

Report of Conference *Pat Pinsent*

Most of this issue is devoted to the 2003 IBBY/MA conference at Roehampton in November. The workshop leaders and most of the plenary speakers have given us short accounts of what they said, and for those whose appetite is whetted by this taster, Pied Piper Publishing, who kindly sponsored a wine reception to mark their launch, plan to bring out the book of conference proceedings later this year. It seemed to be universally agreed that the occasion was as successful as ever in providing lively discussion and entertaining talks about children's literature.

The theme, concerning the boundaries, if any, between adults' and children's books, provoked much debate, particularly in the light of the success of the works of Philip Pullman (whose CBE has more recently marked his public acclaim) and J.K. Rowling in reaching across boundaries, not forgetting the triumph of J.R.R. Tolkien in both the BBC's 'Big Read' and as a (posthumous) film-writer. More recently Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*, marketed at the same time for adults and children, has emulated *The Amber Spyglass* in winning the prestigious overall Whitbread Prize; the jacket of the (otherwise identical) children's edition is slightly less gruesome than the adult's one, which features the dog at the end of the garden fork, but I suspect this would be unlikely to put many children off reading it! As Erica Wagner says in *The Times* (28/1/04), children's and adults' books are, today, 'fluid categories,' and 'David Almond's wonderful novel, *The Fire-Eaters*, is a book that could be read by adults as much as *The Curious Incident* can.'

We are fortunate today in having a range of writers who can transcend artificial barriers which have sometimes meant that adults have been unaware of the riches of children's literature. Many parents today are likely to recognise too that picture books have as much to give to adults reading to young children as to the children themselves, while several contributions at the conference made it evident that the phenomenon of dual audiences is by no means restricted to this country, being paralleled in France, Spain and Taiwan, to name but a few. Not of course that the notion of appealing to a joint audience

is new, for, as Penelope Lively and Ann Thwaite pointed out at the beginning of the conference, it was certainly true of many books in Victorian times. Perhaps the mid twentieth-century trend for publishers to target specific markets age-wise is now reversing, in the light of the realisation that 'children's literature' often demonstrates a more serious address to both character creation and the fundamental human issues than do many books ostensibly demanding a more mature audience. Long may this continue!

-Pat Pinsent, editor

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Crossing Boundaries

a conversation between Ann Thwaite & Penelope Lively

The 2003 IBBY conference began with a discussion about the boundaries between adult and children's fiction between Ann Thwaite, whose biographies of Frances Hodgson Burnett and A.A.Milne are much appreciated by all enthusiasts for children's literature, and Penelope Lively, writer of many children's books, including *The House in Norham Gardens* and the Carnegie Medal winner, *The Ghost of Thomas Kempe* (not forgetting the Booker Prize winner, *Moon Tiger*). They reminded us that the claim that 'children's books are now increasingly read by adults' overlooks the fact that adults would always have been among the audience for children's books until relatively recently, as books would have been shared by all the family.

The phenomenon of books being for children only was a twentieth century phase, but even so, books by writers such as Nina Bawden, Jill Paton Walsh and Peter Dickinson achieved what would now be termed 'cross-over' success, while Ted Hughes, Kit Wright, Charles Causley, Russell Hoban and Jane Gardam are notable names among writers who have written for both adult and young audiences. Today, fantasy seems to be the great cross-over sector, as proved by the popularity of Philip Pullman and J.K.Rowling, though the realistic *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon is an outstanding example of a recent book accessible to (and published for) both old and young.

Interesting evidence about writers and their own reading is revealed in *The Pleasure of Reading* (1992), which provides a wonderful reminder of books read and unread, pleasures past and pleasures still to come. The five books most mentioned in it are *Alice in Wonderland*, *Jane Eyre*, *Winnie the Pooh*, *Treasure Island* and *Just William*. In her life of Burnett, *Waiting for the Party* (1974) Ann Thwaite has revealed that the best selling books from 1884 to

1886 were *Heidi*, *Treasure Island*, *A Child's Garden of Verses*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *King Solomon's Mines* and *War and Peace*, observing that all of these except the last would now be seen as children's books, and that 'at this time there was no rigid demarcation between adult and children's literature' (p.95). In fact no less a figure than the Prime Minister, Mr Gladstone, confessed his enthusiasm for *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, expressing his hope that it would promote good feeling between Britain and America.

When asked about the difference between writing for adults and writing for children, Penelope Lively pinpointed the fact that children will not have the same range of reference as adults, and that a stronger narrative thrust is needed in writing for them. In her children's books, however, she still concerned herself with the issues that interested her as an adult, notably memory and the past. She quoted W.H.Auden: 'There are good books that are only for adults, because their comprehension presupposes adult experiences, but there are no good books that are only for children' (*New York Times*, 1962, quoted in *Aspects of Alice*, ed Robert Phillips, 1971).

Several of Penelope Lively's books, notably *Going Back* (1975), are very much on the boundary between adult and young people's fiction. In a Preface on its reissue in 1990, the author admits that 'the pitch, the voice, the focus are not really those of a true children's book,' seeing it as a 'trial run' for her preoccupation with the nature of memory. Certainly current figures for library borrowings suggest that it has a considerable adult appeal.

Penelope Lively has not written any books for children for some years, but I'm sure that all the audience, as well as the readers of *IBBYLink*, will join me in hoping that she may yet again produce a book which appeals to young people as much as to adults!

My books' audiences

Theresa Breslin

Since publication there has been significant adult interest in *Remembrance*, my book set during World War I. Presentations that I give on this title at public venues attract a large number of people from the older age range who are interested in the subject of the book. Do they come because people of a certain age have experienced war, or because World War I is in the nation's consciousness in a particular way?

I was recently told that increasingly extremely sophisticated book covers are tempting adults to browse in the young adult section of the library and bookshop. Previous titles of mine that have had this type of attention are the two *Kezzie* books and *Death or Glory Boys*, written in response to the first Gulf War. Among other things, these books touch on the morality of conflict, emigration, the plight of migrant workers, and child displacement during war.

I am heartily glad that we have books that deal with the 'big' topics of life. In an age of bland television and magazine pap thank goodness for books that makes readers think. In literature, characters challenge assumptions, explore alternatives, relate to each other and reveal how emotionally inter-connected human beings are.

What makes someone choose to read my titles? Is it the subject? The cover? The characters? In my experience when readers talk to me about my books it is the *story* they speak about most. They tend to say, 'I enjoyed that story because...'

The Audiences of My Books

Linda Newbery

I don't think of my recent novels, *The Shell House* and *Sisterland*, as children's books, though they're published on children's lists. My main characters, aged 16, 17 or so, don't regard themselves as children, and to be honest in portraying those characters and their concerns was more important to me than aiming at any imagined readership.

Although the novels include subjects like homosexuality, bullying and racism, I don't see them as 'issues' novels. The risk of issues-led fiction is that the author can see herself as writing on *behalf* of a group of people, such as sufferers from anorexia. This can lead to a sense of responsibility towards the reader, which is not quite the business of fiction. Fiction concerns itself with inhabiting the consciousness of one or more characters. In *The Shell House* I did not aim to represent all teenage boys in doubt about their sexuality. I tried to be Greg: experiencing confusion, doubt and denial, from inside his mind and body.

I've come to recognise a key difference between writing for teenagers and writing for adults. In an adult novel, the main character can make mistakes and continue to make them, even obstinately continuing against better judgement. A *young* adult novel is less likely to close off the possibility of change and reconsideration. Considering, rethinking, admitting the possibility of being wrong, are so crucial to being human.

In researching *The Shell House*, as a physics ignoramus, I found references to Nils Bohr's 'uncertainty principle.' Perhaps this is Keats' 'negative capability' in scientific terms. Questions are as important – perhaps *more* important – than answers.

Thoughts of a Bookseller

Marilyn Brocklehurst

The debate about the boundaries between adult and children's books should not be primarily about the books but about the audience. Cross-over books give us the opportunity to engage the adult population in the world of children's books, encouraging parents to take part in their children's reading experience as they have never done before. I regularly speak at parents' evenings in schools and the infant side is well-attended, but parents of 8+ children assume that because their children are able to read they need do no more. Here is our chance to encourage parents to read aloud to children and to engage in discussion with their children about wonderful books, and indeed to model the reading habit at home.

Independent child readers are initially unskilled choosers, often put off by their own poor choice of material. 'Reading is boring' usually means 'I can't find any books I like'. Just three poor choices can cause a child to feel there's nothing worth reading. We know that children are heavily influenced by the packaging. I have found Pullman's *The Subtle Knife* being selected by 14 year old boys simply because of the 'cool dagger' on the front cover. Publisher packaging and promotions certainly make a big difference, but can often lead to disappointment when the 'product' doesn't come up to expectations. Children also often avoid books whose covers provide a misleading message- *Stargirl's* pink cover alienates boys, while *The Tulip Touch* looks like a horror story and many girls won't read it.

Children's reliance on the title of a book is no help to them either, and without a basic knowledge of the reliably good authors, they are all at sea. An adult guide is indispensable in a child's reading life, be it children's librarian, enlightened and enthusiastic teacher, or a significant adult in the home, or - better still - all three!

All the talk about children's literature in the press as a result of the 'Harry Potter' books and *His Dark Materials*, as well as a plethora of three volume fantasies, has engaged a hitherto uninterested adult population and has given us a huge opportunity. We must take advantage of this.

Artemis Fowl and the Poisoned Chalice: the Perils of Popularity

Katharn Turner

It is a common assumption that because a book is popular it cannot be any good. In exploring literature written for children we are often at pains to stress the significance of the texts we are analysing. To combat the perceived marginalisation of our field of study we often stress the 'seriousness' of themes and language in texts that are written with a specific audience in mind. In my paper I sought to explore the perceptions of that child audience and our disregard for what we claim to be important, namely that children are encouraged to read.

Earlier in 2003 than the conference, *Artemis Fowl* by Eoin Colfer was voted by a large television poll as one of the hundred most popular books in the United Kingdom. It has, however, been generally disregarded by critics.

There has been little informed discussion as to how such a text enters the public consciousness. Is it a triumph of marketing or an underground, cult success?

Is it really our right to decide what is 'good' for children to read? Many lists of suggested reading for children do not include Enid Blyton, while other do not include Roald Dahl or J.K.Rowling either. There may be sound reasons for this in terms of racism, sexism and downright derivative plots and characters, but there seems to be an even stronger reason for including these titles. Children actually read them. *Artemis Fowl* is a book which appeals to both child and adult audiences. In my talk I explored its appeal and considered how popularity can often cause a book to be disregarded by critics of children's literature.

Thoughts of a Publisher

Brenda Gardner, Piccadilly Press

For the purpose of this discussion I'll confine myself to contemporary fiction and the sort of fiction we publish – contemporary humorous novels. Traditionally the difference between an adult and a children's novel has been one of age; if the hero or heroine was 18+ then it was an adult book. I personally feel that we lose our teenage audience at 14 when they move on to adult titles. At Piccadilly, most of our main protagonists are 14, though sometimes they reach the ripe old age of 16 and the reason for this is one of sex and morality - we feel very strongly that our characters are too young for sex. In my opinion, most of Melvin Burgess's books and the 'Gossip Girls' series, for example, are adult books although we could use say 'older teen' books.

In answering the question about what the differences are between adult and children's books, I thought it might be useful for you to look at why and how we decided to publish Louise Rennison as an adult novelist. We had been receiving fan mail for sometime from teenagers saying how they had passed the books on to their mothers or even their fathers. Then last year we saw what the Americans had done with an edition aimed at the adult market. The covers were fabulous and we discussed with them how they were placing the book. We learnt from them, and since June 2003 we sold approximately 20,000 copies; we expect to be out of print after Christmas.

The downside of all of this is that we find that the booksellers just think it is a children's edition and sling it in the teenage section which can be quite dispiriting. Nevertheless, we sold 20,000 copies of each title and I don't think we would have done that without this new edition. But I would not do it for every book. First of all the books must be well-known and very successful in the teenage market, like Philip Pullman's, Louis Sachar's etc. Secondly, the publisher must see that there is potential for a wider audience. I would probably not publish a book which we called a Crossover book, as we are primarily a children's publisher and we want to publish for children and teenagers, not for adults.

For Piccadilly, there are differences between the adult and children's market but if you get a book that extends this market and you find the whole family reading and loving it, you owe it to the author and everyone else concerned to publish another edition to reach this audience.

Troubling the Boundary between fiction for adults and children: the young adult fiction of Melvin Burgess

Clare Walsh

The contemporary British writer Melvin Burgess subscribes unashamedly to Neil Postman's (1983) thesis about the blurring boundary between childhood and adulthood and in his young adult fiction he aims to challenge what he perceives to be the untenable myth that childhood and adulthood are distinct cultural spaces.

By focusing on three of his recent gender and genre-crossing novels, *Bloodtide* (1999), *Lady: My Life as a Bitch* (2001) and *Doing It* (2003), I explored Burgess' strategies to construct his implied 'adult child' reader.

All three novels sit uneasily within dominant conceptions of 'children's literature,' especially in terms of their treatment of sex and violence. This is partly due to a conscious decision by Burgess to incorporate into his work the more visceral aspects of popular media, such as computer games and graphic novels which target young readers/viewers.

I examined the controversy all three novels provoked amongst critics and media commentators, for these responses provide an insight into the way in which the boundary between fiction for adults and children continues to be policed by well-meaning gatekeepers.

Crossing Over: the reception of "kiddult" literature in Spain

Belen Gonzalez Cascallana

The 'crossover' phenomenon or 'Kiddult Fiction,' as it is sometimes called, has received attention from scholars and critics of children's literature, as well as from those interested both in children as such and in the adult literary system. However very little critical attention has been given to the way that crossover children's books, which appeal to both adult and young adult readers, are received in different countries. My contribution to this research field consists in approaching the art of crosswriting for children and adults from a translational perspective, by examining the reception of crossover books in Spain during the last three decades.

My study focused on a selection of books, and their translations, by three British children's writers: Richard Adams's *Watership Down* (1972); Roald Dahl's *The Complete Adventures of Charlie and Mr. Willy Wonka* (1995), which comprises *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964) and its sequel *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator* (1973); and, finally, J. K. Rowling's first book in the *Harry Potter* series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997).

The analysis confirmed the writers' use of intertextuality as a way of crossing the borders in order to address a dual audience of children and adults. Operating on both the child and the adult code levels, writers resort to intertextual references to bring the reader's attention to a field of literary and cultural codes that need to be activated during the reading process. In translation, those intertextual references must be first decoded by the translators and then by the readers, ensuring that the effect on the target reader is similar as that on the source reader. In fact, focusing on the way intertextual elements are translated, the target audience appears as a main constraint for translators. Moreover, their individual choice of translational strategies has had a great deal of influence on the final reception of translated crossover books.

Translating 'kiddult' fiction becomes a most challenging activity, as translators must meet the needs of two seemingly contradictory target audiences: children and adults. Moreover, translators need to be aware of their responsibility for encouraging children to read and for keeping their imagination active.

GOOD IDEAS WANTED

From time to time, authors are lucky enough to have their books are translated into foreign languages. This is great news for the author's bank balance, and even better for their self-esteem. The first time it happens, there is great delight in receiving the precious title in French, or German, or Japanese, or Welsh, or Estonian, and it's displayed with pride on a shelf. But soon the translations begin to pile up. Six unreadable copies in Dutch, or Russian, or Swedish might flood in, clogging up the shelves, weighing down the attic joists, mouldering in the garden shed.

It seems a shame to throw these perfectly good books away, simply because they're in the wrong language. There must be someone out there who would like to read them. Many authors, I'm quite sure, would be grateful for good ideas about how to dispose of these unwanted treasures.

- Elizabeth Laird

Can you help? Please send your ideas to PatPinsent@aol.com

Creating Picture Books for Adults in Taiwan

Mieke Desmet

Picture books have a reputation of being created for and addressed to children, yet more and more the picture book mode is being used by authors and illustrators to address an adult audience. In Taiwan, there are quite a few authors/illustrators working in this niche. The most famous of these is probably Jimmy Liao. He has a large following of adult readers, maintains a website and has a club for members. His work addresses the theme of coping in a modern urban world through simple stories in picture book format.

A number of illustrators have followed Jimmy Liao's lead; these include Tsao Ruei-Chi and Huang Yu-chin. There are also several clubs devoted to the creation of picture books for adults, such as 'The Picture Book Club' and 'We are Fun,' as well as cafés which function as exhibition rooms for the art work. My paper aimed to introduce the scene of adult picture books in Taiwan, focusing on extra textual elements such as the club and publishing scene. Additionally, the work of a few artists was explored in more detail.

Daniel Pennac: a storyteller in search of an audience

Sue Neale

Daniel Pennac is a literary phenomenon in France. He is fêted wherever he goes and has crowds both of adults and children wanting to hear him speak or have their books signed. A secondary school teacher of literature, he only gave up working with children in Paris in the late Nineties to concentrate on his writing.

In the autumn of 2002, two of his best known children's books were published in English for the first time by Walker Books: *Dog* and *The Eye of the Wolf*. These stories are designed to be read by 8 - 12 year olds but they deal with important issues, such as control, ownership, identity, loss and self discovery – issues that are relevant both to older children and to adults. In terms of writing style and use of language, there is much in them to recommend, and their translations are so wonderfully transparent that you lose very little by not reading them in the original.

In English, Pennac is more widely known within just one particular group of readers, those who find crime fiction both a challenge and an amusement. His Malaussène family saga consists of five novels and one novella; the first volume, *Au bonheur des ogres*, was published in France in 1985 in the Série Noire crime imprint at Gallimard. Unexpectedly high sales of this and the following one, *La fée carabine*, encouraged Gallimard to publish the next one, *La petite marchande de prose*, in their literary

imprint with white covers. This book was more widely read and ultimately achieved the Prix Inter and much critical and literary acclaim. The last book of the originally conceived quartet, *Monsieur Malaussène*, was published in 1995; it was intended to signal the end of the saga and the last we would hear of the family. However, Pennac bowed to public pressure and produced two more about the family, a novella and a novel, *Des Chrétiens et des Maurès* and *Aux fruits de la passion*; both of these were first published in magazines in weekly parts.

It was only in 1997 that Harvill Press began publishing his novels in translation though not in the same order as in French. With the publication of *Monsieur Malaussène* in the autumn of 2003, the saga is complete. As these novels generally only grace the crime fiction shelves, young people are unlikely to discover him in English unless prompted by a knowledgeable adult. His French-speaking audience for these novels is made up of both teenagers and adults, all of whom find different things to laugh or cry about within each very complicated story.

In my paper I looked at what his books are about once you strip away the murder and mayhem so essential to crime fiction, and tried to see why they appeal to such a wide readership.

Creating a Voice: An Author's View

Elizabeth Laird

A Little Piece of Ground is a novel for young teens set in present-day Ramallah during the current intifada. It's written from the point of view of a 12 year old Palestinian boy, who is living under Israeli military occupation, subject to frequent curfew. The novel is, above all, about his and his friends' desire to play football, to find a place of their own, a 'little piece of ground' where they can play it. This desire is constantly frustrated by the curfews, tank incursions and clamp-downs that affect every aspect of their and their families' daily lives.

In writing this novel I knew I was courting controversy, and for some time I fought against doing so. But when I met Sonia Nimr at a workshop for Palestinian writers, the germ was planted, and later we planned the book together. *A Little Piece of Ground* is relevant to the theme of adults reading children's books, firstly because of the wide variety of responses the book has received across the adult/child divide, but also because it highlights a difference between adult and child fiction, that is, the special responsibility of the writer of children's books towards the reader- to enable one person to step for a while into the shoes of another. Although I would have liked to introduce a sympathetic Israeli character, it would have been to sacrifice truthfulness; *A Little Piece of Ground* is a novel written from the point of view of three boys on one side of the Palestine/Israel conflict. I allow my characters to express conflicting views about the situation, but the reader's sympathy is engaged on the side of the occupied.

The responses to *A Little Piece of Ground* give me the impression that so far its readership has been mainly adult, particularly people who are interested in the Israeli/ Palestine situation, or who bring to it their own deeply felt views and loyalties. One or two mainstream stores have displayed the book among adult titles. Sales from Amazon are high, which suggests an adult readership. It's been well received by Palestinians, though there are comments that the picture given of Palestinian life is too soft and cosy, and that the real extent of the catastrophe hasn't been described.

In Britain, some people have expressed serious misgivings about the book and have regretted that it doesn't include a stronger Israeli point of view, or that it doesn't explain the background to the intifada. I understand these points of view, though, as I have pointed out, I had good reasons for writing as I did. Response from Israel itself has not been wholly negative.

It seems to me that the real responsibility of the writer for children and young people is to be truthful to the characters, the situation and the story they are writing. Many different voices, in my view, have a right to be heard. *A Little Piece of Ground* is the voice of Karim, twelve years old, from Ramallah, Palestine. The voice of any other child, from any other place, has the right to be heard too. The real enemy is ignorance. Ignorance leads to fear and fear leads to hatred. Creating empathy and understanding, even if it is only from one side of a conflict, seems to be me to be a perfectly responsible thing to do.

IBBY NEWS

A key event on the international IBBY scene has been Leena Maissen's retirement after 33 years' service, and her replacement by Kimete Basha iNovosejt. Kimete's goals are to lay foundations for the future by extending existing projects, improving services to members, developing an interactive website and collaborative partnerships, and ensuring long-term sustainable funding. She is based in Brussels.

The 2004 IBBY-Asahi Reading promotion award has been given to *First Words in Print* project from South Africa, which promotes literacy by distributing books to schools, clinics etc., and plans to extend its programme to HIV/AIDS sufferers.

From the first issue of 2005, *Bookbird* will be edited by Valerie Coghlan and Siobhan Parkinson, from Ireland.

The case of East German Children's Literature:

Crossover and Dual Address in a Socialist Society

Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth

The phenomenon of addressing children's books to two audiences was not unusual in East German children's literature. This development resulted indirectly from the country's cultural and, especially, literary policies, which were directed at continuously improving the quality and status of children's texts. Based on the guiding principles of socialism, the objective was to lift children's writing to the level of adult literature and to integrate it into the country's national literature. Organisations and institutions were created, in order to manage and control the production of high quality children's books. However, in the course of time, this drive towards the production of more 'adult-like' literature led to a number of books no longer being accessible to children. Subsequently, children's authors began to take the needs of their readership more into consideration, at the same time retaining the higher quality of narration and style.

From the 1970s, authors of children's literature set about using their writing as an instrument for criticism of society, which, to a degree, was to circumvent the censorship imposed by the regime. What is more, many issues constituting taboos in adult literature were first addressed in children's literature, such as environmental matters or 'antisocialness'. Since there was little or no outlet for these discussions in adult literature or the media of the country, several authors turned to allegory and fantasy in children's literature, in order to get across their message, hidden to the censorship authority. However, these books frequently left child readers unaware of the deeper meaning of the text, only allowing the more knowing reader see through the veil. Thus, in the last two decades of East Germany, books increasingly appeared which could be read on various levels by audiences with different background knowledge.

Adult Challenges from the European Picture Book: EPBC & ESET

Penni Cotton

The EPBC (European Picture Book Collection) and ESET (a European School Education Training course) are two on-line projects, funded by the European Commission, which are part of the resource collection at the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature (NCRCL). They have been created primarily in order to give adults access European children's literature and provide challenges for them as they work with young readers.

The EPBC web site (www.ncrcl.ac.uk/epbc/) has been designed to:

- Introduce a variety of European picture books from the EU member states
- Encourage learning about other literatures, languages and cultures
- Focus on how carefully selected visual narratives can do this
- Provide information about the books
- Include translations into English (French & German 2004)
- Suggest practical activities to do with the books
- Encourage cultural reflection

The ESET web site (www.roehampton.ac.uk/development/eset_new) is designed to:

- Provide an on-line European training course in English/French/German
- Include an introduction in more than 25 languages
- Use the EPBC materials
- Focus on how visual narratives can facilitate European awareness
- Provide 3 course modules: Language, Literature & Culture
- Include 5 two-hour session outlines for each module
- Provide aims and objectives, learning outcomes and ideas for cultural reflection
- Include all the resources necessary to use the Course
- Suggest ways forward using other European picture books

My workshop focused mainly on the ESET course, which made use of the EPBC materials. Participants had the opportunity to experience some of the challenges that the European picture book provides and to enjoy a wide range of European children's literature.

Boundaries between fact & fiction: autobiographical narratives

Maiko Miyoshi

In the realm of children's literature, the current popular genre is clearly 'fantasy'. However, there are still a number of books with realistic features, which are written for young readers and widely read and enjoyed by them, although their impact may be less powerful than that of popular fantasy.

Among fictions with realistic characteristics, my paper focused on autobiographical narratives which are recognised as fictional: diaries, journals, letters and autobiography. These have various functions and have been used in many different sub-genres in children's literature. The use of such modes seems to have increased recently, so it has become significant to examine their characteristics and roles, and to explore the reasons why they are so often employed. It is also interesting to consider what their prevalence in literature suggests about present day society.

These autobiographical narratives, which are in many cases the voices of the peers of their young readers, generate a sense of reality, familiarity and plausibility. They are often found as literary techniques in genres where realism has become the key issue, such as problem novels and historical stories. Additionally, these life-writing patterns often give a powerful image of the act of writing, and function as symbols and icons in literature.

My paper discussed three literary works, including a real diary, *The Diary of Anne Frank*; I looked at the effect of life writing, while questioning the meaning sought by the writer when employing such a style. The image of writing as act can be associated with self-formation, in other words, the establishment of self identity and agency, which are both significant topics today. Various writing formats like these can be interpreted as characteristics of metafiction and may provide a challenge to readers. Their metafictional features become another link with the society to which both books and readers belong.

Tolkien, Dante and Crossover Epic

Rachel Falconer

Why do epic quest narratives attract such large audiences amongst adults and children? Are adults succumbing to a nostalgia for simple moral schema and straightforward plots, when they read Tolkien, Pullman, or Nicholson, or when they watch *Star Wars*, *The Matrix* trilogy or, again, Tolkien on film? In my workshop, on the contrary, I suggested that crossover epic narratives are an important part of contemporary western culture. On one hand, they help individuals oppressed by corporate culture to view themselves as part of a meaningful whole, with a shared system of values rather than a common craving for consumer goods. On the other hand, and more sinisterly, epics embody national aspirations for economic as well as military conquest. This is currently well demonstrated by the 'war on terror' launched by US and UK governments in the Middle East, which is constantly being framed in terms of a traditional epic descent into Hell.

My paper examined some of the key features which all epics, for children and adults, share in common. I briefly discussed Dante in relation to 9/11 and its aftermath, before moving on to a more detailed analysis of one episode in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, the journey through the dwarf mines of Moria, in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. I interpret this episode as the trilogy's descent to Hell, the hinge-moment that transforms the ordinary, unheroic journey into an epic quest with global aspirations. It is, I argue, this translation of the ordinary 'I' into a superhero that western audiences (and governments) currently crave. But the infernal knowledge acquired in Tolkien's Moria may actually point in the opposite direction, towards an affirmation of ordinary, unheroic values.

From Beowulf to Bilbo to Buffy:

The Hero in Crossover Narratives Through the Ages

Natasha Baker

My paper marked the beginning of an exploration about heroism in crossover narratives through the ages and was intended to stimulate a wider discussion about the hero figure in stories enjoyed by both adults and children. It introduced the views of Pearson and Pope (1981) and Hourihan (1997) that the epic hero adventure story is deeply entrenched in modern Western narratives, such as George Lucas's *Star Wars* films of the 1970s, and the argument that traditional adventure narrative structures are often based on prejudicial frameworks and marginalistic dualisms.

The paper suggests that all modern heroes are descendants of the epic heroes and that some, such as Robinson Crusoe and Indiana Jones, bear stronger family resemblances than do others, such as Jo March and Dorothy. I went on to discuss the subtle shifts that have taken place in the evolution of the hero figure in crossover narratives throughout the ages, including shifts in age, race, sex and willingness to participate. The protagonists in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1937) were juxtaposed with epic hero types such as Beowulf and Odysseus.

Workshop discussion followed the presentation of the paper and a summary of the issues covered, such as the recent trend of casting adolescent girls in the role of the hero, in books such as Pullman's *Northern Lights* (1995), Nix's *Sabriel* (1995) and Whedon's *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* (1996).

Border Crossing in Historical Fiction

Peter Bramwell

In Monica Furlong's *Wise Child* (1987), Sherryl Jordan's *The Raging Quiet* (2000), Susan Price's *The Ghost Drum* (1987) and Theresa Tomlinson's *The Forestwife Trilogy* (1993, 1998, 2000; collected 2003) and *The Moon Riders* (2003), many borders are crossed, both within the novels and for their readers. Firstly, all the stories focus on characters who are displaced to the margins of society, the strangeness of their transitions into new environments mirroring the experience of readers who cross from the present into the imagined past of historical fiction. What is more, the sensibilities of the characters that make them out-of-step with their contemporaries are often 'modern' ones that elicit readers' sympathy.

Secondly, these novels are hybrids of historical realism and the fantastic. Both prophecy and the cycle of the seasons disrupt linear narrative structure, and at least in the case of *The Forestwife Trilogy*, this can be closely related to feminist historiography and the female chronotope, as discussed in the work of Maria Nikolajeva. These books also possess more self-conscious devices than might be expected in conventional historical fiction; perhaps most notably, storytelling characters within the novels draw attention to the purposes and methods of the implied authors.

Thirdly, border crossing occurs in the presentation of difference. The texts reappraise rigid oppositions between female and male by exchanging qualities between genders and by privileging aspects of the female side which have been slighted. They challenge power based on force and domination, with power based on subtlety and collaboration. *The Raging Quiet*, *Wise Child* and *The Forestwife Trilogy* all confront prejudice about disease and disability, as well as exploring faith differences by bringing Christianity and Paganism into dialogue. Age differences are considered as well: the adolescent protagonists are nurtured through cross-generational friendships with older mentors, and in some cases are shown continuing to mature beyond adolescence through different stages of adult life. At the conclusion of my presentation, I considered whether the novels examined were likely to cross audience boundaries of gender and age.

How baby books teach adults to read to babies: The marketing of two recent series of picture books for babies

Antonia Harding Shackelford

Adults are the gate-keepers of babies' first reading experiences, since reading is a shared activity between babies and adults. More than just reading, sharing books with babies involves both performing with the book, using concrete devices such as flaps, cut outs and textures, and an active interaction. Adults, in fact, usually supply additional information ('scaffolding') during the reading to create a contact between the baby's world and the book. This additional information ranges from practical explanations to more playful modalities such as dramatising details of the story by gesture or inflection (e.g. pretending to eat the pictured apple). Inevitably baby books address the adult audience in a variety of different ways.

My paper analysed two recent series of baby books, the *Baby Says* series by Opal Dunn and Angie Sage (Hodder), and the Ladybird *Touch and Sing* series. These books address the adult as a co-reader both in the marketing strategies and inside the book itself. In fact a closer look at the back and front covers of both series (where the marketing strategies are clearer) places each book in a context of shared reading and playful interaction, openly addressing the adults and suggesting to them how to read the book to a baby. Additionally, in the *Baby Says* series, the back cover also emphasises the pedagogical care with which these books have been designed, highlighting their educational utility.

Both series suggest that the adult co-reader should perform some actions with the baby during the reading. In the *Baby Says* series, the adult is prompted to perform these actions by the written text. In the text, the narrative voice is a mother talking in 'parentese language' and inviting her baby to make a gesture in order to communicate

an idea: 'The car is going. Wave hand. Baby says bye bye.' For a baby not yet engaged in the narrative, the words stand as an open call to join in the reading and take part in the action, so becoming a projection of the implied reader's voice.

A different approach in the Ladybird *Touch and Sing* series is the use of well known action-rhymes. The actions to perform with the rhyme are illustrated separately in numbered frames on the side of the page. These illustrations, behind their apparent simplicity, seem to address primarily the adult co-reader because of the competencies required to read them properly.

Both series highlight the complex dynamics of addressing the adult as a co-reader both in the peritext and inside the book, either in the written text or in the illustrations. Furthermore, especially in the *Baby Says* series, the importance of the peritext becomes manifest, adding to the books' qualities of meaning and turning them into more complex social documents with wide concerns about child education.

The Big Read

James Naughtie

James Naughtie spoke about the opportunities presented by the excitement that seemed to be attached to reading these days – bookclubs, best-selling children's fiction filling the shops and the best-seller lists and, of course, The Big Read. Although it was easy to decry the 'list' obsession that seemed to be pervading popular culture, surely it was better to have a series of programmes promoting some great books than not to have one? And he asserted that reading habits seemed genuinely to give cause for hope. If you were travelling on a train from Edinburgh to London (or, preferably, the other way

'Mummy, why's Daddy reading my picturebook?'

The Magical Worlds of Claude Ponti

Catherine Buscall

Have you ever met a 'Zerte'? The participants at my workshop at the IBBY conference clearly thought that they would remember it if they had: the Zertes are toy-like characters, a cross between cubes and little men with funny bird feet, whose main occupation is to 'zertillonne[r]' on *L'Île des Zertes* (1999, transln. M Fottler, Boston, Mass. 2004). Incidentally Ponti has put a joke intended for the adult reader here: this 'Isle of the Zertes' or 'desert isle' is in fact rather crowded. The story itself is obviously also intended as a pun which the adult reader who knows Shakespeare will recognize: little he-Zerte Jules falls (quite literally) in love, firstly with a brick, then with a certain she-Zerte Romeotte. But the definition of falling in love, how the characters become all 'sloumpy-sloumpy' from the collision, is clearly directed to the child reader.

This text illustrates how much the work of one of France's most innovative writers of contemporary children's picturebooks, Claude Ponti, engages the adult reader, thus drawing attention to the problematic nature of 'cross-over' books. Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (in ed. S.Beckett, *Transcending Boundaries*, 1999) suggests that there are four categories of crosswriting. Ponti would seem

round) these days, you would see more books being read than would have been the case twenty-five years ago. He was tired of hearing snide remarks about Harry Potter, when it was obvious that the books (and the tapes) were introducing many children – and their parents – to the pleasures of reading a fat volume, which otherwise they would never have known. So when the predictable outcry greeted the winner of the Big Read (his forecast, before the final result was known, was that it would be between *The Lord of the Rings* and *Pride and Prejudice*, with the latter his preference between the two) he wanted to celebrate the fact that the business of reading – and its liberating power – was felt once again to be important - a surprising but exhilarating fact.

to belong to the three main ones of these: he has written picturebooks for young children and even for adults, together with novels for both children and adults. He is definitely an author for all agegroups.

Carole Scott, in another article in Beckett's book, claims that: 'Picturebooks give a unique opportunity for what can be considered as a collaborative relationship between children and adults, for picturebooks empower children and adults more equally.' A more detailed analysis of *L'Île des Zertes* shows that it is indeed 'directed at an implied audience that comprises children *and* adults' (Kümmerling-Meibauer). An example of this is 'le Trou' – literally a hole, which swallows anything that falls into it, keeping them prisoners in its tummy. In French slang, 'trou' can also mean prison, something which only the adult reader would identify, as with the reference to *Alice in Wonderland*, often present in Ponti's work, when the character 'tombe, tombe' ('is falling falling').

A final instance of dual appeal cited by Kümmerling-Meibauer is when an author's 'adult works and his children's novels are complementary to each other, thus building a cluster of intertextual references.' Intratextuality like this is easily identifiable in Ponti's work, with references like 'Blaise le poussin masqué,' the deliciously naughty 'masked chicken' which Ponti's readers enjoy spotting in each of his picturebooks. Comparing *L'Île des Zertes* with one of his novels for adults, *Les Pieds Bleus* (1995), reveals further aspects, like the influence of the fairy tale. There is also some degree of violence: incest, rape or fights in *Les Pieds Bleus*, the mad hammer 'Martabaff' in *L'Île des Zertes*. In its very name, the 'baff' ('slap') can be recognised, for this 'mad' (in French slang, 'marteau') hammer hits everything and everyone.

Thus Ponti's entire work embraces the various criteria which not only stress the richness and complexity of picturebooks as privileged dual-audience books, but also allow him to be classified as a crosswriting author.

Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World* :

where there's no room for sitting comfortably

Sophie Mackay

There are two obvious ways in which *Sophie's World* crosses boundaries: it combines the genres of textbook and novel to create a history of Western philosophy in narrative form, and it is also a book which is marketed for both young people and adults. My conference paper explored how this book challenges readers' boundaries, in the attempt to make them actively involved with the ideas in the text and not just passive recipients of them. It demands that we engage with the philosophical questions the book introduces.

The purpose of Sophie's introduction to philosophy is to make her aware of the importance of asking questions. The reason the course begins shortly before her fifteenth birthday is that as she moves closer towards adulthood she might be in danger of losing her childhood sense of awe and wonder about the world and becoming someone who takes the mysteries of the world for granted. Her philosophy tutor, Alberto Knox, holds that a child-like curiosity is essential for successful philosophical enquiry.

I argued that the metafictional strategies Gaarder employs, which play with the boundaries between fiction and reality, require the reader to ask philosophical questions about the nature of reality and the constructed nature of fiction. I went on to suggest that the metafictional aspects of the text are an essential component to its function as an introduction to philosophy. The question-raising nature of the text is more relevant to a beginning philosopher than are the summaries of the major ideas and thinkers from Western philosophy that form a substantial part of the narrative. As Sophie points out at the start of her philosophy course: 'Philosophy is not something you can learn, but perhaps you can learn to think philosophically.' (Gaarder 1997:32)

I ended by concluding that it is the ambiguity that results from the boundaries which *Sophie's World* crosses between reality and imagination that makes it a successful introduction to philosophy. This is because Gaarder's intention is to disturb readers, to engage them with new ideas, to encourage them to ask questions and to expand their minds. New ideas can be challenging and uncomfortable!

"On the Borders of Adult Knowledge"

children growing up in William Mayne's fiction

Jenny Kendrick

As he himself admitted, William Mayne is unlikely to address teenage sexuality in the style of a Judy Blume or a Melvin Burgess, but Mayne has produced a number of novels in which the young protagonists are adolescents in transition: demonstrably undergoing the cognitive, physical, emotional and social changes which characterise adolescence.

Characters may be shown as growing taller, perhaps approaching their parents' height. They are becoming aware of their own or their peers' sexuality and of their parents' sexuality. They may become curious about birth or about their own place in family

history. They begin to perceive themselves as separate from their parents and to develop an identity independent of them. They may be in conflict with their parents, or alienated from them and no longer able to confide in them. Peer groups and unrelated adults become more important. They question for themselves the religious beliefs they have hitherto accepted. They reassess childish knowledge against their developing understanding of the world. In this workshop I looked at three of Mayne's novels particularly relevant in this context.

In *A Game of Dark* (1971), Donald's understanding of sexuality, birth and death is confused by the fact that his sister died and his father became disabled, on the night he was born. His reluctance to assimilate these facts into his developing understanding leads not only to his descent into a nightmarish fantasy world, but also into the avoidant adolescent fantasy logic of adoption.

BOOK REVIEWS

***Reimagining Shakespeare for Children and Young Adults*, ed. Naomi J. Miller, New York & London: Routledge, 2003. ISBN 0-415-93856-2**

This volume in the 'Children's Literature and Culture' series, of which the general editor is Jack Zipes, brings together a variety of different responses to the need to make Shakespeare accessible to young people. These range from novelists who have featured Shakespeare as one of their characters, through writers and illustrators who have tried to bring the plays to life on the page, to the adaptors of the plays for the stage. A final section, 'Pedagogy and Performance,' presents Shakespeare in the school context, to the extent of actually providing a lesson plan to familiarise children with Shakespeare's language and rhythms. The American setting for this and the other pedagogical articles, though it may deter some British teachers who would like to use the insights, can relatively easily be translated into a more familiar UK situation.

Choice of which of more than thirty chapters to highlight within a short review is inevitably subjective. I enjoyed 'Alice reads Shakespeare: Charles Dodgson and the Girls' Shakespeare Project' by Georgianna Ziegler, which describes how Carroll wrote to the mother of one of his young female friends asking her advice about which plays should be included in 'a Shakespeare which shall be absolutely fit for *girls*.' He planned to 'erase ruthlessly every word in the play that is in any degree profane, or coarse, or in any sense unsuited for a girl from 10 to 15' (p.107). Ziegler suggests that the world is not necessarily poorer for the fact that Carroll did not complete this project, and gives some information about what was available for children at the time. She goes on to scrutinise those works of Carroll which were inspired by Shakespeare, in order to imagine 'the kind of pseudo-Shakespearean text' he might have created, without slavishly simply editing the plays. When he was only thirteen, Dodgson produced eight magazines for his seven sisters and three younger brothers, and interpolated his own wit into a speech from Prince Hal to his dying father. Another *jeu d'esprit* was a pastiche on a speech from *King Lear* on the subject of the rehousing of the bells of Christ Church cathedral.

In 'The Bard for Babies' Sheila Cavanagh suggests, on the basis of her experience with her own young son, that Shakespeare's plays may perform a function analogous to that which Bettelheim indicates for fairy tales. Like traditional material, they can confront children with the complexity of the human situation and not over-simplify it by providing a facile solution, unlike many stories for the very young.

Many IBBY readers will recognise the contribution from Marcia Williams, one of the few British contributors, 'Bravo, Mr William Shakespeare,' a presentation she gave to the 2001 IBBY conference; a shortened version of her talk appeared in *IBBYLink* in Spring 2002. It's good to see that Marcia's talents in making Shakespeare accessible have reached across the Atlantic. Altogether this is an interesting and revealing collection, which I would highly recommend to anyone interested in, or researching, this area- but for one thing, its price. At £65 it is likely to be beyond the reach of individual scholars. Try to get your library to purchase it! - Pat Pinsent

***Man on the Moon: A Day in the Life of Bob*, by Simon Bartram, published in 2002 by Templar, Dorking. ISBN1-84011-491-6**

Every day, Bob gets into his rocket ship and travels to the moon, where his job is to keep it clean and tidy and to give guided tours to the curious visitors. While Bob is oblivious to the presence of aliens, observant readers will spot the funny looking creatures that make sporadic appearances throughout the book. Beautifully illustrated with bright colours, this is a cleverly devised picture book. It will be welcomed by those who enjoy sophisticated books, where pictures and text need to be studied carefully in order to enjoy the whole story. Bartram is a talented and innovative artist with a unique and instantly recognisable style. The book was shortlisted for this year's prestigious Kate Greenaway Medal. Another Templar book also shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Medal is *The Cockerel and the Fox* (2002), a retelling of the story of Chanticleer, written and illustrated by Helen Ward. - Ed Zaghini

CONFERENCES & EVENTS

3rd April 2004, University of Surrey, Roehampton

THE CHILD AND THE BOOK

This conference brings together postgraduate students of children's literature from all over the world, with the intention of encouraging collaboration between researchers. Topics will include Alternative Realities, Cultural Identities, Visions of the Past and Beyond the Written Word. For a booking form visit www.ncrcl.ac.uk/childandbook or contact Laura Atkins at l.atkins@roehampton.ac.uk

17 April 2004, University of Oxford

SHELVING TRANSLATION CONFERENCE

Do not miss this exciting conference that will focus on the role of the translated text in Britain today and how it differs from that of the English language text. Anthea Bell will be one of the guest speakers. For more information contact Brenda Garvey at brenda.garvey@chch.ox.ac.uk

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

BOOKBIRD

The most recent issues of Bookbird, the international IBBY journal (published quarterly) are full of interesting items. Vol 41, No 2 has as its subject 'Children's Books as Bestsellers' and includes articles on celebrities writing children's books, a discussion of the revival of the school story through Harry Potter, and developments in German and Basque children's literature. Vol 41, No 3 is about 'Controversial Children's Literature' and gives attention to, among others, books from Finland and Greece. Vol 41, No 4 has as its theme 'War and Peace in Children's Literature'; it looks at Education for Peace with picture books, childhood memories of war in Norway and a view of Gallipoli from both the Turkish and Australian sides.

Each issue also contains regular features about international children's books of not and professional literature as well as many other items that will be of interest to those who think that the perspective of English language speakers tends to be too insular. Subscription details can be obtained from journals@utpress.utoronto.ca and payment (\$35USD pa for IBBY members) can be made by credit card.

BOOKTRUSTED NEWS

Booktrusted News goes from strength to strength. Recent topics included the World Wars (Issue 5, Summer 2003) and Bullying (Issue 6, Autumn 2003), with authors discussed including Jacqueline Wilson, James Riordan and Bob Fowke. A regular feature is the 'Desert Island Books' from a key figure within children's literature, plus extensive booklists and short reviews. Visit www.booktrusted.com for more information!

Also produced by Booktrust is the invaluable *Best Book Guide for Children and Young Adults* (£5) an annual pick of the paperback fiction from the previous year. There are lists, with full descriptions, of recent fiction, arranged in age order of projected reader, plus reference to poetry and non-fiction titles, and a classified Subject Index, which could be very useful for people looking for books on selected themes (such as family and domestic stories, crime and mystery, diaries, animals, etc.) See website above, or ring 020 8516 2977, or write to Book House, 45 East Hill, London SW18 2QZ

EXHIBITIONS

26 February - 22 March 2004, The Central Library, Ilford

BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH

An exhibition of fifty photographs taken by Prodeepta Das for Benjamin Zephaniah's *We are Britain*, a collection of poems about thirteen children from all over the UK who represent 21st Century Britain, (published by Frances Lincoln) opens at the Gallery Space, The Central Library in Ilford on 26th February and runs until 22nd March 2004. Supported by the Arts Council of Great Britain, the exhibition heralds the opening of the Redbridge Literature Festival which runs from 12th - 22nd March. Prodeepta Das will take part in a workshop, open to families in the Redbridge area, on Saturday 20th March. For further information about the festival contact: 020 8 708 3044.

17 - 22 April 2004, The Illustration Cupboard, London

TONY ROSS AND FRIENDS

The Illustration Cupboard is delighted to present Tony Ross and Friends in its annual spring exhibition. This event will focus on the work of award-winning and leading British author/illustrator Tony Ross and will feature the entire suite of illustrations from *I don't Want to go to Bed* as well as other classics. In addition, there will be original artwork available from a select number of illustrators including Ian Beck and Christopher Wormell. The exhibition will be available for viewing on The Illustration Cupboard website www.illustrationcupboard.com from 7 May 2004. Further enquiries, please contact John Huddy at The Illustration Cupboard on 020 7610 5481, or illustrationcupboard@yahoo.com

Forthcoming issues of IBBYLink

Summer: Picture Books & Book Illustration (copydate April 30th)

Autumn: Children's Literature related to Africa (copydate August 30th).

Contributions welcome