YouTube.

IBBY Argentina, working with Desde los Libros, gave a special workshop about ways of matching literature contents and readers through technology. The two-day workshop shared ways of learning through digital content on the media. The workshop addressed mediators, librarians, teachers, and promoters who wish to share their love for books in this "distant world."

The **Slovenian** section of IBBY prepared a reading promotion event on their website: www.ibby.si/index.php/icbd/2021. IBBY Slovenia shared a video made for the occasion with a group of children and their teacher on the theme of Hans Christian Andersen.

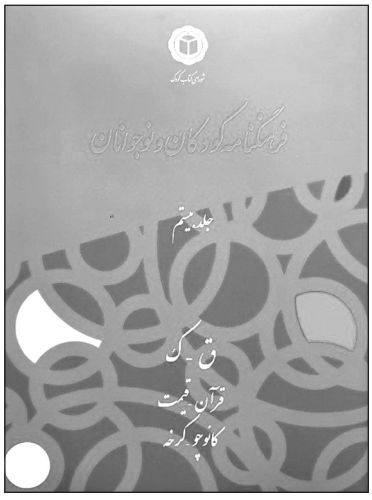
IBBY Malaysia organized various activities, which included a talk on the "Rhythm of Words" that was a joint activity with IBBY Malaysia and the Department of Early Childhood Studies, Faculty of Education, and Social Sciences University Selangor (UNISEL). A reading and storytelling session was held at the Genius Aulad Preschool in Nilai by Teacher Sha, as well as a storytelling session at Gallery Busana Ampang by Storyteller Sharif Apen.

IBBY Ecuador organized a conversation on "The Book, a Bridge to Creativity: Reading Experiences in the Tambos of the National Book and Reading Plan" at the end of March. The event was carried out through the platform Facebook Live of @girandulaecuador.

IBBY Australia held two events to celebrate ICBD 2021. The first took place on Saturday, March 27, and was an online discussion with two guest speakers, Maxine Beneba Clarke and Gabrielle Wang, with the theme "Words Change the World." The second event was a children's literature quiz organized by the Tasmanian Branch of Australian IBBY and held in Hobart on May 1.

A Dream Come True

The Children's Book Council (CBC), which represents IBBY in Iran, launched volume 20 of the *Encyclopedia for Young People* (*EYP*) in March 2021.



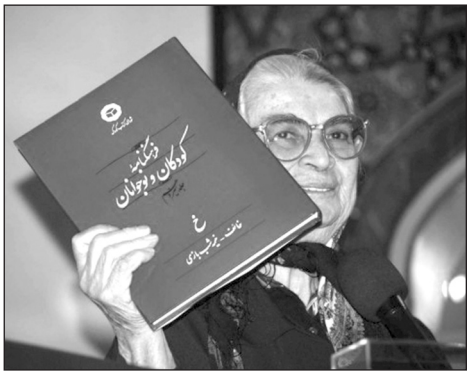
The idea to produce a wide-reaching reference work, known as the *Encyclopedia for Young People* (EYP), was proposed in 1980 by Touran Mirhadi. (See the article by Leila Maktabi Fard in *Bookbird*, vol. 57, no. 3, 2019, pp. 34-41.)

The dream was to publish twenty-five volumes of the encyclopedia for

The encyclopedia volume launch ceremony

children from twelve to sixteen years of age, which would contain a total of five thousand alphabetical entries. The articles are donated by different expert contributors. Touran Mirhadi was the first chief editor of the encyclopedia.

By mid-1980, it had become clear that no single publisher would take the risk of investing in the project! Therefore, it was decided to register a public limited company with publishers and CBC members as shareholders. At first, the work was financially supported by a bequest from Mirhadi's late husband. The first volume of the encyclopedia was launched in 1991. The need for



Touran Mirhadi with her dream project

The art group

further funds was resolved during this time by a group of CBC members who established the association of the Friends of EYP to attract support, which continues today.

During the presidency of Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005), the *Encyclopedia for Young People* was widely introduced across the country, and the already published volumes were given two prestigious awards. With this national support, the encyclopedia found its way into schools and public libraries throughout Iran.

One of the young advisor groups

With time, the speed of publishing became a major issue. Touran Mirhadi passed away in 2016 (see *Bookbird*, vol. 55, no. 1, 2017, p. 72), but her family pledged to continue to support the work. The addition of more chief editors proved effective, as they were then able to produce a volume every year. The launch of volume 20 this year illustrates that Touran Mirhadi's dream continues.

Noushin Ansari
Secretary General of the Iranian Section of IBBY
Honorary Member of IBBY since 2010

Promotion in schools and libraries in large cities as well as in deprived areas

IBBY Yamada Projects 2021

In 2005, IBBY launched a campaign to draw attention to the right of every child to become a reader. With generous funding given by the Yamada Bee Farm, the IBBY-Yamada Program was established to provide funds for IBBY projects that help develop a book culture for children in all regions of the world.

Each year, projects are developed by IBBY members and presented to the Executive Committee. The projects selected thus far have included reading promotion programs, establishing libraries in schools and community centers, training teachers and parents in maintaining libraries and storytelling, and workshops for writers, illustrators, and editors of children's books.

In 2021, IBBY is once again grateful to the Yamada Bee Farm for its support of eleven projects around the world. The projects that were submitted by the national sections and approved by the IBBY Executive Committee are as follows:

1. IBBY Argentina: "Los Favoritos de los Lecrtores"—workshops across Argentina on using books in schools
2. IBBY Armenia: "Our Big Corner of the World"—workshops for young adults in five regions of Armenia

3. IBBY Cameroon: "Imagine My Book, My Universe"—the challenge of developing a children's book culture in Cameroon
4. IBBY Dominican Republic: development of a children's library in the rural community of Hatillo
5. IBBY Ecuador: "I Love to Read"—library extension in Indigenous communities in Tungurahua
6. IBBY Ghana: capacity building in basic library management and reading promotion skills for primary school teachers
7. IBBY Italy: "Mamma Lingua"—introductory workshop on how to use books in many languages to foster a culture of mutual comprehension in families with preschoolers
8. IBBY Nepal: "Stories for Children after Covid-19 for the New Normal"—a collection of children's experiences for picturebooks and books for parents
9. IBBY Sri Lanka: "Let's Make Books and Reading Fun!"—a series of workshops on illustrating, storytelling techniques, bibliotherapy, and mentoring
10. IBBY Ukraine: "Green Wave of Eco-Reading"—events and workshops to promote environmental reading for everyone
11. IBBY Zimbabwe: stories recorded on CDs and circulating to schools for children and young people in an effort to mitigate the COVID-19 social distancing requirements

Many of these projects will be run online. Reports of all these innovative projects will be posted on the IBBY website: www.ibby.org/awards-activities/activities/ibby-yamada-fund.

The complete record of past IBBY-Yamada projects can be viewed on the IBBY website.

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.

Books on Books

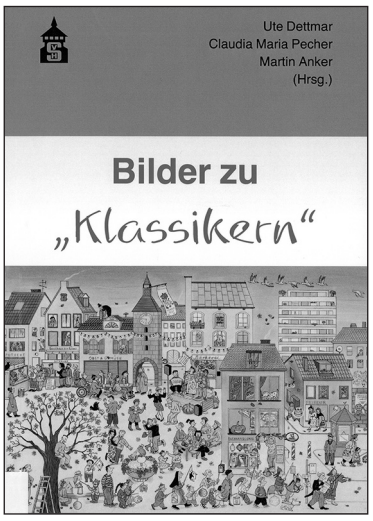
edited by JUTTA REUSCH—INTERNATIONAL YOUTH LIBRARY

BILDER ZU "KLASSIKERN."

Edited by Ute Dettmar, Claudia Maria Pecher, and Martin Anker.

Schneider Verlag Hohengehren, 2019, 308 pages.
ISBN: 978-3-8340-1964-6

In the winter term 2016-17, a lecture series on "Images on 'Classics" was held at the Frankfurt University Institute for Juvenile Book Research. This volume is a collection of the lectures given there. At their core, they all explore the significance of images in international classics of children's and young adult literature. What makes a work a "classic" notwithstanding changing aesthetic and real-world contexts? What role do images and the text-image relationship play? The individual analyses address these questions using vivid examples. Works from different historical periods that have become "classics" are examined in detail, such as *Pinocchio* and *Alice in Wonderland*, as well as Walter Trier's Kästner illustrations and those of Paul Maar and Janosch. The contributors draw attention to different illustrations, changing visual rhetoric, and evolving compositions, for example, while they also critically reflect the social implications in the reproduction of classics.



The fact that reeditions of classics are often characterized by a "modifying re-turn" is shown by Mareile Oetken in her essay "Vom Märchenwald in den Großstadtdschungel. Traditionslinien und Brüche in der Märchenillustration" ("From Fairy-Tale Forest to Urban Jungle. Traditions and Transgressions in Fairy Tale Illustration"). Based on picturebooks by Aaron Frisch and Roberto Innocenti, Alfonso Serra, and Květa Pacovská, among others, she points out how, on the one hand, new images echo traditional fairy tale illustrations, but on the other hand, they clearly undermine and redefine them. Frisch and Innocenti's version of *Little Red Riding Hood* shows that they choose an urban setting instead of the traditional forest; they also initially retain the ambiguity of the wolf, but then opt for a "consistent exaggeration to transform the evil into the tragic and celebrate the harmony of the happy ending in a very different way" (42).

While time is a major factor in the metamorphosis of classics illustration, a contribution such as Svenja Blume's "Wo steht die Villa Kunterbunt? Pippi Langstrumpfs Bildwelten" ("Where Is the Villa Villekulla? Pippi Longstocking's Pictorial Worlds") also addresses the entanglement of temporal and geographical parameters that come into play when classics are translated. Here, in addition to changing conceptions of childhood, images of the self and of others also play a role—something that becomes apparent when Katrin Engelking stages a Swedish "Bullerbü idyll' in her recent Pippi illustrations from 2007 (234f.). There is no doubt that national and sometimes also nostalgically motivated pictorial traditions play just as much a role as more general mental and sociocultural patterns and concepts.

The individual contributions all show that it is precisely the interplay of text and image that "etches itself into memory" and is able to fascinate and inspire generations—even if quite a few older illustrations do not always or no longer correspond to the current common sense. Nevertheless, the fifteen image- and text-based analyses of this edited volume clearly demonstrate that the power of classics lies not least in the fact that they are repeatedly reinterpreted

and adapted and thus brought "into the present."

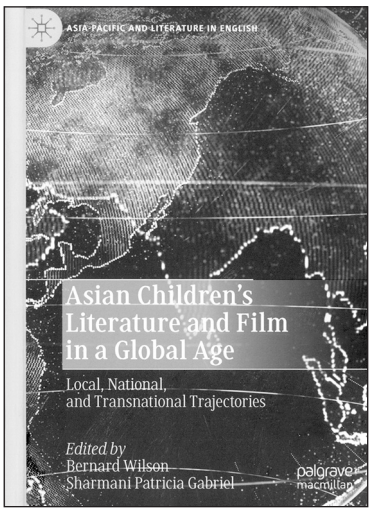
Ines Galling
International Youth Library
Translated by Nikola von Merveldt

ASIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND FILM IN A GLOBAL AGE.

Local, National, and Transnational Trajectories.

Edited by Bernard Wilson and Sharmani Patricia Gabriel.
Series: Asia-Pacific and Literature in English.
Palgrave Macmillan / Springer Nature Singapore, 2020, 398 pages.
ISBN: 978-981-15-2630-5

While postcolonial studies have long addressed the marginalization of non-Western literatures, the book market, which obeys the rules of global capitalism, still causes unequal circulation of children's literatures. There are more children's books on the Western market about Asia that perpetuate notions of "backwardness" and "exoticism" than there are books from Asia itself that reflect the reality of contemporary Asian societies. Conversely, neocolonial practices, such as cultural appropriation and reinterpretation of "culturally authentic" non-Western sources, determine the flow of the commodity of "children's literature" from Asia. Research on Asian children's literature is also dominated by Western discourses and aesthetic concepts.



It was high time for this book, whose authors present Asian children's literature and films as expressions of their specific cultures of origin, but also within the complex symbiosis of their local, national, transnational, global, and glocalized networks.

The methodologically varied contributions cover diverse children's media from the Asian American diaspora, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, and Taiwan.

The concept of "children's literature" rooted in national contexts and transporting collective ideological interests can certainly be observed in Asia. Even though "Asia" is not conceived here as a static, homogeneous entity, but rather as a heterogeneous space with many centers and peripheries, complex local cultures, and constant historical change in the wake of globalization, regional thematic emphases can be identified in the discussion of children's literatures. The book is organized to reflect this.

The first chapter deals with East Asian literature from Taiwan, China, South Korea, and Japan, which focuses on changes in family structures and a redefinition of gender roles. Andrea Mei-Ying Wu looks at transnational cultural dynamics and the local appropriation of the term "child heart" (tongxin), which was adapted from romantic Western notions of childhood into Chinese literary theory and was influential in the development of Taiwanese children's literature in the postwar period. Xiangshu Fang and Lijun Bi reflect on the redefinition of the family shaped by Confucianism or nationalist political movements evident in Chinese children's books from 1978 to 2014. Three South Korean films presented by Sung-Ae Lee manifest similar social pressures through family structures. They are considered a metaphor for society as a whole, showing the negative consequences of nonconformity, but also the possibilities for change it can bring. A social transformation—a redefinition of family, away from heteronormative, monocultural, and patriarchal structures and binary gender roles—becomes more evident in contemporary Japanese children's literature presented by Yasuko Doi. Bernard Wilson sees in the Japanese anime version of Andersen's "Mermaid" a challenge to social norms with their social construction of gender.

The literature selections from South and West Asia, India, Sri Lanka, and Iran grouped together in the second chapter are presented by region, yet they focus on the globally significant children's literature theme of inequality and marginalization of young people due to their age, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Sonia Ghalian traces concepts of childhood in Hindi films since the 1950s that reveal fundamental changes in Indian society. Suchismita Banerjee explores the question of representation of queer lifestyles in Indian heteronormative society through the new phenomenon of LGBTQIA+ literature for children and young adults. Neluka Silva addresses the demonization of alterity along ethnic and ideological lines in Sri Lankan society through two popular children's novels by author Prashani Rambukwella. Amir Ali Nojoumian and Amir Hadi Nojoumian analyze the aesthetic approach to the representation of childhood and child protagonists in films by Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami.

The third section of the book, with contributions on Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, focuses on apparently completely different Southeast Asian literatures that draw on local oral traditions or conventional genres, but are reinvented in their respective local and historical contexts to remain relevant. For example, Sharifah Aishah Osman uses the reinterpretations of the Mahsuri legend in three contemporary Malaysian young adult novels to demonstrate not only the oppression of women but also forms of female agency in a patriarchal world. Herdiana Hakim presents diverse children's books for marginalized ethnic groups that contrast with the dominant number of works for the Muslim majority in Indonesia. Lalaine F. Yanilla Aquino analyzes the language of realistic narratives for children from the Philippines as an indicator of their social inequality within the family and society. Using two examples of contemporary Filipino "speculative fiction," Gabriela Lee analyzes how traditional literary genres are translated into new digital forms of storytelling and how experiences in digital liminal spaces help young people grapple with imposed identities.

The final chapter of the book is devoted to transnational Asian children's literature in the U.S. diaspora. Fengxia Tan uses Chinese American author Ed Young's picturebooks and his rewriting of Chinese folktales to show how cultural memory works across ethnic and national boundaries and how it becomes possible to situate literature in multilingual and multicultural contexts. Drawing on Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory and using the example of Chinese American author Laurence Yep, Susan Ang discusses transnational children's literature as a true "third space," a site for negotiating Asian American hybridization, a dialogue between cultures.

The volume's diverse contributions show that all of these different forms of contemporary "Asian" children's literature share one key feature: the blending of genres, media, and techniques of storytelling—from written and graphic texts, film, animation, role-playing, and gaming—as can also be observed globally. Just as the mechanisms of global children's literature production would benefit from more attention, so would the resulting literary products, as well as children's literature research from the region. This volume has marked a beginning in challenging asymmetry in the field of literary criticism, shifting research to cultures of origin, dismantling Western Orientalist perspectives, and giving Asian children's literature research the place on the global stage it deserves.

Lucia Obi
International Youth Library
Translated by Nikola von Merveldt

EL OBJETO LIBRO EN EL UNIVERSO INFANTIL. La materialidad en la construcción del discurso.

[THE BOOK OBJECT IN THE CHILDREN'S UNIVERSE. Materiality in the Construction of the Discourse.]

Edited by Rosa Tabernero Sala.
Series: [Re]pensar la educación; 10.
Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 2019, 202 pages.
ISBN: 978-84-17633-73-8

In the digital era, when analog modes of

reading are giving way to digital ones and have an impact on children's literature, the authors of this volume draw attention to the material aspect of the book, focus on the importance of physical interaction between the book and the reader, and defend physical aspects of reading.

The study is part of the project "Os livros-objecto: ler sin saber ler" ("The Books-Object: Reading without Knowing How to Read") conducted in the Child Studies Centre (CIEC) based in the University of Minho, Portugal. The project follows the research published in 2017 in *Aproximações ao livro-objeto: das potencialidades criativas às propostas de leitura* (*Approaches to the Object-Book: From Creative Potential to Reading Proposals*), edited by Ana Margarida Ramos (University of Aveiro, Portugal).

This present volume is a collective work of researchers from Spanish and Portuguese universities who study and analyze different aspects of the children's book as an object: from the perspective of form and content, as well as its specific usage for educational purposes. Using the examples of the books published worldwide, with a special focus on the books edited in Spain and Portugal, from the twentieth century to recently published titles, the authors contribute to the research of the materiality of the book that is of current interest in the field of children's book studies.

Following a brief overall presentation to the volume by the editor, there are one introductory and three main sections, as well as an essay following the main sections. The first introductory essay, by José Luis Jiménez, analyzes the work of Bruno Munari (1907-1998), who was one of the first illustrators to play and experiment with the material aspect of the book. The second essay, at the end of the volume, is written by Ariana Squilloni, the editor of A Buen Paso publishing house (Spain) and gives insight into the making of the picturebook *Un jardín* (*A Garden*) by Isidro Ferrer and María José Ferrada.

The first main section of the volume, "The Poetics of the Book Object," consists of four different studies. One explores unusual forms of books, such as accordion books, mask books (Portuguese market), and flap books (international books). Another analyzes the role of paratextual elements in *Geronimo Stilton*, an Italian children's book series, and another studies the role of materiality in the construction of literary discourse.

The second main section, "The Book Object and Genres," explores genres—poetry and ABC books in particular—using the examples of Galician and Spanish books. It analyzes how the physical form of the book is interconnected with the content of different literary genres.

Finally, the third main section, "The Book Object and the Reader," focuses on the reader and reader-book relation, offering examples of how physical picturebooks can be used for educational purposes. One study explores, for example, how a book as an artistic artifact, due to its ludic and interactive particularities, can help in the process of social inclusion of immigrants.

Overall, this collective work attempts to unite separate studies of the book-object as the central topic in one title, offering a classification and analysis of literature of the Spanish and Portuguese market not so well represented in the secondary literature on children's books. The detailed analyses of the wide range of books presented in the numerous articles of the volume are complemented by an exhaustive bibliography of primary and secondary sources that can be used for further research in the related fields of studies.

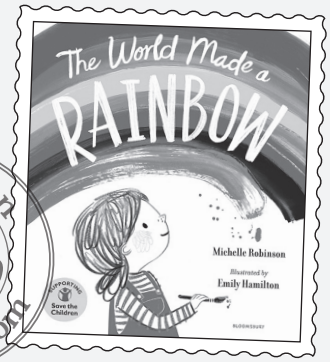
Sofia Venzel
PhD candidate, University of Vigo, Spain

This delightful little book was written during the first United Kingdom COVID lockdown to help children understand more about the implications of the pandemic. Rather than being a depressing story concerning a virus, it focuses on friendship, happiness, and hope for the future. Loving family support is evident in both picture and text, showing that sad times won't last forever. Robinson's rhyming prose, which is easily read aloud, begins:

Let's paint a big rainbow to put on display.
When people pass by it and see it, they'll say...

It then follows a little girl who is missing her friends and visually shows how she manages to communicate with other children who are also feeling lonely. The text is enhanced by Harrison's colorful illustrations and guides readers through interaction with several multiethnic and disabled characters as they each create a rainbow for the world to see.

Penni Cotton



The World Made a Rainbow
Michelle Robinson
Illustrated by Emily Hamilton
London, UK: Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2020. 32 pp.
ISBN: 9781526629807
(Picturebook; ages 3+)

This picturebook depicts a child's adventure to imagine the world behind a wall. The story starts when a child, playing in the garden, realizes that ants are climbing behind the wall. The child's curiosity about what is behind the wall increases, but whatever the child does, the wall is too high for the child to pass over it. Finally successful, the child follows the trails and paints them on the wall.

The story conveys possibilities of the imagination with a magical narrative. The story's accompanying song ensures that it lingers in one's mind, with illustrations that complement the story well. Finally, the story was written especially for children who stayed at home in the COVID pandemic period, have spent time in the hospital for health problems, or grew up behind prison walls, which makes this picturebook even more meaningful.

Sura Ertaş

Duvarın Arkasında Ne Var? (What Is Behind the Wall?)
Ayşegül Dede
Illustrated by Öykü Akarca
İstanbul, Turkey: Timaş Çocuk Publication, 2020. 36 pp.
ISBN: 978-605-08-3470-3
(Picturebook; ages 3-6

"It's like dreaming, only bigger," replies the mother, when her young son asks what death is like. His big sister died before he was born, and he asks because he sees her graying photo on the wall, realizes that she has the power to make people sad, and wants to know her. In wonderful dreamlike storytelling, she visits him at night, and they eat marzipan, visit the hospital and cemetery, and ride bikes together, in the fields and in the clouds. She is fearless and fun and treats him just like a big sister should.

The book is perfectly illustrated in Törnqvist's distinctive style, with vivid greens and blues, and with "nothing digital, all brushes and dirty hands." For Törnqvist, what might be dark subject matter—although Aerts's writing is gentle and poignant—becomes lovely streaky skies, endearing children, and enormous moons. This title won the Flemish and Dutch Book Lion Prize.

Patricia Bloem

Bigger Than a Dream

Jef Aerts
Illustrated by Marit Törnqvist
Translated by David Colmer
Amsterdam, Netherlands: Levine Querido, 2020. 48 pp.
ISBN: 978-1-64614-020-6
(Picturebook; ages 4-8)

This picturebook tells a story about a boy who explains what his father does to build things, how he admires and is proud of him, and that he wants to be like his dad when he grows up. This book is unique because not only is it written in the Javanese language (one of about five hundred local languages in Indonesia), but it is written using two different alphabets; the main text is written using the Javanese alphabet (called Hanacaraka), followed by its translation in the regular, or Latin, alphabet. While the story and illustration are interesting for children, this book also invites readers to learn more about the Javanese language and culture so that the language does not disappear like many other local languages of Indonesia.

enny anggraini

Pengin Kaya Bapak (Wants to Be Dead)

Paksi Raras Alit
Illustrated by Haryo Pangestu
Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Jawacana, 2021. 22 pp.
ISBN: 978-602-74821-7-3
(Picturebook; ages 6-10)

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Mingzhou Zhang
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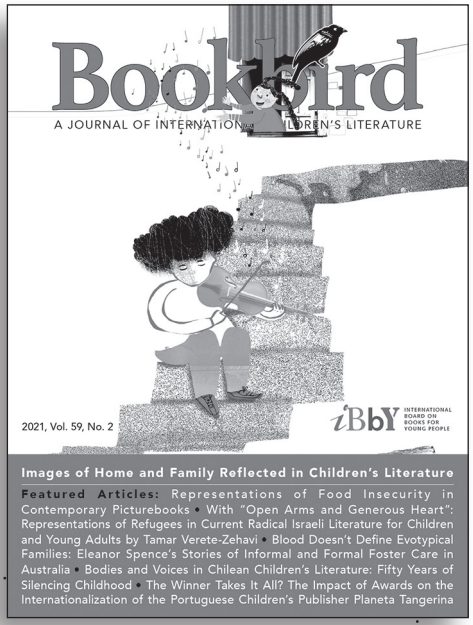

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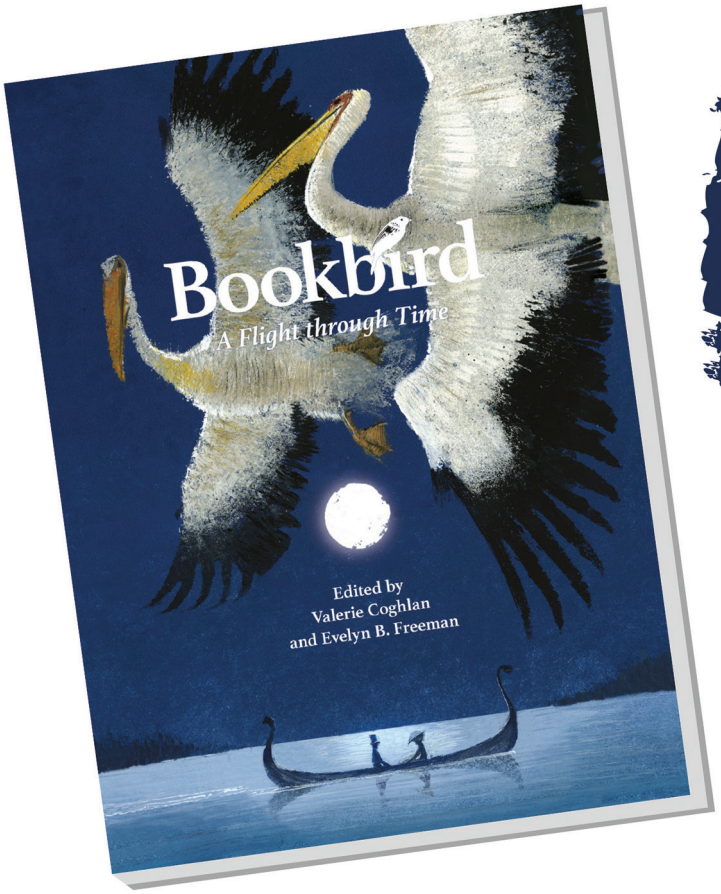


Bookbird: A Flight through Time captures in words and images the story of ***Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature,*** the official publication of the International Board on Books for Young People, from its beginning as a modest bulletin to an internationally acclaimed quarterly publication. Through the voices of many involved with ***Bookbird,*** this book tells the story of an important part of children's literature in an international context over more than sixty years.

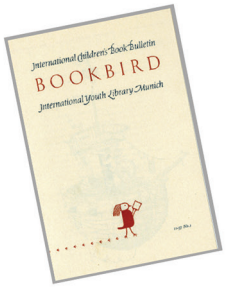
"I highly recommend Bookbird: A Flight through Time. Bookbird is not only an advocate for innovation—it serves as IBBY's memory and is the guardian of Jella Lepman's legacy. Anyone dealing with children's literature should read this book."

Wally De Doncker, *Belgium, author and past President of IBBY*

Bookbird: A Flight through Time is essential reading for teachers and students at all levels—librarians, authors, illustrators, publishers, historians of children's books and childhood, and anyone interested in the development of children's literature in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It is an authoritative, accessible, and informative history of children's literature internationally.

Some key features of the book include:

- Foreword by Hans Christian Andersen Award recipient Katherine Paterson.
- Five chronological sections: "The Early Years," "The Story Continues," "New Beginnings," "Into the Twenty-First Century," and "Still Flying High."
- Twenty-two articles by contributors from seven countries.
- An Overview and photo montage for each section.
- A poem by a Hans Christian Andersen recipient in English and the poem's original language in each section.
- Archival photos of IBBY, *Bookbird*, and the International Youth Library throughout.



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Roger Mello, *Brazilian author/illustrator and recipient of the 2014 Hans Christian Andersen Award for Illustration, praised the book:*
"A fabulous book, fundamental, indispensable! A gift and a right for those who understand that characters and books through time are the possibility of creating a new future."