

Conflicts and Controversies

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EDITORIAL

The theme of this issue of *IBBYLink* is the November 2010 IBBY/NRCL MA conference, whose subject was ‘Conflicts and Controversies’. A book containing most of the papers that were delivered on that occasion, published by Pied Piper Publishing, is due to appear later this year. The conference was, as usual, lively and well attended,. The first talk (not available for *IBBYLink*) by Elizabeth Thiel of the National Centre for Research in Children’s Literature (NCRCL), provided a broad perspective on the term ‘conflict’. She focused on the conflict created for writers by the dichotomy between different perspectives on the child, and their attempts to reconcile the then frequent depictions of child criminality with the more traditional image of the child as innocent. The remaining plenary sessions, accounts of which are available here, looked at questions such as the publication of books with subject matter that is controversial, particularly because of treating sex or violence (by a publishers’ panel, and the author Anne Cassidy), and the treatment of war in children’s fiction (notably by Elizabeth Laird). Information

was provided about the forthcoming exhibition at the Imperial War Museums in London and Manchester on war stories for children, and the conference concluded with an absorbing conversation between Laura Atkins and the popular novelist Malorie Blackman, focusing on how her work treats difficult subjects such as race, and most recently in her latest book, *Boys Don’t Cry*, teenage fatherhood and the experiences of a gay teenager.

The planning for this year’s conference (on 12 November) on poetry for and by children is already well under way (more details elsewhere in this issue).

The next issue of *IBBYLink* (copydate 30 April) will be devoted to articles about and reviews of children’s books concerned with Africa, particularly but not exclusively South Africa. Among other things, this will enable us to look closely at Jason Wallace’s challenging winner of the prestigious 2010 Costa Children’s Book Award, *Out of Shadows*, set in Zimbabwe.

Pat Pinsent

LETTERS

A Message about *IBBYLink* 29

Just a note to say how much I enjoyed *IBBYLink* 29. When I saw that you were going to do an Australian theme, I nearly volunteered to write something about the influence of Australian children’s literature, but it would have been largely a nostalgic ramble – most of the books that I had about Australian children’s literature I donated to the library at Roehampton when I had to have a major cull of books I’d accumulated in connection with *Children’s Literature Abstracts*. But when I was a children’s and schools librarian (1958–1968) and when I was teaching in library school after that, Australian authors such as Nan Chauncey, Eleanor Spence, Hesba Brinsmead, Ivan Southall and Patricia Wrightson loomed very large. When I was on the Carnegie selection committee (early 1960s) I can remember a very strong case being made for Nan Chauncey although at that time winners had to be domiciled in the UK. Ivan Southall came over and gave a talk at Birmingham Library School (promoted by his publisher) and, of course, did win the Carnegie Medal. I went to the ‘do’ where it was announced (Noel Streatfield broke her chair at the dining table – they were pretty fragile). *I Own the Racecourse* (Patricia Wrightson, 1986) was important as a book about a child with learning difficulties. My husband Colin organised the IBBY Congress at Cambridge and I remember we had lots of Australian delegates, though I hadn’t remembered as many as 55.

Do carry on the good work. I find *IBBYLink* both enjoyable and useful.

Sheila Ray

Pushing the Boundaries of Teen Fiction

Anne Cassidy

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

I've been lucky enough to be published for the past 20 years. My first book was *Big Girl's Shoes* published by Lion Tracks in 1990. Since then I've published 40 plus books, including 26 for teens.

I write crime fiction and my best-known book is *Looking for JJ* (2004). *LFJJ* is about a girl called Jennifer Jones. She is 17 years old. When she was 10 she killed her friend. She was sent to a secure institution for six years. When it came to her being released, the press and the public saw her as notorious so she was given a new identity. She lives with a carer and has a nice life. All the time though she is worried that someone will find out who she is and what she did six years before when she killed her friend. When this book was published it got a lot of notice and sold many copies. It won prizes and was shortlisted for many others. It was published in Europe as well as the USA. The Pilot Theatre Company made a play out of it which ran in London for five weeks in 2006.

LFJJ is a controversial book. Many people liked it but some questioned its suitability for a teenage audience. This was not because of bad language – there is none. It was not because of the sex or violence; this was obliquely described. It was the subject matter. It was too close to the terrible case of James Bulger, the two-year-old child who was murdered in 1993. This event scarred the nation's psyche and left a raw mark. This link to the James Bulger case stayed; when the book was shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal in 2005 the press called it the 'Bulger book'. *LFJJ* is not about the James Bulger case. However if James Bulger had not been killed I would never have written this book. The crime haunted me.

Years later I researched and found the case of Mary Bell, a ten-year-old girl who, along with another child, murdered two children in 1968. I read *Cries Unheard* (1998) by Gitta Sereny in which she worked closely with Mary Bell, interviewing her as a much older woman. I wanted to know why Mary Bell did these things, but there was no clear answer. I had to do what all writers of fiction do and suggest and hint, and create a set of circumstances that would bring about the situation in which one ten-year-old child might kill another.

LFJJ incorporates many of the features of all my books: murder, childhood, adolescence, secrets and guilt. The story goes back and forward in time and it has an uncomfortable resolution.

The major link between *LFJJ* and all my other teen books is that the main character is a teenager. Alice Tully likes to dress and look a certain way, she has a clingy boyfriend, a part-time job in a coffee shop, a place at university to go to in the following autumn. She lives with a carer called Rosie with whom she has a mother–daughter relationship. With or without her terrible secret, she is still a teenager first and foremost, and this, I think, is what pulls teen readers to her and makes them empathise with her situation.

When I write about teenagers I draw heavily on my own teenage years. I was 14 years old in 1966. I went to an all-girls' convent grammar school. It had a strict uniform and there was a lot of praying. I was an only child and needy. I always needed my friends more than they needed me so I had my heart broken on many occasions. My parents were happy to keep me as a child for as long as possible but I wanted to be older, like the big girls I saw in school. This all came out in my first novel *Big Girls Shoes* (1990). This novel is almost entirely autobiographical except that the names have been changed and there is a nasty murder that drives the plot.

My teenage years were also affected by the changes that were going on in society. The world and London in particular seemed to be going through a cultural revolution. There was a massive upheaval in the way young people lived. Fashion changed, music changed; those were the days of drugs and the contraceptive pill. It was called Swinging London. But I was stuck in a convent school in Stamford Hill. At home my parents were happy for me to be their little girl. I wanted to be grown up. The main emotion I felt

through my teens was an intense frustration of being pulled both ways. I wanted to be older, have bigger bosoms, longer hair, more freedom, more money, better friends. I wanted to go up to Carnaby Street and go to all-night parties. Instead I was a 14-year-old girl who wasn't allowed to wear make up or choose her own clothes or go out with boys. I know that teens have changed over the last 45 years. They are louder on the bus, on the street and on the tube. They have different fashions, different relationships with the opposite sex, they are more demanding of their families. They are perhaps more impatient with people's expectations of them. They are more opinionated and less malleable than I was. But inside I don't believe they are that different from the way I was in 1966. The last 45 years have not changed the essential struggle that adolescence brings: the child turning into the young adult with the it's-not-fair feeling that I felt; the desire to be older, to be respected, to have freedom; the sense that the family are trying to hold you back, to keep you as a child.

A lot has changed in the world of publishing over the twenty years that I've been writing. Teenage fiction was the most difficult area to do well in. Mushrooming out and shrinking back. Always on its last legs. Being a gritty teen writer during the explosion that was Harry Potter was very difficult. Phone calls didn't get returned. It was called the mystery genre. It was a mystery how it sold. Teenagers didn't read, and if they did read they didn't buy books. It was the poor cousin of the children's publishing world. Nevertheless the young adult fiction market has survived and is now the place to be for outstanding writing. These writers have certainly pushed back the boundaries of teenage fiction. You might think, when I say this, that I mean that there is now more swearing, sex, violence and drugs in the books. This is true. There are four-letter words in teen fiction and this doesn't seem to raise the eyebrows as it once did. There is sex, some of it quite explicit. There is violence. You have only to look at the crime statistics of teenagers killed in knife or gun crimes to realise how important it is for writers to tackle these subjects. There is more about drugs. I write about drugs in my books, although it's largely there as a kind of wallpaper, background. Drugs are part of the furniture of teenage life, and, I think, particularly when writing crime novels, it would be a madness to leave them out. So these things, sex, violence, drugs and swearing are there. But for me this isn't really what I mean when I think of writers pushing the boundaries of teen fiction. When I think about this phrase I think of pushing the boundaries of the reading experiences of teenagers.

When teenagers choose a modern young adult fiction book they're not just getting a story. They're getting diverse subject matter: sophisticated plots, challenging structures of narrative, powerful emotional experiences, moral dilemmas that have no easy answers. They're getting an array of genres and a variety of authorial voices.

It seems to me that teen fiction writers have pushed the boundaries, moving teen fiction closer to adult fiction. I believe that teen fiction has much more in common with adult fiction than it has with children's books. And this, in my mind, is perfectly right. Adolescence is not static. It's a journey away from childhood towards being an adult. It seems absolutely right, to me, that teen fiction should mirror this.

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Panel Discussion

Pat Pinsent

Klaus Flugge, the founder of Andersen Press, said there had been controversy concerning David McKee's *Not Now Bernard* when it came out (1980) because some librarians thought the small boy had been eaten by a monster. There was also concern about Hiawyn Oram and Satoshi Kitamura's *Angry Arthur* (1982), in which a boy destroys the planet and winds up in outer space. Flugge feels that there is more licence now – it is the parents of young children who find it difficult to cope with challenging themes. Another source of controversy was Melvin Burgess *Doing It* (2003). After a number of books which might be described as 'harmless', Burgess produced this book which presented the sexual gossip of teenage boys. Flugge felt this was very useful in order for girls to know what went on in the minds of boys of this age!

The other participant in the discussion, which was chaired by Geraldine Brennan, was Denise Johnstone-Burt, who after a wide range of publishing experience is currently Associate Director at Walker Books. She spoke about various books with controversial content or artwork. One of these, during a period when there was much publicity about knife crime, was Patrick Ness's prize-winning but controversial Chaos Walking trilogy, which begins with *The Knife of Never Letting Go* (2008). She saw the books as being about the process of growing up, rather than containing any gratuitous violence. Another controversial publication was Amanda Mitchison's *Mission Telemark* (2010), which initially had to be withdrawn because of inserts that featured a knife. The cover of David Almond's *The Savage* (2008) was criticised as being violent, though this was not true of the content of the book. Starbucks withdrew from the promotion of Jandy Nelson's *The Sky is Everywhere* (2010) because they saw its content as too explicitly sexual, an aspect that also featured in relation to Robie Harris and Michael Emberley's *Let's Talk About Sex* (2010). Other controversies included Jan Pienkowski's less than traditional perspective on Bible stories in *In the Beginning* (2010). There were some problems about the original illustrations for Michael Morpurgo's *The Kites are Flying!* (2009), set in the inevitably tendentious location of Israel/Palestine. The commissioned illustrator would only agree to his illustrations being used if the perspective between the Israelis and Palestinians was changed. Laura Carlin's illustrations are a replacement.

The contributions of the publishers attracted a good deal of interest and subsequent discussion from the audience.

Conflicts and Controversies: Running into Flak

Elizabeth Laird

The title of this conference, 'Conflicts and Controversies', suggests the subject of war, but I have found myself embroiled in other kinds of controversy from time to time. My first novel, *Red Sky in the Morning* (1988), was based on my personal experience of having a brother who had multiple health problems and disabilities and died at the age of three. This didn't stop people who were attempting to draw the attention of the book trade to the prevalent negative stereotypes of disability from seeking to ban the book, though probably without realising its personal basis. Alerted to the problem, I then collaborated with disabled children in producing a book of short stories, as well as including this theme in several subsequent books.

Kiss the Dust, written in 1990 and set in Iraq, was my first foray into international politics. The characters are Kurds who are forced to flee because of Saddam Hussein's repression, about which, at that stage, little was known. Events soon proved the truth of my criticisms, and some people thought my name disguised a Kurdish author.

I wonder why so many writers are almost obsessed with writing about the first and second world wars, at the expense of ignoring the causes and nature of modern conflicts.

The British public, especially children, need to be informed about the major forces at work internationally that have an impact on our lives.

The biggest area of controversy in my writing has been concerned with *A Little Piece of Ground* (2003), a novel for young teens set in present-day Ramallah. It's written from the point of view of a 12-year-old Palestinian boy, who is living under Israeli military occupation. Its origin lay in a number of visits to the area, and a meeting and subsequent collaboration with the Palestinian author Sonia Nimir. It was impossible to present a balanced picture: a Palestinian boy inevitably feels passionate hostility to the Israeli occupiers, since the only Israelis he meets are soldiers. My narrator would have no opportunity to meet the many within Israel who are making a real effort to end the occupation or at least to control its most harmful effects. To introduce a sympathetic Israeli character would have been patronising to the reader and would have sacrificed truthfulness. Much of the controversy was as anticipated – there were difficulties about publication in the USA and France, and incidents involving schools, libraries and bookshops. There were both good and critical reviews. Some teachers and librarians have been afraid to recommend the book in case they are accused of bias – a variety of political correctness that I don't approve of.

I think it's good to look at difficult topics and discuss them. Lynne Reid Banks' two novels, *One More River* (1972) and *Broken Bridge* (2007) are there to give an alternative view. Readers should read the books themselves and make up their own minds.

More recently I wrote *The Garbage King* (2003) about a group of street children in Addis Ababa. This is unpopular with Ethiopians, who greatly dislike the portrayal of the poverty of some people in their society. They prefer to highlight their great and important culture, exquisite art, amazing ancient buildings and wonderful landscapes.

Crusade (2007) is a historical novel that rose out of my fury at the folly of the West in invading Iraq in the name of freedom and democracy. In it I recall how a 1000 years ago, westerners went off to beat up the Middle East in the name of Christianity. The consequences were bad then, and they are disastrous now. The novel features two main characters with whom we empathise: an English Christian boy and a Muslim Saracen boy.

Another novel, *Lost Riders* (2009), was inspired by a visit to Pakistan to find out about the small boys who are trafficked to the Gulf to ride camels in races. It's a terrible and cruel trade in children as young as four years old. I've been bracing myself for a reaction to the novel, both from Pakistanis, who might object to my portrayal of rural life and poverty in their country, and from Gulf Arabs, who would certainly be annoyed by my description of the horrors of life for the young jockeys, but I suspect that so far the book hasn't come to their attention.

My latest novel, *The Witching Hour* (2009), is set in seventeenth-century Scotland and is an attempt to look at fundamentalist religion working within and against the state: a serious contemporary problem. I was brought up in the Plymouth Brethren and although I no longer subscribe to a closed system of belief, I feel a kind of understanding and sympathy with those who need such a creed, so I wanted to look at the problem, as it were, from somewhere near the inside. The novel was inspired by various ancestors who as Scottish Covenanters were persecuted in that period. In a sense, all this reaction and counter-reaction to the situations I explore in my book is less important than the inner conflict within and between the characters.

The impact of fiction on young readers is incalculable. Older children and young adolescents are starting to position themselves vis-à-vis the world they live in, to try to understand different ideas and points of view, and to know what underlies the news that bombards them every time they turn on their computers. Although it sounds horribly worthy, I feel a sort of weird compulsion to weigh in there and tackle some old prejudices and modern ignorance – but I also do it because stuff bubbles up inside me and wants to come out.

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Once Upon a Wartime: Classic War Stories for Children An Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum

Jane Rosen and Hazel Brown

Jane Rosen: The Books

The exhibition will focus on five books with particular reference to themes relevant to wartime. The books, with their highlighted themes, are:

- Michael Morpurgo, *War Horse* (1982) (Loyalty)
- Nina Bawden, *Carrie's War* (1972) (Separation)
- Robert Westall, *The Machine Gunners* (1975) (Excitement)
- Ian Serraillier, *The Silver Sword* (1956) (Survival)
- Bernard Ashley, *Little Soldier* (1999) (Identity)

To anchor these books it was decided that a historical overview of children's literature about war should be provided, both as a template for the researchers and designers of the exhibition, and for the visitor. This overview would look at what was happening in children's publishing at the time of the conflicts covered, as well as their retrospective treatment in later children's fiction. The aim was to look for landmarks in the field of children's publishing, and at some of the themes and attitudes that informed the development of the genre.

In the nineteenth century, children's literature reflected the fact that Britain was a major imperial power with possessions all over the world, notable instances being the *Boy's Own Paper* (begun in 1879) and adventure stories. Central to these publications were the concepts of duty and loyalty to the British Empire and the sovereign. Titles by G.A. Henty (1871 onwards) and Bessie Marchant (1890 onwards) had among their aims the training of children to play their role in Britain's imperial ambitions, while Rudyard Kipling's *Stalky and Co* (1899) and *Kim* (1901) overtly deal with the training of boys to serve the empire.

In the early twentieth century, story papers such as *The Gem* (1907–1939) and *The Magnet* (1908–1940), aimed at the working-class reader and at propagating the ideas of the establishment, began to appear, as did Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship* (1908). At the same time some books began to feature Germany as the enemy. Erskine Childers' adult text, *Riddle of the Sands* (1903), was soon followed by children's periodicals with the same premise. Many adventure stories about the First World War were written by former army officers, while themes related to patriotism also occurred in books for girls. Spies featured in many of these books, and hostility towards enemies is a dominant note, though in most of the

books written after 1918, the horrors of the conflict are rarely mentioned. The books are generally lavishly illustrated.

Between the First and Second World Wars, the adventure stories often featured flying, notably in the Biggles books by W.E. Johns (first book published 1932). Girls' school stories flourished, and the new comics *Adventure*, *The Rover*, *The Wizard*, *The Skipper*, *The Hotspur*, *The Beano* and *The Dandy* started publication between 1921 and 1938. Some children's books of this time did reflect the rise of fascism in Germany and sounded warnings of the time to come. They were less vocal about the divisions in a British society suffering from the Depression and experiencing its own fascist movement. A notable exception to this was Geoffrey Trease, who also made it clear that war was not glorious.

In many ways children's books of the Second World War were different from those of the First, especially in focusing on the Home Front and evacuation. However Johns added to his Biggles series, and also produced the Worrals of the WAAF books (first book published 1941) which were serialised in the *Girl's Own Paper*. Alongside these were comics, plus the first Puffin books.

Much of the children's literature published immediately after the war is seen by Nicholas Tucker as unchallenging, though *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* (1952) described with devastating effect the realities of being Jewish in an occupied country during the Second World War. Although some other books on the Second World War, notably Ian Serraillier's *The Silver Sword* (1956), were produced in the 1950s, it was not until the 1970s that survivors of the war began to tell their stories, important examples being Judith Kerr's *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* (1971), Nina Bawden's *Carrie's War* (1973) and Robert Westall's *The Machine Gunners* (1975). This decade also saw the arrival of Michael Morpurgo with *Friend or Foe* (1977) and later *War Horse* (1982).

Both world wars are now a major theme in the children's literature of today, though there are some limitations in subject matter, and extravagant claims are sometimes made for the integration of the classes and the role of women in fighting the war. A positive improvement is the decrease in the number of spies in the stories. Younger children are sometimes protagonists, and themes such as Dunkirk and the Holocaust tend to recur.

However, in these and in books that deal with the recent conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East, soldiers are no longer the heroes. A more questioning attitude has arisen and books about current conflicts tend to deal with refugees or are set in the countries where the conflict is happening, as in Bernard Ashley's *Little Soldier* (1999). This trend probably reflects the expectations of both writers and publishers concerning the attitudes of the adults who generally buy the books for the children.

Hazel Brown: The Exhibition

Once Upon a Wartime: Classic War Stories for Children is a new family exhibition that will focus on the authors of children's war literature, their inspirations and the histories behind the stories. It will be the first time that such an exhibition has been held by the Imperial War Museums. It has been designed for two very different sites, in London and Manchester, in 2011 and 2012, which has led the designers, Pippa Nissen Studios, to create a modular design to suit both galleries. The preparatory work for the exhibition began just over a year ago, with collaboration between a large team of historians, researchers, learning professionals, exhibition specialists, curators and designers. Geoffrey Fox was appointed as an external advisor. Selecting from the plethora of works that have been written for children on the subject of war was a difficult task for the exhibition team. We took as our starting point books that had as their focus any conflict which fell within the Museum's remit, from the First and Second World Wars to more recent and ongoing conflicts such as Afghanistan. We decided that the books chosen needed to be in print and widely available in the UK. We considered a variety of novels and picture books, mostly fictional, with a span of intended readership ages, and both female and male protagonists.

The first space visitors will enter, the Introduction area, will be quite a simple space with a large open book, lit very dramatically. A short piece of film, projected onto the book, will briefly introduce the key books in the exhibition. Visitors will then journey through five main sections of the exhibition, which is directly aimed at a family audience, the majority of the children visiting anticipated to be aged between 8 and 12. Each section (titled as the themes) will show what inspired the selected authors; related objects, from original manuscripts and illustrations, to authors' personal mementoes, such as Ian Serraillier's Silver Sword paperknife, will be displayed. It has been fascinating to discover the different stimuli, including television programmes and conversations. The books will be brought to life in the exhibition through the creation of experiential environments and life-size sets.

Each section will be visually immersive in the geographical context and the period in which the book is set. There will be also hands-on interactive elements, such as a life-size interpretation of part of Hepzibah Green's kitchen in *Carrie's War*, where children will learn through a series of questions and prop objects about food and rationing during the Second World War. The wartime events and experiences that underpin the books will be explored through the display of contextual objects, film and photographs, largely drawn from the Museum's collections. Historical objects have been selected to link with the narratives and themes of the books, highlighted by the use of quotations. One such example is a 1918 US poster, featured in the *War Horse* section, appealing for money to be sent to Animal Relief. It depicts a soldier reluctantly bidding farewell to a wounded horse whilst under fire, with colleagues in the background urging him to join them in their retreat.

In *The Machine Gunners*, Chas McGill and his friends are obsessed with collecting war souvenirs, such as bits of incendiary bombs. The Excitement section of the exhibition will include some of the easily obtainable souvenirs children may have collected during the Second World War, as well as some 'dream souvenirs', such as a Luftwaffe winter flying helmet.

Children's war literature raises the question of how an author and illustrator bring difficult stories and historical subjects to children. The exhibition is not intended to sanitise the reality of war and, indeed, the books themselves often do not shy away from the serious consequences of conflict, such as death, destruction and the plight of refugees. A series of detailed plaster-of-Paris scale models have been made by Pippa Nissen Studios, based on descriptions of key aspects of *The Silver Sword*, such as a model of the cellar in which the Balicki children make their home amongst the ruins of Warsaw.

The final room is a library area featuring a selection of supporting books and original material relating to their inspirations and creation, and intended to demonstrate the wide variety of children's literature. There will be a full programme of events for both children and adults, together with an adaptation by the Polka Theatre in London of *The Machine Gunners*. A new children's book by Michael Morpurgo and Michael Foreman, inspired by an object in the museum's collection, will be published in association with the exhibition.

Once Upon a Wartime will provide an engaging insight into the world of children's war literature and the history that has inspired the books. We are sure it will in turn inspire visitors to delve deeper into this fascinating subject, and prompt parents and grandparents to revisit some classics with their own children and grandchildren. Perhaps it will even inspire some budding authors!

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Malorie Blackman in Conversation with Laura Atkins

Pat Pinsent

Malorie Blackman spoke first about her new, and fifty-ninth, book, *Boys Don't Cry!* (2010). She read an extract in which the young narrator, contemplating his anticipated future at university, is suddenly confronted by two bombshells: his ex-girlfriend tells him he is a father, and leaves him literally holding the baby, and his brother admits to being gay. She said that there seemed to be few books written from the father's point of view as a single parent; the usual implication is that they 'did a runner', but in fact many teenage fathers have a responsible attitude. Another trigger towards writing this book was the recent murder in Trafalgar Square of a young gay man. She decided to address both the single father theme and that of a boy who is happy to be gay but is affected by the attitude of other people.

It takes her up to 18 months to write a book, so she feels that it is essential to write for herself and about subjects that she cares about. She has never been afraid to attract controversy, but never wants to be didactic. She gave a good deal of attention to what is probably her best-known novel, *Noughts and Crosses* (2001), in which she reverses the British situation by making the black Crosses the dominant class in a society where the white Noughts are devalued, in a manner kindred to that experienced by black pupils, by the invisibility in history of notable characters who share their skin colour. She revealed that one of her main motivations in writing this book was anger, as she recalled being told by a teacher that 'black people don't become teachers', in response to her career plans. In retrospect she has found that anger can be a motivating force. In *Noughts and Crosses*, Callum is the character closest to herself, but she tried hard to be fair to both sides. Through the personal experience of discovering that her favourite musician was white, not as she had believed, black, she came to realise the irrelevance of colour.

She then read out a letter from a young reader who complained that *Noughts and Crosses* didn't have a happy ending (unlike the majority of her books); she suggested that for teenage readers, if the ending can't be happy, it should at least be hopeful.

Occasionally in her early career she encountered publishers who wanted her to change the colour of a character, a pressure which she resisted. She found that writing *Noughts and Crosses* was for her the way to deal with issues of race. Things seem to have improved over the years: fortunately, her 15-year-old daughter, unlike her mother, has experienced only one racist incident at school, and even then the rest of the class immediately rejected the views of its perpetrator. She claims that children don't care about the colour of characters in books – it is the adults who are concerned.

This was a lively session that was much enjoyed by her audience – I'm sure that many, like me, are looking forward to reading *Boys Don't Cry!*

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A Band of Light amongst the Shadows: *The Boy Detective* and the ‘Penny-Dreadful’ Controversy of the 1860s

Lucy Andrew

CONFERENCE
WORKSHOP
PAPERS

This paper explores the controversy surrounding the rise of ‘penny-dreadful’ fiction for children in the 1860s. These cheap serialised novels featuring glamorised criminal heroes were popular amongst young working-class readers, but met with virulent opposition from middle-class moralists, who charged them with encouraging lower-class juvenile crime. From the 1860s, these texts were constantly brought forward in court cases as proof or explanation of the guilt of young offenders, and their corrupting influence was widely reported in the press. Rather than focusing on the overt link between the readership of ‘penny dreadfuls’ and the perpetration of juvenile crime as articulated in these middle-class critical accounts, I am instead attempting here to unveil latent threats within penny-dreadful fiction, together with deeper motivations behind the attack on this genre. I do this by examining the literary conflict from within the penny-dreadful tradition itself by analysing *The Boy Detective; or, The Crimes of London* (1865–1866). This was serialised in penny parts by the Newsagents’ Publishing Company: it possesses the physical properties of the penny dreadful while inverting its fictional characteristics. By championing a middle-class juvenile detective hero, the appropriately named Ernest Keen, and villainising criminal characters, while openly denouncing criminal ‘dreadfuls’, *The Boy Detective* reacts against the tradition to which it ostensibly belongs. Consequently it overtly addresses middle-class critics’ anxieties about penny-dreadful literature.

At the same time, the text unveils latent threats within penny-dreadful fiction. The Boy Detective’s status as an upholder of bourgeois values and a preserver of class boundaries, confirmed through his employment of Samuel Smiles’s self-help doctrine expounded in Smiles’s book *Self-Help* (1859), hints at a deeper layer of anxiety in middle-class reactions against the penny dreadful; these related to the implicit threat that such texts posed to middle-class ideology and prosperity. Furthermore, the Boy Detective himself embodies the perceived threat surrounding the independence and potency of young penny-dreadful heroes, since his unrivalled authority in his position as investigator of adult criminality ensures that he transcends the boundaries of contemporary childhood behaviour and roles, thus providing a challenge to the adult-child hierarchy. The text’s attempt to resolve this threat by imposing a layer of restraint on its protagonist creates further difficulties. While the generational status quo is restored, as the Boy Detective’s apparent challenge to adult systems of control is undermined and, thus, overcome, his ensuing subservience to the police generates class antagonism; paradoxically this results from the text’s middle-class protagonist submitting to the command of his social inferiors, the working-class police characters. By attempting to address one area of middle-class anxiety about penny dreadfuls, the text unwittingly evokes another. In their reaction against the penny-dreadful tradition, it seems that middle-class critics created a perpetual cycle of irresolvable tensions – a cycle that could be broken only by an outright rejection of this literary form.

The possible commercial motives for the middle-class attack against penny dreadfuls can be considered by regarding *The Boy Detective* as a transitional text. It bridges the gap between the apparently immoral penny dreadfuls and the seemingly sanitised story papers, which, from the mid-1860s, were marketed as moral alternatives to penny-dreadful fiction. The role of Edwin J. Brett seems crucial in this process; he was the Managing Director of the Newsagents’ Publishing Company, oversaw the publication of *The Boy Detective*, and was a front runner in the emergence and success of the new story-paper tradition. The possibility emerges that the moralising passages in *The Boy Detective* were not only inserted to assuage middle-class critics’ anxieties about penny-dreadful fiction but, more directly, were employed to promote Brett’s new publications. Taking these commercial motives into account, I question the legitimacy of the widespread anti-penny-dreadful campaign: this was, overtly, a moral attack against an immoral and potentially corrupting literary form, but was driven, covertly, by a set of

self-interested and self-serving motivations that reinforced the ideological and economic prosperity of the middle classes. A brief interrogation of the application and definition of the term ‘penny-dreadful’ leads me to argue that it became an empty signifier. The term was created by those who attempted to destroy the genre, seen as a scapegoat for a series of unspoken societal woes, a negative against which to construct a positive. Thus the penny-dreadful label has become a bogeyman of literature, its meaning shaped by whosoever dares to speak its name.

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The Refugee Diary Series: Giving a Voice to the Voiceless

Anthony Robinson and Annemarie Young

Anthony Robinson

I am a full-time writer and sometime teacher. My attention at the moment is on writing that gives ‘a voice to the voiceless’. This was the driver for the Refugee Diary series (Frances Lincoln, 2008–2010), which is the focus of this workshop.

Why this series? The rationale in publishing the Refugee Diary series is to give ‘a voice to the voiceless’ – to those children who have had to seek asylum and are now refugees living in the UK.

Before the writing could be started, a process of selection, interviews and transcription of the recordings had to take place in order to obtain material for the books. We conducted initial interviews with over 40 children and their families. We then interviewed each of the four children in depth and then I boiled down the thousands of words from the interviews into the essence of their stories, using the rhythm of their voices, their idiosyncratic phrases and words. I carefully checked the first draft against the recordings and the draft was then checked by the child, to ensure that I had got the facts right, and that they were happy I had captured their unique voice.

Gervelie’s Journey

Gervelie was born in the Republic of the Congo in 1995. This is the true story of her flight from her home in war-torn west Africa to asylum in Norwich via the Ivory Coast, Ghana and Europe. It is the heart-rending story of a family torn apart by war and their courageous decision to seek a life of peace in the West, but Gervelie’s determined spirit shines through.

Hamzat’s Journey

This book follows the story of a boy from Chechnya. In 2001 when the Chechens were at war with Russia, he was on his way to school in the capital, Grozny, when he stepped on a landmine. His leg had to be amputated. He and his father travelled to the UK for expert treatment and the fitting of an artificial leg. As it was unsafe for them to return to Chechnya, the family sought asylum in the UK. Eventually Hamzat’s mother and sister joined them in London and now the family are learning to adapt to their new life after the horror of living in a war zone.

Mohammed’s Journey

Mohammed was born in Kirkuk, the Kurdish part of Iraq. Mohammed speaks Kurdish, and now English too. Saddam Hussein persecuted the Kurds long before Mohammed was born but his journey started in October 2000 when Saddam’s soldiers came to his house, beat him and his mother, and took his father away. Mohammed never saw his father again. He escaped from Iraq by bus, on horseback, in a small boat on a raging river and, finally, by hiding in a lorry on a ship. Mohammed and his mother were granted ‘leave to stay’ in England in 2002.

Meltem's Journey

The fourth book follows a Kurdish family from Eastern Turkey. Thirteen-year-old Meltem's story tells of their journey to the UK, and the harrowing months waiting to find out if they can stay in Britain. Meltem encounters racism, her father goes missing and the family is sent to Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre. But the end of the story is full of hope for the future, as the family is at last given permission to stay in the UK and Meltem starts a new school and makes friends.

Annemarie Young

I am an author, series editor and editorial consultant in primary education and children's books. Until 2002 I was an editorial manager for primary-school publishing in a large publishing house.

We have used the books in primary and early secondary schools with the aim of raising awareness among pupils of the lives of asylum seekers, some of whom may be their classmates. Further publicity was given by a BBC broadcast on *Woman's Hour* on 17 September 2010 where three of the teenagers who came to Britain as child refugees – Gervelie, Mohammed and Hamzat – spoke about their experiences, their present lives and their futures.

I will now describe how we use the Refugee Diary series in schools. We use an adaptation of an Amnesty International role play entitled 'Time to Flee'. To set the scene the children are asked the question, 'What do you know about asylum seekers?'. We then follow this up by eliciting definitions of words such as 'asylum' and 'refugee', before introducing the Refugee Diary series. The next question we ask is 'What would you do if you and your family found yourselves in serious danger?'.

As for any role play, the children then discuss how they would react to having to flee their home and country, and make some decisions between themselves, usually working in groups before reporting back to the whole class. We usually suggest that the teacher takes a part as an immigration officer at a UK Passport Control. He or she asks the asylum seeker the questions

What are you doing here?

What's the evidence for your story?

the answers to which the children have worked out.

In a plenary session, we ask them how they found the experience of being an asylum seeker. We end the session by reading excerpts from some of the books in the series – to show how real children coped.

The first workshop session was conducted at Gervelie's old primary school for the Radio 4 children's programme, Go4it. When I asked the children what they felt they had learned after reading Gervelie's story, each one had something personal to say about how it had changed the way they thought; this ranged from anger at things they had heard people say about refugees, but had not considered before, to feelings of guilt that they sometimes got upset at trivial discomforts. It was incredibly moving to hear them. This is typical of the feedback we have had.

If you would like to hear the *Woman's Hour* interview with three of the children, broadcast in September 2010, where Gervelie, Mohammed and Hamzat speak about their experiences, their present lives and how they see their futures, the link to the archive is www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p009g9d7. Meltem was away on the day of the interview, and so was unable to take part. The main point, made by Gervelie, is that all four of them want children and young people to see that refugees are just ordinary people, like themselves, and they hope that their stories will help to change the way people think.

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Hair Controversy and Racial Politics in Children's Picture Books

Kimberly Black

In her book *Hair Raising: Beauty, Culture and African American Women* (1996), scholar Noliwe Rooks states: 'Like literature, hair, even in what is presumed to be its "natural" state, is shaped by culturally determined creative and re-creative acts to form and further particular ends' (1996: 8). Racial politics are embedded in traits such as hair and its adornment; discussions of hair in children's texts are also discussions about race. It is easy to discount depictions of hair in children's literature as being inconsequential or superficial, but because of a lengthy history of subtle and overt racism and sexism, representation of black female bodies is often the subject of controversy. Hair, which is part of a complex web of interrelated meanings and racial dialogue, can be particularly controversial when depicted in the media or in books. Depictions of black female bodies that call attention to racial difference are risky because they carry with them the weight of historical representations of, and actions against, the real bodies that they signify.

Partly in response to the promotion of multiculturalism in children's media, many scholars and critics have championed the ideology of 'colour blindness'. Adherents to a colour-blind ideology de-emphasise the significance attached to physical human traits that are associated with race and ethnicity. Many who believe in colour blindness are reluctant even to acknowledge the presence of human differences. Colour blindness as an ideology and as a social strategy is used (among other things) to preserve the 'innocence' of children. The notion that colour blindness protects children is based on the widely held belief that young children don't have any innate racial prejudices and that they don't actually see human differences related to race until adults point them out. Adherents to colour blindness promote the idea to children that race is unimportant, thus discouraging discussions of racial differences. This ideology allows its adherents to sidestep frank discussions of race and racism, despite the lived realities that children of colour confront, and the inequalities related to race that exist in society.

Despite the prevalence of the ideology of colour blindness, many children's book authors and illustrators do discuss, depict and celebrate human physical traits related to race. One particular area of emphasis has been that of coarse or kinky hair texture, particularly on females. In discussion of hair texture, these children's picture books also examine the connected and complex interplay of politics, identity formation, race and ethnic pride. Representative texts include Carolivia Herron and Joe Cepeda's *Nappy Hair* (1998), bell hooks and Chris Raschka's *Happy to Be Nappy* (1999), Camille Yarbrough and Carole Bayard's *Cornrows* (1979), Kelly Johnson and Dinah Johnson's *Hair Dance* (2007) and Natasha Anastasia Tarpley and E.B. Lewis' *I Love My Hair* (2001).

A children's book that directly engages with 'nappy'¹ or 'kinky' hair texture as a part of its message can easily result in confrontations and struggles over meanings in representations of race. This is probably best seen in the case of Ruth Sherman, a first-year teacher, who used Herron's *Nappy Hair* as part of a lesson on racial tolerance to her third-year class in New York City. Many of the children's parents became upset on hearing about the lesson and confronted Sherman with charges of racial insensitivity in her teaching. Sherman subsequently requested and received a job transfer, stating that she no longer felt safe in the school after the confrontation.

Despite the controversy that follows these texts, they explore critical issues related to race through a discussion and a celebration of hair. In these books and others, several key themes related to hair and race emerge. The first is the centrality of arranging or styling hair as a critical inter-generational domestic ritual among females. All the texts address this important grooming ritual that helps to encourage closeness among females and promotes inter-generational bonding. The second key theme is the depiction of hair style as an expressive or artistic form. The mundane act of arranging a child's hair is also a vehicle for artistic creation for the caregiver. Thirdly, in many of the books, hair is a signifier of cultural pride, being closely linked to the history and culture of individuals of African descent. The fourth theme is the association of nappy or kinky hair with assertions of social power. Hair is more than simply aesthetics or beauty – it is also a type or source of power in the texts. Finally, all these texts simply praise the beauty and remarkable nature of nappy hair.

Racial politics are embedded in the treatment of human physical traits such as hair texture. Discussions of hair in children's texts are thus simultaneously discussions about race. Despite the predominance of the ideology of colour blindness, many children's books bravely wade into controversies about race while celebrating a unique and wonderful human feature.

Note

1. 'nappy' is a US informal word for frizzy hair (OED).

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Picturing the Irish Past: Historical Picture Books and the Famine

Patricia Kennon

Story and its invitation to explore and inhabit unfamiliar worlds can afford a powerful medium for the construction and negotiation of individual and national identity. Historical picture books can stimulate children's understanding of historical periods, their reflection on the relationship between continuity, conflict and change, and facilitate explorations of different ways of knowing. Children may develop their understanding of Ireland's past and their sense of 'Irishness' in the twenty-first century through their imaginative and cognitive engagement with historical picture books set during the famine of 1840s Ireland. As a theme, the Great Famine is well represented in Irish children's historical fiction, with varying degrees of success (Parkinson, 2002). Yet there are significant gaps and neglected voices. Celia Keenan (2005) has noted the silences in Irish historical fiction for children and the omission of voices that offer a counter-narrative to the revisionist tendencies of the dominant school. The similar absence of alternative perspectives in recent historical picture books on the famine has particular implications for the development of historical empathy, the exploration of power relations and for the possibilities of inter-cultural dialogue and enrichment.

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Conflicts and Controversies in European Picture Books

Penni Cotton

The European Union was created in 1957 to avoid conflicts and controversies between European nations. Since then it has gradually expanded and many projects have been developed to try to unify Europe. One of these, the European Picture Book Collection (EPBC), was created in 1996. It is an online resource that was developed to help children and young adults learn more about their European neighbours through reading the visual narratives of carefully chosen picture books.

When the project began, there were 12 countries in the EU, but by the time the first EPBC was completed, there were 15. All these countries are represented in the collection – plus Switzerland, as a Swiss picture-book expert was keen to join. In addition, four books from the UK were included, one from each of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. These were chosen because it was felt that many children were not aware that the UK was made up of four 'countries'. As a result, there are 20 books in the first EPBC. *Picture Books sans Frontières* (Cotton, 2000) explains much of the rationale behind this work.

Now (2010) that the EU has greatly expanded since the first EPBC, a new project (EPBC II) has received funding to extend and update the collection. This is an EU Comenius-funded project that is part of the EU's Lifelong Learning programme and runs from 2009 until 2011. The funding was received in December 2009 by the co-ordinating institution – the University of Nicosia, Cyprus – and I am the project's Literary Adviser. This new project is designed to break formal boundaries, use electronic narratives and challenge traditions and taboos. The EU currently has 27 members, the most recent being Rumania and Bulgaria in 2007, but the new collection will have more than 60 books as most countries have provided at least three.

An analysis of this new picture-book collection shows that many of the books focus on conflicts and controversies in the individual countries. Sometimes it is overt, showing how hatred can turn to love and respect; at other times the themes are more discreet and show family conflict or controversies between friends.

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- EU's Lifelong Learning programme. http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/lfp/index_en.php.
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**'... until the day she found an empty chair':
The Conceptualisation of Bereavement and Depression through
the Picture-Book Narrative of Oliver Jeffers' *The Heart and
the Bottle***

Sarah Stokes

Picture books provide writers and illustrators with a platform for introducing young readers to complex emotional issues, potentially considered too sophisticated for a young readership to negotiate.

Oliver Jeffers' recent publication *The Heart and the Bottle* (2010) provides a contemporary framework for exploring the shift in children's literature concerning death and bereavement, from didactic limiting stories in earlier centuries – where death served either as a form of spiritual righteousness and moral rectitude or as a direct punishment for sinful behaviour – towards enlightening narratives with the potential to transform their young readers into critical thinkers.

Jeffers' use of visual space and narrative silence engages readers actively in this text. The metonymic possibilities offered by the narrative to young readers in their consideration of losing a primary carer and the associated depression are explored, along with the role of adults as mediators in the reading experience of this contemporary children's text.

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Violence, Surveillance and Survival in *Hunger Games*, *Battle Royale* and *The Running Man*

Helen Day

This paper forms part of a larger project about whether we can discover what categorises children's literature by examining how authors writing for children and those who write for adults deal with similar themes, and by considering the way in which their texts are discussed in popular reviews and academic articles. The focus for this paper is the controversial presentation of violence and its consequences, surveillance and survival in Suzanne Collins' Hunger Games trilogy (2008–2010) compared with Koushun Tamaki's *Battle Royale* (1999) and Richard Bachman's *The Running Man* (1982).

All three can be categorised as subversive dystopian fiction that provides a commentary on the society they were written in. I am interested in what can be attributed to the time and culture in which each text was produced (what it was possible to know or to publish in America/Japan/UK), what is the effect of the narrative voice, language and style (child or adult, first or third person) and what these can tell us about what is appropriate or acceptable reading matter for children or young adults. Using Perry Nodelman's notion of the 'hidden adult', Barbara Wall's theories of the narrator's voice and John Stephens' ideas on ideology and intertextuality, I consider the effectiveness of such comparisons in debating the boundaries of children's literature and the construction of childhood/adulthood in popular fiction.

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William Mayne and the Death of the Author

Anthony Pavlik

William Mayne, who died on 24 March 2010, was a prolific writer. Hailed as one of the outstanding children's authors of the twentieth century by the *Oxford Companion to Children's Literature* (Carpenter and Pritchard, 1999), during his career he won the Carnegie Medal for *A Grass Rope* (1957) and The Guardian Award for *Low Tide* (1992). However, his career was overshadowed by his arrest and subsequent imprisonment in 2004 for the sexual abuse of young girls that had occurred in the 1960s. No biography of Mayne has been written, and no new novels by Mayne were published after his imprisonment (other than self-published work). Interestingly, no children's literature journals have featured Mayne's work since his imprisonment.¹

This paper considers Mayne first as a writer and the influences his life had on his writing. It also considers Mayne as sexual predator and the issue of how we respond to authors whose private lives colour reception of their work. I also consider notions of innocence in society and children's literature, especially in the light of legislation (2006) that requires the vetting of individuals (apart from close relatives but including authors visiting schools) who have contact with children and the current consideration of even stricter legislation by the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Note

1. One of the last academic discussions of Mayne's work was Jenny Kendrick's paper 'On the borders of adult knowledge: Children growing up in William Mayne's *A Game of Dark, Midnight Fair* and *Cradlefasts*' in the proceedings of the 2003 IBBY/NCRCL MA conference, *Books and Boundaries: Writers and their Audiences* (ed. Pat Pinsent), Shenstone: Pied Piper Publishing 2004.

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Dancing and Playing and Mattering: How Gay Teenagers are Portrayed in Young Adult Literature

B.J. Epstein

In this paper I analyse Aidan Chambers' *Dance on my Grave* (1982) and compare it to the Swedish author Hans Olsson's *Spelar roll* (1993) (literally 'playing a roll', but can also mean 'mattering'). Both these young adult novels feature gay male teenagers, but the way they portray the boys, their behaviour, their emotions and their sexuality differs. I compare the way gay boys are depicted and analyse whether their representation reflects larger issues regarding homosexual teenagers in the UK and in Sweden, where the books, respectively, were written and published. I use the concepts of sexuality, acceptance/rejection from others and sexual interactions, in order to interpret these books and the messages they seem to be sending about male homosexuality. By sexuality, I mean how the character himself views, understands and labels his sexuality. By acceptance from others, I refer to how the character's friends, relatives, teachers, etc. understand, discuss and accept or reject the character. And by sex, I look at how sexual interactions are portrayed.

For example, Chambers' novel can be described as discreet in its portrayal of Hal and his burgeoning sexuality, while Olsson features much more blatant, perhaps even more unashamed, language and behaviour. Hal in Chambers' book refers to 'bosom buddy' and 'bosom palship' repeatedly. He would like such a friend or such a relationship, but he never clearly defines what it means. He does not employ terms such as 'gay' or 'boyfriend' or 'partner'. He talks about having sex by using euphemisms such as playing 'belly button and finger' (p.46) or 'present from Southend' (p.148). Meanwhile Johan in Olsson's novel refers to himself as 'bög', which is a formerly derogatory term for gay males that is being reclaimed, equivalent perhaps to 'fag' in English, although it could also be translated as 'gay'. Johan's sexual activities and sexual feelings are described more directly as well. For example, Johan and a friend named Thomas are in a sauna together in one scene and Johan 'såg hur hans kuk långsamt växte sig större ... snart stod Thomas kuk som en cyckelpump upp i vädret. Min växte också ... Thomas nakna kropp – den var så mjuk och behaglig att se på Jag ville så gärna lägga handen på hans axel och stryka honom över hans solbrända rygg'. (p.19) [Johan 'saw how his [Thomas'] cock slowly grew larger ... soon Thomas' cock stood up like a bike pump in the air. Mine grew too ... Thomas' naked body – it was so soft and nice to look at. I really wanted to put my hand on his shoulders and stroke his sun-tanned back']. Then Johan and Thomas masturbate each other. Other frank phrases and terms include: 'Bröst, kukar, fittor, orgasmer! Samlag och häftiga knull – vilka drömmar! För det mesta fick vi ändå nöja oss med våra kåta fantasier och egna händer' (p.21). ['Breasts, cocks, cunts, orgasms! Intercourse and great fucks – what dreams! We mostly had to be satisfied with our horny fantasies and our own hands'].

In general, then, Olsson writes more frankly and openly, while Chambers uses creative but euphemistic language. Sweden has a reputation for sexual freedom and this may have influenced the way Olsson writes. Chambers' style could reflect his own or his society's discomfort with homosexuality. This possibility is strengthened by the fact that Johan's Swedish friends and relatives seem more accepting of homosexuality than do the English people around Hal. Interestingly, the one character in Chambers' book who seems to accept Hal and his homosexual relationship is a Norwegian, which could suggest the idea that Scandinavia in general is more open.

In sum, I look at how these two novels represent teenage male homosexuality and how this in turn might reflect the larger culture that they are set in.

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Are They or Aren't They?: Critical Interpretations of Same-Sex Relationships in Picture Books

Erica Gillingham

Comparing two picture books: *Hello, Sailor* ([2002] 2003) by Ingrid Godon and Andre Sollie, and *Queen Munch and Queen Nibble* (2001) by Carol Ann Duffy and Lydia Monks, I examine each book's central relationship concerning two adult characters of the same-sex in an intimate relationship.

In *Hello, Sailor*, it is difficult to argue against Matt and Sailor being in a romantic relationship and that normalising their relationship is not a key ideology for the picture book; and yet, the text only ever refers to them as 'friends'. In *Queen Munch and Queen Nibble*, the reader bears witness to the development of the queens' friendship and is left with an open ending as to what point that relationship progresses. Are they a couple or aren't they? Does it matter?

In the growing market of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) picture books, these two books stand out in the development of the reader's critical thinking skills.

A lack of didacticism in their presentation and narrative structure allows these picture books to move away from the ‘need to normalise same-sex relationships, as other books in this genre have done. Ultimately these texts open a dialogue about relationships and focus on the essential elements of love between two adults.

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War and Peace: Controversial Images of Wartime Europe in the Contemporary School Stories of Elinor M. Brent-Dyer

Kirsty Jenkins

My exploration of Elinor M. Brent-Dyer’s controversial depiction of the Second World War in her Chalet School series focuses in particular on *The Chalet School in Exile* (1949) and demonstrates that in her descriptions of the horrors of life in the Axis countries Brent-Dyer’s approach to portraying wartime politics differs markedly from the majority of her contemporaries. Her literary device of portraying an adult perspective, in a normally childcentric genre, allowed her to explore and reinforce her message of peace even whilst depicting the full terror of the Nazi regime.

Through an examination of her portrayal of political and religious issues such as Anschluss, Jew baiting and Catholic persecution, seen through the eyes of both child and adult, it is asserted that despite the impressionable age of her readers, and the contemporary belief that children’s literature should foster and protect innocence, Brent-Dyer refused to shy away from horrific international events such as concentration camps and religious martyrdom. Instead, she chose to make them a focus for presenting her own message of peace and understanding, which is most notable in her fictional pupils’ Peace League. Brent-Dyer’s ‘message’ influenced not only contemporary readers, but those of subsequent generations as well.

Work Cited

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Radstock: Girls Gone By.

‘Rupturing the Past: Disturbing Family Relationships in Hugh Scott’s *Why Weeps the Brogan?*

Sandra Williams

A close reading of extracts from my chosen text, Hugh Scott’s *Why Weeps the Brogan?* (1989), enables me to draw out the positioning of the implied reader. It is clear that the author leaves a number of gaps for the reader to fill. The setting of a museum, the age of the two protagonists and their current situation surviving a nuclear explosion is only gradually revealed, requiring the reader to hold with uncertainty and be able to draw conclusions from evidence presented. Written in the third person, the book invites the reader to focalise on the older of the two children, Saxon, and see the Brogan, the creature they fear yet feed, through her eyes:

It nuzzled the cheese through its hair.
A hand searched the tray, thick and ugly.
The head swung.
Saxon’s heartbeat clogged her throat. She gasped, ‘There’s no bread! Later! I will bring it later!’ (pp.24–25)

The nature of the Brogan remains unclear throughout the text until close to the end, where, just before rescue, the children realise this ‘creature’, who has just fallen to its death, is in fact their horribly injured mother. As such, the notion of ‘mother’ as the nurturer is totally overturned. The children have feared this ‘creature’ and seen ‘it’ as part of the world of strange things in the museum. Memory has been halted in the traumatic event of the bomb. There is a rupture between past and present, for while the past is all around them, the irony is that they can’t remember their own.

In the brief subsequent discussion at the conference workshop there was a sense that this book requires the bravery of a younger implied reader who is not yet an adolescent. In addition, the negative construction of the disability was highlighted, drawing out how this should be a topic of discussion with actual readers. Both the content of the novel and its attendant younger implied reader continues to make this a controversial text.

Work Cited

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Losing, Choosing, Abusing, Removing my Religion: Conflicting Attitudes Concerning Religion in Contemporary Adolescent Literature

Tammy Mielke

Banning books is nothing new, especially when religious morals or values are challenged within a text. And while none of the countries discussed in this paper have church attendance above 44% (the average is 29%), religion has maintained its hold on literature, and sales of religious texts almost equal that of sales in the secular market. Religion, it seems, still matters. But what are contemporary authors offering teen readers in books that would not be considered ‘religious’? Three recent books, *Nation* ([2008] 2009) by British author Terry Prachett, *Godless* ([2004] 2005) by American author Pete Hautman and *Does My Head Look Big in This?* (2006) by Australian author Randa Abdel-Fattah, all offer a view of religion or anti-religion in uniquely different ways. These international authors twist the ‘order’ religion offers, and embrace or replace order with a chaos that leads to a higher understanding, while acknowledging the political, social and ethnic aspects that overtake religion. I highlight the ways in which these authors controversially redesign religion’s place in literature for young adults, offering a new agency for readers in terms of religious choice, and unearth the assumed place of religion in literature written for adolescents.

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Hautman, Pete ([2004] 2005) *Godless*. London: Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing.
Abdel-Fattah, Randa (2006) *Does my Head Look Big in This?*. London: Marion Lloyd Books.
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Gorilla Warfare: Apes, Adolescents and African Adventures in 1860’s Children’s Literature

Ruth Murphy

For much of 1861, Victorian society was caught up in the excitement of the ‘gorilla wars’. Inspired by Charles Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* (1859) and African explorer Du Chaillu’s traveller’s tales, a ferocious debate over the relationship of man to ape and the true nature of this newly discovered creature erupted, gleefully satirised by *Punch* 20 times that year. But while fashionable society and popular controversies soon moved

on, the impact of this conflict has remained, curiously preserved in literature for children. R.M. Ballantyne's *The Gorilla Hunters* (1861), Charles Kingsley's *The Water-Babies* (1863) and Paul du Chaillu's *Stories of the Gorilla Hunter* (1867) reference and reinterpret the troubling figure of the gorilla in a post-Darwinian world. The figure of the aggressive, sexually threatening humanoid great ape represents the brutish savagery feared to lie at the heart of the white male; in battling this foe in adventure fiction for children, the protagonists overcome their own primal, bestial nature, to serve as a model and a warning for the assumed proto-imperialist child reader.

The scientific discovery of the gorilla so close in time to Darwin's *Origin* created a symbol of the frightening consequences of repositioning humans as part of the animal kingdom: the gorilla, so similar and supposedly so savage, becomes a representation of the animalistic instincts within the white civilised man. Ballantyne uses this symbol as an enemy for his boyish adventurers to vanquish, and despite struggling with the possible humanity of the gorillas, defines them as animals and distinct from humanity, whether represented by a civilised Englishman or a savage African.

Kingsley explores the new Darwinian concept of the gorilla by using it as a symbol of the savage bestial past we have left behind, but which is always lurking, waiting to reclaim us if we stray from the moral and civilised path. Yet in depicting animals and humans as positions on one scale, Kingsley implies that gorillas are a kind of human, and that there can be no firm division between races or species. By Du Chaillu's text, the gorilla no longer represents the savage within the civilised man, but has become interchangeable with native Africans. In this text, non-white humans are described almost as a kind of gorilla, implying that only the civilised European or American is fully human.

As moralistic and imperialistic children's texts, *The Gorilla Hunters*, *The Water-Babies* and *Stories of the Gorilla Country* clearly reveal the changing constructions of human identity and racial and biological hierarchies through the 1860s. These three texts all attempt to educate their child readers by defining the place of the civilised white man in the colonial and natural world. The gorilla wars might have ended by the publication of Darwin's *The Descent of Man* in 1871, but the complex and controversial interlinking of science, identity and imperialism raised by the unsettling presence of the great ape in the human family tree would dominate how the Victorians thought about children, non-white cultures and animals for the rest of the century, and continues to echo today.

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- Du Chaillu, Paul (illus. J. Whitney) ([1867] 1890) *Stories of the Gorilla Country: Narrated for Young People*. London: Sampson Low and Co.
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REVIEWS

Books about Children's Literature

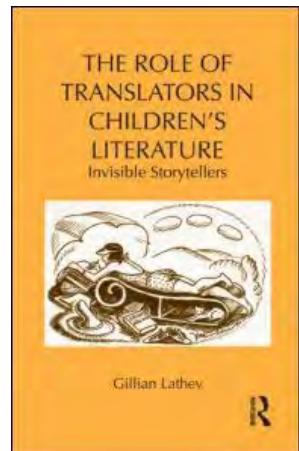
The Role of Translators in Children's Literature: Invisible Storytellers

Gillian Lathey, New York and London: Routledge, hb. 978 0 4159 8952 7, 2010, £85.00, 124pp.

Publications concerning the translation of children's texts do not abound and therefore this book makes a welcome contribution to the field. After publishing her *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader* (2006), a general collection of articles dealing with the translation of children's literature, Lathey has now written a history of translated English-language books spanning the period between the High Middle Ages and the twenty-first century, chiefly seen through the eyes of the translators themselves. The book comprises two parts. Broadly speaking, the first part considers the historical developments before 1900, while the second part focuses on events and issues leading up to the current day.

Reaching back as far as the ninth century, the seven chapters of the first part are instrumental in portraying the overall evolution of children's literature and, associated with this, links in the various developmental stages of translation for children. This part discusses what Lathey calls 'hotspots of translation activity ... and influential translations' (p.9), in other words, turning points in children's literature where more often than not translators played a pivotal role. The majority of these men and women have fallen into anonymity; however, some – recognised as famous scholars, educators or authors themselves – have been immortalised by their comments in notes and prefaces. It is these paratexts and other historical data which Lathey has researched and that demonstrate dominant attitudes and strategies; for instance, an overwhelming preference for adaptation of foreign material. This strategy, according to Lathey, was employed from the moment that translations began to be addressed to children only, instead of both adults and children together. Equally, cultural markers were removed in order to enable children to relate to the foreign texts more easily. Lathey also brings out how the arrival of new genres through translation (notably the fairy tale, the fable and the romance) had a lasting effect on indigenous writing and was embraced by the young readers, given the predominance of religious and didactic fare in the home market of those days.

In view of the larger documentation and the better accessibility of the material of the twentieth century, the second part of the book takes a different direction. Here Lathey gives an account of various aspects and approaches to children's literature translation in the period, the highlight of which in my opinion are the case studies of three well-known and award-winning translators of children's books. Lathey commences this part (Chapter 8) by emphasising the importance of an influx of new genres into the English-speaking world: science fiction, the urban detective novel, and books dealing with issues around the Second World War. In Chapter 9, she draws attention to two awards: the Mildred L. Batchelder (USA) and the Marsh (UK), both launched to celebrate translation. Being closely involved herself with the Marsh Award, Lathey is truly in a position to voice concern about the current lack of interest in translation in the UK, instances of which are expressed on several occasions in the book. Chapter 10 deals with retranslation and the question of modernisation. The following chapter then (Chapter 11), most appropriately entitled 'Translators' voices', offers interesting revelations into the attitudes, practices and biographies of three female translators (Patricia Crampton, Anthea Bell and Sarah Ardizzone). This chapter is hugely enjoyable as not only does it provide insights into the personalities of present-day translators, but also reveals what motivates a translation, and illustrates decision making and methodology. Given that translation studies have long been concerned with research into the working methods of translators, this chapter presents first-hand information and, what is more, acts as a fitting counterpoint to the descriptions and views of the translators of previous centuries. The final chapter (Chapter 12) summarises key points



of the study, focuses attention on the requirements of a translator for children and identifies future areas of research.

I found Lathey's study informative and revealing, particularly so the first part. Although this provides a historical account of past centuries, it also contains vivid, and in places extremely detailed, descriptions, thus transporting the reader back in time. The illustrations added to the text successfully aid in bringing past eras to life. It is compelling to detect how similar the thought processes of previous centuries were to the contemporary viewpoint. Hence, when Charles Hoole, translator of *Orbis Pictus* (1659) comments on the difficulties in translating from the Dutch language, and struggles with matching the original pictures to his translation, or when he wrestles with the translation of animal sounds (p.24), the reader is immediately reminded of similar problems faced by a modern translator. Elsewhere in the book, Lathey cites William Bullokar, translator of *Aesop's Fables*, who in 1585 remarked on his frustration with the irregularity of links between letters and sounds in the English language, a feature that made teaching literacy difficult; additionally he voices his opinion that the knowledge of English grammar can assist children in learning foreign languages (p.20). How refreshingly up to date! To give one last example, even in the olden days it appears that many translators were not able to make a decent living through their job; Lathey informs us that Robert Samber, an eighteenth-century translator of Perrault's tales, had a long freelance career and was forced to accept all commissions offered to him, regardless of the subject matter (p.53). Thomas Holcroft (*Tales of the Castle*, 1785) made a living through jobbing as a stable boy, shoe maker, teacher, actor and journalist (p.70) until luck with a prestigious translation guaranteed him a regular income. These scenarios are reminiscent of the experiences of many a translator nowadays.

Lathey is an elegant writer whose style is fluent and eloquent but also witty. For instance, her nearly two-page-long description of Lang's army of female translators whose names are sadly lost to history, while Lang himself, a man of the patriarchal Victorian society, made it to fame and prominence, teems with sharpness and irony. Overall, Lathey's study is a product of much research and sheds light on a number of aspects of translated English-speaking children's literature and its creators. First and foremost, it demonstrates the huge impact of foreign writing on the native English system of children's books. It is also testifies to the general tendency to domesticate children's texts in order to make them reader friendly, and to erase potentially offensive subjects from the text. And last but not least, it is an excellent chronicle of those people, past and present, at the forefront of translation. The book is a thought-provoking and well-written addition to the body of research into children's-literature translation and will find an audience not only among scholars of children's literature and translation studies, but also with the more general readership interested in the history and development of children's books.

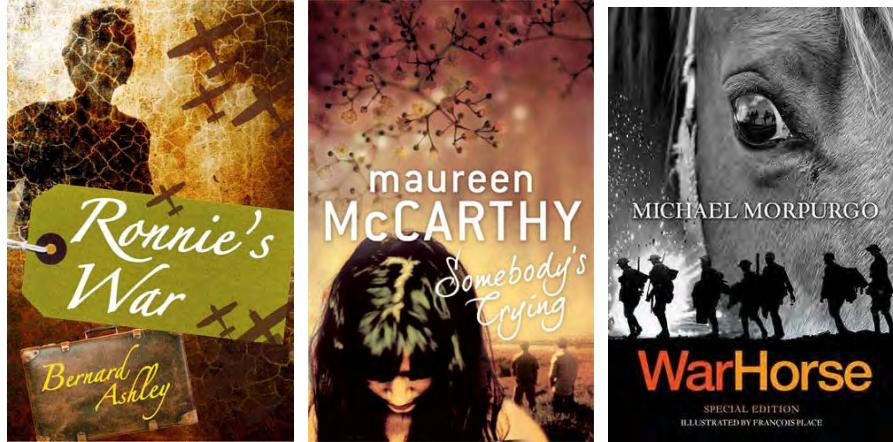
Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth

Children's Books

Ronnie's War

Bernard Ashley, London: Frances Lincoln, pb. 978 1 8478 0054 1, £6.99, 2010, 192pp.

The book is in four parts. It is the story of Ronnie, who is 11-years old at the beginning of the book. In the first part, 'Blitzkreig', he helps rescue his mother from her sister's bombed-out house. In 'Top Bunk Boy', he is evacuated and has to cope with a rural school and a bullying teacher. 'The American Captain' describes where he learns that his father is missing and (wrongly) suspects his mother of having an affair with a serviceman at the airbase where she works. 'Man of the House' has him and his mother return to London. The whole book is as professionally told as might be expected from Ashley, and full of interest and information for young readers.



Somebody's Crying

Maureen McCarthy, Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin (distributed by Frances Lincoln), 978 1 7423 7024 8, £6.99, [2008] 2010.

A challenging book for young adults, told through the experiences of three focal characters all deeply affected by the murder three years previously of a local woman, Lillian: Alice, the victim's daughter, and two young men, Tom and Jonty. To say more about the plot would be to reveal too much about the complex relationships between these four individuals and other family members living in a small Australian town. Plotted and narrated with a subtlety and sensitivity that demands an alert reader.

War Horse

Michael Morpurgo, illus. François Place, London: Egmont, hb. 978 1 4052 5543 1, £12.99, 2010, 192pp.

Originally published in 1982, this book is being reissued in a collector's edition in hardback, illustrated by François Place, to celebrate the Steven Spielberg film due out in autumn 2011.

Sold to a drunken farmer, Joey, a beautiful foal, finds a friend in the farmer's son, Albert. His father demands that Joey either works or is sold, so Albert trains him to pull the plough. When the First World War breaks out, Albert's father, needy for money for his struggling farm, sells Joey to the army. Joey and another thoroughbred horse, Topthorn, lead in a terrible cavalry charge towards the machine guns of the enemy's lines. Joey is captured and for a while is lovingly cared for by Emilie, a young French girl, and her grandfather. But the horses must pull a heavy gun, battling through the mud until Topthorn dies of exhaustion. Joey wanders in no-man's-land, back towards the British trench, but despite a joyful reunion with Albert, Joey is not out of danger. First tetanus threatens his life, and then Emilie's grandfather has to bid to save him from the butcher. He promised his granddaughter when she died that he would find the horse she loved and buy him, but recognising Albert's love for Joey, he sells Joey back to Albert on condition he will love him all his life – for one English penny.

Pat Pinsent

Our Animals (Around the World series)

Oxfam, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8450 7974 1, £11.99, 2010, 32pp. Oxfam will receive 5% for each copy sold.

This collection of 11 colourful photographs of children from many different countries accompanied by the animals with which, in some way, they have a special relationship, should certainly be attractive to the young children for whom, judging by its sturdy format and glossy pages, the book is intended. It incidentally reveals how different is the utilitarian attitude towards animals in many parts of the world, where the animals are part of the farming background of the children, from that with which most of us are



familiar. The only instance of a child with a conventional pet derives from the USA, a detail which in itself could provide something of a lesson!

Pat Pinsent

K is for Korea



Hyechong Chung and Prodeepta Das, London: Frances Lincoln, pb. 978 1 84780 133 3, £6.99, 2010, 32pp.

The series is about the daily lives of children in different countries around the world, focusing on the people, culture and landscape of the country concerned, illustrated with vivid photos. The books are educational for schools and libraries and aimed at primary-school level. So far the series has covered Africa, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Ethiopia, India, Jamaica, Korea, Mexico, Pakistan, Poland, S. Africa, Turkey and W is for World. The next book in preparation is *R is for Russia* (2011).

The very attractive cover shows various small versions of photographs from inside the book. The frontispiece tells us that Hyechong Chung is from Seoul where she worked as an infant school teacher. She now teaches at the North London Korean School.

Prodeepta Das was born in eastern India and is a freelance photographer living in east London. On the title page there is an acknowledgement to the GuNam Elementary School so I assume that the four children in the group on the front cover and on the page opposite the title page are from that school, as are the children in various other photographs.

An author's note gives a short summary of the country, including the statement: 'After the Second World War, Korea was split into two parts, North and South – yet we Koreans are still one ethnic family.' This is the only mention of the political situation.

The book starts of course with 'A', but 'Aa is for Arirang, folk songs we all love to sing' didn't inspire me as this sounds like a translation of the words 'folk song' and the photograph is of three happy children in tee shirts. I should have liked to know a few song titles and if they are still sung. However, 'Bb is for Buchaechum, a spectacular fan dance' has very impressive photographs of the dancers and a dance. The book proceeds through a harvest festival, the landmark Emille Bell and the Namdaemun building, traditional dress, calligraphy, food, housing, music and various other traditional and modern aspects of Korean life.

The photographs are magnificent but the text felt rather lacking in information, assuming that I will know more than I do about Korea. For example, 'Dd is for Dojang, the seal used on official documents.' A specific example of when such a personal seal might be used would have helped me more than the general description given.

In a discussion at the IBBY/NCRCL MA 2008 conference, Prodeepta Das said that 'The idea is not to present a sunny sky image of tourism brochures but to show aspects which will enthuse the young readers and encourage them to ask questions.' But my impression of the book is that it glosses over the uncomfortable political situation that is affecting the people of both North and South Korea and paints a picture of a prosperous, forward-looking 'nation' of people.

Although the book is said to be educational and aimed at schools and libraries, I think its ideal reading would be for an adult with knowledge of the country to read it with a child – perhaps a child in this country or the USA with a Korean ancestry.

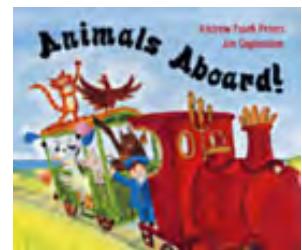
Jennifer Harding

Animals Aboard

Andrew Fusek Peters, illus. Jim Coplestone, London: Frances Lincoln, pb. 978 1 8450 7959 8, £6.99, 2010. 24pp.

A party is to be held on a train and all the animals jump on one by one with their instruments. The party starts off slowly, then gets wilder and wilder before slowing down to a snooze at bedtime. The story is told in rhythmic rhymes, a feature that requires energetic reading aloud and will probably induce an energetic response in the listener, who will want to clap and dance. Try reading this:

Time for a dance, yes, clap to that song (n.p.)



The opening spread with the title page on the right shows the rail track's path, with the train about to enter the village, circle it and head off to a tunnel. The animals in the village are shown in a state of excitement, hurrying towards the track. Throughout the book, the soft but also contrasting colours set the atmosphere of the animals' village and surrounding landscape. The first page says:

There's a party on the train, now who to invite
To climb aboard and dance through the night?

And the picture shows the train driver banging a hanging bell above his head, the train's three funnels playing music and the passenger cab decorated with coloured lights and balloons. Behind the train in the distance a peaceful sunset scene shows the sun sinking into a calm blue sea surrounded by various coloured clouds. So far all looks peaceful but the driver looks determined that such peace will not remain.

The train arrives with a Choo! Choo! Choo!
And Cow jumps on with a Moo! Moo! Moo!.

Cow is followed by Duck ('Quack! Quack! Quack'). Horse leaps on, Pig flies on, and the rest of the animals follow with increasing acrobatics and energy as depicted by the lively illustrations.

The party is obviously being enjoyed 'through the never-never night. But the train is tired ... And the wheels on the track are slowing to a snooze', with darker purples and blues and the stars in the sky reflecting the change of atmosphere. On the final double spread, some of the animals have fallen asleep in the carriage and some have got off the train and are asleep in their homes. A peaceful conclusion to a lively party.

A lovely book for reading aloud, with clear, atmospheric illustrations. There is a hardback edition that would be easier to hold while reading with a child.

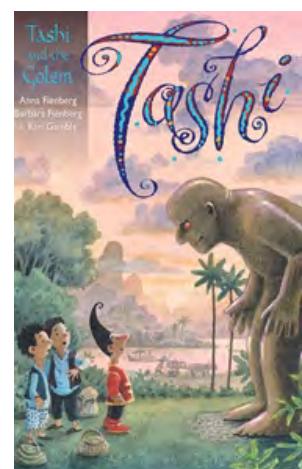
Jennifer Harding

Tashi and the Golem

Anna and Barbara Fienberg, illus. Kim Gamble; Crows Nest, NSW : Allen & Unwin; pb. 978 1 7417 5792 7, £3.99, [2009] 2010, 64pp.

What do you do if you are a small person peacefully sharing your lunch box with a friend when a large person, new on the block, barges in on you, helps himself and brushes aside any mild protests, leaving you ruffled and indignant? If you are Tashi, who is a most distinctive small person, you are reminded of a story whose origins are embedded in your own migrant community traditions.

Tashi is very stylishly turned out in contrast to his more conventionally dressed friends. Given the lively temper of his stories, his appearance befits his storytelling gift. His dark hair is swept up into a cone, with a curl at the end; giving the appearance of a magician's cap and making him taller. He wears a scarlet jacket trimmed with yellow braid over black trousers, boots of scarlet and yellow, and gold rings in his ears. The stories are suggestive of China and they are peopled with individuals whose names denote their character: Ah Chu, Soh Meen, Much-to-Learn, Wise-as-an-Owl, Luk Ahead and Lotus Blossom.



Golems are from ancient times, half-formed creatures or spirits; the idea has belonged to Jewish culture for thousands of years. In the Middle Ages a strong interest in magic led people to fashion figures from wood or clay; a piece of paper with the word *truth* was placed in the mouth of the figure as a secret formula was spoken. When Jewish people were severely persecuted in the sixteenth century, golems became their protectors.

Tashi's first 'corrective' story has a golem at its centre. His storytelling style is vivid and he places himself and his friends at the centre of the action. In order to deal with a bully they create a golem, with some trepidation. As is well known in storytelling, spells do not necessarily conform to expectation. The huge potentially fierce figure develops a mind of his own, and a large appetite. Luckily, whilst not entirely biddable, he does show restraint and at the same time removes the bully effectively.

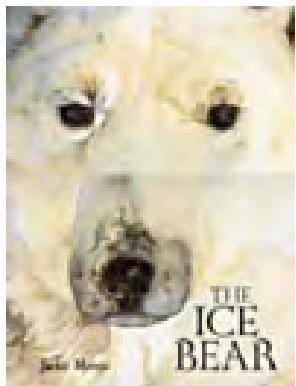
A second story features the dramatic rescue of a baby from fierce pirates after it was thoughtlessly exchanged for a jade horse by Thinks-Too-Late. The book closes with the reader recognising that Tashi's artful storytelling has captured the imagination of the bully who is now eager to entertain the audience with his own fantastic tale.

There is much here for young readers to enjoy in the way of excitement and humour and to draw their own conclusions from the subtext. The covers, front and back, are colourful and depict the protagonists in a landscape that has plenty of scope for imaginative reverie. Inside, the illustrations in grey graphite complement the text in a detailed and lively way. This is the sixteenth in the series of Tashi's adventures; the reader therefore has more opportunities to discover legends and folk tales in the company of this engaging storyteller.

Judith Philo

The Ice Bear

Jackie Morris, London: Francis Lincoln Children's Books, 978 1 8450 7968 0, £11.99, 2010, 32pp.



The portrait of the ice bear on the front cover, in close up, seizes the attention of the reader, inspiring a shiver of awe. On the back cover a dark-eyed boy, brown hair covered by a fur hood, studies us. These two figures direct us into the book inviting us to see the world through their eyes.

Themes of birth, loss, separation, restitution and new beginnings shape a dramatic narrative of mythic dimensions, set in the vast open space of the Arctic region. This landscape of far horizons contrasts with representations, in close up, of the principal characters: the ice bear and her offspring, the hunter and his family. There is also the dark brooding presence of the raven. She acts in ways that are catalytic to the bears and the humans and to the child who is bound to them both. When a choice has to be made, this child declares that he will live with the bears during the winter and spend the summer months with his human family. In this way the relationship between and the understanding of the two worlds will be strengthened.

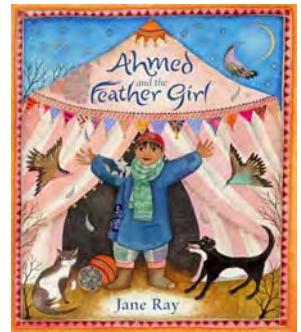
This is a beautiful, painterly book. The unframed pages place the reader at the scene at each turn of the page. Small children will be engrossed by the close-up nature of the pictorial representations. For older readers, the visual power of the illustrations is amplified by the poetic sensibility of the narrative text. Jackie Morris reminds us that we are caretakers of the natural world, especially that far-off region where bears and hunters inhabit the earth and the sky. Such mindfulness for the outer world will also enrich our inner world.

Judith Philo

Ahmed and the Feather Girl

Jane Ray, London: Francis Lincoln, hb. 978 1 8450 7988 8, £11.99, 2010, 32pp.

Jane Ray has collaborated with many eminent authors to illustrate their books for children. She has also illustrated her own stories and, as her latest picture book shows, her distinctive style of illustration is well suited to the fairy-tale tradition. *Ahmed and the Feather Girl* tells the tale of an orphan boy, Ahmed, who lives with a travelling circus and is forced to work long lonely hours for the evil circus owner Madame Saleem. Ahmed's life changes when he discovers a golden egg, out of which hatches a beautiful little girl, Aurelia. Finally, Ahmed has found a friend, but Madame Saleem has other plans for 'The Girl Hatched from a Golden Egg'. Will Ahmed be able to rescue Aurelia from her fate?



There are many layers to this fairy tale, which includes themes of friendship, magic, determination, life and death. At the end of the story, Ahmed and Aurelia grow wings and fly away 'to a place beyond the stars': this event is open to interpretation and could be used to generate an interesting discussion with children. The descriptive language of the story will appeal to both younger and older readers. The images are beautiful: there are vivid depictions of day and night, and autumn and winter, and readers will be drawn to the rich, bold colours and expressive characters. It is the combination of words and pictures that will draw children into the magical setting and the mysterious events that take place.

Kerenza Ghosh

I See the Moon

Jacqueline Mitton, illus. Erica Pal, London: Frances Lincoln, hb. 978 1 8450 7633 7, £11.99, 2010, 32pp.

What is the moon like tonight? This picture book encourages children to marvel at the wonder of the moon and its many changes in appearance over time. There is mention of 'the new moon in the old moon's arms', 'the Man in the Moon', 'the Harvest Moon' and other such allusions. Various animals feature throughout the book, and the lives of these creatures are depicted as they go about their business while the moon can be seen in the sky. The book shows that rabbits, foxes and owls live beneath the same moon as polar bears, koalas and monkeys, yet the moon looks different to each animal.



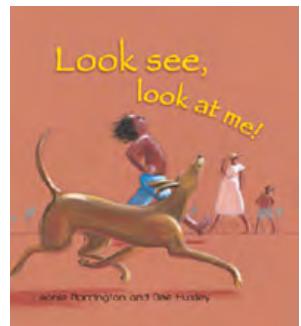
This is a book about observation, and children will enjoy comparing the vivid descriptions and images of the moon to what they have seen in the sky at night. The final pages invite the children to imagine what it would be like to be an astronaut on the moon, and there is a depiction of the moon's atmosphere. At the end of the story, facts about the moon are presented. This part of the book would be improved by the addition of real photographs of the moon and the night sky.

Kerenza Ghosh

Look See, Look at Me

Leonie Norrington, illus. Dee Huxley, Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, hb. 978 1 7417 5883 2, £11.99, 2010, 36pp.

A spare text and exuberant illustrations invite us to share the joy of an Australian Aboriginal child at reaching the age of three. The figures of the boy and his family and friends, developed from workshop sessions that the author and illustrator ran in three northern Aboriginal communities, are loose, elegant, vigorous in line, and strikingly highlighted with block colour and chalks against an almost empty background, whose ochre ground evokes a hot, dry landscape. It's a simple book, where the movement in the illustrations matches the rhythm of the text and conveys a sense of individual freedom, community and the presence of the natural world. In these enticing pages non-Aboriginal children, even as they may be surprised by the place and its people, will



recognise the fun and excitement to be found in family, play and the triumphs of growing.

Clive Barnes

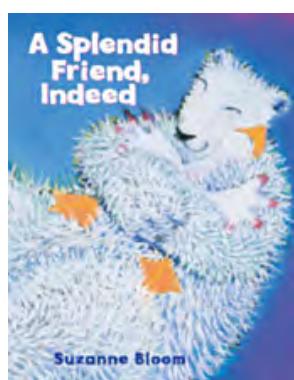


Look! Really Smart Art

Gillian Wolfe, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0010 7, £13.00, 48pp.

This is the fifth book in a non-fiction series in which Gillian Wolfe, a noted art educator, has been introducing young people to various aspects of art, using single works as examples. In this volume, she explores various ways in which artists trick the eye, create a particular impression or simply grab the viewer's attention, including pointillism, perspective, trompe l'oeil, action painting (Jackson Pollock) and collage using found objects. It's a well-designed book that is good to look at, with each carefully chosen painting granted a double spread. These are drawn from a number of historical periods, continents and movements, including some living artists. The text is succinct and there is some encouragement to try out the techniques for yourself. There is more biographical information about the featured artists at the back of the book. It would do as well for the child who is simply curious about art or to work from in an art class.

Clive Barnes



A Splendid Friend, Indeed

Suzanne Bloom, Slough: Alanna Books, pb. 978 0 9551 9989 9, £6.99, 2010, 32pp.

With beautiful illustrations, this is a book of friendship and love. Bear is variously trying to read, write or think when he is repeatedly interrupted by Goose. Goose's persistent enthusiasm and Bear's annoyance and exasperation are clearly visible to even the youngest reader. After disrupting each activity, Goose goes off to make a snack. He returns to disturb Bear once again but this time shares a note he has written for him. This changes Bear's opinion of Goose and to Bear's surprise a great friendship develops.

Bloom conveys both characters clearly and with great humour. The illustrations are very welcoming, particularly the texture of Bear's fur. A lovely book to share with very young children.

Nicola Collins

Little Frog

Jakob Martin Strid, Slough: Alanna Books, pb. 978 0 9551 9986 8, £6.99, 2009, 32pp.

This is a very funny picture book about the eponymous Little Frog who hasn't yet worked out the rules of behaviour. Like a human toddler, he repeatedly misbehaves and doesn't like being told off, so he runs away. Little Frog has a journey of discovery and finally realises he has nowhere to go. However, his worried family have followed him far and wide to tell him that whatever he does they will always love him. The ending may appear somewhat disjointed to adults, I would like to have been told why he was a great success, but when I shared this book with young children (4 and 7 years old) the humour was the overriding factor.

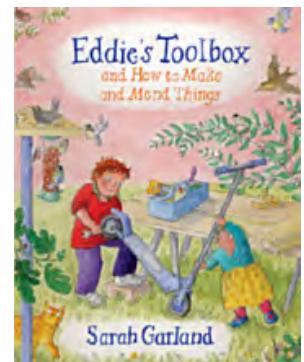
The illustrations are bright, descriptive and very humorous. A reassuring book for all young children, who will enjoy Little Frog's naughty antics as well as the message his family brings.

Nicola Collins

Eddie's Toolbox and How to Mend and Make Things.

Sarah Garland, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0053 4, £11.99, 2010, 40pp.

Eddie lives with his mum and his younger sister Lily. When their new neighbour Tom moves in with his small daughter Tilly, Eddie is disappointed to see that there is no new playmate for him. Tom gently engages Eddie in the making of a new bed for Tilly and shelves for the kitchen. He encourages him to use a real saw, hammer in nails and measure wood with a tape measure, until Eddie can soon make things by himself. As Eddie's confidence grows, so does the developing warm friendship between the two families. One day, Tom gives Eddie a parcel 'from your Mum and me' – a toolbox of his own. The story ends with Eddie using his own tools to make a door in the fence between the two gardens – and everyone helps.



The traditional artwork is in Sarah Garland's charming inimitable style of line and watercolour. The exceptional drawing skills underpin the keenly observed characters, particularly the wonderful harassed Mum, and are a pleasure to linger over. The colours are gentle, and the important surrounding white space allows the pictures and text to breathe. Garland excels in making the ordinary feel special, but is never mawkish – a fine line to tread.

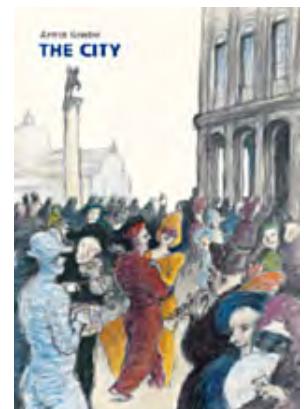
This is one in a series of Eddie books and is tremendously useful for adults who want to inspire children to make and mend for themselves, it has all the right credentials for thoughtful, creative recycling – but, even better for the child who just wants to saw, sand, bang, measure, sew, glue and screw, look after birds, grow seeds and have fun. An all-round winner!

Carol Thompson

The City

Armin Greder, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 7423 7142 9, £11.99, 2010, 32pp.

This haunting picture book for older readers tells the story of a frightened widow wanting to shield her newborn child from the harsh realities of living in a city ravaged by war. Her fears drive her from the city to a place of quiet isolation where she can raise her son, free from every external influence. Through its combination of stark charcoal drawings, a palette of muted pastel tones and the sparse yet lyrical beauty of the written word, this book does not shy away from the depiction of death or the mother's unintentional creation of a monster. She shows him only unconditional love, which begs the question: Where does his savage brutality spring from?



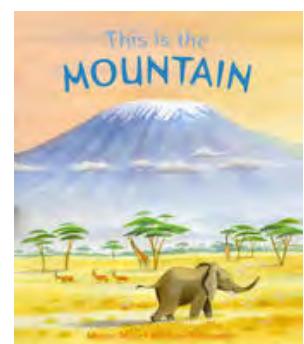
A remarkable book, full of silence and space, that forces its readers to reflect on the notions of childhood, parental responsibility, death, human conditioning and, ultimately, whether love can ever be enough.

Sarah Stokes

This is the Mountain

Miriam Moss, illus. Adrienne Kennaway, London: Frances Lincoln, hb. 978 1 84507 984 0, £11.99, 2010, 24pp.

This beautifully illustrated picture book – the fourth in a series on natural wonders – leads its reader on a meandering journey through the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro towards its summit. Along the way, it provides tantalising insights into the rich diversity of animal, plant and human life that coexist in the shadow of the great mountain.



The opening page explains, with exquisite simplicity, how the mountain was formed; then the narrative is woven through the landscape itself until the reader arrives at the snow-topped peak on the final page. Despite this being a factual text, the language is rich in alliterative phrasing and vivid poetic imagery.

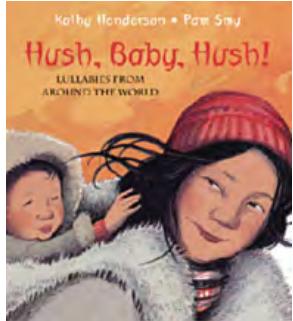
A double spread at the end of the book provides more detailed information about the landscape of Mount Kilimanjaro itself, as well as highlighting the potential threats and dangers it now faces.

An inspiring introductory narrative to the wonders of this fascinating landscape.

Sarah Stokes

Hush, Baby, Hush! Lullabies from around the World

Kathy Henderson, illus. Pam Smy, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 84507 967 3, £12.99, 2010, 40pp.



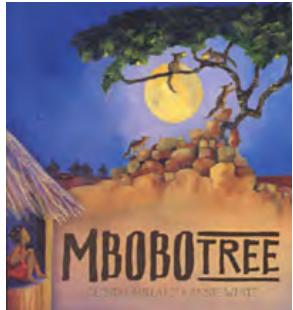
In her enduring fascination for oral tradition, Kathy Henderson has collected lullabies from around the world, compiled in this picture and guide book to parents. As every page, sensitively illustrated by Pam Smy, takes us to a different country and atmosphere, we travel from the soothing, rural songs of Hungary to the humorously threatening rhymes of Italy, through the whimsical poetry of Iran or Bangladesh to the day-to-day discoveries of Jamaica. The book features the lyrics in their original languages, as well as the music to some of them, and I particularly admired its commitment to incorporate these sometime ancestral lullabies into our multicultural and modern world, encouraging new parents to adapt and make them their own, before passing them on to a new generation.

There is a lullaby for every mood and moment of the day, showing that soothing a baby to rest is still universal.

Marie Brusselmanns

Mbobo Tree

Glenda Millard, illus. Annie White, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0119 7, £11.99, 2010, 32pp.



This is a modern fable of a mysterious little African girl's attachment to an equally intriguing tree. In the familiar rhythm and singing prose of the oral tradition, Glenda Millard's tale conveys a number of subtle lessons about difference, acceptance and, most importantly, the protection we owe to nature around us. When a baby appears in the branches of a tree who 'belongs to no one and to everyone', the people of the village decide that she must also be everyone's daughter, and accept that she will not speak until, they predict, she has something important to say. This opportunity arises when Tiranamba Adesimbo Mbobo has to defend the tree she and her village love and live with against the axe of a stranger. The story unravels on a moving and poetic illustration that leaves a lasting sense of wonder at this extraordinary little girl and 'her' tree.

Marie Brusselmanns

Lola and the Rent-a-Cat

Ceseli Josephus Jitta, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0139 5, £11.99, 2010, 32pp.



Lola and John have been married since they were very young, and they do everything together. They look after each other. Together they remember the shopping list. They grow old together.

After John's death, Lola is lonely. There is no one to look after anymore. The days are long: she reads, she watches television, she even surfs the internet. Then one day Lola discovers www.rentacat.com. There are lots of lonely cats waiting for a home. She looks at each one carefully, and finally chooses Tim. She clicks the Send button. Tim will be with her the next day. Now her life changes.

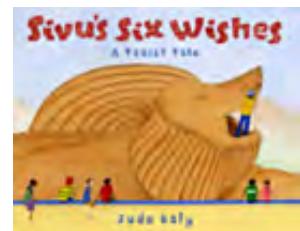
This is a touching story of friendship, and also coping with loss. It is simply told in large, bright, boldly drawn illustrations. There are just one or two sentences to describe what is happening, although each picture tells its own story.

Joyce Holliday

Sivu's Six Wishes: A Taoist Tale

Jude Daly, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8450 7985 7, £11.99, 2010, 40pp.

Jude Daly has already won international acclaim and a number of awards for her illustrated books. This latest is a retelling of 'The Stone Cutter', a thought-provoking tale based on the Taoist teaching that true happiness does not lie in wealth or power and that we should be careful what we wish for.



Sivu, the hero of the story, is a stonemason, who has created some extraordinary things. He can coax an animal or a person out of a lifeless chunk of rock. Whatever he creates he sells, but never for much money. As time goes by he becomes bitter and envious, wishing to become richer and more powerful. At every turn in the story his wishes are granted – not once, but six times. Sivu becomes, in turn, a rich business man, a mayor, the sun, a rain cloud, the wind, and finally a huge rock. Nothing brings him any real happiness, and everyone hurls insults at him for causing disasters and creating mayhem.

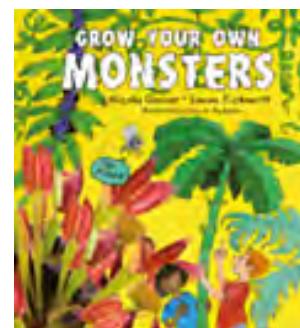
The illustrations are deeply satisfying and full of meaning: folk stories travel well through time. The fact that Sivu's story is told in the present makes it no different from its counterpart in ancient China. Tao (or Dao) means path or way, and is the name given to a variety of related Chinese philosophical and religious traditions and concepts. The three jewels of Tao are compassion, moderation and humility – it is a peaceful religion.

Joyce Holliday

Grow your own Monsters

Nicola Davies and Simon Hickmott, illus. Scoular Anderson, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8450 7 8331, £11.99, 2010, 32pp.

The monsters here are large and weird. This book is about growing them at home – on a window-sill, a patio, a balcony, or just a sheltered corner of the garden. All they need is a habitat, foot covering, water and food. This is a book no child should be without.



Nicola Davies trained as a zoologist, and Simon Hickmott is a gardener who has worked at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew where he grew endangered vegetable varieties. Scoular Anderson also enjoys working in his garden, when he is not illustrating books. These three have produced a gem of a gardening instruction manual for children with a love of growing things. The 'monsters' come from different habitats all over the world. Growing instructions are provided that explain exactly what is needed to make the monsters feel at home in Britain. They may require special conditions: a light box, a bottle or a pyramid greenhouse, all home-made of course. Each advice section is clearly illustrated in a simple and easy way. It is impossible to fail!

Some of these unusual plants, such as squirting cucumbers and voodoo lilies, have monster-like behaviour. The cardoon is truly a giant monster, but you can eat its stem and dry its flowers. The walking-stick cabbage has a practical use. The Venus flytrap and pitcher plant are both carnivores, trapping flies that arrive to pollinate the flowers. The giant echium grows 20 feet tall, a high-rise party venue for bees. The lychee will attain seven feet in just one summer, but only if it lives indoors. The Abyssinian banana comes straight from a tropical island, an exotic and spectacular addition to any garden.

This is a well-illustrated and colourful guide to the very specialised treatment each plant needs, with its own specific set of guidelines plus troubleshooting advice.

Joyce Holliday



Hudson Hates School

Ella Hudson, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0033 6, £11.99, 2010, 32pp.

Ella Hudson graduated from University College Falmouth with a degree in illustration. She is dyslexic, like the child in this story, named 'Hudson'! Each page is superbly illustrated, with the addition of a short sentence or two.

Hudson is good at most things – he paints pictures, builds models, bakes cakes and even enjoys sewing. But because he cannot spell, he has come to hate school, with the teasing from other children and also being kept in during playtime. However the school soon organises a specialist to test Hudson. He is diagnosed with dyslexia. This part of the story includes a simple, well-illustrated explanation, suggesting that people with dyslexia use the right brain instead of the left for sorting out words and numbers. This is six times harder to do. Hudson joins a group of other children for appropriate extra tuition, and is soon happy once again.

This sensitive treatment of a child's reading difficulties carries a reassuring message for parents about the difficulties that dyslexics have with word sounds and short-term visual memory sequencing. But they also have special strengths and abilities with tasks that involve creative and visual thinking – dyslexia need never be a barrier to achievement or success.

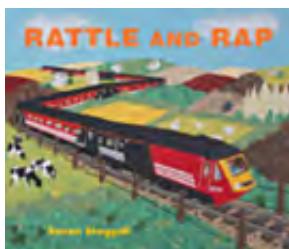
Joyce Holliday

Busy Boats

Susan Steggall, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0074 9, £11.99, 2010, 32pp.

Rattle and Rap

Susan Steggall, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0127 2, £6.99; 2010, 32pp.



Susan Steggall trained as a designer before she became a schoolteacher. She was inspired to draw cars, big machines, trains, etc. by her two boys and their automobile-mad dad. She has produced a series of stories on the theme of transport, all vibrantly illustrated with large, bold, double spreads. There is no shortage of interesting detail, both close at hand and in the distance. These are books to share and talk about, and enjoy.

Rattle and Rap is all about train travel. The text is minimal, but replete with the sounds of the trains. Busy platforms are full of the bustle and fuss of passengers. The trains rumble and roll, rattle and rap, go clickety-clack as they rush and race, skim the sky, and whistle and whine in great onomatopoeic and rhythmic style. It would be easy to turn the text into rhyming verse.

Busy Boats portrays a harbour full of hustle and bustle of shipping. There are cargo boats loading, tugboats guiding a great tanker and lifeboats speeding to someone's rescue. This is the story of a day in the life of this busy port and seaside place – not a moment when it is not packed with activity as tourist boats fill up, while ferries arrive and unload cars and foot passengers. Even the fishing fleet returns at the end of the day, their catch accompanied by the excitable screams of seagulls. As with all Steggall's stories, this is a great visual feast, full of detail for a child to identify with and talk about. Once again the short sentences on each double spread can be turned into a satisfying rhyme.

These are both books to keep young readers fully engrossed for some time, and they will be able to relate the story to their own experiences of travel.

Joyce Holliday

Meltem's Journey: A Refugee Diary

Anthony Robinson, illus. June Allan, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0031 2, £11.99, 2010, 32pp.

Anthony Robinson is interested in the lives of children who have been forced to flee from their home countries to live in very different cultures, frequently in difficult circumstances. This story is one of his Refugee Diary series. Robinson has lived and travelled all over the world, before coming to live in Cambridge, where he teaches and writes books for children.

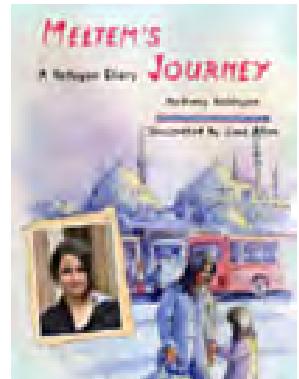
The story is about a Kurdish girl, Meltem, who relates what happened to her and her family. She was born in 1993 and at first enjoyed a normal life on the family farm. This all changed from 1999: her father, Yusuf, was beaten up by Turkish soldiers and fled to Germany, moving in with his brother. The family had been peaceful and happy, living in villages on the borders of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Armenia and Syria, in a region known as Kurdistan. Now Meltem and her mother Cennel must travel to Germany to find Yusuf. After a few months there, they travel on, hidden in a lorry, until they reach Britain. It is a tale of courage and resourcefulness in the face of growing hardship and unfairness.

Meltem describes the stress and horror of refused asylum applications and racial discrimination that they meet in Bradford. A period of respite in Doncaster lasts briefly before the family is forced into the notorious Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre, and then, after a few months, threatened with deportation to Germany, where they did not belong either. Thankfully help arrives just in time from the Children's Commissioner. On Meltem's fourteenth birthday in June 2008, the family is finally granted indefinite leave to stay in Britain.

The narrative is well told; authentic detail is provided by photos and pleasingly drawn watercolour illustrations. There is a comprehensive glossary that includes facts about the Kurdish people's history since before the First World War, when they were still mainly nomadic.

This account is ideal for children living in a politically stable society, to inform them about their less fortunate peers in other countries and about these people's search for freedom and stability.

Joyce Holliday



Birth of a Killer

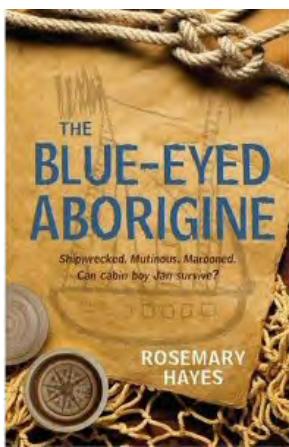
Darren Shan, London: Harper Collins Children's Books, hb. 978 0 0073 1586 4, £10.99, 2010, 253pp.

The first book in a new vampire saga, *Birth of a Killer* begins to fill in the back story of Larten Crepsley, who will be familiar to readers of the immensely popular Saga of Darren Shan series, in which he appears as the hero's occasionally mysterious but essentially good vampire mentor. This prequel rattles through episodes from his early life, both human and vampire, starting with his brutal childhood and his killing of the vicious factory foreman who has murdered his much loved cousin. The monsters in this world are human rather than vampire and although there are some gory elements throughout, the horror is to be found in the factory workhouse.

One of the pleasures of this book for Shan aficionados will be spotting other characters from the earlier novels. Although it works as a stand-alone story it will probably be enjoyed most by those already familiar with Shan's vampire world.

Katie White





The Blue-Eyed Aborigine

Rosemary Hayes, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0078 7, £6.99, 2010, 240pp.

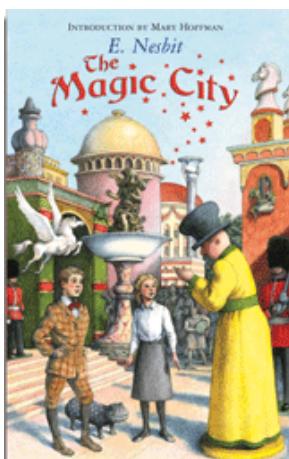
Set in the early seventeenth century, this partly factual young-teenage book, with its seemingly contradictory title, falls into two halves: the first a narration from the point of view of Jan, the young cabin boy of the Dutch cargo ship *Batavia*; and the second the first-person accounts of Jan and his enforced companion Wouter as they are marooned on what turns out to be Australia.

This sudden change in form is appropriate as the reader sees the diverging ideals of the companions: Wouter is a rough, tough soldier although not entirely immoral; Jan, bitterly ashamed of some of his earlier behaviour on-board, is initially intrigued by the aborigines, and gradually appreciates honour and respect as he becomes accepted by them.

Some descriptions, such as of the mutiny, are vivid and the rape scene is not for eight year olds, yet the maturing of Jan as he leaves his callow youth behind holds the reader's interest and admiration.

This makes an enthralling and often exciting read.

Judy Davies



The Magic City

E. Nesbit, London: Jane Nissen Books, pb. 978 1 9032 5237 6, £6.99, 2010, 225pp.

In the twenty-first century Edith Nesbit remains well known for certain children's novels (*The Railway Children*, *The Phoenix and the Carpet*, *Five Children and It* and *The Wouldbegoods* among others), but the general reader rarely encounters some of her other once-popular works. It is therefore a pleasure to re-encounter one of her later and lesser-known works through the imaginative publishing policy of Jane Nissen Books, who reprint once-loved, now unobtainable children's books. Curiously *The Magic City*, originally published in 1910, remains in print in other small impressions, but is certainly worthy of the wider dissemination this current re-publication will offer.

Jane Nissen Books reprints the original text, though with a careless misprint on the dedication page and page 40 ('Etham' instead of 'Eltham', though the correct spelling appears in my first edition), and complete with illustrations by Nesbit's customary illustrator H.R. Millar. Unfortunately the advertised 'Introduction by Mary Hoffman' amounts to little more than a prefatory page of very general reference to the author, her books and the storyline, and none of the deeper interpretation that the work deserves. Nesbit had already written a short story 'The Town in the Library in the Town in the Library', published in *Nine Unlikely Tales* in 1901, whose plot involves two children who build a toy town in the library in their house using books, blocks and toys, and are able to walk into it only to find their house, library and town within it. Whereas in that story Nesbit examines the nature of infinity, in *The Magic City* she expands instead her vision of a toy town that becomes the means by which two unhappy orphans can come to terms with new siblings and adults, and their changing relationships with them.

Nesbit herself was orphaned at the age of six when her father died, and within many of her books reflects the experiences of children who lose a parent, either temporarily (as in *The Railway Children*) or permanently. Often this gives those children greater freedom, being removed from parental interference, and therefore able to undertake adventures free from restraint. However, in the case of *The Magic City* Nesbit's concern is with the psychological process through which children must move in order to achieve resolution in their unhappy state.

Ten-year-old Philip 'loses' his beloved older sister when she marries and goes on her honeymoon. He goes to live with his new younger step-sibling Lucy while her father and Philip's sister are away, superintended by a harsh and unfeeling nurse. Philip feels his loss intently, as a bereavement rather than a separation, and resents Lucy, who is

portrayed as a far less antagonistic child than he. Used to building toy cities with his sister, Philip retreats into this known world, which is shattered by the nurse destroying his constructions. Magically (in fact in a dream) he shrinks to the size of the city he has built, and is able to walk into it. Here he encounters Lucy, and at first rejects her again, but with whom he gradually forms a tolerance, then a friendship and finally a sibling relationship. Philip finds the city peopled by the toys he has used (including the inhabitants of the Noah's Ark), and is told that they have a prophecy in which a Deliverer (which turns out to be Philip himself) and a Destroyer (a heavily disguised 'Pretenderette', really the nurse) will do battle. Philip is given seven tasks to undertake, clearly derived from his memories of books of history, legend and myth, and having achieved them, with increasing help from Lucy, he vanquishes the Pretenderette and is reunited with his sister and her husband, at which point imagination becomes reality and the children can face their new family life with pleasure.

This is an enchanting and deeply insightful book, which deserves a far wider readership, for it has as much to say to adults about children and their responses to trauma as it has to the child readers themselves. Nesbit is clearly sharply attuned both to her subject and her audience. She portrays Philip with a realistic but sympathetic touch, acknowledging his initial spitefulness, but always showing the deep unhappiness from which it springs. For both child and adult in the story a lack of security results in misery and selfishness, evidenced at the end of the book when the nurse is told that, 'nobody loves you', to which she replies, 'that's just why everything's happened' (p.300). Despite the serious psychological interpretation underlying it, the action is swift and funny, and because of Nesbit's easy, confiding style it doesn't suffer unduly from having been written in a very different time. For followers of fantasy there are intriguing parallels with Jonathan Swift, Lewis Carroll, H.G. Wells and Philip Pullman, but the overall assessment must be that Nesbit was a remarkable writer, and that this novel has been too long overlooked.

Bridget Carrington

The following two short reviews have been written by members of Hurst Park Scribblers, a creative-writing club for children at Hurst Park Primary School, West Molesey.

Captain Pugwash and the Birthday Party

John Ryan, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0071 8, £4.99, 2010, 96pp.

This is a breathtaking book for little ones (under seven), who are learning to read. I really enjoyed the colourful illustrations and I think that Captain Pugwash is extremely funny. I like the fact that there are two stories in this book. They are just right for bedtime and I think that adults may enjoy reading the stories aloud to young children.

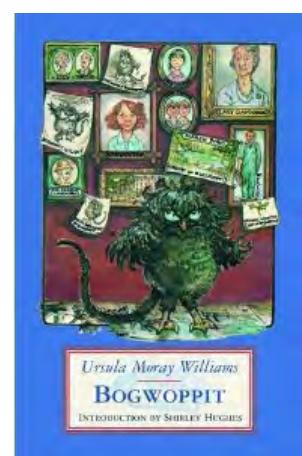
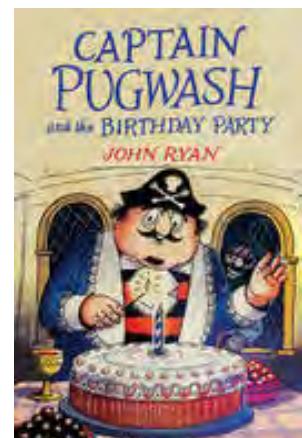
Emilia Lamkin (aged 10)

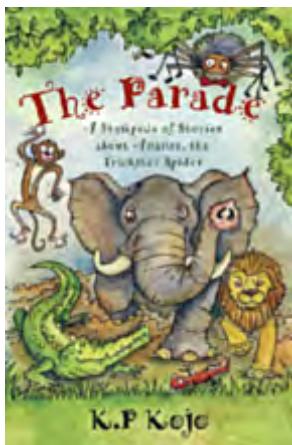
The Bogwoppit

Ursula Moray Williams, London: Jane Nissen Books, pb. 978 1 9032 5236 9, £7.99, 2010, 160pp.

Through a series of exciting-looking pictures hanging on a wall, the cover of this book explains (as a good book always does), who is who and what is what. For example, it shows a picture of Marsh Pond (the habitat of the Bogwoppit) and there is a great picture of the Bogwoppit itself! Basically, this is a very sweet book about a small, feathery creature with webbed feet who lives in a pond. This is an absolutely charming book and it has such a lovely story that I can hardly explain it. An outstanding chapter is Chapter 4. Seriously, you should read it!

Alexandra Haggerty (aged 9)





The Parade: A Stampede of Stories about Ananse the Trickster Spider

K.P. Kojo, illus. Karen Lilje, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0012 1, £5.99, 2010, 96pp.

This is a lovely collection of stories retold or written by K.P. Kojo (pen name of Nii Ayikwei Parkes, novelist, poet and storyteller) about the trickster spider Ananse. His introduction explains the passing on of Ananse tales from one generation to the next in the tradition of oral storytelling, and the influence this had on his childhood in Ghana. The stories were used to illustrate the mythical origins of animals, lessons in appropriate behaviour and how to use cunning and humour to advantage.

I read the stories with my 10-year old daughter, and we thoroughly enjoyed them. However, they could be enjoyed with children much younger. The twist in each tale, when Ananse finally reveals his trick, be it in his favour or not, always made us giggle.

The opening story is an original tale by Kojo – answering a question that plagued him when hearing other Ananse tales in his childhood: ‘Where did Ananse’s wife come from?’. The girl he would like to marry is also being wooed by Ketebo the leopard. The girl’s father sets a challenge – anyone who can arrange a parade of all the animals in Aboakram will win his daughter’s hand in marriage. Ananse confides in Adanko the rabbit, who laughs at him. Ananse then uses his cunning to remind the animals of how they have previously been tricked by Adanko, so they are all keen to help Ananse meet the challenge and ridicule Adanko. Ketebo the leopard returns in a later story colourfully describing how the leopard got his spots. The storyteller plainly tells the morals of each story, and gives clear advice to the reader, as for instance with: ‘So, as you can see, bullying doesn’t really get you anywhere.’

We particularly enjoyed the story ‘Hot Beans in a Hat’ in which Ananse has become well known for his trickery and with it proud and expecting special treatment. A family gathering sets the scene for Ananse’s inability to display patience and gratitude, ending in a humiliation for him.

The ink illustrations will capture younger children’s imaginations, and the stories are short enough to be enjoyed as individual bedtime stories. The stories are very clearly told, but with wonderful descriptive writing, setting the scene for each story and giving a little background information on the characters involved.

A real delight to read.

Rachel and Charlotte Underwood

REPORTS

2011 Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation

English Speaking Union, Charles St, London. Thursday 20 January.

After a reception and a welcome from Michael Lake, Director General of the ESU, Colin Niven, the chair of the judges, spoke enthusiastically about the immense variety of books, which had been reduced to a powerful shortlist of four: Andreas Steinhöfel's *The Pasta Detective* (Chicken House, 2010, an entertaining detective story) translated by Chantal Wright; Toon Tellegen's *Letters to Anyone and Everyone* (Boxer Books, 2009, an original epistolary novel) translated by Martin Cleaver; Delphine de Vigan's *No and Me* (Bloomsbury, 2010, a novel about homelessness) translated by George Miller; and Stig Dalager's *David's Story* (Aurora Metro, 2010, a chilling children's eye account of the Second World War) translated by Frances Østerfelt.

Chris Powling then made a plea for the recognition of the importance of translators. As a young boy, the first book in translation he read was Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking*; he paid tribute to Lindgren's translators, including Patricia Crampton who was in the audience. He quoted his English teacher at the time: 'Not all good books, and certainly not all great books, are originally written in English, but if they're good enough they'll be translated', and finished with a Rilke sonnet translated by J.B. Leishman, which compares the coming into being of a book with the existence of a unicorn. Powling went on to announce that the £2000 prize was awarded to Martin Cleaver. In the speech of acceptance, the winner suggested that his work on creating subtitles for Dutch animated films had been an excellent way to learn his craft.

(The winning book was reviewed by Gillian Lathey in *IBBYLink* 26, Autumn 2009, p.25. She commented that the translation of Tellegen's idiosyncratic style cannot have been an easy task. It is good to know that Cleaver's achievement has been so well rewarded!)

Patrick Hardy Lecture

Puffin Offices, The Strand, London. 14 September 2010.

This year's speaker was Cathy Cassidy, who has been 'crowned' as Queen of Teen for her many books featuring the problems and relationships of this age group. She spoke of how she writes because she loves daydreaming, and also to provide the books she longed to read when she was that age. Particularly notable is the way in which she sees good teen fiction as helping young people to see themselves, something she extends through her own website, where she is in frequent communication with her fans, as she feels that she has an authorial commitment to young people. Friendship is at the heart of everything she writes.

2010 School Library Association Librarian of the Year Awards

Mermaid Conference and Events Centre, Blackfriars, London. 4 October 2010.

This event, transferred at the last minute from the London Zoo to the Mermaid Conference and Events Centre (does this prove that mermaids are just as real as lions and tigers?) was as inspiring as ever. The entertaining video presentations from the shortlisted librarians showed how they had achieved marvels in their schools, making their libraries bright and attractive locations, running clubs and training sessions, and stimulating both school students and staff. The joint winners were the two men in the shortlist of six. Kevin Sheehan from Offerton School, Stockport, is proud of making the Learning Centre fun, 'a sanctuary, not a classroom'; Duncan Wright, from Stewart's Melville College, Edinburgh, has established a school book award and festival, and organises the Kids Lit Quiz in Scotland. Other features of the ceremony included speeches from judges and sponsors. An emphasis was placed on the folly of cutting spending on libraries: a memorable quote was from Neil Gaiman who had said that it was a terrible mistake to steal from the future for the needs of today. The idea of the library as a haven was emphasised by several speakers, including M.G. Harris, author of

the Joshua Files series, set in Mexico; the title she chose for her talk was ‘Libraries: A Secret Obsession’. She would certainly have agreed with an image from Borges, quoted by another speaker, ‘I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library.’

Eleanor Farjeon Award

Puffin Offices, The Strand, London. 3 November 2010.

Before the winner (from a prestigious shortlist of David Almond, Michael Morpurgo, Booktrust, Seven Stories, the National Literacy Trust and World Book Day) was revealed, William Nicholson, author of the Wind on Fire and Noble Warriors trilogies, spoke about his transition from being a screenwriter (which he suggested was not so glamorous as might be thought) to a children’s author – he certainly won the approval of his audience when he suggested that he had found people in the children’s book world were ‘really nice’! This year’s winner was Seven Stories: Kate Edwards, the CEO, and Sarah Lawrence, Collections Director, recalled the vision and hard work of Elizabeth Hammill, Mary Briggs and Kaye Webb in setting up this location for preserving the work of so many children’s authors, and described its important role in outreach to schools, while Anne Harvey added her own personal memories and also recalled Kaye Webb’s link with Eleanor Farjeon.

Costa Book Children’s Book Award 2010

The award winners for the 2010 Costa Book Awards were announced on 5 January 2011. The winner of the Costa Children’s Book Award is Jason Wallace’s *Out of Shadows*, Andersen Press, 2010. The 2010 Costa Book of the Year will be announced on 26 January 2011. A children’s book has once been the Book of the Year – *The Amber Spyglass* (His Dark Materials 3) by Philip Pullman, in 2001.

Out of Shadows is described thus:

‘Zimbabwe, 1980s. The fighting has stopped, independence has been won and Robert Mugabe has come to power offering hope, land and freedom to black Africans. It is the end of the Old Way and the start of a promising new era. For Robert Jacklin, it’s all new – new continent, new country, new school. And very quickly he is forced to understand a new way of thinking, because for some of his classmates the sound of guns is still loud, and their battles rage on ... white boys who want their old country back, not this new black African government. Boys like Ivan. Clever, cunning Ivan. For him, there is still one last battle to fight, and he’s taking it right to the very top.’

The author Jason Wallace was born in the UK but when he was 12 the family emigrated to Zimbabwe. It is his experiences of growing up in a tough boarding school during the aftermath of the war for independence that forms the foundation of *Out of Shadows*.

The following books were also on the shortlist.

Lucy Christopher, *Glyaway*, The Chicken House, 2010.

Sharon Dogar, *Annexed*, Andersen Press, 2010.

Jonathan Stroud, *Baritmeus: The Ring of Solomon*, Doubleday Children’s Books, 2010.
(Jennifer Harding)

Roald Dahl Funny Prizes 2010

Unicorn Theatre, London. 17 November 2010.

The Roald Dahl Funny Prize was founded in 2008 by Michael Rosen as part of his Children’s Laureateship. It is the first prize of its kind, having been founded to honour those books that simply make children laugh. Louise Yates and Louise Rennison were this year’s winners. Both authors were presented with their awards and a cheque each for £2500.

Louise Yates is the winner of The Funniest Book for Children Aged Six and Under, with *Dog Loves Books* (Jonathan Cape). Chair of the judges, Michael Rosen, described *Dog Loves Books* as ‘An outrageous idea, beautifully told and illustrated’. He added:



‘Sometimes, what you want from a new book is a surprise, something fresh and odd. So this book leaves behind some of the staples of present-day humour and gives us humour on every page with a dog that just wants to read books.’

Dog Loves Books is Louise Yates’s second book. She was inspired to become a children’s illustrator by Quentin Blake, but pipped her hero to the post for the prize; Blake was also shortlisted with his book *Angelica Sprocket’s Pockets* (Jonathan Cape)

Louise Rennison is the winner of The Funniest Book for Children Aged Seven to Fourteen with *Withering Tights* (HarperCollins Children’s Books). ‘Queen of Teen’ Rennison, best-known for her Confessions of Georgia Nicolson series, has long been acknowledged as one of the funniest writers for children. She beat fellow comic David Walliams to the prize. He was shortlisted for the second consecutive year.

Of *Withering Tights*, Michael Rosen said: ‘This is a witty, wry, inside view of what it feels like to be a gawky, witty girl who knows what’s going on around her, is detached enough to comment on it all, but carried along in the flow all the same. There’s a gag on every page with loads of funny situations and people.’

Shortlist: The Funniest Book for Children Aged Six and Under

Angelica Sprocket’s Pockets by Quentin Blake (2010, Jonathan Cape)

Dogs Don’t Do Ballet by Anna Kemp, illus. Sara Ogilvie (2010, Simon & Schuster)

Dog Loves Books by Louise Yates (2010, Jonathan Cape)

The Nanny Goat’s Kid by Jeanne Willis, illus. Tony Ross (2010, Andersen Press)

One Smart Fish by Chris Wormell (2010, Jonathan Cape)

The Scariest Monster in the World by Lee Weatherly, illus. Algy Craig Hall (2009, Boxer Books)

Shortlist: The Funniest Book for Children Aged Seven to Fourteen

The Clumsies Make a Mess by Sorrel Anderson, illus. Nicola Slater (2010, HarperCollins Children’s Books)

Einstein’s Underpants and how They Saved the World by Anthony McGowan (2010, Yearling)

The Incredible Luck of Alfie Pluck by Jamie Rix, illus. Craig Shuttlewood (2010, Orion Children’s Books)

Mr Stink by David Walliams, illus. Quentin Blake (2009, HarperCollins Children’s Books)

The Ogre of Oglefort by Eva Ibbotson (2010, Macmillan Children’s Books)

Withering Tights by Louise Rennison (2010, HarperCollins Children’s Books)

Booktrust Teenage Prize 2010

Puffin Offices, The Strand, London. 1 November 2010.

Books published between 1 July 2009 and 30 June 2010 were eligible. For the purpose of the prize ‘teenage’ encompasses young adults between the ages of 12 and 16.

Gregory Hughes’ debut novel *Unhooking the Moon* (Quercus) has beaten books by established authors including Young Bond author Charlie Higson and previous winner Marcus Sedgwick.

Unhooking the Moon tells the story of two Canadian orphans on an eventful road trip to New York in search of their long-lost uncle.

Chair of the judges, Tony Bradman, described it as ‘original, poignant and funny’, adding: ‘The standard of entries for this year’s Teenage Book Prize was very high, and we judges felt spoilt for choice – our shortlist is a reflection of this quality. But all of us felt that *Unhooking the Moon* stood out from the beginning of our discussions. As a writer Gregory Hughes has a genuinely unique voice. *Unhooking the Moon* is full of

terrific characters and gripping storytelling, while also managing to explore the kinds of theme teenagers will find engaging. It's also a first novel.'

Like the characters in his novel, Gregory Hughes had an eventful childhood. Expelled from a Liverpool Jesuit school as a young teenager, he found himself in a home for boys and then in a detention centre. He has worked as a removal man and slept rough in Times Square. He took his GCSEs in his 20s and now works as a deep-sea diver, which he says inspires his creativity. The novel was written whilst Gregory was living in Iceland and sleeping on the floor of a room so small that he could touch both ends of the room while standing in the middle. He wins £2500 and a trophy.

Shortlisted books

The Enemy by Charlie Higson (2009, Puffin)

Halo by Zizou Corder (2010, Puffin)

Nobody's Girl by Sarra Manning (2010, Hodder Children's Books)

Out of Shadows by Jason Wallace (2010, Andersen Press)

Revolver by Marcus Sedgwick (2009, Orion)

Unhooking the Moon by Gregory Hughes (2010, Quercus)

John Burningham and Helen Oxenbury Celebration Evening

Swedenborg Hall, Bloomsbury, London. 30 November 2010.

On an evening that gave us the first fall of snow in southern England this winter, a group of children's literature enthusiasts gathered to pay tribute to two of the defining talents in picture-book illustration in Britain in the last generation. The evening, which was jointly organised by Books for Keeps and IBBY UK, took place in the august surroundings of Bloomsbury's Swedenborg Hall, and, apart from celebrating the work of these two remarkable talents, also welcomed the publication of *There's Going to be a Baby* (Walker Books, 2010), their first book together, after 40 years of marriage and illustrious separate careers.

In the past, neither John Burningham nor Helen Oxenbury has spent a great deal of time promoting or talking about their work, largely allowing it to speak for itself, so this was a rare opportunity both to hear them and to express appreciation for their considerable contribution to the world of British children's literature. Introduced by Rosemary Stones, editor of *Books for Keeps*, Burnningham and Oxenbury chatted with Clive Barnes from IBBY UK about some of the highlights of their careers, accompanied by a slide show that featured some of their best-known titles. There were then questions from the floor, followed by Burningham and Oxenbury signing copies of their books, supplied through John Newman at Newham Bookshop, London.

On an evening where there was a lot of anxiety about snow and its effect on travelling, the audience was not so large as had been anticipated but was knowledgeable and appreciative, including Martin Salisbury and students of illustration from Anglia Ruskin University, and David Lloyd, who, as editor at Walker Books, had been involved in some of Oxenbury's greatest successes. Our thanks also go to Walker Books for sponsoring wine for the evening.

(Clive Barnes)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Oxford Children's Book Group

Harcourt Lecture Theatre, Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford. 12 March 2010, 1.00–5.00 p.m.

Conference and launch of Aidan Chambers' collection of short stories *The Kissing Game*. £15 for non-members. See www.ocbg.org.uk or contact Fay Sinai, sjfly@bitinternet.com.

A Hundred Years of Peter and Wendy

Facultad de Filología, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain. 14–15 March 2011.

The conference has been set up to celebrate the first century of J.M. Barrie's novel *Peter Pan and Wendy*. It will have an interdisciplinary approach and includes literary and cultural studies as well as input from graphic creators, film critics, philosophers and psychoanalysts. Keynote speaker will be Professor R.D.S. Jack (University of Edinburgh), author of *The Road to the Never Land: A Reassessment of J M Barrie's Dramatic Art* (2010). For further information, see <http://peterpanconference.wordpress.com/> or email congresopeterpan@gmail.com.

Write4Children, a Poetry Debate

The next edition of *Write4Children* which is due to be published on 1 April 2011 will include a 'Poetry Debate'. Rachel Rooney will be introducing this with a discussion on the gap between children's and adult's poetry. See www.write4children.org or email write4children@winchester.ac.uk for further information.

The Child and the Book Conference 2011

The eighth annual conference for graduate and postgraduate scholars will be held in Oslo, Norway, 8–10 April 2011, with the theme 'Picture Books in the New Millennium'. See www.hf.uio.no/iln/forskning/aktuelt/arrangementer/konferanser-seminarer/2011/child/index.html.

Learning and Teaching Children's Literature in Europe

University of the West of England, Bristol. 4–6 July, 2011.

This conference relates to a two-year project concerning the learning and teaching of children's literature with children in the 8–11 age group in the UK, Spain, Turkey and Iceland. Further details from Charlie Butler, Charles.Butler@uwe.ac.uk.

Jacqueline Wilson Festival

A one-day conference on 20 October 2011 to celebrate the work of children's writer Jacqueline Wilson as part of the festival at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston. The conference will be preceded by a public event by Jacqueline Wilson on 19 October. For further information contact Helen Day HFDay@uclan.ac.uk.

Literature and Young Adults: A Multilingual and Cross-Cultural Conference

University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg City. 20–21 October 2011.

This international conference, organised by the Société Luxembourgeoise de Littérature in cooperation with the University of Luxembourg, welcomes proposals (150–200 words, by 5 March 2011) for papers concerned with comparative and inter-cultural approaches to youth literature; issues of reception, adaptation and translation; youth in literature; and pedagogical practice. Publication of the conference proceedings is planned. Further details from sllgc2010@gmail.com.

***The Times* Stephen Spender Prizes for Poetry Translation 2011**

Translate a poem from any language, classical or modern, into English!

Stephen Spender was himself a fine translator of poetry. By means of this annual prize, *The Times* and the Stephen Spender Trust hope to encourage and stimulate a new generation of literary translators.

The judges of the 2011 competition will be Susan Bassnett (Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Warwick), Edith Hall (a Research Professor at Royal Holloway, University of London), Patrick McGuinness (Professor of French and Comparative Literature at Oxford University and fellow of St Anne's College) and George Szirtes (poet and translator from Hungarian).

Entrants must be British residents or British citizens. (The Stephen Spender Trust encourages submissions from young people who are British residents but have roots in other countries.)

There will be three prizes in the 18-and-under category and one prize in the 14-and-under category.

For more information: www.stephen-spender.org/prize.html or email info@stephenspender.org.

(Jennifer Harding)

NEWS

2010 Scottish Book Trust's Royal Mail Awards shortlist

Announced on 2 December 2010, it includes Elizabeth Laird's *The Witching Hour* among the three books listed in the Older Readers 12–16 category. See this issue of *IBBYLink* for Elizabeth's Laird's discussion of this book. The shortlist is at www.scottishbooktrust.com/node/3846. Scottish school pupils read and vote for the winners. Voting deadline is 28 January 2011 and the winners will be announced on 22 February 2011 in Glasgow.

(Jennifer Harding)

The Times Stephen Spender Prizes 2010

This prize is for a translation from any language, classical or modern, into English of a poem chosen by the entrant. There are three classes: 14 and under; 18 and under; and open. The winners of the 2010 prizes were announced on 31 October 2010. A free booklet of the winning entries is available from info@stephenspender.org. The poems can be read online at www.stephen-spender.org.

I am amazed at the insight of the young translators into the originals and their inventiveness in their translated versions. The enthusiasm of young translators for the classical languages is interesting and not entirely accounted for by their school studies.

The under-14 prize went to Henry Miller for his translation from Latin of Ovid's 'Amores 3.2'. The under-18 prize went to Patrick Heaton who also chose to translate from a classical language, the first 50 lines of a poem of Ovid's, 'Penelope Ulizi, Heoides 1'.

My favourite in the under-14 class is the commended translation from French of Baudelaire's 'Sleen' by Dominic Hand. Here are the last four lines.

— Et de longs corbillards, sans tambours ni musique,	— And slow funerals, with no drum nor music,
Défilent lentement dans mon âme; l'Espoir,	File past in my soul; Hope, left for dead,
Vaincu, pleure, et l'Angoisse atroce, despotique,	Weeps, while Anguish, atrocious, despotic,
Sur mon crâne incliné plante son drapeau noir.	Plants its black flag upon my bowed head.

In the under-18 class the commended translation from German of Georg Trakl's 'Grodekk' by Claire Ewbank fits with the title of this issue of *IBBYLink* as the poem 'expresses Trakl's sentiments towards war and the immense sorrow he carries in acknowledging the consequences of death' (Claire Ewbank). Here are the first lines.

Am Abend tönen die herbstlichen Wälder	At evening the autumn woods resound with the sound
Von tödlichen Waffen, die goldenen Ebenen	Of deadly weapons, over the golden plains
Und blauen Seen, darüber die Sonne	And blue lakes, the more sombre sun
Düstrer hinrollt; umfängt die Nacht	Rolls downwards; the night draws
Sterbende Krieger, die wilde Klage	The dying warriors together, the wild laments
Ihrer zerbrochenen Münder.	Of their smashed mouths.

(Jennifer Harding)

IBBY NEWS

Annual General Meeting 2011

This year's IBBY UK AGM is on Tuesday 7 April, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., at the offices of Orion Children's Books, 5 Upper St Martin's Lane, London WC2 9EA. After the formal business, Caroline Lawrence and Linda Newbery will speak and then answer questions. Light refreshments will be served. If you intend to come, please contact John Newman (newman100@orangehome.co.uk).

Annual IBBY/NCRCL MA Conference 2011

Froebel College, Roehampton University. Saturday 12 November.

The conference is entitled 'It Doesn't Have to Rhyme: Children and Poetry'. This conference is intended to explore a variety of topics concerned with the writing and publication of poetry for children: confirmed speakers include Michael Rosen (poet and past Children's Laureate), Morag Styles (University of Cambridge), Susan Bassnett (translator, Stephen Spender Trust judge, University of Warwick) and Jacqueline Wilson (anthologist and author). There will also be a panel of publishers and a range of workshops. A call for papers will go out in the summer and will be included in the next issue of *IBBYLink*. For further details email Pat Pinsent, PatPinsent@aol.com.

IBBY Congress 2012 – Crossing Boundaries: Translations and Migrations

Imperial College, London. 23–26 August 2012.

Regular readers of *IBBYLink* will be aware that the UK section is organising the next IBBY congress in London in 2012 from 23 to 26 August. The congress, strategically placed between the Olympics and the Paralympics, will take place at Imperial College, and will be the first in the UK since 1982. It will provide a great opportunity to welcome colleagues from IBBY's 72 national sections who are involved in all aspects of promoting children's books and reading, and to learn about children's literature from international perspectives. At the same time it will be an occasion to share British children's literature with an interested and receptive audience who will be looking forward to meeting UK authors and illustrators.

The title is Crossing Boundaries: Translations and Migrations, a theme that will give scope for discussion about a whole range of matters relating to international children's literature. Over the next few months we'll be making announcements about speakers on the programme – watch the website www.ibbycongress2012.org and register for updates. A call for papers will go out in February 2011 and registration will open in January 2012.

Thanks to a grant from the Arts Council, a delegation of five was able to attend the IBBY congress in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, in September 2010. Congress co-directors Kathy Lemaire and Ann Lazim, and team members Kathleen Milne, Daniel Hahn and Patrick Ryan staffed a stand promoting the 2012 congress, distributing information leaflets and our very popular poster designed by Anthony Browne and printed by Walker Books. Delegates from all around the world expressed interest in coming to London in 2012, ranging from countries with a large membership such as Japan and the USA to countries with smaller national sections such as Nepal and Uruguay. On the final night of the congress we made a formal presentation inviting delegates to the 2012 congress. We showed a video about London that included a welcome message from Aidan Chambers, a winner of the Hans Christian Andersen Award. The UK's most recent winner of the award, David Almond, was at the congress to receive his medal and made a very well-received speech, as did Jutta Bauer from Germany, the winner of the illustrator award.

There will be plenty of scope for IBBY UK members to help and get involved. Most immediately, the congress organising committee would welcome the addition of a treasurer to the team. Anyone interested in filling this role, please get in touch with Ann Lazim (annlazim@googlemail.com) or Kathy Lemaire (kathy.lemaire@btinternet.com).

During the congress, we will need volunteers to help with many activities, including guiding visitors. There will be more information about this in future issues of *IBBYLink*. Again please contact with Ann Lazim or Kathy Lameire.

(Ann Lazim)

IBBY/NCRCL MA Annual Conference 2011

Froebel College, Roehampton University, London. Saturday 12 November 2011.

It Doesn't Have to Rhyme: Children and Poetry

Michael Rosen has described poetry as saying ‘important things in a memorable way’; and this conference will explore what this means for poetry written for and by children.

Proposed items include keynote speakers Morag Styles, Michael Rosen and Jacqueline Wilson, a panel to include publishers of poetry, poetry in translation and workshops. A call for papers for the workshops will go out in the summer. To express an interest or request further information, contact PatPinsent@aol.com

The next issue of *IBBYLink* (Summer 2011) (copydate 30 April 2011) will focus on Africa, with particular emphasis on South Africa. Articles are invited on this and other subjects, together with reviews, reports, news and information about conferences and other events Contributions to PatPinsent@aol.com by 20 April 2011.

Titles for review

Publishers and others with books to be reviewed in *IBBYLink* should send them to Sue Mansfield at 37 Gartmoor Gardens, London SW19 6NX. Email: mansfield37@btinternet.com.

IBBYLink 30, Spring 2011

The newsletter of the British section of the International Board for Books for Young People (IBBY UK), published three times a year.

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To sponsor a future issue of *IBBYLink*, contact PatPinsent@aol.com.

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