

Childhood

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From Jane Ray's *The Nutcracker*. London: Orchard Books. Copyright © 2011. Reproduced with permission. (See below.)

EDITORIAL

Childhood; a golden age – the ‘Dream Days’ of Kenneth Grahame or a difficult period of purgatory? So often we look back and remember with affection even situations that at the time would have been painful. For Jacqueline Wilson, childhood was not a halcyon period. She has lovely memories as she tells us – but her looking back is not one of unalloyed pleasure. For Paul Boateng, however, growing up in Ghana, his memories come through the lens of the books he read so avidly. A testimony to the power of the storytellers, almost all of whom were British.

Childhood – for much of history it has been ignored since it was the achieving of adulthood and status that was important. However, over the past century ‘childhood’ has become a concept, and attitudes to childhood have become a subject of interest to academics.

Hugh Cunningham looks at a change that has taken place in the way childhood has been viewed since the beginning of the twentieth century; changes that are reflected in the way authors treat the child

as a subject and how childhood is reflected through the media. How we think of childhood will affect how we define the literature written for children – and define how authors write for children.

Karenanne Knight asks ‘How have the books read by today’s children been inspired by the childhoods of those who have gone before them?’

Children’s literature, the world of publishing for children, provides a rich field for research. Susan Bailes in reviewing *The Child Reader 1700–1840* by Matthew Grenby allows us to see just how rich and interesting this area of study can be.

Indeed childhood itself, the culture of childhood, is an area that is now attracting attention as can be seen in the establishment of the Centre for Childhood Cultures demonstrates.

Childhood – a period to be treasured? Or a time to be endured? As our articles suggest, childhood as a state is viewed through the memory. For the child it is still, as it was, a passage to adulthood.

Ferelith Hordon

IBBY UK 2016 Christmas card

This year’s IBBY UK Christmas card is an illustration from Jane Ray’s *The Nutcracker*. The illustration chosen is shown on the title page here.

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Full details of how to order this card and all IBBY UK cards available can be found at www.ibby.org.uk/greeting-cards.php.

Hugh Cunningham

Narratives are seductive and powerful. They make sense of the world. They are resistant to alternative versions of reality or of the imagination. In Britain there have been two narratives about childhood. The first, positive and optimistic, was dominant by the end of the nineteenth century and survived through to the 1970s. But since then we have been in the grip of a negative narrative.

In 1942 Sylvia Lynd, poet and essayist, was confident that 'the story of English children at the present hour is a story that moves towards a happy ending'. Lynd's 'story' began in the Industrial Revolution, the age of 'the martyrdom of childhood' when children worked in appalling conditions climbing chimneys and toiling in mines and factories (Lynd, 1942). The shock, the sense that God would bring down judgement on a nation that so mistreated its children, was all the greater because the Romantic poets had sowed the seeds of a belief that childhood was the best time of life, that children were born innocent, 'trailing clouds of glory ... from God' as Wordsworth put it (1807).

Rescue for these 'children without childhood', however, was at hand. In the story, it was led and inspired by philanthropists such as Lord Ashley, who headed the campaign in parliament for better conditions for working children. He was, as a biography of 1926 put it, 'the Moses who led the children of bondage into their Promised Land'. The 'Promised Land' was in one sense 'childhood'; more mundanely it was school (J. Wesley Bready, 1926, p.69).

Ashley's concern stretched beyond working children. He took up the cause of street children who were at the forefront of public attention in the mid-nineteenth century. Here, too, schooling was seen as the remedy, first in the Ragged Schools pioneered in the 1840s, then in Barnardos, and finally in the spread of compulsory schooling in the later nineteenth century.

In the optimistic narrative there was one further element, the rescue of children from neglect, mistreatment and abuse by adults. Here the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), founded in 1889, was seen as playing the crucial role. The NSPCC constructed a less than accurate version of history in which children enjoyed no protection under law until it itself provided such protection.

Government, in harness with philanthropists, played a crucial role in the rescue of children. It passed factory acts and education acts and what were called children's charters, it set up inspectorates. Arnold Toynbee 'tremble[d] to think what this country would have been but for the Factory Acts' (Scherer, 1916).

We can see the positive narrative in place with the reflections on childhood at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. Children had gone through the crisis of the industrial revolution and been rescued for childhood. The nation could congratulate itself. In 1897 W. Clarke Hall, a barrister who worked with the NSPCC, described how when Victoria came to the throne,

the great Juggernaut car of unscrupulous commercialism, private greed, and domestic inhumanity rolled upon its way with none to hinder. Tracing our way back down the dim avenues of the years, we see the white and mouldering bones of the child victims which its cruel wheels have crushed. (W. Clarke Hall, 1897)

But the juggernaut had now, in 1897, been halted: year by year, 'the number of its victims becomes more few, the shout of the happy, rescued children more loud and more glad'.

Children themselves learnt the story. In the elementary schools one song they sang carried the title, 'Oh Happy English Children'. But they may not have been convinced. In

The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists (1914), Robert Tressell has one of his least pleasant characters tell children ‘how thankful you should be for having been made happy English children’, the children then being urged to show their gratitude by subscribing towards the renovation of the chapel.

There was, however, no major challenge to the positive narrative in the first half of the twentieth century; rather it became embedded. In 1903 the author of a standard textbook, H. de B. Gibbins, summarised his account in the words: ‘Only think of the triumphs that have been won in this generation for the children of England’. In the inter-war years the journalist and suffragist Evelyn Sharp described how as a young girl in the 1880s she ‘had no idea that she stood at the dawn of a new age that was going to revolutionise all childhood’ – and for the better. In 1930 Sir George Newman, Chief Medical Officer at the Ministry of Health, could rejoice that ‘one of the darkest chapters of our social history’ was over, ‘the long and shameful story of cruelty and oppression is ended’ (Newman, 1930). Children, it was frequently said, had a right to health and happiness, and, increasingly they enjoyed both. Sylvia Lynd celebrated that achievement in 1942. It would, however, have been preferable to suggest a more nuanced narrative, one that pointed up the widespread institutionalisation of children or the suffering experienced by many children when they were emigrated to Canada and Australia.

The positive narrative kept going into the 1970s at both national and international level. In 1973 Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt published the second of two volumes of *Children in English Society*. They opened with a chapter on the eighteenth century entitled ‘Childhood without Rights and Protection’ and ended with the passage of the Children Act of 1948. It was a story of progress. In 1974 Lloyd de Mause in *The History of Childhood* argued that the further back in history you go, ‘the lower the level of child care, and the more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized, and sexually abused’. The optimism was worldwide. In 1973 the International Labour Organisation passed its Minimum Age Convention, setting 15 as the age below which no child should work. The years that followed were to show how unrealistic that was.

Already in the 1970s, however, a new narrative began to emerge, and it’s one that people of my generation love to tell. Here the personal and the historical narratives overlap. We were taught the progressive narrative, and we’ve seen it disintegrate. Our story begins with our own childhoods in the middle years of the twentieth century and ends in the present. In our childhoods, we say, we had freedom to explore our world without constant adult supervision. Depending on our social background and where we lived, our mothers might turn us out of doors after breakfast and tell us not to come back until teatime, or we might have the freedom to roam in the countryside – an Arthur Ransome childhood. No one talked about ‘health and safety’ or about ‘risk assessment’. Autism, dyslexia, self-harming, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, eating disorders, the things parents and children worry about now, none of these featured in our lives or, so far as we knew, in those of our parents. We had scrapes and knocks, probably some sad old man in a mac exposed himself to us, but we took this in our stride – we were not ‘traumatised’. Our childhoods were happy, they were proper childhoods. Those growing up in the 1970s, however, were the last generation of children to remember their childhoods as free. Since then, according to one survey, the world that children explore on their own has shrunk by a factor of nine.

The pessimistic narrative gains much of its potency from names, the names of children who have died through neglect, or been murdered, or abducted. Maria Colwell, killed by her stepfather in 1973 despite, in the last nine months of her life, 30 complaints about the way her mother and stepfather treated her, was the first in a roll call that has never stopped: Jasmine Beckford, James Bulger, Sarah Payne, Victoria Climbié, Madeleine McCann, Peter Connelly. In the negative narrative the world is far from being a safe place for children. In home, street, school, in the institutions (‘homes’)

where some children have lived, many of them church run, in the BBC or in hospital, as we know post Jimmy Savile, there is, the story tells us, danger for children.

In the twenty-first century international surveys of the welfare and well-being of children lent weight to the negative narrative. In the 2007 UNICEF survey of the 1950 welfare of children in 21 advanced economies the UK came 21st. Recent surveys have confirmed the negative narrative (UNICEF, 2013). In 2015, under the heading 'Bottom of the class in pupil wellbeing table', *The Guardian* reported that in a survey of 10–12 year-olds in 15 countries only South Korea was lower than England. In 2016 England came 13th out of 16 countries for the happiness of eight year olds and 40th out of 42 countries for that of teenagers (Weale, 2015).

There are, it has to be said, other surveys that reach very different conclusions. When UNICEF in 2013 published a further study of children's well-being in the richer countries, the headlines and articles had in some sense been written before the report emerged: we knew it would be bad news, the negative narrative demanded that. It was in fact even on the most cursory look better news than in 2007 – Britain had climbed out of bottom place to being 16th out of 29 countries. But, while grudgingly accepting this, most reporting highlighted the negative. You wouldn't have known from press reports that the survey showed improvement on the following indices: infant mortality, poverty and, amongst 11, 13 and 15 year olds, being bullied, fighting, drunkenness, cannabis use, being overweight. There was also for 11–15 year olds a significant rise in self-reported life satisfaction which now stood at 86%. The 2006 Youth Survey of the British Household Panel Survey confirmed that 87% of 11–16 year olds rated their life as a whole as happy rather than unhappy, 9% were neutral, leaving only 4% unhappy.

These surveys, positive or negative, need to be taken with teaspoons of salt: is it credible that the top three countries for the happiness of eight year olds were Romania, Poland and Colombia, or that the happiness of eight year old Poles translated into the deepest unhappiness for their teenagers? (UNICEF, 2013) Nevertheless they help to shape and inform the dominant narrative.

Narratives make sense of the world but they do not necessarily reflect the world as it is. The narratives I've considered are extremely powerful, in effect mind-sets that can incorporate into the story anything that is thrown at them. Huge numbers of adults in twenty-first century Britain have bought into the negative narrative and internalised it, clinging onto a romantic and idealised view of childhood. They simply refuse to hear any good news. I've heard many people say that they had 'an idyllic childhood', never anyone claiming to be enjoying an idyllic adulthood. The idyllic childhoods are constructed by adults; in a world where adulthood itself has changed enormously, childhood, it is argued, should remain as we like to remember it. 'Hold on to childhood' is the cry. It is perhaps a mistake to suppose that children share this view or subscribe to this narrative. Most children through most of history have looked forward to growing up. We need to be sceptical of straightforward, unambiguous narratives. Any novelist knows that.

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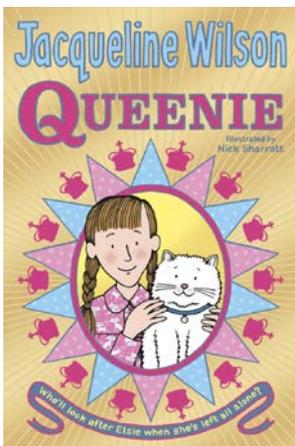
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- [Hugh Cunningham is Emeritus Professor of Social History, University of Kent. He is the author of books including the following: *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century* (Blackwell, 1991), *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (Longman, 1995, revised edition, 2005), *The Invention of Childhood* (BBC Books, 2006) and *Grace Darling: Victorian Heroine* (Hambledon Continuum, 2007).]

My Childhood

Jacqueline Wilson



I once wrote a book called *Queenie* set in the 1950s about a little girl desperate to go to the Coronation. I didn't have to do any research at all because I was a child then too. I have very vivid memories of Coronation Day, mostly because my parents had splashed out and bought a television so we could watch the ceremony in the comfort of our own home. We had to squint close up to the screen because the set was saucepan size and the black and white picture was very grainy – but there she was, the Queen herself, processing up and down Westminster Abbey, no longer just a transfer picture on her own souvenir Coronation mug.

I enjoyed talking to children after the book was published, but their reactions startled me.

'Oh, I love reading historical books,' said one child.

Well, fair enough, the fifties are technically history.

'It's so interesting finding out about olden times,' said another.

Olden times. *Really?*

'I know all about them. You used to wear skirts down to the ground and no-one even showed their ankles,'

said a third.

It was alarming realising that for many children I might just have well been a Victorian child. 1850s, 1950s, it was all deeply buried in the past. My childhood took place in a world modern children would find bizarre, without mobile phones or electronic games or social media. They would find 1950's children baffling too. They would think us

unbelievably ignorant about the facts of life and mock the way we were dressed in puff-sleeved frocks and shorts and sandals, even when approaching adolescence.

Perhaps they'd be reluctantly impressed to learn that we walked to school by ourselves by the time we were six or seven, we could make cups of tea and simple meals, were sent off to do the shopping and would play unsupervised all day long during the holidays.

Those long holidays in the Summer were the best part of my childhood. I remember the joy of the last day of term when we all skipped home chanting 'No more Latin, no more French, no more sitting on the old wooden bench'. I went to a very ordinary state primary. We sat on hard little chairs, not benches, and we certainly didn't learn Latin or French, but no matter. It was the holidays!

I was nervous about going *on* holiday, our annual week at Clacton-on-Sea. I loved making sandcastles, I loved swimming in the freezing sea, I loved the amusement arcade on the pier, I loved the Walls dairy ice cream I was allowed as a special treat, but I was tense about the time we were cooped up as a family in our small hotel room. My parents disliked each other and had frequent tempestuous rows. They'd have been so much happier if they'd simply split up, but divorce was such a shameful word you could only whisper it. They were sticking together for the sake of the child. Me.

But I had a wonderful time the other five weeks. My mum started work in a cake shop when I was six. She'd often let me stay in bed in the mornings. I'd sit propped against the pillow with my library books and my Woolworths shiny red notebook and my biro and my drawing book and my Derwent colouring pencils and my shoebox of my favourite paper dolls – and the morning disappeared in a matter of minutes. I never got bored so long as I could read and write and draw. I particularly loved playing with my paper dolls.

They weren't specially drawn paper dolls with clothes with little white tags to anchor them in place. They were people I'd carefully cut out of dressmaking pattern books, women and little girls. I wasn't interested in little boys, and the only men I could find in the fashion books wore pyjamas and looked silly. I made up elaborate and engrossing games about girls' schools and orphanages with the cast I had to hand.

My mum rushed home with my lunch, specially chosen from the cake shop, usually a big bath bun and a cream cake too squashed to sell. I ate these eagerly. I loved the suppers my mother cooked too, especially sausages and bacon and chips. Perhaps it wasn't surprising that I suffered a lot of bilious attacks as a child.

But of course most of my childhood was spent at school. I've been to both my primary and secondary schools several times as a visiting author and they're delightful places now. Things were very different in the fifties. Even the kindest of teachers in the infants would rub soap in the mouth of any child who dared be cheeky or say a naughty word, and anyone who wouldn't do as they were told were smacked hard on the back of their legs.

Teachers in the junior school were allowed to use canes, although thank goodness there seemed an unwritten rule that this was inappropriate for girls. We could all have hard blackboard erasers thrown at our heads if we yawned or looked dozy in class, and our knuckles rapped with rulers if we made a spelling mistake or ink blot.

Even so, I actually quite enjoyed primary school, especially as several teachers praised my writing skills, and PE and games weren't taken too seriously. Secondary school was very different. It was an all-girls school, newly established, with a very modern shiny new building. The teachers weren't at all modern. The headmistress was positively Victorian in her attitudes.

The staff seemed to think the girls could be bullied into submission. There was no evidence of common sense or fairness. Girls were publicly humiliated if they didn't

have the correct uniform or Clarks school shoes, even though it was often obvious they came from poor families. If they spoke with an accent or used incorrect grammar they were mocked and fiercely corrected. If they failed to wear their school beret outside they were severely punished. If they didn't show total devotion to the school and its rules they were told they had no team spirit and would be total failures as adults. And even the brightest, beautifully behaved girls were advised that they could follow only two possible careers, nursing and teaching, both to be given up as soon as they married, let alone started a family.

These past schools don't just seem in another country, they come from a different planet altogether. I hated secondary school. My diaries seethe with frustration. I was already earnestly attempting to write novels but I never seemed to have enough time. I had to apply myself to lessons all day and homework half the evening.

My parents had left school as soon as possible and didn't see the point of further education. Sadly, at that time of my life, I didn't either. I left school joyfully at sixteen – and I suppose I left childhood too. In another year's time I had left home altogether, and was entirely self-supporting as a junior journalist in Scotland. I was poor and sometimes lonely, but I vastly preferred my new adult independent life.

I was happy to be free of childhood. It's perhaps a strange irony that I immerse myself in so many fictional childhoods nowadays!

[Dame Jacqueline Wilson is the author of over a hundred books for children in a forty-year writing career. She is the creator of Tracy Beaker and has had many of her titles adapted for the stage and television. A bestselling author, she has taken every opportunity to meet her readers and is a keen supporter of work with vulnerable children and children in care. She has received a number of awards and honours, including the Chancellorship of Roehampton University, where she is Visiting Professor of Children's Literature. She was IBBY UK's nominee for the 2014 Hans Andersen Award and her latest published title is *Clower Moon*, a tale of Victorian London (illus. Nick Sharratt; Doubleday Childrens, 2016).]

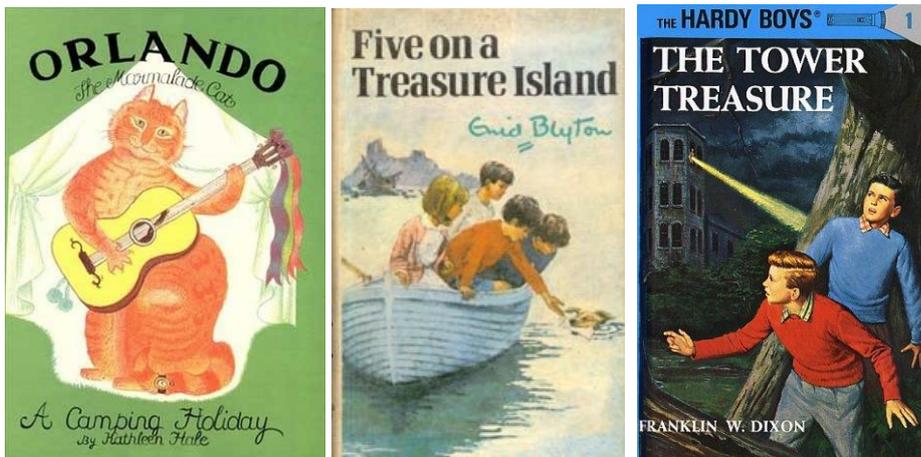
A Childhood Remembered

Paul Boateng

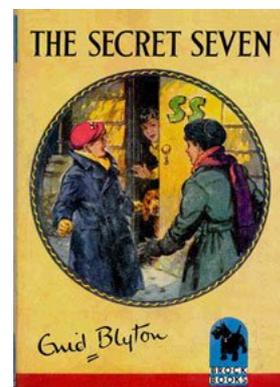
Books are for me often linked to special people and places, so my earliest memories of reading centre around my mother, my grandfather, an inspirational librarian and a very special teacher. We were a reading family so always had books at home, but my independent reading adventures began in a library. This library, the first dedicated children's library in sub-Saharan Africa was a place of wonder and amazement to me. This library was a modest structure set alongside the old polo ground and opposite the parliament building. It faced the Accra Club. This club was forbidden to us because it had practised a colour bar during the colonial period when Ghana was the Gold Coast. 'If it won't let your father in, we aren't going in either,' my Mum would say as we passed it by. There were no such limitations when it came to the library. Nothing seemed out of reach. No one could bar the way. This was a world of endless possibilities and imaginings. It was later replaced by a much bigger facility linked by a sky bridge to the adult library in a prize winning piece of 1960's modernism, but nothing ever replaced the sense of eager anticipation freedom and excitement I experienced amongst its stacks.

The library was presided over by Mrs Sackey. She was everything a children's librarian should be – warm, welcoming, infinitely patient and a source of seemingly limitless knowledge about everything to do with the books she so carefully catalogued.

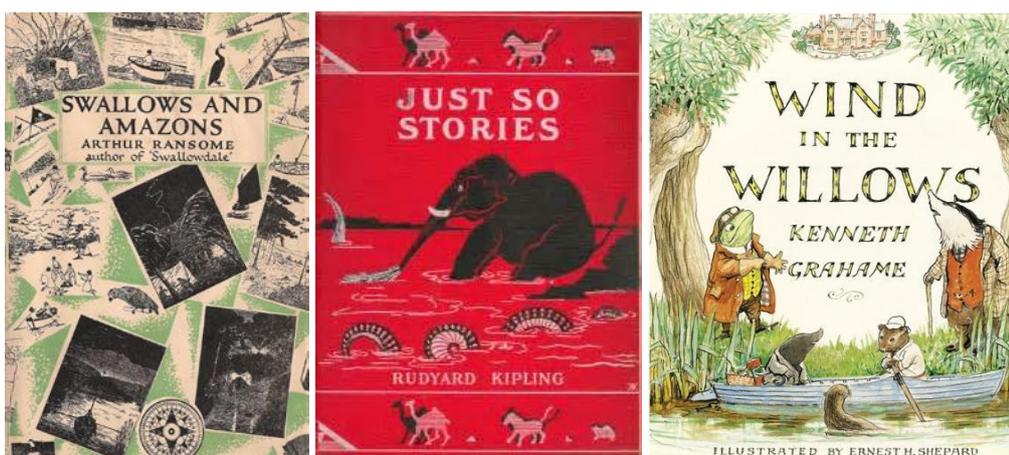
I remember her introducing me, a precocious five year old, to Orlando the Marmalade Cat and fending of my never ceasing demands for the 'next' Secret Seven or Famous Five stories. They would come eventually, but never soon enough. In the meantime there were the Hardy Boys to be getting on with.



I liked adventures and stories about getting in and out of scrapes through ingenious wheezes – kids constructing their own worlds and an alternative reality. I can't ever remember being aware of the undoubted fact that my own reality, growing up in an emerging African sub-Saharan country, was not represented in the library in any shape or form that I would recognise. Although occasionally 'natives' cropped up, set in exotic locations, they didn't resemble my Dad when he went to court in the morning carrying his law books and wig and gown. The illustrations and the tales of my early reading were as far removed from my world as it was possible to be. I was however captivated and transported. There is a universality of the imagination in childhood that transcends geography and race.



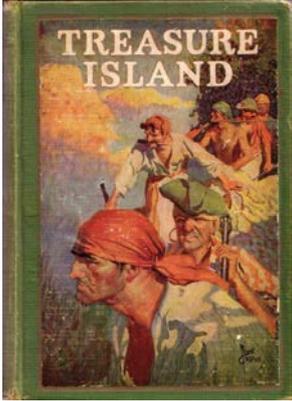
I came to exercise a degree of critical judgement in those early years. What worked for me and what didn't. I learnt to develop and articulate my reading preferences. I also came to realise that illustrators could be a guide to the quality of the writing. I would recognise the artist's hand and take a chance on the words; *Swallows and Amazons*, the *Just So Stories* and *The Wind in the Willows* I recall as much for the illustrations as anything else.



I was hooked on historical fiction from an early age. I can recall with the clarity of childhood memory my maternal grandfather reading *Treasure Island* to me on one of our first visits from Ghana to see him and my grandmother in Exmouth. Sitting at his feet in his garden on a summer day, I remember:

Fifteen men on the dead man's chest—
 ...Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!

Drink and the devil had done for the rest—
...Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!



I gave my little sister the Black Spot after one of our reading sessions. The literary reference may have escaped her it but my ill intent didn't. She cried and my Mum told me off. What went down at the Admiral Benbow was not to be chez nous. An early lesson in the boundaries between real and imagined worlds.

Granddad Macombie was a printer from Hoxton in the East End of London. He had been obliged to leave school at 14 and was the best-read man I have ever met. He gave my Mum her love of both the written and the spoken word and she passed it on to me and I to mine, and today I and my grandson read together. As I read to him I am transported back to my own early encounters with books. Amongst them are memories of Aunty Bertha who ran the Accra Children's Book Club. She still runs a school in Freetown today in her 90s. The civil war didn't stop her, neither has Ebola.

What is it that is so very special about a child's encounter with books? I think as a child you are so much more open to encounters with the fantastical, so little encumbered by all the stuff that gets in the way with age.

When I was but thirteen or so
I went into a golden land,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Took me by the hand.

The poem 'Romance', that we read at school, captures that trance-like world of youthful imagining. Creating a safe space and an opportunity for those encounters is one of the best things we can do for children. The charity Book Aid International, which as the Countess Ranfurly Library Service supplied books to my children's library in the Gold Coast all those years ago, still operates today. It sends more than a million brand new books a year to sub-Saharan Africa, trains librarians, and creates with local partners dedicated children's spaces in libraries on the African continent. Chairing it is for me one of the most personally rewarding aspects of my life. Not least because it is precisely those memories of the joys of reading in childhood that inspires the individual donations on which we rely, memories that do not seem to dim with age and the approach of that second childhood which often precedes our passage from this world to the next.

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[The Rt. Hon. Lord Paul Boateng PC DL was brought up in Ghana. A lawyer by profession, he was an MP between 1987 and 2005, served in the Cabinet as Chief Secretary to the Treasury 2002–2005 and was Britain's High Commissioner to South Africa 2005–2009. He was elevated to a peerage in 2010. He currently chairs the Africa

Enterprise Challenge Fund based in Nairobi, and is chairman of Book Aid International, the English Speaking Union and the International Council of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.]

With a Tap or a Swipe or a Turn of the Page! Childhood and the Joy of Story for a Digital Generation from an Author-Illustrator Perspective

Karenanne Knight

As an author, freelance illustrator and academic, my work in the children's picture-book world continues to permeate my curiosity and enthusiasm for the creative process, in particular its relation to childhood, the crux of what the picture book has come to mean for me. Many questions stimulate my never-ending interest in this field, particularly when concerned with the childhood of the writer/illustrator now writing or illustrating for children today. What are the consequences of their childhood on their writing and how does this manifest itself in the work read by today's children? How does my childhood and the childhood of generations of children before me have any resonance with the children of today's technological/digital age? For all the developments in technology we are experiencing today, these are surely similar in evolutionary terms to the advancements in printing, steam, lighting and travel in days gone by. In each and every decade life evolves, maybe differently but continually evolving none the less, as essentially we surely have all had, or have, those themes of childhood in common, whether born in 1916 or 2016 or any of the years before or in between; whether raised in town or city, different continents, in war or peace. Whilst there are many and varied differences, we all had a childhood, a childhood that surely resonates across time and place. Childhood is a time in which distinctive characteristics grow through experiences: learning to smile, talk, walk and run; making relationships; learning tolerance; learning how to share; and understanding our ability to use our senses to look and see, listen, smell, touch and taste; and it is these experiences that I believe transcend childhood. It is the essential, requisite, constant period known as childhood, of experiencing life and developing as an individual through that period before young adulthood.

So, what counts as children's literature therefore, depends on what *you* think of as childhood, and perhaps whether books should be entertaining or instructional. However, I am captivated by the books that inspired both my own and others' childhoods through the decades. More beguiling, however, is a fascination for how those books we read as children have inspired our own lives and consequently our own writing and illustration for children, as well as academic research.

How did that early childhood reading influence me and how have those words and pictures affected me in my work trying to achieve the highest possible levels of practice in what I produce for children as an adult? How have the books read by today's children been inspired by the childhoods of those who have gone before them?

Highlighting writers and illustrators looking inward, perhaps we can understand how books generally are inspired by childhood. Taking an example, out of many that could be cited, the writer and critic A.S. Byatt recalls her early childhood reading of *Alice in Wonderland* as:

... one of the defining moments of my life. ... It was Alice that made me conscious of thinking about words, from delight in the nonsense words and made definitions of 'Jabberwocky' to the ludicrous misinterpretation of the two queens. (Byatt, 2002)

If writers such as Byatt are *made*, their consciousness awoken into thinking about the books they read as children, are picture-book artists and illustrators determined in the

same way? Indeed, do writers and artists/illustrators use the tradition of children's story to become part of that tradition, to create something recognisable but transformed? If one looks closely at many writers and the work they remember most vividly from their childhood reading, it can be seen how often the adult works are in some measure in fact 'twice-told children's tales' or retellings in a broad sense of a book or books read in childhood, (Moritz, 2001: 25–6). However, if we love a book, do we then love its subject matter, or if we love the subject matter are we predisposed to love the book? Does a fictitious character of a much-loved childhood book provide the adult writer with a voice, or is their natural voice an echo of that character? And this is rooted in other relevant ideas. For example, Neil Gaiman (1986: 87–91) has suggested that,

... the most important dreams are those that we received when we were too young to judge or analyse. The things that mattered – really mattered – when we were too young to discriminate have tremendous power to move us now.

And this resonates with the suggestions that childhood reading is indeed an everlasting, enduring influence. As Neil McCaw (McCaw and Melrose, 2007) has written:

... for me, novels such as *Swallows and Amazons*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Wind in the Willows*, and *Danny, the Champion of the World* worked because of how they made me feel; they made me feel engaged, sure, and ultimately satisfied, but not before (and most importantly) they had made me feel as if I belonged The reader is an integral, valued part of the development of the narrative(s). The joy of the story form is the moment when it pauses to put an arm around your shoulder and to reassure you that you that you are part of it all.

This idea is further defined by Alison Habens (2005: 147-148) when she wrote,

I remember reading at school, desperately, in the gaps between classes, and the heavenly 'wet playtime'; and I remember reading on my small pink bed, lying there blissed out in the way that still seems to me almost the most fun one can have today. I remember where I was when I first met *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *The Railway Children*, the March Sisters and *Pollyanna*. But I seem to have 'always already' known *Alice in Wonderland*. The characters were as fixed as my family, the dialogue as familiar. The archetypes of angry women and eccentric men were my formative companions. The little girl trying to make sense of illogical situations was me.

The key premise of Habens's book *Dreamhouse*, accords with McCaw's sense of belonging, to being part of something bigger than the isolated self; every reader is an Alice (or a Swallow or Amazon) and already knows an Alice position. Anybody can wear the blue dress; any fool can say the lines. In some places, Habens states, the seamlessness of the joins between Carroll's text and her own show 'how profound the influence of childhood reading was on adult writing'. In the end she states, 'it's the adult influence on childhood reading that really makes for exciting writing'.

But up to this point we are primarily dealing with word texts and word narratives, and there are alternatives. For Barry Unsworth (2005: 99–102), pictures were the great thing. The first, he tells us, was made to last, being of cloth, not paper. It was a collection of nursery rhymes, each spread over two pages, with the words on one side and an illustration printed in colour on the facing page. He knew the rhymes by heart because his parents read them out loud to him. It was important to him to know the words, but what really counted were the pictures.

I see them now, all these years later, as vivid and strange as ever. Little Jack Horner in a blue velvet suit and buckled shoes, sticking his thumb straight down into the pie; Georgy Porgy in clothes too tight for him, his arms and legs sticking out like

sausages, tears streaming down his face; Mary's lamb in the schoolroom and the glee of the children; the simpering cow with stiffly extending forelegs leaping over a moon with raised eyebrows. If I try now to determine the effects on me of this first brush with literature, it seems to lie in the sense it gave me, which has never faded, of the world as a gallery of oddities where anything can happen, where the spider is bigger than Miss Muffet, where shoes can have chimneys and provide living space for old women with large families, where the grotesquely thin cohabit happily with the grotesquely fat. And of course, there was the mystery of words. What was this tuffet that Miss Muffet sat upon while eating her curds and whey? How could Lucy Locket lose her pocket when everyone knew that a pocket was not a separate thing but an integral part of one's clothing? I never asked, presumably finding the mystery part of the charm.

There are many such examples and A.S. Byatt and Barry Unsworth have merely been singled out to emphasise this point, which is that the position of text and image as it existed in the past is translated through the books of today produced by writers and illustrators who were themselves entranced by the pictures or the words of their early reading books. Indeed this childhood reading would seem to have a profound impact upon the later work of writers and illustrators. By combining or fusing these worlds of storytelling within a concept of childhood and what childhood means, the picture-book page exists to create a powerful medium for its reader, supported by commentators such as Byatt et al., who have an interesting personal and familiar tale to tell on notions of childhood and the child reader, alongside a particular, implied notion of childhood that would serve to enhance the reading experience of children.



Wizard of Oz illustration for BA Illustration degree project at Falmouth University. Copyright © 2011 Emma Randall.

Emma Randall, one of my students who completed her BA Illustration in July 2011 at Falmouth University, comments on how her childhood affects her work:

Various things influenced my drawing growing up, particularly the Angelina Ballerina books and anything by Enid Blyton. The illustrations by Helen Craig were always so full of detail and colour, I loved them! I even created my own Angelina book once I was so inspired! I also loved the way Enid Blyton would describe her stories, particularly in the Faraway Tree series, I remember trying to draw the worlds she

created that you could find at the ‘top of the tree’. I think elements of these books can be found in my drawings today, particularly the Wizard of Oz image [see above], where Blyton’s magic, and Craig’s detail finds its way into my work.

Writers and illustrators will continue to produce some of the most beautiful artistic work of the very highest quality for children and children’s books (no matter whether read on paper or on digital formats such as a tablet or computer screen) based on later life experiences or consciously or subconsciously twice-told tales, stories of their childhood, or based on the literature they read as children.

Childhood has profound effects on us all one way or another and it is the innate ability of the story that continues to charm children and adults alike, whether it be generations past, generations of the future, or the children of yesterday, today or tomorrow. Childhood is our story, our stories are childhood!

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[Karenanne Knight is the author of *The Picture Book Maker: The Art of the Children’s Picture Book Writer and Illustrator* (Trentham Books/IOE Press, 2014). She has also authored and illustrated several picture books for children and regularly writes papers for academic journals as well as presentations for various conferences on a national and international platform. She divides her time between her academic work at Falmouth and Portsmouth Universities; writing, illustrating and designing books; design and logo/branding work; residences and collaborations. She exhibits her work nationally and has pieces in collections worldwide.]

Introducing the Centre for Childhood Cultures – A Formal Partnership between Queen Mary University of London and the Victoria and Albert Museum of Childhood

Kiera Vaclavik

Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) and the Victoria and Albert Museum of Childhood are situated less than a mile from each other in London’s vibrant East End. There have been close links between the two institutions for some time, but last year we formalised our partnership with the launch of the Centre for Childhood Cultures (CCC). The desire in both university and museum to produce cutting-edge research of national and international significance is matched by a commitment to local

engagement and participation in east London. The partnership will also enable dissemination, knowledge exchange and learning so that the CCC serves academics, members of the public and museum professionals, amongst others. In short, we want to help both academic researchers and museum professionals to be better at their work involving children and childhood culture, and to have more people benefit from that work.

The CCC is co-directed by the Museum of Childhood's director, Rhian Harris, and myself. We have a steering group with members drawn from across the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and from key departments of the Museum. Activities include a regular seminar series – Children's Literature/Children's Lives – and a series of one-off events, from film screenings to study days and exhibitions. From 2017, we will also host an annual lecture. We are starting to work closely with other research centres at QMUL, notably the Centre for the History of Emotions and the Centre for Studies of Home, as well as colleagues in the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences. We are keen to collaborate nationally and internationally and are currently working with academics from a number of institutions including King's College London, University College London, and Oxford and Birmingham Universities.

The CCC is concerned with children's worlds, broadly conceived, past and present – and indeed future – in Britain and beyond. In our first phase, our key themes are play, children's spaces, children's art and design, digital cultures and children's wellbeing. In addition, and alongside these themes, we are committed to developing a better understanding of children and families as research participants and beneficiaries. Child-centred methodologies involving collaboration and co-creation are therefore central.

The close and extremely productive relationship between Seven Stories: The National Centre for Children's Books and the School of English at the University of Newcastle was a crucial reference point and inspiration in the creation of the CCC and the identification of its remit. What differentiates the CCC is that literature is only one of the myriad forms of childhood culture with which we are concerned, thanks to the fact that the Museum of Childhood houses the national childhood collections, dating from 1600 to today. Particular collection strengths are children's clothing, toys and games, and dolls and dolls' houses.

We are therefore particularly keen to support work that explores connections between different aspects of childhood culture, be it comics and play spaces (in a doctoral project by Lucie Glasheen) or books and frocks (an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-funded project on *Alice in Wonderland* – see below). We are also committed to bringing together different academic disciplines, as, for example, in an event scheduled for summer 2017 on attachment theory and practice led by Edward Harcourt (Oxford University), which will involve philosophers, psychologists and practitioners. In a recently started PhD project supported by an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) grant, Stephanie Sutton will be exploring the concept of adventure in relation not only to playgrounds but also literary works. The *Alice Look* exhibition, which I curated at the Museum, accompanied by a well-attended study day, marked the 150th anniversary of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The focus was on the heroine's visual identity over the last century and a half in Britain and abroad, as well as the profound influence that Alice has had on international fashion industry.

Ongoing and completed major projects to date also include *The Child in the World*, involving three doctoral projects co-supervised by university and museum staff, which explore the lived experiences of London children between 1870 and the present day. The first project examines the ways in which middle- and upper-class children living in Britain between 1870 and 1930 engaged with the imperial world in their family settings. The research uses multiple archival sources but is underpinned by a focus on objects from the period preserved in the collection of the Museum of Childhood. As such, it demonstrates how museum collections can present 'a unique and intriguing

opportunity for examining objects related to childhood and children' (Brookshaw, 2009), and to further explore the role of (non-)textual materials and everyday activities in the making of children's imperial cultures (Norcia, 2004). The second project, Children, Migration and Diasporas, focuses on migration of children in relation to the East End of London (the boroughs of Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets) between the years 1930–2000. The third project, Children and Global Citizenship, directs the research programme towards the present and the future, and, working closely with the Learning and Community team at the Museum of Childhood, asks two key questions: 'How do children in contemporary London understand their place in the world, and their responsibilities to other people and places?' and 'How can the Museum play an effective role in engaging school-age children with issues of global citizenship?'

Engaging local children was also the key aim of another recent project, The Child in the Museum. Following nationwide consultation and research, the Museum of Childhood launched and implemented a children's forum which involves local schoolchildren in museum practices, especially with regard to collecting policies.

Moving forward, we are particularly keen to support postdoctoral and early-career researchers working on one or more of the areas outlined above. For enquiries, and/or to be put on the CCC's mailing list, contact: l.glasheen@qmul.ac.uk.

For further Information about Children's Literature/Children's Lives, see <http://complit.sllf.qmul.ac.uk/node/462> and <https://childlitchildlives.wordpress.com/>.

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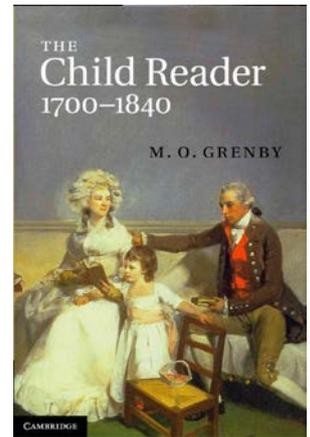
[Kiera Vaclavik is Professor of Children's Literature and Childhood Culture at Queen Mary University of London. Her work brings children's literature studies into dialogue with other fields. Her research centres on children's literature and childhood culture from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day, with a particular focus on Victorian works and their afterlives, as well as postcolonial literature and world literature. Her first monograph (*Uncharted Depths*, Legenda, 2010) explored the descent to the underground in English and French works for young readers, principally in the nineteenth century. Her current project is exploring Alice in Wonderland in relation to fashion and dress. Her book *The Alice Look* will be published by Bloomsbury in 2017.]

Mathew Grenby's *The Child Reader 1700–1840*

Susan Bailes

This erudite study examines the origins of children's literature as a distinct, secure print culture in Britain over the course of the long eighteenth century, and Matthew Grenby painstakingly elucidates the large part that the purchasers and users played in the product. He employs fascinating, fresh methodologies such as the use of inscriptions and marginalia, diaries, journals, records of circulating libraries and subscription lists, to try to clarify who the readers were, how they acquired books and what they thought of them. He comments that earlier studies have been primarily concentrated on attitudes to children and childhood as well as changing modes of reading, whilst he rejects the idea of a 'reading revolution' or the notion that children's literature merely evolved in a straightforward fashion from books of instruction to books that delighted.

Grenby divides this book into seven packed chapters, providing helpful summaries. I was immediately attracted by the choice of cover, a painting by Henry Walton (1746–1813) depicting Sir Robert and Lady Buxton and their daughter Anne (born 1782), illustrating the moment when the father, Sir Robert, has paused from his reading to watch or hear his daughter reading from the book his wife holds. Anne's own book lies nearby, casually dropped on the floor whilst others are strewn on the sofa. What is clear is that Anne is a consumer of an entirely separate range of products from her parents. She has her own toys, the miniature basket, furniture, the low chair and her own books (six in the painting).



Predominantly the first consumers of the new kind of children's books were aged between five and eleven. Their reading was promoted using horn books, battledores, spelling books and Bibles. Grenby points out that there was seldom segregation between literature for children and for adults, and little stigma attached to cross-reading in either direction. So we learn that boys used girls' books, Anglicans enjoyed Dissenting or Catholic texts, and the rich read material that was designed for the poor. Nevertheless Grenby is at pains to remind us that there were many children, even many who had been taught to read, who would not have encountered this still quite new and unfamiliar product. A study of subscription lists supports the notion that the median inscriber was rural from the southern counties of England. The majority of book owners were from middle- and upper-middle-class backgrounds. Spelling books were owned by children at the lowest end of the social scale. Especially interesting is the finding that from the 1770s females were the main consumers, a striking reversal of the position earlier in the century.

By the end of the eighteenth century, we learn, there were children's Bibles, chapbooks, poetry and plays, as well as didactic books ranging across most subjects. Much of the reading was, however, intensive rather than prolific. Inscriptions reveal that many middle- and upper-class children owned dozens of books, but liked to return again and again to the same book. The idea of a 'reading revolution' becomes more complicated when we consider children's actual experiences. Grenby argues that, despite the fact that by the later seventeenth century children were being supplied with more books of an increasing variety, there would often have been little to distinguish them from those children were reading at the beginning and at the end of the period.

Despite books being owned, many were shared in the middle of the eighteenth century. Personal ownership was encouraged, especially by the producers, and by educationalists, who argued that books should suit the individual child's age and aptitude. Book reviews were published to assist parents and teachers. The use of circulating libraries was condemned as they allowed children too much freedom to find their own reading. On the other hand, allowing children to use libraries was a way of controlling their reading, and charity and Sunday school children's libraries flourished by the 1830s. By the nineteenth century separate children's journals and libraries had come into existence.

Reading through Chapter 4, I wished some of the amazing children's bookshops that existed were still thriving today.¹ The pattern established by Newbery gave children a pleasant, friendly setting in which to make their own purchases. London emporia meant children benefited. Less affluent children were often given books or borrowed them. Christmas gifts especially were encouraged and the gift economy accounted for many children's books. So many books were understood primarily as tokens of

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all chapter and page references are to Grenby (2011).

affection, esteem and reward, valuable regardless of their contents. Speaking of his childhood reading of *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Arabian Nights*, William Edwin Adams (born 1832) admitted:

The religious meaning of the first, the satirical meaning of the second, and the doubtful meaning of the third were, of course, not understood. The story was the thing! (Adams, 1903: 101)

In Chapter 5 it is illuminating to discover that, although some texts were devoured, evidence shows that many were ploddingly read in small, regular, circumscribed chunks. Informal reading also took place, some outside in the garden or whilst travelling. Children, we know, read aloud and were often under close supervision, with their parents being advised to scrutinise and superintend their texts. There is a highly appropriate illustration of this on page 260, depicting Mrs Bonhote with her children in *The Parental Monitor* by William Lande (1788). Just as Mary Beard has studied the graffiti in ancient Pompeii, so Mathew Grenby has read thousands of primary texts and noticed the marginalia and annotations of various kinds on the page. Many children acted books out as dramas, whilst the supervisors and the supervised did not necessarily share what children's books were for. One telling example is from Charles Lamb's *Recollections of Christ's Hospital* (Brimley, 1813), when he recalls how half a dozen of his friends 'set off from school, without map, card, or compass on a serious expedition to find out Philip Quarll's Island' (p.16). Jefferys Taylor depicted children playing a game they call 'Judge and Jury', they having 'taken a hint from an interesting little book published some years ago', namely Richard Johnson's *Juvenile Trials* (p.270).

In *Emma Courtney* (Hays, 1796), a novel about the dangers of reading too literally, Mary Hays has her own heroine recall that, as a girl, she 'acted over what she had read', becoming 'alternately the valiant knight – the gentle damsel – the adventurous mariner – the daring robber – the courteous lover – and the airy coquet' (p.270).

It is good to learn that children's own accounts demonstrate what a profound effect reading had for them. Most adults considered children's books as a means to an end. They were ambitious for their young and used them for a variety of purposes including moral, informational, behavioural and religious, not only for pleasure. Children shared their great delight in them but for their own reasons.

The tangible object carried with it status for the child owner. Children realised that having books endowed esteem and respect. Julia in Mary Elliott's poem reveals that she values her reading as it makes her look older 'shall I like a woman look/By reading?' (p.272).

And there is the wonderful account of Eliza in Richard Johnson's *Tea Table Dialogues*, (1771), when she explains that she has reaped 'great advantages' by putting away her toys and dolls and taking up reading (p.272).

Having read *The History of England*, she was able to explain some pictures to the assembled fine ladies and gentlemen, who 'praised and admired me' which 'amuses me much more than a doll' (p.272).

Thousands of children's reading experiences have been meticulously examined and clearly this book shows that there is no such thing as the archetypal eighteenth-century child reader nor any single, predominating pattern of acquisition and use. Some findings may seem fairly predictable: for example that children's books were mostly owned by middle- and upper-middle classes, that the adults were the majority of customers in bookshops, and that most children's reading was regulated and supervised. As far as surprises are concerned Grenby shows us that girls seemed to have owned far more books than boys from 1770s on and the owners were more likely to have lived in English shires than the growing cities. We are reminded that books were not to bring about literacy but introduced after literacy had been secured. Grenby

cites Plumb's observation that childhood was increasingly central to the culture and economy of eighteenth-century Britain. Grenby reminds us that there is a history of children's literature which views Newbery and other mid-century pioneers harnessing entertainment in the service of education and claims that the ensuing decades witness the struggle of delight wresting free from didacticism, finally doing so by the nonsense and fantasy literature of the nineteenth century. This, in Grenby's view, ignores how much evidence there is that children were delighting in and enjoying books. For so many the content was irrelevant as the status that books and bookishness conveyed pleased children the most. They were capable of subverting books with their mischievous annotation or incorporation of them into a game.

Families shared books, and a single short book might take a child months to read. Memoirs and journals show that repeat readings were common, and books were read with the similar intensity as that of a medieval monk.

Books travelled widely and were exported, even reaching the poor and prisons. Authors, illustrators and publishers wanted their product to be attractive. So we find descriptions and pictures of the act of reading itself. The entrepreneurial publishers and innovative authors and illustrators played a crucial role in the establishment of this new product.

I was very amused to read Grenby's entertaining account of a William Hogarth 1732 portrait *The Cholmondely Family*, set in a very orderly, expensive library showing scholarly refinement but in which two boys, at one side of the canvas, are clearly not reading. Instead they are building a wobbly tower of quartos on which to stand. Books please the father who is perusing at his table a densely printed book whilst his children attempt to climb the toppling tower of books. Hogarth may be satirising the precariousness of parental hopes that book use would enable the elevation of their children.

This entire book throws new light on children's reading in 1700–1840 and just how varied the experience was. It is the summation of research and close examination of early materials in international collections: the Canadian Osborne Collection, the Cotsen Children's Library at Princeton University, the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) library, Chawton House library and the Hockcliffe Collection of Early Children's Books. The bibliography acknowledges manuscripts, children's books in pre-1860, printed diaries, memoirs and correspondence, education treatises and conduct books pre -1860 and other primary sources pre-1860, as well as books and essays post-1860 and even three unpublished theses. *The Child Reader* is an exemplary piece of research and a truly worthy winner of the 2012 Harvey Darton Award, which aims to pay tribute to a work and its creator 'which extend our knowledge of some aspect of British children's literature of the past'.

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[Susan Bailes has taught in secondary and preparatory schools for 36 years and retired from a headship in Surrey after 13 years in August 2012. She has always enjoyed

English literature and drama, adapting and writing productions for pupils, and obtained her first degree from London University and her PGCE at Goldsmiths' College. Whilst a deputy head, she was one of the early postgraduate students to obtain an MA in Children's Literature at Roehampton University and continues to carry out research. She very much values serving on the committees of IBBY UK, the Children's Books History Society and, more recently, the Imaginative Book Illustration Society (IBIS), and regularly reviews books for these organisations. She has a particular interest in doll literature and all it reveals about the historical context in which it appears, along with illustrators. She now has a large, relevant collection. Her most recent published talk was 'Kathleen Ainslie (1858–1936): A Forgotten Female Edwardian Illustrator of Children's Books' (*CBHS Newsletter* 113: 21–27).]

REVIEWS

About Children's Literature

Translating Children's Literature

Gillian Lathey, London: Routledge, pb. 978 1 1388 0376 3, 2015, £24, 162pp.

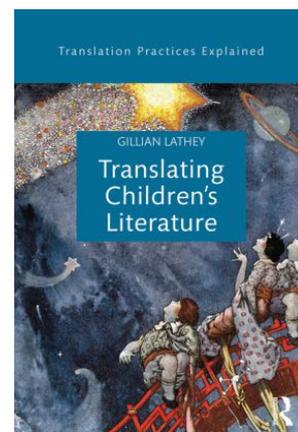
The series Translation Practices Explained has been enriched with Gillian Lathey's book *Translating Children's Literature*, the first practical guide to address various aspects of the translation of literature for children. With this publication, the complexity of translating literature, characterised by various media realisations from verbal to audio-visual forms has been recognised, and with it also the status of translators transposing all types of text aiming at non-adult readers.

Lathey, until recently director of the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature (NCRCL) at Roehampton University, London, has been a judge of the Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation. An eminent author in this field, she has published *The Translation of Children's Literature* (2006), and *The Role of Translators in Children's Literature: Invisible Storytellers* (2010).

Lathey's study on translating children's literature starts with an extensive introduction that is especially valuable for self-learners and students of translation. Readers are 'warned' that translation of books for children is underestimated, but also informed that boundaries between adult and non-adult fiction are fluid. The author stresses that the 'adult-child duality inherent in all books for children' (p.2) requires translators 'to address all layers of meaning' (ibid.) and thus reveals that translation of children's literature may be particularly demanding. She illustrates, with reference to other texts and quotes, what is a structural feature of this course book. The first quote from a writer commenting on translation of texts for children is by Jill Paton Walsh, and the first extracts are from literary texts by Roald Dahl. Walsh's statement contains 'an enlightening encouragement to any writer or translator attempting to understand the artistic potential of writing for the young' (p.3); and Dahl's extracts illustrate how the same passage differs when addressing adult or child readers. The section on the emergence of children's literature underlines the connection between the social context and books for children as well as the importance for translators to possess the 'political finesse' (p.6) to enable the target reader also to discover the encoded message about the socio-political context of the source text. The importance of the target context is in its turn stressed when discussing the developmental issues of young readers and their specific society-conditioned expectations.

The author's first piece of advice to translators: no necessary simplification – respect the child-centredness of books for the young. By highlighting the multimedia characteristics of children's literature, she expresses her belief that books for children may demand 'imaginative solutions' (p.8) and therefore require very competent translators. However, she suggests that the critical audience should study the children's responses to translation, which still remains a neglected area waiting for research.

The aim of the book is to assist 'would-be translators' (p.11) – bridge-builders between children and works of literature written in foreign languages. The organisation of this course book with didactic discussion points, exercises and further reading helps readers to believe that the author's goal can be achieved, because the text offers various types of helpful stimulus for effective work to students and all those who wish to be informed about contemporary approaches to the translating of children's literature. The author puts special stress on the narrative communication with the child reader (Chapter 1), the translation of cultural markers and intertextual references (Chapter 2), and on the translating of the visual and audio aspects of texts for children and young people (Chapters 3, 4 and 5). Chapter 6, discussing retellings, retranslation and relay translation, all typical features of children's literature and the canon,



concludes with the warning that future translators 'should also be aware that their published translation might be used as the basis for a relay translation without acknowledgement or payment' (p.125). The last chapter, focusing on children's publishing, globalisation and the child reader, gives further invaluable insight into the copyright status of translators' work and their working with editors and publishers. This book by Lathey thus addresses the main aspects of translation of (children's) literature and is therefore highly recommended.

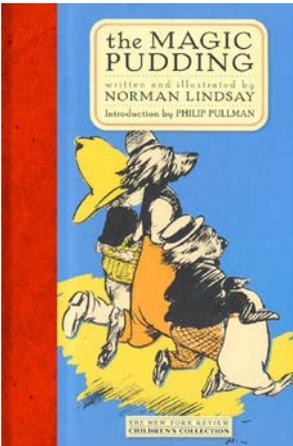
Darja Mazi-Leskovar

[Darja Mazi-Leskovar is Associate Professor of Literature with a special interest in children's literature and translation at Maribor University, Slovenia.]

Storybooks, Novels and Tales

The Magic Pudding

Norman Lindsay (intro. Philip Pullman), New York Review Children's Collection, hb. 978 1 5901 7994 9, 2004, £10, 18pp. [First published Angus and Robertson, Sydney, NSW, Australia, 1918.] [Illustrated storybook, 6–10 years. Keywords: humour; crime; magic; food; rhyming text; anti-Semitism; archaic language.]



Bunyip Bluegum (a polite young Koala) lives with his uncle in Australia. He gets on badly with his uncle and decides to leave home. On the first day of his travels he meets a penguin, Sam Sawnoff, and the sailor Bill Barnacle in the Noble Society of Puddin'-Owners. The members of the society are permitted to feast on a Magic Pudding, which never grows any smaller: the pudding walks and talks and regenerates as it is eaten.

Such a pudding of course attracts thieves. The task of the trio is to prevent the Magic Pudding from being stolen.

Philip Pullman gives this book a hearty recommendation:

This is the funniest children's book ever written. I've been laughing at it for fifty years, and when I read it again this morning, I laughed just as much as I ever did. There's no point trying to explain why it's funny. If there's anyone so bereft of humour that they can read these words and look at these pictures without laughing, then heaven help them.

I fear that the voice speaking here is the voice of the ten-year-old Pullman speaking from memory. He claims that the language of this book poses no barrier for modern readers. I am afraid I cannot agree. Some of the constructions are so archaic that they will be problematic for young contemporary readers.

As noble thoughts the inward being grace,
So noble whiskers dignify the face.

The book makes some questionable assumptions; for example, all adults are depicted as smokers. But the final and, for this reviewer, disqualifying flaw is revealed when a poem reads:

So I'll tell you what I'll do
You unmitigated Jew,
As a trifling satisfaction,
Why, I'll beat you black and blue.

The naked anti-Semitism is bad enough. Worse yet is the shadow this passage casts over the dire events that would follow in the 30 years after it was published. For this reviewer, alas, it is impossible to share Pullman's enthusiasm.

Rebecca R. Butler

Oh, Freedom!

Francesco D'Adamo, trans. Siân Williams, London: Darf Publishers, pb. 978 1 8507 7285 9, 2016, £6.99, 138pp. [Novel, 8–12 years. Keywords: historical novel; 1850s; slavery; USA; disability; runaways; adventure.]

Tommy is a ten-year-old black boy in the Alabama of the 1850s. He and his family live and work on a cotton plantation. One day he meets a stranger called Peg Leg Joe. At night Joe talks to Tommy's parents and another couple, overheard by Tommy. It transpires that Joe is a guide on the Underground Railroad, a network designed to help slaves escape to the northern states. Are Tommy's parents brave enough or desperate enough to take the risk of becoming runaway slaves? They decide to take the chance. The book describes their attempt to escape slavery, as narrated by their son Tommy.

The attitudes adopted by men in this story towards the disabled Joe and towards women are probably accurately depicted for the period in which the book is set. Nevertheless they grate on a modern reader.

The dangers of the journey northwards are vividly depicted and D'Adamo's pace never falters. But there is another and perhaps more significant journey: from Tommy's childhood to his maturity, when he develops the ambition of becoming himself a guide on the escape route from slavery.

Two of D'Adamo's other novels have been translated into English, namely *My Brother Johnny* and *Iqbal*. Siân Williams, the translator of *Oh, Freedom!* was the founder of the Children's Bookshow.

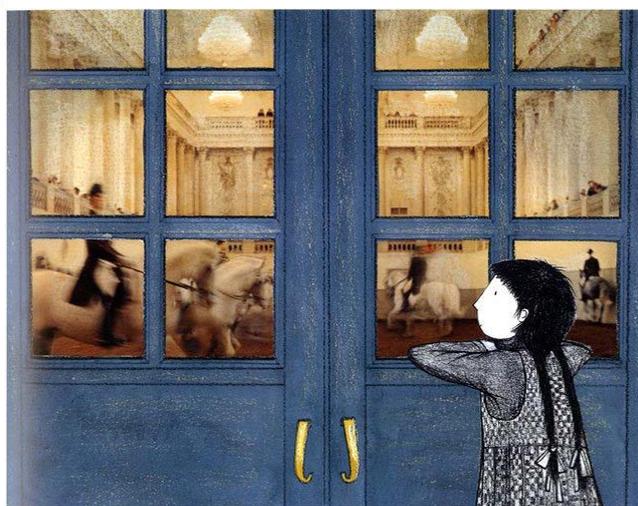
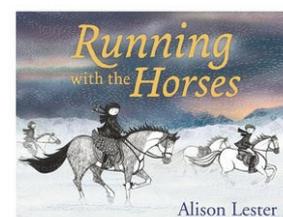
Rebecca Butler



Running with the Horses

Alison Lester, New York/London: North-South Books, hb. 978 0 7358 4002 7, 2011, £12.97, 32pp. First published 2009 by Penguin Group (Australia). [Novel, 6–10 years. Keywords: Second World War; illustrated; photo-montages; horses; riding; Vienna; adventure; friendship.]

Inspired by the evacuation of the Lipizzaner stallions from the Spanish Riding School in Vienna in the Second World War, *Running with the Horses* tells of the young girl Nina's efforts to rescue Zelda, an old cab horse, who, throughout the course of their flight from the grand old city on the eve of war, comes to save the Lipizzaners, Nina and her father. A story of friendship, courage and adventure, beautifully illustrated with photo- and soft-pencil montages and vignettes.



Little is known in the UK of Australian children's author-illustrator Alison Lester, Children's Laureate 2011–2013, and a recipient of the Children's Book Council of

Australia Picture Book Award. Hazel Edwards in *The Cambridge Guide to Children's Books in English* (2001, p.422) suggests that Lester's books 'celebrate' children's 'curiosity about the world, their imagination, their control of the fine line between reality and fantasy, and especially hunger for adventure ... where children engaged in everyday happenings, such as playing on the beach, are transported to ... kingdoms under the sea.', referring to Lester's much loved *Magic Beach* (Allen & Unwin, 1990).

This book, rather different in tone and content, allows for a child to develop an awareness of those having to leave their home and undertake a, as at times in this book, dangerous journey before reaching a place of refuge. Although set during the Second World War, *Running with the Horses* parallels today's current refugee crisis. This book helps young readers in the classroom, a library or at home, to learn what it means to be a child refugee, as Nina, but it also shows how, with the help of one's imagination, how in times of darkness, hope and light can be found.

Lucy Stone, PhD student at the University of Newcastle

Picture and Novelty Books

T-Veg: The Story of a Carrot-Crunching Dinosaur

Smriti Prasadam-Halls, illus. Katherina Manolessou, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0683 3, 2015, £11.99, 32pp. [Picture book, 4–8 years. Keywords: dinosaurs; vegetarianism; rhyming text; otherness.]

Most children can't get enough of dinosaurs and there is a huge range of ever-popular dinosaur picture books available. Into that mix, comes Prasadam-Halls' latest offering: a dinosaur book with a difference. Together with Manolessou's trademark bright, busy and effervescent illustrations, the author has created a heart-warming and buoyant story about individuality, acceptance and finding one's own true voice.

Reg is a happy and boisterous young dinosaur with one worry – he doesn't like meat. Instead, when his pack ate 'juicy steak, Reginald the T-rex ate crunchy carrot cake'. His family frown on him and insist he ought to stop eating fruit and vegetables.

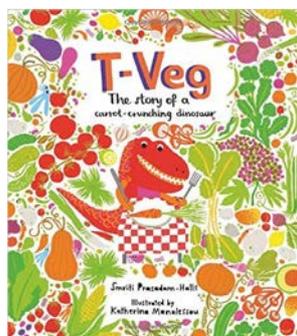
At school he gets teased for being an aberration. Miserable at his lot and feeling utterly misunderstood, he leaves his herd in search of other vegetarian dinosaurs. But soon he realises that he doesn't fit the ways of the gentle, foraging herbivores, who, far from being friendly, are terror-stricken at being stalked by a T-rex! The story takes a turn when Reg's family realises that even though he is different, he is one of their own. They appreciate his uniqueness even more as he saves the herd from imminent disaster: Reg is welcomed back a hero.

The book is beautifully produced: the visual art is vibrant and the rhyming text of the narrative is a joy to read aloud. The catchy title, *T-Veg*, a humorous play on *T.rex*, foregrounds the concept of vegetarianism, while steering clear of any moral judgement in favour or against.

The leitmotif, however, is the recurrent theme of being comfortable in one's own skin, of broadening perspectives and embracing otherness, and of encouraging empathy and understanding towards those who are unlike us.

This story packs a punch, and has the makings of an all-time favourite dinosaur picture book.

Soumi Dey, PhD student in Children's Literature and Literacies at the University of Glasgow



Kangaroo Kisses

Nandana Dev Sen, illus. Pippa Curnick, Burley Gate: Otter-Barry Books, hb. 978 1 9109 5900 8, 2016, £11.99, 24pp. [Picture book. 1–5 years. Keywords: bedtime; anthropomorphism; rhyme; imagined adventures.]

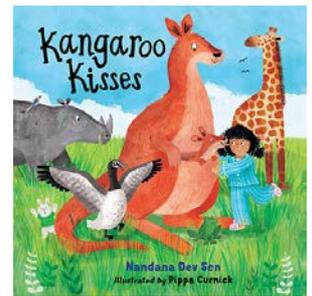
This colourful beautifully illustrated picture book tells the story of an imaginative little girl who is 'Not yet!' ready for bed!

Perfect for children aged 1–5 years as the book has so many details to look at but also big, expansive scenes that will directly appeal to young children.

Page by page, the animals in her bedroom or bathroom come to life. A child reader is likely to enjoy spotting the visual clues dotted all over the illustrations; for example, the giraffe pattern on the towel or the bear-like wrap hung on the door before these creatures turn into wild, friendly creatures.

The story has a good pace as the little girl has a series of adventures: from singing and dancing with musical rhinos to climbing trees with lively monkeys, ending with her kissing a friendly kangaroo. Rhyming couplets give this narrative a sparkly quality with interesting words such as 'snuggle', 'nuzzle', 'squeeze' and 'tickle' all standing out in a larger, bold font.

Any adult reading this book will also smile at the perennial problem of coaxing a young child into bed at night when the child has completely other ideas! The bedtime routine is alluded to but in a subtle way, such as elephants flossing their tusks and bears brushing their fur.

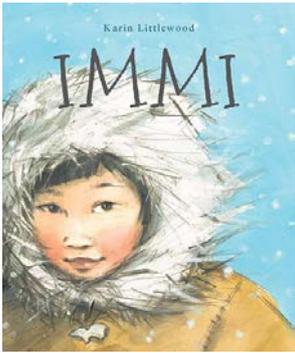


From *Kangaroo Kisses*. Copyright© 2016 Nandana Dev Sen (text), Pippa Curnick (illus). Reproduced with permission Otter-Barry Books.

This book has many talking points. The little girl's bedroom is lit up at the beginning but dark at the end just before she settles down for sleeping, inviting a comparison or peering at carefully. Also, the little girl's special rabbit pops up in every page, just waiting to be noticed.

Most exciting, I think, is the use of the single to double spreads in the picture-book format that move the story from the home (usually a single page) out to the brightly appealing animal scenes (usually double spreads), which emphasise the little girl's imaginative qualities.

Anna Harrison, MEd student in Children's Literature at the University of Cambridge



Immi

Karin Littlewood, Burley Gate: Otter-Barry Books, pb. 978 1 9109 5953 4, 2016, £6.99, 28pp. First published 2010 by Frances Lincoln Children's Books. [Picture book, 1–5 years. Keywords: Eskimo; igloo; polar animals; friendship.]

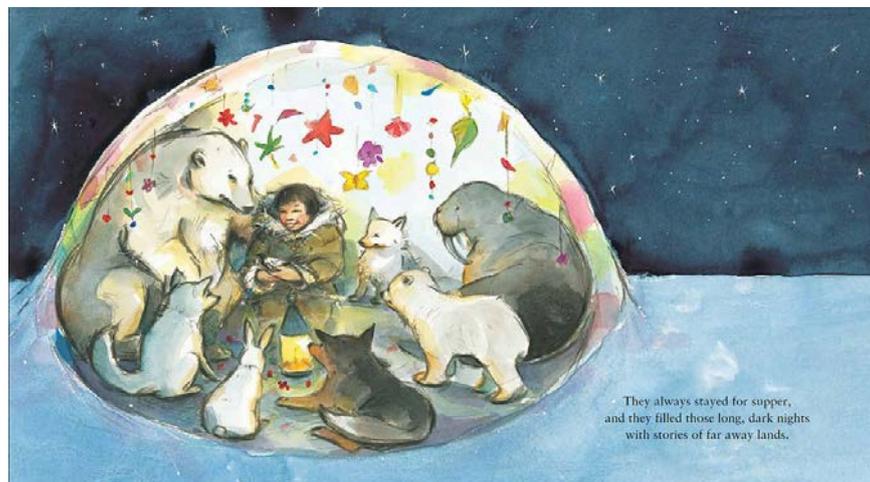
This story features a little Eskimo girl whose direct gaze at the reader forms a striking front cover. The opening endpapers reinforce this view of the reader entering a tough, cold grey landscape where persistent, relentless snow abounds.

The girl decides to fish for her supper but discovers a 'little wooden bird' on the end of her fishing line. Exotic colours contrast well with the polar bear pendant, as she ties the bird onto her necklace. This is the beginning of a series of unusual presents she receives every time she fishes. The gifts begin to transform her cold, white world into something abundantly rich and special, so much so, that other creatures begin to visit her colourful igloo. My favourite illustration is where she is cosily packed into her igloo sharing stories by lantern with creatures that are compelled to visit her (see below).

After a while, when the ice begins to melt, the little girl decides to give away her precious polar-bear pendant, dropping it into the hole where all the gifts have emerged from. Of course, the ending then starts to unravel the mysteries of the presents. You will have to read this for yourself! Suffice to say, a world is portrayed where connections between children in different places makes it a better place overall.

This heart-warming tale is therefore one that is likely to make an impact, one that is also helped by the stunning use of colours that make every spread a sheer visual delight for readers.

Overall, an unusual story that explores friendship and gifts – highly suitable for one to five year-olds – with the quality and ideas to be enjoyed over many readings.



They always stayed for supper,
and they filled those long, dark nights
with stories of far away lands.

From *Immi*. Copyright© 2016 Karin Littlewood. Reproduced with permission Otter-Barry Books.

Anna Harrison, MEd student in Children's Literature at the University of Cambridge



The Journey

Francesca Sanna, London: Flying Eye Books, hb. 978 1 9092 6399 4, 2016, £12.99, 48pp. [Picture book, 6+ years. Keywords: immigration; refugees; war; journey; sea; hope.]

She shows us pictures of strange cities, strange forests and strange animals until finally she sighs, 'We will go there and not be frightened anymore.'

And so the journey to a safer place where war is not a threat anymore begins. The story is narrated from the perspective of a young child who suffers the consequences of war. To protect her family, the mother is left with no choice, but to take her two

children, leave any second thoughts and her old life behind and look for a peaceful country to migrate to. It is a long journey, full of difficulties and fear, but at the same time a glimmer of hope lights up their way.

As Ann Lazim notes in her article 'Books about Refugees and the Experience of Migration' in *IBBYLink* 46, 'the text in this book is easy to read in terms of vocabulary and sentence structure, but this apparent simplicity combined with the memorable illustrations have great power to move readers of all ages'.

The illustrations feature gigantic figures with dark colours for danger, dreamlike creatures for children's imagination and flying birds for the promises of the new home. Life before the war is depicted only in the first two pages, as a joyful day on the beach, with buildings of different size and design in the foreground. All of them have a common feature: they are built on sand and so lack solid foundations. It only takes the turning of the page to see the structures collapse due to the force of a black wild sea that represents the cruel power of war.

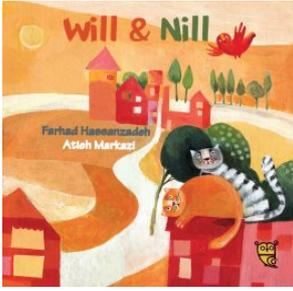
Even though the story deals with the serious topic of migration, there are traces of optimism through the eyes of the child narrator, implying that hope never dies. The characters are not named, as there are actually more than two children and a mother; they represent the reality of every war and every refugee.

This book is particularly pertinent for the age of migration and uncertainty that we live in. Its messages can stimulate thought-provoking discussions with children, but also adults, on migration, the value of peace, human rights, the sense of borders and the effects of war. It can be a window to the world of the millions of refugees that seem to be far from us but actually is very close.



The illustrator, Francesca Sanna, drew her inspiration from real stories of refugees in an Italian refugee centre. This is her first book and certainly a promising start for her future works. It is published by Flying Eye Books (an imprint of Nobrow), a relatively new publishing house of children's books that boasts of many awarded books, such as the Hildafolk series by Luke Pearson and *Shackleton's Journey* by William Grill.

Lina Iordanaki, PhD candidate University of Cambridge



Will & Nill

Farhad Hasanzadeh, illus. Atieh Marzaki, trans. Azita Rassi, London: Tiny Owl Publishing, pb., 978 1 9103 2815 6, 2016, £12.99, 40pp. [Picture book, 5–7 years. Keywords; diversity; cats; anthropomorphism; friendship; selfishness.]

Will & Nill is a beautiful picture book by the renowned Iranian author Farhad Hasanzadeh and the illustrator Atieh Marzaki. It is part of Tiny Owl Publishing's mission to bring to the UK translations of celebrated international authors, creating a booklist that reflects the diversity of UK's society. Hasanzadeh is one of the best-known names in children's literature in Iran, being nominated in the past to represent his country in both the Hans Christian Andersen Award and the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.

The book tells the story of two street cats with very different personalities, Will and Nill. One morning they wake up very hungry. While Will is active and tries to think of a way to find his next meal, Nill is sleepy and unable to move to look for food.

When a sparrow appears, inviting them to play, Will joins in, but Nill is eager to eat the poor little bird. Luckily, Will is able to reason with Nill and save his new friend. Playing with the sparrow leads Will to a delicious half-eaten fish, but Nill hasn't made much of an effort to fill his stomach. Fed and happy, Will has a 'deep and satisfied sleep'. Nill, starving, can't ignore his stomach any longer, as 'a very hungry cat never falls asleep. Everybody knows that'.

The illustrations are bright and colourful, and the warm tones of certain spreads radiate Will's vibrancy and energy. In the first scenes, there is some mismatch between the description of the cats in the text and what is seen in the pictures; for instance when the cats are said to be asleep and the illustration shows them awake.



As a cautionary tale, the most obvious reading of this story is that laziness won't take you anywhere, but perhaps one of its richest aspects is to be open enough to support several interpretations. Is Nill simply lazy or could he be sick or depressed? Could Will have shown some solidarity towards his cousin and shared his fish?

This open-endedness leaves us with the question: what will Nill do now if he is hungry and can't sleep?, therefore showing great potential for classroom discussion and conversation during parent-child shared-reading.

Aline Frederico, PhD candidate University of Cambridge

Information Books and Non-Fiction

The Ancient Egyptians

Imogen Greenberg, illus. Isabel Greenberg, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0825 7, 2016, £8.99, 32pp. [Information book, 7–10 years. Keywords: illustrated; history; Ancient Egyptians; comic strip.]

The Roman Empire

Imogen Greenberg, illus. Isabel Greenberg, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0826 4, £8.99, 2016, 32pp. [Information book, 7–10 years. Keywords: illustrated; history; Roman Empire; comic strip.]

I have looked at these two books together as they are part of a Discovery series aimed at 7–10 year olds. Although the subject matter differs, they are similar in appearance, and use the same devices for telling the stories of the Ancient Egyptians and the Roman Empire.

Both books begin by introducing us to two characters that take us through the book. One is a storyteller who is responsible for giving us the facts and quirky stories; the other is an archaeologist who shows us treasures belonging to these civilisations.

There is plenty of history to tell, and both these volumes make a brave attempt by using a mixture of comic strip and factual pages to explore different facets of the life and times of these ancient peoples. The two volumes cleverly reflect the art of the time from the style of the tomb paintings taken from the walls of ancient Egypt and the statues, baths and temples of the Roman Empire.

The problem I have with both of these books is that although the drawings are wonderfully alive and take us easily from page to page, I think it needs a fairly sophisticated reader to persevere with the complicated layout. For instance, black type on red or darkish blue is hard to decipher, and the script used for the spoken work in the comic-strip balloons is fairly small and cramped due to the format of the books, which is long and thin. This is a shame as I think it might put off a reluctant reader.

However, these books are beautifully illustrated by Isabel Greenberg and immaculately presented in hardback. They also contain masses of useful information written by Imogen Greenberg (they are sisters), including a really informative fold-out timeline. I think they will make lovely presents for any child who already has an interest in the history of the Roman Empire or in ancient Egypt, or a child who is willing to try something a bit different and challenging.

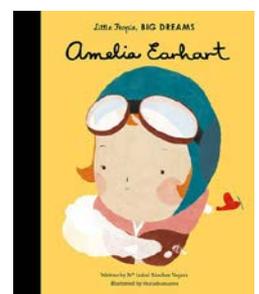
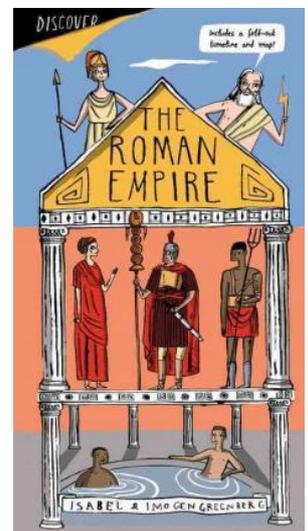
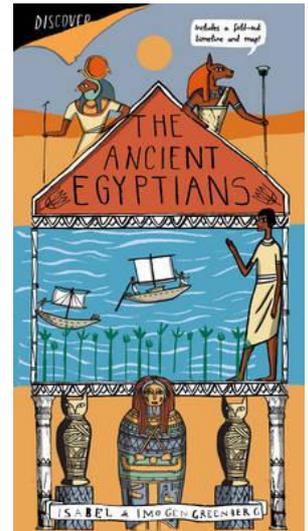
Shirley Hobson

Amelia Earhart (Little People, Big Dreams)

Isabel Sanchez Vegara, illus. Maria Diamantes, trans. Raquel Plitt, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0885 5, 2016, £9.99, 25pp. [Non-fiction, 6–10 years. Keywords: biography; illustrated; aircraft; historic event.]

This book is a short biography of Amelia Earhart intended for readers in the age range six to ten. Earhart became a famous aviator, being the first woman to fly the Atlantic with a navigator and subsequently the first woman to make the same flight alone. The interesting point about her is that she was not fascinated by flying from childhood. In fact it was not until she was in her twenties that she attended an air show for the first time and became interested in flying. Not every high achiever gets off to a childhood start.

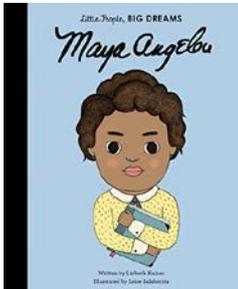
Earhart's story ended in a way that was both mysterious and disastrous. When she attempted to fly round the world, all contact with her aircraft was lost. She must have crashed somewhere and died, but her aircraft and her remains have never been found. There is a monument to her on an island she may have reached, but this is largely



guesswork. It is equally uncertain how readers of this age group will respond to a story that ends so tragically.

The illustrations to this volume of the series do not reach the same standard as those for the Maya Angelou book. They do not strengthen the text to the same extent.

Rebecca Butler



Maya Angelou (Little People, Big Dreams)

Lisbeth Kaiser, illus. Leire Salaberria, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0890 5, 2016, £9.99, 26pp. [Non-fiction, 6–10 years. Keywords: biography, illustrated; aircraft; historic event.]

This book is a short biography of Maya Angelou intended for readers aged six to ten. Angelou became a celebrated writer, author of the autobiography *I Know why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969). Kaiser's book concentrates attention on the subject's childhood. She was born Marguerite. She did not have an easy childhood. The story mentions the campaign in the USA for equal rights. Marguerite traced Angelou's origins to slaves. Angelou was also attacked at the age of eight by a boyfriend of her mother, and as a consequence spent some time as an elective mute. In my experience mutism is very rarely mentioned as a syndrome in books for this age group. She found her way out of her aphasia by reading, finding peace in the books she read.



Kaiser's book sets out with considerable success to tackle some themes that are far from easy for young readers. The impact of the narrative is enhanced by full-colour illustrations by Leire Salaberria.

Rebecca Butler

23rd IBBY UK/NCRCL MA Annual Conference

'Marvellous Imaginations: Extending Thinking through Picture Books' 5 November 2016 at Froebel College, Roehampton University

This year's conference explores the ways in which picture books contribute to the development of the child (or/and indeed the adult) through critical, imaginative, empathetic, creative or other responses. We shall look at the international world of picture books; at trends and developments in publishing; at specific academic research on children's interaction with picture books; and at some of the wide range of programmes and projects that use picture books as a starting point for their work, including established programmes like the Reader Organisation in Liverpool and new programmes such as CLPE's Power of Pictures and Amnesty International's work with the Kate Greenaway awards. We shall hear from eminent illustrators, including Laura Carlin who will be presented with her medal for winning the Bratislava Biennale of Illustration, one of the oldest international honours for children's book illustrators, and about the new Klaus Flugge Prize for the most exciting newcomer to picture-book illustration. The conference will include keynote presentations by well-known illustrators, academics and key figures in the children's literature world.

For information on workshops, the programme and to book this event, see:

http://estore.roehampton.ac.uk/browse/extra_info.asp?compid=1&modid=2&catid=208&prodid=258

If you encounter any difficulties booking online, contact Julia Noyce, Academic Conferencing Manager, T: 020 8392 3698; E: Julia.Noyce@roehampton.ac.uk

The next issue of *IBBYLink* is *IBBYLink* 48, Spring 2017 (copydate 31 December 2016), and will be on the subject of picture books.

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 N7 0EE; jphilo@waitrose.com.

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