

Fairy Tales: The Imaginative World of 'Once upon a Time'

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'His face was wistful', p.7 in the nursery rhyme 'The Little Donkey'. From *My Village: Rhymes from Around the World* collected by Danielle Wright, illustrated by Mique Moriuchi with an introduction by Michael Rosen and published by Frances Lincoln Ltd © 2015. Reproduced by permission of Frances Lincoln Ltd. Courtesy Frances Lincoln Ltd.

EDITORIAL

Once upon a time; the imaginative world of the fairy tale.

‘Once upon a time ...’, words that bring a hush to an audience, create a shiver of anticipation, and take the listener into a world where a giant might steal you away, a wolf eat your granny or a witch lay a curse upon you. Of course, if you are good and/or clever, there is a ‘happy ever after’, but for the wicked there are red hot coals and iron shoes. Much is made of the dangerous nature of fairy tales; the potential for nightmares, the horrid punishments – and their fantastic scenarios peopled by beings that have no place in the real world. These are the characteristics of the fairy tale that have been exploited by writers such as Angela Carter. However, what is not always emphasised is the imaginative content of the fairy tale – the powerful trigger to inspire and stimulate the imagination, to be a place to find a self.

It is this element that the contributors to this our latest issue of *IBBYLink* have brought to the fore. Whether it is Philip Pullman putting forward the reason why fairy tales have a real importance in a world obsessed by the measurement of learning, or Jack Zipes drawing attention to the danger of removing the uncomfortable elements from these stories to create something with a bland generic appeal. For fairy tales in their truest forms are subversive. They are ‘universal’ – the same ‘story’ will appear in different cultures around the world. They are also templates – they allow the audience to insert themselves into the action. It is this characteristic that attracts authors to take the fairy tale and use it to create something more personal, as Malinda Lo, the subject of Erica Gillingham’s article, does. And it is not just today that sees the fairy tale providing inspiration. From the moment published collections appeared, authors stepped in, and Hans Christian Andersen is perhaps the one the world knows best. He was equally famous in his lifetime and his stories influenced other writers, both novelists and others who also chose to write fairy tales.

Traditionally, fairy tales are told by a storyteller. But like the best material that can be fashioned into many different garments, so the fairy tale can be told in a variety of ways, either as the fairy tale or as an imaginative recreation. And such reimagining can appear in a variety of guises. The graphic novel is one such, as Jonas Herriot describes. Here it is not words alone that tell the story, but pictures as well. It seems such a modern format, but, as Herriot reveals, the fairy tale is very comfortable in this medium. The visual appeal of the fairy tale is emphasised by Jane Ray, who is well known for her illustrations for this world of fantasy and the fantastic. Hers is a very personal response, but it is one that has created images that have become the fairy tale ideal for many young readers.

There was a time when the fairy-tale section in the library boasted a range of collections as well as individual stories. It was a focus for young readers from the age of eight. Sadly that has changed. The selections by the likes of Lang and Ruth Manning Sanders have all but disappeared; the illustrated editions are in the picture-book boxes. The collections that do appear are almost all Andersen with a mix of Grimm and Perrault. Where then can a real range be found? Ann Lazim points us to the excellent collection at the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) – a treasure trove for any teacher.

Fairy tales are part of our world. Even the language of fairy tales can be appropriated by science to enhance a sense of wonder, of magic – even if no ‘magic’ may be involved. Without them our imaginative world would be a very monochrome space. Let’s open the door to ‘Once upon a time ...’ and step into a world full of wonders, dangers, extraordinary feats and everyday humour – a world that strangely allows us to make sense of our own everyday life.

Ferelith Hordon

Fairy Tales

FAIRY TALES

Philip Pullman

A story about fairies or other supernatural beings: a folk-tale: a romantic tale: an incredible tale: euphemistically, a lie; a marvel.

So says Chambers' *Twentieth Century Dictionary*. That definition covers a wide ground, which seems to imply that we haven't got enough words in English for each of the different kinds of story that the term *fairy tale* is used to name.

But most of us know one when we see one because there are certain characteristics that such tales have in common – though, of course, there are exceptions to every statement we can make. On the whole, then, fairy tales are short: not novel sized, not even short-story sized. They often include elements of the marvellous, the uncanny, the supernatural: they're tales of wonder. Very often they come from the oral tradition, as genuine folktales, such as those in the most celebrated collection of all, that of the Brothers Grimm. They have a cast of characters who seem to migrate from tale to tale without losing or gaining a single element in their nature: a princess, a witch, a tailor, a soldier, a king and a queen, a youngest brother, a farmer, a miller – and so on. These characters are flat; they are not depicted in any psychological depth. They seldom have names apart from the most common: Jack or Hans. As for magic, for spells and curses, they're accepted as a natural and entirely unsurprising phenomenon. Prohibitions of an absolute and arbitrary nature abound: Don't go into that room! Don't eat lettuce! Don't speak for seven years!

In the sort of fairy tale that most children in Europe and the USA used to know, the sort they had heard so young that they couldn't remember a time when they didn't know them, the moral principle that rules is that of justice. Cruelty and wickedness and deceit are punished: goodness and kindness and honesty are rewarded. Some stories pay perfunctory attention to a sort of Christianity, but it's a primitive, comic and fable-like kind: the Lord and St Peter have great trouble, for example, dealing with the wickedness of Hans the Gambler in one of the Grimms' tales.

There's a big difference, as far as this reader is concerned, between fairy tales from the oral tradition and those composed in a literary way by such writers as Hans Christian Andersen, Oscar Wilde and George MacDonald, or contemporary authors such as Angela Carter. A literary fairy tale is often the expression of a particular personality: the neurotic anxieties of Andersen and the political energy of Carter are clearly visible in their tales, which may have all the props of tradition but which are motivated by something more than the urge to narrate fantastic events. There's nothing wrong with the literary fairy tale, but they are a different thing from the folktale, and that's worth remembering.

There's one other quality that stands out for me in the fairy tale, and that's the clarity with which it shows us that events are more important than description. There is not a single word wasted on lavish description: there's hardly any description at all beyond the most perfunctory. To experience a fairy tale either as narrator or audience is to be reminded that stories are not made of description, they're made of events. Stop to indulge in a sentence or two about the forest, which is always deep; or the palace, in which everything is always made of gold; or the princess, who is always beautiful – and the unseen editor growls 'Get on with it!' The important thing is the speed with which events unfold.

That in turn means a certain distance between the narrator and the events. Characters are never seen in close-up, but always in full figure, as if some distance away on a stage. A fairy tale in the first person is almost inconceivable; it would be like being inside someone who has no interior; it would be disturbing and strange. What interests

the narrator is not what this person is like, how they're different from someone else in a similar position, but what happens when they do this or that. It's not the character but the situations that matter, which is why 'Cinderella' the tale is so popular: each one of us has felt at some point that our family doesn't treat us with the respect and adoration we plainly merit. We don't belong in this setting, we feel: we deserve to be understood and cherished for our extraordinary beauties of body and soul, which are invisible to these clods we have to live among. Readers, whether boys or girls (or grown-ups for that matter), can map themselves and their own families on to Cinderella and hers, and in some part of their psyche relish the story's emotional unfolding again and again.

Fairy tales are full of such archetypal family situations, and one influential way of interpreting them takes this as its starting point. Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976) views fairy tales through a Freudian lens, seeing them as arising in the unconscious and expressing fundamental human experiences, very much including sexual ones. In this interpretation, a story like 'Briar Rose' (sometimes known as 'Sleeping Beauty') is 'really' about the inevitability of sexual development: nothing the king does can prevent the daughter's loss of blood when the time comes, and the hundred years' sleep that follows is 'a time of quiet growth and preparation, from which the person will awake mature, ready for sexual union': when the prince kisses her, she will awake (p.232).

Another psychological approach is the Jungian one, which looks for universal psychic structures in order to interpret a fairy tale as an account of the process of individuation or personal growth. The interest here seems to be not so much in what the characters do as in what the story as a whole suggests or symbolises and in the part played in the unfolding narrative by archetypal figures such as the wise old woman, or the king, or the youngest son.

But of course there are many other ways of reading stories so plain in one way and so rich in another. Jack Zipes is one scholar whose interest has always been in the real social and historical background from which the stories emerge, and he's pointed out, for example, how stories such as 'Hansel and Gretel' have a foundation in the appalling conditions of rural poverty and famine in German-speaking countries in the years after the Thirty Years War. Feminist critics, in turn, can reveal a treasury of fascinating examples of the politics of gender. Theories work like photographic filters in that they make certain things clear by blocking out others; but the things they point out and comment on *are really there* in the text. Feminist, Marxist, Freudian, post-structuralist, green or eco-critical filters are all valuable and interesting, and so are many others not yet discovered.

I referred earlier to 'the sort of fairy tale that most children in Europe and the USA used to know'. Certainly, 60 years ago when I was at primary school, every child in the class could have given an account of 'Little Red Riding Hood', or 'Cinderella', or 'Hansel and Gretel'. Is that still the case? I'm not sure we could still be so certain. I think children today might have experienced stories from a wider repertoire, such as tales about Anansi or Hanuman, and that's an unequivocal good. But if my irregular observation is anything to go by, they are less likely to know an uninflected (so to speak) 'Little Red Riding Hood' than Roald Dahl's jokey parody of it, which is itself a variation on James Thurber's. I'm not sure how much that matters, but if I were in charge of educational policy, I'd make sure that teachers of young children would know, and be able to tell from memory, 40 stories (roughly one for each week in the school year, with one extra). It's not hard to do, and I guarantee that their pupils would remember those stories for far longer than lists of kings and queens or times tables, to name just two things our current rulers would like to make compulsory. I think the stories would do them more good, too.

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Warping ‘The Sorcerer’s Apprentice’: or How Little People Are Belittled in Fairy Tales Twisted against Them

Jack Zipes

Anyone who knows anything about the evolution of fairy tales knows that there is no such thing as an original, authentic tale that spawns thousands of similar tales. In other words, there is no such thing as an *Ur-Märchen* or primeval tale that generates replicas. For example, it is next to impossible to trace a particular tale such as ‘Cinderella’ to one storyteller, society or country at a particular time in history that gave rise to thousands of ‘Cinderellas’. This is because most families, tribes and societies in the world could not keep records before the invention of literacy – languages, reading and writing – and because tales were orally disseminated and appear to have arisen independently under similar circumstances. They often evaporated or were forgotten, but sometimes left artefacts behind if they were significant. Consequently, anthropologists and folklorists have been able to gather ancient traces and variants of different tale types so that we can determine important and recognisable factors that led to the development and formation of basic tale types. By the early twentieth century the renowned Finnish folklorist Antti Aarne published his *Index of Types of Folktales* in 1910, followed by Stith Thompson’s expanded revision in 1929 that was revised once again as *The Types of International Folktales* by Hans-Jörg Uther in 2004. These catalogues have been and are extremely useful because they enable scholars to reconstruct the history of a given tale by tracing the different versions of a tale type over space and time.¹ But like most descriptive reference books, they do not provide substantial socio-historical materials and contexts so that we can understand how and why a particular tale type originated, and the consequences of the transformations it has undergone. Critical inquiry is necessary if we are to grasp why a particular fairy tale becomes popular, relevant and memetic, especially if we want to understand how folktales and fairy tales are crucially involved in the acculturation and socialisation of children throughout the world. For example, ‘The Sorcerer’s Apprentice’ is a fascinating example of how a particular tale type has been changed over time and warped by filmmakers, publishers and writers to humiliate children instead of encouraging them to be curious, and develop their imagination and critical thinking.

‘The Sorcerer’s Apprentice’ has generally been associated with the title ‘The Magician and his Pupil’, ATU 325, in Uther’s *The Types of International Folktales*. The focus in most of the variants of this tale type is on the competition between an apprentice and his master. The type is somewhat related to other tales about shape shifters, except

here the master–apprentice conflict is the determining factor in the plot. Generally speaking there are three phases to the plot. A poor family seeks to apprentice their son to a magician/ogre/devil so that he can successfully learn an ‘art’, which will enable him to earn a living; once the apprenticeship is concluded in the sorcerer’s house, the father must be able to recognise his son from other apprentices, often transformed into animals or birds, if the powerful sorcerer will allow the young man to return to the family. Thanks to the advice or help of a mysterious stranger or the son himself, the father is successful, and upon the boy’s return to the family, he makes money by using his art of transformation, but out of jealousy and revenge, the magician captures him and seeks to kill him. However, the apprentice escapes and triumphs in a battle to death with the magician. The apprentice, transformed as a fox/cat/tiger, bites off the head of the sorcerer transformed as a rooster/chicken.

Folklorists have traced the origins of the tale type to similar motifs in stories from the ancient Mongolian *Siddhi Kür*, the Turkish *History of the Forty Vezirs*, Hesiod’s *Catalogues of Women’s Fragments*, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and ‘The Second Kalendar’s Story’ in *The Arabian Nights*. For the most part, the European oral and literary tales depict a young man who seeks to liberate himself from an older man who has taught him the art of transformation and stealing. The apprentice often receives some help from the magician’s daughter or a princess. The oral and literary dissemination of the tale type throughout Europe, the Middle East and Asia was great and included a well-known Grimms’ tale, ‘The Nimble Thief and his Master’. The other variants that circulated in practically all European countries share many similar features that reflect not only a generational struggle, but also a conflict that countless young people experienced either as apprentices or journeymen. The conditions throughout Europe under which young boys worked in the nineteenth century were difficult and exploitative, and these tales indicate that learning a trade also meant learning how to survive and assume an identity by obtaining knowledge (magic) that would surpass that of the master.

However, survival also meant in other versions learning how to submit to the magic power of tyrants and other authorities as can be seen in a minor variant of tale type ATU 325. In two excellent studies, Graham Anderson’s *Fairy tale in the Ancient World* (2000) and William Hansen’s *Ariadne’s Thread* (2002), the authors both cite Lucian’s comic *Philopseudes* (*The Lover of Lies*, circa CE 150) as one of the main sources of the offshoot of ‘The Sorcerer’s Apprentice’, which I call ‘The Humiliated Apprentice’; Anderson summarises the tale type as follows:

A young Greek called Eucrates is touring Egypt and in the course of a trip on the Nile encounters Pancrates, an amazing magician, to whom he is apprenticed; the latter does not require any domestic servant, but instead enchants household objects, a broom and a pestle, to undertake domestic tasks on their own. Eucrates overhears the spell and in the sorcerer’s absence is able to activate the magical servant. Unfortunately he is also unable to stop its activities once started, having only overheard the first half of the spell; splitting the animated pestle with an axe only divides it into two servants instead of one. Only the returned sorcerer can put a stop to the now three magical servants, and having done so he disappears. Eucrates still knows his half of the spell, but dare not use it for fear of the consequences. Thereafter, he travels on to Memphis, and the great stone colossi of Memnon delivers him an oracle. (2000: 104)

It is impossible to determine how this short satirical tale, which is not as popular as ‘The Sorcerer’s Apprentice’, spread over the next several centuries either through oral tradition or print. By the time some version had reached the great German writer Johann von Goethe, he published a brief poem called ‘Der Zauberlehrling’ (‘The Sorcerer’s Apprentice’, 1797), which is a simplistic imitation of Lucian’s more comical story. Here the apprentice is the speaker of the poem, which deals with his desperation

and frustration when he calls forth ghosts who flood the absent sorcerer's house. When the sorcerer returns, he calmly banishes the ghosts. This poem, which is not particularly interesting, was translated into English a few times in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and was somewhat popular in Germany and the rest of Europe, where other similar prose versions were disseminated.

In 1896–1897, Goethe's poem was transformed into a symphonic poem by the French composer Paul Dukas with the title *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and with the subtitle 'Scherzo based on a ballad by Goethe'. This adaptation was highly significant because Walt Disney used Dukas's music in his animated version of 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' in 1940. (Incidentally, Disney plagiarised a 1930 film produced by William Carmen Menzies, who first used Dukas's music to accompany his narrative).² It was a key part of the film *Fantasia* and part of Disney's effort to resurrect the popularity of the scrawny Mickey Mouse that had declined during the 1930s. In this film, which soon became a popular picture book in the 1940s, Mickey is portrayed as a powerful wizard's servant, sweet, cuddly and silly, who must do menial tasks like sweeping floors, chopping wood and carrying water from the well to scrub the floors. When the sorcerer has to leave the house, Mickey takes his hat and puts it on his head. He soon begins to command the broom to do all his chores, and at one point he rests, falls asleep, and dreams that he is the greatest sorcerer in the world while the broom keeps carrying water from the well and floods the house. Desperately Mickey tries to stop the broom by chopping it with an axe. However, he only creates more brooms and a huge flood. When the sorcerer returns, he immediately restores everything with one command. Angrily he swats Mickey with the broom and sends him off to work. In the Disney picture book, the ending is slightly different; he frowns and says, 'Don't start what you can't finish'. Then Mickey trudges off to work like a slave.

The Disney film and book are significant in the oral and written tradition of 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' because this variant warps and infantilises the tale type. By this I mean the major current of storytelling that depicted a smart apprentice triumphing over an evil despot and that had been primarily intended for adults, including Goethe's poem, was transformed into a children's warning story about a young apprentice's submission to a wizard who keeps the secrets of knowledge and power to himself. The ideological message, already apparent in Lucian's story, is reinforced by Disney's version: young people are to obey omnipotent people, and if they try to use the knowledge and power of their mentors before they have been fully formed by these magicians, they will bring demons into the world and create chaos.

Following the release of Disney's *Fantasia* in 1940 and the thousands of picture books that singled out 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' over the years as a charming story for children, there was some controversy at first. For instance, upon leaving the theatre after watching *Fantasia* in 1940, the well-known journalist Dorothy Thompson felt that she had been brutalised by the film and drew a comparison with the Nazi terror in Europe. Neal Gabler writes:

Thompson's complaint was that Disney and Stokowski seemed to extol the savagery of nature at the expense of man. (What Thompson missed was that Walt was extolling not so much nature as his own power to re-create the savagery on screen). In Thompson's eyes, Disney's nature was so overwhelming that man had no choice but to succumb. (Gabler, 2006: 343)

From another more contemporary perspective, Nicholas Sammond points out that the sorcerer's name in the film is announced as Yen Sid, which is Disney spelled backward, and he argues that Disney projects himself as the manager of miracles and the socialisation of children throughout 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice':

Applied to Mickey, this magic of management, and the sorcerer's private amusement at the mouse's attempt at mastery, suggested the humanization of

developmental regimes. Likewise, the seeming horror of the child's failure at mastery was ultimately resolved through the timely intervention of the parental figure. Where the movie-going parent might feel anxiety at the social weight placed on the act of child-rearing, Disney offered up the figure of Walt and the 'Disney magic' as a resource in the process. (2005: 177–78)

Given the time period in which the 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' was produced as the key segment of *Fantasia*, there are ample parallels that one could draw to demonstrate that this little film that became a picture book, celebrated the authoritarianism of political dictators like Hitler; the popular need for strong political leaders like Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin; the narcissism of powerful filmmakers like Disney; the use and control of miraculous technology by arrogant technocrats; and so on. However, what has been neglected in the studies of 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' is Disney's warping of a tradition of storytelling that celebrated the contention and rebellion of young people faced with tyrannical holders of power/magic and their murderous ways. Moreover, it has rarely been noticed that Disney's film and children's picture book influenced publishers and writers to continue to foster authoritarianism and child abuse consciously and unconsciously, as can be seen in such books as Richard Rostron's *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (1941), illustrated by Frank Lieberman, Marianna Mayer's *The Sorcerer's Apprentice: A Greek Fable* (1989), illustrated by David Wiesner, and Nancy Willard's *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (1993), illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon, and in numerous other books. All of them carry the same demeaning message to belittle children who seek knowledge of magic, and want to experiment with it. What is disturbing and questionable is the portrayal of the sorcerer as godlike and the possessor of absolute knowledge. From an ideological perspective most of the tales depict wizards, who 'own' total knowledge of magic, and are male benefactors whose power is unquestionable. They are to be obeyed without question, while the apprentices, mainly boys, are humiliated if they try to learn by themselves. The struggle between master and pupil is always won by the master in this tale type. Fortunately, the major tale type of 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' still holds sway in children's and adult literature such as the Harry Potter novels, numerous other stories that deal with wizards and sorcerers, and political protests throughout the world in which young people question and contest the power of absolute dictators. What 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' as a wise and age-old fairy tale wants continually to remind us is that, in the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Hegel's brutal antagonistic dialectic of master–slave, young slaves will persist and use knowledge to create more humane conditions and do away with the cruel power of dictators.

Notes

1. See various versions in D.L. Ashliman's 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice: Folktales of Aarne-Thompson-Uther Type 325* and Migratory Legends of Christiansen Type 3020' on his important website: See also www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0325ast.html. www.pitt.edu/~dash/ashliman.html.
2. See *The Wizard's Apprentice* (1930) USA, black and white, 10 minutes. Director: Sidney Levee. Music: Paul Dukas. Camera: Alfred Schmidt. Producer: William Cameron Menzies. Cast: Herbert Bunston, Fritz Feld and Greta Grandstedt.

Disney and his artistic staff must have been aware of this live-action film, which is never credited by the Disney Studios. It is a brilliant little film in which an apprentice uses magic power to bring the statue of a beautiful young woman alive. As he tries to impress her, he causes the brooms to be split as they carry water and to flood a castle. There is a mix of animation and real-live action, with a wizard who is not as menacing as in the Disney film. Certain sequences in *The Wizard's Apprentice* were copied by Disney as well as the use of Dukas's music.

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[Jack Zipes is Professor Emeritus of German and Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota. In addition to his scholarly work, he is an active storyteller in public schools and has worked with children's theatres in Europe and the United States. Some of his major publications include *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales* (1979), *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (rev. ed. 2006), *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World* (1988), *Hans Christian Andersen: The Misunderstood Storyteller* (2005) and *Why Fairy Tales Stick: The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre* (2006). He has also edited *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* (2000), *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition* (2001) and *The Golden Age of Folk and Fairy Tales: From the Brothers Grimm to Andrew Lang* (2013). Most recently he has published *The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy-Tale Films* (2010), *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre* (2012) and *Grimm Legacies: The Magic Power of the Grimms' Folk and Fairy Tales* (2014).]

Visions of Wonder: Hans Christian Andersen and his Influence

Neil Philip

The history of the modern fairy tale begins in 1835, when Hans Christian Andersen published his first slim volume of four tales, *Eventyr, fortalte for Børn* – Tales, Told for Children. That book contained three stories that were retellings of traditional folktales, such as 'The Tinderbox'. But they already display the distinctive crisp directness of tone and the haunting bittersweet back note that were to be the hallmark of the fairy tales that Andersen was to invent over the next 40 years. Andersen's imagination was so fecund, and so original, that tales seemed to pour from him. King Frederik VII of Denmark asked him, 'How can you think out all these things? How does it all come to you? Have you got it all inside your head?'. Andersen himself said of his fairy tales, 'They lay in my thoughts like a seed-corn, requiring only a flowering stream, a ray of sunshine, a drop of wormwood, for them to spring forth and burst into bloom'.

Of course Hans Christian Andersen was not the first Western author to attempt to write fairy tales. For three-quarters of a century after the success of Charles Perrault's 1697 collection *Histoires et contes du temps passé* (which contains what we now count as the definitive versions of 'Cinderella', 'The Sleeping Beauty' and 'Little Red Riding Hood'), French literary salons were awash with writers of fairy tales, such as the Comtesse d'Aulnoy, Madame Leprince de Beaumont and the Comte de Caylus. These fairy tales were often over-ornamented and moralistic.

In the early nineteenth century, German Romantics such as Adelbert von Chamisso, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Novalis and Musäus all sought refuge in the fairy tale. But whereas the Brothers Grimm, the first serious collectors of traditional fairy tales, stressed the importance of fidelity to the tale as it was told, the Romantics elaborated and complicated their stories in ways that took them far from their traditional models. As Musäus put it, 'I'm gathering the most hackneyed old wives' tales, that I'm inflating and making ten times more magical than they originally were'.

Andersen knew these earlier authors, retelling one of Madame d'Aulnoy's tales in 'The Garden of Eden', and returning to the theme of von Chamisso's 'Peter Schlemihl's Amazing Story' in his own 'The Shadow'. But he had an advantage that none of them had; he actually came from the storytelling classes. In his autobiography he recalls how he heard traditional fairy tales at the annual hop harvest, and in the spinning room of the local pauper asylum-cum-hospital where his grandmother looked after the garden. There, he said, 'a world as rich as that of the Arabian Nights was revealed to me'.

From his direct experience of oral storytelling, Andersen understood instinctively the way such stories unfold, in what the folklorist Joseph Jacobs called 'bright trains of images'. He also understood the prime importance of tone of voice in bringing a story alive. Andersen's speaking voice always shines through from the printed page; his style is informal, colloquial, and full of conversational shortcuts and sloppy grammar, leading his first translator, Mary Howitt, to tell Charles Dickens that not only could Andersen not speak English, he couldn't speak Danish either!

Andersen's lifelong friend Edvard Collin remembered his animation when telling stories to children:

The tale went on all the time, with gestures to match the situation. Even the driest sentence was given life. He didn't say, 'The children got into the carriage, and then drove away'. No, he said, 'They got into the carriage – "good-bye, Dad! good-bye, Mum!" – the whip cracked smack! smack! And away they went, come on! Gee-up!'. (1975: 300)

A vivid sense of this alertness to what one might call the cinematic qualities of story comes across in the opening to Andersen's longest fairy tale, 'The Snow Queen', considered by many to be his masterpiece. 'It came out dancing over the paper', he told a friend. It begins,

Listen! This is the beginning. And when we get to the end we shall know more than we do now.

Once there was a wicked demon – one of the worst: it was the Devil. (Philip, 2004: 93)

Straight away, we are hooked.

There is one very distinctive element in the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen that is purely personal to him, and is quite at odds with the traditional tale. In orally transmitted fairy tales, there is very little sense of individual personality. One might say that the traditional fairy tale is resistant to autobiography. The characters are set and immutable: the king, the queen, the princess, the youngest son, the miller, the witch, and so on. But Andersen's fairy tales consist of almost nothing but autobiography. He himself appears in countless guises: as a duckling, a darning needle, a collar, a mermaid, a snowman, a toad, a shadow. And he transforms the raw experience of his own life into the drama of the fairy tale: telling the story of his alcoholic washerwoman mother in 'She Was No Good'; taking revenge on his prostitute half-sister Karen in 'The Red Shoes'; and expressing a profound sense of bitterness, failure and frustration in one of his finest stories, 'The Shadow'.

Another unusual aspect of Andersen's fairy tales is the number of unhappy endings. Although some, such as 'The Snow Queen', have transcendently happy endings, tale after tale, including the three just mentioned, ends in sadness or disappointment. Elsewhere I have called Andersen 'a poet of human suffering'. For him, a true fairy tale ending is not 'and they married and lived happily ever after'. It might instead be, 'So the porcelain couple stayed together, and loved each other until they broke'. The conclusion of one of his very last tales, 'Auntie Toothache', is terrifyingly bleak: 'Everything ends up in the rubbish'.

All these elements of Andersen's style and worldview were to be hugely influential on other writers. As early as 1856 we find echoes of Andersen in Dickens's *Little Dorrit* (1855–1857), notably in the chapter where Little Dorrit is locked out of the Marshalsea and forced to spend the night in the streets. As she sits, cold and sleepless, 'looking up at the stars, and seeing the clouds pass over them in their wild flight', she imagines herself at a grand party. 'Such a vision of wonder opened out before her, that she sat looking up at the stars, quite lost'. Dickens intends his readers to equate Little Dorrit with Andersen's Little Match Girl, and absorb the sadness of one into the plight of the other.

Dickens and Andersen were, at this time, friends and mutual admirers, though after Andersen overstayed his welcome at Dickens's home in the summer of 1857, Dickens withdrew. Andersen stayed for five weeks, and Dickens's daughter Kate summed up the family's recollections: 'He was a bony bore, and stayed on and on'.

Although Dickens thought that 'it is a matter of grave importance that fairy tales should be respected', his own fairy tale 'The Magic Fishbone' is a light-hearted comic spoof, rather in the manner of Thackeray's *The Rose and the Ring* (1854). It is notable for its deadpan assimilation of the fairy-tale world to the everyday one:

One day the king was going to the office, when he stopped at the fishmonger's to buy a pound and a half of salmon not too near the tail. (1867: 8)

This blend of fairy tale and comedy, established by Dickens, Thackeray and Mark Lemon, was further explored by Andrew Lang in his *Chronicles of Pantouflia* (1832), by A.A. Milne in *Once on a Time* (1917) and James Thurber in *The White Deer* (1945). It reached its apogee in the 1934 volume *The Fairies Return*, in which writers such as Clemence Dane, E.M. Delafield, Eric Linklater and Lord Dunsany use fairy tales as a vehicle for a brittle social satire of 1930s Britain.

Andersen inspired other writers to explore the magical quality of the fairy tale. The first of note was Frances Browne in *Granny's Wonderful Chair* in 1856. Authors such as Jean Ingelow, George MacDonald, Lucy Lane Clifford and Mary De Morgan followed. De Morgan's tales include a particularly interesting reworking of Dicken's *A Christmas Carol* (1843) in fairy-tale form, 'The Story of a Cat', in which a Scrooge-like old man is redeemed by a stray cat:

From that time the old gentleman began to forget about his money, and to care for the people about him, and it was all the doing of the strange cat who had come from no one knew where, and gone away to no one knew where. (1900: 146; Philip, 1996: 134)

Excellent as these authors are, the fairy tale did not find its English-language equivalent of Andersen until 1888, when Oscar Wilde published *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, followed in 1891 by *A House of Pomegranates*. Although he published only nine fairy tales, they are of the finest quality. Beneath the dazzling, rippled surface of these stories is a powerful undertow of sadness, and it is a sadness that derives from his intimate understanding of the art of Hans Christian Andersen.

Wilde wrote:

It may be said that so great an artist as Hans Andersen wrote stories for the purpose of pleasing children. This, however, would be an error. Hans Andersen wrote to please himself, to realize his own sense of beauty, and as he deliberately cultivated that simplicity of style and method which is a result of subtle and self-conscious art, there are many children who take pleasure in his stories; but his true admirers, those who appreciate how great an artist he was, are to be found not in the nursery but on Parnassus. (Philip, 1994: 11)

The influence of Andersen on Wilde is clear. He did not try to hide the debt. When Wilde describes a starving playwright, or a little match girl, or a lovelorn student, we

are expected to think of Andersen. The longest, and to my mind the best, of Wilde's stories, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', reworks and intertwines the themes of two of Andersen's tales, 'The Little Mermaid' and 'The Shadow', as well as anticipating that of his own novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1889).

The strange, anguished beauty of Wilde's fairy tales oddly foreshadows his fall from wealth and fame, which was to come in 1895 when he was arrested, tried and imprisoned for homosexuality. He wrote in his long prison letter, *De Profundis* (1897):

The only people I would care to be with now are artists and people who have suffered: those who know what Beauty is, and those who know what Sorrow is: nobody else interests me. (Holland, 1993: 128)

These are the key words of Wilde's fairy tales, 'beauty' and 'sorrow'. Later in the same work he writes:

There are times when Sorrow seems to me to be the only truth. Other things may be illusions of the eye or the appetite, made to blind the one and cloy the other, but out of Sorrow have the worlds been built, and at the birth of a child or a star there is pain. (Holland, 1993: 131)

A friend who met Oscar in Paris in 1898, in his years of shabby exile and disgrace, reports him peering through the gates of rich houses, saying:

That is what I like, just to stand and peep through the bars. It would be better than being in Paradise to stand like this, catch a glimpse as now, and want to go in. (Philip, 1994: 11)

Here are the Little Match Girl's 'beautiful visions' and Little Dorrit's 'vision of wonder', re-imagined by one of the few ever to rival Hans Christian Andersen's poetic imagination in the field of the fairy tale.

It wasn't just in Britain that authors took Andersen as their model. In the USA, where Andersen was immensely popular, writers such as Frank Stockton, Howard Pyle, Will Bradley, and Andersen's friend and publisher Horace Scudder, took their cue from the Danish writer. But the American fairy tale was to truly come of age in 1901, when L. Frank Baum published his *American Fairy Tales*, a collection of original wonder tales set unashamedly on the streets of Chicago.

In that long-neglected book, and in his more celebrated Oz series, Baum was the first to give uninhibited expression to the optimistic momentum of the American dream. He was to be followed by many others, the most important of whom is the poet Carl Sandburg and his *Rootabaga Stories*, the first volume of which appeared in 1922. Sandburg was dissatisfied with imitations of Andersen, and wanted something 'in the American lingo'. In these stories he moves from phrase to phrase with exuberant muscularity, in a voice as distinctive and compelling as Andersen's own.

Just listen to him go:

When the first boy came to the house of Gimme the Ax, he was named Please Gimme. When the first girl came she was named Ax Me No Questions. And both of the children had the shadows of valleys, by night their eyes, and the lights of early morning, when the sun is coming up, on their forehead. (1922: 3)

A typical *Rootabaga* story is entitled 'The Two Skyscrapers who Decided to Have a Child'. In another story, 'How they Broke away to Go to the Rootabaga Country', Gimme the Ax and his children sell all their belongings for 'spot cash money' and buy railroad tickets 'to go away and never come back'. This is a true fairy-tale choice, but not one found in the European tradition. There, the traveller will eventually return home, like Gerda and Kay at the close of 'The Snow Queen', or like the Steadfast Tin Soldier.

The fairy tale has continued to develop on both sides of the Atlantic, but the direct influence of Hans Christian Andersen is most powerfully felt in the literary fairy tales of the second half of the nineteenth century, when his art set the template for others such as Wilde to follow. Wilde's appreciation of 'how great an artist he was' still stands today. In his diary on Sunday, 18 September 1825, Andersen – still a struggling, overgrown schoolboy at the age of 20 – wrote,

I must carry out my work! I must paint for mankind the vision that stands before my soul in all its vividness and diversity; my soul knows that it can and will do this.
(Conry and Rossel, 1990: 7)

In the fairy tale, he found the form in which he could achieve this dream.

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[Neil Philip is an author, folklorist and poet. His translations of Hans Christian Andersen are collected in *Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Andersen* (2004). His other books include *The Cinderella Story* (1989), *The Penguin Book of English Folktales* (1992), *The New Oxford Book of Children's Verse* (1996), *Mythology* (with Philip Wilkinson, 2007) and *Horse Hooves and Chicken Feet: Mexican Folktales* (2003), which won the 2003 Aesop Award of the American Folklore Society.]

Illustrating Fairy Tales

Jane Ray

When I was asked to write this article, I looked up the definition of a fairy tale as opposed to a folktale. I know they are distinct from each other, that academics have analysed what constitutes what. But in the end, I'm not sure it's very important to me – what interests me are wonderful stories that are kept alive through constant retelling and subtle reshaping for each new audience.

So at the risk of irritating the purists, for the purposes of this article, my meaning of the term 'fairy tale' is a tale that has a familiarity to it, a certain shape, and with archetypal

characters and situations – the wicked witch, the step-mother, the princess, the poor peasant, castles, towers, enchanted animals and forests

I grew up in a home where words, music and pictures were abundant. My father was a musician and my mother was an Early Years teacher. They both knew the value of nursery rhymes, poetry, folktales and fairy tales – our ‘heritage’ if you like – both in the classroom and in their own children’s upbringing. My mother in particular told us all the traditional fairy tales and nursery stories. My two sisters and I dressed up in old net curtains and table cloths, and endlessly acted them out. The idea that ‘once upon a time’ led through a dark wood to ‘they all lived happily ever after’ was completely familiar to me. Those phrases, patterns and ideas are in my blood.

I began to draw fairly obsessively at around five, and traditional fairy tales provided the inspiration for my pictures. I made dozens of little books stapled together, and coloured in enthusiastically with wax crayons. ‘Cinderella’ was my favourite, possibly because, like me, she was one of three sisters. I was enchanted by the idea of the slumbering kingdom in ‘Sleeping Beauty’. ‘Beauty and the Beast’ thrilled me. ‘Hansel and Gretel’ terrified me.

I was lucky enough to grow up with the brilliant picture books of the 60s and 70s – Brian Wildsmith, Jan Pieńkowski, Charles Keeping and John Burningham amongst many others. They were all hugely influential on my development as a young artist. But I think it was the Ladybird books that were the most important. They are the first fairy-tale illustrations I remember clearly. Those illustrations to ‘Cinderella’, ‘Sleeping Beauty’ and ‘Snow-White’ are so deeply engrained in my memory that I can recapture them in astonishing detail, and when I find ‘vintage’ copies in second-hand bookshops I am whisked back to childhood in an instant. My first drawings were hugely influenced by them – satin crinolines and powdered wigs come to mind, and definitely men in tights!

There was Disney too of course, and for my generation the wonder of those films was made doubly exciting because they were seen at the cinema, not as videos or DVDs at home. The thrill of seeing *Cinderella* for the first time included the thrill of an outing, the darkness, the box of Malteasers and the companionship of an audience, which gave even more drama to the experience.

As I grew up, drawing and painting became more and more important. I wasn’t particularly academic, I certainly wasn’t sporty, and art was soon identified as ‘my thing’. I remember a particularly sympathetic teacher at primary school ‘rescuing’ me from a hated physical education lesson and getting me instead to paint scenery for the school production. I can’t remember what the play was, but it involved a life-sized witch that afterwards hung on the back of my bedroom door at home and frightened me witless in the night. There is a certain power to being able to frighten yourself with your own pictures!

As a teenager I discovered the illustrations of Arthur Rackham, Edmund Dulac and Kay Nielsen. These images were extraordinary to me – sophisticated, stylish, exotic and beautiful. The exquisite silhouette fairy-tale illustrations by Jan Pieńkowski obsessed me – they had a special kind of magic, and were the inspirations for A-level projects and art-school application portfolios. I also discovered the comparatively modern fairy tales of Oscar Wilde where the language was so deliciously visual that the pictures almost painted themselves.

I studied ceramics, and 3D design at art school, but by the time I left much of my work was painting and drawing. My pictures were based on dream-like and archetypal imagery – towers and woods, the three sisters, the gingerbread house. I was fascinated by the idea of transformation – the bear who is really a prince, the brothers who are swans and the transformation of the Beast in ‘Beauty and the Beast’.

I discovered for myself the original, truly Grimm stories. I read Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976), the ideas of Jung and Freud, and Marina Warner's *From the Beast to the Blonde* (1994), which illuminated deeper and darker meanings to those stories. I was captivated by Maurice Sendak's *The Juniper Tree* (1974), which included less familiar, gruesome stories from Grimm with brilliantly cross-hatched black and white illustrations. There is a little collection of Grimm tales illustrated with etchings by David Hockney that I also loved (1970). A theatre production of Carol Ann Duffy's *Grimm Tales* (1996) was completely inspiring, with all its deceptively simple theatrical stage effects. All these influences and more, inspired my thinking and my work at this time, and continue to do so.

I found work as an illustrator, and after a few years of rather uninspiring magazine and packaging work began to be commissioned to illustrate children's books – folktales, myths, legends – and fairy tales. The gap between commissioned work and my own, more personal work began to close, until I reached a happy place where they were one and the same thing. The work I am commissioned to do as an illustrator now, is pretty much the work I want to do as an artist, and I don't really distinguish much between the two.

As an author and illustrator I am lucky enough to be invited into primary schools and it is a joy to be able to talk to young children about books and pictures. They are all familiar with 'Cinderella', 'The Little Mermaid' and 'Snow White'. They don't just vaguely know the story – they know the whole 'once upon a time' and 'happy ever after' structure of them. They know the shape and the cadences and the rhythms, and this provides an invaluable pattern for getting children to invent and tell stories themselves.

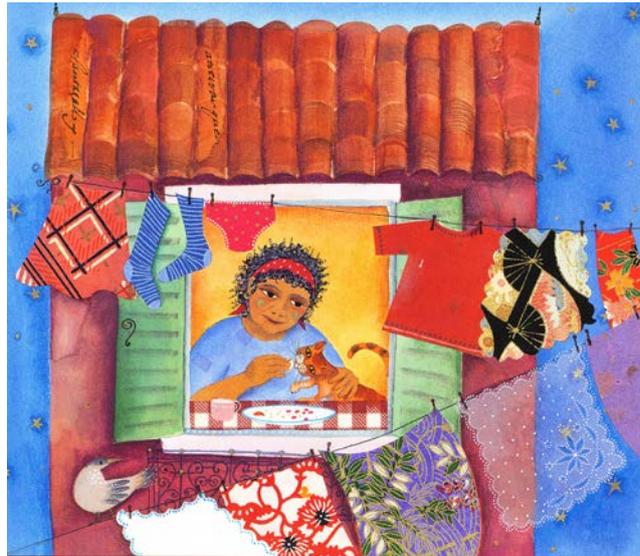
Bringing up my own children I was always amused that at a certain stage of school they would begin to tell jokes. They were usually nonsensical, and all the funnier for that, but it was the rhythm of joke telling that they had understood and taken on-board. I think it is the same with fairy tales, which is just one reason why they remain so relevant and important.

As an illustrator and author it is one's job to think about how to present traditional fairy tales to a new generation and to incorporate new ways of thinking. It is essential that original versions are still available, but it is of the very nature of the fairy tale that it should change and develop as society does. There are wonderful subversive retellings of fairy tales, funny versions and mixed-up versions, all playing with the concepts and structures to entertain and provoke, and all reflecting aspects of society as it changes.

One of the main criteria in my approach to illustrating fairy tales anew is that the children sitting cross-legged in front of me in most schools that I visit are of many and varied ethnicities. I would feel frankly embarrassed if they couldn't see themselves reflected in the books and pictures I show them, and it is interesting and refreshing to 'play' with ethnicity in retellings of traditional fairy tales. So, for example, my version of 'Cinderella' has a black prince, Beauty in 'Beauty and the Beast' is black, and the princess in 'The Frog Prince' is Asian. Time and time again though, when children are asked to draw fairy-tale characters, the princess will be pink and white with golden hair, even when the young artist herself has brown skin. What does this tell us about that child's self-esteem? There is still a very long way to go.

I am very interested in stories that might be described as contemporary or modern fairy tales, not old stories at all, but with the familiar settings and shapes of the traditional stories. I have written several myself, sometimes taking them away from the familiar European woods and towns of Grimm and Andersen, and setting them in other environments with beautiful heroines and heroes who have dark hair and dark skin (*The Apple Pip Princess* (2007) and *Ahmed and the Feather Girl* (2014)). I have illustrated modern fairy tales by other writers too. *The Lost Happy Endings* by Carol

Ann Duffy (2006) and *The King of Capri* by Jeanette Winterson (2003) are both witty and refreshing takes on the traditional fairy tale, and 'The Happy Prince' by Oscar Wilde (1994; 2003) is an all-time favourite of mine.



From *The King of Capri*. (Illustration © 2003 Jane Ray). Reproduced courtesy Jane Ray.

There is also the challenge of showing disability in picture books, something I have long tried to do (though with varying degrees of success). Traditionally, in fairy tales, the only time disability is mentioned, either verbally or visually, is negatively, as the trait of an evil character – the witch in 'Hansel and Gretel' with her crutch comes to mind, or the evil hunchbacked dwarf in 'Rumpelstiltskin'. The child left behind in 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin' has a disability. These ideas are at long last being challenged by the media, and it is exciting to be made to rethink and re-present these stories.

I illustrated a fairy tale by Joyce Dunbar about a deaf prince, *Moonbird* (2006), in direct response to some work she and I did at a deaf and partially hearing unit at a school in Woolwich a few years ago. Their inspirational teacher told us how vital it was that deaf children should have access to fantasy, to magic, to the mythological and legendary, and that they should be able to see themselves as heroes of fairy tales instead of featuring only in 'issue'-based books. The children's response to our book completely confirmed her claim – we were inspired and moved.



From *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*. (Illustration © 1996 Jane Ray). Reproduced courtesy Jane Ray.

For me the fairy tale, whatever the definition, is a source of magic and richness. I continue, even after many years in this business, to find them a perfect vehicle for storytelling, illustrating and teaching. I turn to them again and again for inspiration, and when I look at the vast ocean of stories out there I am glad that I have barely started.

[Jane Ray began her career designing greetings cards, book jackets and posters. Gradually, however, she moved towards children's book illustration, specialising in fairy tales, mythology and folktales, which she finds endlessly fascinating. She finds writing as absorbing as illustration. She frequently exhibits her work with The Illustration Cupboard, London, and Primavera, Cambridge.]

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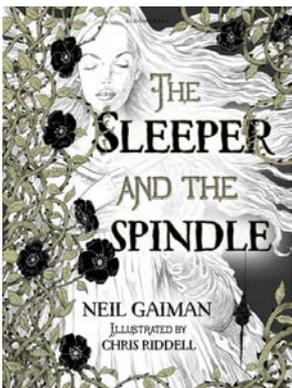
Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White: Challenges to Heteronormativity in Fairy-Tale Retellings

Erica Gillingham

My interest in fairy-tale retellings began when I was researching representations of cowgirls in picture books. Author Susan Lowell revises two fairy-tale heroines – Little Red Riding Hood and Cinderella – as rollicking cowgirls in the Wild West in *Little Red*

Cowboy Hat (1997), illustrated by Randy Cecil, and *Cindy Ellen: A Wild Western Cinderella* (2000), illustrated by Jane Manning. In both texts, the general tale stays the same, but concessions are made for the new setting: a rodeo instead of a ball for Cindy Ellen, a saddlebag of fresh bread and cactus jelly as a basket of goodies for Little Red. Lowell's texts are not alone in rewriting fairy tales in new settings: *Snow White in New York* (1986) by Fiona French utilises the high society of New York and the art-deco design of the 1920s to recreate Snow White's tale; *Jack and the Baked Beanstalk* (2012) by Colin Stimpson replaces Jack and his mother's rural farm with a roadside diner serving up breakfast on the way to the big city for its rendering. With new settings, a reader might expect the characters, particularly the female characters, to develop differently as well – maybe the two cowgirl heroines might also buck a few gender norms or the urban setting will offer more independence – but the picture books rarely challenge heteronormative gender expectations. Little Red's grandma can curse 'til the cows come home, but Little Red is still a nice, obedient young girl; Cindy Ellen and Snow White still marry their 'princes' for a happily-ever-after ending.

In contrast, picture books like *The Paper Bag Princess* (1980) by Robert Munsch and illustrated by Michael Martchenko, *Princess Smartypants* (1987) by Babette Cole, *Queen Munch and Queen Nibble* (2002) by Carol Ann Duffy and illustrated by Lydia Monks, and *The Princess Knight* (2004) by Cornelia Funke and illustrated by Kerstin Meyer haven't rewritten specific fairy tales, but rather used tropes of the fairy-tale genre to challenge heteronormative gender expectations. The princesses in these tales, unlike Lowell's Cindy Ellen or French's Snow White, are not described as pretty or submissive or even interested in marriage. Instead, the picture books illustrate how each princess or queen makes an independent life for themselves as individuals, their own versions of happy endings. The prince at the centre of the picture book *King & King* (2002) by Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland is equally uninterested in marrying any of the princesses that his mother brings before him. However, when Princess Madeleine arrives with her brother, Prince Lee, the princes fall in love at first sight and 'everyone lives happily ever after'. *King & King* is the first picture book to portray two men falling in love and getting married (a milestone in representations of same-sex couples in children's literature), and in doing so challenges the heteronormative understanding of marriage as being possible or acceptable only between one man and one woman.



In similar ways, themes of independence, expectation of marriage, non-heteronormative relationships and happy endings also run through two more recent fairy-tale retellings: *Ash* (2009) by Malinda Lo, a young adult novel, and *The Sleeper and the Spindle* (2014) by Neil Gaiman and illustrated by Chris Riddell, an illustrated text.

To start with the latter, *The Sleeper and the Spindle* twists (and borrows characters from) the tales of Sleeping Beauty and Snow White, and takes place in two kingdoms divided by treacherously steep mountains. On one side of the mountain, a queen is preparing for her marriage in a week's time, an event that she considers to be the end of her 'time of choices', a predictable path to an inevitable end (2004: 14). On the other side, seeking a wedding gift for the queen, three dwarfs (who have known her since she was young) set off through a tunnel in the mountain range but, instead of fine silks, they bring back news of how the neighbouring kingdom is falling asleep. The dwarfs recount that they were told that, a hundred years ago, a dark witch cast a spell on the baby princess that 'when the girl was eighteen she would prick her finger and sleep forever' and that the only way to revive her is with a kiss (p.16). The problem now, though, is that it is not only the princess and the palace residents who have fallen asleep, but the sleep spell is spreading throughout the kingdom a few miles farther each day. Upon hearing the news, the queen postpones her wedding plans to attempt to stop the expanding zone of sleep. She follows the dwarfs through the mountains, has a few close calls as she makes her way through the kingdom, and reaches the tower where the sleeping spell began. Once the queen kisses the sleeping woman, the

true set of events about the sleeper and the spindle come forth and good triumphs over evil. The story ends as the cursed princess is relieved of her spell and the queen makes a choice for herself: to head east, away from her land and the predictable path.

Before the illustrated book was released, much was made of the double-page spread illustration of the queen kissing the sleeping woman awake.¹ As my current research is in lesbian love stories in young adult literature, my Twitter feed was a-buzz with articles and comments on the pre-released image by Chris Riddell – a beautiful and evocative illustration of a lesbian kiss (see below) – and it was what prompted me to read the book. In my experience of the text, however, the kiss from the queen to the sleeper is so much less about same-sex desire or love and so much more about a strong female character stepping into her agency through a hero's journey. A kiss is what is required to wake the sleeping woman and, as the queen has fought her way through various – and, I dare say, more impressive – obstacles to break the sleep spell, the kiss is simply another task to be completed. There are no undertones of desire from the queen nor does the spell require a true love's kiss like so many traditional fairy tales. More interesting, in fact, is that neither the queen nor the princess in *The Sleeper and the Spindle* are looking for completion of their journeys via a happy ending through marriage. Instead, the princess is simply relieved of the burden she carried from the age of 18, while the queen – like a few picture-book princesses – decides not to marry in exchange for a life with more choices.



From *The Sleeper and the Spindle*. The princess being woken from sleep by a kiss from the queen. Copyright © 2013, 2014 Chris Riddell. Reproduced courtesy Chris Riddell.

Malinda Lo's *Ash*, a young adult novel originally published in the USA, subverts the reader's expectations of the classic Cinderella fairy tale in different ways. *Ash*'s story begins similarly to the fairy tale: her mother dies suddenly and her father remarries a woman with two daughters. When her father also dies, the stepmother moves them all from *Ash*'s family home in a rural village near the Wood farther south to West Riding, a village near the king's grounds for the Royal Hunt, where the stepmother makes *Ash* a servant of the household. In grief, *Ash* turns her attention to seeking out the fairy world, something her mother believed in as she was said to have 'some magic in her' of which fairies are drawn to (2010: 2). Eventually, late one evening, she finds the (male) fairy Sidhean waiting for her. All at once, Sidhean is a danger, a potential love interest and a fairy godfather to *Ash*. As *Ash*'s relationship develops with Sidhean so too is the reader introduced to the King's Huntress, Kaisa. In the fantasy world of the novel, the king's hunts are always led by a huntress who is selected for her skills, understanding of the land and belief in the old ways. Through various chance meetings, *Ash* and Kaisa's romantic relationship develops as her contact with Sidhean wanes. In order to meet Kaisa at the King's Ball, however, *Ash* must bargain with Sidhean in order to look



the part – no generous fairy godmother here. But once her end of her bargain with Sidhean is fulfilled, Ash and Kaisa are reunited in their own happy ending.

In her writing online and interviews, Lo often succinctly describes *Ash* as ‘a lesbian retelling of Cinderella’.² And it is: Ash falls in love with a woman – Kaisa, the King’s Huntress – and their ‘happily-ever-after’ ending is implied in the final lines of the novel. Their same-sex relationship and lack of narrated formal union challenges the heteronormative expectations of the Cinderella fairy tale: there is no prince and no royal wedding. In addition, their romantic relationship is fully developed over the course of the narrative, from their chance meeting one evening at a party to a developing friendship in the Wood as Kaisa agrees to teach Ash how to ride horseback, to, finally, their declarations of love at the end of the novel. Kaisa is not just Ash’s one-way dream ticket out of servitude and poverty based on her good looks, great timing and fairy godmother – their relationship is substantiated on more than a few twirls around the dance floor. A by-product of the portrayal of Ash and Kaisa’s relationship is that readers also get a strong portrayal of a lesbian relationship in a fairy tale. As I can count representations of same-sex couples in fairy-tale retellings on one hand, *Ash* is a rare gift in young adult literature. Furthermore, the characters of Ash and Kaisa push gender expectations as well. Throughout the novel, Ash makes decisions that come with known consequences and she is the one who ‘saves’ herself in those instances. Kaisa represents a female working in a traditionally male role as a hunter. However, Lo does not just make Kaisa an exception to the rule: the person who leads the hunt, whether it be a king’s hunt or one of a local village, has *always* been a woman. In these ways, Lo pushes back against heteronormative retellings of Cinderella and the gendered roles that go along with those expectations.

Whether by a twisting of tales in *The Sleeper and the Spindle* or in retellings like *Ash*, authors and illustrators of literature for children and young adults can utilise fairy tales to challenge (rather than reinforce) ideas of gender and desire. In both of these books, the narratives are not didactic in that they do not make an issue of gender or sexuality or the characters’ decisions to follow their own paths. Instead, their ‘happy endings’ are, simply, another possibility.

Notes

- 1 Hudson, David. ‘New Neil Gaiman book for children features a princess being woken by a kiss from a queen’. *Gay Star News*. 8 October 2014. www.gaystarnews.com/article/new-neil-gaiman-book-children-features-princess-being-woken-kiss-queen081014.
- 2 Lo, Malinda. ‘ASH in Korean, and other thoughts on Cinderella’. 23 March 2015. *Malinda Lo*. www.malindalo.com/2015/03/ash-in-korean-and-other-thoughts-on-cinderella/.

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[Erica Gillingham is a PhD student with the National Centre for Research in Children’s Literature (NCRCL) at the University of Roehampton. Her research is in lesbian love stories in young adult fiction and she is editor of the NCRCL blog. Her other research has focused on LGBT picture books, young adult literature and graphic novels, and she spoke at the annual IBBY/NCRCL conference on those themes in 2009 and 2010. She was also an official blogger for IBBY UK for the 2012 IBBY International Congress in London. www.ericagillingham.com.]

Fairy Tales and Graphic Novels

Jonas Herriot

Graphic novels, as a combination of text and pictorial works, are designed to use visual clues to replace narrative, and within the format there is one commonly used set of images that reappear time and again. Finding their way into nearly all the major genres covered, these images belong to the culturally significant and historically important subject area known as fairy tales. Fairy tales contain a host of important and instantly recognised characters, location and plot devices that have become significant at multiple levels of our cultural narrative, embedding themselves within the psyche of our species. As a perfect example of what Richard Dawkins classified as memes,¹ they twist and change, altering to fit distinct niches within our society.

Historically these stories have been linked with pictorial images, partly because of their importance in teaching children to read, and partly because the images they contain lend themselves to representation perfectly. From the woodcuts of the early printing period,² through the hand-drawn images of the Victorian era,³ up to the computer-generated examples that fill websites such as DeviantArt today,⁴ fairy tales allow artists the opportunity to present their own views on the characters, and overlay these on the metaphorical wireframes that exist from the stories they inhabit.

As such, it is no surprise that these characters have come to inhabit the graphic novel so much. From dedicated stories based on individual tales,⁵ or reimagined versions of them altered to fit into the distinct stylistic preferences of the adapting artist,⁶ through to the constant appropriation of their integral pieces that are then fitted into new stories. What is most useful about using these pre-existing images is that you do not need to explain them to your readers. Once they are culturally immersed into the fairy-tale system, a red apple becomes more than a piece of fruit, and a frog can be more than just an amphibious animal. These shortcuts allow authors quickly to build up the dimensions of their work without having to dedicate time to showing their backstories. Picture this image and see how many stories you can connect it to: a young boy in ragged trousers stands on a yellow road that stretches through a cornfield, on his shoulder sits a frog, by his legs are a fox and a pig, and flying overhead there is a raven. By starting a book with this image, the reader can already start to decipher the bits of

code that these component pieces represent, and a good author can use this to build a story with the minimum of words.

Though when we look at what these stories are meant to do, we find the idea of archetypes and morality tales intertwined together. Archetypes allow us to see something as a perfect or original example of its type, and animals are particularly good tools for this, owing to the fact that children are brought up on a diet of anthropomorphic animals, not just in fairy tales, but in all children's books. By using animals, artists and authors are able to utilise the characteristics with which they have been culturally imbued within their stories. So a fox can be cunning and sly, or it can be noble and free, or it can be an agent of chaos and change, depending on which fairy tales you have been brought up with.

When we look at the message these stories carry, we start to see that it is the subtext that is meant to educate young children into the ways of the world, and, despite their basis in historical landscapes, they are as important today as then. While we may not need to spend as much time telling our children not to wander off deep in the woods, there do exist modern urban analogues that are just as important to educate them about. And while we may not need to teach our children to stay away from wolves, these stories were never just about the animal version, but were often aimed at the idea of people as wolves. For example, werewolves teach us not so much about men who turn into wolves, but rather those who act like them. The problem is that without the visual cue of great big teeth we cannot notice how bad some people are, and as such it is the subtext of the story that needs to carry the moral message, teaching children to recognise the subtle clues rather the overt ones. Modern fairy tales (such as urban myths) still focus on bad things happening to normal people, and the best examples highlight the steps that have been taken to get to the ending, thereby displaying what you ought not to do to end up there.

At the present moment in time we are seeing an upsurge in popularity of both graphic novels and fairy tales, and as a result of this there are an increasing number of titles that fit into these categories. Interestingly, titles that are aimed at the older segment of the market are very well received, and often highly nominated,⁷ but can often be unsuitable for younger readers, owing to their focus on some of the more sexual ideologies that feature as subtext in fairy tales. Despite this, for older teens these may be suitable, but for younger readers it is advisable that parents, librarians and teachers read titles before suggesting them.

Suggested titles

To explore fairy tales in graphic-novel form, the author would suggest the following ten titles as a good starting point on a journey of discovery that encompasses a stunning array of titles and stories.

Chris Duffy (ed.). 2013. *Fairy Tale Comics*. New York: First Second.

This compilation of stories features works from a selection of artists who have published other works in this area. For a blog with some illustrations, see www.firstsecondbooks.com/books/new-book-fairy-tale-comics/.

Neil Gaiman (illus. Chris Riddell). 2014. *The Sleeper and the Spindle*. London: Bloomsbury Children's Books.

While not exactly a graphic novel, this combination of text and pictorial work is an amazing re-interpretation of 'Sleeping Beauty' by Neil Gaiman, whose work constantly utilises fairy-tale ideas.

Luke Pearson. 2010. *Hildafolk*. London: Nobrow. (Reissued as *Hilda and the Troll* by Flying Eye in 2013.)

The first of the Hilda books by Luke Pearson starts a series that is heavily indebted to Scandinavian and Nordic fairy-tale motifs blended with stunning storytelling and artistry.

Jerry Pinkney. 2011. *The Lion and the Mouse*. London: Walker.

This version of a classic tale from Aesop is wordless, instead relying on the glorious illustrations to convey the tale to the reader.

Frank Cammuso. 2008. *The Dodgeball Chronicles (Knights of the Lunch Table)*. London: Graphix.

What happens when you combine Arthurian tales with going to school in the modern age? For an illustration, see www.scholastic.com/knightsofthelunchtable/?lt=stacks/wrapper/morebooks/.

Tony Lee and Sam Hart. 2009. *Outlaw: The Legend of Robin Hood*. London: Walker.

While some may not consider Robin Hood to be a fairy tale as such, the fact that this story has become so entwined in popular culture seems to fit many of the descriptions of this genre, and this graphic interpretation of the story is a perfect example of how stories can be portrayed in this format.

Dean and Shannon Hale. 2013. *Rapunzel's Revenge*. New York: Bloomsbury Children's Books.

When you combine Rapunzel with Jack and the Beanstalk the result is a graphic novel that is both funny, and well-drawn.

Matt Dembicki. 2014. *Trickster: Native American Tales: A Graphic Collection*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

As to be expected from the title, this book brings over 20 traditional tales alive in pictures and words. A stunning example of non-European fairy tales that showcases what this format can do.

Aaron Becker. 2013. *Journey*. London: Walker.

The second wordless picture book on this list draws heavily on fairy-tale motifs and ideas to deliver a breath-taking adventure through fantastical landscapes, with images that reveal more each time you read it.

Art Spiegelman and Francoise Moulton (ed.). 2004. *Folklore and Fairy Tale Funnies (Little Lit)*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books.

Spiegelman, who is one of the most respected artists on the adult graphic-novel scene, has drawn together a collection of stories from around the world, presented by different artists. Perfect for adult fans as well as younger readers, this book highlights how well this genre relates to this format.

[Jonas Herriot is a recently qualified librarian and trained anthropologist, so it is perhaps only natural that he finds the subject of fairy tales and their impact on culture so interesting. Coupled with a lifelong love of books that contain words as well as pictures, he considers himself well placed to comment on graphic novels and fairy tales. Alongside this, he has two small children, and a wife who produces art based on fairy tales; as such he finds himself increasingly besieged on all sides by the genre and can no longer look at a red apple with anything less than suspicion.]

Notes

- 1 Dawkins, Richard (1976) *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford University Press.
- 2 See Gustave Doré for examples of this style of work. For more information about this artist try: Roosevelt, Blanche (1885) *Life and Reminiscence of Gustave Doré*. Cassell & Co Ltd (141 illustrations).

- 3 See Arthur Rackham for examples of this style of work. For more information about this artist try: www.arthur-rackham-society.org.
 - 4 www.deviantart.com.
 - 5 For example: Gaiman, Neil (2014) *Hansel and Gretel*. New York: Toon Books.
 - 6 For example: Perrault, Charles (illus. Ji-ye Jeong; trans. Sang-wu Shim; retold Joy Cowley) (2015) *Cinderella*. Sydney, NSW: Big & Small. This entertaining book with its funky illustrations was originally published by Yeowon Media in South Korea. Sang-wu Shim is the Korean author who retold the Cinderella story in the Korean language. For the English editions, the story was then retold by Joy Cowley of Big & Small, with the illustrations by the Korean artist retained. Big & Small is an interesting publisher who has several other titles that fit into this category. See www.bigandsmallpublishing.com/our-books.html.
 - 7 For example, both the Sandman series from Neil Gaiman and the Fables series from Bill Willingham.
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A Fairy-Tale Collection in Central London

Ann Lazim

The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) is an independent UK literacy charity, based close to central London. It provides in-service training, mainly for primary school teachers, and conducts research into reading and literacy in general. CLPE started life as a teachers' centre during the time of the Inner London Education Authority, and has evolved and survived through all the educational changes over the last 40 years. Throughout that time, the organisation has emphasised the importance of narrative in enabling children to become confident, happy and enthusiastic readers and writers. There has been a constant commitment to literature that reflects the varied cultural backgrounds of the children in London schools and beyond, and a significant part of that has been building up a collection of folktales and fairy tales, myths and legends as part of the centre's reference library of children's books.

Representing and respecting children's cultural backgrounds has always been an important motivation behind building the collection. In addition to this, the narrative patterns of folktales and fairy tales, involving repetition and prediction, often help children when they are learning to read – whether English is their first or an additional language. Recognition of a story they already know is often significant in building confidence. One of the joys of the collection is discovering the same basic stories appearing across cultures. The picture books are arranged so that different versions of the same story are gathered together. For example, variants of 'Cinderella', whether the title is *Yeh-Shen* (Chinese), *The Rough-Face Girl* (Native American: Algonquin), *The Golden Sandal* (Iraqi) or *The Little Blue Slipper* (Irish)

The Gingerbread Man has many manifestations. His story is retold in a variety of ways and his progress as he is chased through the countryside depicted by illustrators such as Ian Beck and John Rowe. And he can take different forms. He can be *The Pancake That Ran Away* (a variant found in Scandinavia and Germany) as illustrated by Loek Koopmans; transposed to Texas as *The Runaway Tortilla* by Eric A. Kimmel and Randy Cecil; moved to become a Passover story in *The Matzah Man* by Naomi Howland; and caught by kindness in China as *The Runaway Rice Cake* by Ying Chang Compestine and Tungwai Chau.

'Little Red Riding Hood' is another familiar tale that has been retold many times and in many places. An annotated list of some recent versions entitled 'A Rash of Red Riding Hoods' can be found at www.clpe.org.uk/page/52.

Browsing the collection, you can see many varied ways a tale has been illustrated as well as told, both in picture-book format and in story anthologies. Among the many books of fairy tales collected by the Brothers Grimm can be found those illustrated by Michael Foreman, Maurice Sendak and, more surprisingly, Mabel Lucie Atwell, whilst amongst the books containing Hans Christian Andersen's tales are those illustrated by Joel Stewart, Emma Chichester Clark and Lisbeth Zwerger.

The anthologies are arranged so that stories from the same geographical region are gathered together. Some parts of the world are much better represented than others. The collection consists principally of books published in the UK. However, in order to provide a wider multicultural spread, books published elsewhere, mainly in the USA, have been added. For example, African American folktales retold by Virginia Hamilton, such as the collections *The People Could Fly* and *Her Stories*; and Howard Norman's *The Girl Who Dreamed Only Geese and Other Tales of the Far North*, all, as it happens, illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon. Exploring the collection of story anthologies, it becomes clear that British publishers used to be more willing to publish folktales from a wider range of countries. Nowadays, among the few publishers still prepared to do this, Barefoot Books and Frances Lincoln stand out, and Oxford University Press reissue a selected few of their collections of traditional stories in fresh covers from time to time. There is generally a wider cultural representation among traditional stories published in the USA. This is also true of publishing in France. Unfortunately, the resources and space available mean that the collection is largely restricted to English language publications.

The collection also features fractured fairy tales and retellings from unexpected angles, such as Jon Scieszka's *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by A. Wolf*, *The Frog Prince Continued* and *The Stinky Cheeseman*; Toby Forward's *The Wolf's Story*; and Marjolaine Leray's *Little Red Hood*, translated from French by Sarah Ardizzone. There is also a group of relatively recently written stories which draw on the style of fairy tales. These include Terry Jones' *Fairy Tales*; William Mayne's two volumes of *Fairy Tales of London Town*; and Jamila Gavin's *Blackberry Blue*.

Many of the currently available versions of traditional tales and variant versions are described on our website which recommends books for primary-school collections: www.corebooks.org.uk.

I hope that the glimpse I've given you has tempted you to visit our centre in Waterloo and explore for yourself.

The collection is open to all who wish to use it for reference, and visitors are welcome. However, the room in which it is housed is multi-purpose and it is necessary to make an appointment to be certain of access. Please contact me at ann@clpe.co.uk if you want further information and would like to visit.

[Ann Lazim is Literature and Library Development Manager at the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE). www.clpe.org.uk.]

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The Fairy Tales of Science

Melanie Keene

One autumn afternoon in 1837, the statistical section of a scientific society opened its meeting with a curious presentation. A spokesman reported that the group had lately

devoted its energies to the topic of 'infant education among the middle classes of London'. A survey had revealed the following books in circulation.

Jack the Giant-Killer	7,943
Jack and the Beanstalk	8,621
Jack and Eleven Brothers	2,845
Jack and Jill	1,998
Total	21,407



This preponderance of fantastical works had apparently had dire consequences, resulting in 'lamentable ignorance' on the part of the infants. As the speaking professor detailed:

One child, on being asked whether he would rather be Saint George of England or a respectable tallow-chandler, instantly replied, 'Taint George of Ingling'. Another, a little boy of eight years old, was found to be firmly impressed with a belief in the existence of dragons, and openly stated that it was his intention when he grew up, to rush forth sword in hand for the deliverance of captive princesses, and the promiscuous slaughter of giants. ... They had not the slightest conception of the commonest principles of mathematics, and considered Sinbad the Sailor the most enterprising voyager that the world had ever produced.

The professor regretfully concluded that this was the result of teaching with fanciful, untrue stories. A lively discussion ensued, in which

[s]everal other Members ... dwelt upon the immense and urgent necessity of storing the minds of children with nothing but facts and figures; which process the President very forcibly remarked, had made them ... the men they were.

Of course, this report was not of an actual meeting of an organisation such as the British Association for the Advancement of Science, founded just six years earlier. Instead, it discussed its satirical counterpart: the 'Mudfog Association for the Advancement of Everything', a lampoon from the pen of Charles Dickens.¹ Yet the conclusion of this section of the report – that minds should be stored with 'nothing but facts and figures' – betrays a criticism often levelled at scientific children's books at this time. Dry, choreographed conversations, these unlively works were deemed unpalatable, fact-filled repositories of 'useful knowledge' that 'crammed' children with lengthy names and lengthier formulae, insisting that knowledge must come to children 'in the shape of knowledge'. Most famously of all, of course, Dickens himself began his 1854 *Hard Times* with an attack on extreme utilitarian teaching, in which Thomas Gradgrind urged that 'facts alone are wanted in life'.

In studies of children's literature, Dickens' stereotype has, I believe, too often been taken too seriously: elementary factual works have played a subsidiary role to their fictional counterparts, dismissed as Gradgrindian bores. Alongside the abstracted books that made a virtue of their facticity and lack of narrative, there existed a thriving tradition of texts aiming both to 'instruct and amuse', providing what was seen as appropriate rational recreation. Many different solutions to the problem of combining educational and entertaining material were proposed, from dialogue to diary, calendar to catechism and alphabet to adventure story. In their pages, sophisticated relationships between facts and fancy, learning and wondering, and storytelling and experimentation were posited and developed. In my recent book, *Science in Wonderland: The Scientific Fairy Tales of Victorian Britain* (2015), I take one form of writing for children – the fairy tale – and reveal the elegant, witty and inventive examples that were produced to deal with scientific material as a range of strategies that brought facts and fancy together.

Once upon a time, these books argued, forces could be fairies, dinosaurs were dragons, and the best way to fairyland was through practising the sciences. For some authors,

fairy figures provided an appropriate means of introducing the mysteries of the natural world: their privileged preternatural role granted insights into anything from the processes of the universe to the contents of the garden hedge. Fairies were familiar from children's tales and images, and in their description and depiction were often closely connected to natural history, particularly flowers and butterflies: this made them ideal guides to their floral and entomological brethren. For other writers, it was by converting scientific objects such as elements into families of fairies, that novel subjects could be rendered appealing for juvenile audiences. Fairies appeared both as enticing illustrations, and also as personified examples of anything from a chemical bond (fairies holding hands) to a gas (fairies flying around a room). Yet others used conceptions of the surrounding 'fairyland of science' as a framing device to encourage active participation in the sciences. In these lectures, hands-on experiments and sensory experiences were advocated as the best way to discover the hidden world of gravity, giants and gnomes made out of coal. The 'fairy tales of science', in Tennyson's phrase, were seen as particularly appropriate for Victorian Britain, with new discoveries and technologies transforming daily life into something out of a fantastical future: messages could be sent around the world in the blink of an eye and man could be sent up into the skies in a balloon. What was once only possible in fiction could now in fact be achieved.

The accuracy of the factual content in these presentations was paramount: such publications were part of an effort to broaden contemporary educational provision so that it was fit for modern times, and they were therefore intended to reflect the latest developments in scientific disciplines. In particular, they were often touted as presenting true knowledge of the natural world, modern myths that were, their authors claimed, stranger than any fiction. In this way, the educational impulse of diffusionist organisations so caricatured in my opening example could be tempered through the scientific recasting of older narratives. Crucially, such comparisons also revealed the imaginative work at the heart of many theories and practices, from conceptions of 'deep' geological time and the resurrection of whole creatures from minuscule fragmented remains, to invisible electromagnetic forces and the decoding of signals from across the universe. The middle-class children reading these books would therefore find replacements for their favoured monsters, heroines and plot lines; as well as storing their minds with the 'facts' so prized by authors wanting to raise a technically literate generation. Dragons, giants and enterprising voyagers: all could be found in the pages of the fairy tales of science.

Note

- 1 For the full text of Charles Dicken's *The Mugfog and Other Sketches*, see www.gutenberg.org/files/912/912-h/912-h.htm. For other details, see The Mugfog Papers on Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mudfog_Papers.

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[Melanie Keene is an historian of science at Homerton College, University of Cambridge. She has published on scientific texts and objects for children from the late eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century on topics from candles, pebbles and cups of tea, to board games, toy sets and model dinosaurs. Her work is now expanding into familiar science and medicine, working on elephants, telegraphs and body parts.]

REVIEWS

About Children's Literature

Tove Jansson: Work and Love

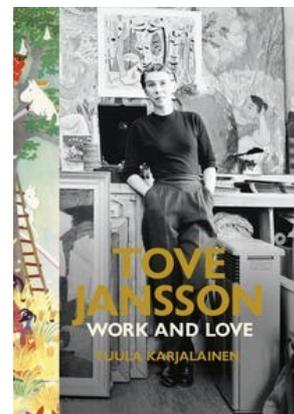
Tuula Karjalainen (trans. David McDuff), London: Particular Books, hb. 978 1 8461 4848 4, 2014, £20, 292pp.

It was as an escape from the realities of the Second World War and its effects on Finland that Finnish artist-writer Tove Jansson (1914–2001) began to write and illustrate her own unique fairy tales, the highly original Moomin books for children, and these were set in that most Nordic of landscapes, Moominvalley. Like many a traditional fairy tale, they are about getting lost, seeking and finding, rites of passage and, often after a long journey, arriving home safely. Last year (2014) was the 100th anniversary of Jansson's birth, and to mark this event the Ateneum Art Museum in Helsinki held a centenary exhibition of her work which ran for six months. The curator of this exhibition was Tuula Karjalainen, a Finnish art historian and art critic, and in preparation for the centenary celebrations her biography *Tove Jansson: Tee Työ ja Rakasta* was published in 2013, appearing in English in the UK as *Tove Jansson: Work and Love* the following year. In this perceptive and beautifully illustrated biography, Karjalainen skilfully describes the world in which Jansson lived and worked, a world peopled with painters and sculptors, actors and stage designers, writers and literary critics, as well as, through various friends, Finland's left-wing intelligentsia. Although Jansson rubbed shoulders with Existentialists and other philosophical movements and, in the visual arts, Surrealism after the war, she had an independent spirit and was careful not to be swept along by any of them. As Karjalainen points out in her introduction, Jansson's vast output of work, such as her paintings, monumental murals for public spaces, magazine and newspaper illustrations, book covers and writings, as well as the complexity of her personal life and relationships with both men and women, writing this biography proved to be a challenging undertaking. Such was the attitude towards homosexuality in Finland, as elsewhere at the time, that Jansson's relationships were never discussed outside her immediate circle, and this often resulted in her sense of isolation and loneliness, aspects of her life that are reflected in some of her Moomin stories.

In this biography we learn that Jansson, who belonged to the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, was a precociously gifted child who, at 14, having already had some drawings published, was producing illustrations for various newspapers. She was born into a highly creative household. Jansson's father Viktor, or Faffan as he was known, a Swedish-speaking Finn, was a sculptor, while her mother, Signe, or Ham, a pastor's daughter and came from an affluent family, was a gifted illustrator. Ham's warm, calm and capable personality is reflected in Moominmamma, who, with her ever present capacious handbag containing, no doubt, sticking plaster, salves and much more, is at the heart of the Moomin family.

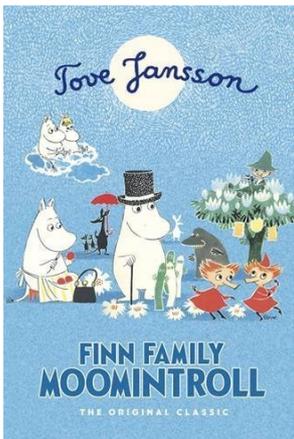
Karjalainen sets out some of the influences that informed Jansson's early creative life. For instance, Selma Lagerlöf's *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* (1906–1907, in two volumes), Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894) were among Jansson's favourite books as a child, and these are said to have influenced her when she was writing the Moomin books, as were stories from the Bible that Ham read to Jansson when she was young. Jansson did, in fact, produce brilliantly innovative illustrations for an edition of *Alice in Wonderland* which was published in Finland in 1966, while the first English edition was published by the New York-based Delacourt Press in 1977.

My earliest recollection as a child of the Moomins' world was their appearance in a regular comic strip in the London daily newspaper, the *Evening News*, in the 1950s.



These comic strips were specifically created for adults but it didn't prevent me from appreciating their gentle humour and the skill with which these hippo-like creatures were drawn. As Karjalainen relates, when Jansson cancelled her contract after five years, due to the pressure of deadlines and because it prevented her from working on anything else, her brother Lars took over the drawing and writing of the comic strip and he continued to do so for 15 years.

In this biography it is fascinating to read about Jansson's uncompromising depictions as they were featured in *Garm*, the Finland–Swedish political and satirical magazine, of Stalin and Hitler during the Second World War, as well as her observations on the problems that came with peace, such as food shortages and rationing. Jansson was, however, deeply affected by the conflict, which began when she was 25, during which time her eldest brother was on active service. It was midway through the war, however, that Jansson placed the Moomins, already partly formed in her mind, in their own unique world, and, for Jansson, the Moomins (whose ancestors, it is said, were trolls who lived behind the tall Nordic kitchen stoves and are rooted in Scandinavian myth) and their world were a kind of escape from the realities of the war and its aftermath. In *Kometjakten* (1946, and translated into English and published in London as *Comet in Moominland* in 1968), the arrival of a comet and its apocalyptic consequences parallel not only Jansson's experiences of air raids in Helsinki during the conflict, but also the images she would have seen through the media of the terrifying aftermath of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Although the disaster in Moominland is not man-made, what other book for children at the time would have addressed the possibility of the world's annihilation?



As we discover in Karjalainen's book, the earlier Moomin figures, with their thinner shapes and pointed noses as featured in *Smatrollen och den stora översvämningen* (1945, and translated into English and published in London as *The Moomins and the Great Flood* in 2012), bore only a passing resemblance to the comfortably rounded creatures that they were to become in the next Moomin story, *Trollkarlenshatt* (1948, and translated into English and published in London, the first Moomin book thus, as *Finn Family Moomintroll* in 1950) and subsequent stories. The bibliographical dates quoted in this review are for those books which were published first in Swedish; Finnish translations invariably appeared much later.

This biography gives fascinating insights, too, into the inspiration behind some of the characters in the Moomin stories. For instance, Thingummy in *Trollkarlens hatt*, which means literally 'the magician's hat', is based on Jansson herself, while another character in the story, Bob, was inspired by Vivica Bandler with whom Jansson fell in love. Jansson was, however, to find lasting happiness with the artist Tuulikki (Tooti) Pietila on whom she based the character Too-ticky. Too-ticky, who first appeared in the book *Trollvinter* (1957, and translated into English and published in London as *Moominland Midwinter* in 1958) is an intelligent and practical no-nonsense personality – like Tuulikki. In the book, Moomintroll finds a lonely and unfamiliar world when he wakes prematurely from hibernation when the rest of his family is still fast asleep. He meets Too-ticky, who teaches him how to live in an ever-changing and often unfamiliar world just as Tuulikki had given Jansson support and understanding in their life together.

Other idiosyncratic characters feature in the Moomin stories such as the Snork Maiden, Snufkin, and the tiny, impulsive and sharp-tongued Little My (a character, Karjalainen tells us, that is much loved by young readers). Jansson felt that there was something of herself in all these characters. Sometimes the stories feature those things that Jansson had dreamed of doing but had never achieved. She had dreamed, for instance, of building a houseboat or moving to Tonga. She did neither, but Moominpappa did, after a fashion, in *Muminpappans bravader* (1950, and translated into English and published in London as *The Exploits of Moominpappa* in 1952). This book was later retitled

Muminpappans memoarer (Moominpappa's Memoirs). Such details in Karjalainen's book have added much to my rereading of the Moomin stories and has prompted me to look afresh at Jansson's accompanying crisp black-and-white illustrations, some reminiscent of scraperboard drawings, and the richly coloured book covers, many of them imbued with the Nordic landscape. Children enjoy these stories for the adventures and dangerous exploits that the Moomins and their friends become involved in, while for adults much of their appeal lies in the satirical, mock serious quirky humour, their innate wisdom and poetic quality. At the heart of all the stories is, of course, a happy and loving family.

While Jansson was the Hans Christian Andersen Medal winner of the writing award in 1966 in recognition of her contribution to children's literature, she saw herself primarily as a painter, although she spent less and less time painting when the Moomins reached a much wider audience, and her paintings would never receive the critical praise that her Moomin stories had. Indeed, an hour-long BBC Four programme *Moominland Tales: The Life of Tove Jansson*, last broadcast on 28 August 2014,¹ echoes Karjalainen's comments by lamenting the fact that the artist-writer and her paintings were somewhat eclipsed by the success of the Moominland books and that she was known more for her 'hermit-like existence' on her island in the Finnish archipelago than for the lyrical adult fiction she wrote there. *Sommerboken* (1972, and published in an English translation in London as *The Summer Book* in 1975), which describes the special relationship that can exist between the young and the very old, is a fine example of Jansson's lyrical adult fiction and remains in print.

Nevertheless, as Karjalainen shows, Jansson is very much present in all her creative work. It is imbued with her experiences and with the people and places that she had known and loved. That Jansson always remained true to herself is clear: 'she acted according to her own views and her own morality and did not yield to public opinion'. When she died on 27 June 2001 she left the world a legacy of unique fairy stories.

Although some aspects of Jansson's long and varied life have been set down previously elsewhere and at different times, Karjalainen has drawn together its many strands, and references the letters and notebooks, and the comments of family and friends with great skill and sensitivity, thus giving us a well-rounded and in-depth portrait of a remarkable woman. And for readers who love the Moomin stories, and for those who are new to them, this biography is a valuable point of reference. Indeed, it gives the reader insight into the inspiration behind the stories and many of the characters in them, and in so doing enriches their enjoyment.

Note

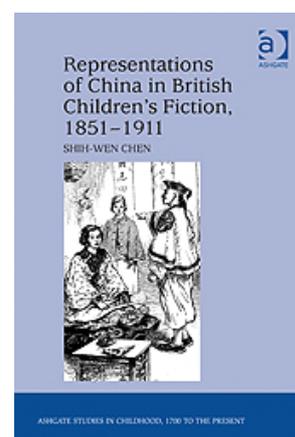
1 A clip is still available at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01pgrk2/clips.

June Hopper Swain

Representations of China in British Children's Fiction, 1851–1911

Shih-Wen Chen, Farnham: Ashgate, hb. 978 1 4094 4735 1, 2013, £63, 206pp.

This welcome volume in the Ashgate Studies in Childhood series not only presents a fascinating insight into a relatively unfamiliar area of children's literature, but also has much to reveal about British attitudes towards minority groups within this country during the period concerned. As it gradually became easier for travellers from the West to visit China, there was an increased demand for books that provided information about this previously isolated country. As indicated in 1844 by 'Old Humphrey' (pseudonym of George Mogridge, a writer for the Religious Tract Society), it even became shameful for children to be ignorant of what was known about it by other educated young people (p.7). Contributors to this important area included writers in such genres as travelogues, historical novels and periodicals, as revealed by Chen,



whose book is designed, among other things, to challenge the conclusions of critics who base their interpretations of children's texts too heavily on Edward Said's concept of orientalism with its view of the 'dominating [Western] desire to govern the Orient' (p.10). Chen argues that though stereotypical portrayals of the Chinese did exist, there were many other children's texts that were more complex and presented a plurality of viewpoints.

Among the authors singled out by Chen, Anne Bowman (c.1795–1886) is notable as an instance of a woman of the period who, unable to publish in serious journals, could demonstrate her knowledge of natural history through fiction (p.25). Her strong didactic intent is displayed in stories that highlight China's natural resources and present it as 'a land ready for British intervention both in terms of religion and commerce' (p.32). Another informative text, *The Wolf Boy of China* (1857) by William Dalton (1821–1875), has the novelty of a hero of mixed race, and also touches on the role of women and the tensions between people of different ethnic identities. This book went into many editions, including some in Germany and the USA.

More lively and entertaining were the books by E. Harcourt Burrage (1839–1916) featuring a character named Ching-Ching who was based on a Chinese man living in London. He progresses during the series from being a comic trickster well able to exploit human weaknesses to become a brilliant detective (in the wake of the popularity of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories). Not only was his speech a source of amusement and emulation to schoolboys, but also works featuring him established a brand of related merchandise (p.54). Chen suggests that 'in fashioning Ching-Ching into a detective figure ... Burrage suggests that nineteenth-century stereotypes of the Chinese as cunning and mysterious ... could be put to good use to uphold justice' (p.82).

Among the historical events featuring in novels for the young (by writers including such well-known children's writers as Bessie Marchant and G.A. Henty) are the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864) and the Boxer Rising (1899–1901). In *With the Allies to Peking* (1902), which includes numerous scenes of violence and of heroism by British characters, Henty provides reasons for the Chinese hostility to foreigners: a character admits that 'the British have "given them ample grounds for endeavouring to get rid of us"' (p.144).

Chen's enlightening study presents a balanced account of a relatively unfamiliar body of fiction for young readers, well contextualised in the events of the time both in Britain and in China.

Pat Pinsent

Suffer the Little Children: Uses of the Past in Jewish and African American Children's Literature (North American Religions series)

Jodi Eichler-Levine, New York and London: New York University Press, hb. 978 0 8147 2299 2, [2013] 2015, £34.00, 256pp.

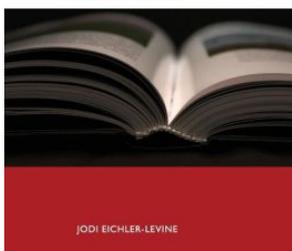
Jodi Eichler-Levine's rationale in linking the children's literature of these distinct minority groups is stated early in her text:

This book contends that Jewish Americans, African Americans, and black Jews all claim American chosenness by structuring their children's literature into redemptive, sacrificially driven narratives. These groups achieve their greatest acceptance as American citizens when their citizenship is sewn up with the commemoration of real and imagined lost children. (p.xiii)

The Jewish and African American groups she sees as 'over-represented' at the extremes of both suffering (slavery and the Holocaust) and the triumphs of civil rights

Suffer
the Little Children

USES OF THE PAST IN JEWISH
AND AFRICAN AMERICAN
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE



and success, while in both cases religious themes – notably that of Moses and the Exodus – are present in the religious rhetoric of their traditions.

Eichler-Levine traces the publication history of children's books from both communities, observing incidentally that *The Snowy Day* by the Jewish Ezra Jack Keats 'was the first book featuring a black protagonist to win the Caldecott Medal for children's book illustration' (p.5). Additionally, both groups have often been presumed to be outsiders in the grand American narrative, with deliberate attempts having been made to foreground their respective roles in it.

The book focuses on a relatively small corpus of material, highlighting books by Virginia Hamilton and Julius Lester among the African American authors, together with Sydney Taylor, Jane Yolen and particularly Maurice Sendak among those of Jewish background, together with Patricia Polacco, who has strong links with both groups. (Incidentally, I find it difficult to understand Eichler-Levine's omission of Mildred Taylor, whose impressive novels about a black community could certainly furnish examples of the themes she explores.) Eichler-Levine claims that in many of these works the 'suffering voyages' depicted can be seen as Exodus narratives that are commemorated in 'rituals of nostalgia and abundance' (p.55).

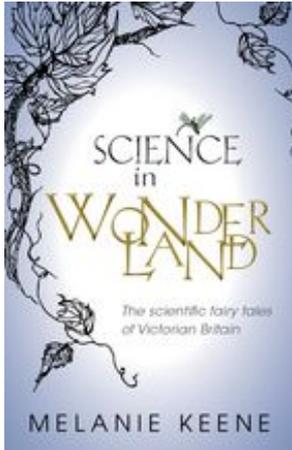
A good deal of attention is given to Sydney Taylor (Sarah Brenner) whose All of a Kind Family series typify a good deal of Jewish experience in the first half of the twentieth century, and have apparently also been popular among non-Jewish readers, Catholic readers in particular 'seeing in them an ethnic family similar to their own' (p.80). Sendak, Lester and Hamilton are conjoined as examples of the portrayal of 'the complexities of positioning oneself as a young person in a world of suffering' (p.133), particularly since the work of all three combines elements of both fantasy and realism.

The 'Conclusion' emphasises the importance of children's stories as a basis for understanding the ways in which religious themes such as crossing, dwelling and sacrifice are seen in American children's literature to create

a popular story of American religious history: we came to a new Israel or Promised Land ...; we made homes that were explicitly supposed to be Christian ...; we joined together as Protestants, Catholics and Jews ... to fight and sacrifice in the mid-twentieth century; and then we entered a period of diversity in both literature and religion, a pluralism of ideas, cultures, and other worlds – but a period in which majority Protestant cultures still dominated ... the grand narratives of American religious history are still with us. (p.157)

Although I found much that was informative in the book, I was still left with an unease about the bringing together of these two diverse areas of children's literature, together with some of the deductions derived from this. Perhaps one needs to have an American heritage – whether Protestant, Catholic, Jewish or African American – in order fully to appreciate the argument, though I certainly share the author's conviction that children's literature is not to be regarded as an 'innocent' enterprise.

Pat Pinsent



Science in Wonderland The Scientific Fairy Tales of Victorian Britain

Melanie Keene, Oxford University Press, hb. 978 0 1996 6265 4, £16.99, 2015, 256pp.

The title of this recent book by Melanie Keene, a historian of science based at Homerton College, Cambridge, has immediate associations with the children's classic *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, the publication of which, in November 1865, is being marked with 150th celebrations throughout the year. Instead of this book being a study of science as used by its author, Lewis Carroll/Charles Dodgson, of Christ Church, Oxford, don of mathematics and master of logic, the subtitle conveys the real theme of Melanie Keene's work: *Science in Wonderland: The Scientific Fairy Tales of Victorian Britain*. Alice does have some significance as Keene concludes in her final sentence, 'As Alice's trip to Wonderland had revealed, logic could indeed be stranger than imagination, truth stranger than fiction' (p.195). It is perhaps surprising that Keene does not make more of *Alice in Wonderland* and its sequel *Through the Looking Glass* as Keene has a chapter 'Through Magic Glasses'. This describes in detail Victorian tales written for children involving such scientific instruments as microscopes, telescopes, spectrosopes and magic lanterns, which were anthropomorphised in the hands of the author Arabella Buckley in *Through Magic Glasses* (1980). Alice herself collapses like a telescope and changes size and perspective. Perhaps we should appreciate that the author is deliberately examining and making us familiar with previously lesser-known works.

As Keene explains in her introduction:

These often quirky, usually charming, and occasionally dull stories were an important new way in which nineteenth-century Britons enthused about, communicated, and criticised the sciences. From nursery classics such as *The Water Babies* to the little-known *Wonderland of Evolution*, or the story of insect lecturer *Fairy Know-a-Bit*, the fairies and their tales were often chosen as an appropriate new form for capturing and presenting scientific and technological knowledge to young audiences. (pp.18–19)

Before the publication of *Alice*, Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies* (1862–1863) was being serialised. Nowadays it is something of a curiosity in comparison with the popularity of the two Alice books. Kingsley's watery fairy tale is, however, a significant text in Keene's study.

Another surprise for me when reading this book occurred towards the end when Keene reveals that her title is not original, but was indeed used by an earlier author, an engineer and inventor Archibald M. Low, who published *Science in Wonderland* in 1935. His central characters are twins, John and Betty, who are taken on a whirlwind adventure. They crash their bikes into an omnibus and fall, not through a looking glass, but a bus radiator and are converted into drops of water. Low chose to deploy fairy-tale conventions to communicate the latest scientific knowledge to his young readers.

Keene begins by quoting Charles Dickens' 1854 novel *Hard Times* with its wonderful satirical portrayal of utilitarianism and education being totally based on the learning of facts taught by Mr M'Choakumchild, in Gradgrind's 'model' school. Who can forget the vivid example of a cow that must be removed from the nursery in rhymes such as 'The Cow Jumped over the Moon', which inspires imagination and joy with a 'graminivorous ruminating quadruped'? Dickens might try to persuade us that the Victorians failed to provide the young with 'wonder' but in this book Keene is anxious to show that this was not the case.

It is quite fascinating to discover the variety of works, and Keene organises her material thematically, starting appropriately with dinosaurs, and *The Fairy Tales of Science* (1859) produced by chemist and journalist John Cargill Brough. We are informed that as a result of palaeontology Brough argued that an 'Age of Monsters' had replaced 'shadowy griffins and dragons' with 'real and tangible' beings. He proposed that

children should learn about iguanodons and megalosaurs as many went fossil hunting on the Dorset coastline. Among the many fascinating illustrations in this book, Keene gives us an image from Samuel Phillips' *Guide to the Crystal Palace and Park* (1854). This shows, lurking on the islands in the lake at some distance from the palace, several prehistoric animals. The next illustration shows the extinct animals' model room. Keene then moves on to the study of entomology and so the butterfly becomes the sprite. Fairies gain wings and become benign; indeed; Lucy Rider Meyer's *Real Fairy Folks, Or, The Fairy Land of Chemistry* (1887) shows an oxygen fairy holding hands with two hydrogen fairies.

With the advance of the scientific use of instruments like the microscope, there was a desire to convey the wonders of drops of water with their hidden content. The combination of water, cleanliness and domestic fairyland led to the creation of 'fairy soap' and ultimately 'Fairy Liquid' with which we are all familiar as we magically clean our homes. Moving from a focus on water, Keene moves on to evolution itself and the true fairy tale of nature.

Disappointingly Keene offers little literary criticism of the material she has included. We do have hints that not all the authors were successful in their day; for example, Albert and George Gresswells' 1884 book for children, which transported readers to a *Wonderland of Evolution*. Apparently their usual territory was veterinarian, perhaps that is why they chose to use talking animals and fairy guides with Chance, 'an airy magic sprite' and her friend 'that cunning sylph' Evolution. Contemporary reviews did not find this tale a successful children's book and considered the authors' attempts at humour 'silly', not living up to its Carrollian namesake, citing a grotesque example of a party of molluscs drinking tea and brandy.

In the succeeding chapter 'Through Magic Glasses', we learn how some authors used horticultural similes to explain the 'sky garden' of the heavens such as Agnes Giberne's *Among the Stars: Or, Woeful Things in the Sky* (1885). Ironically in the penultimate chapter 'Modern Marvels', much of the wonder is deconstructed as we move behind the scenes of the theatre to realise 'fairy lights' are really the product of newly discovered electricity. The famous author of *The Wizard of Oz* (1900), L. Frank Baum, is included as Keene explains how he was concerned about the perils as well as the potential of electricity in a lesser-known work *The Master Key: An Electrical Fairy Tale* of 1901. In this work, a young boy, Aladdin-like Rob, conjured up the Demon of Electricity who gave him access to six different types of electrical device. Despite the potential, Rob's life is endangered and he decides to reject the Demon's gifts, preferring to remain with the current devices of the age.

Ultimately Keene's argument is that,

far from being the destroyer of supernatural stories about the world, through these fairy tales the sciences were presented as being the best way to understand both contemporary society and the invisible recesses of nature, since they revealed the hidden magic of both the sciences and of everyday life. Their enchantment revealed the true wonders of nature. (p.19)

Keene has unearthed some intriguing material, but I was left wondering just how popular some of these texts were and how the young readers found them.

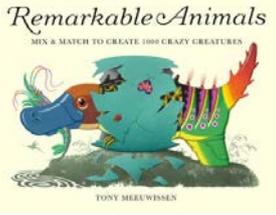
Anyone interested in the Victorians as well as children's literature will find this book fascinating as Keene has unearthed some amazing material and included some excellent illustrations for our edification.

Susan Bailes

Picture and Novelty Books

Remarkable Animals: Mix & Match to Create 1000 Crazy Creatures

Tony Meeuwissen (text and illus.), London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0632 1, £12.99, 2015, 32pp.



This is a picture book for 5 to 8-year-old children. Three side-by-side panels hang from spiral binders. The left-hand panel illustrates the head of an animal, the centre panel its midriff and the right-hand panel its rear end. As the panels are flipped over in turn, different combinations make different mythical creatures. As a panel is flipped over, its reverse side bears text accounting for the newly revealed amalgam of head, torso and tail. Since there are ten panels in each of the three positions, the total number of creatures (some real and some mythical) a child can create is $10 \times 10 \times 10$, i.e. 1,000.

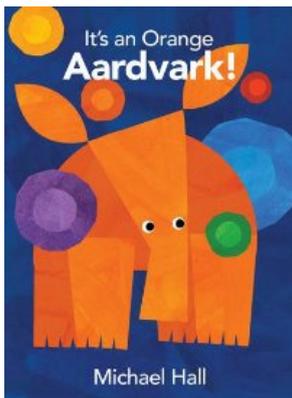
This book is bound to appeal to young readers. The illustrations are colourful and vibrant. But most of all, the book invites young readers to respond to its slightly insane combinations. The text descriptions can act as a trigger to get children discussing these creatures and their capabilities. They might like to compare them to a hippogriff.

For the benefit of parents or teachers, a reader's note at the end of the book identifies the real-life animals who co-exist with the mythical creatures.

Rebecca R. Butler

It's an Orange Aardvark!

Michael Hall, London: Words & Pictures, hb. 978 1 9102 7704 1, £11.99, 2014, 32pp.



It is Michael Hall's many years as a graphic artist and his fascination with pencils, crayon, paper and scissors that have produced a succession of innovative and colourful picture books for young children, and *It's an Orange Aardvark!* is his latest.

This bright and lively picture book relates the adventures of five carpenter ants, each wearing a colourful hard hat, who live inside a tree stump. They hear some rumbling noises, so one of them makes the first of several holes – these are die cut and crisp, and tactile on the page – in the wood so that they can see what is outside. But supposing there's an aardvark out there says one of the ants, who is more cautious than the others; aardvarks have very long tongues which are perfect for searching out and eating carpenter ants. 'Goodness!// Gracious!// Yikes!' exclaim the other four ants. But are they taking the warnings seriously? Is their alarm real or are they making fun of their cautious comrade? After all, aardvarks are usually grey. Young viewers can enjoy drawing their own conclusions here.

This is an accumulative and repetitive story: more holes are made and more colours appear through them as the ants try to guess what is outside. 'It's orange and blue. Blue like the ocean', they say at one point, but the cautious ant is not fooled. 'It's an orange aardvark wearing blue pyjamas', he insists, as more colours appear, and he is right, for the viewer can see this amazing creature; and so the guessing and the warnings go on. Then the moment comes when the impulsive ants decide that, with all those colours, it must be a rainbow out there and, eager to see it in all its glory, they leave the safety of their dark world

A visually pleasing picture book is made up of dark and light rhythms, with the black ants inside their tree stump placed against a near-black background on the left of each double spread, and the brightly coloured aardvark, and later some ant-eating geckos, placed against a white background on the right. As the story develops, the pages become busier with the overlapping shapes and the holes jostling with each other for our attention. One page in particular is bursting with colour and energy as the 'pyjama-wearing, ketchup-carrying, gecko-guiding, orange aardvark' and the geckos descend on the ants' tree stump. The double spreads that feature the five ants only are lively too:

busy with shapes, busy with colour, and busy with words and chatty conversation, all of which make the viewer's eyes dart over the pictures and cleverly suggest the activity of an active ant colony – albeit a small one.

Words and phrases are repeated throughout the story, thus encouraging reading aloud, and also familiarising the young reader with new sounds and rhythms: the alliterative 'guiding a group of green geckos' may be challenging, but fun to play with. There are some nice, amusing touches too: 'Have you noticed we have wings?', one of the ants asks looking sidelong at the viewer and thus further involving her/him in the story.

This picture book, with its endearing characters depicted in simple angular and curved shapes, is an entertaining way of learning about colours and of learning some new words. It is a valuable addition to the young reader's bookshelf.

June Hopper Swain

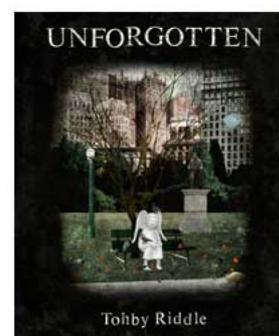
Unforgotten

Tohby Riddle, Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, hb. 978 1 7423 7972 2, £14.99, 2012, 128pp.

Unforgotten, a picture book aimed at 12 year olds and over, tells the story of one winged messenger, one of Riddle's 'impossible birds', who, drawn to Earth to 'watch over and to warm and to mend' the inhabitants there, is itself overcome by what it finds and gradually sinks down to the ground. In a weakened state, this being (who is referred to as 'it' throughout) wanders, dreamlike, through the city streets busy with commuters and those from other lands and other ages, trying to find a place to rest. Mostly, this angel's presence goes unnoticed; only a very few individuals and some birds and animals are clear sighted enough to see it. At last, mistaken for a stone statue, the angel is given a resting place on a plinth in a park, and here it might have really turned to stone had not a clown and two children with two dogs and a duck come to the rescue. Now *it* is given shelter and watched over and warmed and mended until, revived, it leaves the Earth as silently as it had come.

This is a picture book of few words – the whole text being brought together as one stanza at the end of the pictorial narrative – and these prompt the viewer to look closely at the very detailed pictures. Riddle uses photographic backgrounds and these mostly show the negative aspects of city life: the tenement blocks, industrial landscapes and the pollution from belching, acrid smoke, a dreary motorway underpass, and the graffiti, the litter and sometimes the squalid conditions in which some individuals exist. Against these settings – and the angelic being is present in all of them – Riddle's depictions of the individuals are telling. While some of the figures are drawn, like the angel, others are cut-out photographs of real people, sometimes with their heads replaced by depictions of stone ones, often from classical Greek statues, and these render the faces strangely passive, devoid of all feeling, most of them seemingly absorbed in their isolation. Because the pictures, many of them quite dark, also invariably have black surrounds, the ever-present angel is a constant point of light. The sequence of pictures that show the rescue of this being by the clown (surely symbolising tears and laughter, and therefore an analogy of the human experience) and his friends and their tender administrations is beautifully expressed in line and colour, and is an effective contrast to the photographic images.

Riddle successfully conveys the vulnerability of human beings, and particularly in a busy city, the sense of isolation that they can sometimes experience; he also focuses, however, on their capacity for reaching out to others with warmth, compassion and understanding. This is an imaginative, thought-provoking picture book with both images and text suggesting another dimension beyond the Earthly realm. It is certainly open to discussion and interpretation.



At either end of this hardback edition, the endpapers show a filmic sequence of stills of the angel in flight. To view an animated version on Youtube, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oze4QJNR18A>.

June Hopper Swain

The Wizardling

Binette Schroeder, trans. Siobhán Parkinson, Dublin, Ireland: Little Island, hb. 978 1 9104 1100 1, £11.99, 2014, 32pp.

Wizzo lands on Dragon Rock and meets Dradru, the little Dragon Girl. She is hungry – a perfect opportunity for Wizzo to practise his magic. But what happens if you forget your magic word?

This is a gentle humorous take on ‘The Sorcerer’s Apprentice’ that would be perfect for sharing at bedtime. Translated from the German by Siobhán Parkinson, there is plenty of opportunity for onomatopoeia and lively language. Binette Schroeder’s illustrations provide a visual feast to complement Wizzo’s conjuring. Rich swathes of colour cover each double-page spread, creating an enchanted world full of details for the young reader to discover and enjoy. Schroeder’s work is not seen enough today, and this example should find its way into libraries and into the hands of young readers. There is nothing to frighten – just a shiver when the scary wolf appears – but plenty to delight.

Ferelith Hordon

Information Books and Non-Fiction

Tell me a Picture: Adventures in Looking at Art

Quentin Blake, London: Frances Lincoln Children’s Books in association with the National Gallery, hb. 978 1 8478 0642 0, £12.99, 2014, 64pp.

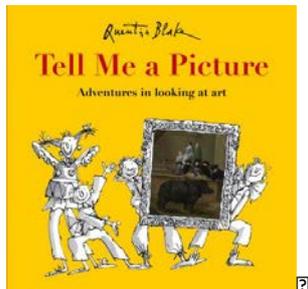
First published to accompany an exhibition at the National Gallery, London, 14 February – 17 June 2001, *Tell me a Picture* is the work of Sir Quentin Blake, the first UK children’s laureate, who served from 1999 to 2001. As children’s laureate he wanted to fulfil an aim of his laureateship: to raise the profile of writing and drawing for children. The author acknowledges that *Tell me a Picture* would not have been possible without the support and enthusiasm of the staff of the National Gallery’s education department, especially that of Ghislaine Kenyon.

This reissue, with its high-quality paper and colour reproduction, contains a new introduction, ‘A Word of Explanation’, in which Blake explains his methodology. His basic idea was that illustrations, recent paintings and Old Master paintings, 26 in all, were placed in alphabetical order so that there was no hierarchy of respect or importance or barriers to spontaneous reactions from the spectator. In *Quentin Blake: Laureate’s Progress* (2002), Blake also explains how the director of exhibitions, Michael Wilson, encouraged him to draw on the walls of the gallery, which was achieved by enlarging the drawings onto vinyl and sticking them on. As Ghislaine Kenyon writes later:

This cheerfully familiar, near life-size crew had the effect of halting the children in their instinctive rush to get to the end of anything; being children, they understood the game, you looked at the drawings and then moved on to look at what the drawings were looking at with such engagement.

As Blake himself observed:

Children make random comments and enquiries; except, of course, they are not random, but quite carefully reflect some of the questions you would want raised in (say) the classroom.



One exhibition visitor told Blake: 'We think it ought to go on for ever'. By reissuing this book, countless more young people can engage with art and have real pleasure from the variety of works.

Blake is a true master of lively, spirited, joyful drawing, making use of movement with a minimum use of lines, effectively communicating mood and actions. Each piece of art in this book is given its own two-page spread and is deliberately left untitled. He imaginatively links each painting with his own drawings of children by the deft use of detail. One example is Pietro Longhi's painting that records the exhibition by a showman of a rhinoceros for the Venice carnival of 1751. As was typical, each viewer wears a mask, just as Blake depicts one of his children wearing a mask. Similarly, Blake chooses a goose and a doll to be carried by the figures in his sketches for David Jones' 1924 painting *The Garden Enclosed*, which shows several geese leaving the garden and a discarded doll on the ground.

Another feature of this book is that the artists and subject matter are extremely varied in period and style, ranging from Paolo Uccello's *Saint George and the Dragon*, painted in 1470, to the twentieth-century illustrator John Burningham's 1989 illustration from *O! Get off our Train*, so appealing to universal tastes. Very helpfully at the end of the book, Blake provides us with further thoughts on viewing art, and information about each painting and its artist. *Tell me a Picture* is a stimulating, creative way to inspire children and could also be used for writing projects as each work could be the starting point for narrative or drama.

This book is a fascinating source of wonder. Suitable for 5+, Blake has successfully communicated his belief that looking at great illustrations can be the first step on a lifelong appreciation of great art.

Susan Bailes

Heracles' 12 Great Labours. Reports from the Field as they really Happened!

Serge Sedoff, illus Tatyana Kormer, trans. Melanie Moore, London: St Jim's Press (St James' Publishing), hb. 978 0 9928 9250 0, £14.99, 2014, 98pp.

Heracles is always a good subject; his Twelve Labours still exciting the imagination of modern children. This version by Serge Sedoff and translated by Melanie Moore is an excellent addition to the shelves. Adopting a direct voice, the author takes the role of a reporter. The immediacy is refreshing, allowing plenty of humour to be added to the narrative without detracting from the action; the translation reflects this admirably. Tatyana Kormer's designs are reminiscent of Greek-vase paintings, full of life and energy. This is a version that could be read aloud with success or enjoyed quietly by oneself. Definitely recommended.

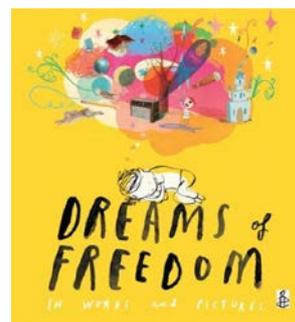
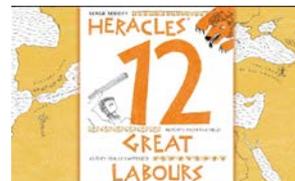
Ferelith Hordon

Dreams of Freedom

Fiona Noble (ed.), London: Frances Lincoln, in association with Amnesty International, hb. 978 1 8478 0453 2, 2015, £12.99, 48pp.

Freedom is an easy word to say; it slips off the tongue. But what does it mean? We all take it very much for granted, but children, complaining of the restrictions imposed by adults and parents, often feel they have no freedom. Here is a book to help challenge such a view and give direction to thoughts about freedoms – freedoms that sadly many do not enjoy.

Frances Lincoln and Amnesty International have already partnered in *We Are All Born Free*, celebrating the Declaration of Human Rights. Here the format is the same. Well-



known and outstanding international artists and illustrators including Roger Mello, Barroux and Jackie Morris, create images to accompany the words of human rights activists from Mandela to Malala, Anne Frank to the Dalai Lama. This is a book to inspire reflection and discussion. Whether used quietly with one child, with a class, or to inspire an assembly, this is a book that should be prominently displayed everywhere.

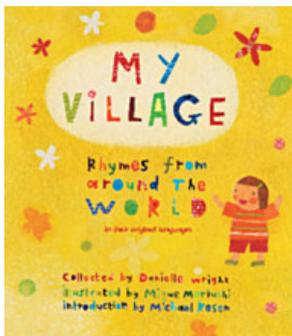
See 'Dreams of Freedom in words and pictures' in the Children's Books area of *The Guardian* online. You can see 11 of the wonderful illustrations and read the captions: www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/gallery/2015/feb/11/dreams-of-freedom-human-rights-amnesty-international.

Ferelith Hordon

Poetry

My Village: Rhymes from around the World

Danielle Wright (collector), illus. Mique Moriuchi, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0627 7, £11.99, [2010] 2014, 48pp. First published in Australia and New Zealand in 2008 by Gecko Press, Wellington, New Zealand.



Before I describe and review the contents, I start with a few remarks about the book in general. This new edition has an introduction by Michael Rosen, a former children's laureate. In his introduction he refers to nursery thymes, and gives a brief history of them in the English language. From this I assume that all the rhymes in this book are nursery rhymes. The Contents lists rhymes from 23 countries. All except three are given in the original language alongside the English translation. The excerpts that are in English only are those from Ireland, Jamaica and Samoa. So to whom will this book appeal? Each poem (with a translation if there is one) takes up a double spread. It will certainly be useful to any school or nursery with multi-ethnic pupils, and to any carer and parent with a multi-cultural family. However, the illustrations are fantastic (more on these below) and I challenge anyone to not fall in love with them and to treasure this book.

I am not a fan of 'design' fonts and couldn't decipher all the letters in the name of the illustrator on the front cover and had to turn to the title verso. There are also a few design issues within the book. For example, I searched for the name of the country on the first spread, as 'New Zealand' was in green on a black background. Also the text of this poem doesn't stand out well on its blue background. The same is true of a few other pages, fortunately most have pale backgrounds on which the black text and clear font make the words stand out well.

To me, a nursery rhyme jogs along, with the child being rocked or jogged, or is clapping and/or joins in. Sometimes the lines have a rhythm, others have hand movements. For example, 'Jack and Jill' has a rhythm, and 'Incy Wincy Spider' has a rhythm and hand movements. Of course you may not agree with me on my definition of a nursery rhyme! Checking in my dictionary for a definition, it gives 'a short traditional verse or song for children' – a very wide category!

The choice for New Zealand is 'Big Whale' and as the other language is Maori, I assume the English is a translation. While the original Maori version has a rhyme, the English doesn't. However, the translator has preserved the pattern of the original in the English version. This is important as the rhyme is described in the copyright information as an action rhyme:

Big whale
Long whale
Very fat whale
Swish your tail, whale

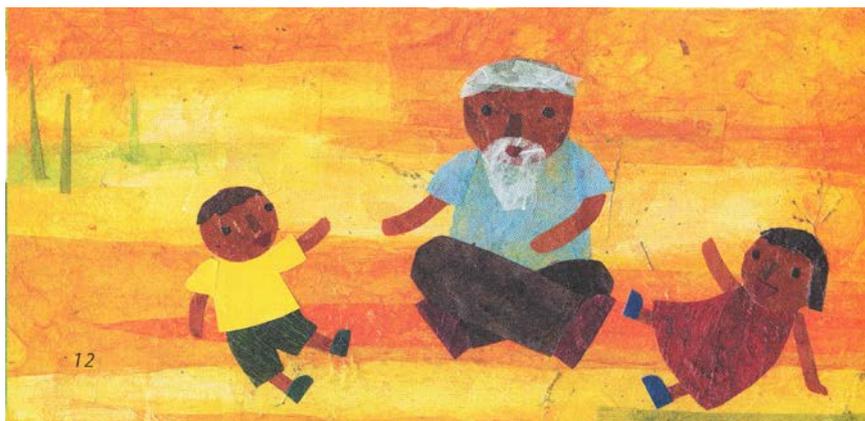
Spout your blowhole, whale
Whale swimming in the sea. (p.8)

The illustrator must have been very happy with the choice of rhyme for New Zealand. She has a swishing whale right across the page, with bubbles above, and smaller fish underneath and beside the whale. The blues and black indicate the underwater environment. Lovely.

Although some poems are more than one verse, many are only one. I like this one from Australia, the original is an Aboriginal rhyme in the Kurna language, but the Ngarrindjerei version is given. Here is the English translation 'Grandfather':

Grandfather, Grandfather;
Won't you tell me
Stories of our land,
So you can teach me
Who are my people
And from where they came.
Grandfather, Grandfather;
What is my name? (p.12)

The illustration evokes the heat and scrub of much of the Australian hinterland. The sun blazes above the bearded grandfather talking to his granddaughter and grandson, a bare tree above them. Various shades of yellow and orange with a few greens are used. Again very atmospheric.



'Let's Play' is the verse for Iran. The first verse goes:

I'm a ball, soft and round,
Throw and catch me, up and down;
Play with me till bedtime. (p.32)

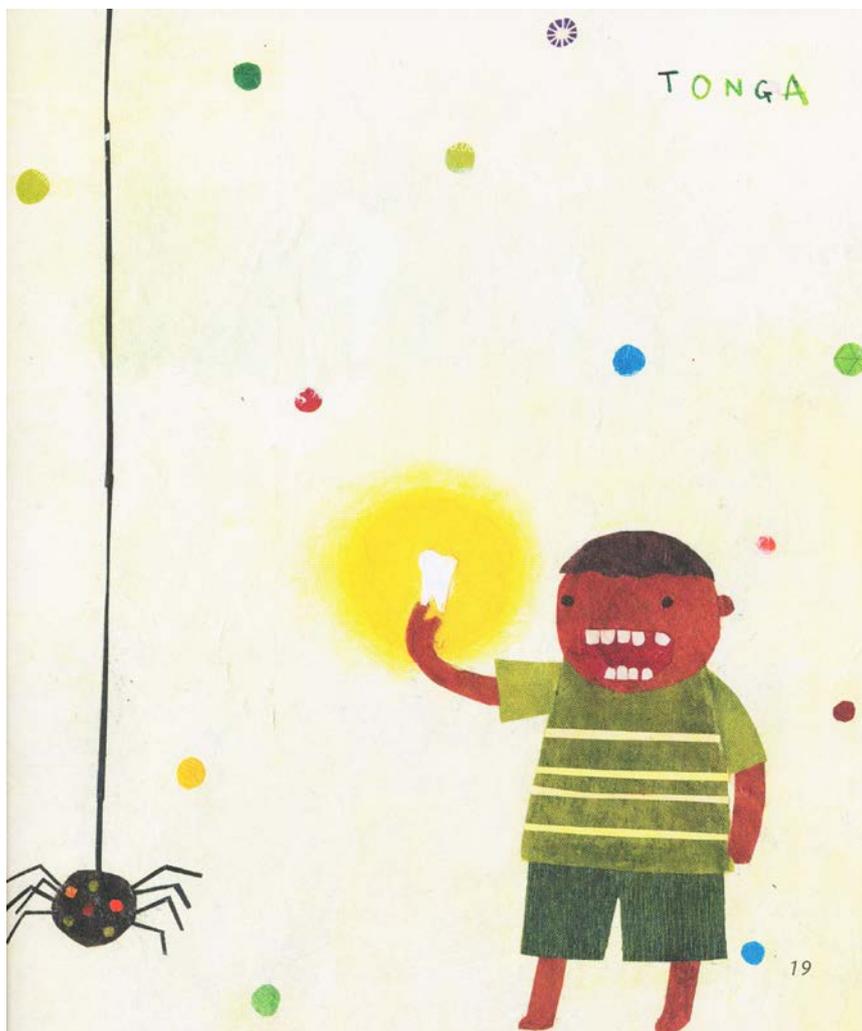
The illustration here is of children in a play park, two on a swing, two playing with a ball, one on a slide with another running towards the ladder, and a man approaching the park with a child on his back and a dog following him. The trees seem to have virtual decorations to indicate fun. The colours are not vivid and although the ground is in orange-brown hues and the mound outside the park in green hues, the trees are in every colour and not what you would expect!

I cannot choose more than one last one or I shall spoil the book for you. Ireland's choice is only in English 'Little Donkey'. It is one of the longest. Here is verse five:

His face was wistful
And left no doubt
The he felt life needed
Some thinking out. (p.16)

The background is pale blue with a few darker shades but still mute. The donkey stands on a patch of grass, studded with one crocus-shaped blue flower and three star-shaped flat flowers in the grass. His head is one side as he thinks – you can imagine the poem from the illustration. It says it all. (See p.1.)

It is hard to summarise this book. It has verses that will be repeated and repeated as a child gets to know them. I shall read it again and again and learn many. The illustrations are superb. It is not easy to show many of the illustrations here as they are double spreads, so for a final example, here is an illustration for the poem 'Hina, Hina' ('Spotty Spider') by Wanda Cowley (also translated into English by her) on p.18.



Acknowledgements

All the quoted poems in this review are from *My Village: Rhymes from Around the World* collected by Danielle Wright, illustrated by Mique Moriuchi with an introduction by Michael Rosen and published by Frances Lincoln Ltd © 2015.

p.8 'The Blue Whale' translated by Lorraine (Te Rohe) Johnston. Reproduced by permission of Frances Lincoln with thanks to John Archer, Melinda Butt and Fiona McIntyre.

p.12 'Grandfather' by Ruby Hammond and Rob Amery. Reproduced by permission of Frances Lincoln Ltd.

p.18 From 'Little Donkey' by Elizabeth Shane. Reproduced by permission of Frances Lincoln with thanks to Máire Ní Chonalláin, David Todd and Berni Campbell.

p.32 'Let's Play' by Farideh Khalatbaree. Reproduced by permission of Frances Lincoln Ltd with thanks to Shabaviz Publications.

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Jennifer Harding

Books for Reluctant or Struggling Readers

Goal: Football around the World

Caio Vilela (text and photos) and Sean Taylor (trans.), London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0597 3, £7.99, 2015, 40pp.

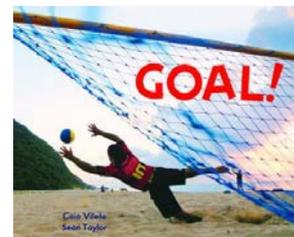
There is a constituency of interest to authors and their publishers, a hitherto untapped market. It is that group of children who regard reading as either a waste of time or a penance. Some experts would argue that most of the members of this constituency happen to be male.

This book is devoted to these reluctant readers. It is a celebration of a world in which football is king, a world ruled by strikers, defensive midfielders and classic number 10s, where Messi and Ronaldo walk on water.

The book consists largely of action photographs with minimal text commentary. Aiming at an eclectic readership, one of the photographs even features a girl. A tangential benefit of this book may be to deliver a geography lesson featuring the countless countries in which the beautiful game is played.

This reviewer once tutored a boy for whom football was a way of life, almost a religion. Anything that interested such a boy in reading would deserve my humble gratitude.

Rebecca R. Butler



Information Books and Non-Fiction

The Story of Life: A First Book about Evolution

Catherine Barr and Steve Williams (text) and Amy Husband (illus.), London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0485 3, £12.08, 2015, 40pp.

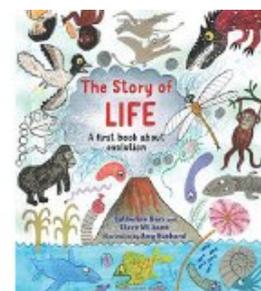
At the heart of this book for young readers lies a massive irony. As a result of a long and complex transition, humanity reaches the point of self-awareness at which we can ask ourselves how we got here. What is the process that originated life itself? And how did we humans emerge from that long process? And, finally, where are we heading?

Ever since Darwin first accounted for the origins of species, evolutionary theory has been involved in a hotly contested debate with traditional religion. Even today, when scientific evidence supports both the Big Bang theory and evolution, the teaching of creation theory as valid science still persists.

This book presents the story of evolution in simple and readily understandable form. Its presentation is in general admirable. It does, however, miss one important trick. Darwin described accurately what happened as generation succeeded generation and favourable survival features were handed down. This book accomplishes the same vital task. But Darwin did not understand how the process worked. Not until Crick and Watson cracked the genetic code of DNA was the process of transmission understood. Barr and Williams might have made this clear.

Nevertheless this is a valuable book and one which any science teacher of KS1 and KS2 pupils or a parent could usefully acquire.

Rebecca R. Butler



The 22nd Annual IBBY UK/NCRCL MA conference will take place at Roehampton University, London, on Saturday 14 November 2015. The title is 'Steering the Craft: Navigating the Process of Creating Children's Books in the 21st Century'. The call for papers is on the IBBY UK website www.ibby.org.uk/ and the NCRCL blog <https://ncrcl.wordpress.com/>. The deadline for proposals is Wednesday 24 June 2015 and should be submitted to Julia.Noyce@roehampton.ac.uk.

The next issue of *IBBYLink* is *IBBYLink* 44, Autumn 2015 (copydate 30 June 2015), will be on Latin America and Mexico.

Articles on other subjects are also welcomed. Contributions to Ferelith Hordon: fhordon@aol.com.

If you are interested in becoming a reviewer for *IBBYLink*, contact Judith Philo: jphilo@waitrose.com. New reviewers are always welcome.

Titles for Review

Publishers and others with books to be reviewed in *IBBYLink* should send them to Judith Philo at 194 Tufnell Park Road, London E7 0EE; jphilo@waitrose.com.

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