**IBBY conference 2019**

**Parallel sessions**

*(nb use of hyphen or space in ‘nonfiction’ and’ picture books’ is writer’s own)*

**SESSION 1: CHILDREN’S RESPONSES**

**Julie Holmwood**

**"Sorry microbes" - Year 5 struggling readers engaging with non-fiction picturebooks**

This research project seeks to explore how struggling Year 5 readers engage with non-fiction picturebooks in a small group situation. It was completed for a 'Children's Literature in Action' module being studied on the MA Children's Literature course at Goldsmiths, University of London. Existing literature was surveyed focusing on the place of the non-fiction picturebook within children’s literature, reading engagement, attitudes and motivation, and dialogic learning. From the data collected, four predominant themes emerged and these were used as a framework for analysis: engagement; pleasure; attainment and motivation; and types of talk. Much of the talk observed was competitive rather than co-operative. Although chains of dialogue exist, they are more often categorised as ‘cumulative’ rather than ‘exploratory’ due to the lack of collaborative critical engagement. Patterns in children’s individual dialogue contributions were identified; some of these suggest links to attitudes to learning. A range of different types of engagement were evident with some individuals demonstrating a tendency towards affective, creative and personal engagement. Children’s responses to illustrated non-fiction books demonstrated gaining pleasure through curiosity and acquisition of new knowledge. Further research focusing on children from a broader spectrum of reading attitudes and attainment is suggested.

**Biography**

Julie Holmwood is studying for a MA in Children’s Literature at Goldsmiths, University of London.  She has a particular interest in picturebooks. Previously she taught in primary schools before becoming an Education Improvement Adviser for Primary English and Literacy with Shropshire local authority. She volunteers with Shrewsbury Bookfest a charity that aims to inspire, enthuse and entertain children through literature and the arts. While studying, she continues to work with teachers and schools providing CPD on aspects of primary English and statutory assessment.

**Mary-Louise Maynes**

**Facts and Feelings: children’s emotive encounters with poetic nonfiction picture books.**

Texts which combine poetic language with artistic images and nonfictional content are a growing category of books for children both in the UK and internationally. In contrast to digital sources of information, ‘poetic nonfiction picture books’ (Kesler, 2012) are often beautiful physical objects in themselves, which offer rich and multi-layered reading experiences for children, but reading experiences which can question accepted distinctions between fiction and nonfiction. This paper presents some of the findings from a small-scale, qualitative study which explored the responses of children in a Year 5 class (aged 9-10 years) in a primary school in England, to a selection of poetic nonfiction picture books. The children were observed in conversation about the texts, and then took part in semi-structured interviews with the researcher. The study demonstrated that the children responded primarily in emotive and empathetic ways, building on their feelings and experiences to make sense of what they were reading. The paper discusses poetic nonfiction picture books as a hybrid category of texts and suggests that they can provide opportunities to widen children’s experience of nonfiction, challenge genre boundaries and encourage an approach to reading nonfiction which recognises and values emotive, aesthetic and personal response.

Kesler, T. (2012) *Evoking the world of poetic nonfiction picture books.* Children’s Literature in education, 43(4) pp 338-354.

**Biography**

Dr Mary-Louise Maynes is a Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies at Bishop Grosseteste University Lincoln. She has a background in primary education and school libraries. She has a particular interest in researching children’s nonfiction and hybrid texts and is currently working on a book investigating children’s responses to poetic nonfiction picture books. She has published and presented work on children’s spirituality in the early years, and monsters in children’s picture books

**SESSION 2: ILLUSTRATION**

**Vassiliki Tzomaka**

### Alternative illustrations for nonfiction picturebooks

Designing and illustrating nonfiction picturebooks largely revolves around finding ways to make information accessible to children whilst simultaneously retaining their attention. This has been the motivation of every picturebook artist throughout the 360-year history of the picturebook. Child development psychologists Vygotsky and Piaget subsequently shared only one belief, that better cognitive learning takes place when the child is excited and having fun. Being able to access images and information digitally, about everything, in seconds, although once seen as a threat, has opened up new possibilities for artists that are curious about science and natural history. Using a combination of glow-in-the-dark inks, patterns and colours that are more imaginary than real to introduce children to both wildlife and cultures across the deserts of the world, Vassiliki discusses how the artwork of her upcoming book, *Hoot and Howl through the Desert* (Thames and Hudson, 2020), was developed, following an exploration into alternative ways of making non-fiction information more exciting. Alongside this she presents the advantages of pushing the boundaries of traditional nonfiction illustrations, the difficulties involved in keeping a balance between real and imaginary and the power and opportunities that the double page spread continues to offer.

**References**

Hughes, A. M. (2008). *Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Practical Guidance in the EYFS)*. London: Routledge.

Pritchard, A. (2014). *Ways of Learning: Learning Theories and Learning Styles in the Classroom.* 3rd Edition. Abingdon: Routledge

Thorne, K. (2007). *Essential Creativity in the Classroom: Inspiring Kids*. London: Routledge.

### Biography

Vassiliki Tzomaka (BSc, MEnv, MA, PhD) is a graphic artist based in Colchester. She completed a practiced based PhD on role of narrative in the design and illustration of nonfiction picturebooks at Cambridge School of Art in 2017 and has been an Associate Lecturer there since. Her first picturebook, *Hoot and Howl across the Desert,* will be published by Thames and Hudson in Spring 2020.

**Ruth Thomson & Pam Dix**

**The role of illustration in non-fiction children’s books**

This session will explore how the role of illustrations has evolved and increased in importance to complement non-fiction texts, to entice and engage readers and extend their understanding and enjoyment. Non-fiction illustrators have generally been far less feted than picture book illustrators, perhaps dismissed as being more technical than imaginative. However, a closer survey and inspection of their work reveals a different story.

Ground-breaking publishers over the past century have pushed boundaries and encouraged innovative and hugely creative visual approaches to non-fiction books. They have sought out well-known artists, photographers and graphic designers to bring their skills to the challenge of stimulating and explaining for young readers. There proves to be a wealth of extraordinary illustrators who deserve to be better known and whose influence and legacy have been far-reaching.

Using seminal examples of illustrated books (both old and new) from Soviet Russia, France, the UK, the USA, Poland, India, Germany and elsewhere, this session will show how illustrators have imaginatively, and often ingeniously, depicted people at work, described the natural world, explained how things work, recreated the past, reveal what is hidden from view (e.g. inside the body), made visible the invisible (e.g. sound and music), provided instructions for making and doing, told stories of significant people and shown life in countries around the world.

**Biographies**

**Ruth Thomson** has had a long and versatile career as a children’s non-fiction author, editor, translator, book packager and publishing director for many major English publishers. She has written more than 300 non-fiction titles for children of all ages, specialising in history, literacy, geography, nature, art, craft and design. In addition, she holds an MA in museum and gallery learning and has written a number of specially commissioned children’s books and interactive packs for national museums, including the National Gallery, the Tate and the Imperial War Museum. She has won the TES Information book award, the Other Award, the English 4-11 Award for the Best Children’s Picture Book, several American Library Association awards and, in 2012, her book *Terezin: a story of* *the Holocaust* won both the SLA Information Book Award and the ALCS Information Book Award. She has been guest speaker at the Cheltenham and Edinburgh Book Festivals and has held many workshops at primary schools throughout the UK. For the past two years, she has been researching with Pam Dix the neglected history, role and scope of illustration in 20th century international non-fiction books, with the intention of writing a book on the subject.

**Pam Dix** has an MA in Children’s Literature. She is currently Chair of IBBY UK and a trustee of Book Aid International, and has been a school librarian and SLS head of service and lecturer in children’s literature in education at London Metropolitan University. She is the author / editor of several books on school libraries and the role of resources in children’s learning.

**SESSION 3: LOOKING AT INDIVIDUAL BOOKS AND APPROACHES**

**Diletta Donati**

**Biographical picturebooks**

This paper proposes an exploration of the biographical picturebook’s unique ability to bring the past into the present with a focus on:

* the manipulation of time through text, image, layout and page turns in Barb Rosenstock and Mary Granpre’s *The Noisy Paint Box: The Colours and Sounds of Kandinsky’s Abstract Art (2014);*
* a “foreignizing” (Buttler and O’Donovan, 2012) approach to presenting history in Pam Muñoz Ryan and Brian Selznick’s *When Marian Sang: The True Recital of Marian Anderson (2002);*
* a playful take on the autobiographical genre in Chis Hadfield and the Fan Brothers’ *The Darkest Dark (2016).*

These three picturebooks offer numerous insights into some of the literary devices which help make the past both relatable and exciting for young readers today. With their interplay of text, paratext and peritext they involve us in taking a critical approach to biography and a playful look at the genre. Most importantly they go beyond the usual timelines, glossaries and maps, allowing us to capture the essence of the great women and men of the past. They bring us into the diachronic moment where we experience these people’s life changing moments, and share in their struggles and their wonderment.

**Biography**

A passionate collector, writer and illustrator of picturebooks, Diletta Donati is currently doing an MA in Children’s Literature at Roehampton University, London. She taught English as a Foreign Language for 17 years in Italy and ran courses aimed at developing children’s learning skills through reading projects, acting and drawing.

Diletta managed choral and orchestral concert tours around the UK and Italy, as well as working for a year at the Lion Bookshop in Rome while studying for her degree in English, French and Italian literature at La Sapienza University.

Alongside her teaching work, Diletta has dedicated herself extensively to music and art, performing and recording on international concert tours with Vinicio Capossela and ensembles such as the Cambridge University choirs of Fitzwilliam College and Wolfson College.

She is currently writing and illustrating her second children’s book.

**Ana Paula Campos** (paper to be read)

**Design influences on science books**

This paper arises from studies for my master´s dissertation and with the case study I conducted. These are the objectives and main insights of the work. The qualitative study aimed to raise and discuss ways in which the design field can contribute to science communication for children through four investigative axes of research: collaborative processes, participatory processes, playfulness and information design. In order to highlight and discuss questions relating to these axes, I conducted a case study of the children's information book *Lá fora – Guia para descobrir a natureza* (Planeta Tangerina, Portugal, 2014). The analysis method was based on eight categories, as stated in papers by Professor Sue Walker (University of Reading): content, rhetorics, layout, navigation, linguistics, material qualities, production, and consumption.

The analysis suggests that the design field contribution to science communication for children can be enhanced the more comprehensive is its scope and the earlier it is introduced in the design process. In addition, each investigative axis highlights specific contributions, linked to the form of participation that design takes on the production process of the publication, namely: the informative, investigative and critical accuracy, and the creativity in addressing the themes of science; the defence of autonomy, leadership and respect to cognitive and emotional needs of the child; the poetic, open, imaginative and complex approach of addressed subjects; the attention to the usability and readability of objects, and its information visualization.

**Biography**

Ana Paula lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil. She is a graphic designer and since 2015, has run a creative studio with a partner, where we work mostly for projects aimed at children or their carers, in the fields of education, literature, culture and science. Before that, she worked as an information designer for the science magazine *Pesquisa Fapesp* from 2011 to 2019. In 2016, she obtained a master´s degree from the University of São Paulo with a research about the design of non- fiction picturebooks for children and young people. Since that, she has been studying the relationship between infographics, text, design and illustration in children's non-fiction picture books. She also writes reviews, articles and interviews for Brazilian magazines that are specialized in books and literature, such as *Quatro Cinco Um* magazine and *Emilia*.