

The Edinburgh Companion to Children's Literature

THE EDINBURGH COMPANION TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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MARIA NIKOLAJEVA

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CONTENTS

Introduction: Where Have We Come From? Where Are We Heading? 1
Clémentine Beauvais and Maria Nikolajeva

Part I: Contemporary Directions in Children's Literature Scholarship

- 1 Teaching the Conflicts: Diverse Responses to Diverse Children's Books 13
Karen Coats
- 2 Posthumanism: Rethinking 'The Human' in Modern Children's Literature 29
Victoria Flanagan
- 3 Animal Studies 42
Zoe Jaques
- 4 Spatiality in Fantasy for Children 55
Jane Suzanne Carroll
- 5 A Question of Scale: Zooming Out and Zooming In on Feminist Ecocriticism 70
Alice Curry
- 6 Age Studies and Children's Literature 79
Vanessa Joosen
- 7 Carnality in Adolescent Literature 90
Lydia Kokkola
- 8 Cognitive Narratology and Adolescent Fiction 102
Roberta Seelinger Trites
- 9 Empirical Approaches to Place and the Construction of Adolescent Identities 112
Erin Spring

| | | |
|--|---|-----|
| 10 | Picturebooks and Situated Readers: The Intersections of Text, Image, Culture and Response <i>Evelyn Arizpe</i> | 124 |
| 11 | Re-memorying: A New Phenomenological Methodology in Children's Literature Studies <i>Alison Waller</i> | 136 |
| Part II: Contemporary Trends in Children's and Young Adult Literature | | |
| 12 | Canons and Canonicity <i>Anja Müller</i> | 153 |
| 13 | Seriality in Children's Literature <i>Bettina Kümmerring-Meibauer</i> | 167 |
| 14 | Counterfactual Historical Fiction for Children and Young Adults <i>Catherine Butler</i> | 179 |
| 15 | Pattern, Texture and Print: New Technology, Old Aesthetic in Contemporary Picturebook-Making <i>Martin Salisbury</i> | 194 |
| 16 | Telling Stories in Different Formats: New Directions in Digital Stories for Children <i>Junko Yokota</i> | 203 |
| 17 | Multimodality and Multiliteracies: Production and Reception <i>Margaret Mackey</i> | 217 |
| 18 | Serendipity, Independent Publishing and Translation Flow: Recent Translations for Children in the UK <i>Gillian Lathey</i> | 232 |
| 19 | The Picturebook in Instructed Foreign Language Learning Contexts <i>Sandie Mourão</i> | 245 |
| Part III: Unmapped Territories | | |
| 20 | Next of Kin: 'The Child' and 'The Adult' in Children's Literature Theory Today and Tomorrow <i>Clémentine Beauvais</i> | 265 |
| 21 | Critical Plant Studies and Children's Literature <i>Lydia Kokkola</i> | 274 |
| 22 | Health, Sickness and Literature for Children <i>Jean Webb</i> | 281 |
| 23 | Evolutionary Criticism and Children's Literature <i>Maria Nikolajeva</i> | 289 |
| 24 | The Genetic Study of Children's Literature <i>Vanessa Joosen</i> | 298 |

| | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 25 | Distant Reading and Children's Literature <i>Eugene Giddens</i> | 305 |
| 26 | Hogwarts versus Svalbard: Cultures, Literacies and Game Adaptations of Children's Literature <i>Andrew Burn</i> | 314 |
| 27 | Hybrid Novels for Children and Young Adults <i>Eve Tandoi</i> | 329 |
| 28 | Cyberspace and Story: The Impact of Digital Media on Printed Children's Books <i>Victoria Flanagan</i> | 336 |
| | Coda: <i>Alice to the Lighthouse</i> Revisited <i>Juliet Dusinberre</i> | 342 |
| | Notes on Contributors | 355 |
| | Index | 360 |

INTRODUCTION

Where Have We Come From? Where Are We Heading?

Clémentine Beauvais and Maria Nikolajeva

IN THE BEGINNING was the child. The child was ignorant and helpless and needed instruction and protection. We are not using these words contemptuously or ironically. As will be explored in the chapter on evolutionary literary theory, human beings developed the way they did because they learned to tell stories in order to offer instruction to their young, first orally, then in writing and eventually also in print.

In the second beginning were the child and the book. The adult, who had written the book and produced the child, brought them together in a way that seemed appropriate. The adult studied the child reading the book, and studied the book read by the child. Both the child and the book were of course solidly material; yet neither one nor the other could be said to be *just* that. Their encounters, like many other human endeavours, contributed to blurring the boundaries between the natural and the cultural (see, for instance, Hilton et al. 1997; Arizpe and Styles 2006; Immel and Witmore 2009; Grenby 2011); the child in and through children's literature always existed, in David Rudd's elegant formulation, 'between the constructed and the constructive' (2005: 23).

Those constructed and constructive aspects of the child – especially in and through children's books – have been often studied separately in the (still relatively recent) history of children's literature research. Early on came the psychologist, who announced that the child had a mind, an unknowable and mysterious interior space peopled with desires and fantasies (Bettelheim 1976). The child became a vessel of anxiety and trauma, which the book attempted, mostly unsuccessfully, to reflect, attend to and solve. Symmetrically, children's literature research paid attention to the enigmatic unconscious of adult authors who wrote the book, of child characters featured in the book and of young readers engaging with the book. The children's book, famously, became defined as a product of authors' frustrated imagination and nostalgia (Rose 1984), reflecting the child's interiority filtered through the adult author's distorted vision. The reader's psychological development was, at the best, accelerated by engagement with the book, at the worst, slowed down and impeded (see, for instance, Tucker 1981; Rustin and Rustin 1987). Today's psychoanalytical approaches find inspiration in Sigmund Freud (Kidd 2011) as well as Jacques Lacan (Coats 2004; Rudd 2013), connecting psychoanalysis to the representation of childhood in children's fiction.

Other approaches – formalist, semiotic, new criticism, narratological – focused on the inner structures of children's texts (Shavit 1986; Hunt 1991; Wall 1991; Hourihan

1997, Nikolajeva 2002; Cadden 2011). Taking their cue from William K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley (1946) that there was no such thing as authorial intention, from Roland Barthes (1967) that the author was dead, and from Wolfgang Iser (1974) that readers were implied, those scholars did not explicitly deny the *constructive* aspects of the child, but they simply declared them to be as ‘unknowable’, and perhaps ‘undesirable’, as the adult author’s intention. The children’s book gained, undeniably, some nobility in the endeavour: it became a text worth exploring on its own, like those books for grown-ups, *Ulysses*, *To the Lighthouse*, which Juliet Dusinberre (1987) claimed children’s literature had perhaps even inspired.

Definitional work was central to the early major works on children’s literature, which inevitably struggled with the most crucial question in the field: how is children’s literature different from all other kinds of literature? *Is it different?* How can we study it? In *Language and Ideology in Children’s Fiction* (1992), John Stephens claimed that children’s literature research lacked a discourse of its own and therefore borrowed extensively from other areas. One can question this statement and view it in a negative light, but at least at that time Stephens was right on one point. As a new discipline, children’s literature was a dynamic area and indeed borrowed like a thieving magpie from general literary criticism as well as from other adjacent fields, such as gender studies, culture studies, childhood studies – just as all these fields have borrowed from each other. Perry Nodelman’s influential articles ‘Children’s literature as women’s writing’ (1988) and ‘The other: orientalism, colonialism, and children’s literature’ (1992) are good examples of how children’s literature employed theoretical frameworks from feminist and postcolonial literary studies, respectively.

Yet children’s literature also developed its own discourse, grappling with the issues of what children literature is and what it does, issues specific to this kind of literature, in ways similar to scholars of women’s literature or working-class literature, who try to understand why this particular kind of literature came to be and what it has done to its authors, characters, readers and markets.

Times have changed for the better – and the more overwhelming. In the early days, new approaches were emerging in journals and at the ever increasing number of conferences; yet there remained a sense of being familiar with the field. Today children’s literature research has reached the dilemma of Shakespeare studies: nobody can even remotely have a full overview of the field; we specialise in a theory, a genre, a theme, a historical period, or a particular author. We publish in different journals and with different publishers, we go to different conferences. Even though it may occasionally feel frustrating, it is certainly welcome, because it means that the field is diverse, dynamic and expanding, spreading tentacles into other disciplines, borrowing from other disciplines, interacting with other disciplines and generating new disciplines as it goes. It means that children’s literature discourse has moved far beyond applied criticism.

Part of that move involved increased engagement with theory. Ever receptive to other fields, children’s literature research undertook a constructivist turn of some magnitude in the 1990s, influenced by – but also adapting – cultural theory. The child and the book, in that pre-millennium era, became further dematerialised, as critics stitched the literary and the social by highlighting children’s literature’s role in perpetuating ideological and cultural norms, including about children themselves (Lesnik-Oberstein 1994; McCallum 1999). The book became seen primarily as a field for ideological

battles (Hollindale 1988; Stephens 1992; Zornado 2001), and the child as the eye-witness, if not the victim, of those battles. The 2000s witnessed a sharp increase in work on gender (Lehr 2000; Stephens 2002; Flanagan 2007, Mallan 2008, Clasen and Hassel 2017), race (Bradford 2007; Bernstein 2011; Grzegorzczak 2015), sexual orientation (Abate and Kidd 2011; Pugh 2011), ethics (Sainsbury 2013; Mills 2016), power hierarchies (Trites 2000; Nodelman 2008; Nikolajeva 2010; Beauvais 2015), and radical politics and aesthetics (Mickenberg 2006; Reynolds 2007; Mickenberg and Nel 2008; Abate 2010).

Children's Literature Research in the Age of the Material Turn

Gender, race, class; evolutionary historians call these structures *imagined orders* (Harari 2011: 102–18), as opposed to natural orders, dictated by biology. But is that dichotomy even plausible? No need to set up strawmen in this quick history of children's literature research: no dye-in-the-wool constructivists ever denied that the child and the book were constructs, *and also* material entities. Children, undeniably, were born and grew up; scientific attention to their cognitive processes progressed rapidly, showing the intricate entanglement of external stimuli and inborn predispositions in the development of their brains. What is constructed, and what is constructive, in the imagery – a map, a picture, doubtlessly a representation – of the growing hemispheres of a child's brain? Boundaries had always been blurred. Children made reading choices; however influenced by others, they were also *de facto* their own. Who could claim to detangle the forces of social pressure from those of individual intentionalities in such decisions? It is hard, today, to ignore the physicality of our lives, which beckons for new ways of assessing literature targeting young people, as well as new ways of reassessing texts that have been discussed from other theoretical angles. Recent achievements in medicine and technology pose questions about what it means to be human, which cross-breed with philosophy, ethics, psychology. As to the children's text, it had never, of course, been only a text. From pocketbooks and penny dreadfuls to oversized school editions of picturebooks, its formats vary, and matter to their reading. The children's books industry, with its circuits, its economics, its strategies, orchestrates the distribution of books. Flesh-and-blood children's authors talk, tweet, express opinions outside their books; they gain recognition, go on school visits, receive royalties and awards. Paratext, peritext, epitext; the modification of those thresholds (Genette 1997) had always been acknowledged as a modification of the text, and the advent of the digital text required rethinking them in depth.

That intractable materiality of both child and book – that false dichotomy between the social and the natural, the concrete and the conceptual – was never absent from children's literature research. But recently, new trends in children's literature scholarship, doubtlessly as a reaction to constructivism, have given rise – by that swing of the pendulum so common in humanities research – to what may be called a material turn in children's literature. The material turn is a vast paradigm shift, encompassing areas such as ecocriticism (Dobrin and Kidd 2004; Harding et al. 2009; Curry 2013), space and place (Cutter-Mackenzie et al. 2011; Carroll 2012; Cecire et al. 2015), posthumanism (Applebaum 2010; Waller 2011; Flanagan 2014; Jaques 2015, Ratelle 2015), disability studies (Keith 2001; Avelin 2009, Dunn 2015) and cognitive poetics (Stephens 2011; Kümmerling-Meibauer 2012; Crago 2014; Nikolajeva 2014;

Trites 2014; Oziewicz 2015; see also Nikolajeva 2016 for a further overview). What those approaches have in common is a stretched cross-disciplinarity, extending across the humanities, the social sciences, and the so-called hard sciences. They assert the illegitimacy, even the intellectual dishonesty, of keeping in separate academic pockets such diverse objects of study as the child's brain, 'childhood', the history of the children's book, and the adult author.

General literary studies had their own material turn in the 1990s and, as usual with some lag, it reached children's literature scholarship at the beginning of the new millennium. But children's literature is synchronous with its neighbour, childhood studies, inhabited by the same kind of concerns. Strongly inspired by the works of Bruno Latour (1993, 2004), prominent childhood studies scholars, such as Alan Prout (2004, 2011), have been stressing the particular receptivity of *the child* as object (and subject) of study to new materialist approaches. The child is, to use Latour's words, a perfect monster, or hybrid: the kind of creature that exists across the boundaries that we have been trained by modernity to see as inflexible: nature/culture, reason/spirituality, social/individual. With new materialism, methodologies become connective, a matter of drawing links; writing becomes exploratory, thickly descriptive. Against explanation, scholars in the field of children's literature and childhood studies are identifying new actors in the narratives of childhood. In their view, a TV, a bowl of cereal full of artificial colourings, *Sesame Street* and a seven-year-old child with eyeglasses munching on a sofa near a sleeping cat is an *assemblage* of inexhaustible richness. Such everyday situations, in reality as in books, shatter boundaries between the human, the animal, the technological, the medical; between natural needs and artificial provision, between ethics and impulses.

This trend, ideally, should reflect the complexity, plurality and ambiguity of childhood, in and out of its representation in fiction produced and marketed for young audiences. Whether it always achieves that aim is an important question; whether we may be at risk of losing sight of the – still undeniably – constructed aspects of childhood and literature is another crucial one. Constructivism comes with its own ethical demands, out of which we cannot wriggle; anyone who dares to *explain*, to talk of structures, of constructions, of ideology, is already a committed scholar. We cannot act as if the political charge of cultural theory is somehow quaint, or has had its time. In the rise of the material turn, therefore, we do not see an ultimate progress, bound to absorb all previous perspectives; rather, it is a different kind of commitment. New materialist approaches are committed to an exploration of the world in all its hidden connections, its fluidity; committed to telling the stories of all actors in the world, including those previously robbed of agential role in great human narratives: an electronic chip, an ant, a virus, a child.

Presentation of the Volume

Because of the prominence of new materialist approaches in children's literature today, that trend is to a high extent reflected in the present volume, elbowing new developments of other theoretical and critical viewpoints. When putting together a Companion, it is tempting to wish for a comprehensive overview of current research, but no children's literature scholar today has a full command on what is going on; no one can read all the new books and articles in the rapidly mushrooming journals,

no one can attend more than a fraction of the conferences. Any overview of current research is inevitably selective (see, for instance, Reynolds 2011; Pinsent 2016), as is a thematic essay collection (such as Mallan and Bradford 2011; Butler and Reynolds 2015). So is the rationale for this volume.

We already have at our disposal excellent overviews of the field (Grenby and Immel 2009; Rudd 2010; Wolf and Coats 2010; Mickenberg and Vallone 2011; Nel and Paul 2011; not to forget the faithful *Understanding Children's Literature*, Hunt 2005). This Companion makes no claims to providing an exhaustive review of research in the field so far; instead, it seeks to ask 'What comes next?' – that is, to capture the most recent trends and phenomena in children's and young adult literature itself as well as international research; to anticipate the possible new avenues that research can take. It is gratifying not to include a chapter titled 'Defining children's literature', even though the debate, started by Perry Nodelman more than thirty years ago (Nodelman 1980) and developed by later critics (Lesnik-Oberstein 1996) is still going on (Jones 2006; Nodelman 2008; Gubar 2011; Beauvais 2015). We believe that even though a consensus on this can never be achieved, the target audience of this volume does not need a precise definition. Today's children's literature research community tends to be inclusive in its definition both of the child and of literature. The rise of crossover books in the past twenty years, initiated by the *Harry Potter* series, has contributed to this attitude (Beckett 2009, 2012; Falconer 2009). The arrival of digital texts has breached the limitation of children's literature to printed texts. The avalanche of fan fiction demands new approaches to authorship and new consideration of the power hierarchies between adults and children (Jamison 2013).

The areas and topics have been chosen to correspond to the most up-to-date research in the field, which is presented using widely-known texts and avoiding parochial or too-specific topics. The emphasis is on the approaches, themes and methodologies. The book's direction is future-oriented; its ambition is to present emerging practices and interests in the field as well as emerging publishing trends.

The *Companion* consists of three parts: the first centred around contemporary trends in children's literature research (theories, perspectives and methodologies); a second part on contemporary trends in children's literature publishing (new forms and media and evolutions of older ones); and finally, an 'unmapped territories' section in which a selection of scholars present their findings and hypotheses on emerging and still under-studied areas of research. Our wish has been to include essays reflecting new and recent directions of enquiry, as well as a re-conceptualisation of more conventional areas.

We have deliberately excluded a number of self-evident topics, both in terms of theoretical approaches (feminist theory and children's literature, psychoanalysis and children's literature) and genres and kinds (fantasy, young adult fiction, dystopia, picturebooks). Firstly, we believe that these topics have been extensively treated in existing publications. Secondly, we believe that some of these topics can be fruitfully discussed within broader theoretical categories or through slightly different approaches. For instance, Karen Coats's chapter on diversity, although focused on race, is relevant, too, for feminist, queer, postcolonial and disability approaches. Fantasy features in Jane Carroll's chapter on space and place, in Zoe Jaques's chapter on animal studies, and in Andrew Burn's chapter on videogames; dystopia is treated in Victoria Flanagan's chapter on posthumanism; young adult fiction is central to Roberta Trites's

chapter on cognitive approaches to literature, Lydia Kokkola's on carnality and Erin Spring's on empirical work with young readers; and picturebooks are treated both theoretically and empirically, in Evelyn Arizpe's, Junko Yokota's and Sandie Mourão's contributions. In this way, the most important topics are covered, but not necessarily within conventional categories. In the final chapter, Juliet Dusinberre, one of the most eminent scholars in the field, the author of the influential *Alice to the Lighthouse: Children's Literature and Radical Experiments in Art* (1987), offers reflections on the state of the art in the past thirty years.

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Part I

Contemporary Directions in Children's Literature Scholarship

TEACHING THE CONFLICTS: DIVERSE RESPONSES TO DIVERSE CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Karen Coats

GARY SOTO NO longer writes children's books. In 2003, the Chicano author of some thirty books for children of various ages was commissioned by the American Girl company to write the book that would accompany their 2005 Girl of the Year doll. After consulting with the company, Soto crafted his story of Marisol, a contemporary Mexican American pre-teen girl. The story's main conflict centres on her parents' decision to leave Pilsen, a majority Hispanic neighbourhood in the Lower West Side of Chicago that Marisol loves, and move to the suburb of Des Plaines, Illinois. Her parents begin their campaign to win Marisol's support for their move by citing the lack of space for a garden to grow more flavourful tomatoes and chilies than those available in the stores, but they also acknowledge that they are concerned for her safety in an urban neighbourhood with busy traffic and no place to play. Marisol is not happy about the move, especially when she discovers that there is no dance studio in Des Plaines where she can practice *ballet folklórico*, but she eventually adapts to her new home and finds a way to keep dancing.

To Soto's great surprise and dismay, when the book and doll appeared, angry, threatening phone calls and letters began pouring in to both Mattel, the parent company of the American Girl franchise, and Soto's home. Chicano activists, city aldermen and even a United States congressman were incensed by what they saw as the implicit message that 'Pilsen was not good enough for Marisol the doll' (Soto 2015: 62). Readers who defend the book see in it a young girl's resilience and adaptability in the face of a parental decision that was hard for her, certainly a common enough theme in children's literature. Soto believed he had written a realistic, culturally relevant story that showcased a mother's regret – her 'sighing heart' as she argued that 'urban life was not for her' (62, 63). But the activists argued, and encouraged student protestors (most of whom admitted that they had not read the book) to argue, that Soto had misrepresented the culture of the neighbourhood. The teen protestors also seemed to object to the fact that Marisol has a non-Latino white friend, shouting 'Marisol don't mix with white people!' (65). The upshot of the protest is tragic for Chicano children's literature in particular, and multicultural children's literature generally, as Soto's response to the barrage of media outrage and angry phone calls has been to change the focus of his literary career: 'I have stopped writing children's literature. At my age, it's become too dangerous' (68).

So what happened here, and what can it tell us about the current priorities of diverse children's literature? Librarians, literary critics and reading advocates have for

decades voiced concerns about what Nancy Larrick famously dubbed ‘The all-white world of children’s books’ in her 1965 article of that title. Larrick looks at the lack of representation of black people (her term is *Negroes*) from various angles, beginning by arguing that omissions and stereotypes do irreparable harm to both black and white children. While she says that ‘there is no need to elaborate upon the damage . . . to the Negro child’s personality’ that is incurred through their exclusion from books that represent ‘the American way of life’, she does unintentionally invoke and ironise Kipling’s ‘white man’s burden’ in her elaboration of the damage such omissions and misrepresentations impose on white children:

Although his light skin makes him one of the world minorities, the white child learns from his books that he is the kingfish. There seems little chance of developing the humility so urgently needed for world cooperation, instead of world conflict, as long as our children are brought up on gentle doses of racism through their books. (Larrick 1965: 63)

Implicit in that statement is the belief that children’s identities and values are largely created by the social lessons they find in books, and that they absorb these lessons unconsciously, uncritically and based solely on a physical resemblance to the characters depicted. Under this assumption, then, it would follow that the images of children found in their books are largely responsible for real-world violence, and, properly amended, can thus effect a remedy. Ultimately and explicitly, though, Larrick presents the dearth of black representation as a missed opportunity for publishers. After citing statistics that demonstrate the economic and aesthetic viability of books that feature positive representations of black history as well as contemporary cooperation and integration, she quotes counter-arguments from publishing professionals and booksellers before rejecting their explanations by concluding:

Whether the Council [for Interracial Books for Children] gets many books into print or not, it can accomplish a great deal simply by reminding editors and publishers that what is good for the Ku Klux Klan is not necessarily good for America – or for the book business. White supremacy in children’s literature will be abolished when authors, editors, publishers, and booksellers decide that they need not submit to bigots. (85)

Flash forward, then, to the second decade of the twenty-first century: are today’s authors, editors, publishers and booksellers still submitting to bigots? Larrick’s survey of the three-year period between 1962 and 1964 revealed that only 6.7 per cent of the trade books published for children in the USA included one or more black characters. Her emphasis was solely on the inclusion of black characters rather than their importance to the plot, and she didn’t indicate the race or ethnicity of the authors in her study. The Cooperative Children’s Book Center’s (CCBC) annual statistics, collected since 1985, use a different metrics than the mere appearance of a character of colour, but still limited their original counts to those books where the authors and illustrators are black. However, beginning in 1994, the CCBC has broken out statistics according to various ethnicities within America, and indicated the numbers of books by and about people of colour and First/Native Nations. Still, their statistics show only incremental changes in the books received, which include mostly North American publications but also some imported and translated works; for instance, in 2014 the

number of books by and/or about people of colour and Native peoples showed an uptick of 10–14 per cent over the previous year. Interestingly, however, the US census of that same year reported that 50.2 per cent of children under five were of ethnic and/or racial ‘minorities’.

While no similar statistics are available from the UK or Australia, it is clear that the number of books written by and about people of colour and Native peoples does not begin to align with the number of young readers in Anglophone cultures who need to, as the saying goes, ‘see themselves in books’. As population demographics shift in light of global flows and lower birth rates for white people, and as people with non-heteronormative and non-neurotypical embodiments advocate for public recognition, calls for voices and images in children’s books that countermand stereotypical and demeaning ways of conceiving diverse cultures, genders and embodiments proliferate, and social media has created effective platforms for those calls to be widely disseminated. Despite the publicity garnered by Twitter campaigns such as #ownvoices and #WeNeedDiverseBooks, however, the children’s publishing industry and other avenues of media distribution have been slow to address the diversity gap, still rehearsing the argument, called out as a false narrative by Larrick fifty years ago and by Christopher Myers in 2014, that people are not voting with their wallets for more diverse representations. But if we take Gary Soto’s *Marisol* (2005) as just one example of the ways in which a flourishing publishing enterprise can come under attack even when it seeks to have a cultural insider write a story about a member of the group he is from, it becomes clear that the current climate in which diverse representations appear or don’t appear is more complicated than either market forces, the need for a greater headcount of diverse main characters, or even authors sharing the cultures of their characters can give account.

For the remainder of this chapter, I want to adopt a ‘teach the conflicts’ approach of asking questions and exploring the ideologies that inform what has become, finally some might say, a kairotic moment in the study of diversity in children’s literature, which concerns gender and ability as well as racial and ethnic representation. The Soto case makes some of these conflicts come to the surface, but there are certainly other points of contention that inform the production, distribution and reception of diverse literature for young readers. As Larrick pointed out in 1965, ‘It is not unusual for critics to disagree as to the effectiveness of the picture of the Negro [or any other identity or situation for that matter] in a book for children’ (65). What is read as a damaging stereotype to some is considered an essential element of realism or an effective means to a specific end to others; what I want to get at are some of the baseline differences that can inform such very different impressions. My approach will be necessarily interdisciplinary, traversing philosophy, developmental studies and literary theory. And while I will strive to be as objective as possible, I am aware that the pose of objective neutrality is considered by some a form of white privilege. I would claim it, however, as a scholarly and pedagogical necessity; my aim is not to add to the polemical discussions that already vie for attention and assent on social media. Instead I want to excavate and confront some of the ideological foundations that undergird and support the often contradictory and contentious responses to books from underrepresented identities, which include not only various racially and ethnically defined cultures, but also people who are not neurotypical or heteronormative. In addition, this method will enable readers to engage with the ideologies that inform the production of diverse literature in

various national contexts, even though my examples will be drawn from multicultural literature in the USA. In this endeavour, I want to explore the following sites where intellectual disagreement seems most polarised: why there is such a lack of diverse representation in the first place; what sociohistorical factors have ushered in and impinge upon the most recent push for diverse images; why, how and to what degree diverse images matter to the formation of individual identity; and how theoretical priorities, including developmental, aesthetic and sociological perspectives, inform critiques and definitions of quality in multicultural literature for young readers.

Why are There so Few Diverse Books for Today's Children?

There are multiple ways to approach this question beyond the paranoid one often cited on social media – that is, that institutional racism prevents quality work from diverse authors from seeing print (see, for instance, the comments section of Sutton 2015). I would not argue against this, despite calling it paranoid; the old adage that just because you're paranoid doesn't mean someone's not out to get you may well hold true here. However, the Soto case does complicate, if not call into question, any simple assent to this argument. After all, Soto certainly has all of the right credentials to have written the story of a contemporary Mexican American family. First, he is an accomplished writer, having won multiple awards for both his poetry and his children's books. While many of his awards, such as the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Film Excellence and the Children's Literature Association's Phoenix Award, focus on the aesthetic quality of his work, others are targeted specifically to his representation of Latino experience. He has been awarded the Hispanic Heritage Award for Literature, the Author-Illustrator Civil Rights Award from the National Education Association, and the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award. He is thus both a cultural insider and a well-respected, even beloved, chronicler of childhood and of the Mexican American experience, enough so that he didn't have to promote himself to the publisher. Rather than *shutting him out*, as the argument for institutional racism might assert, they *sought him out* to write what they knew was going to be a very large print run that would ensure profits for their bottom line. Diversity is thus seen as a profitable commodity, rather than a risk or a liability, for this company. Although Soto grew up in Fresno, California, rather than Chicago, he did his research on Marisol's particular contexts, and took pains to portray both the vibrancy of the Pilsen community and Marisol's and her mother's mixed feelings about leaving. He also drew from his own and countless others' experiences of serial migration in search of better lives and opportunities for themselves and their children. Such autobiographical background experience is what many promoters of diverse literature say is the best path to authenticity of representation. But it was precisely for this fidelity to his own experience that he drew outrage from those who took offence at Marisol's mother's assertion that her family would be better off if they moved elsewhere. Soto told a story that many children and their parents could relate to, but because the experience that he represented did not fit the narrative that politicians and activists wanted to advance for their insular Latino community, he was shouted down, publically and privately, and an important voice for an underrepresented group, *from* an underrepresented group, fell silent.

Charges of institutional racism against writers from outside the culture they are representing are certainly easier to make. In *A Fine Dessert: Four Centuries, Four Families, One Delicious Treat* (2015), for instance, Emily Jenkins traces the history of

a dish called blackberry fool. Because she depicts the situation of an enslaved mother and daughter making the dessert for a family and hiding in a closet to eat the leftovers, review sites and social media blew up with protests over the presentation of these characters obviously enjoying several moments during the process, claiming that such representation ignores the horrors of American slavery and plays into the despicable ‘happy slave’ trope, even though both the words and the pictures make it clear that it was unfair that they worked hard to make a dessert that they couldn’t share openly. Exacerbating the problem for many of the critics are the facts that both Jenkins and her illustrator, Sophie Blackall, are white and, while they performed substantial historical research, they did not enlist black readers to vet their work prior to publication. This highlights a controversial point in the production of diverse books – that is, who is allowed to tell what stories, and who should have the final say over whether the books are offensive or not. The hashtag #ownvoices explicitly calls for writers to draw from their own experience, and many critics accuse writers who write about characters outside their culture or identity of ‘cultural appropriation’ or misrepresentation. In a letter written in 1970 (and published in 1972), for instance, Julius Lester argues:

We no longer (and never did) need whites to interpret our lives or our culture. Whites can only give a white interpretation of blacks, which tells us a lot about whites, but nothing about blacks . . . Whites will never understand the black view of the world until they get it straight from blacks, respect it, and accept it. (1972: 29)

But against this, we have to acknowledge that getting the Mexican American view from a Mexican American did not save Gary Soto from angry critique, so perhaps the definite article is the problem: is there a monolithic view of the world shared by members of a particular culture that members both inside and outside that culture should get straight, respect and accept? In a case similar to Soto’s, *A Birthday Cake for George Washington* (2015), though written, illustrated and edited by people of colour, was deemed offensive because it emphasised the pride Hercules, a black chef enslaved by George Washington, took in making a cake for his master, and relegated the story of his escape and his daughter’s continuing enslavement to an Author’s Note at the end. In addition, both the author, Ramin Ganeshram, and the critics objected to the illustrations, which added an ‘unintended levity’ to the situation (Ganeshram 2016). Unlike what happened with Soto and Jenkins, whose publishers stood by their work, Ganeshram’s publishers bowed to the pressure of the critics and actually removed the book from circulation after it had been published. Publishers invest a lot of money in the books they bring to market, and such losses are bound to make them skittish, to say nothing of the fear that such high-profile cases induce in potential authors who understandably don’t want to be labelled racist. Ganeshram fears that ‘it’s unlikely that the industry will again censor itself post-publication . . . Instead, publishing will go back to safely ignoring stories that might require a delicate hand.’ Such a chilling outcome is surely antithetical to the goals of advocates for more diverse books for young readers created by members of the ethnic groups they represent, and yet public shaming through social media has become a prominent feature of the discourse surrounding diverse literature for children. When these outcries from individuals who present their opinions as representative of their entire identity group are effective in silencing

storytellers or limiting the types of stories they are allowed to tell, we may be running the risk of eliminating diversity from diverse literature.

In Ganeshram's discussion of the controversy, she also points out what may be one of the most salient, though largely unrecognised, ideological sticking points in the critical reception of diverse books when she says that books like hers are 'about . . . singular moments in the lives of enslaved characters rather than being explorations of slavery in America'. One way of thinking about this as a more general problem for diverse literature is to say that the horrors of slavery have become what is known in cognitive theory as a 'script' (Schank and Abelson 1977) for black representation, so when books like *A Birthday Cake for George Washington* or *A Fine Dessert* tell stories that violate or step outside that script, they cause cognitive dissonance. Readers have to expand their scripts to accommodate the idea that even within the horrific condition of being enslaved, men, women and children were able to find moments of tenderness and joy, and take pride in a difficult job well done even though it was performed under duress. What many critics seem to fear, however, is that readers will instead replace the horror script with one that is easier to bear. And indeed, Ganeshram does fear this, pointing out that 'Horribly, the benign rewriting of slavery continues in history books . . . Monstrously, some still refuse to admit the long-term ill effects of enslavement on an entire race of Americans.' On the other hand, however, it is worth considering that the sharing of singular moments of joy and pride has the effect of individuating enslaved persons and emphasising their humanity instead of their positionality, and thus may result in throwing their unjust treatment into sharper relief than if they were simply presented as undifferentiated members of 'an entire race of Americans'.

Claudia Tate (1998) makes a similar point when she discusses the critical reception of five neglected adult novels that tell stories about the desires of individual black people rather than centring their discourse on the more general problems of being black in America. Tate argues that these books, by Emma Kelley, W. E. B. DuBois, Nella Larsen, Zora Neale Hurston and Richard Wright, violate the expected narrative of the collective representation of black people, treating their characters as distinct individuals focused on concerns other than those of a resistant social group within an oppressive society. As such, the white critics of the time (that is, the early to mid-twentieth century) didn't know what to make of them, so they dismissed them as inferior outliers in otherwise solid and celebrated oeuvres. In a striking turn of events, many of today's most vocal non-white and Native critics of children's books, in their reasonable desire to wrest control from the dominant culture over how members of their groups are represented, work out of a sense of corporate cultural identity that actually produces similar dismissals of stories that don't fit their own prescriptive narratives. Of Kiowa writer and film-maker Thomas M. Yeahpau's complex, hard-hitting, satirical young adult book, *X-Indian Chronicles: The Book of Mausepe* (2006), which doesn't shy away from the drug use, abuse and intra-racial betrayal of contemporary Native teens, for instance, well-known blogger and activist Debbie Reese says, 'I have to read that one again. It set me back on my heels when I read it the year it came out' (2013) – a remarkably ambiguous comment from someone who normally knows exactly and immediately what she thinks about the portrayals of Indians in youth literature. Reese is outspoken in her critiques of books that contain even the subtlest appropriation of or demeaning or out-of-context reference to Indigenous cultures, and she is equally

ready to promote books by Native and non-Native writers that strike her as respectful and well-researched, yet Yeahpau's work apparently left her at a loss, perhaps because his storytelling style or the representations he created induced cognitive dissonance in her – that is, they do not fit tidily into her script of how contemporary Indians should be presented. In broad terms, then, we might conclude that while critics may desire to revise the negative scripts that have contributed to their culture's oppression, they may unwittingly 'replace . . . one kind of tyranny with another' (Appiah 1994: 163) by not allowing the insight that stories are necessarily different from scripts. Individual stories emerge when scripts are violated, and those violations make the larger cultural scripts visible as confining straitjackets placed on individual identity.

What are the Sociohistorical Causes and Stakes of Multiculturalism?

An emphasis on individual identity is, however, often considered a myth of white Western ideology, and a damaging one at that, by those whose sense of self depends on specific cultural affiliations or other forms of collective identities that, as Anthony Appiah notes, 'come with notions of how a proper person of that kind behaves; it is not that there is *one* way that gays or blacks should behave, but that there are gay and black modes of behavior' (159). This way of thinking seems at odds with the autonomy required to construct an individualised identity. Certainly, the valuation of individual identity over and against identity prescribed by social roles has a history that is deeply implicated in white Western culture. Philosopher Charles Taylor (1992) attributes this shift in the location of identity in part in the emergence in the eighteenth century of a new concept of morality, thematised but not necessarily originated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Taylor argues that Rousseau articulated a belief that was already emerging in culture that children are born with a deep connection to nature, including their own inner nature. This 'sentiment de l'existence' (Rousseau 1959: 1047) is the source of a moral authenticity that is progressively lost through our exposure to others, which induces a will to variously compete, dominate, compromise and conform in social interactions. Although Taylor does not note the connection, this relocation of moral authority from external to internal sources was surely instrumental in the revolutions that replaced monarchies with more democratic political and social structures.

Of course, the hierarchical sensibilities of a monarchy do not simply disappear in a democratic society. Indeed, one of the persistent problems that continue to plague literary representation is the differential value of social images, as Larrick laments; the social and economic elites get to establish, at least at first, the aesthetic values of a culture. But the promise of equal treatment under the law, ongoing social revolutions and the evolution of democratic sensibilities have led to what Taylor calls a 'politics of recognition' (1992: 25). Recognition matters on an individual level precisely because our sense of self does not proceed from some inward quality of authenticity, but is instead constructed in dialogue with others. This is why, in modern culture, children need to 'see themselves in books'; what they are looking for are affirmations of their own ways of being, images that connect up with signifiers that have been assigned to them by significant others and that they have taken up as

self-definitional. They are also looking to establish boundaries by disidentifying with images they consider as other, that is, not themselves. As they grow older and expand their social interactions, recognition becomes important on a political level as well, and this is largely in reaction to the images they have found to identify and disidentify with. For instance, the lack of representation or multiple negative representations of East Asian characters create scripts that assault the dignity promised to an East Asian American, Australian, or British teen by their democratic society. They therefore seek out or create positive stories of East Asian identity that set themselves against these scripts. Without recognition, however, their new scripts don't have the force they need to transcend the notion that being East Asian somehow puts them essentially at odds with the democratic promise of equal dignity and treatment under the law. They must seek out others who share their identity so that together they can develop a platform for recognition not as individuals, but as a group with a shared purpose to insist that they be given the recognition for this particular aspect of their identity from the dominant culture. Such is the problem that Gene Luen Yang allegorises in *American Born Chinese* (2006). Both the Monkey King and Jin suffer from a lack of recognition from the dominant culture that they wish to be a part of. Yang concludes in a somewhat remarkable way (for mainstream young adult literature, that is) that the only recognition that matters comes from Tze-Yo-Tzuh (the creator) rather than the dominant culture, a move which nonetheless affirms Jin's identity as Chinese and allows him to embrace it and apologise for not recognising Wei-Chen as the good friend he was.

But Appiah worries that the politics of group recognition puts the autonomy of future individuals at risk. He shares this concern with Jürgen Habermas (1994), who argues that when constitutional democracies go beyond the limits of individual rights such as free association and non-discrimination to treating cultures as if they were endangered species that must be protected, they deprive individual members of those cultures the right to revise or even reject their cultural identities. Appiah agrees, arguing that 'the ethical principles of equal dignity that underlie liberal thinking seem to militate against allowing . . . a whole generation of one group . . . to impose a form of life on the next generation' (1994: 157–8). Moreover, Appiah continues,

The politics of recognition requires that one's skin color, one's sexual body, should be acknowledged politically in ways that make it hard for those who want to treat their skin and their sexual body as personal dimensions of the self. And personal means not secret, but not too tightly scripted. (163)

While the freedom to 'organize my life around my "race" or my sexuality' (163) is what emerges out of a promise of equal treatment, the demand to do so is too often the unintended consequence. Appiah 'would like other options' (163). The ideological questions this opens up might be: does this political argument transfer to an argument about the politics of diverse representation in children's literature? Does the reification by critics of diverse literature of a standard narrative for cultural or gender identity run the risk of depriving young readers of the opportunity to revise or reject those narratives for themselves? And does it insist that children organise their identities and forms of life around their race or their sexuality as a kind of new essentialism? Or does a politics of recognition truly open up new avenues for positive identity construction? And if this constitutes a false binary, what might 'other options' look like?

The Importance of Images on Identity Formation

The concern for more representation of people who identify as other than white, Anglo, middle class, able-bodied and heteronormative proceeds from two main principles: first, that the portrait which dominates children's literature is not now nor ever has been representative of the embodiments and social realities most children actually experience, and second, as we have just discussed, that social recognition, both positive and negative, is a crucial factor in identity formation in contemporary culture. White, European cultures became ideologically dominant through force rather than through an accurate representation of the ways in which the majority of people live their lives – that is, they colonised, enslaved and/or killed the people whose lands and resources they wanted to claim as their own, in the process repressing and/or appropriating their arts, religions and social practices. This history is well known. The question for children's literature and culture critics is how the ideological sense of entitlement that suborned the use of force in this way was engendered; that is, are people predisposed to a rage for social dominance, and, if they are, is there anything we can do to change that? If, on the other hand, behaviours are learned and identities constructed according to cultural scripts, to what degree can the replacement of negative scripts with positive ones effect individual and social change?

Social learning theorists, including those who believe in the implicit goodness of children as well as those who subscribe to the *tabula rasa* model, would argue that a sense of entitlement is a learned behaviour; in order to summon up the will to go forth, colonise and kill other human beings, children must be brought up in an environment that convinces them of their own superiority, and of the other's inferiority. This is in fact what haunts Larrick's assumption of a reparative potential in children's literature that nevertheless leaves white social dominance intact; she implies (and I am sure this was not her intention) that if we can eliminate these portraits of implicit and explicit white superiority and entitlement from children's books, white children, by learning humility, will lead the way in securing the world's cooperation just as they have, up to this point, led the way in propagating conflict and asserting imperial dominance.

The danger imagined for non-white children in a social learning model is that, through either a lack of representation or a restrictive or degrading image in mainstream children's literature, children who don't identify with the dominant culture have internalised a sense of their own inferiority such that even if legally or socially sanctioned obstacles are removed, they still won't be able to access the benefits an equal and just society might make available to them. Damaged self-esteem comes into view as equally as harmful as material exploitation, social and economic inequality, and other forms of systemic injustice, with the added burden that these things are often intersectional. Sherman Alexie has his character, Arnold Spirit, Jr., explain it this way:

It sucks to be poor, and it sucks to feel that you somehow *deserve* to be poor. You start believing that you're poor because you're stupid and ugly. And then you start believing that you're stupid and ugly because you're Indian. And because you're Indian you start believing you're destined to be poor. It's an ugly circle and *there's nothing you can do about it.* (2007: 13)

Interestingly, Arnold doesn't blame books. In fact, he cites books as his mother's and his sister's escape from an unsatisfactory lifeworld – a world where intergenerational

poverty has deprived his parents and grandparents, 'all the way back to the very first poor people' (11) of the opportunities to follow their dreams. More interestingly, Arnold *does* break out of the ugly circle that starts with poverty but includes other aspects of his internalised self-image such as physical unattractiveness and his devalued cultural heritage. His path toward internalising a positive, more capacious view of his own identity is instructive in a general sense. Junior begins the book with what social psychologists call an ingroup/outgroup bias. In the beginning of his story, he sees the members of his ingroup as distinct and diverse individuals, some good, some bad, but most complicated mixtures of admirable and less than admirable traits. On the other hand, he pictures white people as a homogenous outgroup of caricatured privilege. This individuation of ingroup members and lumping together of outgroup members is a common feature of the bias, even when, as Arnold does, you see the outgroup as more appealing than the ingroup. By widening his view of the world through individual relationships with people outside his culture, he transforms them from imaginary exemplars of the mythical source of all hope to Gordy, Penelope, Roger and Coach, all individuals with flaws and virtues. In doing so, he individuates himself as well by listing all of the many traits that connect him to others by personal affinity rather than by culture. Still, his identity is not completely satisfactory until he has been recognised by his best friend, Rowdy, as a nomadic Indian.

Recent investigations into the way children think indicate that the kind of bias Arnold illustrates is an implicit trait of human beings, rather than a result of social learning. Infant studies have made it clear that babies as young as three months old have started to develop ingroup/outgroup bias, which reveals itself not only as a favouritism expressed for people who are perceived to be like them, but also as a greater ability to differentiate the members of one's ingroup as individuals (Hamlin, Wynn and Bloom 2010; Kubota and Ito 2016). These findings have been cited as evidence of the early onset of racial bias because most researchers base their experiments on visual markers of race in terms of facial recognition and preference (see, for instance, Kelly et al. 2005). However, studies undertaken at the Infant Cognition Center at Yale University locate bias differently. Their work reveals that babies as young as five months old show a preference for those who are perceived as helpful over those perceived as obstructive (Hamlin and Wynn 2011). Eighty per cent of infant respondents prefer a puppet that helps another puppet open a box to get a toy over a puppet who slams the box shut as the toy-seeking puppet tries to open it. This indicates a nascent understanding of goal setting, cause and effect, and benevolence. Moreover, though, once slightly older babies have established a relationship of similarity or dissimilarity between themselves and another, they prefer that help be given to those who are like them, and hindrance or punishment be meted out to those who differ (Hamlin et al. 2013). Interestingly, the similarities and differences which matter to the babies are based on culturally neutral preferences rather than the categories that adults insist are salient such as gender and race or ethnicity; in these studies, the researchers established connections between the babies and the puppets through a shared preference for either graham crackers or oat rings. These studies indicate a capacity to assess similarity and dissimilarity from the self based on traits other than physical markers, as well as an early sense of justice based on how a social other is perceived in relation to the self.

This might sound like pretty bad news for the social learning theorist, but further research shows that such bias is not insurmountable. In a study with four- to six-year-old

Chinese children who rarely if ever saw African faces, researchers first identified racial bias by using racially ambiguous faces they created by combining traits from Chinese and African faces, and asking children to indicate which race they were (Xiao et al. 2015). In accordance with ingroup/outgroup bias, the children categorised the happy faces as Chinese, and the angry ones as African. The children were then trained to recognise individual African faces by attaching them to names. Once they had learned to individuate African faces through naming, their racial bias regarding who was happy and who was angry was significantly reduced. On the other hand, children trained to individuate Chinese faces did not show a similar change in their racial bias. The researchers conclude that it may be possible to mitigate implicit racial bias by teaching children to individuate members of other races.

These infant and older child studies are relevant to researchers in multicultural children's literature in multiple ways. First, they indicate that the development of ingroup and outgroup biases are not learned primarily through images in books, nor are they necessarily mitigated through the presentation of more diverse images alone. Second, they indicate that racial bias can be reduced through the use of words attached to images in such a way that the words individuate the images. If one of the problems of ingroup/outgroup bias is an inability to see members of an outgroup as diverse individuals within that group, then telling more stories where characters stand out from scripted expectations, and telling stories where characters have their own scripts explicitly challenged, would contribute to a lessening of bias. What this might mean for literary critics who encounter such books, however, is that any strategy that amounts to holding the line on collective cultural identities – that is, insisting that modes of behaviour or appearance are right or wrong, sanctioned or offensive, with respect to some basic script of cultural or even historical representation – is exactly the wrong one if the goal is to reverse racial bias. In order to intervene in ingroup/outgroup bias, it may be more effective to have children learn to individuate images in such a way as to de-emphasise affiliative identities and instead to see characters as individual people with names and idiosyncratic traits and personal histories rather than as representatives of a particular group. If, on the other hand, the goal is the preservation of a distinctive collective identity, the survival of the values and practices of a particular way of conceiving a cultural heritage, then critics must be willing to accept some degree of recalcitrance with respect to ingroup/outgroup bias. The push to preserve and protect such a heritage as a key emotional and psychological resource for resisting the negative scripts imposed by a dominant culture may indeed necessitate what Jean-Paul Sartre called 'antiracist racism' (1965: 18), but he saw such a move as a temporary stage towards the development of a society without racial distinctions. However, if the goal is to preserve the autonomy of a culture and ensure its continuance through future generations, then the cost may well be the equal preservation of bias.

Interestingly, these two methods of approach take us back in time to the debates that surfaced over Ezra Jack Keats' *The Snowy Day* (1962). M. Tyler Sasser (2014) explores the differing receptions of this book as exemplary of the conflicting goals of the early 1960s concerning the direction of black identity politics and recognition. For some critics, Tyler notes, including Langston Hughes, Charlemae Hill Rollins, and the members of the American Library Association's Caldecott Award Committee, *The Snowy Day* was a charming story of an innocent child doing an ordinary thing, and

thus fit their goals for the natural integration of black children into children's books. For those who championed the Black Arts Movement, however, which set out to define a black aesthetic that was not simply different from but antagonistic towards white ideologies, the fact that Keats was white and his protagonist, Peter, was 'unextraordinarily black' (Martin xviii; quoted in Sasser 2014: 365) was problematic primarily because the 'whole social, political and cultural significance of being black is left out' (Dixon 123; quoted in Sasser 2014: 366). These two ways of seeing, one integrationist, one separatist, contextualise two very different goals with respect to the creation of identity, and thus lead to very different modes of critical response.

In both extremes of response, however, what first caught the eye of readers was the fact that Peter was brown. And indeed, this is where many readers and critics focus their attention in terms of diversity in children's literature; that is, as I've said twice before in this essay but with a new emphasis here, there is general agreement that 'children need to *see* themselves in books'. This privileging of vision emerges out of the strong link between image and identity formation, either as an intuition or an actual theoretical commitment to Jacques Lacan's formulation of the mirror stage, wherein a child recognises themselves through a specular image that they idealise. In a different economy of value, that is one not dominated by the literary or specular image, one might imagine the lack of representation to constitute a kind of social freedom, perhaps the kind of freedom Appiah desires to organise his life on his own terms. But that is not the economy in which we live; instead, we are captivated by the visual images in our highly mediated culture, and held in thrall to the value assigned them by social recognition.

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that, in the service of constructing an individualised identity, we are not wholly determined by the specular or cultural images put before us. The sense of fragmentation that the child *feels* in front of the totalising image they *see* in actual and cultural mirrors can open up a psychic mechanism for identifying with parts rather than wholes, as the infant studies prove. This is where the idiosyncrasies of desire enter into economies of value. That is to say, readers may isolate and identify with individual traits that have little or nothing to do with visual resemblances, and they may, through the use of innovative language and nonsense, revise scripts or even whole language systems that seek to assert an authority they wish to throw off.

It is with such understanding that we can approach a book like *Skippyjon Jones* (Schachner 2003), which children adore, and which critics have called out as racist and extremely offensive. The objections have to do with the fact that Skippyjon plays into stereotypes made popular by cartoons and ads; using a fake Spanish dialect, he produces tongue-pleasing nonsense words that end in -ito as he imagines himself as a Mexican Chihuahua hero, saving his multicoloured Chihuahua companions from an evil bumblebee that turns out, when the fantasy is all over, to be a piñata full of candy beans. This enjoyment of Skippyjon's linguistic fantasy play, according to online reviewer Beverly Slapin (2013), 'prepare[s] young children to accept immigrant-bashing, stop-and-frisk searches, the forced breakup of Mexican families, the impoverishment of farmworkers, and the racist campaign against the Mexican American students in Arizona'. In Slapin's opinion, Skippyjon holds a fun house mirror up to an entire culture that distorts to the point of extensive material

damage. But it might be said that she is doing to Skippyjon the same thing his mother is doing when she insists that he must be a Siamese cat, and ‘not a bird, not a mouse or a grouse’ (Schachner 2003: n.p.) or any of the other critters of his imagination. He is punished because he refuses to limit himself to what his mother and his embodiment insist that he is, rather than the hero he sees and identifies with when he looks in the mirror.

By analogy, then, must those who would object to his taking on an embodiment other than the one he was born with also object to Jazz Jennings, who dared to exchange her birth sex for what she felt was her true gender (Herthal and Jennings 2014)? Is there something akin to ‘cultural appropriation’ and stereotyping in transgender identity? And what of Skippyjon’s language play? Is the Spanish language so inviolate that a child cannot take joy in manipulating it in ways analogous to Dr. Seuss’s *On Beyond Zebra* (1955)? Should English speakers be similarly outraged by the nonsense words created by poets like Jonarno Lawson and Lewis Carroll to delight the ears and tongues of children and loosen the authority of linguistic determinism? Slapin gives her approval to the ‘gifted’ Chicano poet, José Antonio Burciaga, for creating poems in inventive street language that blends Spanish and English, but disallows the kind of free play that delights by its sound and, frankly, its transgression of adult norms of correct language use, rather than its sense or propriety. If identity is created through language and image, then language play and image creation are intimately linked. Might it be argued then that insisting on fidelity to cultural norms or embodiment is the imposition of an essentialism that deprives children of agency, enslaving them instead to grand narratives of fixed identities that progressives and, indeed, multiculturalists have fought hard to dismantle?

Reading as a Literary Critic

A similar problem has arisen with e. e. Charlton-Trujillo’s verse novel, *When We Was Fierce*. This contemporary story of a group of black male friends caught in a nightmare of gang violence participates in the same ethos and, indeed, features some of the very same problems of S. E. Hinton’s *The Outsiders* (1967), but has been criticised for stereotyping black characters and for not conforming to the standards of African American Vernacular English. Like critics of *Skippyjon Jones*, founder of the Minorities in Publishing podcast, Jennifer Baker, and blogger Edith Campbell accuse Charlton-Trujillo of mocking black speech (Flood 2016). From an aesthetic point of view, however, I would argue that Charlton-Trujillo does for African American Vernacular English what the beat poets did for poetry in Standard English, that is, liberated it from conventions in order to de-familiarise the scripts that had too narrowly defined the social and aesthetic identities of a generation committed to reimagining the future. The text is not, as Baker avers, hard to read, but it does require that readers approach it as poetry rather than prose, and it works best orally, so that readers can hear the phrasing, the pauses, and the musicality of the voice. Throughout this chapter, I have surfaced what I see as many of the ideologies underlying the critiques of multicultural literature from political and sociological perspectives, but there is another way of reading that doesn’t demand the kinds

of tight reproductions of a particular critic's view of what reality is or should be like for today's children. Charlton-Trujillo's book can be read as work of literature that challenges readers with an innovative poetic form that conveys a powerful message that allows young people to revise the standard script and write their own stories, even inventing their own vernacular if they need to. At the time of this writing, however, the publishers have postponed publication as a result of the vitriolic responses to the book on social media. Apparently, the need for more diverse books is not as strong as the need by some to control the narratives of cultural identity.

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POSTHUMANISM: RETHINKING ‘THE HUMAN’ IN MODERN CHILDREN’S LITERATURE

Victoria Flanagan

ONE OF THE principal attributes of the critical discourse known as ‘posthumanism’ is its ability to evade precise definition. Cary Wolfe has famously argued that the term ‘generates different and even irreconcilable definitions’ (2010: xi). The epistemological ambiguity associated with posthumanism arises because of its expansive ideological mission, which might best be summed up as the radical de-centering and de-privileging of the autonomous, coherent and rational humanist subject. Although posthumanists can agree that ‘humanity’ is a concept that requires redefinition in the modern era, precisely what this definition should be remains an enigma. Rather than seeing this as a flaw, writers such as Iván Castañeda suggest that this fluidity is an integral component of posthumanism. According to Castañeda, ‘we resist an exhaustive definition of posthumanism because part of the efficacy of posthumanism is that it admits the evolving nature of its own project, which mirrors our contemporary cultural situation’ (2015: 77–8). The self-reflexive and interrogative qualities of posthumanism enable it to perform a critical examination of many of the binary concepts that have traditionally been used to structure and make sense of human experience. Western culture, argue Clare Bradford, Kerry Mallan, John Stephens and Robyn McCallum, has been ‘underpinned ideologically by binary oppositions such as natural and artificial, organic and technological, subject and object, body and mind, body and embodiment, real and virtual, presence and absence, and so on’ (2011: 154). Posthumanism seeks to reshape and resituate these boundaries and oppositions, primarily by focusing on the notion of ‘otherness’ and examining how certain subjects and species have been strategically excluded from humanist definitions of humanity.

Posthumanism plays a particularly significant role in relation to children’s literature for two reasons. Firstly, literature for children and adolescents is thematically preoccupied with the processes of subject formation. From picturebooks for the very young to coming-of-age stories for young adults, literature produced for child and adolescent readers is always concerned – at least implicitly – with the experience of growing up and how a subject might negotiate their relationships with other individuals in the world. A concomitant consideration within a wide range of children’s literature is the ethical dimension of this process of maturation: such literature actively seeks to intervene in a child reader’s perceptions of self by exploring existential questions such as, ‘What makes a good person?’ or ‘What makes a just society?’ This focus on ethical subject formation consequently makes children’s fiction a potentially rich space for

posthumanist critical interpretations, especially in the context of modern ideological paradigm shifts relating to gender, race, disability and the relationship between human beings, animals and the natural environment. Childhood, as a category of being, has historically been situated as ‘other’ in relation to adulthood – and posthumanism, with its emphasis on how particular subjects have been socially excluded, consequently functions as an apposite metaphor for conceptualisations of child subjectivity.

Secondly, the discourse of posthumanism is relevant to children’s literature because of the long-standing association of children’s texts with humanist ideological paradigms. Narratives produced for children typically engage in thematic explorations of selfhood and the process of identity-formation, but have traditionally done so primarily within a humanist framework. John Stephens and Robyn McCallum reflect on the role of humanism in children’s literature at some length in *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture: Traditional Story and Metanarratives in Children’s Literature* (1998). They attest that humanism functions in children’s narratives to produce the ‘idea of selfhood as essential’ (1998: 5). A further effect of this engagement with humanism is the propensity for children’s literature to universalise human values and behaviours, and to present them as transcending time and culture. Such a position proves to be problematic in relation to children’s narratives which are based on traditional pretexts, as such pretexts frequently endorse ideological subject positions that are at odds with the values of a progressive, modern society. Posthumanism, which explicitly redresses the exclusionary practices of subject formation that have historically been associated with humanism, thus has much to offer as a critical paradigm for reading specific works of children’s literature that seek to challenge dominant ideological paradigms of selfhood.

It is important to point out at this juncture that humanism ‘is not a homogeneous ideology’ (McCallum 1999: 6) and a large body of children’s literature currently exists – particularly within young adult fiction – that expressly interrogates humanist essentialism. It therefore not surprising that literature aimed at adolescents (rather than younger children) has been the most innovative in its exploration of the fluid, multiple and networked modes of subjectivity endorsed by posthumanism. More precisely, young adult fiction concerned with examining the impact of modern technology on the human condition has produced an alternative construction of subjectivity that challenges humanist notions of an essential, unified and coherent self.

Cyborg Subjects: Reconfigurations of Humanist Modes of Selfhood

Technology is vital (both now and in the past) to posthuman reconfigurations of subjectivity. Pramod Nayar writes that posthumanism is concerned with moving beyond ‘the traditional humanist ways of thinking about the autonomous, self-willed individual agent in order to treat the human itself as an assemblage, co-evolving with other forms of life, enmeshed with the environment and technology’ (2014: 3–4). Nayar’s use of the term ‘assemblage’ references Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987), who use it to describe the fluidity and plurality of social complexity – qualities that are equally relevant to posthumanist modes of subjectivity. More specifically, however, Nayar’s characterisation of posthuman subjectivity as ‘assembled’ rather

than essential creates an explicit intertextual link with Donna Haraway's theorising of the cyborg, whom she refers to as 'a kind of disassembled and reassembled, postmodern collective and personal self' (1991: 163).

Haraway's writing on the subject of cyborgs was instrumental to the emergent scholarly discourse of posthumanism in the 1990s because she was one of the first theorists to acknowledge how the liminal and subversive figure of the cyborg challenged humanist understandings of individual subjectivity. For Haraway the cyborg is a 'hybrid of machine and organism' (1991: 149), a figure which blurs the boundaries between the human and the non-human and is therefore 'resolutely committed to partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity' (1991: 151). Cyborgs and other mechanoid creatures have become increasingly common in contemporary young adult fictions which 'raise questions about what might constitute human subjectivity, as the shape of a world to come is narrated in the context of key metanarratives which seek to scrutinise what it is to be human through representations of mechanoid experience and perceptions' (Bradford et al. 2011: 160). A frequent strategy in such fictions is to align readers with non-human characters like cyborgs or robots, and to then use this textual construction of 'otherness' as a technique for interrogating conventional assumptions about 'humanity' and the conditions used to include or exclude subjects from this category of being.

Historically, representations of toys in children's literature have similarly used the 'othered' subject positions of toy characters to explore the question of what it means to be 'human'. According to Lois Kuznets, toy characters frequently function as a subversive impetus for exploring human anxieties about the nature of existence. Kuznets illustrates this point with reference to classic children's novels such as A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) and Russell Hoban's *The Mouse and His Child* (1967), and stories that focus on dolls and their relationships with human children, such as Rachel Field's *Hitty: Her First Hundred Years* (1929) and Rumer Godden's *The Dolls' House* (1967). For Kuznets, these texts examine the relationship(s) between human subjects and non-human objects by bringing the reader's attention to the boundaries that exist between these categories – and then deliberately subverting them. Zoe Jaques similarly discusses fictive representations of toys in her examination of posthumanism in children's literature, *Children's Literature and the Posthuman: Animal, Environment, Cyborg* (2015). Like Kuznets, Jaques contends that toys disrupt the binary categories used to establish the superiority of human subjects:

these posthuman playthings destabilize the gendered hierarchies that plague humanity by rendering them ridiculous. At the same time, they also play with the posthuman implications of an inhuman body built entirely for pleasure, as curiosities that can outlive their human owners but also can be variously 'broken' by them. (2015: 214)

Jaques subtly draws the reader's attention here to the paradox of toys and their ability to cut across the constructs that operate to instantiate 'humanity' as a unique and superior category of being. As inanimate objects, toys are passive in the face of the violence that human children to assert their power. However, the material from which they are constructed (whether artificial plastic or organic wood) enables them to endure on this earth for much longer than their owners. Kuznets also points to the way in which toys in children's fiction are responsible for asking philosophical questions about the nature of

humanity. Toy narratives, states Kuznets, depict toys as symbols of the 'quintessential other' and this particular genre of children's literature 'heightens our awareness of what it means for a toy character to become a conscious self and a subject, of often the protagonist, within the text' (1994: 5). Kuznets' comments in this instance can be easily transferred to fictions which depict cyborg characters, many of which situate cyborgs as focalisers and protagonists and then use this position of 'otherness' to interrogate humanist assumptions about human identity and experience.

The figure of the cyborg has loomed large within critical discussions of posthumanism. The cyborg – a hybrid being that challenges binary distinctions of human/machine and natural/artificial – serves as an embodiment of the quest for 'alternative representations of the subject as a dynamic, non-unitary entity' (Braidotti 2015: 164). The cyborg is also an emblem of contemporary technoscience and an apt reminder of the genealogy of posthumanism. Influenced by the emergence of cybernetics theory during the 1940s and 1950s, posthumanist critics initially looked towards technological developments as a means for exploring and redefining the human subject. Donna Haraway (1991), Chris Hables Gray (1995), N. Katherine Hayles (1999), Neil Badmington (2000), Elaine Graham (2002) and Sherryl Vint (2007) have each helped to establish posthumanism as a critical paradigm by writing about the ways in which advances in technology have altered and subverted traditional concepts of 'the human'.

Cyborg characters have become more commonplace in children's literature as advances in technoscience – such as genetic engineering and the development of artificial intelligence – have made the consideration of issues about the limits or boundaries of 'the human' more urgent. The questions which are posed in cyborg narratives are, of course, very similar to those outlined by both Kuznets and Jaques as evident in toy narratives: a reminder that although posthumanism originally functioned as a theoretical paradigm designed to make sense of changing relationships between human beings and machines, its ideological origins are much older.

At a very basic level, posthumanism focuses on the practices of inclusion and exclusion that have historically acted to produce the category of the human subject. Cyborg and robot narratives offer a particularly fruitful site for such critical investigations, as cyborgs and robots mimic human form (and, indeed, most children's fiction contains cyborgs that can visually 'pass' as human), yet their constitution from inorganic material renders them both disturbing and liminal. Tanith Lee's *The Silver Metal Lover* ([1981] 1999), a science fiction novel about a relationship between a human girl and her robot lover, is ground-breaking in its foreshadowing of a posthumanist vision of human/machine interactions. Most children's literature of the twentieth century tended to depict cyborg characters as inhuman subjects inspiring both trepidation and fear, a representational paradigm characterised by Bradford et al. in this manner: 'On the whole, such hybrid forms of being [such as cyborgs] are treated in YA fiction and film negatively, usually as aberrations . . .' (2008: 165). This position concurs with Noga Applebaum's view that representations of technology in science fiction for young people are inherently technophobic (2010). Within this context, *The Silver Metal Lover* offers an innovative examination of how a robot with the perceived capacity to enter into intersubjective social relations might challenge humanist notions of what constitutes human subjectivity. It must be noted, however, that the novel is told in the first person by a human narrator, which precludes the reader from accessing the interiority of the robot, Silver, and maintains the centrality of a human point of view.

The anti-technology representational paradigm which dominated children's and young adult literature from the 1980s has gradually shifted in the new millennium, and narratives featuring cyborgian characters published since 2000 have engaged much more closely with posthumanism in their exploration of non-human/partially-human subjectivity. Mary E. Pearson's *The Adoration of Jenna Fox* (2008), the first book in the *Jenna Fox Chronicles* (2008–13), exemplifies this trend. The novel is narrated in the first person by a teenage girl whose body and brain are artificially reconstructed after she suffers horrific injuries in a car accident. Pearson's narrative disrupts humanist paradigms of selfhood on a number of different levels. Kerry Mallan characterises Jenna's subjectivity as one that is founded on fragmentation and loss, as Jenna cannot reconcile her previous childhood 'self' with the new version of herself created after the accident (2013: 148). This fragmentation of self is then profoundly affected by her body – which is awkward (Jenna's gait is unnatural and she needs to practise walking) but also plays a role in the recovery of memories from her past life. The novel interrogates the Cartesian mind/body split in its exploration of how Jenna's body affects the (re)construction of her subjectivity. As Adrienne Kertzer explains, 'Jenna believes that body memory, such as when her feet repeat the nervous fidgeting and tapping of her childhood, is personal in a manner that the uploaded memories of the high school curriculum are not' (2016: 9–10).

Downplaying the significance of the body in favour of an abstract view of selfhood – in alignment with the Cartesian dictum 'I think therefore I am' – has become a critical issue for posthumanism. The material body has often provided the basis for the exclusionary practices used to construct the autonomous and coherent humanist subject, and as a result women have been particularly disenfranchised. Posthumanism is thus particularly relevant to women and girls, because their bodies have generally functioned as a sign of their 'otherness'. Cyborg characters have increasingly been gendered as female in young adult fiction published since 2000, and such narratives draw an explicit link between the female body and the production of female identity.

The connection between cyborgs and the material body may initially seem to be a strange one, given that cyborgs are, by definition, an assemblage of organic and inorganic material. However, it is precisely the strangeness of the cyborg body (in relation to the human consciousness of the subject who possesses it) which necessitates an ongoing self-reflexivity about how the body produces selfhood. Furthermore, the notion of how to manage a deviant and alien material body is an effective metaphor for the physical transformations that adolescents undergo during puberty, which can often induce anxiety. Richard Shakeshaft makes the point that cyborg characters draw in the reader's attention to the adult/child binary in their thematic exploration of the control that adults exert over children, both figuratively and literally. Such narratives, he argues, depict adults as the decision-makers when it comes to the act of transforming a child or adolescent body into a cyborg one, and thus reflect 'real-world hierarchies where adults have economic power, political and social power' (2014: 238). Robin Wasserman's *Cold Awakening* trilogy (2008–10) revolves around a cyborg character, Lia, who experiences the realisation that her organic human body has been replaced, at her parents' orders, by an artificial, mechanoid one, as a profound sense of loss: 'I know all that, but I can't . . . It's just not the same. It's like I'm living in my head, you know? Like I'm operating the body by remote control. I'm not *inside* it somehow' (Wasserman 2009: 208).

Lia's first-person account of her experiences as a newly-created cyborg (like Jenna, this is the result of injuries she sustains in an accident) offers readers an overt meditation on the limitation of humanist modes of selfhood. Interestingly, it is the concept of pain which allows Lia to renegotiate the relationship between her mind and body in a manner that leads to the formation of an agentic subjectivity. Other examples of female cyborgian characters who destabilise conventional understandings of the Cartesian mind/body split can be found in *Cinder* (2012), a futuristic fantasy retelling of Cinderella which is the first book in Marissa Meyer's *Lunar Chronicles* quartet (2012–15) and Debra Driza's *Mila 2.0* series (2013–16). These narratives are told from the perspective of a female cyborg and use this focalising position of otherness to interrogate the patriarchal discourses that are inherent to humanist paradigms of selfhood. Such fictions share Haraway's vision of the cyborg as both a liminal and hybrid figure with which women can align themselves in order to take 'pleasure in the confusion of boundaries' that have historically constituted the essential humanist self (1991: 50; original emphasis).

Situating a cyborg or mechanoid character as the narrator or focaliser of a work of fiction does not necessarily result in a posthumanist examination of individual subjectivity. Bernard Beckett's *Genesis* (2006) is an instructive example of a narrative that thematically explores the distinctions between human and artificial intelligence but offers a resolution which firmly situates readers in a humanist subject position. A sci-fi thriller set in 2075, the narrative takes place in a society known as 'Plato's Republic', which has isolated itself from the rest of the world (now plagued with political strife and disease) and patrols its borders by shooting approaching refugees. *Genesis* employs a range of experimental narrative techniques, which would seem to align with the fragmented, pluralistic and technologically mediated subjectivity associated with posthumanism. An interview acts as a frame for the narrative: Anaximander is participating in an entrance exam for the Academy, the elite institution within her society. She has nominated the historical figure of Adam Forde as the topic of her examination, and as such the narrative is constructed out of dialogue between herself and the Academy members, brief passages of focalised narration as she is permitted to take breaks from the exam room, and holograms of Adam Forde's life – some of which are supplied by the Academy and some of which have been created by Anaximander herself. As the narrative progresses, readers learn that Adam Forde gained historical notoriety because of his relationship with an android named Art, and *Genesis* uses their interactions as a means for investigating and reflecting upon the distinctions between human beings and artificially created machines. A unique aspect of *Genesis*' narrative form is that it enables both its human and android characters to speak for themselves, and hence encourages readers to adopt multiple (and critical) interpretive positions:

'You think the thing you call consciousness is some mysterious gift from the heavens, but in the end consciousness is nothing but the context in which your thinking occurs. Consciousness is the feel of accessing memory. Why else do you not have memories from your earliest years? It is because your consciousness has not fully developed.'

'You're avoiding the question', Adam insisted, but there was doubt in his eyes. (Beckett 2006: 106)

The narrative ingenuity which characterises *Genesis* and forms the context for its critical interrogation of the human/machine binary is compromised, however, by a conservative denouement which serves to reinforce the inherent ‘otherness’ of non-human subjectivity. The novel closes with the revelation that Anaximander herself is not human but a descendant of Adam Forde’s android, Art. The examination she has taken part in is a ruse, designed to identify androids that are ‘dysfunctional’ because they have developed pro-human sympathies. The novel closes with the violent act of Anaximander’s murder, and functions ideologically to place readers in opposition to the cruel and inhumane society at the novel’s centre. Intertextuality plays a central role in the narrative’s eventual endorsement of humanism. Initially, the novel creates intertextual relationships with classical humanist philosophers: Plato is referenced in the name that the Republic bestows upon itself and Socrates is implicitly alluded to in the question-and-answer format of the primary narrative, a discursive structure commonly referred to as ‘Socratic dialogue’. These intertextual allusions create an illusory alignment between Anax’s society and humanist ideology, which is eventually revealed to be false. Reconsidered in light of the novel’s dramatic closure, such intertextuality operates to highlight the delusions and dysfunctionality of the android society, which both reveres and loathes its human creators.

‘Posthuman’ and ‘Posthumanism’: Terminological Distinctions

An important reason for including *Genesis* in a discussion of posthumanism and its application to children’s texts is that the novel effectively illustrates the distinction between the concepts of ‘posthumanism’ and the ‘posthuman’. The two terms are sometimes used interchangeably in scholarly discussions, but in actuality refer to separate and discrete concepts. ‘Posthumanism’ is the critical discourse that seeks to understand and dismantle the privileged status of the humanist subject, whereas the ‘posthuman’ is the subject who exists in a world where the boundaries that once defined humanity have been redrawn as a result of technological impact or the recognition that the human is of multi-species origins. *Genesis*, therefore, is a narrative about a posthuman future rather than one which engages with the ideology of posthumanism. The novel initially blurs the distinction between human and artificial intelligence in a manner that seems to validate non-human subjectivity, but its purpose in doing so is to reveal the profound dysfunction of a non-human society.

Genesis foreshadows the end of the human (and humanist) subject in a posthuman world – a threat most famously articulated by Francis Fukuyama in *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (2002) – but the novel’s depiction of social dysfunction and brutality does not align with the ideological aims of posthumanism. Posthumanism, in contrast, is a critical paradigm that offers a new and expanded understanding of what it means to be human in the modern era. For writers such as Hayles, this critical perspective is one that occasions feelings of pleasure, because it ‘evokes the exhilarating prospect of getting out of some of the old boxes and opening up new ways of thinking about what being human means’ (1999: 285). *Genesis* cannot be characterised as a narrative that engages in such practices. Beckett uses a range of postmodern techniques to depict posthuman subjectivity – such as mixed modalities, the use of narrative framing and intertextuality – which work to

situate readers critically in relation to Anaximander (and also Adam and Art) but which also produce posthuman subjects as passive and interpellated. The novel functions, more properly, as a tragic lament for the destruction of the humanist subject.

Negative or fearful responses to the possibility of a posthuman future, such as the one portrayed in *Genesis*, are often premised on the assumption that an abandonment of humanist paradigms of selfhood will necessarily involve the loss of individual agency. Posthumanism, it must be stressed, is not based on the negation of subjective agency. The prefix ‘post’ does not entail the ‘end’ of humanism, but should rather be understood as ‘after’ or ‘beyond’. Consequently, posthumanism involves a reformulation of both human subjectivity and agency which points to more fluid definitions of these concepts. Stefan Herbrechter emphasises the communal and collective nature of posthuman subjectivity, stating that the posthuman individual is ‘not so much a singular identity but a collection of co-operating actors’ (2013: 205). Herbrechter’s comments are especially germane to young adult fiction which explores the impact of digital technology on the human condition. Novels such as *Hacking Harvard* (2007), by Robin Wasserman, *Adorkable* (2012), by Sarra Manning, and *Gen/Finn* (2016), co-authored by Hannah Moskowitz and Kat Helgeson, portray adolescent subjectivity as produced simultaneously in real life and in cyberspace (see also my chapter later in this volume (Chapter 28)), and use the online environment to suggest that subjectivity is no longer fixed or stable. Importantly, agency is envisioned as occurring in a pluralistic and networked context in these narratives – and thus accords very explicitly with posthumanist modes of subjectivity.

Anthropocentrism: Deconstructing the Human/Animal Binary

Although initially indebted to cybernetics theory, posthumanism has since expanded to encompass a much broader view of humanity and its embedded relations with other species and the natural environment. In other words, the interrogation and reconceptualisation of the human/machine binary has led to the redrawing of other boundaries which have been used to separate the ‘human’ from the ‘non-human’. The distinction between human beings and animals has been fundamental to Western ideological paradigms as a result of humanism, but technological developments in the latter part of the twentieth century – such as xenotransplantation (the transplanting of organs from one species to another) – have resulted in philosophical and ethical debates about ‘the animal incorporated within/into the human’ (Nayar 2014: 78). Such debates have then led to a wider discussion about the nature and value of life. Posthumanism, which aims to redress the hierarchical divisions between human beings and other species, therefore closely intersects with the critical discourse of animal studies (see in this volume Zoe Jaques (Chapter 3)). Common to both posthumanism and animal studies, according to Nayar, is a desire to expose the ‘anthropocentrism that positions the animal as an oppositional and inferior other to the human’ (2014: 80).

The simplistic assumption that all depictions of animals in fiction for children function anthropocentrically is fundamentally problematised by Amy Ratelle in her 2015 study of animality in children’s literature and film. Ratelle uses the discourses of

posthumanism and animal studies as a theoretical framework for her historical investigation of children's texts and argues that:

Western philosophy's objective to establish a notion of an exclusively human subjectivity is continually countered in the very texts that ostensibly work to configure human identity. Literature geared toward a child audience reflects and contributes to the cultural tensions created by the oscillation between upholding and undermining the divisions between the human and the animal. (2015: 4)

Ratelle's explicit reference here to the cultural tensions which are produced by the conflicting impulses to construct and then erase divisions between humans and animals is illustrated with great complexity in Peter Dickinson's novel, *Eva* ([1988] 2001). Dickinson brings together both the technoscience and the animal strands of posthumanism in his story of a young girl, Eva, whose neurones are transplanted into the body of a chimpanzee after her human body is fatally injured in a car accident. Thematically the novel is concerned with Eva's quest for a unified subjectivity – which would seem to imply that the narrative advocates a humanist mode of selfhood – but Dickinson complicates this quest in a myriad of ways. Eva is present as a conscious human mind within the body of Kelly, the chimpanzee whose memories have been 'erased' in order to make way for Eva's human mind. Yet traces of Kelly remain in Eva, figured primarily through a recurring dream of Kelly's which pervades Eva's consciousness. Eva's subjectivity is thus fragmented, plural and constructed across species boundaries. The novel also engages specifically with a discourse of animal rights, attuning readers to the ethical problems raised by the continued privileging of human subjectivity over all other life forms:

Eva climbed on to the table. She tapped her chest.

'This belongs to a chimp called Kelly,' she said.

'You people stole it from her. You thought you'd killed her so that you could steal it, but some of her's still here. Some of her's me. She knows what you did, so I know. I know it's wrong. (2001: 161)

An important aspect of Eva's development is her willingness to surrender parts of her human self in order to express the animal. The novel's recognition and valuation of animal subjectivity prompts readers to reflect critically on the species boundaries that have worked to enforce animals' inferiority within human culture.

The Midnight Zoo (2010), by Sonya Hartnett, similarly works to blur the species boundaries between humans and animals. The narrative is a work of magical realism which tells the story of two brothers and their infant sister who inadvertently escape the massacre of their Roma community by Nazi soldiers. They eventually find protection amongst the caged animals of an abandoned zoo. Unlike fantasy novels which typically align themselves with posthumanism by allowing non-human characters to act as focalising subjects – a technique which brings 'otherness' to the forefront of the narrative and allows the concept of humanity to be deconstructed from a non-human perspective – *The Midnight Zoo* is told from the perspective of the brothers. Nevertheless, Hartnett's animals can all talk, and much of the narrative is structured around their conversations with the two boys. This dialogic representation of human and animal subjectivities, which draws the reader's attention to the cruelties suffered

by both the animals and the children, entails that the interspecies thematic focus of the narrative is effectively mirrored in its narrative discourse:

Andrej snatched Wilma to him and leapt backwards, but the lioness didn't seem thwarted or insulted: 'That's better,' she said. 'Keep her near your body. She will be warmed by the heat of your blood.'

Andrej's heart was hammering with shock. He could hardly find words to say. 'I know that,' he managed to answer. 'My mother told me.' (Hartnett 2010: 100)

The Midnight Zoo constantly draws parallels between animal and human experience, without negating the animality (emphasised in the extract above by Andrej's palpable fear of the lioness) of its animal characters. Instead, the narrative concerns itself not with humanising animals but in examining the relationships that exist between animality and humanity. At the heart of *The Midnight Zoo* lies the subject of genocide, which Hartnett subtly explores by linking the history of the Roma Holocaust with the experiences of caged animals who are similarly deprived of freedom and agency. The novel attributes such practices to the speciesism which allows certain human subjects to be valued above other living beings, including both humans (according to race, gender or class hierarchies) and animals. As Aliona Yarova proposes, the force of this novel is its contention that 'killing people and animals are equally serious crimes' (2016: 16).

Young adult fiction has, until now, been the primary site of engagement with posthumanism in children's literature. However, it is now possible to see evidence of posthumanism and its reconceptualised vision of human subjectivity in books directed at much younger readers. A delightful example is Oliver Jeffers' picture-book, *This Moose Belongs to Me* (2012). The narrative takes issue with the concept of animal ownership through a simple story about a boy's realisation that it is not possible to actually 'own' a wild animal (especially when two of your neighbours also make claims about the moose in question belonging to them). *This Moose Belongs to Me* offers young readers an accessible critique of the speciesism that has allowed human beings to cast themselves as 'masters' of the animal kingdom. This thematic message is complemented by illustrations which 'borrow' from the landscape paintings of the Slovakian artist Alexander Dzigurski, and also include characters from Jeffers' previous picturebooks. The effect of this hybrid, multimodal visual technique is to further problematise the concept of ownership and make the boy's assertion of domination over the moose a fantasy.

Ethical Posthumanism

Posthumanism may, on the surface, appear to be strangely incompatible with the socialising and enculturating agenda of children's literature. Posthumanist modes of subjectivity – characterised by multiplicity, fluidity and, in reference to the impact of technology on human selfhood, networked rather than individualistic – constitute a considerable divergence from the humanist paradigms of essential selfhood and agency common to children's texts. Posthumanism and children's literature are nevertheless linked by an explicit engagement with ethics. Children's literature is inherently concerned with the question of ethical subject development, and as such it

offers an ideal site for the exploration of how the humanist subject has been historically constructed using a range of exclusionary practices. Further, the routine situation of child or adolescent subjects as liminal in relation to adults and adult culture functions as an apt analogy for the way in which animals, machines and the natural world have similarly been positioned as inferior to adult, human subjects within humanist ideological paradigms. Jaques' identification of Lewis Carroll's popular books for children, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There* (1871), as 'ontologically sophisticated works' which construct a 'mutable relationship between Alice and the creatures she meets' (2015: 14) thus aligns with what Paul Sheehan (2015) has termed 'mythological posthumanism': a form of posthumanism which turns away from technology and science and instead looks to myth and traditional forms of story in its quest to de-construct the humanist subject.

Living in a time of 'posthumanity' demands a reassessment not only of what it means to be human, but also of nature and the animal. Children's literature has a key role to play in the ideological transformations that are necessary if human beings wish to remain on a planet that is currently facing multiple threats as a result of our previous inability to respect animal and environmental forms of life. Fortunately, there exists within children's fiction both a rich tradition and an innovative body of contemporary work that is actively involved in destabilising the legacy of anthropocentrism and (re)situating human beings in symbiotic relationships with other living species.

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ANIMAL STUDIES

Zoe Jaques

The animal is the sign of all that is taken not-very-seriously in contemporary culture; the sign of that which doesn't really matter.

Steve Baker 1993: 174

Critical terror of Kiddilit is common. People to whom sophistication is a positive intellectual value shun anything 'written for children'; if you want to clear a room of Derrideans, mention Beatrix Potter without sneering.

Ursula Le Guin 1990: 1

THE CHILD AND the animal have a lot in common. Freud has it that children and animals share a special connection, uninhibited as both are by the civilising strictures of the 'undoubtedly mysterious adult' (1999: 126). For Stephen Jay Gould, evolutionary similarities matter; the large foreheads and eyes of human babies and many young animals overlap in such a way as to 'elicit powerful emotional responses' (1979: 35) in human adults, probing our nurturing instincts regardless of species. We are, however, equally happy distancing animals and children from the realm of the human adult – we are comfortable with the expressions 'behaving like an animal' or 'being childish' operating as negative appellations for the improper or uncivilised. The inability of animals and young children to speak back to us in our own language also provides opportunities for much humorous power play; forms of baby or animal 'shaming' now regularly feed social media sites, whereby parents or owners dictate what children and animals are 'saying' to excuse various misdeeds. With such a plethora of connections, one might well agree with Matthew Cole and Kate Stewart when they argue that '[i]n order to move forward with a comprehensive study of either children or nonhuman animals, it is crucial to address the role of each in the construction of the other' (2014: 70–1). It should also be no surprise that, as Simon Flynn puts it, animal stories are 'so integral to children's literature that the form is nearly unthinkable without them' (2004: 418) even if, as my epigraphs from Baker and Le Guin attest, both the child's book and the animal subject have long been read as trivial and marginal, as topics which lack sophistication or import.

Like children's literature scholarship, animal studies is a fairly new, cross-disciplinary field of critical enquiry. Yet a fascination with the non-human animal has always been at the heart of philosophy – animals are, as Lévi-Strauss claimed, 'good to think' (1971: 89). Understanding the self, in any guise, relies upon negotiating that selfhood through the lens of 'the other', of which the animal is perhaps the most evocative and compelling

form. Such mediation on otherness, however, frequently works to serve the dominant order – in this case of mankind – so as to position the animal as of an ideologically lower order and to reinforce the anthropocentric status quo. The animal's perceived lack of rationality and capacity for language has dominated a great deal of philosophical thinking about 'them' and 'us': for Aristotle, in the fourth century BC, 'man alone of the animals has logos [speech]' (2008: 28–9); for René Descartes, writing in the seventeenth century, a beast's inability 'to speak as we do . . . proves not only that the brutes have less reason than man, but that they have none at all' (2008: 45). Even in the twentieth century such arguments persevere; for Martin Heidegger, it is language that allows access to the world, for it is the route by which we understand and perceive it. He questions whether 'the essence of the human being primordially and most decisively lies in the dimension of *animalitas* at all' (1998: 246), for, unlike the human, the animal 'can only behave [*sich . . . benehmen*] but can never apprehend [*vernehmen*] something as something' (1995: 259). Yet language and rationality are not the limit of human uniqueness; the human body itself is distinct, as 'something essentially other than animal organism' (Heidegger 1998: 247). This claim echoes John Locke in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), where he locates bodily shape as integral to what it means to be human:

I think I may be confident, that, whoever should see a creature of his own shape or make, though it had no more reason all its life than a cat or a parrot, would call him still a man; or whoever should hear a cat or a parrot discourse, reason, and philosophize, would call or think it nothing but a cat or a parrot; and say, the one was a dull irrational man, and the other a very intelligent parrot. ([1690] 1836: 224)

Locke's mildly subversive interest in the discoursing cat or rational parrot is compelling; philosophers from Montaigne to Derrida have found cats to be the most captivating of species when pondering the boundaries of human uniqueness, and parrots have regularly been taught speech acts: an African grey parrot named N'kisi demonstrates a vocabulary in excess of 900 words, the ability to conjugate verbs, and effective use of the past, present and the future tenses.

Yet these attempts to bring language to the animal do little effectively to upset the ontological divide. Descartes himself commented 'that magpies and parrots can utter words like ourselves' (2008: 45) but argued that, as they lack understanding of those utterances, they function basically as machines. Attempts to teach birds to speak or, perhaps more famously, apes to sign, seek to dispel distinction myths, pointing to the ways in which animals are capable of the very acts upon which humans have claimed uniqueness. Research in this area has the politicised agenda of seeking a more ethical, equal and 'humane' relationship with animals. As humanity has, for so long, tended to value itself above all other life forms, it is easy to see why animal rights discourse might wish to emphasise the human in the animal (or, more subversively, vice versa) as an essential strategy. Prominent animal rights theorist Tom Regan, for example, emphasises that humans and animals occupy the same status as 'subjects of a life' (2004: 243) – with desires, emotions and experiences – arguing against Immanuel Kant's ideas of personhood based on rationality. He highlights the many and varied human forms that somehow fall short of the personhood threshold established by Kant, but that nevertheless have 'inherent value' (Regan 1985: 37), and seeks to extend this significance to animals: 'What could be the basis of our having more inherent value than animals?

Their lack of reason, or autonomy, or intellect? Only if we are willing to make the same judgment in the case of humans who are similarly deficient' (ibid.). Yet while emphasising the reasoning capacity of animals, on the one hand, or the lack of rationality of certain humans on the other, might make sense in the context of the dominant anthropocentric order within which animal rights activism must work, it also limits the effectiveness of the discourse and ironically accentuates the very anthropocentrism it seeks to undercut. By obscuring distinctiveness, there is a sense that the animal has to be akin to the human in order to be valuable. Much animal rights discourse, then, has unwittingly 'more often than not ended up simply producing a slightly different version of anthropocentrism and subject-centrism' (Calarco 2008: 9).

Of course, the whole foundation of the debate might well be considered flawed: humans are, obviously, animals. The linguistic separation in common speech of 'the human' from 'the animal' operates in much the same way as attempts to codify animals when turning them into food. 'Pork' or 'beef', rather than 'pig' and 'cow' are 'less disquieting referent points' (Adams 2000: 25), and much recent work in animal studies shows a preference for the terms 'human animal' and 'non-human animal' which highlights such slippage. Yet essential to some calls to recognise our fundamental 'sameness', in taxonomic rank at least, is an emphasis on permitting and valuing our inherent distinctions. Philosophical work on animals which takes this stance thus deploys different rhetoric, highlighting the diverse nature of an animal kingdom outside of debilitating hierarchies of being. Jacques Derrida's famous writing on 'the *question* of the animal' (2002: 378) thus asks us to recognise the limiting, interpolating and homogenising effects of language and seeks to pay attention 'to difference, to differences, to heterogeneities and abyssal ruptures as against the homogeneous and the continuous' (398). At the core of his argument is a case for multiplicity:

There is no animal in the general singular, separated from man by a single indivisible limit. We have to envisage the existence of 'living creatures' whose plurality cannot be assembled within the single figure of an animality that is simply opposed to humanity. (415)

Such a point is made more straightforwardly by Christopher Manes: '*Homo Sapiens*: one species among many millions of other beautiful, terrible, fascinating – and signifying – forms' (1996: 26). Within this framework, it becomes possible to celebrate what Donna Haraway calls 'relating in significant otherness' (2003: 25) whereby humans might divest themselves of the long-standing and politically comforting fiction that 'we have no access to what animals think and feel' (226) and embrace coterminous, co-constitutive relationships with our companion species. Haraway – whose work in the fields of biology, philosophy, primatology and feminism, amongst others, has made her a central figure in animal studies and cyberculture (see Flanagan 2014 and her chapter on posthumanism in the present volume) – argues in *When Species Meet* (2008) for 'contact zones' as spaces where animals and humans grapple with one another and become transformed by the process. As a dog agility handler, Haraway is interested in the real, tangible ways in which the lives of humans and other animals are entangled as 'we live with each other in the flesh in ways not exhausted by our ideologies' (2003: 17). As such, she provides a palpable philosophical stance on thinking with animals 'not in bloodless abstraction, but in one-on-one relationship, in otherness-in-connection' (24). Difference here becomes the basis for union.

Children and Animals: Otherness-in-Connection

What animal studies philosophy means for children and their literature is both obvious and implicit; the phrase ‘otherness-in-connection’ might serve just as well to encapsulate the kinship gulf between the adult and the child as it does animals and humans. It is not uncommon for animal studies scholars to turn to the child or childhood as part of their rhetoric. Haraway, for example, cites ‘the play of time and space’ of children’s toys and stories as crucial to her understanding of the ‘world-making entanglements’ (2008: 4) of companion species. Tom Regan, in his case against Kant, connects young children and animals as marginalised ‘nonpersons’ (which he also extends backwards to the newly-fertilised ovum and, indeed, forwards to the senile or comatose). Yi-Fu Tuan in *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets* argues that the rearing and training of children and animals function in largely the same way, whereby ‘[t]he small child is a piece of wild nature that must be subdued and then played with’ and is thus ‘a pet and is properly treated as such’ (1984: 115).

In a conflicting vein, a great deal of conservationist discourse looks to the child as a figure of salvation and optimism, placing a heavy burden on a somewhat mythologised future generation. Gail F. Melson thus cautions against the dangers of ‘[a] new generation, lacking any deep felt conviction of shared environment, [which] comes of age only to further accelerate ecological degradation’ (2001: 199); childhood should therefore be ‘a time of deepening connection’ which cements the child’s ‘future stewardship of the planet’ (ibid.). Children here bear the brunt of responsibility for the earth, and all the animals and other life forms that live upon it; they thus inherit problems not of their making and become programmed into the same anthropocentric assumption that caused them in the first place, namely the overarching belief that ‘we remain the supreme beings on little earth, in charge of whether it becomes a garden or a wasteland’ (Diski 2010: 49). Yet set against such almost inevitable training in humanism, be that to save or destroy, is the as-of-yet-unfettered wildness which children demonstrate in abundance and which permits their acceptance of unfixed boundaries between themselves and the wider world. Henry David Thoreau famously made the case that ‘in Wildness is the preservation of the world’ (2013: 18), and while many conservationists see children as the preservers of the planet itself – if they are educated in how to go about it – one might venture that it is children’s very lack of human-centric education that makes them such powerful advocates for it. Wildness is, after all, separated from the domain of the human; children, who are not yet fully inculcated into the boundaried, adult ordinances of human civilisation and mastery, are thus open to the potential wildness within the world and within themselves. Such tensions between civilisation and wildness are played out evocatively in Maurice Sendak’s picturebook *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963), in which the young Max tries out dominion-in-potential by sailing to an unpeopled island, donning a crown and taking command of the composite animals who live there. Although ostensibly a story about growing up, controlling one’s emotions and finding order in a world of chaos, the narrative’s discomfort with the inevitability of children mastering the world, and thus becoming disconnected from it, highlights the particular potency of childhood as a time in which wildness is yet to give way to the prescriptions of adulthood and the domination of nature that it entails. Max’s enraged command of the creatures, on the other hand, somewhat

naturalises that very dominion. The power of Sendak's narrative comes in playing with the hierarchies demanded of an anthropocentric world.

While animal studies scholarship has thus looked to the child fairly frequently, it is surprising how little attention children's literature research has paid to the place of the animal *as animal*. That is not to say that critics have failed to consider the animal at all – there has been substantial attention to the role of the animals in children's fiction, befitting the fact that they often dominate its pages. Yet scholarship has been far more comfortable reading its wild things as skins for the narrative's 'meat': for Margaret Blount 'the animals are not really themselves, but disguised people' (1974: 15); for Maria Nikolajeva they are, more specifically, 'always disguises for a child' (2002: 125). This pervasive sense that animals perform a camouflaging function dominates scholarship of children's animal fiction; criticism of a picturebook such as Sendak's almost always reads over the wild things themselves, seeing them only as stand-ins for something more important and human – be that as ciphers for colonised races (Shaddock 1997) or projections of the human psyche (Rollin 1999). Such a stance is, of course, in keeping with long-standing traditions of deploying animals for metaphorical or allegorical effect; from *Aesop's Fables* through Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945), animals *have* long been used to tell moral tales which have little to do with their animal tellers and which speak to concerns of a distinctly non-animal nature. Critics therefore look beyond the fur coats to determine what the real substance of the story might be: the creatures of Grahame's riverbank are the Edwardian masculine elite (Horne and White 2009); Bond's Paddington Bear is an immigrant traveller (Smith 2006); Kerr's tiger who came for tea is the invading force of Nazi Germany experienced by Jews during the Second World War (Sylvester 2002).

Yet while any one of these readings might offer insightful takes on the text at hand, it is questionable whether animals operate *purely* as a literary device, as if they are themselves transparent and entirely malleable. Tess Cosslett has explored this issue in *Talking Animals in British Children's Fiction, 1786–1914* (2006), one of the first critical works to focus on the place of children's literature in historical debates on animal rights. Cosslett examines how canonical children's fictions function to educate young readers in kindness to animals, placing them in the context of important milestones in animal protection movements and discussing forms ranging from the parable, to the wild animal story, to the animal autobiography. This final genre, which became popular from the eighteenth century and was generally authored by women, was often deployed to yoke together the concerns of the animal with that of the human – *Black Beauty* (1877), the most famous example, is read as simultaneously a children's book, slave narrative, feminist text, and treatise on the ethical treatment of horses. Yet while many authors have noted the human concerns at work in such texts, Cosslett makes the case that 'animal characters in these stories may be metaphors for slaves, women or children, but they are also metaphors for animals' (2006: 182). I would take that case a step further and venture that the symbolic function of animals *always* operates in tandem with their animal nature and can never be fully divorced from it, offering comment upon their real-world counterparts in a mode that might align with or, as often as not, defy the 'meaning' of the text. Anthropomorphism has complex consequences, continually reminding us of the interconnections and distinctions between the human and the animal in its prevalent use and misuse in the stories we tell. As such, children's fiction exposes the deep-rooted confusion over the animal that operates in

the human imagination – it is distinctly ironic that the dominant mode of teaching children to ‘be human’ is through the deployment of the animal spokesman.

Familial Animals: The Place of the Pet

One of the best gateways for exploring this tension is in texts for very young readers, and in particular those where animals *do not* speak. Putting words in animal mouths is, as we have seen, both literally and figuratively fraught with challenges; wordless picturebooks can thus explore animal-human play without the homogenising effects of animals ventriloquising human speech. Alexandra Day’s *Carl* series, which commences with *Good Dog, Carl* (1985), provides a case in point. This predominantly wordless narrative plays with the fantasy tradition of dog as nursemaid – as most famously evoked by J. M. Barrie’s employment of the Newfoundland dog, Nana, in the role – by having a Rottweiler left in charge of a young baby. The laissez-faire attitude to parental responsibility exhibited by the human mother as she leaves the house, for entirely unexplained reasons, gives the narrative a topsy-turvy feel from the opening which continues throughout, as Day offers a wry glance at the place of animals in the human domestic space. It is especially compelling that she chooses a Rottweiler for this caregiving role – a breed that was particularly vilified by the media during the late 1980s and early 1990s, and which continues to be considered one of the world’s most dangerous dogs because of its muscular stature and powerful bite.

At first glance, a text such as Day’s does little to discredit the overarching sense that animals function largely to serve humans and that anthropomorphism in children’s fiction is, if not providing a moral purpose, a device that aims merely to amuse young audiences. Certainly Carl does assume a role in this narrative that both accords with, and comically falls short of, human thresholds on the proper care of children. He is attentive to his duties to the baby – ensuring that she is fed, watered and variously entertained – but these activities involve a dunk in the fish tank and a comically excessive consumption of butter. Carl is also remarkably respectful of his environment, taking the trouble to clean up after the inevitable spills and mishaps that emerge through his attempts at parenting a human baby in a human space using human tools. As ‘unobtrusive as a piece of furniture’, Carl might be said to provide an exemplar case for those philosophers who lament the adoption of animals into the human home as ‘pets’ – who see them as catering ‘to the usual human vanity and competitiveness’ for a docile ‘product’ (Tuan 1984: 107–8) which is ‘sterilized or sexually isolated, extremely limited in exercise, deprived of almost all other animal contact, and fed with artificial foods’ (Berger 2009: 24). He is the embodiment of the paradox at work in his eponymous commendation ‘good dog’; his virtue lies in his ability to quell much of the animal energy that actually makes him canine.

Set alongside such a sceptical take on the pet as an inauthentic and fraudulent animal, however, one might venture that Day’s text is also carefully attuned to the complexities of the entangled roles humans and animals have in the real, lived experience of each other’s being, including the great responsibilities of service animals who ‘provide a very specific function for humans and are only truly valuable as long as they provide that function’ but also ‘form close bonds with their human guardians, in many cases becoming part of the family’ (DeMello 2012: 203). Day’s narrative resists heady anthropomorphism even as it employs it; Carl is shown engaged in human

activities, but he undertakes them in a specifically canine way – using his head to gently bump the baby back into her cot and mopping the floor with his tongue. The humour here lies as much in the playfully adept, bodily and distinctly animal way in which these actions are depicted as it does in their bizarre, simultaneous rejection and replication of human parenting norms. Day's realistic illustrations, which make little attempt visually to humanise Carl outside of his role as caregiver, ensure that he never fails to be visible to the reader *as a dog* in a companionable, physical and significant relationship with a human child. Such a connection here reminds us that part of Tuan's and Berger's case against pets – that they are isolated from all other animals – fails to acknowledge their 'contact with one animal in particular: the species *Homo sapiens*' (Fudge 2008: 24).

Yet at the same time, the narrative also exposes some of the more problematic slippages in a culture that sometimes struggles effectively to delineate when it comes to animals in the home. As James Serpell argues, dogs 'fulfil a childlike role in our society and, as perpetual children, we expect them to be forever innocent, playful and fun-loving' (1995: 253). The final pages of *Good Dog, Carl*, which sees the human mother/owner return to the household and immediately embrace her canine 'child' (her human child, tellingly, is not depicted), are demonstrative of the substitutive role animals can play in human lives by becoming children. For Haraway, such slippage is inherently dangerous: '[t]o regard a dog as a furry child, even metaphorically, demeans dogs and children – and sets up children to be bitten and dogs to be killed' (2003: 37). The symbolism and message of this deceptively simply picturebook is thus a complex mix of ideologically loaded depictions of the ontological play constantly enacted between humans and animals. As such, it both confronts and contributes to this risky business of living and thinking with companion species.

Animal Spectacle: The Place of the Zoo

If the home strips the animal of all that makes it distinctive and wild, 'co-opted into the family' in John Berger's term, then the zoo transforms that same wildness into 'the *spectacle*' (Berger 2009: 25). Nearly as frequently depicted as the domesticated pet, zoo animals feature prominently in children's fiction as well as in the experience of childhood, where a family day at the zoo is an archetypal outing. Alison Jay's picturebook *Welcome to the Zoo* (2009) shares with *Good Dog, Carl* both a wordless format and disruptive approach to norms of animal control, allowing it to be read as merely a playful romp around a colourful menagerie and as a text that might prompt more critical appraisal of the space. The book opens with a double-spread diagram of the zoo which takes an aerial point of view and lays out animal enclosures in a manner that accords with typical zoo maps, informing the visitor of the location of the giraffes, elephants, flamingos, zebras and so on. Although not focalised by one child or particular visitor, the rest of the story takes us on a journey around this map of the zoo, subtly encouraging the reader to trace paths and follow the actions of various animals and people from page to page. Most of the text's colourful charm, besides the beauty of the illustrations themselves, lies in the subversion of expectations of the zoo environment. The animals appear entirely free to leave their enclosures, lacking any obvious bars or fencing (with the strangely telling exception of the 'petting' section), and are thus able to move about the zoo interacting with each other and visitors. Distortions of scale

and perspective serve to enhance the drama of the space, as giraffes are fed via giant ladders, and an impossibly round elephant follows a keeper who carries an impossibly large toothbrush. The tone of the book is thus demonstrably light-hearted, as a hodge-podge of creatures and humans interact in subtle mini-stories, compelling the reader to find connections and delight in the minute details on every page.

Welcome to the Zoo thus offers no obvious critique of keeping animals in captivity – Jay’s chaotic menagerie is a site of pleasure and celebration, seemingly for both animals and humans alike. Yet the complete lack of cages is so obvious that it perversely makes the cage *more* conspicuous by its absence. There is no fixed agenda, restricted diet or order imposed on the animals which live there, creating a sense of commotion that is entirely at odds with the real zoo upon which it comments. As originally conceived, the zoological garden served as a glorification of man’s dominion, not only restricting its ‘specimens’ to extremely cramped quarters but also arranging them taxonomically in settings that ‘emphasized order over the chaotic world’ (Ritvo 1996: 47). More recently, zoos have attempted to dislocate themselves from that history, creating animal enclosures that appear more naturalistic and thus appeal to the changing tastes and demands of the viewing public, as well as meeting increased legislation on the keeping of animals in captivity. These revisions operate as much on a figurative as a literal level – consider, for example, the increased fashion for speaking not of ‘cages’ but of ‘habitats’ and ‘environments’. Yet sceptics have argued that shifts in modern zookeeping do little for the animals themselves, merely providing comfort for zoo spectators who find it more ‘emotionally and aesthetically satisfying to have them presented in a natural setting’ (Mullan and Marvin 1999: 78) and can thus be misled ‘to believe that wild animals can be at home in alien compounds’ (Malamud 1998: 107). Looking again at Jay’s *Welcome to the Zoo*, one wonders if the whole narrative might serve to highlight such dominion-inspired artifice. While it seems to provide a reference point for the fantasy of cage-free captivity, have readers simply been tricked into not seeing the bars? Although they may *appear* free to roam about, the riot of visual activity serves to obscure the fact that there is actually very little movement of animals between the spaces, with human spectators sticking to the paths and only the liminal figures of the human keepers entering animal arenas. The creative camouflage of mounds, trenches and other hidden barriers that function in modern zoo landscaping thus find their apex in Jay’s imaginative construction of seam-free dividers and can serve to prompt critical thinking about the possibilities and impossibilities of the zoo, ‘in which captivity is the elephant in the room, so to speak’ (Milstein 2013: 177).

Reading Jay’s picturebook through the lens of animal studies demonstrates that even light-hearted takes on the zoo problematise the restraining and displaying of animals. Many modern picturebooks depicting such spaces have been far more overt in their critique; Mini Grey’s *Jim* (2010), for example, makes the zoo a decidedly gloomy space, governed by impossible bylaws and restricting its occupants to incredibly small spaces. The book, which derives its text from Hilaire Belloc’s *Cautionary Tales for Children* (1907), yokes together the experiences of the pampered but neglected child with the captive lion, so that when the latter eats the former they both seem liberated by the act. Anthony Browne’s Kate Greenaway Medal-winning *Zoo* (1992) is a more obvious example still; his illustrations are designed to highlight the impossibility of the zoo as a place of seeing, with animals turned from the viewer or variously obscured, according with John Berger’s case that ‘in the zoo the view is always wrong’ (2009:

33). Browne's zoo epitomises Berger's sense that the animals 'seldom live up to adults' memories, whilst to the children they appear, for the most part, unexpectedly lethargic and dull' (ibid.), with the family's perfunctory visit almost as depressing to witness as the cramped, bleak conditions of the animals themselves.

Browne's picturebook is attentive to the real experience of zoo animals – highlighting, for example, the stereotypic behaviour demonstrated by most carnivores in captive environments – but his politicised take leans on historical standards to make the message more acute. Browne places many of his animals into the grade-listed buildings found at London Zoo – structures that are no longer deemed suitable to house the animals they were built for but which cannot be destroyed. As such, they serve as constant, physical and public beacons as to how animals have been kept and displayed. Browne's choice to put the animals back in these spaces is deliberately provocative and designed to push a particular agenda that, one might argue, lacks subtlety given its use of spaces long deemed unacceptable for animal habitation. But it serves as a reminder as to the principles behind captivity at a time when most zoos are more successful at the sleight of hand. It also, despite the historical backward glancing, can be read as a highly prophetic text. Browne's depiction of the face of a gorilla, sectioning as if within the cross-hairs of a gun's sight, cannot fail to be read all the more poignantly following the killing of Harambe at Cincinnati Zoo, when a young child climbed inside his enclosure in 2016. The same can be said for Katherine Applegate's Newbery-winning middle-grade novel, *The One and Only Ivan* (2012), in which the eponymous gorilla narrates the story of his miserable existence in a 'domain [. . .] made of thick glass and rusty metal and rough cement' (2012: 7) until he is eventually moved to a zoo that seems idyllic in comparison: 'I take my time going uphill, savoring the feel of grass on my knuckles. The breeze carries the shouts of children and the drowsy hum of bumblebees' (289). Loosely based on the real story of a gorilla who spent twenty-seven years of his life in a Washington shopping centre until being moved to an Atlanta zoo, *The One and Only Ivan* makes the zoo demonstrably the lesser of two evils. Yet even in the context of this more positive take, the narrative ends with a sense of disquiet concerning the necessity of keeping the gorilla behind a wall 'endless, clean and white [. . .] carefully built to keep us in and others out' (89–90). The need to see the animal restricted and separated from the human – and the tragic outcomes when those restrictions fail – serves to highlight the essential and impossible struggles and compromises that are the essence of captivity. As Ivan himself states: 'This is, after all, still a cage' (290).

Sentimental Stories: The Place of Feeling

Both Browne's *Zoo* and Applegate's *The One and Only Ivan* are highly emotive tales; the latter employs the animal as a first-person narrator to encourage empathetic response in young readers. For many critics, the positioning of the animal in this way is highly sentimental and thus largely inauthentic, but it can also be a powerful method to promote critical engagement with animal lives. David Whitley has made this case to particularly useful effect in relation to one of the most prevalent but academically derided mediums for communicating ideas about animals to young audiences. In *The Idea of Nature in Disney Animation*, Whitley contends that Disney's repeated attempts to 'make a play for our feelings' with cutesy animals brimming with charm and humour – which are generally read as 'signs of the inauthentic in Disney's aesthetic' (2008: 2) – can in fact generate profound acts of feeling capable of engendering

positive change in our affiliations with the natural world. In *Snow White* (1937), for example, Whitley reads the scene in which the animals assist with domestic tasks as playfully attuned to wildness; much like *Good Dog, Carl's* care for the human baby, the animals in the cottage use their bodies to complete the tasks in a manner that falls comically short of human expectations on hygiene, creating '[t]he estrangement that so delights' (26). In a more recent film, such as *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), viewers are moved similarly to delight in the provocative, alien power of wildness yoked together with civility, engendering the feelings of disappointment experienced by many when everything in the castle, Beast included, settles into forms so tediously human at the film's end. In both cases, the wild has a lure that goes beyond the sentimental and forms part of 'a rich tradition of films that are engaged with the question of how we relate to and understand the natural world of which we are ourselves part' (161).

What makes Whitley's text such an important intervention in the field of children's literature and animal studies is its valuing of nature as more than a mere symbol or cipher, as well as its investment in reading Disney animation outside of a critical tradition which sees it as tedious at best and sinister at worse. Amy Ratelle's more recent *Animality and Children's Literature and Film* (2015) takes a similar stance, looking at animated film produced beyond the Disney stable, like *Chicken Run* (2000) or *Princess Mononoke* (1997), alongside live-action films such as *Free Willy* (1993). Ratelle's book focuses 'on the ways in which these works present the boundary between humans and animals as, at best, permeable and in a state of continual flux' (2015: 4) and she chooses fictions that, like Whitley's corpus of Disney animations, use elements of the fantastic to comment on the condition of the animal in the real world.

Yet while it might be tempting to see some form of evolution in the representation of the animal in fiction – such as Whitley's case that *Finding Nemo* (2003) is 'a fable for our time' (2008: 137) or Ratelle's argument that *Dolphin Tale* (2011) intervenes in debates 'around legal personhood for animals like cetaceans' (2015: 138) – one must caution against linear readings from anthropocentric dominion to posthuman enlightenment. It is comforting to believe that we are better informed on animal-human relations 'now' than in some mythologised 'then', yet there is little evidence in the history of the literature we give to children to suggest that an unfettered or progressive education has occurred. Lewis Carroll's famously moral-free *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) – written more than 150 years ago in the middle of Darwin's overthrow of established delineations between humans and animals – offers one of the most philosophically sophisticated takes on human-animal union in the entire canon of children's fiction. J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* universe, which received its latest and most animal-focused instalment in the filmic release of *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2016), maintains a stance on human dominion over nature that dates back to Descartes. Much of the plot of *Fantastic Beasts*, in fact, is centred upon the disquieting results of the boundaries between the wild and the civilised becoming porous, as represented in the unlikely form of a travelling bag, the defective clasp of which continually allows magical animals to escape and roam the streets of Manhattan. One of Newt Scamander's earliest lines of dialogue, 'I must get that fixed', proves surprisingly prophetic in the context of a film in which the hero is he who can – albeit with a sensitivity and earnestness characteristic of the most ardent conservationist – reinstate the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' (as

much between humans and animals as between wizards and muggles). If early box-office takings for the film provide any measure of assessment, such a message remains remarkably popular.

What Marina Warner locates as the ‘optative’ function of fairy tales (themselves, of course, suffused with animal actors) might be said to apply to the entire body of children’s fiction: it is a domain capable of ‘announcing what might be’ (Warner 1995: xvi). Altering the predominantly anthropocentric stance on the world established in Ancient Greece is slow going, but children’s literature remains one of the most prevalent and overlooked places in which such questions are being asked. Crucially, it is not only in those obviously provocative or ‘posthuman’ works – such as Peter Dickinson’s *Eva* (1988) or Malorie Blackman’s *Pig Heart Boy* (1997) – that animal subjectivity becomes a site for speculation. Neither do more complex works offer greater space for ontological disruption, which can be found as much in the picturebook or animated film as in more canonical or literary fictions. Children’s acceptance of animal narrative – and adults’ continual deployment of it, despite the many reasons why it is counter-productive to a humanist cause – contains echoes of a shared understanding that there are other ways to be. As such, it offers a compelling, conflicted and camouflaged site for thinking through the question of the animal. Donna Haraway has made the case that by the late twentieth century ‘the boundary between human and animal is thoroughly breached’ with ‘many people no longer feel[ing] the need for such separation’ (1985: 68). Children’s literature, of course, *never* really felt the need.

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SPATIALITY IN FANTASY FOR CHILDREN

Jane Suzanne Carroll

IN RECENT YEARS, we have witnessed renewed scholarly interest in and emphasis on landscape, place, and space, particularly within the social sciences and the humanities. Indeed, ‘a profound conceptual and methodological renaissance’ (Warf and Arias 2008: 1) has occurred. This paradigmatic shift is what Denis Cosgrove terms the ‘spatial turn’ (1999: 7). The spatial turn has led to fresh engagement with the methodologies and approaches associated with geographical enquiry, and also to a renewed interest in viewing space not merely as the void in which activities occur, but as a ‘quintessential element in producing and structuring human life’ (Thoene 2016: 11). Critical interest in representations of space in art and literature has likewise increased. Robert T. Tally contends that spatial narratives – those organised around journeys and spatial transformations – have become increasingly dominant since the middle of the twentieth century. Tally connects this need to engage with space to a number of historical factors. He argues that decolonisation, the redrawing of geopolitical boundaries after the two world wars, cultural displacement, and the ‘massive movement of populations – exiles, émigrés, refugees, soldiers, administrators, entrepreneurs, and explorers – disclosed a hitherto unthinkable level of mobility in the world’ (2013: 13); the rise of new technologies that ‘repress distance’ (14) and the increased blurring of boundaries through digital spaces, have created a new fluidity, uncertainty, and opportunity in our relationship to spaces. Critical awareness of, and interest in, landscape had increased so that now, as Stephen Siddall remarks, ‘landscapes are more popular than any other subject’ (2009: 7).

For scholars of children’s literature, this spatial turn is really nothing new: a critical interest in landscapes and space was anticipated, even called for, from the very beginnings of children’s literature as an academic discipline. Among the potential research topics included in the very first issue of *Children’s Literature* (1972) is ‘landscape and mood in children’s stories’ (‘Areas for research’ 1972: 185), thus establishing landscape and spatiality as significant areas for enquiry. As many children’s texts ‘originate in a sense of place’ (Hunt 1994: 179) investigations into spatiality may be especially useful in opening up new methodological approaches to the study of children’s literature. Tony Watkins suggests that geographical studies and particularly cultural geography which explores ‘ideas of landscape, spatiality, utopia, globalisation, heritage and national identity, and geographies of gender and of race [. . .] could prove vital for the cultural study of children’s literature and media’ (2005: 67). Of these factors, Watkins suggests that landscape is the ‘most relevant’ (ibid.) for scholars of children’s literature and advocates a renewed interest in the interpretation and interrogation of landscape in texts for young readers. Interest in landscape and spatiality in children’s

literature exists, and is growing, with a wealth of critical responses dealing with spaces and places in all kinds of texts for young readers. There exist studies of specific texts or authors, such as my own *Landscape in Children's Literature* (2012) which used Susan Cooper's *The Dark is Rising* sequence (1965–77) as the basis for topoanalytical readings of four kinds of space: sacred spaces, green spaces, roadways, and lapsed spaces. There also exist a number of edited collections which bring together diverse critical responses to particular spaces and offer up rich interdisciplinary responses to spatiality. Some deal with recognisable, named places, such as Pádraic Whyte and Keith O'Sullivan's *Children's Literature and New York City* (2014), and others deal with conceptual as well as actual spaces, such as Maria Sachiko Cecire, Hannah Field, Kavita Mudan Finn and Malini Roy's edited collection *Space and Place in Children's Literature, 1789 to the Present* (2015). Most recently, Nina Goga and Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer's *Maps and Mapping in Children's Literature: Landscapes, Seascapes, and Cityscapes* (2017) engages with real cities like Berlin and Milan as well as fictional spaces like Middle Earth, and explores fantasy texts alongside realistic fiction. While spatiality is undoubtedly relevant in all kinds of fiction, it is perhaps most prominent in fantasy texts and so an understanding of space is crucial to our readings of fantasy. This chapter will explore recent trends in criticism dealing with representations of space and place in children's literature and will focus specifically on fantasy.

The quest-based nature of many fantasy narratives means that protagonists move through and experience different kinds of spaces and so a significant part of the worldbuilding, that is, the practice of making 'a world of logical internal cohesiveness, within the pages of the story' (Sullivan 1996: 304), associated with fantasy is the successful construction of a sophisticated and believable physical environment. A common strategy is to connect the fantasy world through mimesis to the real world, that is to say, linking a fictional, representational space to a geographical one. This strategy has been particularly emphasised in relation to British texts. As Louisa Smith explains 'in general terms, British fantasy, both domestic and "high" tends to be rooted in places: literature is often attached to a real or realistic place' (1996: 298). The wealth of connections between fictional and geographical places has, in some instances, led to a form of literary geography that involves little more than tracing simplistic correspondences between 'real' places and their fictional counterparts. This sort of literary geography was popularised in the twentieth century with books like Margaret Drabble's *A Writer's Britain: Landscape in Literature* (1979) and David Daiches and John Flower's *Literary Landscapes of the British Isles: A Narrative Atlas* (1979) treating space as inspirational milieu and Frank Barrett's *Where Was Wonderland: A Traveller's Guide to the Settings of Classic Children's Books* (1997) setting out routes for day-trips and walks for fans of children's literature. While Alberto Manguel and Gianni Gadalupi's *The Dictionary of Imaginary Places* offers a guidebook to an enormous number of invented and fantastic places, their list is 'deliberately restrict[ed] to places that a traveller could expect to visit' (1999: viii) and priority is given over to places that can 'be visited and are mapped in the real world' in which 'the authors looked upon real landscapes and installed on these landscapes their visions: The characters, the actions, were imaginary – not the places' (ibid.). However, as the editors of *Literary Geographies* note, such approaches are aimed at 'reader-tourists' (Hones et al.

2015: 2) and are now being superseded by more sophisticated critical approaches to spaces in fiction. So while Lyra's Oxford may seem to map very well onto the city that is located at 51.7520° N, 1.2577° W, there are far more interesting things to say about Pullman's fictional representation of the city than simply that it looks very much like Oxford.

Fantasy is a broad and amorphous genre and there is an appropriate plurality of critical and theoretical approaches to spatiality in the genre. My discussion is spatially limited, and so I will focus my investigation on two key subgenres of fantasy: high fantasy or immersive fantasy, which is entirely set within a fantastic realm, and portal or portal-quest fantasy, in which the narrative action moves between a consensual reality and a fantastic space. In this chapter, I borrow Farah Mendlesohn's (2008) terms for these subcategories of fantasy, and her arguments about the ways fantasy novels can be understood in terms of their narrative and spatial patterning underpin my discussion here. I will examine these subgenres in relation to two major areas of spatial interest: mapping and topoanalysis. I will first consider the use of maps as paratexts in immersive fantasy texts, and propose that we read them not as cartographic texts but as illustrative pieces which complement the verbal text. I will then consider the portal as topos in relation to portal fantasy and outline the recent developments in topoanalysis which springs from twentieth-century geographical approaches to landscape. This section argues that many of the spaces depicted in literary texts are drawn from deeply-embedded commonplaces in Anglophone cultures and fantasy authors deliberately reuse the same topos in portal fantasies.

Framing Fantasy Worlds

While they may initially seem to have little in common, both paratexts and portals can be considered as framing devices and both, therefore, perform a similar role in shaping and ordering fantasy narratives. Brian Attebery suggests that: 'most fantasy writers provide clearly defined frames: narrative devices that establish a relationship between the fantasy world and our own while at the same time separating the two' (1992: 66). For Attebery, these frames join while holding separate – they give shape and structure, not only to the fantasy world, but also to the space between the text and the reader. Sarah Gilead notes the necessity for fantasy to include 'a frame around the fantasy, re-establishing the fictional reality of the opening' (1991: 227). While Attebery and Gilead are both writing about narrative frames, I contend that such narrative devices are often supported, reinforced, and echoed by physical frames. Both the maps and the portals which I will discuss function as frames, or, perhaps more accurately, as borders between the fantasy space and real space. Gérard Genette conceptualises the paratext as a kind of threshold. He writes:

More than a boundary or a sealed border, the paratext is, rather, a *threshold*, or [. . .] a 'vestibule' that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back. It is an 'undefined zone' between the inside and the outside, a zone without any hard and fast boundary on either the inward side (turned towards the text) or the outward side (turned towards the world's discourse about the text). (1997: 1–2; original emphasis)

For Genette, the paratext has a spatial function. It is a zone through which the reader must pass, a borderland that separates while simultaneously connecting the world of the text with the world of the reader. It is a space ‘not only of transition but also of transaction’ (2). The portals that give portal fantasy its name fulfil the same function: they offers connection while simultaneously illuminating the distinctions between two different kinds of space. In the case of portal fantasies, the ‘inward side’ is turned toward the fantasy realm and the ‘outward side’ is the primary world of consensual reality. Both paratexts and portals, then, support transaction between fantasy and reality and provide a space in which these contrasting forces may coexist.

In reading these thresholds, we may usefully turn to Mikhail Bakhtin’s ‘chronotope of the threshold’. For Bakhtin, all literary genres have their own distinct chronotope, a term that describes ‘the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature’ (1981: 84). This is certainly the case in children’s fantasy: while many fantasy texts involve travelling through time, the fantasy narrative is indelibly linked to space and so there is a strong bond between the spatial and temporal elements. Even in texts such as Philippa Pearce’s *Tom’s Midnight Garden* (1958), where the central character travels between two times, the action is supported and framed by the physical space of the garden. Similarly, Penelope Lively’s *The Driftway* (1972) fuses the spatial journey with a temporal one, and impresses on the reader the interconnected nature of space and time. As a landscape historian, Lively is perhaps uniquely positioned to write such a narrative but the connection between space and time, between spatiality and temporality, is played out in many children’s fantasy texts from Mrs Molesworth’s *The Cuckoo Clock* (1877), to Alan Garner’s *The Stone Book Quartet* (1976–8), to Kate Thompson’s *The New Policeman* (2005). Of the many chronotopes Bakhtin identifies, the chronotope of the threshold is the most relevant for my discussion of paratexts and portals. Bakhtin argues that ‘the word “threshold” itself already has a metaphorical meaning in everyday usage [. . .] In literature the chronotope of the threshold is always metaphorical and symbolic, sometimes openly but more often implicitly’ (1981: 248). The act of crossing the threshold is, therefore, both literal and figurative. The paratexts and the portals I will discuss in this chapter signal on both a topographical level, and on a metaphorical one. While these thresholds act as the physical boundaries between fantasy and reality, they also facilitate encounters between these worlds: in the paratextual map, the reader encounters the world of the text for the first time and, similarly, in the portal fantasy, the physical portal is also the symbolic space in which fictional characters meet a new world. In this threshold space, the reader and the character may hesitate on the edge of this new world, poised in the border zone before plunging on ahead. The threshold provides a space – literal and symbolic, physical and temporal – in which to apprehend and assess the differences between the two worlds.

Maps in High Fantasy

The fantasy map physically frames the narrative and facilitates the encounter between the reader and the world of the text. In rendering the imagined space as a physical one, the fantasy map serves to induct the reader into the world of the text. Björn Sundmark observes that ‘maps anchor fantasies to the real world’ (2014:163). The map

bridges the gap between the world of the story and the world of the readers. While Stefan Ekman (2013) argues that the map should be treated as a docume – a small part of a greater document – its location in the endpapers or with the front matter confers on it the status of paratext. So while the map may appear to lend a sense of fixity and certainty to the text it accompanies, it is itself an ambiguous and indeterminate thing, caught on the borders between reality and fantasy. The literary map becomes what Genette terms a ‘threshold [. . .] a liminal space between the actual world of the reader and the fictional world of the story’ (1997: 2). The map, then, acts as a kind of frame – a border that marks the limits of fantasy text even as it describes the limits of the fantasy world. Through the map, the world of the reader becomes contiguous with the world of the text.

In facing the world of the reader and the world of the text, literary maps have a ‘doubled identity’ (Bushell 2012: 153). They straddle the border between artistic representation and empirical record, between connotation and denotation, between fiction and fact. They are two-faced things, or perhaps Janus-faced, poised on the threshold and looking both ways. Mark Monmonier observes that even ‘a good map tells a multitude of little white lies; it suppresses truth to help the user see what needs to be seen’ (2014: 25). Denis Cosgrove (1999: 7) uses the example of the coastline to illustrate these sorts of lies, noting that in reality there is no clear line where the land ends and the sea begins, but rather a mutable zone which changes depending on the height of the tide, the time of the year, and various other factors. The line drawn by the cartographer which we recognise as the ‘coastline’ reflects not the hard truth of where earth and water meet but a subjective interpretation of this space. The fixity of the coastline – and indeed of other marks on the map – is illusory. Some of the lies maps tell are more ideologically sophisticated. For instance, maps drawn using Mercator’s Projection, which prioritises a Eurocentric worldview, distort the land masses of the earth, exaggerating the size of territories in the Northern Hemisphere and shrinking those areas, such as South America and Africa, which were colonised by European peoples (Monmonier 2014: 94–6). In these maps, an ideological position takes precedence over the actual topography.

Fictional maps are similarly untrustworthy. With the exception of a few personalised maps, such as Thrór’s Map showing a part of Middle Earth from J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Hobbit* (1937) and Captain Flint’s map in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* (1883) which both have a named cartographer, the maps presented alongside fictional texts often efface the traces of any cartographer. This anonymity lends them further autonomy. Thus, maps are often presented as authoritative documents, as texts which present an objective truth about a particular territory. As a result, Sally Bushell argues, readers tend to see a literary map as a ‘neutral scientific object [that is] objective and absolute in its meanings’ (2012: 153) even though it is clear that these fictional maps are not made by professional cartographers and even though the map is attached to and bound up with a work of fiction. People ‘trust maps’ (Monmonier 2014: 87). This trust is what persuades us that the fictional map lends verisimilitude and authority to the fictional world. In *The Tough Guide to Fantasyland*, Diana Wynne Jones lampoons fantasy maps, highlighting their inaccuracies and their unreliability:

Find the MAP. It will be there. No Tour of Fantasyland is complete without one. It will be found in the front part of your brochure [. . .] Examine the Map. It will show most of a continent (and sometimes part of another) with a large number of

bays, offshore islands, an inland sea or so and a sprinkle of towns. There will be scribbly snakes that are probably RIVERS, and names made of CAPITAL LETTERS in curved lines that are not quite upside-down. [. . .] These may be names of countries, but since most of the Map is bare it is hard to tell [. . .] In short, the Map is useless, but you are advised to keep consulting it, because it is the only one you will get. (Jones 2004: 1–2)

Jones' tone may be facetious but the criticisms she levels at the maps in fantasy texts are valid: these maps are often 'useless' in the sense that they do not have the same function as maps of real places. While maps in the real world show political, cultural, administrative, areas, and may even demarcate religious territories, in addition to the geographical and geological information, fantasy maps are often, as Jones suggests, 'bare'. They seldom include even basic topographical information such as contour marks, soundings, latitude or longitude. Stefan Ekman observes in his survey of fantasy mapping that few fantasy maps contain a scale or even a proper legend or key to the symbols used, and as many as three-quarters of fantasy maps contain no information about where on the globe they are situated, or even if the fantasy world is a globe at all (2013: 30–5). Literary maps cannot, therefore, serve as tools for orientation and navigation in the same sense that real maps do. The typical fantasy map offers a representation of a space, not an accurate record of one. It has a very different function. The clue to the role of the fantasy map lies in the way these maps engage with cartographic conventions – fantasy maps often have the superficial appearance of real maps. They include coastlines, hill signs, and other features that encourage the reader to identify them as cartographic texts. The fantasy map is a persuasive tool, one that serves to convince the reader that the world in which the narrative takes place is authentic. Because the map exists, it follows that there is a territory which may be mapped. The fantasy map engages with familiar, identifiable, semiotic codes, not merely to evoke a particular setting as a real map does, but to persuade the reader that this setting is not unrealistic.

While there have been many books written about cartography and the role of maps as cultural artefacts, there has been comparatively little serious consideration of literary maps in children's literature. Nina Goga and Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer's edited collection on maps and mapping in children's literature (2017) and a recent special issue of *Children's Literature in Education*, edited by Anthony Pavlik and Hazel Skeeky Bird, redress the balance, providing investigations into practical and metaphorical mapping in children's literature. Pavlik and Bird highlight the 'productively interdisciplinary' nature of the current critical work on mapping and argue eloquently for the 'ample possibilities for future scholarship' (2017: 1–5). Indeed, there is much work still to be done. As recently as 2014, Björn Sundmark could note that 'although a great deal of work has been done on visual and verbal signifiers in picture books, other types of iconotexts – covers, frontispieces, illustrated books, and maps – have been neglected so far' (2014: 164). Though there is rich discussion of visual material in children's texts and a corresponding wealth of theoretical and methodological approaches to images, maps are not often counted among the illustrations or images that occupy critical attention. J. B. Harley complains that 'even philosophers of visual communication [. . .] have tended to categorize maps as a type of congruent diagram [. . .] different from art or painting' (1992: 234). The tendency to treat maps

as something separate to other kinds of visual media has meant that maps have been critically overlooked (Ekman 2013: 15). Perhaps our resistance to reading maps as illustration stems, firstly, from the fact that they are often the sole visual representation, barring the cover art, in otherwise purely verbal texts and, secondly, from the fact that they appear modally complex. The collocation of visual and verbal and, sometimes, numeric information within the maps seems to demand a special sort of reading. Clare Ranson, writing in 1995, asserts that child readers are ‘now less skilled in cartographic recognition techniques’ (164) than their nineteenth-century counterparts and suggests that modern child readers may struggle to read the maps included in fictional texts. Denis Wood argues that on the contrary

A kid picks up *Winnie-The-Pooh* and makes complete sense of the map on the endpapers . . . without having had the slightest instruction in map reading. Another opens *The Hobbit* and, though the map lacks a legend, is nonetheless able to follow Bilbo and the dwarves across Wilderland [. . .] because the map is not apart from its culture but instead a *part* of its culture. [. . .] It is because we grow up into, effortlessly develop into, this culture . . . which is the culture of the map. (1993: 143; original emphasis)

Although maps are ‘rich iconotexts’ (Sundmark 2014: 163) which simultaneously present verbal and visual information – often with words superimposed over images – requiring the reader to draw on a sophisticated set of skills in order to read and interpret the cartographic information, much of this visual literacy is deeply culturally embedded. The map, Wood argues, ‘is not an alien form that came from outer space but a synthesized system of supersigns we all grew up with [. . .] it sort of comes with the territory’ (1993: 144). Rather than seeing the maps of imagined spaces as cartographic texts, it may be more useful to treat them as illustrations, as visual texts which act as ‘spatial glosses’ (Billman 1982: 40), supplying the reader with information that supports and enhances the verbal material in the text.

If we treat literary maps as a special category of illustration and apply the codes we use when dealing with other multimodal texts, the maps start to offer us more information about the texts they accompany. Reading the map alongside the text, as something that complements and extends the meaning of the verbal text, opens up fresh understandings of space for the reader. For example, Garth Nix’s maps of Ancelestierre and the Old Kingdom in the *Old Kingdom/Abhorsen* series (1995–2014) contain many clues to the nature of these divided territories long before Nix is able to reveal this same information within the written text. This map clearly shows a physical division between the two spaces, a stepped line on one side evocative of a crenulated wall, and a dashed line on the other which looks much the same as the dashed lines which are used to depict roads on this map. On the northern side, the line is labelled ‘the wall’ and on the southern side, the line is called ‘the perimeter’. The reader is thus introduced to the notion that two very different kinds of discourse are at play within this world.

The divisions between the Old Kingdom and Ancelestierre are further emphasised by Nix’s decision to include two separate navigational tools: a compass rose and a scale rule. These two tools reflect the nature of these neighbouring territories and the two modes of life present in this world. The compass rose points due North – in fact this is the only direction marked on it at all – to the Old Kingdom, a pre-industrial

world of magic and non-mechanised travel. The scale is associated by its position with Ancelstierre, a space where modern technology and mechanised travel have taken root. Whereas the rose points to an older, vaguer, more instinctual sort of travel, the scale evokes authority, measurement, and a more controlled, and controlling, relationship with the landscape. The authority of the scale is, perhaps, a little undermined by the presence of a little arrow on the centre bottom of the map accompanied by the words ‘To Ancelstierre proper’ which suggests that the area of Ancelstierre around the perimeter wall, indeed the only part of Ancelstierre depicted on this map, is somehow ‘improper’, an edgeland on the very outskirts of the country. Thus, even before the narrative begins, the reader may deduce that in these stories the authority and power of Ancelstierre will be undermined. The prominence of the borderline between Ancelstierre and the Old Kingdom suggests, even at this preliminary stage, a struggle for power within this landscape. The divided nature of this territory, and the complex issues of power within this world, are communicated quickly and effectively through the pictorial map.

Doorways in Portal Fantasy

So far I have focused on maps as a means of fixing and making visible the imagined spaces of fantasy texts but there are other ways to explore the spaces of fantasy. As Tally points out, ‘the presence of actual maps is not a requirement for literary cartography, literary geography, or geocriticism’ (2013: 5). Indeed, Ekman’s study suggests that no more than 40 per cent of fantasy texts include maps at all (Ekman 2013: 22). I want to turn now to portal fantasy, and to topoanalysis, which offers a way to read landscapes through ‘types’ of spaces. Approaching landscape in terms of its constituent parts rather than reading it as a complex whole may be particularly useful in dealing with literary landscapes because these imagined spaces are rarely complete and whole – we are not given every detail, nor provided with the opportunity to explore the landscape fully or freely. Therefore, we may find it useful to focus our discussions of spaces on particular component elements of the fictional world. This structuralist approach to space is rooted in early twentieth-century morphology. Around the same time that Vladimir Propp was writing his *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928), Carl Ortwin Sauer was developing ‘The morphology of landscape’ (1925). Just as Propp identified commonalities within narratives, Sauer identified formal patterns in landscape. As a geographer, Sauer was interested in elements like soil type, drainage, and the presence of particular kinds of rock formations, but his idea of breaking down a large and complex landscape into its component factors provides the basis for a useful methodological approach. By considering literary landscapes in terms of their irreducible elements, literary geographers may borrow from Sauer’s morphology to see fictional landscapes as being similarly composed of particular recurring elements.

These recurring elements are properly called *topoi* – a word that allows us to consider both the place and the narrative actions that habitually occur within it. *Topoi*, then, are typical, even stereotypical, sites within cultural imaginings of particular kinds of spaces. Emer O’Sullivan writes of stereotypes as a kind of ‘literary shorthand which triggers an extensively pre-programmed actualization of associations’ (O’Sullivan 2005: 39–40). This sort of ‘shorthand’ allows authors to produce apparently complex

landscapes which are culturally and intertextually resonant without resorting to long-winded description.

Topoanalytical investigations – that is, readings which are concerned with particular topoi – are relatively common. Pamela K. Gilbert observes that:

work in literary and cultural studies has tended in two directions: one is concerned with ‘actual’ spaces – the space of proper nouns, so to speak (the London of Defoe, the Paris of Zola, or even Dickens’s fictional but highly specific Bleak House) – and one is more concerned with a ‘type’ of space: the city, the factory, the home. (2009: 105)

In recent years there has been a number of investigations into particular ‘types’ of spaces in children’s literature. Of all the topoi, those connected with domestic spaces are particularly popular subjects. For Gaston Bachelard these ‘quite simple images of felicitous spaces’ (1994: xxxv) carry a wealth of emotional and cultural associations that render them particularly resonant and provoke deep imaginative responses. A number of critics including Lois Kuznets (1978), Virginia Wolf (1990), and Pauline Dewan (2004) have offered sophisticated readings of the representation of houses and domestic spaces in children’s texts.

The production of space through topological set-pieces becomes especially apparent when there is a clear juxtaposition between two very different kinds of space as in portal fantasies where the borders of the home world press up against the edges of another world. In her seminal *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (2008), Farah Mendlesohn proposes that fantasy texts can be categorised based on their narrative patterning and notes that some of these narrative patterns are bound up with geographical and spatial functions too: as the character passes through the portal into the fantasy world, ‘nonspecific landscape is unrolled liked a carpet in front of the character’ (12). For Mendlesohn, these landscape set-pieces are ‘contrived’ spaces (*ibid.*) but their contrivance shows how many authors are engaging with and adhering to topological conventions.

For example, in portal fantasies when characters pass from the mundane realm to the fantastic realm or vice versa, the transition between worlds is often spatially coded. In passing through the aperture of the rabbit hole into Wonderland, through the nursery window into Neverland, through the gap between two standing stones on the Chalk of the Discworld into fairyland, characters in children’s portal fantasies cross from one world into another via a physical frame. Doors are particularly common portals as they literally and figuratively control passage between one place and another, between one state of being and another. Just as the paratextual map is two-faced, the doorway ‘awakens in us a two-way dream’ (Bachelard 1994: 224). Like the map, this threshold highlights the difference between two spaces whilst simultaneously connecting them.

The moment when both character and reader become aware for the first time that there is another world, a wider, stranger, fantastic world that exists alongside the primary space is a crucial one in portal fantasy. This moment of recognition and transition has become a generic and topological convention, a set-piece where inside and outside, domestic and wild, safe and dangerous, small and big are juxtaposed. This set-piece is robustly connected to a topos: the portal. The physical appearance and the narrative function of the portal are bound together. Firstly, the portal is usually

marked visually; the differences between the primary and the secondary world are visible to the naked eye and the passage between the two worlds is often clearly framed by a window, a doorway, or another kind of physical or architectural frame. Secondly, the threshold is a zone of indecision and there is generally a moment when the character pauses before and just after passing through the portal. This framing device calls attention to the separation between the two worlds while simultaneously showing the connection between them. For example, in Alan Garner's *Elidor* (1965), the front door of the house is also the portal between England and Elidor:

Roland braced himself on to his toes and looked with one eye through a gap between the letterbox frame and its hinge. [. . .] It was nowhere that he recognised. In his narrow angle of vision there was nothing but mountains: peaks, crags, ice, and black rock stabbed upwards. The porch seemed to be at the top of a cliff, of a knife-backed ridge. Roland had the sensation of a sheer drop behind him in the room. (103)

Here, the threshold of the front door marks the division between night and day, interior and exterior, warmth and cold. Yet, these stark divisions do not strengthen the distinctions between the primary world and the secondary world, but rather facilitate the blurring together of these two spaces: as he looks, Roland feels that the physical reality of the primary world is conflated with that of the secondary world.

Garner may be drawing from and developing a narrative and spatial set-piece developed in an older text, one that Mendlesohn describes as 'the most familiar and archetypal portal fantasy' (2008: 1). Throughout C. S. Lewis's Narnia series (1950–6), the portals between the primary and secondary worlds lend form to both the fantasy landscape and to the narrative action. In these books characters are often looking out of windows, peering into doorways, pausing on thresholds: in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1955) the children are sucked into Narnia through a framed painting, in *The Last Battle* (1956) heaven is accessed through a stable door. In *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1950), the movement between the primary world and the secondary world is framed by the wardrobe. The first of these transitions shows how clearly Lewis has assimilated the portal topos in his fiction. Lucy Pevensie walks into the wardrobe and:

A moment later she found she was standing in the middle of a wood at night-time with snow under her feet and snowflakes falling through the air. [. . .] she looked back over her shoulder and there, between the dark tree-trunks, she could still see the open doorway of the wardrobe and even catch a glimpse of the empty room from which she had set out. (Lewis 1980: 14–15)

The difference between the two worlds is represented as a series of visual contrasts: on the one hand, there is an interior space, in summertime and daylight, on the other, an outdoor space in winter and at twilight. The movement from England to Narnia is a movement from the closed and contained to the open and unlimited and brings an awareness of an impossibly widening landscape which promises widening experiences. Yet this widening world is connoted with only a few bare words 'a wood at night-time' and 'snow'. Lewis relies on the reader's ability to recognise the associations of 'home' and of 'woodland' to construct a landscape where two very different kinds of space

are pushed together. Lucy is initially unaware that she is moving into another world and the framing device of the wardrobe is only recognised retrospectively. She cannot glimpse the Narnian wood through the open door of the wardrobe, yet, once she is in Narnia, she is able to see through the thicket of trees and fur coats to the spare room beyond.

By contrast, Edmund's experience of the difference between two worlds is aural rather than visual. When he moves through the wardrobe he is conscious that 'his own voice had a curious sound – not the sound you expect in a cupboard but an open-air sound' (35). Edmund does not look back and so the wardrobe does not act as a clear visual threshold between England and Narnia on this occasion, but because the reader has already been inducted into the system of representations that Lewis invokes this does not matter. England is signified by interior, daytime, warmth and summer, Narnia by exterior, twilight, coldness and winter. Edmund experiences Narnia as 'a strange, cold, quiet place' (36) – a brutally stark description – but one which is sufficient to trigger the set of associations that allows the reader to recognise the topos. As a character who talks to himself quite a lot in the early part of the narrative, Edmund finds the quiet of this new world unsettling and his first reaction on entering Narnia is to shiver (36), an involuntary physical response which is echoed in the 'shudder' that passes through Will Parry when he first steps from England into Cittàgazze in Pullman's *The Subtle Knife* (Pullman 1997: 16). This shiver indicates that the transition from one world to another is registered through and by the child's body. The landscape is not merely looked at, but experienced sensually.

While Deirdre F. Baker takes issue with the lack of variation in portal fantasy worlds, arguing that 'the sameness of the geographical layout determines a sameness in simplistic moral or metaphysical vision' (2006: 242), I believe it is a mistake to think of these fantasy landscapes as blandly stereotypical. Rather, by using topoi, the authors can draw on a wealth of cultural associations which enable the reader to imaginatively engage with the fictional space. The use of topoi lends richness and resonance to the depictions of space without the need to resort to complex worldbuilding. The spatial set-pieces are not a sign of laziness or a lack of innovation, but an indication that an author has engaged deliberately with recognised spatial codes. The portal topos frames and orders the narrative and provides a recognisable threshold between the primary, familiar world, and the secondary, unfamiliar world, thereby supporting the reader in their engagement with the fantasy space.

Further Developments

In this chapter I have focused on physical spaces but I do not wish to imply that these are the only kinds of spaces worth investigating. Indeed, Warf and Arias note that Henri Lefebvre argues for the need to understand space 'not simply as a concrete, material object, but also as an ideological, lived, and subjective one' (Warf and Arias 2009: 3) and the lived and embodied spaces of children's fantasy have rich potential for critical investigation. In their introduction to *Space and Place in Children's Literature*, Cecire et al. note that:

a recurring characteristic of canonical children's literature in English is the designation of special spaces of childhood into which only children may pass. The

frequency of these locations in beloved works for young people is a testament to the way in which childhood itself is often seen as a world apart, with its own logic and landmarks that distinguish it from adult reality. (2015: 1)

Seeing childhood as possessing ‘landmarks’, characterising it not simply as a temporal zone but as a spatial territory too, raises questions about how this space might be bounded, controlled, and negotiated. We have also witnessed a surge of critical investigation into lived and experienced space and some sophisticated work on the mind as a sort of space. While psychogeography is most securely connected with cities and with representations of urban and suburban spaces in modernist literature, at its root it is primarily about the relationship between space and human experience of space. Even as far back as Barrie’s *Peter and Wendy* (1911) we see an interest within children’s literature in the correlation between the internal spaces of the mind and the geographical world. In recent years, there has been increased engagement with the mind and memory in spatial terms. Alison Waller analyses the ‘fusion of memory and geography’ (2010: 306) and traces the intimate connections between ‘remembered landscapes and remembered selves’ (303). Maria Nikolajeva (2016) reflects on the way the mind encounters and responds to fictional spaces and investigates the cognitive challenges of xenotopia.

The diversity of critical responses to spatiality in children’s literature studies is matched by the varied creative responses to changes in our everyday spatial practices offered by children’s fantasy. For example, texts like Susan Cooper’s *Green Boy* (2002), Saci Lloyd’s *The Carbon Diaries: 2015* (2008), and Timothée de Fombelle’s *Toby Alone* (2009) have responded loudly and defiantly to global climate disaster and the destruction of ecosystems with a wave of ecologically-focused texts in which the quest is not to recover a magical object nor to rescue a damsel but to secure new environmental hope for the planet (see further Alice Curry’s chapter (5) in this volume). Similarly, recent dystopian young adult fiction explores possible worlds in which natural resources are limited and space – both physical space and personal freedom – is compromised. Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games* trilogy (2008–10) and Veronica Roth’s *Divergent* series (2011–13) have made excellent use of urban spaces and edge-lands, that is areas that lie in the borders between wilderness and civilisation, allowing characters like Katniss Everdeen and Beatrice Prior who are physically and socially marginalised to move beyond the limits of their cultural roles. We have also seen children’s fantasy texts like Conor Kostick’s *Avatar* series (2004–11) which engage directly with cyberspace and problematise the relationship between space and personal identity.

The spatial turn has not led to any formalised academic approach to the functions of landscapes in literature and many critics, myself included, have tended to cherry-pick aspects of geographical and spatial enquiry to supplement our investigations into fictional spaces, dipping in and out of geography, landscape history, cultural studies, and myriad other disciplines. This lack of coherence has meant that some critics see recent critical approaches to landscapes in literature as being ‘theoretically dormant’ (Johnson 2007: 1). On the other hand, Neal Alexander argues, ‘that there is currently general disagreement over what literary geography means, as both paradigm and practice, is not necessarily cause for despondency but may in fact be a sign of vitality’ (2015: 5). The range of theoretical and methodological responses to spatiality are indicative of a multiplicitous and dynamic area of critical enquiry.

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A QUESTION OF SCALE: ZOOMING OUT AND ZOOMING IN ON FEMINIST ECOCRITICISM

Alice Curry

ECOFEMINISM, OR WHAT is now more popularly, and less controversially, termed ‘feminist ecocriticism’, has arisen through the critical insight that we can apply many of the principles unearthed through decades of feminist study to humanity’s relationship with the environment. The power-laden constructivist discourses that have led to the exploitation and backgrounding of women throughout history and across cultures have much in common with the controlling discourses of environmental marginalisation and exploitation that have led to escalating environmental crises. Both male-female and human-earth relationships have historically been, and in many cases still are, riddled with inequalities and have resulted in widely differing rights, privileges and material states for women and the environment respectively. Women have been viewed as possessions, suffered definition through a male gaze and had basic rights and freedoms denied them. The environment has been viewed as a resource, defined through its use value to humans – either for trade or tourism – and animals in particular have suffered innumerable abuses. For much of our history, neither women nor the environment have had any means of challenging their subordinated status. Feminist ecocriticism seeks to identify both women and the environment in a comparative analysis whereby the socio-political structures that consolidate power imbalances are not only identified but also acknowledged for the many ways in which they intersect (for a useful overview of key works of feminist ecocriticism over the past four decades, see the ‘Introduction’ to Gaard, Estok and Oppermann’s 2013 *International Perspectives in Feminist Ecocriticism*).

Greta Gaard, a leading feminist ecocritic, provides an overview of some of the key theoretical terrain currently under exploration in feminist ecocriticism:

[E]cocriticism speaks in multiple feminist voices that draw attention to such issues as sexual and environmental justice; women’s active roles in environmental, social, and interspecies justice issues; as well as questions around gendered bodies, postcolonial ecofeminist concerns, feminist re-working of affect theory, posthumanist analyses of power, gender, and ecology, and green queer theories. (2013: 1)

Where all facets of Gaard’s ecocritical engagement would turn a useful lens on children’s books with an environmental agenda, I would like to highlight one in particular – posthumanism – as an approach that intersects with contemporary children’s literature criticism and can therefore inform and expand our current critical readings of children’s

texts in potentially transformative ways. Where children's literature scholarship tends to favour a definition of the posthuman as a hybrid being interdependent on new and emerging technologies (see, for instance, Victoria Flanagan's recent *Technology and Identity in Young Adult Fiction: The Posthuman Subject* (2014), and her chapter (2) in this volume), feminist ecocriticism expands this definition to a wider-scale concept of material embodiment. As Serpil Oppermann contends, 'the emerging discipline of posthumanist studies . . . has brought about a profound epistemic shift with new configurations of intertwined physical and social, material and discursive understandings of the relations between the human and the more-than-human world' (2013: 25). It is posthumanism's capacity to destabilise the boundaries of individual human selfhood that allows for its application both to a study of childhood – the definition of which is forever being reworked, as evidenced recently by David Rudd's (2013) 'heretical' approach – and to an ecocritical reading of human embeddedness.

The posthuman subject is one whose body is inextricably enmeshed in the material world, be that the air we breathe, the toxins we ingest, or the technologies we rely on. It is a subject perceived at the microcosmic level, attuned to the 'myriads of visible and invisible agents of the material world (bacteria, viruses, toxic chemicals, food, water, energy)' that assail the human body (Opperman 2013: 25). On the opposite end of the spectrum is the macrocosmic, or 'ecoglobal' perspective – a term arising from Gaard's delineation of 'ecoglobalism' as a viewpoint concomitant with 'the whole earth image' seen from space (2010: 658). When the earth is 'seen from such a distance', Gaard contends, 'we do not see such simultaneously personal and political experiences as military occupation . . . toxic waste, social injustice, human and interspecies oppression' (ibid.). In a move that mirrors the historical trajectory of ecofeminism itself – with early proponents exploring essentialised notions of woman-earth connection and later moving towards a more nuanced reading of the differing material responsibilities borne by diverse women (in the plural) in diverse social and environmental contexts – Gaard challenges us to forgo the wide-angle lens that obscures 'personal and political experiences' and to recognise human-earth interdependence and our ecological embeddedness on a scale that makes the personal *also* deeply political.

Heather Sullivan proposes a paradigm she terms 'dirt theory' as an 'antidote to nostalgic views rendering nature a far-away and "clean" site' – Gaard's ecoglobal image – arguing instead that it is precisely because 'dirt, soil, earth and dust surround us at all scales', that '[l]ooking at dirty nature [can] allow a close-up and human-scale view of the environment, yet one that is inevitably interconnected with broader views, too' (2012: 515). In feminist ecocriticism's aspiration to take into account 'the actual matter of bodies and things', as Sullivan puts it, it can draw from posthumanist discourse a commitment to macrocosmic environmental reappraisal *through* the microcosmic redefinition of the individual human agent (517). Taking material ecocriticism and 'dirt theory' as our measure, it is possible to turn to children's books with an environmental agenda and look at their imbrication of scales and spaces to extrapolate a clear position regarding environmental responsibility.

I contend, then, that the distinctly posthumanist turn in feminist ecocritical studies has much to offer a study of environmental responsibility in children's literature. Clémentine Beauvais' recent success in applying a new lens to radical or transformative children's literature is of further help in teasing out the significance of such an analysis. In her article 'Little tweaks and fundamental changes', she argues that

a subject-specific treatment of political radicalism – a comparative analysis, for instance, between texts with an environmental agenda – can lay bare one important facet of the texts’ engagement with radicalism, yet can ‘remain impervious’ to any aesthetic variations or to the scope of the social and political transformation such texts seek to encourage (2014: 20). In other words, while a set of texts may have justifiable cause to be viewed in light of one another’s treatment of environmentalism, such texts might have little in common with respect to the level of personal responsibility allocated to the texts’ protagonists or to the burden of responsibility borne by the implied reader.

Beauvais’ useful refusal to segment transformative children’s books into subject-particular instances of radicalism enables a subtle refocusing of attention onto the projected impact of a text’s political engagement: from microcosmic personal transformation to macrocosmic socio-political change. This sliding scale of impact is a useful measuring tool for any comparative critical analysis, and, perhaps with a certain level of irony, I therefore use it in what follows to *re*-segment my object of analysis – children’s books with an environmental agenda – and to undertake a ‘scaled reading’ of their potential to model radical environmental change.

Zooming Out . . .

‘To move from a large to a small scale or vice versa’, suggests environmental humanities professor Timothy Clark, ‘implies a calculable shift of resolution on the same area or features, a smooth zooming out or in’ (2012: n.p.). This ‘shift of resolution’ enables the transverse reading of radicalism proposed by Beauvais whereby impact is measured on a sliding scale (2014: 20). To read at scale is to acknowledge the differing levels of responsibility modelled by a text in its attempts to create some form of transformative impact. In children’s texts with an environmental agenda, such scaling may involve an acknowledgement of the differing responsibilities, and possibilities, to create change accorded to a child versus an adult, an individual versus a community, or a grass-roots movement versus a governing body. It may allow us to note the *competing* responsibilities borne by an individual or a society towards differing subjects or objects, each with some claim to their ethical attention.

Bearing this in mind, it is useful to revisit Beauvais’ suggestions for the various radical responses to socio-political inequalities that a text may seek to present and promote. Her schema for radical change runs from texts that advocate change on a microcosmic level – those that ‘can be seen as equipping the child with both responsibility for the world and the resulting anguish to witness its limitations’ – to texts that advocate change on a macrocosmic scale – those that attempt to ‘generate and galvanise a critical mass, capable of confronting the established order’ (2014: 22, 25). Where the microcosmic text ultimately acknowledges the ‘restricted scope of human action’, the macrocosmic text lays blame for any failures of change on the deficiencies of the readers’ own idealism (21).

As perceived in Beauvais’ nuanced conclusion, reading at scale demands caution. As we learn from mechanics, scale effects occur when social or physical structures have a desired effect at a smaller scale, but fail to produce the same effect at a larger scale. A miniature model of a wooden bridge, for instance, may fail to hold its weight when

built to life-size specifications. When it comes to political radicalism, and particularly a will towards long-term environmental change, socio-cultural responses that may be appropriate for an individual may not scale up to accommodate communities or nations, and those same responses that may achieve a desired effect *for* an individual may have a lesser or opposite effect on that individual's environment.

Conflictual responsibilities, as Clark reminds us, are unavoidable when dealing with environmental radicalism: '[a]s a result of scale effects, what is self-evident or rational at one scale may well be destructive or unjust at another' (2012: n.p.). A case study might revolve around the ethical impact of travelling by plane; on one scale it provides the opportunity for a holiday with one's family and a chance to improve one's social and familial well-being; on another scale, it leaves an irresponsible carbon footprint and fuels worsening climate crisis. Questions which inevitably arise are those that relate to the desired, and actual, scope and extent of an individual's empathy; at what point does one's concern for the well-being of one's family spill over into concern for the well-being of one's wider community – both human and environmental – and at what point does such concern spill over from an immediate concern for current generations to a projected concern for generations to come?

In order to explore this idea of a sliding scale of impact, I shall attempt a scaled reading of a relatively lengthy passage from Julie Bertagna's young adult novel *Zenith* (2011). This novel is among the recent spate of futuristic fantasies that have an avowedly environmental agenda; it envisages a drowned world with severely limited technologies after the melting of the polar ice caps and follows the fate of a teenage girl, Mara, as she attempts to forge a new community for herself and her loved ones. What is remarkable about this passage is its imbrication of scales and spaces in its delineation of Mara's relationship with the earth. Mara and the boy she has fallen in love with, Fox, are now living precarious existences hundreds of miles apart with only a virtual reality headset – one last vestige of a more advanced world – to enable communication between them. The virtual reality world in which they 'meet', known as the Weave, is a semi-defunct version of our own internet, yet one that has exceeded our current capacity for virtual experiences. Here, the avatars of Fox and Mara enter a 'Weavesite' known as 'WORLD WIND' (203):

The Weavesite crackles and Mara gasps as she's sucked into the whirl of a cyberstream. In the second it takes to yell Fox's name, she has whooshed right through the cyberstream and shoots out into calm black space. She draws a breath, swallows, blinks.

Looming before her is a vast glowing gem.

'Planet Earth,' says a voice in her ear.

They are floating in black space. Mara wants to grab Fox's hand then remembers she can't. She stares up at the amazing vision.

'This is Earth?'

She can hardly breathe as she takes in the beauty of the glowing, gem-like planet: the stunning blue of the oceans, the brown and green of its lands and ice-cruled mountains and white ice-caps, all wrapped in swirls of cloud. [. . .]

Fox zooms in closer and now the occasional shock of noise, an image or a disembodied voice flashes up from the planet below.

'Ti-anan-men Square.' Fox reads the sign that flashed up with the tanks. 'It's old message flags. Historical stuff.' He shrugs. [. . .]

A mushroom cloud billows up. In the distance, a tidal wave crashes on a raft of islands, obliterating the land. Ahead, cracks appear in the mountains and the Earth shudders.

'Nuclear bomb, tsunami, earthquake.' Fox reads the flags at each event. They pass over the bombed ruins of several countries. Mara can't read the messages on the tattered flags but a great wail of despair rises from the smoking remains. [. . .]

'Stop,' Mara pleads. 'I've seen enough.'

Fox nods, his mouth set in a grim line. He pulls the wind-shuttle back from the Earth. The planet looks calm and beautiful once more. [. . .]

'It's not all like that,' says Fox. 'I promise. We must've been at the wrong altitude and picked up all the bad stuff.' (203–6, original italics)

In what follows, I shall attempt a reading of the above passage on three distinct scales, or 'altitudes', as Fox might term them: small-scale personal transformation; medium-scale socio-political change; and large-scale environmental reappraisal.

Small-Scale Personal Transformation

The earth, as accessed via the medium of the virtual 'Weavesite', here becomes a literal backdrop (an '*amazing vision*') for Fox and Mara's unfolding human relationship; where the earth is at a scale that enables it to sit '*gem-like*' in a single field of vision, Mara's and Fox's human bodies are clearly in the foreground. Yet, in a passage that calls specific attention to the individuality and *thingness* of bodies and their parts (Mara '*draws a breath, swallows, blinks*'), there is a curious sense of dislocation from the sensory nature of human experience. Mara looks for comfort from Fox ('*wants to grab Fox's hand*') but realises that physical touch is impossible in this disembodied medium. Fox, seeking from this beautiful vision of earth a shared space in which to evoke human closeness, instead finds only distance and the divisive effects of historical trauma. As they zoom back and forth between the different altitudes, Mara begins to feel physically sick; the device she uses to take her on a virtual journey into space while her physical body remains in stasis on the ground, uncannily provokes in her the physical symptoms of movement – breathlessness, nausea, fear. Such a view of the earth sits uneasily in Mara's body, a metaphor, perhaps, for both the artificial nature of the medium and the unnatural vantage point through which Fox and Mara try to comprehend both each other and the earth.

Medium-Scale Socio-Political Change

The elision of human and natural causes in the list of tragedies '*flagged*' in this virtual earth ('*Nuclear bomb, tsunami, earthquake*') is such that the '*great wail of despair*' that '*rises from the smoking remains*' could emanate from the throats of the earth's human inhabitants or from the very earth itself. Both Tiananmen Square and the '*mushroom cloud*' have obvious referents: the massacre of students by the Chinese military in 1989, and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945

during the final year of World War II. Both human tragedies can be analysed through an ecocritical lens as an abuse of systems of political power that have devastating consequences for human communities and the environment alike. These interlinked systems of oppression are most clearly seen in the radiation of the atomic bombs that not only killed and disfigured a generation of the cities' inhabitants but also produced a toxic wasteland of the environment, contaminating the air, soil, water and food supply and causing genetic mutations for decades after the event. It is a passage that offers up stark criticism of the socio-political inequalities that leave some communities at greater risk than others from human aggression (war, martial law) or natural disaster (earthquake, tsunami). When contemplating the passage from this vantage point, the individual human is both highlighted and erased; at once the very core of the tragedy, yet also the anonymous member of a crowd, obliterated in a moment.

Large-Scale Environmental Reappraisal

The palimpsestic nature of Fox's and Mara's view of the earth encourages a wider geological viewpoint. The earth is *both* the blue oceans, green lands, ice-capped mountains and swirling gases of a large-scale viewpoint *and also* the interconnected and damaged local ecologies of a closer field of vision. In the context of millennia, the earth as it is seen from space points both to humanity's insignificance in the wider geological picture and also to the spectre of change that now looms over our planet in this geological time period dubbed the Anthropocene era. The '*tanks*' noted by Fox take on symbolic associations – visible artefacts of industrialisation which have been used in service of war, territorial expansion and large-scale environmental decay. The concept of long-term change is one that we as humans, and particularly nation-states with short-term elected governments, find difficult to grasp; pulled back from the immediacy of the present, as if zoomed out to a bird's-eye view of the world from space, Fox's and Mara's large-scale view of the earth pre-empt a similar magnification of timescales. Where Fox's and Mara's insubstantial bodies – their lives blinked out in an instant – float invisibly in space, the earth body, on which humans may have significant long-term impact, is here brought forcibly to attention.

Zooming In . . .

Michael Tavel Clarke contends that a global, ecocritical perspective has no value 'if not to train us in a transnational environmental way of thinking as a means of preparing us for the mindset that will be necessary for political and social change to combat global warming' (2015: 12). When taken under this aegis, the three scaled readings above have a dual effect, producing complementary notions of radical action: small-scale personal transformation may, after all, lead to medium-scale socio-political change which may in turn lead to large-scale environmental reappraisal. However, given the personal urgency in Clarke's advocacy of a 'transnational environmental way of thinking', it is significant that such action is based on competing notions of human agency. Where at the first scale, the primacy of the human agent legitimates a measuring of environmental impact solely in its relation to the human (humanity's capacity to suffer because of it, as well as work to diminish it), the third scale points to the relative

insignificance of the human agent, thereby measuring environmental impact on a scale that exceeds our current, anthropocentric, frames of reference.

The question to ask, then, is whether such readings can *augment* each other or whether they by necessity cancel each other out. Put another way, is it possible to bolster human agents while at the same time putting them firmly in their ecological place? In children's literature, the question of individual agency within larger, more powerful (adult) systems becomes even thornier still; in a genre that demands a hopeful sense of self-determination, is it enough for Fox to dismiss '*all the bad stuff*' as a consequence of simply being '*at the wrong altitude*' or should children's books with an environmental agenda *force* a reading at a scale that encompasses large-scale environmental reappraisal even at the expense or comfort of the individual human agent?

Clark contends that 'reading at several scales at once cannot be just the abolition of one scale in the greater claim of another but a way of enriching, singularising and yet also creatively deranging the text through embedding it in multiple and even contradictory frames at the same time' (2012: n.p.). Even within the microcosm of Mara's and Fox's virtual shared space, their opposing attitudes towards the sight/site offered them are a telling indication of the differing levels of responsibility borne by individual humans in the face of tragedy. Where Fox '*shrugs*' his virtual shoulders and condemns the '*bad stuff*' to the waste bin of history (a reading – it's worth pointing out – that is inconsistent with his behaviour throughout the rest of the novel), Mara allows herself a more deeply held emotional response. These differing responses are an indication of the conflictual responsibilities referred to earlier in the contemplation of the ethical implications of a holiday abroad; the recognition of personal pleasure and well-being that such a trip can bring may be a legitimate response at the small scale yet may cause personal conflict and uncertainty when contemplated at the larger environmental level.

Feminist ecocritics Carol Adams and Lori Gruen suggest that '[i]t is by now familiar to most people who have thought about the ethical and political grounds for our obligations to the other-than-human world, that reason alone cannot motivate and sustain a rejection of destructive anthropocentric practices' (2014b: 2). These words echo those of Beauvais in her analysis of the pedagogical agenda of radical children's books, which, she contends, are 'at least partly marked with a belief that the young reader must be addressed both as an emotional and as a rational agent in order for his or her transformative potential to be fulfilled' (2014: 27). In aligning emotionality and reason in the pursuit of environmental justice, feminist ecocritics, children's literature theorists and the majority of the texts from which they both draw their conclusions are alike in seeking a *practical* response to a worsening environmental crisis that takes into account the competing and conflictual responsibilities borne by the average human subject.

In a context where Mara's discomfort and disembodiment turn her into an oddly passive viewing subject – Mara '*stares up*' and '*takes in*' while Fox actively zooms her between altitudes – her failure to find meaning in what she sees ('*Mara can't read the messages on the tattered flags*') finally signals a wider failure of technology to replicate or replace a sense-based relationship between humans and the earth. Keenly feeling the lack of human contact, and disengaged from historical referents that nevertheless fill her with sadness and fear, Mara reacts by extricating herself from the virtual world and affecting a return in the reality of her physical body. It is one thing – the text suggests – to contemplate a large-scale view of the world, with its geological timescales

and long-term threat of climate change, yet it is another to engender the type of emotional and visceral personal response that will enable an individual to translate such awareness into transformative action.

To read at scale is thus to acknowledge that a tiered reading of human responsibility is not an optional extra but in fact *necessary* to position the earth as something *more* than – to take Clare Bradford’s and Raffaella Baccolini’s phrase – ‘the inert background upon which actions are performed and events occur’ (2011: 36). To read at scale is to avoid the sense of helplessness associated with the macrocosmic, or ecoglobal, view of the earth – a helplessness that Amy Cutter-Mackenzi, Phillip G. Payne and Alan Reid note manifests itself in young people feeling ‘disempowered and therefore disenfranchised, all the while being summoned or constructed by particular interests as “planet-savers” and “earth-warriors”’ (2011: 183) – to instil instead a sense of intimacy and localised engagement with place. I have argued elsewhere that the dangers of ecoglobalism can be mitigated by adopting a position we might term *ecolocalism* in order to interrogate the planetary scaling of climate-related rhetoric and instead encourage material and embodied human-earth relationships at the local level (Curry 2013: 20).

Such a conclusion is not new, of course, yet it is still worth reconsidering in the context of radical children’s literature given its impetus towards transformative change. It is telling, in fact, that the United Nations 2012 Rio+20 Conference report on sustainable development highlights this ‘people-centred’ element of sustainability:

We emphasise that sustainable development must be inclusive and people-centred, benefitting and involving all people, including youth and children. We recognise that gender equality and the empowerment of women are important for sustainable development and our common future. (United Nations 2012: 7)

With this ‘common future’ at stake, the feminist ecocritical move towards acknowledgement of the interconnected nature of systems of oppression, and of our intricate enmeshment in our wider ecology, is a helpful step towards valuing our environment on both a small-scale personal level and on a medium-scale socio-political level enabling of transformative change. As Michael Tavel Clarke and Faye Halpern warn:

dominant modes of criticism . . . pit the rights and privileges of different groups against each other with the aim of achieving equity among the groups [. . .] [y]et the goal of such contestation – the redistribution of social and material resources on a more equitable basis – elides the environmental damage caused by the exploitation of material resources. (2015: 2)

With this in mind, I would advocate a scaled reading of contemporary children’s literature that avoids eliding environmental damage and instead acknowledges shared responsibility – towards the earth and towards each other – and deems such acknowledgement a viable foundation for political radicalism.

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AGE STUDIES AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Vanessa Joosen

GIVEN THAT AGE is central to definitions of children's literature (see, among others, Hollindale 1997: 8–9), it may come as a surprise how rarely children's literature studies and age studies have drawn on each other so far. This is partly due to the fact that the focus of age studies – also called *ageing* studies – has long been put on gerontology, both by precursors such as Simone de Beauvoir (1996) and by more recent leading critics such as Margaret Morganroth Gullette (2004), Sylvia Henneberg (2006) and Stephen Katz (2014). Yet, while the interest in age studies is rising as a consequence of demographic shifts, its scope is also expanding to explore how *any* age influences the human body, mind and behaviour, and how relationships between generations are shaped. In societies worldwide, intergenerational tension is rising because of the increased old-age ratio in 'greying' societies. This demographic evolution gives way to an increase in ageism, 'the systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against individuals on the basis of their age' (Green 2010: 187). While ageism has been explored mostly with regard to the elderly, any generation can be subject to age-related prejudices. People in their twenties may suffer 'youth ageism' when applying for high-profile jobs, for example (Hilpern 2001), and Lydia Kokkola points out that the emphasis on the *Sturm und Drang* of adolescence obscures the fact that other periods in life can also be marked by stress and turmoil (2013: 6; see also her chapter on carnality in the present volume (Chapter 7)).

The recent demographic shifts, which have occurred or 'are anticipated in all countries except in sub-Saharan Africa' (Kolb 2014: 3; see also Joosen, forthcoming), and concomitant intergenerational tensions have given age studies new urgency. The role of books in children's socialisation makes them a relevant source to explore how age norms are taught to the young (Joosen 2015). These age norms refer to standards for a person's physical appearance, acquired skills and mental state at a certain age. They are part of an age ideology which influences how children perceive people of different ages, and affects how they think about their present, past and future selves. Conversely, age studies provides a framework and tools to discuss the phases in life as they are constructed in children's books. The distinction and/or transition between childhood, adolescence and adulthood are central questions to many children's books, and one finds characters of all ages in children's literature, both as protagonists and in secondary roles.

Sylvia Henneberg is one of the few age critics who have reflected on children's literature. Her impression of the representation of elderly women in children's classics and its effect on young readers is rather downbeat: 'In the absence of stories portraying viable aging women, the distance between generations increases, creating

a destructive gulf in which ageism and sexism freely reinforce and confirm each other, virtually unnoticed and unchecked' (2010: 126). Her criticism was anticipated by age critic Haim Hazan, who opens *Old Age: Constructions and Deconstructions* with a similar critique of elderly women in children's books (1994: 13–14). Henneberg is right in pointing out the limited attention paid to middle and old age in children's literature studies, although there are notable exceptions (Ansello 1978; Apseloff 1986; Butler 1987; Crawford 2000; Crew 2000). While her conclusions are based on popular fairy tales and children's classics, one may wonder if they also apply to more recent children's books. Henneberg herself refers to Sandra McGuire's regularly updated booklists of non-ageist books for children (McGuire 2016). While valuable as sources of inspiration for educators, the annotations to this list are very brief, and the selection criteria somewhat vague and intuitive. The need for more theoretically framed, in-depth analyses of intergenerational relationships and old age in children's literature is still urgent. This chapter hopes to offer such an analysis, and to demonstrate how children's literature studies can benefit from the frameworks and tools offered by age studies. After a short introduction on the most relevant theories, concepts and methods of age studies, I will present an analysis of Michelle Magorian's *Goodnight Mister Tom* (1981), a popular children's classic that won the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize and was adapted for the screen in 1998. I will use it to illustrate the merits and challenges of studying age in children's literature on the one hand, and to point out a few broader tendencies that I have observed in other children's books.

Age Studies as an Interdisciplinary Field

Age studies unites scholars from humanities, social and medical sciences in an effort to understand the impact of age on human beings. While ageing is a biological process, age critics highlight nurture over nature when it comes to the impact of age on people's lives. As Lorraine Green argues, 'misconceptions [about age] include the belief that biology and chronological ageing have an overwhelming influence on what we become and how we live our lives' (2010: 2). Instead, age critics within the humanities take a constructivist approach to ageing. Like critical race studies, gender studies, disability studies and queer studies, age studies is partly driven by a political agenda (see Gullette 2011: 15–17), aiming to point out the social constructedness of age norms, to fight discrimination on the basis of age, and to foster intergenerational understanding and dialogue instead. In addition, age critics stress the diversity in living age. Various personal differences affect the way in which people experience a given age. Moreover, old age is a phase in life that stretches from sixty-five to more than ninety years (Green 2010: 1987). To some individuals' standards, it begins even sooner – there is a relational aspect to the way age is perceived. To a teenager, someone in their fifties may already appear old, while that same person may be perceived as young by a ninety-year-old.

'Age socialization must be bewildering', argues Margaret Morganroth Gullette in a book with the telling title *Aged by Culture* (2004: 12). Children get mixed messages about age. On the one hand, a long life is presented as desirable and many children will have positive personal contacts with elderly people; on the other hand, various social discourses suggest that old age is an undesirable state. As a result, even very young children

already hold quite negative views about old age (see Montepare and Zebrowitz 2002). ‘Aging equals decline’, Gullette notes, and this is ‘a devastating formula’ (2004: 7). The ‘decline narrative’ was already criticised by one of the precursors of age studies, Simone de Beauvoir. ‘Generally speaking,’ Beauvoir writes, ‘scientists, philosophers and writers consider that the individual reaches his highest point in the middle of his life’ (1996: 13). In this view of the life course, anything that comes after old age is considered a ride downhill, culminating in death. Green stresses that the decline narrative is a cultural construct that does not match with many people’s lived experience of old age: ‘The societal negativity surrounding old age and previous assumptions about dramatic physical and mental decline are evaluated and found to be greatly overstated’ (2010: 8). Nevertheless, the decline narrative is pervasive and many people have internalised it, so that it influences their expectations in life and self-image. ‘We carry this ostracism [against old age] so far that we even reach the point of turning it against ourselves’, Beauvoir writes, ‘for in the old person that we must become, we refuse to recognize ourselves’ (1996: 4). Hence, age critics consider the decline narrative a life-negating model, which they strongly oppose.

Resisting the decline narrative requires critical awareness, and this is where education has a role to play. In his manifesto ‘What is age studies?’ (2014), Stephen Katz stresses the relevance of studying literature specifically: ‘Narrative is particularly important because it anchors the inside of aging, bringing together self and society and animating our biographies as we borrow, adapt, interpret, and reinvent the languages, symbols, and meanings around us to customize our personal stories’. When analysing age in children’s literature, it is important to keep in mind that these narratives are not just didactic tools, nor are they reliable, straightforward reflections of reality. As Jeff Hearn rightly argues, ‘what is important is not what images are, but who produces them, how are they produced, and by whom and how are they consumed’ (1995: 99). As a discourse with its own conventions, children’s literature draws on cultural constructs of (old) age, yet also adapts these to build a good plot and satisfy its implied dual readership. My analysis of age in *Goodnight Mister Tom* will illustrate this process. In addition, I will draw on age studies to provide a broader context for the novel’s construction of age to show its relevance for gaining a better understanding of this aspect of character construction.

Age Norms in *Goodnight Mister Tom*

Central to Michelle Magorian’s *Goodnight Mister Tom* is the relationship between a child and an old man who acts as a substitute parent. Will, the eight-year-old protagonist, is evacuated from his London home on the eve of the Second World War, and finds a new home in Little Weirwold, a country village. He is assigned to live with an old widower called Tom. Will, who is first called ‘Willie’, has suffered serious abuse from his mother. He wets his bed, has nightmares, and constantly fears that ‘Mister Tom’, as he politely calls the old man, will give him a beating for his – very minor – offences. While the match between the old, sturdy man and the nervous, weak boy is not an obvious one, Tom and Will soon grow on each other. With the patience and kind heart that lie hidden under his stern surface, Tom teaches the boy the self-confidence he needs to grow at ease, make friends and succeed in school.

Age is an overt theme in *Goodnight Mister Tom* which recurs in various forms. Early on in the book, Will's age is discussed explicitly when Tom takes him to the village doctor. After examining the boy and giving a straightforward explanation about various symptoms that Will displays, the doctor is surprised to learn Will's age:

'It's quite common,' he continued [about bedwetting]. 'Especially if they're small. Give him a month or two to settle. How old is he? Five, six?'

'Eight, goin' on nine.'

It was the Doctor's turn to look surprised. (53)

The quotation addresses how numerical age is matched with age norms. Bedwetting is not unusual in a five-year-old, the doctor's surprise suggests, but it is expected to have ceased by the age of eight. Will's height is also below standard. The deviation from age norms, as it is addressed in children's literature, has been mostly explored for precocious children: early maturation was seen as problematic, for example, in Victorian discourses on 'old-fashioned children' who had an uncanny resemblance to adults (Nelson 2012: 12), while in the twentieth century, precocious children are treasured in books such as Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (Beauvais 2015: 278). Yet, as Clémentine Beauvais points out, age-related standards of 'normal' development are cultural constructs, produced by the middle classes and often reflecting their interests. Will is the negative counterpoint to the gifted or premature child: he is lagging behind in physical growth and learned abilities. Doctor Little and Tom, who function as figures of authority in the novel, suggest that this deviation from age norms is deplorable and problematic. Will's mother carries the blame for having hampered his 'natural' development. I will discuss this character in more detail below, but one important aspect is that she is a poor widow. Poverty is thus linked to the inability to raise children properly, inhibiting their natural development. Since the mother is not only poor but also a Puritan, her harsh methods and lack of means are suggested to be a matter of belief and choice rather than want. By using age norms to chastise the poor, the novel endorses the middle-class ethos that has produced these standards.

While his mother's treatment of Will is criticised as a form of child abuse that should not be tolerated, the plot relies on Mrs Beech's harshness. As she has made it impossible for Will to make friends or succeed in school, he has retained an 'innocent' state that distinguishes him from the other children in the book. His pitiable condition is a source of sympathy for the villagers of Little Weirwold, and seems to serve the same function with regard to the implied reader. As Elisabeth Wesseling has shown, orphan narratives often make use of sentimental styles and melodramatic narrative techniques, with black and white characterisation and extreme highs and lows for the main characters that serve to engage the reader (2016: 123–4). While Will is not an orphan in the literal sense of the word, *Goodnight Mister Tom* is an adoption story that features many of these traits. Its construction of age must be read in the light of its sentimentalism, as I explain further below.

Age norms become most apparent in the case of deviations, as in the conversation between Tom and Doctor Little. Yet, like many children's books, *Goodnight Mister Tom* endorses the relevance of age norms by relying on them to construct characters in a shorthand fashion. Whenever the narrator introduces a new character – and given that Will is new to the village, he makes the acquaintance of a whole range of people – a rough description of their age or phase in life is added: 'a plump, middle-aged

woman' (Magorian 1981: 25), 'a fresh-faced brunette woman in her thirties' (29), 'an elderly couple' (56), 'a young man in his twenties' (57), 'a short dumpy woman in her forties' (90), and so forth. The novel draws on the reader's knowledge of these stages in life to cut short more extensive characterisation of the people Will meets, and each introduction reinforces the idea that age, or one's stage in life, matters to understand a person's identity.

Although age norms are thus reinforced explicitly and implicitly, *Goodnight Mister Tom* also underscores the personal and performative aspects of age. Taking their cue from queer studies and drama studies, several age critics stress that people *are* not a certain age, but rather perform certain age roles (see, among others, Basting 1998 and Fineman 2011). At one point in the story, Will plays an old tramp during a school performance: 'Miss Thorne watched him grow visibly older. His shoulders were pushed up by his neck and his stomach caved in. He looked cold and mesmerized and bad-tempered' (Magorian 1981: 215). The more they rehearse the scene, the more Will grows into the part: 'Willie believed more than ever that he was the old man' (216). The scene reveals how age is constructed through bodily gestures and speech, which mark a person as old. To put up a convincing appearance, Will draws on the stereotype of a weak old man, based on an old tramp he has seen in the streets, rather than on Mister Tom's stronger features, which might not be recognised by the audience as a performance of old age if they were embodied by a young person. The tramp's experience of old age is constructed as being very different from that of the more affluent Mister Tom, who is not hunched, and associated with warmth and strength. That age is a relative criterion to assess a person's character is also underscored by Will's best friend Zach. As a happy, carefree boy and the son of two actors, Zach serves as a contrasting figure to Will, and shows him a different, happier kind of childhood. The conjunction of two characters who experience their age in dissimilar ways and who regularly talk about their difference helps to create an awareness of the diversity in the performance of age.

Connecting Childhood and Old Age

Even more prominent to the novel than the friendship between Zach and Will, however, is Will's relationship with Tom. *Goodnight Mister Tom* can be placed in a tradition of children's books that depict a close connection between a child and an elderly person (see Joosen 2013, 2015). The friendship between Tom and Will is based on both likenesses and complementarities. On the one hand, both are lonely figures who have not been spared by life. As soon as Will overcomes his initial fear, he and Tom indulge in activities that both enjoy tremendously: playing with Sammy the dog, eating good food, sharing stories. Because of their stages in life, they are somewhat removed from the hassle of daily responsibilities, even though the war forces both out of their comfort zones to engage more in social interaction. While Tom has enough money to buy clothes, shoes and food, the narrative does not mention any work that he has to do to make a living, and he has plenty of time to devote to Will, caring for him, reading him stories, letting him draw, teaching him literacy. On the other hand, they are also contrasted in ways that make them complementary. The main contrast lies in Will's physical weakness and mental vulnerability and Tom's physical and mental strength, which ultimately makes the old man the ideal caregiver.

The characterisation of Tom as an elderly man resists the so-called ‘decline narrative’ that Gullette and other age scholars criticise. Early on in the novel, we learn that ‘Tom was well into his sixties’ (Magorian 1981: 3). Age critics such as Green (2010: 8) consider sixty the age when senescence begins. Given the fact that age norms evolve over time, and that shifts in life style and improvements in healthcare are extending middle age, Tom thus can be considered to be an old man, and is unambiguously labelled as such by the narrator and the other characters. Yet, as argued above, numerical age turns out to be a relative criterion for predicting a person’s condition and life style. Tom is introduced as strong and vigorous: ‘a healthy, robust, stockily-built man with a head of thick white hair. Although he was of average height, in Will’s eyes he was a towering giant with skin like coarse, wrinkled brown paper and a voice like thunder’ (Magorian 1981: 3). While Tom displays the typical signs that children’s fiction and other media use as shorthand for old age – white hair, wrinkles – there is no sign of weakness or illness in Tom. While the decline narrative posits that health, as well as physical and mental abilities, decrease with old age, the novel suggests that poor health is linked to bad treatment rather than age, and so it can occur at any time in life. Moreover, it can be remedied with good food and care, and thus reversed. It should be stressed that the deviation from the decline narrative also serves the development of the plot. Tom’s strength is needed to enable Will’s growth, giving him a sense of security, and ultimately to save him from his strict mother. This may raise the question of why Tom was not constructed as a younger man. When Tom adopts Will at the end of the novel, after all, he becomes the boy’s father, not his grandfather. A possible explanation is that his old age might make a romance plot less likely. Tom, the novel suggests, is beyond romantic love, and thus his relationship with Will is and will remain his most important affective attachment. Moreover, Tom complies with a stock figure that Sylvia Henneberg has criticised for being ageist: ‘elderly individuals as wise mentors who have no needs of their own’ (2006: 121). *Goodnight Mister Tom* relies on this stereotype to cast Tom as a reliable substitute father to Will; one who will always be there for the boy, never be distracted by work, love or other priorities.

Conversely, Will acts as a child redeemer to Tom in a way that is reminiscent of the relationship between Heidi and her grandfather in Johanna Spyri’s classic, *Heidi* (1881). The death of his wife and child have left Tom emotionally maimed, and he is explicitly called a recluse. Thanks to Will, and for the first time in forty years, Tom opens up to social interaction. In order to provide for Will, Tom visits shops, resumes contact with people in the village, attends a meeting about the war and even volunteers to take on various roles in the war effort. Most importantly, Will teaches Tom how to *feel* again. He turns out to be the son that Tom never had. Tom cherishes a box which holds an unworn christening robe – meant for his son, who died shortly after being born. Having suppressed his grief for his wife’s and son’s deaths, it is as if Tom has tucked away his emotions along with his memories of them. It takes another child to release them.

Several age critics address the way that age intersects with other markers of identity, such as gender, race and class. When gender is addressed in age studies, the focus lies mostly on representations of older women. Jeff Hearn argues that it needs to be supplemented with studies on aged men, which may ‘problematize dominant forms of men and masculinities, including hegemonic masculinities’ (1995: 98–9). Because their life expectancy is shorter than women’s, Hearn posits, ‘Older men are constructed as pre-death’

(101). Like the decline narrative, this construction is reversed in *Goodnight Mister Tom*. Rather than being ‘pre-death’, Tom is reborn in old age, forty years after his wife’s and son’s deaths. Like many books for young readers, *Goodnight Mister Tom* is a narrative of growth. Yet the process of positive development towards a fuller self is not just present in young Will, where it might be expected, but also mapped onto Tom. ‘One of the most deeply rooted stereotypes of the aged is that they are conservative, inflexible, and resistant to change. The old are perceived as incapable of creativity, of making progress, of starting afresh’, writes Hazan (1994: 28). By contrast, *Goodnight Mister Tom* suggests that old age does not equal loss, and that positive gains and developments are possible at any age. As Nick Lee argues in *Childhood and Society*, ‘there are no “human beings”’, only ‘potentially unlimited numbers of ways of “becoming human”’ (2001: 2). With the figure of Mister Tom, the dynamic nature traditionally associated with childhood is mapped onto an adult, which gives the impression that, like childhood, adulthood and old age specifically are not fixed nor stable. That it is Will who initiates Tom’s growth gives the child protagonist a purpose in life – he is more than just a victim but also an agent who facilitates growth.

A Seesaw Effect

In various novels where the connection between childhood and old age is central to the narrative, the generation in between is downgraded. While the old and the young are cast as imaginative, kind and involved in meaningful activities, the middle generation is depicted as being rushed, shallow and preoccupied with trivial aspects of life, so that they don’t have time to foster meaningful relationships with their children and own parents. In my research I have compared this tendency to the ‘seesaw effect’ that Anna Altmann (1994) has noted in feminist rewritings of fairy tales, where the promotion of previously downgraded groups (women) is often at the cost of others (men) – if one goes up, the other goes down. Altmann problematises this practice in feminist fairy-tale rewritings for maintaining the very gender dichotomy that these texts seek to question. While she is writing about gender, I argue that a similar dynamic occurs with age: narratives that give agency to children and elderly characters frequently create a dismissive picture of the generations in between (Joosen 2015). The frequency with which this pattern occurs in children’s books that depict a close connection between children and elderly characters gives the impression that a new generational stereotype is being created, with adulthood as a phase that is to be despised and dreaded.

In few stories does the seesaw effect manifest itself as extremely as in *Goodnight Mister Tom*. Will’s mother is not so much shallow as downright cruel. In the first part of the book, the reader gets an indirect picture of Mrs Beech: from Will’s bruises and extreme fear, and from the belt that she packs in his suitcase instead of food or clothes, one can guess that her methods in raising him have been harsh. In the middle of the novel, Will is then sent back to London – a place that is explicitly denied to be a home – because his mother has become ill. Mrs Beech and Tom are then contrasted in every possible way. While Tom’s body is cast as tall and protective, Mrs Beech looks repulsive: ‘She was very pale, almost yellow in colour and her lips were so blue that it seemed as if every ounce of blood had been drained from them. The lines by her thin mouth curved downwards’ (Magorian 1981: 264–5). Mrs Beech does not like touching and is horrified when Will smiles at her: ‘The smile frightened her. It threatened her

authority' (266). While Tom radiates warmth, the mother is associated with coldness. While he gains his authority from his goodness and knowledge, she has to impose it with force and fear. Mrs Beech can be placed in a long line of evil or negligent mothers, from the evil stepmothers in fairy tales to the 'abandoning mothers' in more recent children's fiction (Fraustino 2016), who have functioned as the engine of young protagonists' adventures.

Mrs Beech is what Elisabeth Young-Bruehl has termed a 'childist' adult. Childism is 'a prejudice against children on the ground of a belief that they are property and can (or even should) be controlled, enslaved or removed to serve adult needs' (2012: 37). While Young-Bruehl does not consider it as such, childism can be considered a form of ageism, with the complicating fact that children are at a stage of development where they need care and guidance from adults (44). When that care does not serve the child's best interests but the adult's, Young-Bruehl speaks of childism. She stresses that 'some interpretations of child immaturity support childism more than others' (42), and warns particularly against seeing children 'as greedy, spoiled, demanding, undermining' beings, who 'need to be strictly monitored and punished' (51). This description fits Mrs Beech's treatment of Will perfectly. Her acts are informed by the Puritan belief that children are inherently sinful. This complicates the idea of 'childism' somewhat: because of Mrs Beech's Puritan religion, she believes that she is acting in the boy's best interest, for instance when she wants to protect him from 'the sin of pride' after he has returned to London in the middle of the novel (Magorian 1981: 269). Yet by that point in the narrative, the reader has been geared to empathise with Will, so that his mother comes across as a delusional, sadistic hypocrite. In Will's absence, she has given birth to a baby girl, whose father is unknown. 'She's just trying to get attention', the mother says when the baby cries, and 'She must learn a little discipline' (274). The baby eventually dies of neglect and abuse while she and Will are tied up under the staircase. The excessiveness of the seesaw effect in *Goodnight Mister Tom*, with Mrs Beech as the ultimate bad mother, can be explained by considering its melodramatic stance, which I have briefly addressed above. The mother's destructive treatment of Will functions as a narrative plot device to contrast with and enable Tom's healing impact. Moreover, with such a bad mother, the adoption in which the story culminates is one that consists of happiness only. When it is revealed that the mother has killed herself, there is no sense of loss – only relief, which further intensifies the happiness that Will experiences when he can finally call Tom his father.

A Narrative of Decline After All?

As I have stressed in my discussion of *Goodnight Mister Tom*, the novel deviates from the decline narrative in showing how Tom is a lively senior capable of change and growth. Nevertheless, this message is somewhat reversed in the final chapters. After Will has been saved from his mother by Mister Tom, the novel ends back in Little Weirwold, with the two companions reunited and now officially related by adoption. Two significant scenes mark the end of the novel. First, when a school performance of *Peter Pan* is staged, Will refuses the part of the eponymous hero. Peter Pan is a symbolic figure in children's literature – as the boy who does not want to grow up, he stands for the romantic nostalgia for childhood. Will's refusal signals that he accepts and embraces his growth. That message is underscored by the final scene of the novel.

When Will goes to put up his cap in Tom's house, 'he became conscious that his peg was lower than usual' (447). The observation signals that Will has grown. The importance of this fact is underscored by the final line of the novel – a prime place in any narrative – which has Will saying: 'I'm growing!' (449). Will's euphoria at his growth, which is closely tied to the progress of his health and happiness, is matched with a reverse movement in Tom:

As with the sudden discovery of the lowness of his peg Will noticed now how old and vulnerable Tom looked. It unnerved him at first, for he had always thought of him as strong. He watched him puffing away at his pipe, poking the newly lit tobacco down with the end of a match.

Will swallowed a few mouthfuls of tea and put some fresh coke on the range fire. As he observed it tumble and fall between the wood and the hot coke, it occurred to him that strength was quite different from toughness and that being vulnerable wasn't the same as being weak. (448)

While *Goodnight Mister Tom* resists the decline narrative until the very end, this final scene suggests a turning point, as Tom's strength, which was so vital to Will's transformation, seems to have withered. The image of Tom putting down the fire – a common metaphor for life – in the pipe, while Will fuels the range fire, supports this new contrast in vitality. As Claudia Nelson points out, in some Victorian narratives which coupled young and old characters, 'the aged might be perceived as preying on, exploiting, or projecting their own weaknesses onto children' (2012: 2). Here, the opposite is suggested, and in less negative terms: it is as if saving Will has drained the life force out of Tom. The novel thus briefly touches upon a painful truth that few children's books connecting young and old characters acknowledge: that this companionship is likely to be limited in time, as the children grow up and ultimately develop into adults, with all the concomitant responsibilities, while the elderly grow into deep old age and ultimately death. It fits the sentimental mode of *Goodnight Mister Tom* that it brings up the changing nature of Tom and Will's relationship. The effect can be compared to the moving closure of A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926), when Christopher Robin says goodbye to his friends of the Hundred Acre Wood. Hinting at a sense of loss that is lurking around the corner underlines the preciousness of the moment, and anticipates the nostalgia that will arrive when it is inevitably lost. Moreover, while *Goodnight Mister Tom* does not deny the vulnerability that may come with old age, it points towards new avenues in the relationship between Will and Tom. Both will keep on developing, as they are – in Nick Lee's terms – in the constant process of human becoming rather than being. The fact that Will is no longer innocent, but empathic enough to try to understand old age – as his ability to distinguish between weakness and vulnerability demonstrates – suggests that the connection between Tom and Will is likely to change, but not wither.

Goodnight Mister Tom casts an optimistic view on the dynamic process that ageing offers to every stage in life and acknowledges the diversity in old age that age critics consider so important. It is one of many children's novels that thus provides a counterbalance to the decline narrative that age critics take issue with, even while it reinforces other stereotypes, in particular that of the evil mother, the failed poor parent and the wise old mentor. As my analysis has demonstrated, the novel's construction of old age needs to be contextualised in its thematic and formal features, and is determined by

its nostalgic and sentimental style. If children's literature is to contribute to age studies and to age education, the impact of its narrative conventions (both for children's literature as a discourse and for individual stories) on its construction of age needs to be acknowledged and critically examined. The focus on and focalisation through young characters in most children's books helps to explain, for example, why the figure of the wise mentor is so pervasive in this discourse. That does not mean, however, that this stereotype cannot be resisted.

Given that age is an identity marker that often goes unnoticed and that ageism is rarely critically examined, children's literature studies needs to draw more on age studies to address the construction of age for young readers if it does not want to reproduce age-related prejudice naively. The merits of this interdisciplinary field are only expected to expand in coming years, now that its focus is shifting from old age to all ages and to age as a relational concept. As a discourse in which intergenerational relationships feature so prominently, and which contributes to the age socialisation of the young, children's literature in turn deserves more attention from age critics – both the classics, and more contemporary books – because it offers a much more diverse and complex picture than it has so far been credited with.

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CARNALITY IN ADOLESCENT LITERATURE

Lydia Kokkola

THE TERM *CARNALITY* entered the English language in the early fifteenth century from Latin. It refers to sensuousness, the state of being flesh, fleshliness: all the pleasures that arise from intimate bodily connections with the world. These connections form the basis of perception, and thus knowledge. Knowledge is power. The bodily aspects of knowledge formation are central to an examination of carnality in adolescent literature. Carnal desires are typically used to express power negotiations as adolescents enter the adult world. This breaching of the border between adulthood and childhood is so important in fiction depicting sexually active adolescents that in my book *Fictions of Adolescent Carnality* (Kokkola 2013a) I avoid the term ‘young adult fiction’: the euphemism ‘young adult’ smothers the power imbalance at the heart of such works.

Reading about carnal desires can enable young readers to recognise how discourses of power are intimately connected to carnality, although this recognition is unlikely to be pleasurable. Most fiction depicting sexually active teenagers associates the pleasures of desire with pain and loss. The knowledge gained from knowing another person so intimately is often questioned and/or punished. The onset of adult responsibilities (such as raising a child) is presented as a burden. In short, most literature marketed for teens promotes the idea that they should not be sexual beings, and this view seems to be part of the larger cultural project aimed at preserving the notion of childhood innocence. Since the turn of the millennium, however, adolescent literature has tended to assume a more knowing readership, albeit not necessarily more powerful for possessing that knowledge.

This chapter is divided into three sections, each of which is arranged chronologically. The first begins by examining how carnality and power are connected and then provides an overview of the critical reception of adolescent desire in fiction, highlighting how sex and power are intertwined. The second outlines changes in the way carnality has been depicted in adolescent fiction, highlighting areas where the fictional representations differ from real-world evidence. The final section examines both the critical reception of non-normative sexualities and changes in the depiction of non-normative desires in fiction.

Knowledge, Power and Bodily Relations with the World

Phenomenologists such as Martin Heidegger (1996) ground all knowledge in the body. We receive information about the world through our senses: perception – interpretations of that information – is the basis of all human knowledge. Even the most seemingly abstract thoughts, phenomenologists propose, are grounded in the body. Heidegger’s

concept of *Dasein* (being) highlights this as it compounds the state of being with being in relation to the world. Maurice Merleau-Ponty further developed this idea to propose that the body, since it contributes to the capacity to know, is an intentional part of the subject. As he explains:

I never know things in their totality, but always from an embodied perspective. Because I am a body, I can only see things from a certain perspective, and yet, because I am a body, I can also experience the thing as being more than that partial perspective. The thing exists ‘in itself’ because it resists my knowing it with total certainty. However, the thing exists ‘for me’ because I always experience it in relation to my own body. (Merleau-Ponty 1996: 153)

For Merleau-Ponty, the mind-body divide does not exist: all knowledge is formed through fleshly relations with the lived world. Experience and knowledge combine to form the compound experience-knowledge, which acknowledges that we can never know anything in its totality. The limits of our body’s capacity to perceive form the borders of our knowledge.

Carnal knowledge differs from other sensual relations with the perceptible world in that it indicates a breaching of a body’s border. Unlike the term ‘tactile’ – which limits the contact between body and world to the skin – carnal relations are forged beyond the skin. The orifices which enable the body’s border to be breached – the vagina, the anus, the mouth – are all shrouded with taboo and subjected to culturally specific modes of control. Carnal desire, in its broadest sense, is a desire for fleshly relations with the world through these orifices. Eating – often considered comparable with sexual activity in books for young children – is a carnal desire. It is also the only border-breaching activity that is acceptable in public spaces, and even then there are multiple rituals surrounding both what is consumed and how it is consumed. The mouth is also a one-way border. Vomiting, although it is vital as a means of purging poison from the body, is not acceptable in public spaces. Similarly, the culturally specific social codes surrounding defecation and urination alert us to the intimate connection between abjection and the state of being flesh, carnality.

The abject emerges when a revered boundary (such as the body) is breached. Studies of food in children’s literature rarely suggest that the consumption of food is abject (Daniel 2006; Keeling and Pollard 2012), although such stories exist. Fairy tales such as *Little Red Riding Hood*, the myth of Persephone and the eating of Turkish delight in C. S. Lewis’s *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) provide just three examples where eating is presented as abject. In each case, the consumption of food symbolises an unacceptable breaching of a border: human-animal, underworld-overworld and the world of the witch versus Aslan’s world. Note also how each of these deviant acts of eating is intimately connected to hidden forms of knowledge. When Eve or the witch in Lewis’s *The Magician’s Nephew* (1955) consume the apple of knowledge, they cause a rupture between divine law and human behaviour. In the Christian tradition, knowledge and sin emerge through fleshly, carnal relations with the world.

Although the term ‘sin’ is rarely used in either fictional representations of carnal desire or analyses of such works, accessing hidden forms of knowledge lies at the heart of both. Roberta Seelinger Trites’s seminal study of the power relations between adults and teenagers, *Disturbing the Universe* (2000), ushered into Anglophone studies of literature for the young a clear divide between children’s literature and adolescent

literature. This distinction had been clear in the name of the research area in other language areas for some time: German, for instance, uses the term *Kinder- und Jugendliteratur* (children and youth literature), whereas the English term – children’s literature – typically covers the entire range from 0–18 years. Trites’s study identifies a consistent pattern in the power struggle between adults and teens: the teenage protagonist (and often minor characters as well) begins by challenging adult sources of power by engaging in adult-only behaviour, such as having sex. The character then suffers as a result of this unsanctioned behaviour (most commonly by becoming pregnant; see Kokkola 2013a: 51–94). This punishment results in changes of behaviour and so, by the end of the novel, the character is wiser and supposedly more adult. Since the publication of Trites’s work, the notion that sex and power are intimately connected has never been challenged, even though considerable variation in the way carnal desires are presented in fiction have been identified.

Trites’s conception of power drew extensively on the work of Michel Foucault for whom power is a form of discourse (1990, 1991). Foucault, for his part, drew on the work of the Marxist critic, Louis Althusser (1977). Althusser coined the idea of the ISA – Ideological State Apparatuses – to show how states function through institutions such as schools. The State is composed of an infrastructure (an economic base) and a superstructure (Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) such as the police) which overtly enforce laws, and ISAs, of which education is the most powerful today (Althusser 1977: 134–48). ISAs are powerful because these ideologies they promote appear to be obvious (161). In his development of Althusser’s ideas, Foucault observed how this control is exerted beyond the institution. The notion of health is mediated beyond the birth of the clinic, the notion of sanity is mediated beyond the asylum. In each case, the source of power lies in contrasts between the normal and the abnormal. Foucault also identified other powerful institutions which are not immediately perceived as belonging to the state, such as the family. Although a family might appear to be personally formed, ideas about what constitutes a family are socially specific and legally bound. Endeavours to present an ideal of family to the external world (for example, by hiding extramarital affairs or alcoholism) reveal how citizens internalise the power discourse and become self-policing. That is, the state does not need to enforce laws through RSAs because citizens police themselves.

One aspect of ideology, which neither Foucault nor Althusser discuss, is that adolescence is a time of strife. In my own study of carnal desire in adolescent literature (Kokkola 2013a), I proposed that teenagers are systematically disempowered by the discourses that present adolescence as a period of turmoil, stress and crisis. I was not suggesting that teenagers find life easy, but I noted that other periods in life – such as the sandwich years when one must care for both one’s children and one’s elderly parents – might well be more challenging, and might result in an even deeper questioning of self-identity (see also Joosen’s chapter on age studies in this volume (Chapter 6)). The cultural practice of siphoning off all evidence that children are not innocent by labelling them ‘adolescent’ has maintained the ideal of childhood innocence ‘long past [its] “sell by” date’ (Kokkola 2013a: 6). This practice is possible because of what Althusser dubs ‘interpellation’ or ‘hailing’: when individuals ‘recognise’ themselves in terms of the ideology (1977: 162–3). Adolescents (and those around them) perceive themselves when their feelings and/or behaviour are described in terms of a life phase predicated on turmoil. The onset of sexual desire has been interwoven into

the ideology of turmoil. Novels about sexually active teens tend to present desire as a problem in need of resolution rather than a delight to be enjoyed.

Investments in maintaining the idea that teenagers are not sexual beings seem to be part of the larger cultural project aimed at preserving the notion of childhood innocence. This notion, with its inherent onus on adults to care for and protect children, has had positive social outcomes. Unfortunately, children can also be disempowered by assumptions that they are innocent: 'by claiming childhood innocence to be a natural as opposed to a "constructed" state, adults can safely ignore the power imbalance between themselves and children' (Giroux 2000: 5). Maria Nikolajeva has termed this power imbalance aetonormativity, in an analogy to the power relations described by the term heteronormativity, as she uncovers its impact on the construction of literature for the young (2010: 8). This discussion shifts the emphasis away from the formation of knowledge through the body to show how the interpretation of knowledge is reliant on ideological discourse. By examining how the young readers are inducted into embracing and recognising themselves in aetonormative fiction, even as these works of literature present children being disempowered, critics like Nikolajeva expose the processes by which ideologies are formed and hail to readers.

Examining representations of carnality as an ideology can explain why literature does not reflect reality. Rendering some forms of sexual expression normal and others deviant empowers certain groups over others. Foucault's own example in his posthumously published series of lectures, *Abnormal*, is the masturbating child: an example he suggests illustrates 'the universality of sexual deviance' (1999: 62). Since children are supposed to be innocent and asexual, the masturbating child – who is exhibiting a common behaviour – is considered abnormal. (The same is true of adults, although the abnormality is not desire, but the supposed failure to find a sexual partner.) A survey commissioned from Superdrug by the World Health Organization revealed that the average age at which American boys lose their virginity is 16.9 and the average age for girls is 17.2. By the time they reach eighteen, less than 20 per cent of both sexes are virgins. The majority of these sexual encounters are heterosexual: the majority of the 11.5 per cent of the population who had engaged in at least one sexual encounter with a person of the same sex had also had at least one heterosexual encounter before (Superdrug 2016). In short, if 80 per cent of any given population are engaging in a specific behaviour, it is definitely common. Readers of adolescent fiction, however, are encouraged to view the onset of sexual desire as problematic and acting upon those desires as deviant.

The feelings, actions and knowledge gained from engaging in sexual activity in real life are wholly distinct from reading about these matters from a book. This point may seem obvious but the two are often conflated in attempts to ban these books (McNichol 2008). As Elisabeth Grosz delightfully observes 'the sensations of voluptuousness, the ache of desire have to be revived in order to be recalled' (1995: 195); kinaesthetic knowledge can only be known *in situ*. Erotic fiction endeavours to awaken similar sensations, but such works are usually not considered to be *for* teenagers, even though they might be *about* them. Francesca Lia Block, for instance, is best known for her *Dangerous Angels* sextet, also known as the *Weetzie Bat* books (1998). The series contains many positive depictions of sexual desire, but the relatively few descriptions of sexual acts tend to link the fulfilment of desire with pain. Block's collection of erotic short stories, *Nymph* (2000), on the other hand, is officially classified as a work for

adults, even though its format resembles her other works so closely that the publishers are clearly also marketing it for adolescents. The only significant difference between *Nymph* and the *Dangerous Angels* sextet is that the former never judges or censors its characters. As soon as adolescent desire is presented in a manner designed to titillate (as it is in *Nymph*), it has traditionally been banished from the children's literature section of the library. Equally, the critical reception of fiction containing carnally desiring teens continues to be dominated by discussions of disempowerment and the sexiness of sex is banished to pornography studies.

Whilst critical examinations of carnal desire in adolescent literature have almost exclusively focused on exposing ideology and discourses of power, the literature itself has a more varied content. In the following section, I provide an historical overview of Anglophone fiction for teens that endeavours to map it onto broader social movements to see how key works produced for young people both reflect the attitudes of the era and contribute to changing ideas about teenagers and their carnal desires.

Depictions of Carnal Desire Between Teens

Adolescence emerged as a discrete period of time in the post-World War II period. As an interviewee describing her experiences of being a teenager in the 1940s and 1950s explained 'I didn't realise I was a teenager, you see. That's the funny thing, you know. There weren't teenagers in those days' (in Everett 1986: 9–10; original italics). Since there were no teenagers, there could be no literature for them. One of the earliest American novels to be remarketed for a teenage audience was Maureen Daly's *Seventeenth Summer* (1942). Set during the summer after Angie Marrow completes school, it is primarily about her excitement as she falls in love – or at least in lust – with Jack. At the end of the novel, she is still a virgin but her sexual awakening has enabled her to distinguish between her carnal desires and her other desires. This knowledge enables Angie to turn down Jack's marriage proposal, and to decide to live independently instead. *Seventeenth Summer* certainly does not glorify sexuality, although it does couple self-knowledge and carnal desire. By recognising herself as a desired and desiring woman, Angie gains autonomy over her life.

Books written specifically for teenagers began to appear in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and these early works were decidedly less positive about the self-knowledge gained from carnal relations. One of the most widely read novels of the 1960s was Josephine Kamm's *Young Mother* (1965), published two years before abortion became legal in Britain. The novel was originally published by Brockhampton and republished by Heinemann in 1968 (without changing the references to abortion as illegal). The publication history is significant: this was one of the first novels to be marketed through book clubs, more specifically a book club that reached out to schools around the Commonwealth. This story of a teenage girl coping with an unplanned pregnancy was reprinted in large numbers at least a further three times and copies were distributed to young readers throughout Asia and Africa as well as the Western Anglophone world. Its successful sales indicate that it resonated well with the reading and buying public's view of sexually active teens from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, which is disturbing. *Young Mother* begins when the protagonist, Pat Henley, is already in her second trimester. Through flashbacks, readers learn that the child was conceived at a party, when an older, married man spiked her drinks and then raped her. At no point

in the novel does anyone – not even Pat, her mother or her sister – express anger or disgust at the man's behaviour. Instead, Pat is repeatedly shamed for getting herself into a risky situation.

The novel also appears to have set a pattern for other novels in which adolescents become parents. Pat considers having an abortion, but since it is illegal she is forced to give birth. To reduce her family's shame, she is sent away for the final trimester. This involves leaving school, and the possibility of continuing her studies later is not suggested. Her son, John, is given up for adoption, but Pat misses him so much she endeavours to kidnap him. When she recognises that her own parenting skills are insufficient, she returns him to his adoptive family. The novel ends with the wedding of Pat's chaste elder sister, Chris. The wedding plans have been downsized in order to make it possible for Pat to attend. Chris is presented as an innocent victim of Pat's thoughtlessness. About one in five of the novels in my corpus of 200 for *Fictions of Adolescent Carnality* depicted teenagers who conceived a child and/or became parents. Every single one questioned the characters' capacity to raise their children. Most of the children were conceived the first time the girl had sex, and all children who were given up for adoption are better off with their adopted parents. To be fair, novels depicting teenagers as good parents exist in every decade – for example, Ann Head's *Mr and Mrs Bo Jo Jones* (1967); K. M. Peyton's *Pennington's Heir* (1973); Norma Klein's *No More Saturday Nights* (1988); Sapphire's *Push* (1996) and Stephenie Meyer's *Breaking Dawn* (2008) – but even in these novels the characters' parenting skills are questioned. Pregnancy is a punishment: even Meyer's perfect Bella is tortured by her pregnancy and the process of giving birth. She succeeds in mothering because her extended vampire family also care for the baby.

Depictions of sexual acts themselves have changed more than the pattern of punishment. The invention of reliable contraception in the form of a pill in the 1960s, coupled with the emergence of the hippy counter-culture and the so-called 'sexual revolution' made its way into fiction for teenagers in the 1970s. The two most often discussed examples are American Judy Blume's *Forever* (1975) and British Aidan Chambers's *Breaktime* (1978), yet neither dwells on the sexiness of sex. Both are more interested in how carnal desire plays into the characters' development of self-awareness and increasing maturity. The sexual revolution is more obvious in Norma Klein's *It's OK If You Don't Love Me* (1977). As the title suggests, Klein's protagonist, Jody, does not feel the need to make a lifelong commitment in order to enjoy sex. Although Jody recognises that 'it's hard to admit that sex is something you want to do or might do' ([1977] 1978: 60), she finds ways to communicate her desire to Lyle. They also discuss how they feel about each other and contraception. Once they become sexual partners, their negotiations continue as they seek new ways to pleasure one another. Klein is not even shy about showing that revenge and anger can play a role in carnal desire, a feature not present in any other book written for teenagers.

The 1980s witnessed the onset of the AIDS crisis, deliberately mismanaged in the US by the Reagan administration which regarded the disease as a homosexual problem (and suitable punishment for those who 'chose' a 'gay life-style'). In Thatcherite Britain, similar beliefs abounded but were somewhat undermined by Diana, Princess of Wales, who hugged and held hands with people who were dying of HIV infection. The music of this era was dominated by musicians such as Jimmy Somerville and Boy George who challenged male-female binarisms along with other aspects of

heteronormativity. Nevertheless, many fans were unable to read their flagrant celebration of what, in the 1990s, would come to be dubbed queerness. Freddy Mercury, the lead singer of *Queen*, dressed in leathers and drag, and composed songs that commented on both his sexual desires ('Somebody to Love') and life with AIDS ('The Show Must Go On'), and yet until his death in 1991 many fans assumed that he was heterosexual. This ghosting of carnal desire is present in adolescent literature, but mostly in the context of queer desires which I discuss in the following section. The predominant tendency in fiction depicting heterosexual desire in the 1980s and early 1990s was a return to repressing carnal desires, and more extreme punishments for those who failed to heed the warnings. AIDS was presented as a predominantly gay phenomenon, but the existence of a deathly virus left several characters wondering 'how can anyone love anyone when you could kill them just by loving them?' (Block 1998: 63). The main punishment for heterosexual desire continued to be pregnancy. The noticeable change was not that sexual desire was punished, but that it was presented as something that could not be curbed. Chris and Helen, in Berlie Doherty's *Dear Nobody* (1991), for instance, are taken 'by surprise and storm' (1). Somewhat curiously, heterosexual teens – unlike their queer counterparts – are unable to control their desires long enough to think about using a condom.

Focusing on novels published in the third millennium, Kimberley Reynolds suggested that 'writing about sex, sexuality and relationships between the sexes [is] one of the most radically changed areas in contemporary children's literature' (2007: 114–15), and if one restricts one's concerns solely to sexual acts, there are indeed grounds for agreeing. Post-millennium literature abounds with descriptions of sexual behaviours that would not have been possible to publish earlier. For Reynolds, 'the area of greatest change is not about how much sex is taking place but the importance attached to it and the strategies for writing about it' (2007: 122). Using Melvin Burgess's novel, *Lady: My Life as a Bitch* (2001), to illustrate her argument, Reynolds claims that 'children's literature participates in shaping – it does not merely reflect – changing attitudes to young people' (2007: 114–15). There are two major strands in this change. The main shift visible in post-millennial fiction is the openness with which the topic is treated. Post-millennial teens are surrounded by sexual images on the internet, television and other media, and so writing for them assumes that they know more than their counterparts in earlier decades. This knowledge, however, is not formed through the body. Teenagers today are not necessarily a more sexually experienced audience, but they are treated as being at risk from the sexually explicit nature of the media that surrounds them. This sense of risk is evident in the other major change in post-millennial fiction: a strong split in political beliefs.

On the political right, conservative Christian views have found their way into sex education. Under the George W. Bush administration, the federal government increased the funding of abstinence-only-until-marriage programmes (which began in the Reagan era) 'despite an overwhelming body of research proving they are ineffective' (SIECUS 2016). No other Anglophone country has adopted a similar approach to sex education or fiction for teens. The True Love Waits movement, and the popularity of purity balls in the US are other signs of this movement. The fiction which most clearly reflects these beliefs is the phenomenally commercially successful *Twilight* series by Stephenie Meyer. Dubbed 'abstinence porn' by Christine Seifert (2008: 3), Meyer's work has certainly picked up on the radical nature of choosing *not* to have sex. Even once she is married, Bella continues to suffer as a result of her desire: she wakes up

from her wedding night covered in bruises and surrounded by the debris of a room wrecked by Edward in his struggles to avoid biting Bella. Only once Bella has died as a human and been reborn as a vampire can she begin to enjoy sex with her husband. Meyer's eroticisation of abstinence and S/M desires has garnered a global readership. It remains to be seen whether this will trigger more novels in which chastity is valued.

Writers on the political left, by way of contrast, assume that teenagers will be sexually active. The radical new tendencies on the left spectrum focus on exposing sexually abusive practices, often including explicit presentations of sexual acts. These include violent depictions in fiction about prostitution and incest. The former includes novels such as *Sold* by Patricia McCormick (2008), in which a young Nepalese girl – Lakshmi – is sold into prostitution. This material is radical in that it expects teenagers to know about sex-trafficking, but it is not radical in its expression of carnality. Lakshmi, unsurprisingly, never experiences desire. In contrast, *Game Girls* by Judy Waite (2007) is more radical as the three middle-class girls – Alix, Fern and Courtney – do not need to become prostitutes. Scratching the surface, Waite endeavours to uncover why three financially secure teenagers might want to sell sex. For Alix, prostitution offers a means to reclaim her body after she is abused whilst drunk at a party. For Fern, the only virgin, the desire to be friends with Alix is sufficient reason. And for Courtney, prostitution proffers the finances needed to escape her sexually abusive father. Her story, surprisingly, celebrates the self-knowledge that can come from carnal desire. Courtney falls in love and experiences pleasurable sex for the first time, which enables her to regain her sense of bodily integrity and tell her mother she has been abused. Thus adolescent novels about prostitution reveal an expectancy that adolescents know a great deal about sex already, but perhaps not enough to value their own bodies (see Kokkola, Valovirta and Korkka 2013 for a fuller discussion).

The novels about incest and other forms of sexual violence are also written for a knowing audience. At its most extreme, this includes Precious's admission, in *Push* by Sapphire ([1996] 1997), that she sometimes has orgasms when her father rapes her. The other trend in incest fiction is the tendency to present sexual relations between siblings as romantic. Consensual sex between brothers and sisters appears in several novels from this era, including *Forbidden* by Tabitha Suzuma (2010) and *Bloodtide* by Melvin Burgess ([1999] 2001). Elsewhere, I have examined how unlike reality the clinical literature on sibling incest these novels are (Kokkola and Valovirta 2016), and we suggest that the lack of other means of thwarting romances in a sexually liberal climate has resulted in a fetishisation of one of the last limits of acceptability.

The two current trends – abstinence porn and extreme liberalism – stem from different belief systems, but they share a common obsession with placing sex centre stage. As Foucault noted, 'What is peculiar to modern societies, in fact, is not that they consigned sex to a shadow existence, but that they dedicated themselves to speaking of it *ad infinitum*, while exploiting it as *the secret*' (1990: 35; original italics). Four decades later, carnality is still present *ad infinitum*. Aetnonormative assumptions that adolescence is a period of *Sturm und Drang* result in many facets of everyday life being presented as problems rather than a part of human life. Adolescent fiction suggests that carnal desire is one of the best routes to self-knowledge. This linking of desire and identity is even more prevalent in fiction depicting same-sex desire. In the final section, I examine the shifts by which non-normative desires have become mainstream, and focus on how the knowledge that comes from carnal desire can inform reading practices.

Depicting Non-Normative Desires

Heteronormative assumptions about binary genders, opposite sex attraction and (serial) monogamy render many expressions of desire abnormal to the extent that the person expressing those desires can be deemed less than human. Aetnonormative assumptions that adults are normal reduce adolescents to a sub-human category. Taken to its extreme, all adolescent desire is non-normative because the adolescents themselves are abnormal. And adolescent fiction does take matters to the extreme. It includes numerous examples of non-normative sexualities such as cross-species desire (not only vampires and supernatural beings, but also human-animal couplings), cross-generational desire as well as same-sex desire. Queer carnalities produce forms of knowledge which resist heteronormative assumptions. In this final section, I provide a brief overview of fiction depicting same-sex desire before focusing on how such literature encourages reading practices that promote readers' ability to challenge aetnonormative as well as heteronormative belief systems.

The majority of novels depicting same-sex desire are written by authors who wish to support adolescents seeking to understand same-sex desire in themselves and/or their friends. John Donovan's *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth the Trip* (1969) was the first Anglophone novel written and marketed explicitly for a teenage readership to openly depict same-sex desire. Although Donovan had begun work on the project much earlier, its release in the same year as the Stonewall riots that marked a significant turning point within the gay rights movement paved the way for a new subgenre within adolescent fiction. Nevertheless, seven years passed before Rosa Guy published the first novel depicting same-sex desire between teenage girls: *Ruby* (1976). These American novels were gradually complemented by fiction from other English speaking countries. The first Irish novel, Tom Lennon's *When Love Comes to Town*, was not published until 1993. Most of these works focus on the process of coming out, which is presented as a change because children are simultaneously assumed to be asexual and future heterosexuals. Same-sex desire is not treated as something one *does*, it is assumed to reveal who one *is*. For Liza Winthrop in *Annie on My Mind* (1982), this requires only minor readjustments: '*You're in love with another girl, Liza Winthrop, and you know that means you're probably gay. But you don't know a thing about what that means*' (Garden 1992: 143, original italics). Being gay, for Liza, is something she requires knowledge about, and she seeks information from an encyclopaedia. Other characters, like Mason in Michael Holloway Perrone's *A Time Before Me* (2005), are guided by others and learn by doing.

Tison Pugh and David Wallace pick up the need for a guide in their queer reading of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series:

That the wizards' London lies openly 'hidden' from Muggle eyes resembles the ways in which queer establishments can likewise be invisible to straight eyes oblivious to their presence. When Harry asks Hagrid if they can purchase his school supplies in London, Hagrid succinctly replies 'If yeh know where to go' (SS 67). Hagrid introduces Harry to a new world in which he can live openly as a wizard, and this experience parallels the experience of many homosexuals who are introduced to gay life by a more knowledgeable guide. (2006: 266)

Pugh and Wallace capture the connection between queer carnalities and reading. Just as a newly out wizard needs to learn to see the magical London hidden in plain view,

newly out teens need to learn to see queerness in a heteronormative world. In short, they need to learn to read queerly. Queer readings are readings that go against the grain of the text to uncover sexualities that, like the magical world of London, are hidden even as they are ‘invisible to straight eyes’. Queer readings are not simply summaries of novels in which a character is overtly subverting gender roles (for instance by cross-dressing); queer readings are subversive, they undermine the main flow of the text. By reading *Harry Potter* queerly, Pugh and Wallace are reading against the grain of the text. Their analysis required years of academic education, and yet developing a queer eye is something that gay and lesbian teens must learn to do. Fortunately, there are texts which – counter-intuitively – teach readers how to read against the grain (see also Kokkola 2013b). Several novels published in the post-millennial era set out to encourage young readers to learn to read queerly, primarily by drawing readers’ attention to what is left unsaid.

Francesca Lia Block’s *Violet and Claire* (1999) offers a clear example of how a work of fiction can encourage a novice reader to see unstated desires. The joint protagonists date men, but the novel encourages readers to recognise their mutual desire. Violet, who plans to become a film director, is the narrator. The novel begins when she sees Claire across the quad: ‘It took an expert eye to recognise it in her but I recognised it – she was my star’ (Block 1999: 7). Violet’s ‘expert eye’ is another name for a ‘gaydar’, the popular name for the capacity to recognise queerness that is hidden in plain sight. In fact, Violet is not particularly self-aware and struggles to recognise her feelings for Claire. Attentive readers rapidly recognise the girls’ mutual desire, thereby learning to read queerly. The use of the filming as a trope to depict the gaydar is picked up in a Canadian novel which simultaneously won both the Governor General’s Award for English-language children’s literature and the Governor General’s Award in 2014: Raziel Reid’s *When Everything Feels Like the Movies*. The novel was inspired by the murder of a fifteen-year-old who asked a male classmate to be his valentine. Reid’s protagonist, Jude, combats homophobia by pretending that he is a film star and coming up with flamboyant smack-downs such as: ‘Go ahead, blame the victim! The villain is my favourite role to play’ (2014: 170). In both these novels, the act of looking is foregrounded by the references to cameras, and also to discussions about how the camera limits the view. This metaphor helps even novice readers see how there might be more beyond the camera. For Violet, love appears when she puts aside her camera to see Claire properly. For Jude, love arrives too late as Luke returns after ‘the credits rolled’ (171).

Carnal desires – the desire to experience through the body – transform sensation into knowledge. Reading about carnal desires can enable young readers to recognise how discourses of power are intimately connected to carnality.

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COGNITIVE NARRATOLOGY AND ADOLESCENT FICTION

Roberta Seelinger Trites

BLENDING AS IT does aspects of cognitive science, reader-response theory, and narrative theory, cognitive narratology offers critics of children's and adolescents' literature opportunities to delve into the intricate interactions that occur between readers and texts. David Herman defines cognitive narratology as 'the study of mind-relevant aspects of storytelling practices' (2013: 2). In other words, cognitive narratology focuses on how brains receive and respond to various aspects of narrative; this field thus encompasses the study of both the textual features that trigger brain responses and the brain's perceptual processes that allow for the completion of meaning-making. Cognitive narratology is particularly useful in the study of fiction for young readers because it helps scholars examine the interactions among childhood cognitive development, cognitive activity, and the cognitive cues embedded in textuality. Cognitive criticism in children's and adolescents' literature therefore includes at least three facets: 1) studying the mind as an embodied phenomenon; 2) studying reading as a function of cognition; and 3) studying cognitive encodings embedded in textuality.

The Embodied Mind

Cognitive theory rejects what is sometimes referred to as the Cartesian split, which is the term for René Descartes' false dichotomisation of the mind as something distinct from the rest of the body. Cognition resides within the body; brains are obviously part of the body. Contemporary philosophers and psychologists interested in cognition reject this false premise, although they nevertheless grapple with the illusion that Einstein (1950) once called 'a kind of optical delusion of consciousness' that the mind is separate from the materiality of the universe. For example, J. Scott Jordan (2008) relies on Susan Oyama's work (2000) on the mind/world dichotomy to provide basic information about embodied cognition. Jordan argues that, historically, psychologists have typified cognition 'as an internal, centralized decision-making function that uses perceptual input in order to generate the appropriate behavioural output', but more recently, psychologists have begun to 'place greater emphasis on the fact that the brain is housed in a body that is embedded in a world' (Jordan 2008, n.p.).

Elizabeth Grosz also writes about philosophy's long-term failure to grapple with the human body as a site of knowledge production. She accuses Western philosophy

of 'somatophobia' and traces this fear of the body as far back as Plato, for whom 'matter itself [i]s a denigrated and imperfect version of the Idea. The body is a betrayal of and a prison for the soul, reason, or mind' within Platonic thinking (1994: 5). Grosz rejects this archaic notion, insisting instead that the body 'must be regarded as a site of social, political, cultural, and geographical inscriptions, production or constitution. The body is not opposed to culture . . . it is itself a cultural, *the* cultural product' (23).

Building on Grosz's work, Susan Bordo questions the poststructural interpretation of the body as a discursive construct. She asks: 'If the body is treated as pure text, subversive, destabilizing elements can be emphasized and freedom and self-determination celebrated; but one is left wondering, is there a *body* in this text?' (1993: 38; original italics). Bordo thus invites us to consider the materiality of the body as a site of knowledge, as an active aspect of agency that is inseparably interconnected with brain functioning. Another way of putting this is to observe that cognitive criticism understands the brain as a material phenomenon. Indeed, John Stephens identifies 'that the mind is embodied and not an intangible entity that exists in binary distinction from the body' as one of the 'central tenets' of cognitive studies (2013: v). As such, cognitive narratology can be said to participate more in what is sometimes referred to as the material turn of cultural criticism, rather than being a facet of the poststructural linguistic turn.

Developmental psychologists and literary critics have identified how children's brains grow and change in ways that allow them to develop as readers (see, for example, Marsh et al. 1981; Frith 1985; Seymour and Elder 1986; Stuart and Coltheart 1988; Kümmerling-Meibauer 2011; Kümmerling-Meibauer and Meibauer 2013). Literary critics, understanding that children's brains change as they grow, are exploring issues that are fundamentally cognitive when they address such issues as children's changing interests in genre as they develop (see, for example, Russell 1991; Hunt 1994) or how children's shifting perceptions allow them to read differently at different ages. For instance, although he did not identify his work at the time as cognitive criticism, Perry Nodelman explores issues of the visual perception involved in reading picturebooks in his ground-breaking *Words about Pictures* (1988: 22–39), and he also premises his early work on predictability in children's fiction in the assumption that cognitive development is a fundamental aspect of the reading experience (Nodelman 1985: 5–20). For decades, literary critics have understood intuitively that cognitive development affects readers' reception of fiction.

Margaret Mackey more directly identifies her work as cognitive criticism in *One Child Reading* (2016). She utilises a concept Wayne Johnston (2011) refers to as 'the Murk' to examine how the years of her own pre-memory came to influence her literacy acquisition, and she examines how reading acquisition is an embodied process. Moreover, Mackey extends her concept of embodied reading to include the physical space surrounding the reader. As she puts it, all readings are 'earthed' (507); that is, they all occur in a specific geographic location bound by the reader's awareness of place, which Mackey refers to as 'situated' reading (20). Mackey's work demonstrates how cognitive criticism interacts with the material turn, that is, the philosophical shift away from the linguistic turn that emphasised the discursive at the expense of the physical. All reading is always a physical act that involves the ongoing interaction of an embodied brain with a text that is also, in one form or another, a material artefact.

Reading and Cognition

Not only does cognitive criticism insist on the embodied nature of cognition; it also explores the various aspects of cognition required for the reading process to occur. David Herman assesses ‘memory, perception, emotion’ as three functions of cognition that are required in the process of storying (2013: 2). Indeed, children’s literary critics are increasingly aware of the significance of these cognitive functions to the reading process.

For example, Maria Nikolajeva (2014) examines how various aspects of cognition are implicated in the reading process. She analyses the complex process by which brains perceive an external world that a literary text then evokes: ‘From a fictional, linguistically conveyed representation, we create a mental picture or image scheme . . . based on our previous empirical as well as literary experience’ (23). As Nicole K. Speer and her colleagues demonstrate, ‘The information available to readers when reading a story is vastly richer than the information provided by the text alone’ (2009: 989). Neural connections are continually stimulated as we read; our brains ‘dynamically activate specific visual, motor and conceptual features of activities while reading about analogous changes in activities in the context of narrative’ (995). Reading stimulates brain functions in complicated and intriguing ways.

Moreover, Mackey argues that all reading depends on the subjunctive: we must be able to perceive and understand that which is hypothetical in order for fiction to work (2016: 112–14). She bases her work on the theories of Jerome Bruner, who refers to this process as ‘subjunctivizing reality’ (1986: 26). Similarly, Lisa Zunshine (2006) examines Theory of Mind in fiction as the process by which humans can imagine (or hypothesise) other people’s emotions. Maria Nikolajeva (2014) innovatively extends this idea to children’s fiction, acknowledging the significance of Theory of Mind, or mentalising, as developmental work in the subjunctive that requires imagination: she then traces how the reading process both requires and reinforces Theory of Mind. As Nikolajeva puts it, ‘fiction allows us, through various narrative devices, to enter other people’s minds’ (81). Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (2012) demonstrates specifically how young adult novels rely on Theory of Mind, while Roberta Silva (2013) analyses how fantasy fiction employs Theory of Mind to help adolescents process fear and anxiety. Narrative and storytelling depend on the interrelated phenomena of the subjunctive and Theory of Mind: Theory of Mind is necessary for humans to speculate about the subjunctive ‘what if’ on which stories rely.

Reading fiction also requires a cognitive understanding of temporality – that is, of time passing – an understanding that relies on the reader having a memory (Nikolajeva 2014: 145–6). According to Nikolajeva, readers of narrative also rely on the cognitive processes involved in experiencing emotion; ‘[f]iction creates situations in which emotions are simulated’ (83). Self-reflection is another aspect of cognition on which reading depends; interestingly enough, Nikolajeva connects self-reflection to dreaming in children’s fiction: ‘Dreams in fiction are used to illuminate the character’s understanding of selfhood, which turns out to be an accurate reflection of what dreaming is’ (152). Nikolajeva also identifies the cognitive action of ethical decision-making as essential to the reading process. As she points out, ethics are implicated in Theory of Mind; we cannot make ethical decisions about others if we cannot

empathise with them, and many children's texts assume that readers will understand the significance of making ethical decisions, like whether to let a stranger into the house when Mother is away – even if that stranger is a fascinating cat in a red-and-white-striped hat.

Conceptualisation and categorisation are also cognitive activities that are integral to the reading process. George Murphy, a cognitive psychologist, explains that '[o]ur concepts embody much of our knowledge of the world, telling us what things are and what properties they have'; we know the difference between 'chair' and 'not-chair' when we enter a new room, or when we meet a 'bulldog', we know it is a member of the category 'dog' but not 'cat' (2002: 1). George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue that conceptual categorisation is fundamental to human evolution: to survive, people need to understand the difference between categories such as 'prey and predator' and 'food and not-food' (1999: 17). This ability to categorise is the basic skill of discernment required for reading to occur; from the youngest of ages, children can distinguish – among other things – people from objects, gender distinctions, and categories of facial expressions. In the reading process, categorisation occurs in ways too myriad to enumerate: the reader categorises to distinguish a book from a computer program, one word from another, a picturebook from a novel, a villain from a hero, a setting from a character, conflict from cooperation, and so on. As a specific example, Lydia Kokkola (2013) analyses how competing cognitive conceptualisations of innocence and sexuality influence knowledge production in adolescent novels. All concepts are based on some sort of categorisation; humans cannot conceptualise without discerning the distinctions from which categories emerge.

Moreover, when people conflate their knowledge of one category onto another, cognitive scientists refer to that process as *mapping*. An example of mapping would be for someone to say that they 'see' something when they mean they 'understand' it, as Anne Shirley says multiple times in *Anne of Green Gables* (Montgomery 1908). Anne 'maps' the concept of vision onto the concept of understanding. An *entailment* occurs when a mapping limits people's capacity to understand a concept in any other way; most people, for example, can think of understanding in terms of vision, but not in terms of other senses, such as their sense of taste or smell. Thinking of understanding in terms of vision has entailed – that is, limited – our ability to describe how we experience understanding. Mappings are the primary vehicle through which metaphors are created: even young children understand the metaphor inherent in the lyrics of 'You Are My Sunshine'; children map the quality of brightness onto the concept of joy, but neurotypical children understand that no child is actually transformed into the sun through the singing of those words. Metaphorical understanding relies on mapping and entailment, but it also requires the cognitive functions of categorisation and conceptualisation – both of which are essential to reading and interpreting fiction. Neurotypical children can conceptualise sunshine as a term for 'source of joy' while they simultaneously categorise the 'you' in the song's lyrics as a distinct entity from the sun's actual rays.

Reading thus engages the following cognitive functions, often simultaneously: categorisation, conceptualisation, mapping, Theory of Mind, perception (especially of temporality and others' emotions), self-experienced emotions, and ethical decision-making.

Textual Encodings and Cognitive Triggers

Cognition includes perception, but perception is a response to environmental triggers. In the case of fiction, perceptual triggers are embedded in the text. The perceiver, in turn, must have in place specific neurological apparatus in order for meaning-making to become complete. Multiple literary critics have demonstrated how textual encodings interact with cognitive triggers so that meaning can be completed during the reading process.

One of the most seminal analyses of the ways texts embed cognitive triggers is John Stephens' work on schemas and scripts. Stephens defines a schema as 'a network of constituent parts, and the stimulus evokes the network and its interrelations, especially what is normal and typical about that network' (2011: 14). Scripts, then, involve a series of schemas linked in the passage of time: 'Whereas a schema is a static element within our experiential repertoire, a script is a dynamic element, which expresses how a sequence of events or actions is expected to unfold' (ibid.). Scripts are one of the brain's most efficient forms of memory; they help us remember 'going to the grocery store' – but, mercifully, we don't store in our memories every single action of every single journey we have ever taken to a grocery store. Stephens gives as an example either a dog on a frayed leash or a running cat as a schema stored in our memory; when the dog breaks the leash and chases the cat, we experience a script: 'dog chases cat' (14–15). In other words, all narratives rely on our stored memories about the way certain events typically unfold, so no narrator needs to expend extra details explaining all the steps it takes for Goldilocks to sit in a chair (bending at the knee, positioning her posterior) or eating porridge (lifting a spoon, inserting it in the mouth, chewing, swallowing). In another example from children's literature, Marek Oziewicz identifies the justice scripts at work throughout speculative fiction. Oziewicz argues that scripts 'frame our understanding, intelligence, memory, and expectations about the world, especially about causally-linked event sequences' (2015: 5), and he identifies 'human understanding of justice' as 'script-based' (6). He argues that children's speculative fiction is a particularly effective vehicle for justice scripts because the young have 'an acute sense of fairness' (11) and because speculative fiction is so fluid in the way that it allows for 'thought-experiments', specifically about those issues left unanswered by science (12–13). As a result, Oziewicz demonstrates ably that speculative fictions for the young contain embedded justice scripts throughout the genre. As it happens, all narratives rely on scripts. Children organise information in scripts, and texts rely on readers to know enough about these scripts that every detail of every action need not be included in the story.

The passing of time is also an essential element of most stories, so Margaret Mackey identifies deixis as an inevitable encoding in narratives (2016: 112). Deixis is a linguistic tool that Mackey explains as 'the use of a small set of words, sometimes called "shifters", that require situational knowledge of the context of utterance for full interpretation – words such as "me", "yesterday" and the like' (112). Perspective is crucial to our interpretation of deixis: 'If I know that your perspective is not identical to mine, it is a relatively small step to establish that your "now" may be my "then", your "here" may be my "there"' (ibid.). *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak 1963) effectively relies on a small set of deixis, especially regarding the difference between "then" and "now". The story opens first with a proximal time indicating that the setting is

in the evening – ‘The *night* Max wore his wolf suit’ – and then the narrative repeats the word ‘and’ to demonstrate the continuation of activity throughout the book. The word ‘and’ appears thirty-five times in the book, serving to coordinate words, to move the narrative along to the next action in time, and to position the reader relative to Max’s actions. The repeated ‘and’ serves as a textual encoding that triggers a brain function in the reader so that the reader understands that time has passed for someone else during the story’s plot; indeed, relatively speaking, more time has passed for Max than has passed in the reading of the book itself.

Eva Gressnich (2012) analyses another type of textual encoding that triggers cognitive function. In examining picturebooks, she uses Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott’s definition of a pageturner which is ‘a detail, verbal or visual, that encourages the viewer to turn the page and find out what happens next’ (Nikolajeva and Scott 2001: 152). Pageturners can be visual or they can be verbal; Gressnich identifies as two frequently used pageturners ‘split question-answer sequences and split sentences’ (Gressnich 2012: 169); visual pageturners include a ‘split depiction of a picture’ and ‘a simulation of the page being a door or a similar object’ (172). In every case, the pageturner is involved in both a literal passage of time and a metaphorical evocation of time passing. When a child is prompted by the text to turn the page, the child’s cognitive activity is interacting with the text to allow a completion of meaning.

Jane Newland interrogates yet another type of textual encoding that triggers a cognitive understanding of time passing: repetition. Newland bases her theorisation on the Deleuzian sense of repetition that ‘it is only through repetition that difference is possible’ (2013: 194). She thus demonstrates that repetitions (of characters and situations, for example, but also the rereading of a book) afford the reader changed cognitive perspectives: ‘The repeated element . . . [of a series book] triggers other repetitions and memories for the reader’ (198). Repetition allows for the creation of new perceptions, new recognitions, and new neural connections.

Following Lakoff and Johnson (1980), cognitive critics of children’s and adolescents’ literature are increasingly aware of metaphor as a cognitive function. For example, in my previous work I have analysed how growth is associated with the metaphor ‘up is good’; acting ‘grown-up’ is generally better than being admonished to ‘just grow up!’ (Trites 2014: 19–21). Metaphors of growth are often embedded in narratives for pre-adolescents and adolescents, serving as textual encodings that trigger a specific brain function. Karen Coats analyses how children’s texts encode children’s bodies as metaphorical containers with skin that both keeps the child in and the world out (2010: 125–6). Ester Vidović explores the metaphors of the body as container and ‘more is up’ (2013: 186) to analyse competing attitudes towards disability in Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*; her work demonstrates that an understanding of metaphor and metaphorical implications can extend to the important work of ideological readings of an entire culture.

John Stephens identifies this type of ideological reading of larger groups as ‘cognitive mapping’, which is a ‘process whereby a particular subject is defined by means of establishing identity-with and difference from with respect to other subjects [and which] depends on preconceived mappings of appearance, ethnicity, or notions of appropriate social behaviour’ (2012: v). Mary Orr (2012), for example, demonstrates how a text such as *Playing at Settlers* (Lee 1855) repositions the cognitive mappings of colonialising discourses. Caroline Campbell (2012) interprets

cognitive mappings of gender, fear, and safety in young adult novels about Antarctica. Kate Norbury (2012) perceives the networks that map guilt onto emerging LGBT identity in young adult novels. Relying on Cornel West's work (West 1989: 70–5), I have identified race as a category of oppression – which is a type of cognitive mapping – in young adult novels such as *47* by Walter Mosley (2005), *American Born Chinese* by Eugene Yang (2006), and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie (2007) (see Trites 2014: 40–2, 111–18). Humans' tendency to categorise as a basic element of conceptualisation leads inevitably to cognitive mappings; texts embed cognitive mappings within narratives as a way of sparking the reader's recognition and intuition. Understanding mapping as a cognitive process allows critics of children's and young adults' literature to recognise the widespread pervasiveness of cognitive mappings embedded in narratives that transform how readers feel about entire categories of people, emotions, situations, and settings.

Implications for Children's Literature

Cognitive narratology is the branch of cognitive literary criticism that pays particular attention to those aspects of brain function involved when people experience narrative. Cognitive narratology shares with reader-response theory an interest in what readers bring to texts, and it shares with narrative theory an interest in the textual mechanisms that propel a narrative. Cognitive narratology differs from these other theories, however, in its interest in a third feature, which is the interaction(s) that occur in the brain when a reader experiences a story. Specifically, critics of children's literature employ cognitive narratology when they analyse how textual encodings trigger cognitive processes in an embodied mind. Cognitive narratology thus pushes both reader-response theory and narrative theory in new directions; these new directions involve recognitions of the complexity of the reading process as well as the brain function(s) necessary for the reading transaction to transpire in childhood.

Cognitive narratology has significant implications for the study of children's literature. In insisting on the embodied nature of childhood cognition, cognitive narratology helps move theoretical discussions of children's texts away from the purely discursive and toward a recognition of the material, including not only embodiment, but also technology, the environment, cultural artefacts, and cultural constructs. Children's literature is clearly constructed out of discourse, so cognitive narratology does not advocate for an abandonment of those poststructural practices that follow from the linguistic turn. Rather, cognitive narratology insists that all reading – indeed, all literacy practices – involves interactions between discourse and the material world, particularly the materiality of the embodied child reader.

This emphasis on embodiment also has particular implications for material feminism and the many forms of feminism with which it interacts. Ecofeminism, for example, involves our increasing awareness of human interactionism with the environment (see Chapter 5 by Alice Curry in this volume); cognitive ecofeminist narratology has the potential to help us examine the schemas and scripts involved when child protagonists interact with – or ignore – their environment. Intersectionality, the study of how race intersects with other factors (such as gender, social class, and/or age) to increase

how one experiences oppression, is another theory to influence material feminism; this theory relies on the idea of cognitive mapping in order to function. Cyborg studies, growing out of Donna Haraway's (1991) feminist examination of the overlappings among human bodies and technologies, lead to a posthuman understanding of how subject formation occurs. As Victoria Flanagan writes, 'Posthumanism uses technoscience as the impetus for a radical reevaluation of human subjectivity, exploring the many ways in which technological innovations such as virtual reality have changed our understanding of what it means to be human' (2014: 1; see also Flanagan's chapter on posthumanism in this volume (Chapter 2)). Any examination of subject formation necessitates an understanding of cognitive processes, so any theoretical study of subject formation in children's literature stands to gain from being aware of the tools that cognitive narratology provides.

Most importantly, cognitive narratology helps us become better aware of children's literature as a function of children's cognitive literacy skills. In 1988, Peter Hollindale decried the difference between 'child people' (who focus on child readers) and 'book people' (who focus solely on children's texts) (4). Cognitive narratologists are scholars with a foot in both camps; they understand both the situatedness of texts and the situatedness of readers.

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EMPIRICAL APPROACHES TO PLACE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF ADOLESCENT IDENTITIES

Erin Spring

IN TODAY'S GLOBALISED society, things are 'speeding up, spreading out', leading to a 'stretching out of social relations' (Massey 1991: 24–5). As a result, place and identity are of interdisciplinary concern. Numerous theoretical and conceptual approaches to literary studies have a spatial dimension, including postcolonialism, nationalism, imperialism, gender and sexuality, ecocriticism, urbanisation, and digital cultures. Within children's and young adult fiction criticism, the links between place, identity, readers, and texts have received increasing attention over the past two decades. Jenny Bavidge (2006) argues, however, that children's literature criticism 'has not paid enough attention to questions of spatiality [. . .] and has rarely attempted to theorise the nature of place and space in children's literature' (323). Existing scholarship can be separated into two strands which ultimately interweave: literary, text-based criticism that focuses on how concepts such as place and identity are constructed within the text; and reader-response criticism that privileges the role of the reader and the experiences of place that are brought to the text.

In the empirical work which I have conducted with adolescent readers, I have found that, for individuals at this stage of life, place is a complex term that is not straightforwardly defined; it is often described as a physical, social, and/or cultural construct (Spring 2015a). While place is multifaceted, the adolescent readers that I have worked with – including recent migrants, indigenous youth, and those living in diverse rural and urban communities – are intensely aware of place's influence on their identities. As a result, they are quick to comment on textual constructions of place in the novels that we read together. Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading illustrates how 'the reader brings to the text work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition [. . .] in a never-to-be-duplicated combination' (1995: 30–1). I have found that readers' real-world negotiations of place inevitably shape how they scaffold fictional interpretations. In return, texts provide readers with new ways of navigating or viewing their world, as well as their various positions within it. In this chapter, I argue that understanding readers' place-identities sheds light on texts, and vice versa. Thinking about place and its intersections with identity opens new dimensions in our understanding of both adolescent texts and readers.

Why Adolescence?

Within the literature on place and place-identity, there are numerous empirical studies which interpret children's engagements with place, for example through map-making or other participatory methods (Hart 1979; Cele 2006; Arizpe 2009; Charlton et al. 2012; Taylor 2011). Literary scholars have long been concerned with the concept of home as a site of significance in children's fiction, focusing prominently on the home-away-home narrative (Nodelman and Reimer 2003; Bavidge 2006; Reimer 2008). There is a wealth of educational research with adolescents in relation to place, but these mainly have a pedagogical or curricular focus (Azano 2011; Matthewman 2011; Wiltse et al. 2014). Three recent edited collections tangentially consider themes such as environment, nature, and space within children's literature: Sidney Dobrin and Kenneth Kidd's *Wild Things: Children's Culture and Ecocriticism* (2004); Amy Cutter-Mackenzie, Philip Payne, and Alan Reid's *Experiencing Environment and Place through Children's Literature* (2011); and Maria Sachiko Cecire, Hannah Field, Kavita Mudan Finn and Malini Roy's *Space and Place in Children's Literature, 1789 to the Present* (2015); on this matter, see also Jane Carroll's chapter (4) and Alice Curry's chapter (5) in this volume. That said, these collections focus primarily on children's texts and responses. A gap exists in our understanding of young adult readers' engagements with place, which is particularly interesting given the changes that occur during this life stage.

Young adulthood is continually categorised as a time of internal turmoil, instability, and in-between-ness (Arnett 2004; Hilton and Nikolajeva 2012). These moments of uncertainty similarly underpin young adult fiction. Karen Coats reminds us that:

YA fiction is organized around the same sorts of tensions that preoccupy the physical bodies and emotional lives of its intended audience: tensions between growth and stasis, between an ideal world we can imagine and the one we really inhabit, between earnestness and irony, between ordinary bodies and monstrous ones, and, perhaps most importantly, between an impulsive individualism and a generative ethics of interconnectedness. (2010: 316)

Adolescents are beginning to contemplate their roles in various communities and societies in ways that are not as urgent during childhood. The readers I have worked with are, for example, applying for university, working to save money, navigating complex relationships, and moving away from the family home. I spent time with a group of young readers living in a rural Canadian community, 300 miles from the nearest city. Some shared their concerns about having to leave town after high school in order to find work; many of them had never visited a city before. The changes which occur within adolescence – including those noted above – are bound up in the notion of place. While questions such as 'Where are you from?' or 'Where is your home?' are complicated, I have found them to be organically at the forefront of my conversations with young people about place, both within and beyond the text.

Conceptualising Place and Place-Identity

What are some of the ways in which we can define or conceptualise place? How can we read a young adult text from a place-based perspective? In order to respond to

some of these questions, I begin with an overview of key theories and frameworks that set the stage for an understanding of place and identity. I then follow with a synthesis of my work with young adult readers and texts in order to illustrate the intersections between place and identity construction during this life stage. The discussion section will, in turn, clarify the usefulness of these place-related theories for scholars of children's and adolescent literature who work with texts and/or readers.

Space and place

A study of place has become the underlying premise of social, cultural, and human geography. Until the 1970s, the focus of geographical research was spatial science, which was mainly concerned with the particularities of physical locations, thereby viewing humans objectively rather than subjectively (Taylor 2004). Human geographers Yi-Fu Tuan (1974, 1975, 1977) and Edward Relph (1976), among others, sought a realignment of their discipline's focus, maintaining that the aim of human geography was rather to understand humankind's 'internal geographies' (Cresswell 2013: 108), which they felt were overlooked by a focus on spatiality. There was therefore a shift from studying concrete spaces to a desire to understand symbolic, embodied, and experienced places. As something central to every human experience of the world, place became of salient interest to the discipline of geography.

In *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977), Tuan distinguishes between spaces and places. Space is unknown, abstract, and void of emotion, while place is imbued with meaning. Space is aligned with movement, while place is associated with pausing. In other words, space is transformed into place when we pause long enough to experience that location, allowing for the attribution of meaning. Depending on the experiences that occur in a location, what is space for one person could be place for another. In a similar vein, Tuan differentiates between rootedness and sense of place. Rootedness is an 'unselfconscious, permanent attachment to place that is a universal experience' (154). According to Tuan, all humans, at some point in their life, have felt a sense of rootedness in place. On the other hand, obtaining a sense of place with a location is a conscious experience – one that is the result of pausing in a place long enough for it to attain a subjective, embodied presence. The abstractness of space means that it is impossible to achieve a sense of place or rootedness in that location.

Space is a particularly negative experience for Tuan because it is associated with movement and openness. In *Topophilia* (1974), he discriminates between visitor and native perceptions of place to reiterate how time and pausing are necessary for identifications with place to develop. Visitors are not able to enter unreservedly into place; they are only given an opportunity to create a viewpoint based on the sensory experience they have while visiting. They do not stay long enough for the space to be transformed into a place. We come to appreciate places more when they are 'mixed with the memory of human incidents' (Tuan 1975: 95). In order to acquire identification or rootedness in place, we have to pause there. When this experience is successful, the result is topophilia, the 'affective bond between people and place' (Tuan 1974: 4).

Insideness and outsideness

Rather than the space/place binary put forth by Tuan, Relph's (1976) phenomenological conceptualisation of place accounts for different layers of place-experiences, with insideness at one end and outsideness at the other. The fluidity of Relph's model accommodates varying levels of place-experiences to surface between these two opposite poles. Feelings of insideness are the result of having spent time in a place long enough for it to evoke an authentic place attachment, matching Tuan's notion of pause. At the other end is outsideness, the product of 'reflective uninvolvement' (Relph 1976: 50) with a location, such as feelings of homelessness or alienation, leading to an inauthentic relationship with place, aligning with Tuan's notion of space.

The most extreme classification held at either pole is existential identification. Existential insideness refers to experiences where the deepest level of belonging is felt. Conversely, existential outsideness is a conscious resistance to belonging. Relph employs the term *placelessness* to describe 'an environment without significant places and the underlying attitude which does not acknowledge significance in places' (1976: 143). Between insideness and outsideness are a number of possible identifications, without falling to either extreme. Relph's framework demonstrates how relationships with place are fluid, as are places themselves. We might leave a place, and return to find it changed; or we might experience something positive or negative that shifts our perception of that place. Despite acknowledging that negative place associations exist, Relph favours feelings of insideness.

David Seamon and Jacob Sowers worry that Relph is 'out of touch with what places really are today' (2008: 47) in that he ignores the inevitable temporal changes that affect place. It is not possible that humans can ever have a 'firm grasp' on the world, especially adolescents, who are experiencing a range of emotional and physical changes. That said, I find Relph's spectrum of experiences more accommodating than Tuan's space/place distinction. For example, Tuan asserts, 'the house [. . .] remains in place, it is stable' (1999: 61). While Relph acknowledges that rootedness/existential insideness is possible, he does not suggest that these experiences are static. It is not reasonable to argue that people can only form relationships with a place if they resist movement. For this reason, a review of place scholarship that interrogates place in light of these changes is vital to an understanding of place and place-identity construction.

A Time-Space Compression

In 'A global sense of place' (1991) cultural geographer Doreen Massey provides a re-conceptualisation of place, written in a time of widespread anxiety surrounding globalisation. The premise of Massey's argument is that movement does not threaten place or our identifications with it. Massey approaches the concept from an ethnographic standpoint: having observed the effect of the 'time-space compression' (27) on her borough of Kilburn, London, 'now lined with a succession of cultural imports – the pizzeria, the kebab house, the branch of the middle-eastern bank' (24), she recognises that place cannot be as straightforwardly defined as earlier geographers such as Tuan and Relph suggest. People infrequently spend their whole lives living in one place; even if they do, the place itself is not rooted or singular. Multiple religious, cultural, ethnic, and social communities can collide on the same street – and each

resident will understand that place differently. In this vein, Massey argues that spaces are not flat surfaces: they are comprised of a ‘bundle of trajectories’ (2005: 47) where living and non-living things come together to comprise that place.

In light of her observations of Kilburn, Massey reconsiders place as something that is comprised of movement and connections, rather than rootedness or feelings of insideness. She questions what the local really means, how do we ‘hold on to that notion of geographical difference [. . .] even of rootedness if people want that, without being reactionary?’ (1994: 164). Massey’s reassessment of place consists of four distinctive stages. The first stage reiterates that places are processes. Because of the flows of movement – between ideas, people, markets – which are constantly at work, places cannot be defined as static, but should rather be seen as being ‘constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations’ (154). While we may pause somewhere long enough for us to become insiders, the place itself cannot ever stay the same. Secondly, it is impossible to draw boundaries around places; all geographical locations are constantly being influenced by other places. Massey’s depiction of Kilburn illustrates this transfer of culture and knowledge – without leaving the high street she can find various ethnic eateries, religious centres, foreign newspapers; her sense of place *and* the place itself are informed by the outside world, blurring local and global spaces.

For Massey, a consideration of place accounts for links with everything beyond its borders. Because the local is continually being informed by the global, Massey’s third stage reiterates that places cannot ever have a coherent identity that is shared by its residents. Everyone experiences place differently, depending on the communities, or networks, which they are involved with, echoing Relph’s spectrum of possible place-identifications. Lastly, while Massey considers place as unstable, and thus difficult to define, her fourth stage argues that each place is unique. While she advocates for an understanding of place that is open, fluid, and borderless, she still believes that it is possible to identify with the places where we live. Places retain their uniqueness through their fluidity.

A Patchwork of Specific Entanglements

Having looked at place through a geographical lens, I now turn to ecocriticism, a branch of theory that considers ‘the relationship between literature and the environment’ (Glotfelty and Fromm 1996: xviii). In *Writing for an Endangered World*, ecocritic Lawrence Buell (2001) constructs a five-staged theory to reflect the importance of place-connectedness to the literary imagination. While he does not refer to young adult fiction explicitly, he suggests that his framework is applicable to texts regardless of theme or authorship. Massey is writing about real places, and Buell fictional, but their frameworks come to similar conclusions. Each stage of Buell’s theory offers a possible way in which a character or reader can identify with place. The first stage suggests that we have a singular home base with which we identify most strongly. As soon as we move beyond this centre of meaning, all other places that we encounter pale in comparison, echoing Tuan’s space/place binary. While Buell acknowledges the enduring nature of home, he notes that we cannot always ‘presume that people operate from home bases’ (2001: 65), or that homes stay the same, mirroring Massey’s plea for an open, more flexible construction of place. As such, Buell’s second stage of place-connectedness suggests that we often come to identify with an ‘entanglement’ of places – with multiple places rather than just one. This sentiment closely echoes Massey’s

(1991) argument that mobility is an integral part of place, and that places themselves are constructed as a ‘simultaneity-of-stories-so-far’ (Massey 2005: 9). Buell similarly agrees with Massey that, like our identities, places themselves are unstable, in that they are continually being reshaped and redefined. The third stage of Buell’s theory reflects his belief that place is a verb, rather than a noun. Places are always under construction. His fourth stage continues from this perspective, acknowledging that people themselves move between places, resulting in a multilayered sense of place, ‘like a coral reef or a set of tree rings’ (2001: 69), negating notions of singular place affiliation, again reiterating Relph’s range of insider/outsider place-identifications.

The final tier of Buell’s model specifically relates to the act of reading fiction. He acknowledges the power of fiction (particularly representations of place) to trigger the identities of readers. Buell suggests that readers are capable of engaging with fictional settings by drawing on their knowledge of ‘real-life’ places beyond the text. While he does not refer to reader-response scholarship, this area of his work corresponds with Rosenblatt’s transactional theory. While Buell presents his theory as a tool for outlining the place-identities of fictional characters, his model can also be applied to real-life experiences with place, as his conceptualisation closely aligns with that of Massey, and vice versa.

The theories outlined above provide concrete examples for interpreting and evaluating place and identity, within and beyond the text. In the following subsection, I demonstrate the multifarious ways in which that these conceptual models – place, space, insiderness, outsiderness, rootedness, place as a process – can enhance our understanding of both adolescent readers and young adult texts.

Creating Place from Space

A text that I have worked with successfully is Clare Vanderpool’s *Moon over Manifest*, which was the 2010 Newbery award-winner. A first step in my research process is to select texts where constructions of place and place-identity are particularly prevalent – where the implied readers, as constructed by their authors, are asked to engage with questions of identity and place. Sometimes authorial intention is explicit. For example, on her author website, Vanderpool has shared her inspiration for writing Abilene’s story:

what is a true place? It conjured up ideas of home. Having lived most of my life in the same neighbourhood, place is very important and for me true places are rooted in the familiar [. . .] But I wondered, what would a ‘true place’ be for someone who has never lived anywhere for more than a few weeks or months at a time? What would be her definition of home? (Vanderpool, n.d.)

While I deliberately select the texts that my participants read, I am aware that I am a competent, critical reader; although I might find issues of place salient within the text, it may or may not be considered in the responses of my participants.

Moon over Manifest is narrated by twelve-year-old Abilene Tucker, who is left by her father, Gideon, in the rural town of Manifest, Kansas. Gideon is out of work, and travels via train across the country searching for stability. Understanding that life on the road is unsuitable for a young girl, Gideon leaves Abilene with Pastor Shady, who befriended Gideon when he, too, lived in Manifest, thirty years prior. In this place,

Abilene becomes acquainted with local residents who tell her stories of Manifest in the past. Through storytelling, Abilene comes to understand the people of Manifest, and in doing so she finds, in them, a home. These interactions teach her many things about her father, reinforcing the relationships that are held between people and places. Through the stories of Manifest told to Abilene, particularly through the shifting time periods, the reader recognises how this place has changed over the course of several decades – it has slowly been influenced by the time/space compression. Similarly, by coming to know the place where her father grew up, Abilene begins to understand her father. With this knowledge she fills in many of the gaps of her past, undergoing a journey of self-discovery that is intrinsically place-based.

As readers of this text, then, we arrive in Manifest with Abilene; we watch as her journey from space to place unfolds. While Abilene is a ‘visitor’ to place, drawing on Tuan’s vocabulary, she has some knowledge of Manifest, gleaned through her father’s recollections and stories as they travelled on the train. Similarly, the townspeople have memories of Gideon as a child, and sharing this information with Abilene means that she is never fully an existential outsider. While she still needs to pause in Manifest in order to for it to become a home, she arrives with intrinsic connections to the townspeople and the complicated histories of this place. Many of the adolescent readers who I have worked with in the past construe place as a social construct. Rather than viewing place as a geographical location, such as a physical house or a neighborhood street, many have articulated that their social relationships, to friends or family members, are more salient to their identities. *Moon over Manifest* focuses on social constructions of place and, in doing so, prompts a particular response in readers who feel the same way (Spring 2015a).

I have found Tuan’s space/place binary to be quite limiting in my work with adolescents, in that it either positions them as insiders or outsiders to place – there is no middle ground, as there is for Abilene. For example, when working with readers in Toronto, I had two recent migrants within my group who had spent their childhoods living in Moscow and Seoul. I came to understand how their identities have been forged and/or reconfigured by migration, and how, in particular, mobility has shaped and constrained their familial and social relations. Both participants articulated how places – both the ones they left, and the ones they presently live in – continually inform their emerging, adolescent identities, albeit in contrasting ways (Spring 2016). While they felt like more than visitors to Toronto, they had not yet fully achieved ‘topophilia,’ or a love of place, in ways that some of the other youth had. Reading about Abilene prompted them to think about their own journeys to and arrival in Toronto, and about the various communities that they were/are included or excluded from. As Vanderpool herself suggests, the text sparked a discussion about questions such as: where *am* I from? Where is home? Or, *what* is home?

Reading about a Known Place

Canadian author Tim Wynne-Jones’ *Blink and Caution* (2011) traces the lives of Blink, a homeless sixteen-year-old boy, living on the streets of Toronto, and Caution, a fifteen-year-old girl, who has run away from her family in Northern Ontario. For the first part of the novel, the narrative perspective shifts between Blink and Caution, providing the reader with an awareness of these characters’ perceptions of Toronto. I chose to work with *Blink and Caution* because it is set in Toronto, where I was, at the

time, working with a selection of adolescent readers. The physical geography of the city at large is literally Blink and Caution's home – the parks, subway stations, and streets. Because of this, both are presented as being existential insiders to this place. Blink tells the reader that his life could be 'mapped out along the edge of the lake' (Wynne-Jones 2011: 161). They ride streetcars at night with their eyes closed, and know exactly when to get off; their knowledge of physical space is clarified to the reader through the narrative voice that is employed. They refer to actual street names as they navigate the city. Blink wears a set of clothing stolen from 'a gym locker at Jarvis Collegiate, where the posh children drift down from Rosedale' (9). Jarvis Collegiate and Rosedale exist outside of the text, potentially within my participants' everyday worlds.

Following the home-away-home pattern, Blink and Caution are taken away from Toronto. While away, they experience a period of growth, encouraging them to think critically about their identities. They eventually return to Toronto. Blink reconnects with his grandparents, but his grandfather is dying of Alzheimer's disease; the house which was once a home for Blink has changed significantly, thereby breaking away from the traditional promise of return – he came back to the city, and was willing to reconcile with his past, but home was no longer there. Similarly, Caution returns to Northern Ontario, leaving behind the struggles she encountered in the city. She rediscovers home by reuniting with her family, which, for her, is more important than the physical place. That said, home (here, her family) has changed so significantly that her return is not to the same place from which she left. The stability of home for both characters is not reconciled in the text's conclusion, reinforcing the complexities of place that Massey and Buell discuss. In this text, place is not static but is rather a process.

Can fictional settings, constructed by the author or narrator, ever reveal anything about actual places? Gabrielle Cliff Hodges, Maria Nikolajeva and Liz Taylor write:

Our imaginative reconstruction may be a recognizable version of a specific location, so that we are seduced by it and collude in its apparent authenticity; but however lifelike it may be, it is still not the place itself [. . .] it offers a perspective from which to reflect on our relationship to it. (2010: 201)

Regardless of authorial intention, fictional settings are always going to be representations, resulting in reader recreations. While my participants could search this text for specific representations of Toronto, the textual Toronto, crafted by Wynne-Jones, is a construction of place, a reflection of the city that is drawn from his own real-life encounters with the city, but not the same as them. While the reader might recognise or 'collude' in the vision of Toronto that Wynne-Jones creates, Toronto the setting is how he sees it, and it thus cannot be trusted as an authentic representation.

I decided to use *Blink and Caution* as one of my researcher texts because I wondered what it would be like for my participants to read about a place that existed, for them, beyond the page (Spring 2015b). The choice of text successfully encouraged my participants to think critically and carefully about their own perceptions of Toronto. Even though the fictional and the actual are closely aligned in *Blink and Caution*, it is not Toronto. Although they were critical readers, the adolescent readers often found it difficult to distance themselves from the familiarity of the setting. Several of them desired this proximity: borrowing information from their own experiences of Toronto made them feel like they had insider information that other readers might not have. In having walked the same streets as Blink and Caution, they felt they understood the characters beyond what was provided by the text. Reading about Toronto, albeit

fictionally, appeared to reinforce or reaffirm their senses of place. Catching glimpses of their city on the page seemed to change their knowledge of the actual Toronto.

For others, however, the level of description provided by *Blink and Caution*, particularly in relation to street names, meant that the fictional and real Toronto were difficult to separate. Their creative freedom as readers was limited by the proximity of their own encounters with place. One reader explained that, if you know something well, it is difficult to imagine it any differently. Again, we see here that Buell and Massey's conceptualisations of place as open and fluid, rather than bordered and static, are useful ways of thinking about readers and texts. Reading about fictional places changed my participants' perceptions of those beyond the text.

Reading Culture and Identity

I am currently working with a group of Blackfoot Indigenous youth who live on a reserve in Southern Alberta. This project, in particular, is prompted by my concern that Indigenous young people in Canada are not having opportunities to read culturally relevant fiction (cf. Bradford 2010; Korteweg, Gonzalez and Guillet 2010). I have found a striking omission of the voices of Indigenous youth in our understanding of the ways in which young people, more generally, respond to and engage with texts. Numerous children's literature scholars have made note of the colonial assumptions that are often embedded in Indigenous children's fiction, most often through a postcolonial framework (Johnston 2003; Bradford 2007). Clare Bradford reminds us that 'it is common for Indigenous characters in children's books to conform to a limited number of types [. . .] whereas non-Indigenous characters are accorded far more diversity and complexity' (2007: 332). While some texts construct and perpetuate the exclusion of Indigenous voices, other texts offer narratives that feature Indigenous characters, cultures, and settings in diverse, complex ways. As I am a settler scholar who is not a member of the cultural or social community where this research is situated, I have been working closely with a Blackfoot teacher and librarian on the reserve; they have helped me to select texts that, in their opinion, most closely represent the cultural worldview of their students. The novels that we have chosen are about, by, and for First Nations readers.

We read together Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007). The protagonist, Junior, lives with his family on the Spokane Indian Reservation near Washington. In junior high school, his teacher encourages him to leave the reserve school to attend the 'all white' school in Rearden, twenty-two miles away. Here, he joins the basketball team, falls in love with the popular Penelope, and befriends Gordy, the smartest boy in the school. Junior's future, off reserve, appears to be filled with hope, but he continues to grapple with poverty, bullying, violence, and alcohol abuse at home. Junior notes that:

Reardon was the opposite of the rez. It was the opposite of my family. It was the opposite of me. I didn't deserve to be there. I knew it; all of those kids knew it. [. . .] I felt like two different people inside of one body. (56)

The tension between insideness and outsideness runs throughout the text, as Junior seeks to define himself while straddling two very different places and cultures. The young adult readers that I am working with have lives that are similarly underpinned

by questions of identity. The most pressing question they are all confronting is: should I stay or should I go? It is impossible to do both. Their reserve, while the largest in Canada, is eighty kilometres from the nearest urban centre. As Junior's character exemplifies, if they permanently leave the reserve, they risk leaving behind their cultural identity – links with their elders, language, and the land. They have the option of taking a bus to the 'white' school every day. One of my female participants connected with Junior's experience of being encouraged to leave. She had recently returned to the reserve school after spending one year in a city school. While her trajectory differs from Junior's, in that she chose to return, this moment of recognition or transaction prompted her to share her own experience of being an outsider to place. She never became an insider to the city school, but when she returned to the reserve, she was no longer an insider there, either. Both places, understood to be processes, have come to inform her sense of self, albeit in very different ways.

For Indigenous readers, texts such as these have the potential to be transformative, in that they allow readers to catch glimpses of their identities, worlds, and cultures within the pages. I have found that reading culturally-relevant, place-based texts is encouraging Blackfoot youth to contemplate and celebrate the values and identities that were stripped from their elders and communities through cultural assimilation; in turn, the discussions that we are having are allowing them to critically analyse their worlds, and potentially transform them.

Drawing on Theories of Place to Understand Adolescent Readers

An understanding of theories of place and identity can facilitate an understanding of readers' conceptualisations of place, within and beyond the text. For example, Tuan's (1977) distinction between space and place, and his focus on the importance of pausing, has allowed me to distinguish between places within my participants' lives. Additionally, Relph's (1976) conceptual framework for the different layers of place-experiences is useful as it allowed me to trace how the participants' place-identities have shifted over time. Massey's (1991) conceptualisation of place as a time-space compression has helped me to recognise the intersections between time and space within my participants' trajectories. Her description of time-space has shaped the design of my empirical projects, as well as my analysis, in that I understand that my participants are positioned differently within time and space: they come from somewhere, and are going somewhere, within a range of spatial and temporal scales. By understanding place as a process, rather than as something fixed, I am able to focus on my participants' 'stories so far'.

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PICTUREBOOKS AND SITUATED READERS: THE INTERSECTIONS OF TEXT, IMAGE, CULTURE AND RESPONSE

Evelyn Arizpe

IN HER 'AUTO-BIBLIOGRAPHY', Margaret Mackey (2016) shares her ambitious project of 'thickly' mapping her childhood literacy, through a reflection on her response to the collection of the texts and the literacy practices that she encountered in her first twelve years of life. In one sense, Mackey's work reminds us of other authors and scholars who have written about their childhood reading (Marcel Proust 1905, Jean-Paul Sartre 1964 and Jorge Luis Borges 1970, among others) and of the fascination and frustration of attempting to understand what happens as we read. It also relates to some of the attempts to study readers in history, such as James L. Machor's exploration of 'the dynamics of reading and the textual construction of audience as products of historically specific fields, where social conditions, ideologies, rhetorical practices, interpretive strategies, and cultural factors of race, class, and gender intersect' (1993: xi). If, instead of history, we consider socio-cultural geography, then we can see how readers and their responses are also produced in the intersections mentioned by Machor but within contemporary *geographically*-specific fields.

Mackey's account is perhaps the most in-depth and systematic account of a reader's response that has been written to date and, because it is theoretically and materially grounded, it is certainly one of the most illuminating. While Mackey does not focus solely on picturebooks and her adult account is retrospective, her project raises questions and issues that are particularly pertinent for discussing readers' responses, such as the following: how do an individual's life and reading experiences, perceived identity, and the context of the act of reading affect the reaction to texts? What difference do age, gender, race, class make? What kind of response is produced when these intersections (henceforth considered under the broader term of 'culture') are superimposed on the very personal transaction between a reader and a text? And finally, for the purposes of this chapter: how is it different when there are images that are integral to the reading of the text as a whole? As we shall see, new avenues in research, extending forward from a range of disciplines, hold much promise for examining what culturally-situated responses can tell us both about reading and about picturebooks.

This chapter will refer to some of the recent studies in which picturebooks are the *locus* of empirical research and which look to innovative theoretical frameworks that can shed some light on these questions, yet it must be noted that any potential answers need constant reviewing, not least because societies and literacy practices are under

constant change and new picturebooks are published every day. Mostly, the focus here will be on research involving young children (up to the age of twelve) although of course many picturebooks can be enjoyed at all ages and, indeed, studies are now exploring the aesthetic, affective and cognitive appeal they have for parents, teachers and other mediators.

The first three sections of the chapter present a broad overview of reader-response theory, picturebooks, and literacy and culture, a view that is of necessity limited but which includes references to the key literature in these fields for the reader of this chapter to pursue according to their interests. The fourth section considers some of the issues and debates around multicultural picturebooks and how some scholars have integrated reader-response theory in studying them, leading into a section on what those issues mean for research design and methodology. This is followed by a brief look at an international empirical study (Arizpe, Colomer and Martínez-Roldán 2014) which encapsulates these discussions as they apply to investigating culturally-situated readers' responses to picturebooks. The last section addresses some of the challenges of reader-response research and points to promising ways forward in this area of enquiry.

The Intersection of Reader-Response Theory and Children's Literature

When readers encounter a text, they engage in a 'transaction' with it (Rosenblatt 1978), using cues provided by the author and filling in any 'gaps' in these structures (Iser 1978) according to their previous experience of 'the word and the world' (Freire and Macedo 1987). The reader thus plays an integral and valuable part in evoking the meaning of the work of literature: without the interaction with the reader, the text's meaning would not exist. While this tenet is now fundamental for any consideration of the reading process, the validation of readers' views, however, is relatively recent. It emerged from the critical movements in the 1960s and 70s that invited the reader to the interpretative table which, until then, only had seats for the author, the text and the literary critic. 'Reception theory' or 'reader-oriented semiotics' tends to focus on the 'implied reader', a construct of the text (Iser 1978), while 'reader-response' theory tends to consider 'real' readers, especially within the context of literature teaching. Moving into children's literature, Michael Benton posits that a theoretical view which 'accommodates both the reader and the text' is crucial given that this literature 'defines itself by reference to its young readership' (2004: 124).

It has long been a goal of educators to investigate and understand the reading process of real readers, and especially children and young people of school age, in order to improve that process in some way, but literary scholars, whether or not they are in the field of children's literature, tend to shy away from empirical research and for perfectly good reasons, some of which will be discussed below. Recently, however, perhaps due to the discoveries arising from neuroscience or to the emergence of new digital technologies, there has been a growing interest in how readers can inform research. Perhaps it is also a result of readers having more channels, such as social media, through which to express their reaction to books and of publishers having to take these expressions into account in order to produce books that will sell. All of this now applies not only to children and teenagers but also to younger and older adults, causing a further shift in literary criticism that traditionally focused on the text.

The nature of children's literature introduces further complications to the already complex game of reading for several crucial reasons, but two of them are particularly relevant when reflecting on readers' responses. The first is that authors and readers belong to different generations, with the older one yielding different forms of power over the younger one which is in an earlier stage of cognitive and affective development, and this also has implications for the expression of response. The second is that children's literature tends to be more multimodal and therefore brings images (and often other modes) into play and, in the specific case that concerns this chapter, it is precisely the interaction between images and words that defines the picturebook.

The Potential of Picturebooks for Readers and for Research

Researchers from a wide variety of disciplines and with a range of different objectives have used picturebooks to collect and examine children's reactions and responses. This is because they are aesthetic objects as well as cultural, social and ideological texts, and they offer a unique reading experience. When reading a picturebook, the reader must attend to all of the semiotic modes in order to make sense of the story (or, in the case of wordless picturebooks, the absence of this mode). Studies on how very young children respond to the invitations offered by picturebooks (usually by parents) have shown that responses are closely linked to play, performance and development as readers and spectators (Arizpe and Styles 2010). Studies with school-aged children reveal how much richer the experience and responses can be when there is some understanding of visual art and of the specific aesthetic and literary features of picturebooks (for example, Arizpe and Styles [2003] 2016; Pantaleo 2008; Sipe 2008).

There is no room here to review the history of picturebooks (Salisbury and Styles 2012) or to go into depth into theories of how they 'work' (Nodelman 1988; Nikolajeva and Scott 2001); however, it is important to highlight the feature which defines them as such, that is the narrative synergy between words and pictures. Adding to this synergy are other significant aspects of a picturebooks, such as design and peritextual features (typography, endpapers, dust jackets, among others). Poststructuralist literary theory has provided definitions for the features of picturebooks that work in less traditional ways such as metafiction, intertextuality or fragmentation but many other theories have provided a lens through which to examine these texts, such as feminist, queer, critical race, sociolinguistic theory and many more. More recent approaches include systemic-functional theory (Painter, Martin and Unsworth 2013) which develops the idea of the 'grammar' of the visual text (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996) including what it demands of the reader.

By extending narratology and cognitive literary theory to the interaction between words and pictures, Maria Nikolajeva (2012, 2014) looks at how picturebooks evoke emotional engagement and empathy in the reader. The cognitive approach is proving its potential in further studies that attempt to understand the act of reading 'as it happens' in the mind (for example, Kümmerling-Meibauer and Meibauer 2013). To date, however, there have been hardly any empirical studies with picturebooks which apply cognitive theory. Most studies which look at the interaction between children and picturebooks examine responses obtained after the actual reading moment in a specific context, and focus on particular aspects such as art and aesthetics, postmodern elements or controversial themes (for a review, see Arizpe and Styles 2016). In terms of the

cultural 'situatedness' of the act of reading, however, it is the body of studies on diversity, whether of the picturebook or of the readers, that has proved the most illuminating.

Literacy Practices and the Literary Transaction

From studies in the field of literacy, we have become aware that literacy is a social practice, which means that people produce, use and interact with texts not in isolation but within their social contexts (see for example, Barton, Hamilton and Ivanič 2000). These practices will be differently affected by the various structures, institutions and power relationships that surround all of us, as well as by our own individual reasons for engaging in them. The shared practices will also have an effect on the types of texts that are made available to children and on the way they react to them. For example, in most Western countries, the earliest texts usually given to children are picturebooks and they are engaged with at home, side by side with an older person who, in addition to reading the words, will probably add comments, ask questions, provide sound effects and make physical gestures such as pointing at details of the images. Whether done consciously or not, these actions aim to 'teach' the skills needed to understand and enjoy a picturebook and the young children will adopt these practices the next time they encounter one.

Mackey's book provides evidence for the ways in which context and setting affect literacy learning and response to texts. The accidents of physical geography and temporality determine the many aspects of our identity and how we perform our race, gender and even age, no matter where in the world we have grown up. We become readers within certain environmental, material and cultural surroundings and these contribute to develop our interpretive ability within an understanding not only of reading but also of other literacy practices. Thus we are all culturally situated readers who bring this understanding and ability, along with our personal experience and imagination, to every new encounter with text and image. Picturebooks addressing themes of diversity and inclusion therefore become spaces in which readers can either recognise their own social, cultural and environmental background or become aware of those that are different.

Given that reading is so affected by individual and personal experience and at the same time so rooted in a particular culture, two crucial questions emerge here. First, how can we ever hope to learn anything from one reader's response (and in this case to picturebooks) that may apply to other readers? Second, how can we arrive at either a theoretical or pedagogical approach that works for understanding and extending the responses of all readers?

Multicultural Picturebooks and Culturally Situated Response Theory

The increase in educational institutions' intake of pupils from different cultural backgrounds due to globalisation and migration has led to a large body of educational research, especially in Anglophone countries, that looks at diverse literacy practices and attempts to integrate multicultural education into the curriculum (Banks 2002) and to formulate more culturally responsive pedagogies (Souto-Manning 2009). It has

also led to a greater interest in the publication and promotion of ‘multicultural’ texts and the discussions about using children’s literature to promote knowledge, understanding and acceptance of diversity. While definitions of the term ‘multicultural’ are contingent and endlessly debatable (Cai 1998; Botelho and Rudman 2009), it refers mainly to texts that specifically include and focus on characters and contexts that are *not* by, for or about people who belong to a white, Anglophone, majority. This is not the place to review the debate either about culturally ‘authentic’ texts and who is entitled to write them or about translation (for example, Short and Fox 2003, Gopalakrishnan 2011, or Coats in this volume (Chapter 1)), yet this is another issue that affects the relationship between author and implied reader in children’s literature and the real readers’ responses. For racial and ethnic minority readers, these texts can sometimes provide a mirror in which they can see themselves (Sims Bishop 1992) and their culture and therefore provide an invitation to talk about it. For mainstream readers, they can provide a window into these ‘other’ worlds (Galda 1998) and perhaps a space for developing understanding. However, Cai (2008) warns that there is a danger that this can have the opposite effect and create or confirm stereotypes and prejudices rather than transform them (see also Cuperman 2013). Given the added dimension of images, ‘multicultural’ picturebooks provide a rich field for analysis and critique and have led to innovative methodologies such as critical multicultural analysis (Botelho and Rudman 2009) and critical content analysis (Johnson, Mathis and Short 2017).

The influence of marxist, feminist and new historicist criticism moved reader-based research to consider more fully the social, cultural and ideological dimensions of both author and reader, looking at multicultural literature as well as whole-culture and cross-cultural studies (Benton 2004: 121). Although Louise Rosenblatt’s seminal theory did not elaborate on the socio-cultural context, she did argue that

we need to see the reading act as an event involving a particular individual and a particular text, happening at a particular time, under particular circumstances, in a particular social and cultural setting, and as part of the ongoing life of the individual and the group. (1985: 100)

Writing in 1999, Lawrence Sipe concluded that the ‘focus on various types of socio-cultural contexts seems to represent a trend for more comprehensive investigation in the future’ (Sipe 1999: 120). Although Sipe did not follow this trend himself, his own in-depth study of responses to picturebooks (2008) remains a seminal piece of research which influenced those who did. Mingshui Cai (2008) also argued that while critical reading should not be imposed on aesthetic reading it is necessary to move beyond the latter. Cai’s theoretical model (2002) thus considers the overlap of cognitive, affective and social-communal dimensions in the reading process.

Early approaches in this direction (such as Gregory 1997 or Coulthard 2003) note how visual texts help to make connections between what readers know and what they find unfamiliar. These studies looked at how multilingual children construct and negotiate meaning in a new language, and how the picturebook art form in particular invites affective and cognitive interaction which can be used to examine issues of cultural identity and cultural connection, bilingual or second language learning, and home-school links. One recent thought-provoking study, by Roberta Price Gardner, illustrates the importance of examining responses as they ‘relate to unequal social locations such as race’ (Price Gardner 2016: 122). She uses critical race theory as a

lens with which to analyse the negative and resistant response of African American children in her neighbourhood to images in a picturebook that meant to celebrate a positive, historical, African American female. She concludes that the rejection was the result of deeply embedded, wider, negative social messages about blackness that the children had internalised. She points to the need for further examination of the ways 'children read with or against visual rhetoric in picturebooks and other texts through a web of socio-cultural and identity frames of reference' (Price Gardner 2016: 131) in order to help children develop a more critical reading.

Further, Wanda Brooks and Susan Browne have noted that 'a culturally situated reader-response theory emerging from extensive data compiled from ethnically diverse readers and multicultural books does not exist' (2012: 77). Although they do not examine picturebooks in particular, the model that Brooks and Browne propose for developing a 'culturally situated reader-response theory' attempts to identify the way readers position themselves and how this affects the way they make sense of a text. They argue that a reader's 'Homeplace' is made up of multiple and fluctuating layers encircled by family, peers, ethnic group and community and it will interact with the cultural themes, ethnic group practices and linguistic styles within a multicultural book. This model can be linked to Mackey's attempt to position her young self as a reader through a detailed description of her 'Homeplace', although she grounds it even further in her physical and material environment and does not lose sight of the cognitive work of reading.

Improving Research Design and Methodology

Bringing all the theory about literary interactions, picturebooks, diversity and the requirements of empirical research down to a session with 'real' children and a 'real' book is undoubtedly also a real challenge. Assumptions, hypothesis and interview schedules tend to go out the window when researchers are confronted with children who have their own agendas as readers: the picturebook may not attract them, they may not be 'in the mood' to respond in any way (and why should they be?). It is what makes this area of research both exciting and demanding and why it must involve not only in-depth analysis of the selected picturebook but also careful consideration of the research design and methods.

Researchers looking at reader response to picturebooks have followed a variety of methodologies such as interviews, retelling, drawing, drama or photography, depending on their particular aims. Different theoretical frameworks have been used to inform the analysis, although Rosenblatt's transactional theory remains at the core of most studies. In some cases, the picturebook is mainly a convenient research tool (short texts, relatively simple language and visual cues) to enquire into skills such as decoding, retelling or other learning processes or to find out about what children think about particular issues (for example, migration, war, bullying). In these cases, methods used to obtain readers' responses can overlap with pedagogic strategies. In other cases, studies are more focused on the picturebook itself, and on readers' responses to aesthetic features or to cultural connotations (for an overview of methodology, see chapter 10 in Arizpe and Styles 2016).

In considering research on reader response, the following aspects must be taken into account: the context in which the responses are elicited and who is present in

that context; the selection of the picturebooks presented to the readers; whether the readers read and respond individually or in groups; the type of questions asked; the amount of time allotted to reading, rereading or responding and the timescale of the project as a whole. The aims and theoretical frameworks will determine the methods used, such as whether oral, written or other creative forms of response are elicited, and these in turn will impact on the analytical approach adopted. The approach must also consider that, as Brooks and Browne note, ‘interpretations are not so tidy and easily categorized. Rather, the responses are overlapping, transient and often revised, as is consistent with the nature of cultural practices and the fast-paced give and take of discussions’ (2012: 83).

For this reason, throughout the process the researcher must continually reflect on the response process and the interpretation of the data, asking themselves two questions posed by Margaret Meek: ‘What counts as response?’ and ‘What part does my response to their responses play in their understanding of what they are doing *when* they read?’ (1990: 2). Meek argued that we must be aware that response ‘is always multiple, layered, combining understanding and affect, involving mental images and gestures for which the surface feature of words always seems inadequate’ (10).

Examining Readers’ Responses at the Intersection of Text, Image and Culture

One study which responded to the need to consider multicultural and multilingual contexts and was rooted in culturally-responsive approaches was the ‘Visual Journeys’ project. It emerged from the growing interest and concerns worldwide in the rise in the migrant population at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Few studies had explored migrant children’s literacy and literary understanding in direct relation to their identities as migrants and few of them had included the voices of the children themselves.

Sharing texts and responses would allow us to examine how the knowledge and experience of not only migration but also visual literacy could help to improve the ways in which schools could meet these readers’ emotional, cognitive and linguistic needs. The texts we chose to read with the children were picturebooks because, from previous research and teaching, we knew that this type of book would be attractive to most readers and that the presence of pictures could be reassuring to children who were unsure of their text decoding skills, especially in a less familiar second language. Even better, wordless picturebooks provided an ideal vehicle to get through language barriers (Arizpe 2013). Two internationally recognised authors, Shaun Tan and David Wiesner, had just published new works, *The Arrival* (Tan 2006) and *Flotsam* (Wiesner 2006). Tan’s book directly addresses the topic of migration while Wiesner’s alludes to connections among children around the world. We hoped that authentic, well-crafted stories and pictures would invite children’s responses and allow us to see how they made sense not only of the text but also of themselves and of the world.

Five countries – Spain, Italy, Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom – participated in the research project, all of them major host countries to displaced children from a range of ethnic backgrounds. In working with the groups of children, at all times we were aware of the pluralities we were working with, the multilingual

and multicultural context within which identities were fluid and intercultural relationships were developing. As Nodelman points out, 'As artifacts of our own culture, picture books require and help to construct readers and viewers who will take their place in that culture' (2000: 41). We kept in mind that picturebooks are objects with a particular aesthetic that is inserted within particular literacy practices which may or may not be familiar to all readers (such as opening from left to right or having the illustrator's photograph on the dust jacket). On the other hand, globalisation has meant that certain films, for example *Finding Nemo* and *Titanic*, were familiar to most participants and were used as common intertextual references. As diverse readers responded to the same two picturebooks, we recognised the challenge of embracing and valuing both what was similar and what was different, not only for understanding how they made sense of the text but also for developing more culturally responsive forms of education.

As well as having discussion sessions on the two picturebooks, the participants responded through visual activities such as drawing and photography. The children enjoyed these activities, which avoided language barriers and the anxiety of assessment. For example, drawing a graphic sequence of his journey allowed Hassan, from Somalia, to create a more coherent narrative to tell his Glasgow classmates in his new language. It also permitted researchers an insight into how Tan's detailed visual text influenced Hassan's narrative, in the way that Hassan dealt with difficult circumstances in his country and his journey in a symbolic manner. At all times, however, researchers were aware of the limitations of oral and visual response as well as the need for caution about data interpretation. The multiple voices in these multiple settings defied easy categorisation; instead, a more holistic, permeable framework was adopted, incorporating the crossings and blending of categories and thus reflecting the notion of 'border-crossings': across the national and cultural 'borders' of readers and across fictional borders. Sarah Newcomer, one of the researchers on the project, noted that the enquiry created a space 'where students could bring all of their resources to the table – their languages, their experiences, and their prior literary knowledge'. She also summed up the implications:

When students and teachers are engaged in this process of 'reading between the pictures' together, this can allow the teacher a clearer understanding of the literacy skills that their students already possess and how to build from there to help them expand their repertoires of meaning-making strategies. (Cited in Arizpe, Colomer and Martínez-Roldán 2014: 212)

New Challenges and Promising Ways Forward

The results of the Visual Journeys project show how an enquiry which included a wide diversity of readers and contexts, and which invited readers' responses through a methodology that was sensitive to personal and cultural backgrounds, can open new avenues in research on response to picturebooks and culturally situated readers. It also showed how working with picturebooks can have significant positive consequences both for learners and teachers. This chapter, however, has posed various questions which attempt to go beyond the educational dimension, and while the body of studies

mentioned above has begun to provide some answers there is still much more to do in addressing both old and new challenges in order to move forward.

First, the familiar challenges of working with children's responses – articulation, authenticity, power imbalance, interpretation, among others referred to above – still remain. Second, as mentioned at the beginning, new, less familiar challenges must be contemplated, given that both the picturebooks and the socio-cultural matrix they are inserted in have become more multimodal, multilingual and multicultural, while at the same time children have become more multiliterate (see in this volume Mackey (Chapter 17)). In addition, digital technology is creating new types of texts, such as picturebook apps, and readers can now respond to texts through a variety of online social spaces (for example, see Manresa and Real 2015). This has implications for access, for the creation of new communities of readers and for responses to printed picturebooks.

One important aspect going forward is to improve the link between the findings from the growing body of empirical research in these areas and from theoretical studies on visual literacies, picturebook theory and cognitive development. This means examining some of the conceptual tensions around different epistemological approaches, such as the ways in which neuroscience or phenomenology or constructivism explain the cognitive and affective experience of reading (and looking), as well as the 'text to life' and 'life to text' elements that are almost always present in responses to picturebooks.

At the same time, this aspect takes us back to the challenge of the implications of the knowledge we have gained so far about readers and their responses. Most studies involve singular samples and their assumptions may extend not only to gender or culture but also to the actual concept of 'the child' or 'children'. Perry Nodelman is sceptical about what we can learn from these studies, although he allows that 'self-critical thinking has the best chance of producing knowledge that is, if not generalisable, nevertheless usefully shareable' (2010: 18). Clémentine Beauvais takes further Nodelman's point about the general 'optimistic' view of children's responses, noting that while the filling of the 'readerly gap' between the words and the pictures is often 'celebrated' by researchers, it remains within the boundaries of an 'adult-orchestrated', normative and didactic possibility of interpretation (2015: 6, 7), reminding us thus of that inherent paradox of children's literature.

From an educational perspective, the aim of most of the research that involves culturally situated readers is precisely to counteract deficit views of children's competences through a celebration of what they *can* do. Additionally, this research aims to highlight difference in order to best cater for diversity. However, it is also important to think about commonalities. While Mackey seeks to add 'the idea of groundedness to our reception theories' (2016: 483) by describing a 'particular, situated local reader in a specific setting' (495), she also asks that we look beyond her 'singularities' and her unique interpretations, towards the cognitive act of reading itself (45). Thus, although there can never be a universal story or completely generalisable findings, theoretically informed, in-depth scrutiny of the responses of every culturally situated reader will have some insight to offer about the transaction between readers and words and/or pictures. The more we know about cognitive processes of reading and the more case studies we have of individual readers, the more we can glimpse the commonalities that will move our understanding forward. A consideration of the overlaps between singular case studies and larger quantitative surveys on reading

might also deliver meaningful data, as would a closer integration of interdisciplinary approaches from both the humanities and the social sciences.

As well as being mindful of the singularities of a child reader's response and the tensions that result from researchers being adults, we could consider responses within the wider global systems of oppression and privilege. This could be done, for example, by working from the perspective of intersectionality theory, which studies multiple dimensions of inequality and injustice (see for example, Hancock 2016) to examine not only how these dimensions appear in the identities depicted through the semiotic and affective features of text and image but also how the response of culturally situated readers might accept or challenge these identities (along the lines of Price Gardner's 2016 above-mentioned study). Research on response can teach us what individual children do with the knowledge and experiences they bring to reading, but one of our goals should be to use this understanding to further enrich knowledge and experience for all children and particularly for those who are placed in more marginalised, less advantageous situations. The good thing is that we now know that picturebooks are excellent and enjoyable conduits for helping us towards this goal and that we can make a productive start by mapping cultural intersections onto that ever-intriguing act of reading words and pictures.

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RE-MEMORYING: A NEW PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE STUDIES

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THIS CHAPTER STARTS from the premise that the act of reading a children's book is not confined to childhood, but is a process embedded in time that can be active at different points across a lifespan. In light of this suggestion, it is possible to turn to adult memory as a viable source of knowledge about the lifelong reading acts that start with childhood books. In this chapter I will introduce an interpretative phenomenological method of enquiry that acknowledges the lived experience of childhood reading as a continuum, not ending with an initial textual encounter but enduring as the reader ages. Common aspects of this experience can be uncovered through what I call 're-memory work' with adult rememberers and rereaders. In the following, I shall explain this approach and demonstrate how it can add a new dimension to children's literature studies, enhancing insights already provided by researchers working directly with young readers (for example, Wolf and Heath 1992; Lowe 2006; Maynard et al. 2008).

The prevailing sense for many children's literature critics has been that, for grown-ups, childhood reading is an inaccessible realm of experience, located in the past, in the cultural unconscious, or in the adult imagination (Tucker 1981; Lesnik-Oberstein 2004; Nodelman 2008). The methodology laid out in this chapter acknowledges the reconstructive power of memories of the past, but aims to refine the idea that early reading is lost forever and instead offer a way of accessing early encounters with texts. I propose that 're-memorying' – and the resulting dialogue between later and earlier reading selves that emerges from it – addresses important questions: what makes books read in childhood meaningful? Can the divide between child and adult reading selves be bridged? And how is the category of children's literature expanded and enriched by the ongoing life of texts in memory? To establish this method I bring together two underpinning assumptions: the centrality of the lifespan, and reading as a diachronic process. From these foundations my discussion will turn to methodology and will outline the basis for re-memory work in interpretative phenomenology, which recognises that individuals understand the world around them through their subjective, sensed experiences. This approach takes as its philosophical grounding the work of Edmund Husserl and his student, Roman Ingarden, who argued that awareness is an intentional state – that is, it is always conscious of something – and thus there is a relationship between any cognitive process and its object of attention (Husserl 1973); all the

more so if that object happens to be an aesthetic artefact like a book, created by the efforts of another conscious being (Ingarden 1973). For phenomenologists, the way to understand any experience is to return to the content of consciousness itself by looking inwards and adopting what Husserl describes as a ‘phenomenological attitude’ (1983: 112–14). It is this attitude that is at the core of re-memory work, along with a common notion drawn from reader-response theory that although reading as a set of physical and cognitive processes ‘may end when the book is closed’, the reading act ‘may continue long after’ (Johnson 2011: 138). This method is shaped by elements of more recent interpretative phenomenological practice and empirical research in reading studies, recognising the value of seeking out a fresh perspective by moving beyond a purely self-reflexive investigation of encounters with childhood books and instead gathering data from other people who have experienced this phenomenon. It is also necessarily engaged with questions of how knowledge can be gained from subjective and reconstructed memories.

Lifespan Theory

Discussions about the lifespan and the life course emerged in fields of developmental psychology, healthcare and sociology in the late twentieth century as changing population demographics licensed discrete research into aging (see for example Baltes 1987, Giddens 1991, Elder 1998; see also Joosen’s chapter on age studies in this volume (Chapter 6)). Studies informed by this movement acknowledge that human behaviour encompasses constancy and change ‘from conception to death’ (Baltes 1987: 211), and that to fully understand many conscious and unconscious activities it is necessary to extend research beyond specialist knowledge bounded by fixed stages of development. Thus, instead of focusing solely on infant learning or memory deterioration in old age, researchers consider the interconnectedness of experience across a life. Within this paradigm, development is not always viewed as a linear progression. Instead, attention is paid to ‘diverse outcomes, reversals, returns and reinventions’ as well as to the ‘unpredictability and precariousness of lives’ (Hörschelmann 2011: 379). Work across disciplines has suggested that losses, gains, and innovative processes may feature variously at different points of the life course; showing, for instance, how new forms of intelligence emerge as individuals age, compensating for deficiencies in mental processing through better insight or abstract understanding (Neugarten and Neugarten 1986). One body of researchers situates literary reading within the lifespan through experimental work – as a force for changing aspects of personality (Djikic et al. 2009) or as promoting cognitive health (Stine-Morrow, Hussey and Ng 2015). Such investigations demonstrate how research into literacy and reading experience is not just a matter for researchers interested in the early years of life, but also as part of lifelong learning and aging (Meyer and Pollard 2006). Other researchers examine life transitions, often with an eye to opening up new perspectives on traditional developmental stages. Thus while psychologists Susan Bluck and Tilmann Habermas do employ the terms of conventional structured developmental stages, they stress the importance of context as well as biological chronology, noting that different human activities can be interpreted as functioning within or across what they term ‘biological and cultural ecolog[ies]’ (2001: 137). Henry Blatterer’s sociological work goes further and explicitly questions

the ‘well-cemented psychological edifice’ of ‘adulthood’ that was established in the twentieth century, suggesting that a new ‘benchmark for actions and practices’ relating to adulthood is required in late modernity and into the modern age, one that accepts a greater fluidity between categories (2007: 786–7; see also Giddens 1991).

The notion of porous age boundaries has important implications for children’s literature studies, speaking to what Clémentine Beauvais has called ‘aetocriticism’, or the study of relationships between generations (2015: 18). Marah Gubar articulates the importance of recognising a shared world for these generations in her writings about children’s literature criticism and her theory of kinship. She writes that ‘[t]here is no one moment when we suddenly flip over from being a child to being an adult. Our younger and older selves are multiple and interlinked, akin to one another rather than wholly distinct’ (2013: 454). Although she makes no mention of lifespan theory, she stresses the ‘gradual, erratic, and variable nature of the developmental process’ (ibid.). However, despite such calls to blend the conventionally discrete ecologies of childhood, youth, adult and old age, little attempt has been made to build a theory of lifelong reading that has childhood reading as its initiating impulse. J. A. Appleyard’s seminal work on becoming a reader acknowledged something of this continuum in the tradition of lifespan models, positing reading as behaviour that changes over time in ways that are sometimes irregular, and arguing that adult reading ‘combines and reconstellates all the ways of reading that have mattered to an individual across a lifetime of responding to stories’ (1991: 164). Hugh Crago’s project to ‘trace the evolution of story making from infancy through to late adolescence . . . all the way to old age’ (2016: 14) updates and expands this work, but further efforts are required to examine how reading acts work across these ecologies of age and experience.

To demonstrate why this move might be of critical value for children’s literature scholars I draw on the temporal core of lifespan philosophy and its central tenet that past life, life as currently lived, and life projected into the future all contribute to the self (Brannen and Nilsen 2002; Rathbone, Conway and Moulin 2011). By finding parallels with phenomenological insights into the temporal nature of reading, I will now consider how the reading self exists across time, allowing theoretical access to childhood reading experiences from the past.

Reading in the Time-flow

To understand reading is to understand it within the ‘time-flow’, as Wolfgang Iser explains (1978: 109). Ingarden agrees that ‘cognitive acts performed during the aesthetic experience’ are valuable because of their immediacy and their insights into the reader’s ‘direct and intuitive relationship with the object’ (1973: 400) and that this aesthetic experience is bound to the temporal, since a text is perceived and understood in separate parts, which emerge, are encountered by the reader in a present moment, and then sink ‘slowly into the horizon of the past’ (1973: 98). Ingarden’s ‘moment of reading’ (1973: xxii) requires unpacking in light of the complexities of temporality and the ways that a child (rather than a student of literature) might encounter texts. Rhythms of regular segmentation, anticipation, and rumination are a crucial part of most reading experiences, and any single moment of engagement with a book might therefore be considered as a point in a rather scattered system. Moreover, a childhood book might

be read over an extended period of time – often on a nightly basis for an infant being read to by a caring adult, or on a weekly basis in a school classroom. Even in the case of long stretches with a book in one sitting, children's reading activity is interspersed with instances of diversion or reflection. Marcel Proust's famous account of embodied childhood reading from 1906 lists the many ways in which its imaginative delights are interrupted by sensations related to the material reality the young reader finds himself in, from a 'bothersome bee' distracting him, or the temptations of a boisterous outdoor game or a dinner waiting at home (1971: 4). Text-based encounters can also bleed into other forms of imaginative life for children, such as fantasy role-play inspired by the literary text. In fact, those apparently supplementary activities are forms of reading in themselves, as are all other types of cognitive and emotional extensions connected with the text. If, as Iser argues, reading is a 'dynamic process' of setting a text in motion (1974: 276), time spent transforming words and sentences into meaningful content is only part of the picture and will be completed by time spent remembering earlier sections of the text, browsing illustrations throughout the book, imagining oneself into the story, making connections with other texts or real-life contexts, and a range of other personally experienced activities. It is the case, as Ingarden notes, that 'we always experience our present moment as a phase integrated with the unified whole of time' (1973: 105); in other words, a reader's sense of time – like an individual's sense of self – relates to the present moment they are in, but also to this moment's relationship to knowledge of earlier time and expectation of future time.

Mark Currie has more recently stressed the role of the future in this temporal act of reading, noting that the process identified by Ingarden and Iser actually engenders a somewhat paradoxical movement, from 'the passage of events from a world of future possibilities into the actuality of the reader's present, and onwards into the reader's memory' (2006: 16). Drawing in part on Husserl's philosophical discourses on time, Currie argues that narrative fiction and the reading of it provides a model that can help tackle bigger questions about temporality, because it allows for a 'dynamic relation' (*ibid.*) between a 'tensed' conception of time and, simultaneously, an 'untensed' or 'block' conception of time. Where tensed time is conceived in the relationships between past, present, and future, untensed time posits experience as a sequence of events that exist together within a network of before and after conditions (2006: 17). Currie's thinking adds a valuable philosophical dimension to reader-response theories. Although he does not address issues of age or generation, his exploration of the complex workings of time allows for a decoupling of the common categories of childhood (past) and adulthood (present), and presents an alternative model of temporal stepping stones (before and after and before and after). This template also supports the notion that a reading act might be stretched across time, featuring in a variety of ways across different ecologies in the life course. Indeed, reading a book can be formulated as an infinite activity within the scope of an individual lifespan. A reading act may be initiated by a child, but the reader of a children's book does not stay young forever. The act continues into adulthood, and even an aging individual who never again picks up that book remains its reader by virtue of their transaction with the original text. It is for this reason I describe the full reading act as a diachronic process, by which I mean that it exists across untensed time rather than as being bounded by a single moment or even a single period of life.

While pure Husserlian phenomenology would not distinguish between reading and other forms of human consciousness in lived experience, Ingarden and later reader-response theorists have noted the peculiar intensity of intentionality of works of art such as imaginative literature, in which authorial and readerly meaning-making intersect. Phenomenology's concern with 'presentness' also does not preclude the study of other temporal dimensions. Thus, I would argue that at least three temporal planes are in play: the present moment of interaction with a text; the consecutive phases of reading in which these present moments fit with the time-flow of the reading act (what Husserl calls the 'primary remembrance' or 'retentional consciousness', which is joined like a 'comet's tail' to actual perception; 2002: 112); and the cognitive action of 'secondary remembrance' or recalling the experience in the unified whole of time through memory. It is my contention that by recognising these temporal nuances, and understanding the relationship between the presentness, the time-flow and the unified whole of time, it is possible to reach an enhanced understanding of childhood reading in phenomenological terms.

The model can be expanded in the context of lifelong reading that encompasses *rereading* as a natural extension of the reading act. Conceptualising a childhood reading of Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* (1930), for instance, would involve three steps: first, an examination of a child's original phenomenological encounter with the novel, including affective and embodied responses as well as moments of mental cross-referencing to other stories; second, a consideration of subsequent imaginative engagements with the novel, including rereadings, creative play inspired by the story, and continued before-and-after responses to the text; and third, an investigation of the interplay between memories of, and continuing imaginative engagement with, *Swallows and Amazons* for that reader at the age of twenty-one, fifty, or ninety-nine (see Maine and Waller 2011 for a study of these phases of response to Ransome's novel). Closing down the investigation at any point works to deny that rereadings are valid extensions of the reading act, or that responses to a text may continue for many years after an initial encounter. Continuing the enquiry beyond conventional boundaries of childhood recognises the insights offered by lifespan theory and opens up new ways of understanding reading acts as they are situated in phenomenological time. In the next section I set out how phenomenological methodology can be employed to build on these theoretical foundations towards a process of re-memorying.

Re-memorying: A Phenomenological Method

For adults thinking about childhood reading in its full temporal context, memory is the most useful – if not always the most straightforward – tool. A number of writers have turned to their own memories to interrogate childhood reading as a diachronic act, returning to the objects of this past experience through the practice of rereading in a form of autoethnography. Francis Spufford's *The Child that Books Built* (2002), Patricia Spacks' *On Rereading* (2011), and Margaret Mackey's *One Child Reading* (2016), as well as scholarly enquiries by critics such as Hugh Crago (1990) and Rachel Falconer (2008: 174–85), all engage to some degree with autoethnography's aim to 'systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural structures or narratives' (Ellis and Bochner 2000: 273). For instance, Spufford claims to tell not only his own early story, but the story 'of the reading my whole generation of

bookworms did' (2002: 21). At the same time, these writers also deal in 're-memorying', attempting to examine the 'interpretative partnership' between text and reader in a structured manner, as Mackey puts it (2013: 88), often taking into account the effects of changing ecologies in the lifespan. Re-memorying is a term I have adapted from the critic Lynne Pearce, who deploys rereading as part of a feminist project to explore the 'processes of reading' (1997: 2). Expanding her usage, I put forward re-memorying as a phenomenological method that pays close attention to the specific lived experience of childhood reading and to the forms of perception, cognition, and emotional response that can be remembered and re-experienced through new encounters with the object of the book in adulthood.

Phenomenology is a practical method for understanding the world as it is perceived and experienced by humans: 'an attempt to describe human consciousness in its lived immediacy, before it is subject to theoretical elaboration or conceptual systematizing' (Jackson 1996: 2). Husserl's original phenomenological philosophy called for reflective and intuitive study of 'inner evidence' (1973: 18) in order to reach an understanding of the essence or '*eidós*' of a phenomenon, rejecting the predominant empiricism and scientism of the nineteenth century that sought to measure and categorise external reality. His approach required a 'bracketing' of all knowledge outside of immediate experience to better focus on 'the world as given in consciousness (perceived, remembered, judged, thought, valued, etc.)' (Husserl 1999: 1). Something of this method can be observed in Spufford's reading memoir, although he does not use the term 'phenomenology' to describe his approach. Through the use of autobiographical memory Spufford isolates specific qualities of a youthful experience of reading. His is a poetic form of bracketing to reach the essence or *eidós* of this event. He begins: 'As my concentration on the story in my hands took hold, all sounds faded away. My ears closed' (2002: 1). By splitting off certain sensory responses to observe them closely, Spufford demonstrates a key principle of phenomenological thought: the relationship between consciousness and an intentional object. His autobiographical memory also illustrates Husserl's sense that secondary remembrance resembles perception – even if it is not quite the same (Husserl 2002). In recollection, the story in the young Spufford's hands acutely demands his attention and seemingly shuts down some aspects of the conscious and perceptive self in order to focus experience wholly on the transmission of literary content to the imagination, a process he describes through the metaphor of an airlock 'seal[ing] to the outside so that it could open to the inside' (Spufford 2002: 1). The result is aesthetic readerly pleasure of a sort no doubt familiar to all adults who remember being enthusiastic consumers of books in their youth – the dissolution of the embodied self to the life of the narrative within, indicated through the young Spufford entranced by his book, 'curled in a chair like a prawn . . . gone' (2002: 2).

Phenomenology is a method that has proven to be influential in literary studies, predominantly in its role in shaping reader-response theory; but Husserl's thinking has also been critiqued, most vigorously by Terry Eagleton, for evoking a private sphere of experience that 'is in fact a fiction, since all experience involves language and language is ineradicably social' (2011: 52). Phenomenological methods do indeed stress the subjective nature of experience and employ first-person reflection to investigate the significance of objects and events; yet for Husserl, such enquiry allows researchers to go beyond psychology through the implementation of logic and a focused study of the relationship between individual mind and the intentional object (1973). New

forms of phenomenological methodology seek to reconcile the personal and the social. Clark Moustakas (1994) laid the ground for research in which data is collected from individuals or communities who share an experience of a particular phenomenon. Researcher and participants (or 'co-researchers') can work together to move away from 'the distraction and misdirection of their own assumptions and preconceptions' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2009: 14) and distil the essence of the activity. The method can also be applied to the study of readers' engagement with canonical texts, articulating verbal descriptions of an often hidden practice (Sikora, Kuiken and Miall 2011).

Children's literature researchers can benefit from taking on board aspects of this methodology, by adding to the body of auto-bibliographical knowledge of childhood reading through their own memories and by examining existing reading histories. They can also extend the field along the lines of interpretative phenomenology to take into consideration the experiences of other readers – participants or 'co-researchers' – and to elicit new data. Collaborative re-memorying can thus be shaped as a three-phase method for the systematic gathering of narratives about childhood reading from remembering adults. First, 'accounts of remembering' are created by participants working together with the researcher (through interview or written responses to a series of questions), building a rich picture of the original encounter with a significant childhood book. Participants are encouraged to attempt to access the presentness of the first-time reading and actively recall as much as possible about the book's content, the reasons and contexts for reading it, and the emotions and responses provoked by it. The following questions provide a framework for creating this account of remembering: why did you originally pick up this book as a child? When did you read this book? Where did you read this book? Who did you read this book with? What can you remember about the story and characters, the language used, the cover, any illustrations, the smell and feel of the book? What were the most important bits of the book for you? How did the book make you feel? Did the book remind you of any other books or of anything else? How do you remember this book – through words, illustrations, own images, stories from parents or friends?

In the second phase, participants reread their remembered books, and at the same time create 'accounts of rereading' by noting details of engagement with the text in the present time. This phase foregrounds reading in the time-flow, both in terms of the interplay of present moment, anticipation, and retrospection familiar from reader-response theory, and through the interlacing of present reading and recollection of previous reading(s). To encourage a phenomenological attitude, participants can be asked to make notes about their responses at set points (at the cover, at the end of the first chapter, halfway through the book, at especially striking passages, pages, episodes or illustrations, and so on). They may consider the same questions they answered during the creation of the account of remembering, at the same time paying attention to any shifts in attitude or response that may reflect the biological or cultural ecologies of their current status.

The final step attempts to plot the experience within the unified whole of time, by constructing a relationship between remembering and rereading. The researcher asks participating adults to reflect on similarities and differences in their accounts, any gaps or mismatches, and the degree of satisfaction the process has brought. In this stage, participants can be encouraged to focus on what Husserl calls the 'presentification' (2002: 113) of the original experience by reproducing this event in the form of a reflexive third-person narrative. The following questions can be used as prompts during

the process of rereading, or in interview afterwards, to add detail to the narrative: which details from the book did you recognise in your rereading? Which had you not remembered? Were there any moments when your rereading felt completely different? What feelings did the rereading evoke? Were you satisfied with the rereading experience? Do you think the book has influenced your life?

It is useful to add a few notes on practicalities here. Since it is the detail of individual response that forms the data for analysis in this interpretative approach, a representative sample is not necessary (as it often is in sociological methodologies) and it is more important to work with participants who share the common experience under scrutiny: in this case, reading in childhood. Homogeneity on this level provides points of connection and in turn enables some description of the essence of that phenomenon: the intention is to 'think in terms of theoretical transferability rather than empirical generalizability' (Smith et al. 2009: 51). Working with adults who have been readers in their youth, and who can recall to a greater or lesser degree books they encountered as children, allows researchers to focus on questions of the significance of children's literature across the lifespan, the embodied context of reading moments, and the effects of memory on relationships with books over time.

Data produced by this method include interview transcripts, written accounts, and researcher notes on the remembered books and on the co-constructed narratives. The researcher should become familiar with these accounts, and interrogate them according to their own central research concerns, identifying major themes and unexpected elements and examining these for meaning. This is a process of transforming naive descriptions into more technical terminology in order to understand the *eidos* of the phenomenon. It is a process that can be creative as well as critical: a 'hesitant' method, as Amedeo Giorgi puts it (1989: 50), which takes into account the flow of meaning from the individual to the bigger pattern that emerges. Analysis of this material thus acknowledges that a double hermeneutic is at play, requiring the researcher to make sense of their own sense-making, and that of other participants in the study.

Re-memorying sits alongside other forms of autobiographical remembering and rereading as a form of re-memory work in which reaching for experiences in the past can be laborious and can require systematic strategies of recollection. A note of caution needs to be sounded since 'memory work', as a recognised methodological practice, is firmly embedded in ethical forms of historical and sociological research that seek to expose hidden realities through the reconstruction of communal narratives about the past (Kuhn 2002), and has been particularly fruitful for those examining traumatic experience (Felman and Laub 1992), or for those with interests in identity politics and new history-making, particularly from a feminist perspective ('memory work was developed with and for the feminist movement', according to Frigga Haug 2000: 2; see also Onyx and Small 2001). The term '*re-memorying*' indicates the phenomenological approach which encompasses remembering, rereading, and bracketing out of assumptions about reading, but which shifts the focus of attention away from the social and political meanings of shared pasts and group research to the specific functioning of individual reading acts. This is not to say that remembering childhood books or rereading them does not reveal alternative social histories of reading, as my work on gendered memories of canonical children's literature has demonstrated (Waller 2017). It is also true that the process of re-memorying can sometimes be a highly political act which can turn up challenging, traumatic, or revisionary material

for an individual or community (it is worth noting that the term ‘re-memory’ originates in Toni Morrison’s fictional slave narrative *Beloved* (1987), where it is deployed to explain the tangible re-construction of the past through a conscious return to a conceptual space or place). However, these aspects of the work are not the primary focus in the method I have established here. Nevertheless, where memory is at the heart of research, common questions can be raised about how exactly it functions in relation to reading and how past experience might accurately be retrieved through the act of remembering. I will turn now to some of the implications of this method, specifically its reliance on remembering adults.

Implications – Reconstructive Memory

The term ‘re-remembering’ signals my interest in *remembering* as an act rather than *memory* as a cognitive faculty or a repository, and the methodological importance of this distinction. Although certain involuntary memories will emerge unbidden from unlikely prompts, most accounts of remembering and rereading deal in material that has been consciously recollected or is recognised as familiar from initial perception when encountered on a subsequent occasion. Remembered items might be autobiographical details about how, when, and where a book was read or semantic facts about the book’s appearance or content; they may form part of a generic sense of the past (‘I used to read under the bed covers’) or a more specific personal knowledge (‘I read *Swallows and Amazons* on a sailing holiday and liked the character of Titty’). Re-memory work also functions as a method of testing memories and identifying usable images that make sense of reading experiences throughout the lifespan. Remembering, misremembering, or forgetting can all be ways of noticing and acknowledging meaningful details about a book, a reading stance, or an affective response in childhood and beyond. An interpretative phenomenological approach allows these details into the critical repertoire, adding a fresh range of insights to existing interpretations and scholarly work. The term re-memory also highlights my understanding of memory acts as inherently creative in nature, as much processes of schemata-building as accurate representations of past experience. Ulric Neisser explains that ‘[r]ecall is almost always constructive’ (1986: 78), whilst Antonio Damasio notes that it produces not ‘an exact reproduction but rather an *interpretation*, a newly reconstructed version of the original’ (1994: 100; see also Conway 1995; Schacter 2003; Fernyhough 2012, for a range of approaches to this topic).

With these claims in mind, queries might be raised about any empirical study making use of adult memory work. Perry Nodelman argues that ‘the child I remember or imagine still being with me, viewed through inevitable lapses of memory and the filter of later knowledge and experience, is not the child I was. It is . . . not, therefore, likely to provide accurate insights into real childhood experiences’ (2008: 84). Nodelman’s status as a professional reader of children’s literature comes into play in creating this problem, but for him reimagining past experience is epistemologically flawed for all adults because memory both contains gaps and adds erroneous detail; there is also the problem of nostalgia bringing in affective influences and thus shading the ‘reality’ of the past. Maria Nikolajeva makes a similar point in relation to literary authors’ supposed privileged access to childhood through memory, arguing that the ‘so-called childhood memories described by authors, whether idyllic or traumatic, are complete confabulations’ (2014: 11).

There is, in fact, some evidence that autobiographical information about the past can be reliably recalled (Brewer 1996). The method of re-memorying aims to uncover 'good data' through phenomenological strategies, encouraging participants to bracket out – as far as possible – their adult assumptions and experiences, as well as any knowledge they have about the book in question outside of the memory of first reading. This form of disciplined introspection is facilitated through the use of specific prompts and interview techniques of probing (see Yow 2015: 162–4), while the untensed theory of time helps formulate a model where childhood is not past (and gone) but merely prior (and retrievable). Moreover, for the phenomenological method I am building here, the veracity of reality is somewhat less important than the lived experience of the individual, even when that reality is a version of the self in the past. Phenomenology recognises that human knowledge of the world comes through conscious, sensory, and emotional channels and thus gives credence to personal observations about the past. When Spufford describes his childhood memory of a book's 'soundtrack poking through the fabric of the house's real murmur' (2002: 1), the detail is useful not because it relates to externally observable facts or because it is an accurate reproduction of the young Francis' perception at the time of reading, but precisely because it can provide those insights into childhood experience (that Nodelman refutes) through its bracketed focus on the phenomenon.

For children's literature studies, suspicion has often fallen upon adults who dare to make claims for the texts and reading practices of young people because they have mistaken their own Romantic construction of the child for real children and child readers (Rose 1984). I maintain a questioning stance regarding the transparency of adult knowledge about childhood, but suggest that initial scepticism can be countered by recourse to strategies from the study of autobiographical works and from the memory work of oral history. Stanley Fish has pointed out that '[a]utobiographies cannot lie because anything they say, however mendacious, is the truth about themselves, whether they know it or not' (1999: n.p.), and, similarly, remembered accounts are the truth *about themselves*. For oral historians, veracity is also carefully defined, so that according to Lynne Abrams ultimately what the researcher is interested in is 'whether a respondent can remember events and experiences that are significant to him or her, not whether they have a good memory per se' (2016: 103).

Published memoirs or life stories will not have precisely the same quality as accounts of remembering or rereading produced through empirical re-memory work, but all might be understood in terms of narrative or discourse; that is, the material produced through phenomenological enquiry – whether that is a written autobiography or the transcript of an interview – is open to analysis as a consciously constructed text. Although a study grounded in interpretative phenomenology does not aim to tell a life story for social, political, or personal purposes, it will tell a narrative, nevertheless. Where re-memorying differs from purely autobiographical work is in its move to go beyond individual truths.

The Lifelong Reading Act

Re-memory work sits within wider lifespan studies. It recognises the scale on which reading histories are built and understands that childhood reading is a diachronic act, incorporating the presentness of the present moment of reading, the consecutive

phases of reading in the time-flow and within biological and cultural ecologies, and recollection of reading in the unified whole of time. Taking phenomenological observation as a starting point, these three aspects provide useful practical prompts for re-memory work, helping researchers and co-researchers to focus on specific types of remembering in their accounts of experiences with childhood books.

Researchers need not be wary of taking a phenomenological attitude towards their subject. Contemporary scholars are trained to theorise, historicise, and contextualise; but it is also reasonable to aim at the *eidōs* of a phenomenon through self-reflection or the close observation of perceptions, memories, judgements, thoughts, and values provided by others, as long as the methods employed are sound and disciplined. Re-memorying should thus always attempt bracketing of *a priori* considerations through careful and attentive reconstruction of reading experiences (including affective and bodily response), as well as through structured rereading and reflection by co-researchers of significant books from childhood. Researchers may turn to the new cognitive poetics to describe some of these responses in their analysis of data gathered. They may also be interested in investigating the role of phenomenology in cognitive science; for example in Daniel Dennett's concept of 'heterophenomenology' (1991: 72–9; 2007).

Re-memory work also functions as a method for testing memories. Remembering, misremembering, or forgetting can all be ways of noticing and acknowledging meaningful details about a book, a reading stance, or an affective response in childhood and beyond, and provide some starting points for understanding why particular texts are and remain meaningful to readers. An interpretative phenomenological approach allows these details into the critical repertoire, potentially adding a new range of insights to existing interpretations and scholarly work, as well as adding knowledge to the processes of diachronic reading itself. By recognising the initial impulse for certain reading acts in childhood and paying attention to early responses as well as ongoing connections, it is possible to break down common notions of the divide between child and adult reading selves. The shared perceptions, sensations, and emotions attached to re-memorying accounts can thus offer powerful narratives about the essence of childhood reading from a new and engaged perspective, bringing to light the diachronic nature of this phenomenon and giving voice to those engaged in the lifelong reading act.

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Part II

Contemporary Trends in Children's and Young Adult Literature

CANONS AND CANONICITY

Anja Müller

IN AN AGE where the literary field has become more and more diverse, and hierarchies within this field (such as the interpretative sovereignty of the author, control mechanisms of the print market or aesthetic dichotomies of ‘high’ versus ‘low’ or ‘popular’ culture) have been severely challenged by developments in critical theory, economy or cultural appreciation, canonicity may be regarded as a dated concept. One looks, for instance, in vain for an entry on ‘Canon’ or ‘Canonicity’ in *Keywords for Children’s Literature*, edited by Philip Nel and Lissa Paul (2011), while Kenneth Kidd’s article ‘Classic’ diagnoses a ‘dampening of enthusiasm’ and outright ‘suspicion’ towards the canon, due to the influence of poststructuralist theory (Kidd 2011: 57). Other scholars consider canonicity to be a concept in dire need of reconsideration. Therefore, research into the canon and, more precisely, into strategies, mechanisms and criteria of canon formation, is enjoying an unmitigated interest in general literary studies as well as in children’s literature research. Positions and priorities in canon research may be specific to regional academic traditions, as Elena Paruolo’s introduction to *Brave New Worlds: Old and New Classics of Children’s Literature* remarks with regard to Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom (2011: 12–14). Moreover, distinguishing between general literature (that is, literature primarily written for adults) and children’s literature is in this respect important and significant, because when it comes to canonicity it seems as if these two areas of literary studies, which have at long last begun to approach each other theoretically, still appear to be quite distinct.

The following chapter intends to make a contribution to bridging this gap in particular. By suggesting a functional approach to canonicity, it seeks to incorporate cultural theories which enquire into the constructive, imaginary processes of canon formation, into canon research for children’s literature. Canonicity, thus, shall to some extent be detached from questions of essential aesthetic values or notions of ‘high’ versus ‘low’ culture, in order to reconnect with a more general idea of the cultural work performed by canons and the contribution they make to our social imaginary. For this purpose, I will first juxtapose existing approaches to canonicity in general literature with those in children’s literature before proposing this functional approach and elucidating it with some examples.

Approaches to Canonicity in General Literature

As far as general literature is concerned, one can first of all distinguish between theoretical approaches to canons and canonisation that follow either sociological or aesthetic perspectives. Aesthetic approaches claim that only those texts that fulfil

certain criteria enter a canon, thus are commonly considered to share particular intrinsic qualities and, due to that quality, have a discernible impact on other texts in the literary field. These qualities are believed to be universal and, hence, shared, recognised and appreciated throughout history within a cultural community of a viable size. Such cultural communities have traditionally been of a national character, for the emergence of canons is closely intertwined with the emergence of the concept of the nation as well as with attempts to establish a common cultural identity in the wake of nation-building. In more recent times, however, the establishment of transnational community concepts has also coincided with initiatives at establishing transnational canons, such as European or international canons (see Kümmerling-Meibauer 2004).

What all these attempts have in common is that they emphasise the aesthetic, literary qualities of canonised texts. Corresponding canon theories accordingly examine the aesthetic criteria that account for inclusion to or exclusion from the canon. Essentially indebted to an aesthetics of autonomy of literary texts, which arguably emerged during the eighteenth century (see, for instance, Reinfandt 1997), the various theories that can be labelled 'aesthetic' assume that criteria for the evaluation of literary texts must only be determined from within the literary system. The lists compiled with the help of such approaches largely correspond to a traditional monolithic understanding of the canon as a special selection of works of unchanging universal value; works that make it to the core reading lists of universities or school curricula; works that are regarded as influential and representative for the development of a community's literary culture; works that 'should have been read' by all people who want to participate in the cultural elite of their community. The outstanding representative of this approach in the Anglophone sphere is certainly Harold Bloom with his seminal monograph, *The Western Canon* (1994). However, this traditional, petrified view of the canon is not the only possible manifestation of canonicity based on aesthetic considerations; aesthetics-oriented approaches to canon theory can also assume more dynamic forms. Systems theory approaches, for example, understand canons as autopoietic systems regulating themselves due to their own intrinsic codes and ground rules. They do insist that the codes determining the inclusion or exclusion of texts into a canon are not external but intrinsic to the system; yet they are less interested in identifying core texts than in exploring the inclusive and exclusive processes informing canonisation. More importantly, since the codes for the inclusion or exclusion of a text into a canon are considered to be historically contingent, hence subject to change, the same applies to the canons produced by such codes. Leonhard Herrmann therefore argues that the inclusion into a canon always presupposes the compatibility and connectivity of a text with existing canon elements. Such elements can either be textual or context-oriented features (Herrmann 2012: 70). Thus, canons can perfectly well include new texts, provided they can be related to acknowledged textual features or to the meaning potential of texts that are already present in the canon at a certain time.

The other major identifiable approach to canon theory is constituted by a socio-cultural perspective on canonicity. The common denominator of the various manifestations of this perspective consists in drawing attention to the power mechanisms inherent in canonisation processes. Socio-cultural approaches, too, tend to assume a universal validity for the aesthetic and cultural values conveyed in a canon. The so-called 'canon wars' of the 1980s and 1990s, starting in the United States, targeted especially these universal claims as they chastised canons for excluding texts on the

basis of their authors' gender, race or class – or because the topics the texts dealt with did not comply with supposed normative views within this triad. The debate raised during those 'wars' has sparked numerous canon revisions and has eventually resulted in the plurality of canons we encounter today. Specific canons for certain genres or for cultural communities defining themselves through their nation, gender, ethnicity, age or class give evidence for the attitude that canonicity must yield to our general experience of pluralism. The canons resulting from such a position coexist with so-called alternative canons, counter-canons or anti-canons that very deliberately try to make an antagonistic gesture to the hegemonic normativity which, their compilers believe, essentially inheres the very notion of canonicity as such. The major issue of the 'canon war' debate, namely a canon's claim for representation, however, seems still to be contested and unresolved. On the one hand, one can argue that this problem of representation indeed cannot be solved, because any enterprise like a canon must necessarily be selective, hence, exclusive, and will inevitably leave unrepresented a considerable number of works produced or cherished by some groups in a cultural community. This is probably the remaining stain of any canon project: the taint of if not universality, then at least the common core, as it were, that attaches itself to canons like an evil curse.

On the other hand, one could suggest that the various battle cries for politically correct inclusion policies in canon formation are by no means the most important or interesting aspects of socio-cultural approaches to canon theory. They may be of interest for political activism, but from the point of view of literary or cultural studies, research into the cultural work performed by the canon may be a more rewarding endeavour, because such an enquiry can yield valuable insights into the function of canons for the creation of collective identities. Such approaches have been pursued, for instance, by Frank Kelleter (2010), whose work in the field of popular culture is especially interesting for children's literature. It is by now a truth universally acknowledged that the formation of national canons was integral to national and imperialistic projects. Edward Said, for example, maintained in Lee Morrissey's *Culture and Imperialism* that the British canon preserves the idea of a powerful Europe juxtaposed with a 'desirable but subordinate periphery' (Said 2005: 219). The legacy of that identificatory function is the notion that canons are conservative tools of cultural hegemony imposing ideologies onto readers or, more effectively even, onto educational institutions. James Guillory (1993) develops from this idea his concept of canons as cultural capital and concludes that an unequal distribution of this capital by different degrees of access to education will result in social discrimination. Generally speaking, this hegemonic concept of a canon as a top-down power structure, in which readers are subjects who are acted upon, informs most socio-cultural theories of canon formation.

Aleida Assmann (1998) has found more neutral terms for how canons construe collective identities, as she assigns the canon a crucial role in the constitution of a collective memory. This feature is a quality canons share with archives, but unlike archives canons seem to be more rigorously or, at least, more recognisably structured (see Herrmann 2007: 31). Besides, one can identify various layers in a canon – Clemens Ruthner, for instance, distinguishes between a core layer of greatest permanence, a medium layer and a periphery where most changes and fluctuations in the canon material can be observed (Ruthner 2007: 44). Rainer Grübel therefore adequately calls the canon a 'chronotope' (Grübel 2012: 42–3), that is, a spatially organised structure in a continuous transformation process throughout history.

In general literary theory, then, canons have largely lost their claim to be hoarding aesthetic treasures, representing unchangeable values of human existence. Instead, they have been reassessed as functional structures, aiming at constructing collective identities and collective memories. Their inherent power mechanisms have been meticulously scrutinised with regard to their principles of inclusion and exclusion (most notably in terms of gender, race and class). Anti-canons, counter-canons or alternative canons have been formed in response to such reassessments. The dynamic nature of canons has been foregrounded, and the processes of canon formation, canon change, de-canonisation and re-canonisation have moved into the centre of academic research interests. Current canon theory is, as a consequence, as much informed by literary studies as by cultural studies, sociology or systems theory. Accordingly, research into the canon not only pays attention to texts but to the entire literary field including, among others, production, market, publication, education, criticism or readership.

Approaches to Canonicity in Children's Literature

Considering the wide range of this research area, it is certainly surprising that research into the canon of children's literature is a fairly 'recent invention' (Stevenson 2009: 110) which emerged after canonicity had been severely challenged in general literary studies, and that it has remained comparatively restricted in its scope. Here, one of the major concerns still seems to revolve around definitions and terminologies. What is a classic of children's literature? What is a canon? Is there a canon of children's literature? Should we rather use different terms instead of 'canon', such as 'touchstones' or 'key texts'? Such are the questions one encounters again and again when scholars of children's literature discuss canonicity. Another field of enquiry tries to link texts that are perceived as classics or as canonical with childhood concepts; childhood being regarded either as a natural state of the human being with some unchanging qualities, or as a historically contingent construct. The latter corresponds to the state of the art in history of childhood scholarship; the former owes to Romantic ideas of the child but has no correlation to sociohistorical realities.

Quite a number of scholars take great pains to insist on the different quality of children's literature when it comes to canon issues. Anne Lundin believes:

While canon wars have waged in the humanities, the family tree of children's classics has remained relatively unshaken amid the storms about. Perhaps that stasis says something about our isolation from the discourse that engages the larger literary culture. (2004: vii)

Perhaps, one could argue, this is because the classics Lundin mentions form the core of the children's literature canon, which is less susceptible to change than the periphery. The assertions of Ernst Seibert, Austria's leading scholar in children's literature research, that children's literature may have canonical potential (2007: 463) whereas young adult literature is so ephemeral an affair that it necessarily remains uncanonised (464) can certainly be dismissed. This is already apparent when Seibert adds a number of alleged 'special cases of serial literature', saying their existence by no means contradicts his statement because they are exceptions, with *Harry Potter* being even 'the exceptional exception' (ibid.). Seibert's second key assumption is equally doubtful

in the light of existent canon criticism: 'Classics (that is canonized children's literature or rather characters) do not reveal anything about national peculiarities; they are only of limited value for the discussion of transcultural issues. Their distinctive feature is their timelessness' (*ibid.*). In view of the undeniable connection between the rise of national concepts and the emergence of canons, such a contention is hardly tenable. The eminent German children's literature scholar Hans-Heino Ewers (2007), finally, does not doubt the existence of key texts of children's literature, but is less certain when it comes to a traditional canon of children's literature (apart from the self-declared lists of classics proposed in respected 'classics' series of publishing houses): who, after all, should decide which books should be in this canon, and on the basis of which criteria? Such questions apparently take it for granted that a canon can only exist in the singular.

What all these approaches to canonicity in children's literature have in common is that they largely ignore the above-mentioned developments in general canon theory, or, at least, do not actively take cognizance of them. Instead, they retain an opinion of the canon as an authoritative, singular structure which makes statements about the intrinsic value of the texts it contains. Accordingly – this becomes obvious in Ewers's elaborations – assembling a canon must be a conscious act performed by identifiable authoritative instances who decide about inclusion or exclusion. The emphatic insistence on the role of gatekeepers in the field of children's literature in general and in the canons of children's literature in particular is a case in point, whereas general canon theory, in contrast, has developed towards a pluralistic as well as a descriptive rather than prescriptive attitude towards canonicity. Such descriptive approaches, for example, reflect critically on intentionality in canon construction (see, for instance, Simone Winko 2002 for her idea of the canon as an 'invisible hand' phenomenon) or they regard canons as autopoeitic systems with their own intrinsic, inclusive and exclusive codes, which include aesthetic as well as sociological criteria. Research into the canon of children's literature can certainly profit from such approaches more than from constantly meditating on the alleged peculiarities of literary texts aimed at child readers as opposed to adults.

In a similar vein, pondering on aesthetic criteria for canonicity has not come entirely naturally when dealing with children's literature, either. After all, children's literature was for a long time excluded from canon formations precisely because its literary quality was deemed inferior to that of literature for adults. Deborah Stevenson therefore perceives the emergence of canon research in children's literature studies in connection with the discipline's attempt to demonstrate its legitimation (2009: 111). In response to possible allegations concerning the literary quality of children's literature, Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer has developed a set of aesthetic criteria for canonicity in children's literature, the most important of them being innovation and originality (2003: 192–211). In a similar attempt, Emer O'Sullivan (2005) puts stress on the impact factor of canonical texts, that is their wide reception and influence on other texts. Remembering Paruolo's statement about the regional distinctions among canon studies in children's literature research, it seems as if German scholars in particular are interested in establishing terminologies of canonicity and in defending the aesthetic value of children's texts. This may be partly due to academic traditions, especially in German studies, and partly due to institutional power struggles over the discursive hegemony in an emerging research area that enjoys increasing popularity.

Whereas aesthetic approaches to the canon of children's literature have thus begun to gain ground in recent years, the various sociological canon theories seem to take longer to find application for research into canonicity in children's literature. This is somewhat surprising because children's literature research has traditionally been quite explicit about the functional aspects of children's literature. Given the important role of children's literature for socialisation and enculturation processes, it is certainly not too far-fetched to scrutinise canonical children's literature in view of the social orders and ideas the texts represent. It can also be assumed that historical changes in canons of children's literature are not occasioned simply by historical changes in concepts of childhood. It would be far more plausible to relate these changes to more encompassing political, social, economic, cultural and ideological shifts of which childhood forms only one small, and by no means independent, section.

Under closer scrutiny, the alleged stability of a canon in children's literature tends to derive from an equally alleged universal notion of the character of childhood. In their preface to *The Literary Heritage of Childhood: An Appraisal of Children's Classics in the Western Tradition*, Charles Frey and John Griffith maintained that 'works [of canonical children's literature] provide a reading of children and of childhood' (1987: vii). Their list of what these books are consequently about (desire, fear, innocence, experience, parents, children, ambition, humility, dream, reality, sex, violence, mortality, immortality), 'all seen under the aspect of the nursery, the schoolroom, the bedtime ritual, the lark' (viii), presents childhood as essentially human, or as a residue of universal human features; but this childhood is also an entirely depoliticised realm. If J. D. Stahl believes that 'the task of establishing a canon is analogous to determining the nature of childhood' (1992: 12), one could add that this task, then, is definitely impossible to accomplish. No matter how much one may crave for the Romantic idea of childhood innocence to represent the true nature of the child, one would be well advised to acknowledge the many valuable studies in the history of childhood which, for the last decades, have demonstrated that childhood is a cultural construct like gender or race, and that the idealisation of childhood informing today's discourses of pedagogy or family policy has as much to do with the real nature of childhood as patriarchy has to do with the true nature of gender relations. Without a universal child to be reflected in a canon, it is all the less surprising that a canon of children's literature is subject to change, as well.

Suggestions Towards a Functional Approach to Canonicity

In order to assess canons and canonisation processes in children's literature, it is therefore advisable to assume that the respective structures and strategies in those processes largely correspond to those of other literary canon formations. Starting from such a presupposition one can treat and approach children's literature first and foremost with the tools of literary and cultural studies instead of rendering all observations age-specific, relating them to an imaginary child reader (unless, of course, one pursues reception-oriented questions) and justifying, on these grounds, the refusal to acknowledge developments in general literary or cultural theory. Combining socio-cultural and aesthetic aspects and approaches entails applying theoretical frameworks from sociology or political theory when analysing the cultural work of canons in children's literature. The assumption behind such an approach is that the knowledge conveyed

and preserved in canons is not merely a literary knowledge but forms part of a more encompassing notion of cultural memory including aesthetic as well as cultural values. Such a functional approach to canonicity will have to look into textual structures as well as into institutions and mechanisms that declare works as potentially canonical by ascribing to them the kind of aesthetic and cultural values canonical works are supposed to represent: for instance, literary quality, innovation, originality and supposed impact on readers and other literary texts. Literary prizes are such institutions that are worth investigating when gauging the potential future canonicity of contemporary children's literature, because they attribute to long- and shortlisted texts the ability to perform cultural work very much like canonical texts.

In order to assess such notions of canonicity, Charles Taylor's concept of social imaginaries may prove to be a useful tool. Taylor uses the term social imaginary in order to describe 'the ways people imagine their social existences, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations' (2004: 23). An analysis of social imaginaries focuses: (a) 'on the way ordinary people "imagine" their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms, but is carried in images, stories and legends' (*ibid.*); (b) on the fact that 'it is shared by large groups of people, if not the whole society' (*ibid.*); and (c) on the idea 'that common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy' (*ibid.*).

This definition contains several aspects that can be easily connected with existing canon theories, and offers new dimensions besides. Since imaginaries are reflected and manifest in 'images, stories and legends' (*ibid.*), this intrinsically narrative (or symbolic) character not only implies that it is worth examining the mentioned genres for the social imaginaries they express, it also relates imaginaries to the canon, which has been perceived to be narrative in its very structure (see Grüberl 2012: 42). Collective in character, canons are a plausible example to enquire into social imaginaries, because with its identificational function a canon is actually a prototypical site where such 'stories' carrying social imaginaries may be found. Moreover, canons may preserve social imaginaries not only in the individual texts they contain, but also in their entire structure. Following a systems theory approach to canonisation, one could suggest that social imaginaries provide the codes determining the inclusive and exclusive mechanisms of canon formation. A second asset of social imaginaries is their wide proliferation and high degree of participation and representation. Taylor distinguishes social imaginaries which are shared by a large part of the community, if not the entire community, from theories which originate in individuals or smaller groups (with the potential of entering the imaginary at a certain time; see Taylor 2004: 24). This does not mean, however, that social imaginaries make a claim for universality. Social imaginaries are always defined by a particular identified community; they operate and are valid within this community only and make no claim beyond its borders. With this presupposition, social imaginaries differ from the values represented by canons according to traditional canon theories. The big issue of the canon wars – the lack of representation of marginalised groups – is eschewed in the idea of social imaginaries because their moral orders are based on the consent of all community members. This may be a utopian claim, but it is important in this context to hint at the difference between social imaginaries and ideologies or, for that purpose, the contested

categories of the canon wars (namely gender, race and class). Ideologies imply that power operates from top to bottom as values and orders are imposed on subjects. Social imaginaries, in contrast, come into existence as they are actively realised in the cultural and mental practices of the community members. The idea of social imaginaries not only emphasises their constructed character; it also accentuates the dynamics of the construction processes and, most importantly, the participatory work of the agents involved in them. Applied to literary canons, social imaginaries are not only reflected in texts, they also presuppose conscious authors and readers who realise certain values or moral orders. The latter aspect is quite remarkable when applied to a canon of children's literature because it jettisons the idea that the child reader is more or less a consumer reading for sheer entertainment, without consciously realising ideological implications.

Besides, social imaginaries, being structured like stories themselves, are manifest especially in the structural patterns of narratives: one can trace them in plot patterns, setting constellations, character constellations, protagonist agency, genre conventions, and so on. In other words, they are revealed in the cultural and social practices evident in literary texts (for example in narratological practices), and they aim at cultural and social practices in the reader who is perceived as a subject agent. With this orientation, social imaginaries perform veritable cultural work and can therefore serve as a tool to assess the cultural work of the canon, too, without narrowing that work down to a set of essentialist, fixed, conservative and monolithic values, identifying the presence or absence of certain ideas and theories. A social imaginary approach, in contrast, analyses texts with regard to the (structure of the) social practices they represent or invite. Thus, it requires enhanced attention to the conceptual structures of texts and seeks to explore how these structures can connect with the underlying practice structure of the imaginaries.

Social Imaginaries in Canon Formation Research

In order to flesh out these abstract reflections, let me briefly illustrate how an enquiry into some of the integral social imaginaries for Western culture – democracy, secularism and Europe – may inform the discussion of processes of canon formation and canon change in children's literature.

If one breaks down the social imaginary of democracy to its core social and moral practices and orders, one can identify among them free rational judgement and decisions, consent, actions and practices aimed at mutual benefit and a rational individual as agent. Within the literary field, this imaginary will engender plots that favour such practices and orders by displaying, for instance, processes of maturation and socialisation, ethical decisions and by insisting on the importance of sovereign agency. Liberty, law, charity and representation are further values to be expected within narratives that emerge from the imaginary of democracy. A literary analysis conducted in view of these aspects could investigate the ethical and moral values of fictional characters and look at the basis on which their decisions are taken. In a *bildungsroman*, one could analyse what precisely defines maturity, who eventually is associated with that attribute, and where the moral order into which the protagonist is eventually integrated resides: in the individual or the community? Finally, with regard to plot, one could scrutinise preferred patterns of conflict solution: are

solutions achieved by mutual consent, by the assimilation of an individual into a group or by attaining radical individual autonomy, maybe even in opposition to a community?

Thus the shifting power relations within families in canonical children's literature through the centuries, for example, can not only be explained with changing concepts of the family, respectively the roles of parents and children within a family. On a larger scale, the gradual disappearance from the canon of stories about families with strictly patriarchal structures, or with parents whose authority remains unchallenged, also coincides with increasingly egalitarian family structures emphasising individual autonomy, so that children can rehearse their competences as future democratic citizens and decision-makers.

Even more obviously, the social imaginary of democracy in children's literature is reflected in the robinsonade, a genre that from its very beginnings has explored the relationship of individual and community, as well as strategies of community building and government. Apart from Defoe's original text of 1719, robinsonades which have persevered in contemporary canons (such as Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* (1930)), tend to evolve around groups which thrive as they interact and arrive at consent with each other, or around individuals or groups who seek cultural contact and dialogue with rather than mastery over the indigenous population to survive (such as Michael Morpurgo's *Kensuke's Kingdom* (1999) or Terry Pratchett's *Nation* (2008)). In both cases, respecting equality of rights, a culture of dialogue and consensual decision-making as well as participatory structures of government need to supersede the original monarchical stance of Robinson, if robinsonades are to remain in the contemporary canon, as can be well observed in the many film adaptations of Defoe's novel.

The second exemplary imaginary, secularism, denotes a general shift of the religious from the public to the private sphere and, consequently, a detachment of political and religious institutions in a community. Religious models of world explanation are superseded by non-religious models normally based on reason or, more specifically, on natural sciences. In his monograph *A Secular Age* (2007), Charles Taylor additionally mentions a third dimension of secularism: secularism does allow for belief as an individual choice, but within a secular imaginary this belief includes the acceptance that one's personal belief is only one possible choice among equally valid different belief systems, even including atheism. Accordingly, secularism, like democracy, highlights the role of individual decision and choice while disparaging with the idea of one universally valid truth. In order to identify structural patterns of the imaginary of secularism in literary texts, one may not only look at characters' religious inclinations. Plot constructions, too, can imply underlying religious patterns, such as Manichean dichotomies or teleological histories of salvation or redemption. A major question, of course, is how far canonised texts represent religious monoculture or pluralism in secular communities, and whether 'religious' is synonymous for 'Christian', or whether religious pluralism is accounted for.

Without having been named as such, the social imaginary of secularism has already proved to be a valid tool for analysing canonisation and decanonisation processes. It underlies, for example, the observation that the development of children's literature towards an autonomy aesthetics forms part of a secularisation process, because this development made it necessary to detach children's literature from its function in

religious or religiously informed moral instruction. Although the production of religious children's literature has never ceased, such books no longer form part of the canon. The evangelical writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century – Sarah Trimmer, Maria Sherwood or Hannah More, for example – may scarcely be read outside the academic realm, yet nevertheless make an appearance in histories of children's literature. This does not apply, however, to the authors of the vast evangelical book market in our present time, which despite its sizeable figures, is regarded as a religiously specialised niche in a secularised literary field and, hence, overlooked by canon gatekeepers and academics alike.

Moreover, secularisation processes are very prominent in the popular field of fantasy literature: children's novels with a clearly religious agenda, such as George MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871) or Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies* (1863) gradually seem to fall out of the canon. The more general mythological character of Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–5) renders them by far more prone to universal appreciation than C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950–6), whose obvious Christian subtext recognised by the readers seems to outweigh the author's own insistent precept not to read his books allegorically. More recent productions in the canon of children's fantasy literature, such as J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books (1997–2007) or Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy (1995–2000), present us with entirely secularised secondary worlds where religion merely surfaces either in intertextual references or motifs (Rowling) or is even directly attacked as an outdated, potentially corrupting and oppressive value system (Pullman).

Finally, the social imaginary of Europe is of particular interest for an investigation into canon formation processes, because it responds to a fundamental point of criticism in the canon wars, namely the conservative, exclusive nature of national canons and their implicit imperialist agenda. The social imaginary of Europe, in contrast, is essentially transnational, that is it proffers a conscious notion of belonging to a community that transcends national borders, that affirms cultural exchange and that is essentially dynamic because its codes of inclusion and exclusion have not yet been agreed on unanimously – neither as far as its geographical borders are concerned nor as far as its values are concerned.

In view of the debate about Britain's place in Europe, fuelled in June 2016 by the United Kingdom's electorate's decision in favour of 'Brexit', it is extremely interesting to examine where British canonical children's literature positions itself towards the social imaginary of Europe in a continuum from 'splendid isolation' to full integration. Does the social imaginary of Europe surface in British children's literature at all, and if so, what does Europe signify? In other words: which geographical regions and civilisational practices are imagined as Europe? Do texts in the British canon of children's literature represent a notion of shared civilisational practices or moral orders throughout Europe? Do they rather emphasise national, regional or local (for instance 'British' or 'English', 'Welsh', 'Scottish' or 'Irish') orders and practices? Or do the texts imagine belonging to other communities, perhaps a residual imaginary 'British Empire', a 'Commonwealth' or an 'Anglo-American transatlantic community'? Moreover, as with the other social imaginaries, plot structures of the fictional texts can reflect the transnational implications of the social imaginary of Europe. Plots of assimilation, adaptation or integration, for instance, support fictions of exported local

order systems, whereas plots of hybrid convergence, cosmopolitan dialogue, cultural contact (and clash) or conviviality are more congenial to the transnational dimension of Europe. In this context, hybrid convergence means a somewhat disturbing coexistence of different cultural identities (as outlined by Bhabha 1994). Cosmopolitan dialogue features the exchange between different cultural identities without necessarily aiming at consent (see Appiah 2007: 258). Cultural contact may include either of these instances, but tends to be more confrontational (see Pratt 1992: 4). Conviviality, finally, implies the comparatively peaceful cohabitation and acceptance of cultural diversity within one community (see Gilroy 2004). What all concepts have in common is that they do not conceptualise the respective exchange processes in terms of hegemonial, unilateral power structures.

If a respective enquiry finds that British canonical children's literature displays little concern with the imaginary of Europe – as compared to its interest in the relationship to former colonies or Commonwealth countries – or the United States, one ought to admit that at least the cultural work of the canon of British children's literature hardly seeks to contribute to an awareness of Britain's connection with the rest of Europe. Contemporary children's literature on the two world wars or the Shoah may occasionally give the impression that, at least within this particular area of cultural memory, British children's literature indeed perceives the United Kingdom as inseparably intertwined with the rest of Europe (the works of Michael Morpurgo, with their emphasis on the common human suffering of all participants in the wars, are a good case in point here). Yet this impression only applies to these very singular events. Otherwise, British children's literature appears to invoke the social imaginary of Europe only sporadically. Transnational narratives rather tend to reflect on postcolonial topics. The shortlists of British children's book awards (such as the Carnegie Medal, the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize or the Costa Children's Book Award) appeared to show special interest in novels on European topics or with European settings in the early 2010s. One could think, for example, of Helen Grant's *The Vanishing of Katharina Linden* (2009), Theresa Breslin's *Prisoner of the Inquisition* (2010), Sonya Hartnett's *The Midnight Zoo* (2010), Ruta Sepetys's *Between Shades of Grey* (2011), Sarah Crossan's *The Weight of Water* (2011), Elizabeth Wein's *Code Name Verity* (2012), Katherine Rundell's *Rooftoppers* (2013), or even Sally Gardner's *Maggot Moon* (2012), in which the dystopian state bears close resemblances to both Nazi and GDR Germany (see Butler's chapter (14) in this volume). This interest soon abated again in favour of more individualised concerns, such as inclusion, dysfunctional families or gender, with the occasional book on racial discrimination in the United States. Eschewing further political topics, especially those with an explicit European outlook, the texts on the more recent shortlists of British children's book awards are unlikely to perform a cultural work that could foster a social imaginary envisaging Britain as an uncontested part of Europe.

Pursuing such and similar questions when approaching canonicity from a functional perspective sheds light on how children's literature, as a popular form of contributing to the symbolic constitution of collective identities in the rising generation, participates in the formation of social imaginaries. Looking at texts which are either already canonised or have been attributed a certain value by canonising institutions (such as prize longlists or shortlists, recommendations, anthologies, literary histories, curricula), one can draw conclusions about how significant certain social imaginaries

are for the cultural practices in a particular country or region. The cultural work of the canon, thus, is much more than that of a memorable monument assembled from prestigious literary pieces. It is an ongoing, dynamic work reflecting and shaping a community's system of aesthetic, social, political and cultural values, and, as such, it is a never-ending story.

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SERIALITY IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer

SERIALITY IS AN increasingly central topic in the theoretical and historical study of children's literature and other media targeted at children. Part of the interest in series for children, ranging from picturebooks, comics, and children's novels up to children's films and digitised media formats, is the impression that serially produced and consumed forms of children's literature and media have become more sophisticated in the last decades. Narratively complex works, such as Morris Gleitzman's *Once* series (5 volumes, 2006–15) and Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* (13 volumes, 1999–2006), to take two prominent examples, are commonly perceived as significant artistic advances over the mass-produced series which have dominated the European and North American children's book market since the middle of the nineteenth century (Kensinger 1987; Deane 1991). Mass-produced series entered the domain of academic interest in the wake of cultural studies, thus reversing long-standing prejudices against such 'low' artistic forms. On the whole, however, cultural studies was more interested in the popularity of serial forms than in seriality as a literary and narratological device. The largely formal matter of seriality was treated as more or less incidental, while the focus of research was directed towards understanding the reasons why children and adults alike are attracted by mass-produced series, which continued to be regarded with suspicion due to the assumed financial interests of the publishers, as well as ostensibly simple plots and superficial characterisation. Still now, it is not uncommon to hear from readers or mediators that stand-alone books are more valuable than series, or that sequels are inferior. By contrast, children's literature scholars such as David Rudd and Victor Watson have taken series written for children seriously by investigating their possible impact on the target group as well as analysing their narrative and aesthetic qualities (Rudd 2000; Watson 2000, 2004). Theoretically focused and in-depth-studies of seriality in children's fiction are still an urgent desideratum for children's literature research, since the analysis of series fiction would provide insight into children's cognitive, emotional, and aesthetic development, and into how reading series may improve children's still fragmentary literacy skills. Some recently published book chapters and edited volumes, however, testify that the biased attitude towards the study of children's fiction series has given way to a more neutral approach (Heath 2013; Nikolajeva 2013; Reimer et al. 2014; Sands-O'Connor and Frank 2014; Kümmerling-Meibauer 2017). Against this background, this chapter aims to address the multiple facets of seriality in children's literature with an emphasis on British and North American children's novels from the middle of the twentieth century to the present.

Series: Prequels, Sequels, Trilogies, and Other Concepts of Serialisation

The series as a form comes into being as a consequence of a demand for a sequel – often in case of successful novels and films – or out of a certain concept – a storyline planned in advance and realised independently from demand or success. While series typically comprise a compilation of books ranging in numbers from two up to hundreds, other serial concepts more specifically describe the connection between books and stories whose characters and storylines are tightly entangled. A series elicits certain expectations on the part of the reader, touching on all elements: setting, characters, plot, theme, and the narrator's voice. The most prominent concept is the sequel that continues the story developed in the original work. This often happens when a book has an unforeseen success, which triggers publishers to request authors to write an extension. While the sequel focuses on what happens after the conclusion of the original work, a prequel tells the story of what happens before the beginning of the first book, as for instance in David Almond's *My Name is Mina* (2010), which is a prequel to the author's highly praised *Skellig* (1998). Telling a story backwards, or delving into the prehistory of the story developed in the first book, is quite rare in children's literature as compared to sequels that propel the narrative forward and guarantee a further development of the main characters with whom the readers are already familiar. If authors decide to write more than one sequel, they usually create a trilogy, as Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* (1995–2000), or a tetralogy, as Alan Garner's *Stone Book* series (1976–8). It is not unusual that the number of sequels is extended to five – as in Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* (2005–9) – or far more – as the prominent example of the *Harry Potter* books (1997–2007) by J. K. Rowling demonstrates (Levy and Mendlesohn 2016). There are also series which comprise more than ten books, for instance, Enid Blyton's *The Famous Five* (twenty-one volumes, 1942–63), Brian Jacques's *Redwall* series (twenty-two volumes, 1986–2011), and R. L. Stine's *Goosebumps* (sixty-two volumes, 1992–7; followed by two spin-off series from 1994 to the present).

However, long series tend to be ghostwritten by a number of different authors, such as the 175 volumes of the *Nancy Drew Mystery Stories* (1930–2003), developed by Edward Stratemeyer and published under the pen name of 'Carolyn Keene', which include more than 15 different authors (Johnson 1993). While sequels are commonly written by the author of the original work within a manageable time span of one to three years in order to keep the readers' attention, two other strategies can be observed. Authors who did not intend to write a sequel since they consider their book as being self-contained and complete, change their mind for different reasons, releasing a sequel after a time span of ten or more years. One example is Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War* (1974), whose taboo-breaking topic paved the way for similar young adult books that came out in the 1970s. The open ending of the novel induced enthralled readers to contact the author asking what happened to the protagonist after the brutal fight. Eleven years later, Cormier published *Beyond the Chocolate War* (1985), which gives an answer to the readers' questions, but also extends the story by focusing on other characters who already appeared in the first book (see Kümmerring-Meibauer 1997).

Another strategy consists of writing sequels to children's classics and popular children's books after the copyright expires, or by commission of the copyright holder.

These sequels are typically written by new authors – due to the fact that the authors of the original works have generally passed away. This is not a totally new phenomenon, since sequels to popular children's books written by other authors have been marketed since the nineteenth century (Sheldrick 2011). A prominent example in the second half of the twentieth century are the sequels to Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908), starting with Jan Needle's *Wild Wood* (1981) and reaching its peak with William Horwood's four *Tales of the Willows* (1994–8). While Needle's book retells the story from the perspective of the weasels and stouts who rebel against the social order, Horwood's quartet pursues the development of the main characters, whereby the setting changes according to the sequence of the four seasons.

Countless sequels and prequels have been written to J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1911) since the end of the 1980s (Stirling 2011). Although the book entered the public domain in the UK in 1989, the copyright was renewed in 1995, which means that most of the sequels are unauthorised, with a few exceptions, such as *Neverland* (1989) by Toby Forward and *Peter Pan in Scarlet* (2006) by Geraldine McCaughrean, which was commissioned by the copyright holder following a competition launched in 2005 (on the intricacies of the copyright law on the creation of sequels, see Cheng 2013). The sequels and prequels to Barrie's book constitute a Peter Pan universe by extending the timeline into the past as well as the future, selecting minor characters as protagonists, introducing new characters and plots, and addressing different audiences, from preschool children to primary school children, adolescents and even adults, attracting the two last groups with the explicitly described sexual awakening of Peter Pan and Wendy and the inclusion of topics such as abuse, abominable crimes, and mental insanity.

A more recent trend is the publication of sequels and prequels to renowned and popular children's books from the first half of the twentieth century. Mostly, the original books share the characteristic that they have been complemented by sequels or constituted a series, either written by the author of the first book or by several authors. The horizon of these older books is now extended by furthering the plot line, introducing new characters, and providing a new historical and cultural context, as is evident in Budge Wilson's *Before Green Gables* (2008), a prequel to L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), and Patricia MacLachlan's *The Boxcar Children Beginning: The Aldens of Fair Meadow Farm* (2012) as a prequel to Gertrude Chandler Warner's *The Boxcar Children* (19 volumes, 1942–76, followed by 125 further sequels written by different authors, still continued). David Benedictus' *Return to the Hundred Acre Wood* (2009) is a sequel to A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926), characterised by a nostalgic attitude, while *No Place like Oz* (Paige 2013) is an edgy sequel to L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) as well as the prequel to the *Dorothy Must Die* series, also by Danielle Paige (2014–16). In 2014 two sequels based on Edith Nesbit's *Five Children and It* (1902) saw the light of day: Jaqueline Wilson's *Four Children and It*, and Kate Saunders' *Five Children on the Western Front*, which was shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal in 2015. Wilson's sequel focuses on the encounter of four children living in the fictional present with the five children of Nesbit's original book, which leads to humorous misunderstandings and joyful adventures. Saunders' sequel, on the other hand, deals with the time travel of Nesbit's five child protagonists into the near future, when they have almost grown up. Due to the depicted historical

background – the story takes place during the First World War – Saunders’ novel is distinguished by a sombre tone and melancholic atmosphere.

J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* novels introduced a new series concept into children’s literature. Conceived by the author as a septet from the beginning, Rowling launched a new book almost every year. As Harry Potter grows up – he is eleven years old in the first volume and seventeen years old in the final volume – the complexity of the themes, narrative structure, and emotional relationships of the fictional characters increases from one book to the next by considering the protagonist’s developing cognitive and intellectual capacity to deal with more dangerous tasks (Nikolajeva 2010: 13–25). Therefore, the mood became gloomier from book to book, due to the progressive presentation of violence and abuse of power, which creates an atmosphere of mutual mistrust, instability, and even hatefulness, thus pushing into the background the humorous tone that characterises the first three books in the series. Yet, when the first book came out in 1997, readers of the same age as Harry Potter could follow the protagonist’s development, ‘growing up’ with him at the same pace, which evidently contributes to readers’ strong identification with Harry Potter. In addition, Rowling managed to attract an adult audience by the implementation of critical, even satirical episodes, which refer to current political and cultural debates on the one hand, and the increasing interest in romantic aspects and the main characters’ sexual awakening on the other. The *Harry Potter* books thus paved the way for the multiple crossover fantasy series that have appeared on the market since the 1990s (Beckett 2009: 151).

At the same time, readers are invited to reconsider their attitude towards those characters whose ambivalent status gradually becomes apparent. Although the books are interspersed with indications about the actual motives of Harry’s alleged adversary, Professor Snape, the ending provokes the rereading of the whole series in order to discover these and other hidden references. In addition, the publisher launched a media consortium with merchandising products, computer games, and movie adaptations that followed the appearance of the respective volume within a short time to keep the target group interested, and that implemented new perspectives on the characterisation of the protagonists and their goals (Gunelius 2008). Nine years after the final *Harry Potter* volume, the publisher released the theatre play *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (2016) by Jack Thorne, whose plot is based on a story developed by Rowling. Although it is marketed as ‘Harry Potter 8’, the story begins nineteen years after the end of the seventh volume and is only loosely connected with the previous plot line. In addition, Rowling wrote sidequels, such as *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2001) and *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* (2007), which extend the Harry Potter universe by introducing new characters and plot lines. Since the emergence of the Harry Potter franchise, the concept of serialisation within children’s literature and media has considerably changed due to the mixing of genres, simultaneous remediations, and transmedia storytelling (Westman 2011).

Towards a Poetics of the Serial

Serial narration is largely regarded as a definite characteristic of the aesthetics of popular culture. In studies of popular culture, the connection between popularity and seriality is often considered to be so obvious that questions are rarely raised concerning

the specific nature of serial narratives, the cultural and historical circumstances they presuppose, and the differences between popular seriality and serial structures in other cultural fields (Allan and van den Berg 2014). Since in order to function a series demands a certain willingness to spend time with the reading and to be eager to learn more about the same characters, the question arises as to why readers stick to serial forms. An often suggested argument is the sense of security which is particularly appealing to children whose literacy skills are still developing: Victor Watson's famous analysis of series fiction for children begins with the claim that reading a series is akin to 'entering a roomful of friends' (Watson 2000: 1). Many critics decry the monotony of children's book series in which the protagonists do not grow older or change and in which the plot follows the same sequence of events – Nodelman (1985) even associates sameness as a significant quality of children's literature. But other critics argue that reading about the same characters may serve as a scaffold which prepares child readers for the potential broadening of the topic and gradually introduces them to more complex structures (Mackey 1990).

The apparent sameness of the storyline and the depiction of characters in children's book series draw on the paradigm of repetitiveness which is an essential feature of serial narrativity. However, repetition is a rhetorical and stylistic instrument of literary texts in general and cannot be reduced to serial texts and children's books only. Although no one has, to this day, theorised the aesthetics of repetition, it is evident that repetition is an aesthetic mode which cannot be reduced to a simplified narrative structure, since it serves multiple functions (Sielke 2013). Particularly, serial narratives are characterised by a counterbalance of repetition and variation. We can hypothesise that one common pleasure of a series consists in the expectation that readers will encounter the same characters again and again. This joy of repetition is complemented by variations that may range from slight changes of the setting, the plot line, and the genre conventions up to the characterisation of the protagonists. These hypotheses are in line with studies in cognitive narratology that emphasise the significance of schemas and scripts (Stockwell 2002; Herman 2013; for children's literature, see Trites 2014 and her chapter (8) in this volume). Both cognitive concepts help readers to understand the narrative structure of texts and to recognise narrative deviations. In this respect, series particularly assist non-experienced readers like children in confirming the scripts before they can be disrupted. Moreover, if a series obeys a general law, it is not a principle of unity but of connection. This feature leads to a paradoxical relationship: a series seems to be indefinitely extendable, but frequently comes to a spontaneous end. It appears over time, but can later be collected into a finished work. It is open but it is also in some sense closed. Considering this, a poetics of the serial raises questions about the nature of beginnings and endings, which is often connected with the issue of fulfilling and foiling expectations. While the reading order of many series produced for children is irrelevant due to the tendency to depict static characters and present interchangeable plots, other series require that readers observe the correct sequence in order to understand the development of the characters and how specific events are tied to incidents presented in previous books. It can even happen that the disregard of the actual order of the books may evoke misunderstandings and even reveal key information too early, which contributes to a loss of suspense.

While stand-alone books usually bring the depiction of a character's growth to a certain stop, extensions of the original book's story in a series offer readers the

possibility to comprehend the further development of characters with whom they are familiar. While readers are thus remaining within an already known frame of reference, a series enables them to broaden their knowledge and aesthetic pleasure. Consequently, readers can understand the previous books within a series in the light of the new one, which potentially contributes to altered interpretations. Seen against this background, a series satisfies the readers' interest in a possible storyworld beyond the single novel, which touches on thematic concerns as well as the characters' further development.

Apart from these questions, there are some essential narrative modes that build up a connection between books within a series, for instance, parallelism, open-endedness, and circularity (Kümmerling-Meibauer 1997). Parallelism points to the fact that there must be certain correspondences between individual books in order to classify them as a series. Parallel aspects can touch on all relevant issues that belong to a narrative, such as the setting, the storyline, the genre, the characters, and the narrative voice. In this respect the question arises of how authors manage to inform the reader who is not familiar with the previous book about the main events and changes told therein. Quite often authors use strategies to summarise the plot of the previous book at the beginning of the current book, usually by a character who writes a letter or a diary entry or informs another person about what has happened beforehand. This strategy is used to refresh the reader's memory and to give them some hints of what they might expect in the new story.

A serial text does not need to sustain the illusion of completeness and closure that a single text requires, to a certain degree. The series as such becomes the text, which implies that readers cannot base their expectations about the nature of the text just on one single text within the series. A singular text within a series becomes an episode, which is situated in a greater context. Although decontextualisation is still possible, readers cannot expect to understand a text within a tightly knit series without at least acknowledging previous narrative threads. Authors of such series, too, are faced with the problem of closing each book in a satisfying manner while leaving the ending open to push the narrative into a sequel. Consequently, the sequel works against the limitations of literary art by extending the storyworlds before and after the initial book.

Sequels and series point to the *aporia* of ending which arises from the observation that it is impossible to decide whether a story is definitely complete or merely ends. As scholars in the realm of narratology have shown, closure in the text is a relational term since it can be reopened in a subsequent text (Kermode 1967; Herman 2002). While authors of popular mainstream series frequently use cliffhangers to indicate that the story has been merely partially completed, others prefer to write an open ending which leaves several gaps. These gaps propel readers to reflect on the possible continuation of the story after they have closed the book. Hence, the gaps serve as hooks for the reader's imagination as well as making it possible for the author to recommence the story, without being obliged to follow just one potential track. Whatever strategy authors may choose, the phenomenon of anti-closure which is a predominant feature of modern and postmodern literature, is also to be found in modern serial fiction for children.

As the parallels between books within a series and the close connection between the openings and endings of single novels already indicate, a series may also subvert the genuine idea of a sequential and chronological order of the reading process, since readers may move backwards and forwards, swaying between different books in a series in

order to compare the storyline, key elements, and the presentation of the main characters. This behaviour points to a circular movement which goes against the supposed linearity and single-mindedness of children's series. Circularity as a narrative strategy to stimulate the reader's attentiveness may be enhanced by other aesthetic principles, such as for instance multiperspectivity – when a story is told from multiple points of view, thus constituting a sequence of different versions of the same events.

A poetics of the serial also needs to discuss the issue of the author, since a number of series have been created by a team of authors – an aspect which gains in importance considering the increasing impact of fan fiction. Although these authors are generally obliged to follow strict guidelines as far as the representation of the characters, the setting, and the storyline is concerned, in principle they are free to introduce new minor characters and small episodes, and to follow their own stylistic preferences as long as they do not deviate from the series concept in a significant manner. As a series may change over the course of time due to a need or desire to adjust the topic, the depiction of the characters, and the setting to contemporary views, authors may differ in the use of narrative voice, the design of descriptive versus narrative passages, and the presentation of dialogue. This becomes even more evident when authors do not belong to a series authors' team, but have been commissioned by publishers or have decided on their own to write a sequel or prequel to a novel produced by another author.

Finally, a poetics of the serial would be incomplete without a consideration of paratext and illustrations, if present. It is a common trend in book series to shape the book design in such a way that covers and titles facilitate assignment to a specific series. However, this sameness apparently changes, not only to distinguish single volumes within a series, but also regarding the potential adaptation to contemporary trends in the general marketing of children's books. Frequently the paratextual design of children's fiction series has been completely changed, for example when a series is translated into other languages, which is most evident with popular English fantasy series such as *Harry Potter* and *Percy Jackson*. Another example in this line is the parallel production of children's and adult versions of *Harry Potter*, which mostly affects the cover design. The same applies to series illustrations. While publishers usually commission a specific illustrator to create the images for a series, this often changes over time, with other illustrators coming on board to take on the job. It might be a worthwhile undertaking to compare different illustrations produced for a series, in order to try and find out in what ways the illustrations contribute to the overall recognition of the series and how they support the series' overarching concept on the one hand, and in what ways they might add something new or even change the reader's attitude towards the characters and the storyline on the other.

Series Fiction, Fan Fiction, and Transmedia Storytelling

The emergence of the internet facilitated an unpredicted growth in fan communities, in which fans communicate in forums, share stories and comments, and influence the creation of stories in which they are interested (Coppa 2006). These sites offer new kinds of user involvement for online narration, which touches on the theoretical study of serial narration (Ryan 2004). The desire of fans to seek out new material to enhance and continuously extend a story goes against the need for closure that is central to

many theories of narrative (Jenkins 2006). To a certain degree, the ongoing efforts of fan fiction authors to update their own stories by considering the comments and suggestions of their own readers testify to how much they enjoy the process of rewriting and extending already existing stories. This form of interactivity often leads to the creation of spiralling rather than sequential and linear storylines.

A telling example is *Harry Potter* fan fiction, which is produced on several web pages, the largest being HarryPotterFanFiction.net, onto which more than 80,000 stories have been uploaded at the time of writing. Besides sequels, prequels, and spin-offs, a considerable number of these fan fiction stories focus on minor characters who are provided with an individual biography and are involved in adventures that are often loosely connected with the *Harry Potter* universe. Gaps in the novels and open questions are hooks for developing new sidekicks which lead to considerable changes to the main storyline. In addition, the narratives not only draw on Rowling's novels but also refer to the film adaptations, interviews with Rowling, and a range of popular children's books and young adult novels as well as literature for adults, which are intertextually interwoven with the *Harry Potter* series.

Another narrative strategy connected with seriality is transmedia storytelling, which is a specific narrative technique of telling a single story across multiple media formats and platforms, including printed books, movies, television, games, and web pages. The aim of this cross-media phenomenon is not only to reach a wider audience, but also to change and expand the narrative itself. The transmedia launch may start with a printed book which is complemented by films, apps, and online versions, but it may also start the other way round (Douglas 2001).

The simultaneity of digital content, in contrast to the sequential production and consumption of serialised print, marks a real change in the perception of serial forms themselves. As a media-historical change, this transformation challenges the audience to confront a complex set of epistemological issues, to consider whether it is the current media-induced revision of seriality that has caused scholars to perceive seriality as a crucial topic of interdisciplinary study. Media changes and transformations stimulate serial production, due to the capacity of serial forms to bridge transitional moments by varying the familiar with the novel. In this regard, digitalisation promises to change general views of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' 'culture of seriality' by scrutinising the common ground association of seriality with narrative fiction (Hayward 2009). With this, new forms of serial structure emerge in transmedia storyworlds. Fan fiction demonstrates that contemporary amateur production interacts with professional content, but also creates its own type of complex narration through unique forms, aesthetics, and narrative structure, likewise encouraging alternative reception practices (Page 2013). Three aspects are relevant in transmedia seriality, which are elucidated by analysing fan fiction as well as transmedia franchise projects of popular children's and young adult products. First, they highlight the complex nature of seriality in transmedia texts, inviting the reader/user to shift between different media formats. Second, they create a specific kind of flexible and multiple serial effect wherein meaning does not depend on perceiving a specific sequence of narratives, but instead depends on reading any collection of narratives within a larger cycle to assemble a sense of flowing genres and preferences. Third, they reconfigure the serial effects of tropes found across the transmedia components of individual stories as well as across the breadth of children's literature and media.

Serious about Series: A Plea for an Interdisciplinary Approach

Discussions of seriality genuinely profit from the differences of theoretical approaches that diverse disciplines such as literary studies, media studies, and cognitive studies offer. Although the perspective of cultural studies remains an influential means of investigating series and serial forms, it is increasingly challenged by other perspectives that focus centrally on forms and processes of serialisation. If the recent changes in serial forms and their media have attracted attention to seriality per se, it has resulted in a growing awareness of the crucial role played by serialised books, the inherent consumption patterns and narrative strategies that structure populist as well as elitist approaches to culture. Accordingly, studies of seriality have to acknowledge the recent developments in print, film, and digital media, but should also ask broader questions, that is questions about the discursive construction and socio-cultural negotiation of value in and through serial forms; about the historical ties between contemporary popular serial forms and the serialised children's novels of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries; and about the specific roles of various medial (and inter- or trans-medial) configurations that shape the narrative and aesthetic characteristics of series created for children. At the same time, the introduction of seriality studies into this broad terrain demands that this new research is conducted in interdisciplinary settings, where exchanges amongst multiple perspectives and paradigms certainly contribute to a better understanding of the shared object of study. A thorough analysis of the forms of seriality calls for methods that are inherently comparative by considering theoretical insights from different disciplines, such as narratology, children's literature research, literary studies, cognitive psychology, film studies, game studies, and pedagogy. Moreover, seriality studies would benefit from being tackled both from the angle of close empirical and formal studies on the one hand, and from the wide-angled theorisations of cultural, historical, and media-technical developments on the other.

The potential of future children's literature seriality studies as a genuinely interdisciplinary field of enquiry may revolve around facilitating a dialogue across disciplinary and methodological borders by emphasising the sophisticated narratological and aesthetic features of serialised art forms whose significance for the child's cognitive, linguistic, and aesthetic development has been underestimated.

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COUNTERFACTUAL HISTORICAL FICTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

Catherine Butler

COUNTERFACTUAL HISTORICAL FICTION is a type of text defined by its deliberate and systematic departure from consensus accounts of history. Counterfactual texts are designed to explore, not what happened in the past but what *might* have happened, had circumstances differed in one or more respects – if a battle that was historically won had been lost, for example, or a person who died had survived.

‘What if’ questions have long fascinated authors in numerous genres, from historians to science fiction writers, and a complex array of competing and overlapping critical terminologies has been developed for their discussion (Collins 1990: 108; Hellekson 2000; James 2007; Butler and O’Donovan 2012). Prominent in most accounts is what is sometimes called a ‘branch point’ – that moment at which the history of the fictional world and our own split off from each other (the battle that was won or lost, for example), after which each history continues a path of separate development.

In science fiction treatments especially, the reasons for and occasion of this split may be central concerns of the narrative, but in many counterfactual fictions the branch point will have occurred long before the time the story is set, and its existence will be only implicit. The people living in the counterfactual world may have no reason to believe theirs is not the only reality, and it is left to the reader to infer that their world and ours are not the same. Joan Aiken’s *Dido Twite* novels, discussed below, are one example among many, being set in a nineteenth century in which the Stuart dynasty still reigns in Britain. Books of this kind raise particular challenges when published for children, because in order to recognise that a book is making use of counterfactual history readers must already be sufficiently familiar with consensus accounts of the historical past to be sensitive to any departure. Where a text has a primarily adult readership, some pre-existing historical knowledge may reasonably be assumed, but this assumption is far less easy to make with child readers. Children’s writers who wish their books to be recognised as counterfactual must either rely on their readers’ historical sophistication or else find some way to alert them to the status of the fiction – through dropping heavy clues in the form of obvious anachronisms or absurdities, or by including an explicit discussion of the book’s counterfactual premise, either as a peritextual feature such as an Afterword or within the book itself. In Philip Pullman’s *Northern Lights* (1995), for example, the character Lord Asriel sets out the principle thus:

that world, and every other universe, came about as a result of possibility. Take the example of tossing a coin: it can come down heads or tails, and we don’t know before it lands which way it’s going to fall. If it comes down heads, that

means that the possibility of its coming down tails has collapsed. Until that moment the two possibilities were equal. But on another world, it does come down tails. And when that happens, the two worlds split apart. (Pullman [1995] 2006: 376–7)

In *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, John Clute suggests that branch points can be used as a diagnostic to distinguish science fiction and fantasy uses of counterfactual history:

If a story presents the alteration of some specific event as a premise from which to argue a new version of history – favourite ‘branch points’ include the victory of the Spanish Armada in 1588, the victory of the South in the American Civil War, and Hitler Wins scenarios – then that story is likely to be s[ci]ence f[ic]tion. If, however, a story presents a different version of the history of Earth *without arguing the difference* – favourite differences include the significant, history-changing presence of magic, or of actively participating gods, or of Atlantis or other lost lands, or of crosshatches with Otherworlds – then that story is likely to be fantasy. (Clute and Grant 1997: 21; original italics)

Clute’s distinction is helpful in drawing our attention to the extent to which the centrality of the cause, occasion and mechanics involved in worlds ‘splitting’ may vary between texts, and the significance of this variation in terms of reader experience. In assigning such texts to just two generic categories, however – science fiction and fantasy – Clute underestimates the variety of ways in which counterfactual history may be woven into children’s and young adult fiction, the range of roles it can play, and the number of generic borders it can cross.

In this chapter I argue that the variety of counterfactual historical fiction for children, and the variety of purposes for which it is used, demonstrates the need for a more nuanced approach, one that articulates counterfactual history’s affinity with genres including allegory, fable and traditional historical fiction, as well as science fiction and fantasy. I suggest that the technical challenges posed by writing in this mode for a young audience demand particular ingenuity from authors, not least in supplying the historical and generic awareness that writers for adults have traditionally been able to assume.

The Contradictory Nature of Historical Fiction

Before investigating the role of counterfactual historical fiction further, it will be helpful to consider its relationship to historical fiction generally. Historical fiction in the modern sense is commonly said to have begun with the novel *Waverley* (1814), in which Sir Walter Scott attempted to evoke the relatively recent past of the 1745 Jacobite rising. Historians since Herodotus had used narrative (including invented dialogue) to engage their readers, but in splicing well-known historical figures and events from the 1745 rebellion with a story of invented characters such as Edward Waverley, Scott was combining very disparate ingredients. *Waverley* offered readers a way of understanding history that went far beyond being a catalogue of facts, instead refracting the past through the kind of intimate psychological interiority of which the novel form had shown itself peculiarly capable. The book was an international literary sensation that inspired countless followers, and although the historical

novel has developed in many directions during the subsequent two centuries, the form that Scott founded continues to thrive today.

From its beginnings, historical fiction has contained a number of apparent contradictions. Most fundamentally, the very term 'historical fiction' combines an implicit claim to say something factual about the historical past with a declaration that it is fiction, something defined precisely by its departure from fact. This basic tension gives rise to others. For example, one implicit premise of historical fiction is that the people of the past can be understood – that they are sufficiently like us in their motivations and desires as to be comprehensible to modern readers. The assumption that human nature is relatively invariant across time and culture, however, competes with historical fiction's framing of the past as fascinatingly different from our own times, in terms not only of technology, material culture and institutions but also of values and sensibility. Historical fiction is constantly negotiating these dual assumptions of sameness and difference in its representation of past lives. In addition, it must incorporate another kind of double focus – firstly, on the private affairs of (perhaps fictional) individuals, and, secondly, on the large sweep of great public events and epochs. Where the former is emphasised, history may become no more than a scenic backdrop; where the latter is, the story's characters may be reduced to insignificance besides the larger events of history.

Of course historical fiction is not a unique genre in needing to balance various conflicting demands, although it is unusual in the extent to which it may be said to have been precipitated by them. However, I shall argue that counterfactual historical fiction not only acknowledges these conflicts but provides practical ways to incorporate them successfully within the parameters of historical narratives. In fact, counterfactual historical fiction might usefully be regarded as historical fiction's paradigmatic form, rather than as an eccentric outgrowth from the genre.

The Attractions of Counterfactual Fiction in Writing for Children

Scott's novel appeared around the same time that children's literature itself was becoming firmly established, and historical fiction has been a prominent component of that literature almost from the beginning. Over time, and certainly in recent decades, certain features have tended to distinguish historical fiction for children from that written for adults. One is that, because children's fiction usually positions children as protagonists, and because children have historically tended not to be the key agents in major historical events, historical fiction for children is more likely than adult fiction to take place at the periphery of those events, or to depict the lives of 'ordinary' people far removed from the centres of political and military power – a tendency that has increased in recent decades as social history has become a more prominent part of the discipline of history, not least as it is delivered in schools. Nevertheless, counterfactual fiction can offer an attractive alternative strategy to the 'history from below' approach, making it possible to put a child protagonist at the centre of world-changing events and allow them a high degree of agency. This opportunity is taken by many authors of children's counterfactual fiction, whose child protagonists are regularly central in shaping history through their decisions and initiative, as is the case with Joan Aiken's *Dido Twite* in *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* (1962) and sequels, Philip Pullman's

Lyra Belacqua in *Northern Lights* (1995), and Sally Gardner's Standish Treadwell in *Maggot Moon* (2012), all discussed below.

Another distinctive feature of children's literature has always been its perceived educational and didactic function, and historical fiction for children has accordingly assumed the role not only of entertaining children but of teaching them about the events of the past, inevitably in ways that tend to promote and naturalise the ideological assumptions of the writer's present. Historical fiction has frequently been used to supplement history lessons in school classrooms, so that, for example, a class 'doing' the First World War may well find itself moving beyond historical sources to read modern novels set during that period, such as Michael Morpurgo's *Private Peaceful* (2003), a text that through its empathetic appeal on behalf of its main characters strongly promotes a critical attitude towards the treatment of ordinary soldiers (see, for example, the '*Private Peaceful* Education Resource Pack' produced by the Scamp Theatre in 2011, designed for use with older primary school pupils). Given this didactic context, and the fact that children are less likely than older readers to have a detailed prior knowledge of the historical background of the books they read, writers of children's historical fiction may feel a special responsibility to produce work that is both accurate and fair in its representation of the past. Nevertheless, while the requirement for accuracy apparently militates against the inclusion of counterfactual narratives in children's historical fiction, the didactic desire to make sympathetic characters (of whom readers are implicitly invited to approve) think, speak and act in ways that accord with contemporary values may paradoxically inspire the introduction of anachronistic behaviour (Barnhouse 2000: 1). The relationship of didacticism to the question of historical accuracy is thus far from straightforward.

Interrogating the Distinction between Historical and Counterfactual Fiction

One way to view the various ways of writing about the past is in terms of a hierarchy, in which each step is at a further remove from reality. At the top of the hierarchy sits the past itself, immutable, inscrutable, inaccessible. Next comes the surviving evidence of the past in the form of artefacts, historical documents and so on. These in turn give rise to the interpretations of historians, intended as a factual account but also as a way of mediating the past and making it comprehensible to present-day understanding. Historical novelists use the work of historians as the basis of a fictional narrative. And finally, counterfactual novelists write fictions that are defined precisely by their divergence from the historical record.

This model, which places counterfactual history at a greater remove from reality than conventional historical fiction, may appear to reflect common sense, but I suggest that it is highly misleading. As noted above, all historical fiction diverges from history, simply by virtue of its fictionality. Almost all historical fiction also makes use of anachronism, notably in the area of language (especially where the fiction is set in the distant past) but also in terms of beliefs and attitudes, with protagonists in particular frequently presented in ways more consonant with the attitudes of modern readers than with those of their fictional contemporaries (Butler and O'Donovan 2012: 80–93). With this in mind, one might argue that counterfactual

history differs from conventional historical fiction partly in being more explicit – and thus more honest – about its departures from historical accuracy.

The most obvious difference between the two varieties of historical fiction is that conventional historical fiction typically refrains from offering outright contradictions of consensus accounts of historical facts, instead operating in the interstices of the historical record by fleshing out facts with plausible narratives or concentrating on events and parts of society that have received little detailed historical scrutiny. Counterfactual history by contrast offers precisely such a contradiction of the historical record. Although this appears a sharp distinction, references to the seemingly solid body of ‘the historical record’ should not blind us to the extent to which history is an interpretative enterprise through and through rather than a set of palpable facts (the past itself being after all inaccessible), and as such has hypothesising – indeed, fiction-making – at its heart. As the historian Richard Lebow has argued, ‘the difference between so-called factual and counter-factual arguments is . . . one of degree, not of kind’ (Lebow 2000: 551), and the same might be said of the difference between historical and counterfactual fiction.

This point may be illustrated by the classic children’s novel, *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), in which Mark Twain writes of a historical figure – Edward, the son of Henry VIII – in the period before his accession as Edward VI. Twain’s story does not change the fact of Edward’s accession; but it embroils him in a melodramatic adventure in which he exchanges identities with a pauper, Tom Canty (to whom he bears an uncanny resemblance) – a fact that almost results in Tom being crowned in his stead and that is revealed only during the coronation ceremony itself. History of course records no such disturbance at that event, and to this extent Twain’s story is counterfactual. Nevertheless, *The Prince and the Pauper* is not generally considered as a counterfactual fiction, but rather as a historical novel, as are many novels by such nineteenth-century authors as Alexandre Dumas and Harrison Ainsworth that take comparable liberties with consensus history. Nor are more recent examples lacking. In Pauline Chandler’s *The Mark of Edain* (2008), for example, Aoife, a niece of Caratacus at the time of the Claudian invasion of Britain in AD 43, plays a significant role in leading the resistance effort against the Romans. Naturally, Roman historical sources make no mention of Aoife, who is Chandler’s invention. Possibly a figure such as Chandler describes, had she existed, might well have been just insignificant enough to fly ‘below the radar’ of Roman historians, but just how successful would she have needed to be in thwarting the invasion in order to tip *The Mark of Edain* from being a historical novel into being a counterfactual one? There is no simple criterion by which to make such a distinction, because counterfactuality is an integral part of all historical fiction.

What is Counterfactual History *For*?

In practice, perhaps the most helpful way to distinguish the categories of counterfactual and conventional historical fiction is to note that, in the former, departures from history are understood not merely as an inevitable side effect of the fiction-making process, but rather as the point of the exercise. But what purposes might writers for children have in changing history? There are numerous possible answers, some of which I have already touched on.

As a way of exploring the many-worlds hypothesis

The ‘coin-tossing’ idea expounded in the passage from *Northern Lights* quoted above is not an invention of Philip Pullman’s but derives from a scientific theory closely associated with the quantum theorist Hugh Everett III, who hypothesised in his 1957 ‘many-worlds’ model that each quantum event, rather than being instantiated in one of two possible ways, is instantiated in *both* ways – giving rise to two universes, one representing each possible outcome (Hellekson 2000: 251). This theory offers a science-based explanation of ‘branch points’, and is typically used by writers exploring counterfactual history for the purposes of science fiction. Science fiction not being the focus of this chapter, here I will simply note that, even where fictions recognise the existence of multiple worlds with divergent histories, they typically rein in the profligacy of Everett’s theory and restrict branch points to events deemed ‘important’ from the perspective of human culture, battles being a popular example because they tend to have a conveniently binary set of outcomes, being either Won or Lost.

To ‘improve’ history for the purpose of storytelling or ideology

In 1580, Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defense of Poetry* considered the rival claims of history, philosophy and imaginative literature as means of inculcating virtue. In Sidney’s view, history’s primary defect was that it did not always teach the most desirable lessons – villains sometimes triumphed, the good sometimes failed – and for this reason he preferred the ‘golden’ world of the poets, which could present an ideal moral universe. Similarly, counterfactual fiction offers a chance to correct history’s mistakes, and to present it in terms the writer may prefer. More broadly, it offers an opportunity to present narratives that satisfy readers’ aesthetic, ideological and narrative demands better than history itself can do. The philosopher of history, Hayden White, has pointed out that we tend to understand historical events in terms of the narrative templates of fiction, ‘by exploiting the metaphorical similarities between sets of real events and the conventional structures of our fictions’ (White 1978: 53). Counterfactual history is able to take this process further, adapting historical events to conform more closely to the narrative structures and themes that readers are likely to find satisfying or acceptable.

As an example of this kind of adaptation of history to the demands of narrative convention, one might consider the strong bias in folktale, romance and fantasy in favour of stories in which usurpers are cruel rulers, while deposed monarchs and lost heirs are generally assumed to have to the good of their people at heart. There is no reason to believe that either of these things need hold true in the world beyond fiction, but this narrative preference has arguably exerted a real bias on the ways in which children learn about historical figures such as, for example, Charles I or Richard III. The Glorious Revolution of 1688, in which James II was deposed by William of Orange, is perhaps the prime example in English history of a usurpation that was not only successful but (by facilitating the Hanoverian dynasty) gave direct rise to the political dispensation in Britain today. The dissonance between political reality and the narrative ‘digestibility’ of this event may be one reason for its being

little studied in schools, despite its historical importance; but equally it makes it especially apt for counterfactual rewriting, as happens in Joan Aiken's series of novels, beginning with *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*. These books are set in a nineteenth century in which benign Stuarts still sit on the throne and are subject to constant attempts at usurpation by the villainous Hanoverians – a scenario that 'corrects' history in accordance with the ideological biases of folktale.

*As a way of critiquing historical 'inevitabilism'
and highlighting contingency*

'The nearest run thing you ever saw in your life' was Wellington's famous assessment of Waterloo – and it is not surprising that this battle has become one of counterfactual speculation's most popular branch points. Causation is notoriously difficult to establish in matters of historical change, but the fact that something *has* happened can easily encourage people into believing that it was *bound* to happen. Counterfactual history offers an 'antidote' (Ferguson 1997: 89) to that bias, highlighting the chanciness of events and showing that the paths not taken by history were in many cases as likely as what actually happened. Historians in particular use counterfactual history as an empathetic exercise, to help understand the actions of those involved in historical decisions, who were of course working without the benefit of hindsight, and for whom various 'future' outcomes were all equally potentially real. Children, being people whose lives lie mostly in the future, may find that this approach of imagining potential outcomes rather than analysing, justifying and perhaps bemoaning past decisions orientates the practice of thinking about history in a way more in accord with their habitual mode of being as creatures of possibility and potential, or what Clémentine Beauvais has dubbed 'puer existens' (2015: 20).

Counterfactual history also allows for the subversion of what Jean-François Lyotard called the 'grand narratives' of history (Lyotard 1984: 31–6). Grand narratives are those stories we tell each other about the past (amongst other things) which work to legitimise particular views of the world and of society. If such stories can be robbed of their aura of inevitability then other possibilities for understanding become available, and counterfactual history is one possible way of achieving this. For example, one of the most common counterfactual branching points has been a world in which the Second World War was won by the Axis powers, and in which Britain languishes under Nazi occupation, as shown (to mention just one recent example from children's literature) in Julie Mayhew's *The Big Lie* (2015). One possible reason for the popularity of this scenario in children's literature from the United Kingdom is a wish to puncture any smug sense of British exceptionalism, any sense that 'it couldn't happen here'.

To open up a non-Thucydidean space for fiction

Consensus accounts of history offer a framework within which conventional historical fiction situates itself. Whether this framework is regarded as a helpful scaffold for fictional creation or as a constrictive cage is likely to vary according to the writer

and what they wish to do. Joan Aiken reported that the opportunity of freedom from historical accuracy was a catalyst in freeing her imagination generally:

Have you ever noticed how peculiarly liberating it is to follow a conventional pattern in nearly all respects, but to include one odd factor? . . . At a sticky children's party, if you simply paint a blue nose on every guest the effect is very uninhibiting. One step aside from the normal and you're away. This was what I found with [*The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*] – having a Stuart king and a few wolves in the middle of the nineteenth century somehow set me free to enjoy myself. I wrote a straightforward rags-to-riches-to-rags-to-riches nineteenth century tale, and had tremendous fun filling in my own details. (Aiken 1970: 39)

Counterfactual histories highlight the extent to which all history is game-like, constructed from hypotheses and 'What ifs'. Aiken's use of nonsense to break the 'rules' of history opens further a ludic, non-Thucydidean space, unbound by the usual constraints of evidence and scholarly inference and fit for carnivalesque play. In fact, her nineteenth-century England includes numerous absurdities unrelated to its counterfactual historical setting. A cannon that can accurately fire a shell from Nantucket 3,000 miles across the Atlantic to blow up the King's palace (*Nightbirds on Nantucket*, 1966), or a plot to roll St Paul's Cathedral into the Thames on castors (*The Cuckoo Tree*, 1971), are nonsensical in ways that have nothing to do with their lack of historicity. Aiken claimed she used such 'exaggeration and nonsense' to forestall misreading by naive readers who might otherwise have taken her books as a serious depiction of the nineteenth century, encouraging them instead 'to understand that this is fantasy – not serious history' (Aiken 1996: 72); but the wider effect is to loosen the moorings of her fiction not just from the historical nineteenth century but also from the principles of plausibility in general. Aiken's books contain numerous details that are either anachronistic (for example, the existence of a nineteenth-century Lord Bakerloo – named after a 1906 nickname for a London underground line) or else assume events that would presumably not have occurred under a continuing Stuart dynasty, such as the presence of Christmas trees in England (historically introduced by Queen Charlotte, consort of the Hanoverian King George III). While one might seize on such details to accuse Aiken of 'mistakes', this would be to miss the point of the playful abandon with which she treats her historical materials.

Where Did all the Branch Points Go?

At the beginning of this chapter I noted that 'branch points' are sometimes regarded as a defining feature of counterfactual histories. However, consideration of a variety of counterfactual historical fictions for children suggests that this is too simplistic a criterion, and that in many counterfactual histories the branch point is either ambiguous or vestigial.

Aiken's novels are a case in point. It is surprisingly difficult to find a historical moment or event that could serve satisfactorily as 'branch point' for the world of Dido Twite – that is, a moment in history that (had it turned out differently) would both have kept the Stuarts in power and also installed the Hanoverians as serious pretenders to the throne (for a discussion of possible contenders and their drawbacks, see Butler

and O'Donovan 2012: 115–16). Aiken's fuzziness in this matter may be of a piece with her absurdist approach to historical process and plausibility generally, but in her lack of interest in providing a well-defined branch point she is typical of writers of counterfactual historical novels for children and young adults. Branch points, apparently so crucial to the genre, are frequently elusive or inconsistent in practice, as a consideration of some more recent examples will demonstrate.

One book that appears to have a 'classic' branch point is Jenny Davidson's *The Explosionist* (2008). In an Author's Note, Davidson identifies the date on which the world of her novel and the world we inhabit split apart as the day 'when Napoleon beat Wellington at the Battle of Waterloo on June 18, 1815' (2008: 450). Her story is set in 1938, and Davidson has sketched out a geopolitical situation and path of historical development that might indeed have plausibly followed from her chosen branch point. Sophie, the story's teenaged narrator, lives in a Scotland that is part of a revived Hanseatic League, while England has recently fallen to the mainland European power at the end of a conflict reminiscent of the Great War. This is not an impossible scenario, but a slight expository awkwardness hangs over Sophie's uncanny awareness that (in her words) 'every one of the abuses and atrocities that filled the daily papers could be traced back in one way or another to the fatal day in 1815 when Napoleon defeated Wellington and slaughtered the British forces at Waterloo' (Davidson 2008: 57–8). Waterloo would no doubt loom large in the history of Sophie's world, but her sense of it as the singular event from which all present evils flow knocks audibly on the fiction's fourth wall: Sophie, after all, does not know she is living in a different timeline from that of her readers, nor that this battle marks the point at which their worlds diverged. Also notable is the way in which Davidson plays with the histories of some historical individuals who in our world achieved fame in the century after Waterloo. In Sophie's world, as in ours, Marconi is a pioneer of radio waves (219), but elsewhere figures famous in our history are inexplicably transplanted to new fields – Richard Wagner is now a novelist and James Joyce a writer of operas, while Albert Einstein is mentioned as a poet (62). The semi-humorous point about the arbitrariness of fame and the unexpected consequences of a single change to history is clear, but there is no reason to suppose that the people who achieved distinction in our world would still be famous in the counterfactual one, still less for such different achievements. Indeed, Davidson herself admits in a note to the book's sequel, *Invisible Things* (2010), that many of her assumptions are 'monumentally unlikely' (263).

Counterfactual 'Incoherence' as an Index of Generic Hybridity

Davidson, who is explicit in providing a precise branch point for her fiction, nevertheless swerves from a strict observance of its implications for narrative plausibility in pursuit of a local point about the role of chance in determining one's life course and degree of fame. The same is still truer in the work of other authors, in whose work counterfactual historical elements compete with other genres, and where branch points may disappear almost entirely from view. The novels of Philip Pullman, Scott Westerfeld and Malorie Blackman all afford examples of this.

Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights*, the first of the *His Dark Materials* trilogy, is not primarily a counterfactual historical novel but a complex and multifaceted fantasy,

one that delves deeply into science and theology. Nevertheless, as noted above, in the novel Lord Asriel explains the differences between multiple worlds by means of a theory recalling Everett's multiple-worlds hypothesis, and within that framework it is reasonable to understand the novel as depicting a world that has split from ours at some point in the past, when a 'coin' that landed heads in our world landed tails in the world of Pullman's heroine, Lyra Belacqua.

In the case of *Northern Lights* this branch point is not identified with a single event (such as a battle), but appears to have occurred just before the events known in our world as the Reformation. The history of Lyra's world largely corresponds with our own until that point, with medieval institutions such as the University of Oxford in place, and a Europe-wide Church under the Pope's authority. In Lyra's world, however, the Reformation did not happen: John Calvin became Pope instead of acting as the papacy's most vocal enemy. Unweakened by schism the Church entrenched its power and in Lyra's time controls much of society through a labyrinthine network of courts, boards and councils. While the people of Lyra's twentieth century have many of the same technologies that we do, those developed after the sixteenth century have different names: electric light is 'anbaric' and airports are known as 'aerodocks', for example.

Thus far *Northern Lights* looks like a classic counterfactual history, on the lines one might expect to see if its worlds were created in the way Lord Asriel describes. However, Lyra's world also features witches, talking bears and many other creatures that have never existed in our world, and it appears always to have done so. Even more egregiously, each human being has a companion in animal form known as a daemon, who is a physical manifestation of their soul. Nor is this a post-sixteenth-century development: even the Bible of Lyra's world refers to the daemons of Adam and Eve. In short, the ways in which *Northern Lights* implicitly claims the status of counterfactual history are strongly undercut by its fantasy elements. The best way to understand *Northern Lights* is probably as a book that runs more than one genre in parallel, neither seeking nor achieving overall consistency but taking from each what it has to offer in terms of enriching the novel's texture and power.

In this respect *Northern Lights* might be compared with some other texts that fall loosely within the steampunk genre, such as Scott Westerfeld's *Leviathan* trilogy, consisting of *Leviathan* (2009), *Behemoth* (2010) and *Goliath* (2011). Steampunk typically involves a counterfactual, quasi-Victorian world in which steam, clockwork and airship technology are not superseded by electricity or the internal combustion engine, but have been developed in ways that in our own history were choked off by rival technologies. In the world of Westerfeld's trilogy Charles Darwin not only developed the theory of evolution but also discovered DNA (called Life Threads in these books) and founded the science of genetic engineering, which by 1914 has been advanced to the extent that the army is able to recruit a menagerie of vast, genetically engineered creatures to aid the British war effort. Westerfeld's novel implies a branch point – a Darwin who works out the genetic code many decades before Franklin, Crick and Watson. But Westerfeld makes no serious attempt to work through the vast and complex chains of cause and effect that would need to flow from this discovery to its adoption by the military as a weapon of war just decades later. Moreover, in *Leviathan*, Archduke Franz Ferdinand is still assassinated in 1914, which seems most unlikely given the substantial differences between our world's history and that of the

books. However, this lack of connection is not viewed as a problem by Westerfeld himself, who sees steampunk as what he calls ‘an art collaging technologies and history’, comparing his technique with the kind ‘mash-ups’ that have become popular in the age of the internet (Westerfeld 2011; see also Rose 2009).

If the counterfactual historical status of *Northern Lights* is complicated by its parallel existence as a magical fantasy adventure, and that of *Leviathan* by its embracing of the steampunk aesthetic of ‘collaging’, Malorie Blackman’s *Noughts and Crosses* (2001) too exhibits generic hybridity. Blackman’s novel might be considered primarily as a satirical fable rather than as a counterfactual fiction. In the world of *Noughts and Crosses* society is divided on racial lines, with the powerful Crosses ruling over the oppressed noughts, in a situation that evokes the period of Jim Crow laws in the United States. The noughts’ former condition of slavery has been abolished, but they are still very much second-class citizens, and the experiment of allowing a few nought children into Cross schools is controversial and of recent date. Certainly, the love affair between teens Sephy (a Cross) and Callum (a nought) is unthinkable in this climate. In a powerful inversion of historical reality Blackman imagines that the ruling Crosses are black, and that it is the subjugated noughts who are white. This move allows her to expose many truths about power relationships between races in the world we live in that might otherwise pass unnoticed, especially by white readers, ranging from the relatively trivial (sticking plasters are only available in colours matching the skin tones of the dominant race) to the systematic erasure of the achievements of people of other races.

A book such as *Noughts and Crosses* does not require a counterfactual historical apparatus in order to make its ideological point, but interestingly Blackman provides one, in which the ancient supercontinent of Pangaea never split up to create the continental land masses we know today. Some centuries before the period of the story, the dark-skinned populations of southern Pangaea (the equivalent of Africa in our world) migrated north, ‘acquiring along the way the know-how to make the guns and weapons that made everyone else bow down to them’ ([2001] 2006: 138). Interpreted as a ‘classic’ counterfactual historical premise, this would imply a branch point between Blackman’s world and our own at least 175 million years in the past, that being the approximate period of Pangaea’s disintegration in our own history.

Elsewhere in the book, however, Blackman hints at an alternative branch point, when she has a schoolteacher make a rather cryptic reference to 146 BC as a crucial date in history ([2001] 2006: 71). In our world this was the year of the Third Punic War, in which Rome finally destroyed its African rival, Carthage. Might it be that in Blackman’s mirror-world this significance is reversed, and that 146 BC saw the balance of power tipping decisively to Africa from Europe? Finally, in a scene set in a school history lesson, Blackman has Callum name a number of black innovators and explorers ([2001] 2006: 134–47) who are famous in the world of the novel, but who are relatively unknown in our own. Blackman adds in an Author’s Note: ‘The African-American scientists, inventors and pioneers mentioned in chapter 30 are all real people . . . When I was at school we didn’t learn about any of them . . . I wish we had done. But then, if we had, maybe I wouldn’t have written this book’ ([2001] 2006: 444).

It is of course highly implausible (to put it mildly) that two worlds which diverged long before the evolution of human beings could nevertheless result in societies that follow such equivalent trajectories, even in both cases producing in Dr Daniel Hale

Williams the first person to perform open heart surgery ([2001] 2006: 135). The ‘purity’ of Blackman’s counterfactual historical premise is sacrificed to her local didactic needs, and to the overall project of depicting a world laterally inverted about the axis of race. In the case of *Noughts and Crosses* it seems reasonable to read the novel’s counterfactual historical elements primarily as a way of underlining that our world’s recent centuries of white dominance are a contingent rather than an inevitable historical outcome.

Counterfactuality as a Tool of Interpretative Ambiguity

Pullman’s, Westerfeld’s and Blackman’s novels show that counterfactual history is often best considered not as a genre in itself but as a series of tropes that can be drawn on and combined selectively with those of other genres, to produce various narrative and rhetorical effects. The last example to be considered here, Sally Gardner’s Carnegie Medal-winning *Maggot Moon* (2012), takes this process still further, and introduces a new note of self-consciousness about the narrative possibilities of this kind of hybridity.

Maggot Moon is a counterfactual history in which 1950s Britain is under occupation by a totalitarian regime. However, Gardner’s text is narrated in short, somewhat elliptical present-tense chapters by its protagonist, the schoolboy Standish Treadwell. There is no reason to doubt Standish’s honesty as a narrator, but it is clear that he has only limited access to information; moreover, despite his intelligence his expression is often idiosyncratic, a consequence perhaps of his dyslexia. This means that some of the cues that might otherwise orientate a reader trying to get a ‘fix’ on the world Standish inhabits are unclear or ambiguous. There are many things that Standish either does not know or neglects to mention.

Numerous features seem designed to suggest that the regime of *Maggot Moon* is a Nazi one. The totalitarian government in *Maggot Moon* is associated with Germany (its natives have German names) and is obsessed with a particularly Aryan ideal of racial purity, while those who are considered to have ‘defects’ (such as Standish, with his different-coloured eyes) are liable to be eliminated. Loyalists to the regime give a salute resembling that used by the Nazis, and their most feared functionaries are a group Standish calls ‘leather-coat men’ (Gardner 2012: 12 *et passim*), evoking the leather trench coats associated in the popular mind with the Gestapo. Although the narrative is vague in many particulars, the date is given very precisely at one point as ‘Thursday, 19th July, 1956’ (56), which fits the ‘Nazi occupation’ interpretation of the book well, as does the physical setting with its bombed-out houses and blackout curtains. (And yes, that date was indeed a Thursday.)

Despite these seemingly clear indicators of the book’s counterfactual historical setting, other features of *Maggot Moon* inhibit confidence in the identification. The book makes no mention of Germany, of Nazism, or of Hitler (the unnamed leader is referred to as the President, not the Führer), and the occupying country is referred to as the Motherland rather than the Fatherland, as one might expect of the Third Reich. While some of these things may be attributable to Standish’s idiosyncratic vocabulary and narrative quirks they introduce a degree of ‘blurriness’ to the setting, allowing other possible referents to bleed through. We may notice, for example, that as well as evoking the Nazis the forces of occupation share attributes with the Eastern bloc regimes of the

Cold War, particularly in their engagement in a Soviet-style space race with America (the unnamed land of ‘Croca-Colas’ and Cadillacs in Standish’s mind). The secret police are in some respects as reminiscent of the East German Stasi as of the Gestapo, an association strengthened by the book’s many echoes of Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). These range from the smell of boiled cabbage (Gardner 2012: 83) to the naming of Standish’s district as Zone Seven, a title that recalls Orwell’s Airstrip One. Beyond this there are some aspects of *Maggot Moon* which defy any plausible counterfactual scenario, such as the ability of Standish’s neighbour Mr Lush to adapt an old-fashioned television set to receive American broadcasts (60), presumably without the benefit of Telstar.

The inclusion of transatlantic television broadcasts might easily be dismissed as an anachronistic error on the author’s part, but they contribute to the overall sense that *Maggot Moon* is a book only partially committed to its ostensible counterfactual setting, a sense sharpened by the plot’s concern with the manipulation of news (and thus of history) through a fake moon landing. The effect is to generalise the situation in which Standish Treadwell and his community find themselves, invoking the familiar device of a counterfactual Nazi Britain to give solidity and historical resonance to a portrait that might otherwise appear quite abstract in its depiction and overly obvious in its totalitarianism-is-bad morality. In interview, Gardner has described the book very much in these terms:

I became fascinated with the ‘what if?’ histories I found. What if things had been different? Winston Churchill was hit by a car on Fifth Avenue in New York. What if he hadn’t survived? Or what if Hitler hadn’t survived when he was hit by a car driven by Englishman John Scott-Ellis? This planted the seed for writing an alternative history – a fable – if you like. The Motherland is essentially any tyrannical dictatorship the reader chooses to make it. (*Bookbrowse* 2012)

Gardner’s transitions from ‘alternative history’ to ‘fable’, and from Nazism to ‘any tyrannical dictatorship’ are effected without any apparent sense that a significant generic border is being crossed. *Maggot Moon*, similarly, straddles historical categories: at once a counterfactual evocation of the 1950s and a general warning against totalitarianism in the present and future.

Children’s literature has had a long relationship with counterfactual history. It is a genre in some ways particularly suited to child readers, affording as it does the opportunity to give child protagonists unusual degrees of agency, and to adjust the presentation of history in ways that accord with the contemporary ideological demands made on children’s literature; yet the relationship is also a difficult one, given the potential of counterfactual fictions to mislead readers about course of past events. This very ambiguity can, however, give rise to a second-order benefit inasmuch as it may encourage readers to consider more sceptically all claims as to the ‘truth’ of the historical past. As I have argued, counterfactual and conventional history are more closely related than is generally acknowledged – to the extent that it seems reasonable to consider conventional historical fiction as a special category within the wider realm of counterfactual history.

In recent decades, counterfactual historical fiction for children has increasingly exhibited a degree of generic hybridity. If Davidson’s *The Explosionist* is a ‘traditional’ counterfactual historical fiction, focused in large part on delineating an alternative

timeline flowing from a well-defined branch point (the battle of Waterloo), the work of Pullman, Westerfeld and Blackman uses counterfactual history as just one ingredient in a more complex generic mix including fantasy, steampunk, satire and fable. The historical contradictions and lacunae precipitated by this hybridity tend to be subordinated to the immediate needs of the fiction, which are not generally centred on the elaboration of a plausible and consistent alternative history. Of the authors considered here it is perhaps only Gardner who actively exploits rather than brackets the ambiguity attendant on generic mixing, a move facilitated by her use of an unreliable narrator, but it remains to be seen whether counterfactual historical fiction for children in general will move further in this direction, or return at some point to a 'purer' concern with the perennial fascination of questions that begin, 'What if . . .?'

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PATTERN, TEXTURE AND PRINT:
NEW TECHNOLOGY, OLD AESTHETIC
IN CONTEMPORARY PICTUREBOOK-MAKING

Martin Salisbury

IT IS SOMETHING of a cliché that predictions of the future tend to reveal more about the time in which they were made than they do about the era that they endeavour to foretell. In 1950s science fiction, for example, the forward-looking nature of postwar optimism dominated the visual culture of the period – and also found its way into the decorative and applied arts of the time in, among other things, the ubiquitous molecular motifs and sputnik shapes that adorned fabrics and furniture by designers such as Robin and Lucienne Day. It is, of course, our relationship with technology which tends to get us into a particular problem. The frequent disconnect between the forces of technological progress and what might loosely be referred to as the emotional, aesthetic and sensual needs of the human condition often lead to wildly misguided plans and projections.

Working as I do in the broad art and design sector, and, more specifically therein, in the field of communication design, I have over the years attended many conferences and seminars where I have found myself receiving earnest lectures on the need to prepare for the imminent demise of paper, print, painting, illustration, or anything else that is not accessed via a screen. In 2011, I was asked to speak at the ‘Tools of change in publishing’ conference at Bologna, on the eve of the Children’s Book Fair. The one-day conference was attended mainly by those working in the children’s publishing industry – editors, designers, marketing and sales people, as well as those in senior management. The day seemed to be dominated by speakers stressing the need to get our collective acts together to cope with the impending departure of the physical book, and to prepare for the arrival of a newcomer: the picturebook app. A succession of tabulations and graphs were on display throughout the day, showing ski-slope decline in book sales and precipitous climbs in sales of digital readers and tablets. Expressions on the faces of conference delegates ranged from dazed bemusement to outright fear.

My own presentation involved a wilfully contrary showing of photographs of the letterpress printing workshop at Cambridge School of Art, and a general appreciation of the physical, tactile qualities of print that I have always seen as one of the key factors behind my love of picturebooks. More seriously, I questioned the headlong rush toward the screen and did my best to suggest that, as with the arrival of all new technology, what will happen in reality will be a shifting in the nature of the relationship between old and new: an opportunity to revisit and redefine what each is and isn’t good at, and to reshape their coexistence.

Few of us at that conference, however, could have predicted quite to what extent the arrival of the then named ‘picturebook app’ would precipitate the spectacular rebirth of the physical picturebook. Sales of physical books had been in decline for a number of years, while the market for digital readers was booming. But what seemed to be least understood, in the rush to be at the forefront of the predicted explosion in picturebook apps, was the very particular nature of the traditional picturebook medium – as compared to, and as distinct from, ‘reading’ in general.

Picturebook Publishing: From Printmaking to Programming?

One of the most interesting and surprising aspects of the conference was the number of publishers who were eagerly ‘converting’ the works of their best-selling picturebook-makers into digital versions. Many of the outcomes displayed a lack of understanding of the importance of the turning page (Bader 1976: 1), and of the unspoken in the success of the original picturebooks – the space between word and image that is left to be filled by the imagination. The codex book is a very different medium from the screen, and simply transferring one to the other was never going to work. The design of coding programs to facilitate the actions of touching a dog to make it bark or touching a sheep to make it jump over a fence may perhaps not go down as the high point in twenty-first century design or twenty-first century children’s literature. A game is a game and a book is a book.

The learning curve for publishers has been, and continues to be, a steep one. Much money was lost in developing picturebook or storybook apps that were destined to disappear instantly into the abyss of the app store. Digital is still finding its true place, while the regeneration of the traditional book is gaining momentum, led by the children’s book sector. Of course, such phenomena may be seen as cyclical, but it is difficult to find examples of publishers speaking in these terms when the book was at its lowest point a few years ago. The figures are astonishing: sales of paper picturebooks in the UK go up 5–6 per cent year on year (for the period 2013–17) while sales of non-fiction titles have boomed, growing by as much as 38 per cent a year (*The Bookseller* 2017). Hardback books have grown not only in popularity but in size. One highly visible phenomenon is the growth of the *big book*.

This is particularly apparent in relation to non-fiction. When presenting their dummy books at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair, my MA Children’s Book Illustration students and graduates became used to being told by publishers that the British public ‘won’t buy big books’, and that no one will pay more than £10.99 for a picturebook in the UK. Now we are awash with big, beautiful, expensive books. A key trailblazer here was *Maps*, by the Polish couple Aleksandra and Daniel Mizielińska. Released in English in 2013 by the innovative publisher Rachel Williams, then at her Templar imprint, Big Picture Press, this spectacular picturebook fused graphic idioms of medieval cartography with David Shrigley-esque ‘contemporary cool’ figure drawing. It had first appeared in Poland the previous year. The book immediately stood out from the crowd and forced itself forward, not only in a literal sense, because of its splendid 15-inch height, but also because of the tactile qualities of its production values. It is a book that demands to be owned. The phenomenal sales of *Maps* have opened the floodgates (well over 100,000 by the end of 2015) and paved the way for

hardback books that appeal to both adults and children on various levels: entertainment, education and aesthetics. As well as big books, we are now seeing far greater overall attention paid to production values, with increased use of high-quality uncoated paper stock, cover boards that employ embossing and debossing of surfaces; namely, raised or recessed relief shapes.

In examining the reasons for these phenomena, it may be useful to look not only at our relationship to technology and ‘reading’, but at our relationship to art, design and visual culture. It is something of an anomaly that the picturebook has been seen, in academic terms at least, as something to be examined and analysed within the fields of children’s literature studies and education when in fact, it could be argued, it is first and foremost an artefact, an object that is much more than the sum of its parts and that exists within the visual arts, with increasing convergence with the book arts (the standard term for artistic practice that uses the physical book as its primary medium for creative expression). The process of the picturebook’s creation can be seen as a hybrid art form, one which straddles literature, design, the book arts and perhaps even musical composition. Picturebook-making, even when authorial (created by a sole author or ‘maker’), is always collaborative, particularly in relation to design and typography.

New Design, Old Patterns

Some of the commonest questions, from those not trained in art and design, are ‘what is a designer? What does a designer do?’ The designer, artist and picturebook-maker Bruno Munari attempted to answer this question as simply as possible in his 1966 collection of essays, *Design as Art*: ‘He is a planner with an aesthetic sense.’ Since that time, the role has expanded considerably and many would reject Munari’s definition as inadequate. But it is difficult to find a better or more succinct one. The design of a picturebook is a key aspect of its all-round ‘being’. Far from simply being a process of tidying up and making it look nice, for many picturebooks the visual form of the text and organisation of the page is a crucial aspect of the delivery of meaning. The written word has become increasingly pictorial while the image is more and more likely to be better referred to as ‘visual text’. Word and image are merging. As a consequence, design becomes an increasingly integrated, authorial component.

Munari, in his brief essay, *The Shape of Words* (1966), explains:

Not only does each letter of a word have a shape of its own, but all its letters taken together give shape to the word . . . When you read the word MAMMA you see at once that it has quite a different shape from the word OBOLO. (n.p.)

So the designer or designer-illustrator (depending on the division of labour) must be aware of the visual and audial shapes of words and must participate in the process of storytelling or meaning-making as well as playing a lead role in formulating the overall aesthetic experience of the book. And it is this latter element that is at the heart of this chapter. Munari again:

At one time people thought in terms of fine art and commercial art, pure art and applied art . . . Today the designer (in this case the graphic designer) is called upon to make a communication . . . And why is it the designer who is called upon? Why is the artist not torn from his easel? Because the designer knows about printing, about the techniques

used, and he uses forms and colours according to their psychological functions. He does not just make an artistic sketch and leave it up to the printer to reproduce it as best he may. He thinks from the start in terms of printing techniques. (n.p.)

I shall return to the relationship between artist and print process later, but this distinction between the so-called fine and applied arts has been a hotly debated topic for many years. It is difficult to trace its origins. Much of what is now regarded as great art in our national museums and galleries was, at its time of origin, commissioned or 'commercial' art. Through art history, the levels of uneasy tension between free creative expression and the need to work to a brief have ebbed and flowed, as have the degrees of cross-fertilisation between the two. And the visual aesthetic that is prevalent in illustration and design at any given period has in the past tended to connect closely to that of the fine arts. But with the move towards the purely conceptual and the increasing separation of 'art' and 'craft' in contemporary gallery art, there has been less and less for the graphic arts to connect with. The current revival in the fortunes of the printed picturebook and illustrated book is rooted in a return to what is sometimes referred to as 'mid-century modern', a rather more useful term than the catch-all 'retro'.

The way that many children's picturebooks and books in general *look* today is rooted, therefore, in paradox. At a time when printing technology is so sophisticated that it is in fact possible, in Munari's words above, to 'just make an artistic sketch and leave it up to the printer to reproduce it as best he may' (n.p.), many artists are *choosing* to impose on themselves the kind of restrictions that artists worked under sixty or seventy years ago. They do this in order to create a more organic aesthetic; a tactile, haptic book that replicates the touch and feel of its predecessors of several decades past. In other words, one of the great triumphs of the digital revolution, in terms of the creative side of book-making, is that it is now possible to use it to make an illustration that does *not* look digital. The overtly digital illustration of ten or twenty years ago is now looking distinctly dated as many artists use the computer and scanner primarily as a tool for a form of printmaking.

Some of the mid-twentieth century artists whose work has influenced so many British picturebook-makers are examined more closely below. There were two key qualities that many had in common. One was a complete disregard for the notions of 'fine' and 'applied' art categories – a refusal to be restricted to either box. The other was an ability to see the limitations of printing processes as a challenge rather than a hindrance, an opportunity to work closely with printers in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for their artwork.

Artists of the period whose reputations have grown especially and have been re-evaluated include Edward Bawden, Eric Ravilious, Enid Marx, Barbara Jones and Barnett Freedman. They are regarded as peculiarly British in nature and are generally not well-known beyond these shores. All were exhibiting in galleries while also producing design and illustration for books, magazines, advertisements, and in most cases also for wallpapers and other 'pattern papers' as they were known. A key player in all of this was Harold Curwen, whose Curwen Press printing establishment in Plaistow, East London, had originally been founded by his grandfather, John, in 1863. Curwen encouraged the careers of many of these artists at a time when the distinction between printer and publisher was not quite as rigid as it is today. He commissioned them to produce a wide range of material, illustrative and decorative, for use by the company

in its trade advertisement material as Curwen forged radical changes at the press to become a leading light in the revival of high-quality printing in the 1920s. The Curwen Press also printed many of the most important illustrated books of the period. As one of Harold Curwen's early advertising brochures proclaimed, their intention was 'to put the spirit of joy into printed things' (see Powers 2008). This spirit of joy is perhaps what many twenty-first century artists and publishers are rediscovering and recapturing currently through the tactile, haptic qualities of high-quality print.

Bawden and Ravilious's work was at the forefront of this original 'spirit', and there is particularly fervent interest in them at the present time. The two met after Bawden left Cambridge School of Art in 1920 to take up a scholarship at the Royal College of Art in London. There he met Ravilious, who was arriving from Eastbourne School of Art on the south coast, also on a scholarship. Despite being polar opposites in terms of temperament, they became firm friends. Enid Marx and Barnett Freedman were also studying at the Royal College and they were all taught design by the painter, Paul Nash, who would later describe the group of students under his tuition at the time as 'an outbreak of talent' (Webb 1992).

Bawden and Ravilious both settled in the village of Great Bardfield in Essex, followed by a number of other artists who moved to the village and contributed to the hugely successful Great Bardfield summer exhibitions. So popular were these that special trains were laid on from Liverpool Station in London. The group of artists was at pains to point out that they were not a 'movement', sharing a particular ethos or philosophy. They included painters, theatre designers, textile designers and photographers. Nevertheless, it could be said that there are certain key activities or characteristics that loosely bound them together, and which underpinned much of the graphic work in the Britain of the 1940s and 1950s.

Perhaps the most important of these are *printmaking*, *design* and, crucially, *pattern*. Edward Bawden almost single-handedly elevated the linocut from a process that had hitherto been regarded as a kitchen-table medium for children, to a serious means of image creation for professional artists. Bawden's genius as a designer and image-maker lay in his ability to take complicated subject matter from natural or man-made origins and to simplify and reorganise into pictorial pattern. It was therefore only natural that, alongside his painting and printmaking, he would become involved in wallpaper and other pattern design. Along with John Aldridge, a Royal Academician painter who lived and worked in the village, Bawden set up a small venture to design wallpaper. The designs were made with repeat prints of linocuts, created in repeatable units and then printed in sheet form lithographically by the Curwen Press. They were then sold by the company Modern Textiles. Titles of the designs included *Sahara*, *Pigeon*, *Riviera* and *Leaf*. All were highly pictorial in nature. Bawden had a long and prolific working life until his death in 1989.

Recovering Tradition Through Technology

The lasting legacy of the work of these artists and printers is becoming increasingly evident as we view the current landscape of British illustration. The processes of print-making are becoming popular again, albeit often in tandem with digital processes when used in commercial illustration. The print and design quality of books is clearly growing ever more important as the book stakes out its territory as an aesthetically

pleasing, desirable artefact. The emergence of independent publishers such as Nobrow (and their children's book imprint Flying Eye), along with the new children's book imprints set up by 'highbrow' publishers such as Tate Publishing, V&A Publishing and Thames & Hudson, has had a major impact on the picturebook in the UK, as an increasingly sophisticated visual aesthetic establishes itself. Many of the larger conglomerate publishers have now been encouraged to set up independent-sounding imprints to keep up with the new wave of independents.

An increasing proportion of overseas artists and titles are finding their way into the English language market. Books originally released by influential small publishers in Europe, such as Planeta Tangerina in Portugal and Topipittori in Italy, are being translated into English. It is no coincidence that these publishers all evolved from design studios. Their output has been driven from the start by a concern for the visual. The early publications of Nobrow and Planeta Tangerina were in the form of limited editions of screen-printed artists' books before the companies gradually moved into mass-market publishing. Topipittori began with high-quality illustrated promotional booklets for business clients. The companies share a belief that the visual experience is not simply a matter of presentation, it is *content*. In the case of Nobrow or Flying Eye, no expense is spared in production. Often spot-colour printing is used (the printing of a single colour separately, outside of the normal four-colour offset lithographic print run, giving a purer colour), to ensure the exact required colour is achieved. As explained on Nobrow's website:

Given that the company started both in the midst of the financial crisis (Nov 2008) and in the supposed 'dying days of print', our books had to be somehow different. It wouldn't be enough to champion new artists and content alone, the books themselves had to stand out, to 'deserve to be printed' . . . We publish books with their inherent qualities as objects in mind, to that end we do everything in our power to ensure that they look good, smell good and most of all tell great stories! (Nobrow n.d.)

In order to understand the way that so many artists are combining old and new, or traditional and digital, techniques, it is first essential to have a rudimentary understanding of what can seem an unfathomably technical process of transferring artwork to the printed page. Here the relationship between printing and *printmaking* is key. The term 'printing' usually refers to mass reproduction while 'printmaking' refers to an artist's use of reprographic processes as a means to achieve particular effects as well as an edition of a number of prints. Up until the mid-twentieth century, letterpress printing continued to be the standard process by which books were printed, a process little changed since its original invention by Johannes Gutenberg in the mid-fifteenth century. Put simply, this process involved the use of a printing press to repeatedly press an inked, raised ('relief') surface against paper to leave an impression, in the form of type and/or image. This would usually be black ink on white paper. The individual metal letters would be assembled by a compositor into the right order and locked into a frame on the printing press.

A line illustration would be in the form of a raised surface on a metal block, converted from the original drawing through a process using acid to eat away the surface around the line, leaving it raised so that it could be inked. Single colour was much cheaper for publishers than colour printing. A compromise would be to use two or possibly three colours for the illustrations. This meant that artists needed to be fully

acquainted with the technicalities of the process of reproduction in order to get the best results. Each colour would be printed separately, in turn, and allowed to dry before the next was overprinted. The artist would provide 'separations' in the form of a black original for each of the separate colours. These would be made into metal blocks that would each be inked with their respective colour. It was necessary for the artist to be able to plan and envisage exactly how the final image would look when the three colours were overprinted, as it would only appear in its final form when all three colours were printed and it was too late to make changes.

The universal commercial print process of today is offset lithography. 'Offset' refers to the fact that the image or text is first printed onto a rubber 'blanket' and then transferred onto paper, in order that the image does not appear in reverse. Lithography relies on the mutual antipathy of oil and water in order for an image to be inked and transferred to paper, rather than using a raised surface. A version of this which saved money for publishers in the mid-twentieth century was known as autolithography, and was used for many of the books in the highly successful Picture Puffin series published by Noel Carrington. The key here was the fact that the artists drew their individual colour separations directly onto the lithographic plate. So the books that resulted could be seen as original artists' prints, printed directly from the original drawing. Although printed in huge quantities there could be considerable variations from one copy to the next.

The book illustrations which resulted from these processes could exhibit both the technical ingenuity and fallibilities of the artists, with the overlaid colours often being less than perfectly registered, with each other or with the line (if one was used). But it was these very imperfections and variables which give them the charm that appeals so greatly today. As well as Bawden, Ravilious and co., artists such as Roger Duvoisin, Helen Borten and Kathleen Hale are increasingly appreciated, and their books from sixty years ago are being lovingly reprinted, as well as inspiring a new generation of artists.

As touched on above, the world of Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign means that today's artist need leave nothing to chance. Every effect can be created on screen and delivered electronically to the printer. Yet, ironically, today's 'digital native' art students and graduates increasingly prefer to return to the organic textures achieved through hands-on printmaking and drawing. The vast array of digital effects available to the user is increasingly ignored as artists create multiple textures through print and collage and then scan and import to the computer, the final digital stage allowing for further collage and colour control. Another common practice is to create colour separations on paper, in exactly the same way as artists did sixty years ago for letterpress printing, but then to scan them individually and overlay them digitally.

Another noticeable phenomenon of the apparent return to aspects of the mid-twentieth century ethos is the branching out of illustrators into the worlds of textile and ceramic design to meet the burgeoning demand for pattern. A particularly good example of the revivalist mood can be found in the phenomenal success of the company, *St Judes*. Originally founded by artist Angie Lewin and her husband Simon, the venture existed for some years in the form a small gallery in the little Norfolk market town of Aylesham. As well as exhibiting prints and paintings by Angie herself, the gallery showed work by a range of British illustrators and printmakers who could be seen to be in the *Twentieth-Century Modern* tradition, but who are also highly contemporary

in their interpretation of these traditions. The artists represented include Jonny Hannah, Rob Ryan, Mark Hearld and Ed Klutz. Theirs and Angie Lewin's own work can be seen to build on many of the preoccupations and motifs that underpinned the work of Edward Bawden well over half a century ago, with particular interest in the patterns that flow from the flora and fauna of the British countryside. St Judes now operates from Edinburgh, selling mainly online, but regularly organising exhibitions at a variety of venues under the title 'St Judes in the City'. As with the mid-century artists above, St Judes' artists happily explore the middle ground between fine art and commercial design.

Some of the finest contemporary illustrators are exploring the boundaries between the narrative image and pattern design. A good example is Laura Carlin, whose output since her graduation from the Royal College of Art has been an inspiration to art students the world over. Carlin's visual storytelling is often expressed through highlighting the rhythms and patterns of landscapes – natural and urban. These find their way naturally into patterned endpaper designs and into her work in ceramic design. Such preoccupations were evident even in her early work such as the college project *Ten Days in Tokyo*, produced in 2004. This large-scale book of reportage drawings of Tokyo street life demonstrated her interest in the dialogue between spatial representation and pattern.

Katherina Manolessou's work in picturebooks is usually executed entirely through the laborious process of screen-printing. Although it is possible to *almost* replicate the outcomes in Photoshop, her acute concern for the physical property of her books has made her aware of the impossibility of achieving quite the same colour and texture digitally as she is able to do through printmaking, in particular in relation to the points where colours are printed over each other. Despite the fact that the work has to go through another reprographic process (offset lithography) in order to reach the printed page, the difference is still apparent. Manolessou was one of the first to undertake a practice-led research degree in picturebook-making, one of the outcomes of which was her first published book, *Zoom Zoom Zoom* (2014). Manolessou's graphic vocabulary is one of flat, almost schematically arranged shapes, interlocking to form pattern, without any attempt to suggest the illusion of spatial depth. With this kind of storytelling, where the content is delivered almost entirely via the visual text, the aesthetic properties of a book seem to be of particular importance. *Zoom Zoom Zoom* is a shared performance experience between parent and child, involving much touching and tracing of shapes and patterns.

In the days before dedicated illustration courses, the art school training of the great picturebook-makers of the twentieth century such as Brian Wildsmith, John Burningham and Raymond Briggs, would generally have been in *either* fine art *or* commercial graphic design (such a choice is still necessary for would-be illustrators at institutions in many countries). Most would have to find their personal creative route to a marriage of these two areas. The new picturebook-maker in the UK is increasingly likely to have been trained in practical illustration and design and may have had the opportunity to specialise in more authorial children's book illustration at master's level, supported by a broad programme of design history and contextual studies. Many, however, come to master's level study in illustration from areas of design that traditionally have a strong focus on pattern, such as textile or fashion design. A gradually increasing number are choosing to go on to take practice-led research degrees, exploring an aspect of the subject using their own creative practice as a primary tool of enquiry.

As more practitioner-academics emerge, the knowledge base in the field of children's picturebooks will begin to expand and broaden, embracing design history and bringing greater balance between experiential knowledge and the purely theoretical. This will narrow the currently overlarge gap between maker and theorist in the picturebook knowledge base and help the development of a more fully rounded understanding of the subject. 'Research' in the field of art and design has until recently had a rather different meaning to that in academia as a whole. It is a term used to describe the underpinning, visual exploration and experiment that provides the foundation to whatever a final outcome may be. In the case of the picturebook, that outcome is the tip of a very large iceberg of visual research. Drawing on personal, practical visual research, on the growing body of practice-led PhD research in the arts, and of course on existing theoretical research from non-makers, doctoral students and graduates who are practitioners currently include a number of well-known, widely-published picturebook-makers. Their research is shedding increasing light on the *process* of picturebook-making as an art form.

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TELLING STORIES IN DIFFERENT FORMATS: NEW DIRECTIONS IN DIGITAL STORIES FOR CHILDREN

Junko Yokota

FROM THE EARLIEST of time, storytelling has had a role in how we communicate as humans. At times, stories convey information or explain, in other cases they fulfil didactic purposes of imparting morals or codes of behaviour, and often stories serve to share the sheer power of the imagination. Storytelling over the ages has had many changes and adaptations. Those differences can be attributed to such factors as cultural shifts, historical attitude shifts, and even technological advances.

When stories for children appear in print, a foundational assumption is that ‘print’ encompasses a range of formats, from traditional thirty-two-page bound books to limited-paged board books to pop-up or other toy-like gimmicks. In addition, ‘digital’ stories appear in formats from scanned PDFs to fully interactive, multiple-option tracks that have the capacity to be different with each ‘read’. Then, there are ‘hybrids’, stories that reside in a combination of the print world and online world: websites with video and other digital materials essential to the story as a whole for an audience of children who read longer texts (for instance, *Skeleton Creek*, Carman 2009). This chapter focuses primarily on one aspect of this vast range of differences – traditional print picturebooks and digitally presented stories which serve similar purposes.

Fundamentals of Telling Stories to Children

Whether told orally, through paper that is printed and bound, by itinerant storytellers using kamishibai cards on wooden stages mounted on bicycles, or through digital devices – that is, regardless of format – acts of storytelling are widely recognised for having universal elements. When stories are told orally, the engagement of teller with audience is a critical component to their success. Beyond the need for using a ‘good’ story, the oral performance component has its own prerequisites: to use structures that enhance aural engagement and listening comprehension and to use sound (for example: vocal qualities, speed, sound effects) as essential elements. Some storytellers incorporate physical props as appropriate, while others may don costumes. Audience engagement ranges from mere listening to actively contributing story elements. Dramatisation may be involved, both on the part of the teller and of the audience. Most of all, successful oral tellers of story not only actively tell, but also actively take in audience response in order to adjust their telling in the midst of the activity (see Temple, Martinez and Yokota 2015).

Differing formats necessitate that varying elements become more prominently developed than others, depending on the text being shared and the teller's purpose and style. Oral storytelling is most successful with highly structured elements that facilitate listening comprehension. Print storytelling is most successful when visual and textual elements are developed in synergistic ways. Digital storytelling is most successful when interactive features can be independently accessed, and also make sense within the story's progression. Yet, the need for compellingly well-told story is unilaterally important across all formats.

Print picturebooks have commonly recognised relationships between text and images with clearly articulated picturebook theories (see, for instance, Nodelman 1988; Nikolajeva and Scott 2001). Many of the physical elements such as page count (and therefore, pacing), cover/spine, endpapers, gutter, and so forth which comprise the print picturebook experience as a whole were originally developed due to the limitations imposed by the printing processes of the era when picturebooks took on their present form. Over time, these specifications developed into an art form with well-articulated design aspects that influence text and illustration into creating a holistic experience for readers.

A shift in the conventions of print picturebooks was signalled by Eliza Dresang in *Radical Change* (1999). Precipitated by her participation on the Caldecott Committee that awarded David Macaulay's *Black and White* (1990), Dresang identified emerging changes in picturebook elements that included both content and format. Her analyses were made well before what we now conceive of as the digital era, and the shifts she noted in the nonlinearity of books such as *Black and White* could be considered a precursor to how we now see nonlinearity in the digital world. Dresang's 'Radical Change, Type One' described these 'Changing Forms and Formats' as:

1. Unusual graphics
2. Nonlinear organisation and format
3. Multiple layers of meaning
4. Interactive format

Thus, although it can be argued that each of the features was already present in print, it is also possible to extrapolate how her analysis nearly two decades ago underscores the shift to digital ways of telling stories. More specifically, Celia Turrión (2014) confirmed and articulated the links between the features of postmodern literature with features of stories on electronic devices.

Digital Stories for Children

The first picturebooks for children to appear in the digital world consisted of PDFs of scanned print picturebooks, the pages of which could be turned with a click of the mouse. These digitised picturebooks were typically augmented with sound: an oral reading of the text and occasional sound effects such as a musical background or sounds depicting the environmental setting of the story. Such productions were followed by incorporating a sense of movement by making film-like panning of print pages of picturebooks to draw attention to the elements of the illustrations considered

to be most central to children's comprehension of the story. Later came added features such as games that went beyond the original print picturebook (see, for instance, Yokota and Teale 2014; Yokota 2015).

The arrival of tablet devices, beginning with the 2010 launch of the Apple iPad, brought about possibilities never known before touch screen technology. Many have written about what this has meant for the picturebook world and made comparative analyses of the print and digital formats (Yokota 2013), offered terminology and reframed a theory for digital picturebooks (Al-Yaqout and Nikolajeva 2015), and considered implications in creating digital picturebooks (Sargeant 2015; Serafini, Kachorsky and Aguilera 2015). In this section of the chapter, the following aspects of the impact of this technology on digital storytelling are discussed:

- Literary elements of digital storytelling
- Design elements of digital storytelling
- Stories which integrate games versus games threaded with story
- Children telling their own digital stories
- Impact of changes on digital marketing, distribution, and acquisition

Literary Elements of Digital Storytelling

In analysing story development in print, the use of literary elements to develop text and to evaluate its successful implementation is common. For picturebook story analysis, attention to the development and analysis of visual elements is likewise central (see, for example, Temple, Martinez and Yokota 2015). For the digital world, many analyse elements that are unique to digital platforms, but in some cases such analyses pay little attention to how the basic elements of text and visual analysis play out. The foundation of good storytelling remains true across platforms. Decades of research by book creators (Shulevitz 1997; Bang 2016), by instructors of book creation and design (Salisbury 2004; see also his chapter in this volume (Chapter 15)), and by researchers (Nikolajeva and Scott 2001) have led to clear understandings of how text and visuals co-mingle to create an interdependent relationship, and that the synergy of the two creates something that either text or illustration alone cannot. Creating and understanding how basic literary elements such as characterisation, setting, and plot lead to development of mood and theme is well defined. But beyond the basics of how story is told and how text works with illustrations, digital-specific features are also to be considered: how does the use of sound, movement, and digital interactivity develop the story's elements of character, setting, and plot to shape mood and theme? One such example can be found in the use of sound effects in *Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site* (Oceanhouse Media 2011). The story mood is enhanced through realistic sounds that compel the listener to feel the evocative sense of being in the midst of a construction site. In print, this is a non-consideration as sound is not present, but in digital, it can serve as an added enhancement. However, at times, sound can detract from the overall mood if it becomes disruptive and distracting. There are appropriate sound effects that match the movements that happen when touch technology is applied to move things about or make things happen on screen. Narration quality can be as inviting or rejecting to the experience as the story itself.

Plot development in digitally-born story apps

In this most recent generation of telling stories in the digital world, stories which are born digitally have differing structures from those that simply were transported to the digital world after being created for print. In a case such as David Wiesner's *Spot* (Smashing Ideas 2015), what we find is a change from linear storytelling; there is one beginning platform, and multiple entry portals. Through the chosen portal, readers enter the visual world progressively deeper, while also moving across the scenes. Once you have thoroughly explored a world, you find yourself moving through a portal into a related world . . . and so forth, until you discover that the various worlds are interconnected. This is a story app which tells story in a way that would be as seamless in print; it would be possible to flip around in the pages of a book, going forwards and backwards, but awkwardly so.

Conveying emotion in digital storytelling

In the twenty-fifth anniversary edition of her book, *Picture This: How Pictures Work* (2016), Molly Bang added a section on conveying emotion in pictures, using her own book, *When Sophie Gets Angry –Really, Really Angry . . .* (2004) to explain her process. From fury, sadness, expectancy, to contemplation, Sophie's emotions are conveyed entirely through the visual. This book can be viewed digitally through the International Children's Digital Library (ICDL) in which all books are presented as PDF scans from cover to cover. There are no sounds and there is no movement in the ICDL digital version. In the newer world of apps, sound, motion, and other conveyances of emotion (such as pacing) have the power to add to or even exceed what the visual alone communicates. For example, in *Lucy & Pogo* (Cats n Dogz 2015), Lucy is a cat desperate to go to dog school, and wears a dog disguise and practises dog behaviours in order to 'pass' as a dog. Things go relatively well until there is a bus crisis that only a cat can resolve with cat capabilities of climbing and getting help. The emotional arc exhibited not only through text and illustrations that elicit feelings of hope for the cat's initial success at passing as a dog, the happiness of belonging in dog school, the suspense of danger, the anger invoked by the revealed deception, and the ultimate acceptance as cat – all are accentuated by the dramatically presented combination of expressive oral narration, music, and sound effects.

In another example, the YouTube Kids version of the book *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* (YouTube Kids 2016) shows up in the category of 'books'. Yet the only printed words are on the title page at the beginning, with the dedication, narration, and animation credits at the end, and the rest of the story is narrated while showing animated illustrations. The presentation of the words in this book is text as art, in other words, text visually presented to communicate emotion. On the page of the print version of the story (Willems 2003) where the pigeon throws a fit – 'LET ME DRIVE THE BUS!' – the words of the text visually pulsate in red, angry, angular letters. When a digitally presented book removes the words on the page, the communication shifts from interpreting the printed text to listening to the narrator's oral interpretation. The closing of the digital presentation includes the words 'the end' with an added illustration (not in the original book) showing the pigeon driving a big truck.

The personal appropriateness of self-pacing emotional response to literature is perhaps better mediated in print as the reader has ultimate control in how much to take in at a time. One example is of my then nine-year old daughter who wanted to read *The Middle Passage* by Tom Feelings (1995), a graphically strong and nearly wordless book (only the foreword has text) depicting the ship's passage endured by slaves captured from West Africa and brought forcibly to the United States. Inhumane treatment, violence, and abuse against women are shown pictorially. By placing the book on the floor, open to varying pages over a period of a week, the nine-year-old was able to self-pace the taking in of those images. Movies, television, and paced digitally-presented material that involve sound and movement such as in apps impose a pacing from beyond the child reader. There is a level of experiential assault that is potentially more 'in your face' with an app than that which is presented in print.

Design Elements of Digital Storytelling

As mentioned above, the effect of book design on the overall experience with print picturebooks is well defined and documented in the research literature (see also Martin Salisbury's chapter in this volume (Chapter 15)). When it comes to shape, a book about a journey is likely to be created as a horizontally schemed book; a book about skyscrapers is likely to be created as a vertically schemed book. With respect to size, we appreciate the impact of Beatrix Potter's 'little books for little hands' and the cosy experience of the straightforward storytelling that accompanies the vignette illustrations done in pen and wash. Likewise, the true-to-life size depictions in Steve Jenkins' *Actual Size* (2004) are formatted in a generously large size and impact the understanding the information conveyed about the scale of size of living creatures. But in the digital world, there is necessary standardisation to the screen size of tablet devices. Whether the story is about dinosaurs or miniature insects, all end up as the same proportions of tablet screens, and the size necessarily remains the same no matter what the 'book'. At best, digital reproductions work well when the original design shape is relatively close to the proportions of the digital device. However, due to the size limitation of some tablet surfaces – such as smartphones to smaller tablets – the transition from print necessarily means a decrease in size, often making the type not readable without gimmicks such as pop-up boxes with the text enlarged.

The overall designs for various formats have distinctive identifying features often unique to the specific format. Each format has developed certain characteristic features as ways of organising information, introducing content, and conveying introductory matter for the reader (Cadden 2011). But interestingly, the overall physicality of the print and the tablet is such that both are potentially usable in some similar ways. Cynthia Nugent (2016), for example, argues that the tablet's physical size, weight, and visibility under any lighting condition make the tablet a potential candidate for 'lapsit' (story-reading with a child sitting on an adult's lap).

The physicality of the print picturebook is considered as a whole. Shape, size, and even such features such as heft of volume and texture of the book's cover are among what is initially conveyed to the reader. Holding the physical book in hand, the eye considers the visual 'advertisement' of the contents: the cover design and illustrative features. An example is *Beautiful Birds* (2015) by Jean Roussen and Emmanuelle Walker. Published by Flying Eye Books, the book is a pleasure to hold. The matte

cover, the cloth spine, the embossed text on the cover all add up to accentuate the beauty of the cover illustration. The tactile appeal of high-quality paper is felt with each page turn. Such are elements of print book that occur strictly in print.

A digital picturebook, on the other hand, features its creating company first rather than an author or illustrator. In the digital world, an app developer typically creates a template by which the design is kept consistent across all of their creations so viewers recognise the company 'signature'. In print, reference to other works by the publisher is relatively discreet unless part of a series, but in digital, it is typical to have advertisements for the developer's other works. When opening the app, *The Heart and the Bottle* (Bold Creative, Chris Johnson Studio and Appstrakt 2010), a book that has been thoroughly analysed by Ghada Al-Yaqout and Maria Nikolajeva (2015), the logo for Penguin Publishing appears as the only element against a white background. Then the name of the studio 'Bold Creative' appears on the next screen by itself. Only on the third screen do we see the title of the book or any other aspects we typically use to identify a book, beginning with the cover of a print book such as an illustration or the name of the author-illustrator. The screen interface shows the book title and image on the left side, and the top bar has 'menu' and 'hint' written across it. A large red area on the right says, 'click HERE to begin' and below it is written, 'Find out about Author and Illustrator Oliver Jeffers and discover more of his books . . .'. Clicking on that area takes the reader to a photo and a paragraph about the author-illustrator with links to his homepage, the publisher homepage, a way to email a friend within the app, a connection to other books by the author, and more apps made by this publisher. All the while, a melody of only ten notes plays repetitively in the background. If you had clicked on the 'click HERE to begin', you would be taken to a screen of directions to tap 'hint' if you get stuck, or to tap the sound button if you want to hear the book being read to you. A turned up 'page' corner image on the lower right indicates that is the place to swipe if you want to continue the story. This element of showing connection to a print book was particularly popular in the earlier days of creating digital picturebooks, included to show elements of familiarity for print readers.

In the print world, the term 'peritext' refers to the elements surrounding the main body of the text such as the cover, endpapers, and title page. These elements are part of what makes the totality of the book's experience and are particularly important in understanding the picturebook as a whole. Peritextual elements have comparable and contrasting aspects in digital formats (Yokota 2015). Perhaps the most important peritextual feature in the digital world is the use of an icon to represent the app. In other words, the icon serves as a book cover in terms of visual recognition. The peritextual features of digital apps differ by device. How large is the screen? How well does it respond to touch? What are the dimensions when compared to print versions of the same book, if developed from a print original? For example, apps are available for a variety of devices. The same app can be seen on a phone and on a tablet. How do proportionate variations in the differing devices impact the display? Are sound and movement peritextual features or are they to be considered as main features? In digital books, the developer assumes a larger peritextual identity than in the print world. Typically in print, a publisher's name and logo are included on the spine, title page, and copyright page, and the book's overall aesthetics are determined by the book content and design. Rarely will you find the publisher name to be prominent; however, if the author or illustrator is a particularly famous person whose name will sell the book,

their names will be featured prominently with tags such as ‘winner of xxx award’ attributed. The only time a book’s design is repeated is to indicate when a book is part of a series of some kind, whether a series by an author or a subject.

When looking at the credits for newer story apps like *Lumino City* (State of Play Games 2014), the old adage ‘it takes a village to raise a child’ can easily be applied to the creation of story apps. Far beyond the author and illustrator being supported by a publishing company’s editorial and marketing team, story credits tend to be inclusive of a very wide range of creatives: the programmer, the lighting and camera person, and the sound designer, among others, are named. In such cases, there is no longer a traditional ‘author’ or ‘illustrator’ named but instead an entire team is credited. In fact, an elaborate film-like sequence is used to introduce each member of the team.

Stories which Integrate Games Versus Games Threaded with Story

Most apps have some aspect of game: some are decidedly story-based with elements of game that propel the plot while others are purposefully games containing story elements that enhance the game experience. The degree to which an app for children is more story or game ranges from 0 per cent to 100 per cent. An example of an app which is story-centered but has integrated game elements is *Lucy & Pogo* (Cats n Dogz 2015). As introduced earlier, Lucy is a cat who disguises herself in order to be allowed to attend dog school. The narrative arc drives the story, and many game/activities occur along the way. But each one makes sense within the story, and each activity moves the plot line along: Lucy is told that cats can’t even count, so children are asked to help her count her claws by tapping on each one. By placing letters in the right order, Lucy’s name is changed to Rocky, a dog name. At school, children are asked to place continents on a map, and tap piano keys in music class. But the activity which is sure to make children giggle is helping Lucy improve her aim in the dog behaviour of lifting her leg at the right angle so her urine stream precisely hits a mushroom until it grows. When the teacher is explaining the cruel animal that is a dog’s worst enemy, children must use their fingers to connect the dots until a cat is revealed. While there are many activities, each one is purposeful and flows within the story well.

An example of an app that is a game but with elements of story is *Axel Scheffler’s Flip Flap Farm* (Nosy Crow 2013). The goal of this app is to have fun being silly while matching the top half of an animal with a bottom half of an animal. Each half has a poem describing it, and the possible combination of the two halves has 121 permutations. A dog + a pig = a dig; a rabbit + a goat = a roat. There is a feature to highlight each word as it is being read, supporting learning readers in tracking the words on the page. While there is no overall story arc, each page has rhyming jingles that humourlessly describe half an animal, so the two parts together add up to describe the whole imaginative animal.

But not every app is clearly for one purpose over the other. Many fall between the two extremes. Consider the app based on the story of *Peter and the Wolf*. Published in French as *Pierre et le Loup* (Camera Lucida/Radio France/France Télévisions 2013), the app is quite magnificent for its musicality and the orchestration, animation, and execution. The purpose of this app is to immerse children in a classical orchestral music experience, introduce various instruments and the sounds they make, and embed this all within a dramatic storyline. Even before the app generation, the original

intent of the musical was for music education. This particular app is expertly created with a beautiful design sensibility, cleverly using musical signs and notes to represent character. However, text presentation is traditional narrative form, and story is the overarching driver of the experience.

Finally, there are apps that are presented entirely as game, and any story element would have to reside in the child's imagination. The purpose of such apps is to tease the imagination playfully, such as *Press Here* by Hervé Tullet (Chronicle Books 2012). Although produced both in print and digitally, neither format of any of his books has a narrative arc. Instead, they are conceptual and intended to be poked, swiped, pushed, and pulled in ways that are more successful in digital than in print because the outcome of the digital actions shows immediate change. Likewise, Christoph Neimann's *Chomp* (Fox & Sheep 2016) encourages children to poke, push, and play for humorous outcome. The device of a mirror engages the child as protagonist at the centre of the game. The order in which things are tapped doesn't matter because there is no sequential intent.

Children Telling their Own Digital Stories

Perhaps because of the influence of concepts such as Transmedia Storytelling (Jenkins 2006) in which multiple types of story output converge into a mixed media storytelling experience, along with a generation of children who have grown up with technical capability for creating their own content, storytelling among today's children has developed into its digital multimodal state. Rather than simply being consumers of stories told or published by adults, children today are engaged in their own storytelling creations in ways that come off as polished, due to the availability of the scaffolding of apps and tools for professionally creating finished products. Apps such as *Don't Let the Pigeon Run this App!* (Disney 2011) provide scaffolding for children to create their own stories. Using characters from the popular book series, children are asked a series of questions for which they use the auditory 'record' button to respond (for example, 'What's your favorite game?' and 'Tell me the name of someone you know.'). The app then takes the children's responses and tells a story incorporating their responses in their own voices as key elements. While this method provides a nearly fail-safe method of children's participation, it also inhibits flexibility or originality on the child's part. *The Complete Fairytale Play Theatre* app (Nosy Crow 2016) scaffolds children telling stories by giving them tools as if they were creating a theatre set. First, they can choose backgrounds, then characters, then give them costumes and props, all while recording their story scene by scene. They might choose to retell a fairy tale, given that the visual images in the app originate in one of the six fairy-tale apps created by Nosy Crow, or they might choose to use the props to create a completely original story of their own. Other apps support children telling their own stories that are more open-ended. One example is *Story Buddy 2* (Tapfuzze 2015), set up for children to write their own text and insert photos or drawings, while the app produces a book that appears like a traditional print book but is viewed on screen.

Finally, there are generalised authoring tools freely available that children can and do use to create their own stories. For example, the *Storybird* platform allows the creator to write and add images and create an online book stored in a personal library

or shared. It can also be printed in traditional format as well for ‘keepsakes and gifts’, indicating that the purpose of this site is personal rather than commercial. In addition, such a tool can be supplemented with affordable purchased applications. Thus, children today have access to the digital tools they need to readily express their stories through multimedia means. Currently, there is increasing emphasis on children coding on their own. The future of what this means for digital storytelling is yet to be determined, but the possibilities are certainly already available; and, informally, digital stories are being made in classrooms and homes by children learning to do their own coding. With the current move towards shorter messaging and short video-making with communication in general, one wonders at the effect this move towards brevity will have on digital storytelling by children. Most of these creations are outside the scope of this chapter, but a quick survey online will reveal the range of research being conducted on children engaging in digital storytelling.

Impact of changes on digital marketing, distribution, and acquisition

Any discussion of changes in the arrival of digital tablets must include a discussion on how those devices changed how stories were made available to child readers. Traditional models of book reviews in printed media, libraries acquiring and promoting books, and bookstores displaying and hand-selling books to readers worked for the world of print books. However, in this digital era, the story creation–acquisition–engagement cycle has shifted significantly, and the shift influences many key aspects of how stories are now created for children. Individual app titles are expensive to develop, and difficult to be discovered and sold on a large enough scale for investment recovery, much less profitability. The predominant market for app purchases is primarily parents; their reliance of how to choose an app to purchase differs from the traditional print market. Social media and reliance on user ratings rather than on professional critique has implications in the evaluation/selection process. Thus, some app developers have capitalised on recognisable and selling icons: popular authors like Dr. Seuss, popular characters like Dora the Explorer, television series tie-ins like *Sesame Street*, and entertainment giants like Disney branding. There may be free ‘light’ versions of an app which allow you to sample it before buying the full version, or there are nearly always links to follow to buy a developer’s other apps from within one app. Others have created libraries or sell multiple apps together as discounted sets or offer a subscription service such as ‘One More Story.’ In the US market, *Storia* collection was developed by Scholastic and sold to Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for the school market. More recently, Apple launched *iBooks StoryTime* to be viewed on Apple TV, and Amazon launched *Rapids*. The apps themselves are free downloads, and typically a free book gets you started, but the intent is to sell ebooks for viewing on televisions – a move that is towards a larger screen and potentially for a wider audience simultaneously, but one which is too new at present to assess.

With the increase in video-based material on the internet, digital video storytelling to children has also increased. YouTube has launched a YouTube Kids channel with an app for adults to control the content their children can access. ‘Storytime Station and More!’ is one of several YouTube Kids channels in which a print book is read aloud,

unaltered. ‘Storytime Pup’ is a YouTube Kids channel in which an adult wearing a dog costume introduces a print book and reads it aloud, followed by the pup advertising subscriptions and inviting ratings.

Implications of New Directions in Digital Stories for Children

In this, the middle of the second decade of the twenty-first century, digital story production and digital storytelling are beyond their infancy, but not by much. As can be seen from the above discussion, there are a number of theoretical and practical issues for scholars, developers, teachers, and parents to consider carefully. Digital stories have much to contribute to young children’s learning and development. But, important work remains to be done in order to understand and take full advantage of their potential. What follows here are issues that warrant consideration by the field.

Volatility of digital materials

Printed stories have a sense of permanence. When a publisher decrees a book to be out of print, the physical book that was printed earlier is still in existence in libraries, classrooms, or homes. But digital stories are ever-shifting and for the most part silently changed in the background if users keep tablet apps up to date. When developers do not update apps as operating systems upgrade, apps that have been downloaded earlier suddenly have frozen components or do not function as originally intended. In other cases, upon opening an app, the operating system pops up a message to say that there is some slowness to the app because the developer has not upgraded to the current operating system. When referencing apps in describing, reviewing, or analysing them, the version number is important for scholars to note; changes can range from nominal corrections to major improvements. Over time, it appears that some apps have been abandoned by their creators.

Representation of people

Lack of diversity in how people in apps are represented mirrors and even compounds the issue of the lack of diversity in children’s literature overall, an issue that has received considerable scholarly attention in a number of countries around the world (Sims Bishop 1990; Yokota 1993; Cai 2006). Homogenisation which erases racial distinctions, plasticised representations of people, and the overrepresentation of animals in apps for young children add to the landscape of avoiding uniquely individualised cultural representation. The drive for global sales has clearly impacted a desire to create products of universal appeal that could be ‘anyone’ but not an ‘other’.

Non-narrative forms of digital works

Many informational books created as apps are straight non-fiction. They convey facts, they include links to further information, and sometimes they have embedded or linked videos. But some informational works are conveyed in a narrative form. Evaluation

criteria for narrative apps for children have been proposed, including work by Yokota and Teale (2014). But comparatively little has appeared which critically examines the features of narrative non-fiction or pure non-fiction digital productions. Also, many books for children, both in print and in digital formats, are poetic, episodic, and evocative, and thus have artistic expressions of a different kind. Such formats need analytical frameworks appropriate to the form.

Adult mediation of children's digital experiences

Over past decades, many researchers have studied how adults – both parents and teachers – mediate children's picturebook experiences (Sipe 1998; Teale and Sulzby 1999; Teale 2003; Arizpe and Styles 2015). We know about 'gaps' (Beauvais 2015) in which child readers create their own meaning, filling in the spaces left by the book creators, and the 'elsewhere' (Nodelman 1988) beyond what the text and images offer and require the creation of a personalised 'poem' (Rosenblatt 1978). We steer away from overly didactic books which leave no room for the child reader to interpret and make their own meaning. But how do children anticipate and respond to gaps in how stories are told digitally? What roles do adults play, and what roles do apps themselves play in scaffolding how children approach and interact with those gaps? While there are numerous studies about adults interacting with and teaching children through digital stories, the focus of such studies to date has largely been on apps designed to facilitate the development of children's early literacy skills (see, for instance, Bus and Neuman 2008). There is an increasing number of studies which focus on adults mediating children's digital experiences where the focus is on literary understandings arising from the textual, visual, auditory, and movements that add up to the overall experience (Hoffman and Paciga 2013; Aliagas and Margallo 2015; Real and Corroero 2015).

Teacher/librarian/professional development needs

The proliferation of digital devices in homes, schools, and libraries has resulted in a widespread need for professional development opportunities for adults focused on how to select and engage children with digital stories productively. A recent example which can be found as an online course offered by the American Library Association is entitled, 'Digital Storytime: Kids, Apps, and Libraries.' What is needed are research-based ways of providing a new kind of training recognising that interactions surrounding digital materials are different from those with print.

Translation issues

One of the most exciting possibilities which digital formats offer is the ease with which multiple translations can be provided. But what remains a challenge is the need for translation at a professional level. Beyond machine translations which are improving and language-proficient translations which are technically accurate, the need for professionally-performed literary translations remains critical. The possibilities of

multiple language editions of apps are enticing, the cost of carrying out each translation well is acknowledged, but continuously providing less-than-best-quality translations makes digital apps that profess to be available in multiple languages less appealing.

The Future of the ‘Digital Wild West’

It has been a mere six years since the birth of the digital tablet, and the term ‘digital wild west’ has been used by sources ranging from popular news media such as *The New York Times* to research centres such as the Joan Ganz Cooney Center to describe the uncharted territory and the free-for-all rush to this new publishing venture. Much discussion has been had, research has been conducted, and progress has been made; but much more is yet to be done. Increasingly, promising new materials are being developed which are tailored to the digital ways of telling stories; however, it has also become increasingly easy to produce materials of mediocre and questionable quality. Proposed evaluative frameworks will need to be adjusted as newer types of materials are developed, new ways of interacting with digital materials will need to be understood, and new ways of considering the roles of adults within this digital world for children will need to be examined. All the while, there is much already established and to be carried over from research of the past while keeping an eye towards the future and its possibilities. Stories for children have brought us from oral to print to digital, with many variations for cultural ways of telling adopted along the way. All ways of telling stories for children have prevailed, and, in time, the digital storytelling world will define its ways as well.

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MULTIMODALITY AND MULTILITERACIES: PRODUCTION AND RECEPTION

Margaret Mackey

MY TITLE INCLUDES four nouns that pack in a grand total of eighteen syllables – but this chapter is actually about verbs. For all their lengthy portentousness, these particular nouns actually shelter concepts of incipient action, and it is the potential for action that focuses the discussion in this chapter.

Robin Bernstein has productively explored one way of thinking about the relationship between a noun and the kinds of actions it suggests. She developed the idea of the ‘scriptive thing’, saying ‘The method of reading material things as scripts aims to discover not what any individual actually did but rather what a thing invites its users to do’ (2011: 11). She points out, ‘The term *script* denotes not a rigid dictation of performed action but rather a set of invitations that necessarily remain open to resistance, interpretation, and improvisation’ (11–12). A scriptive thing ‘broadly structures a performance while allowing for agency and unleashing original, live variations that may not be individually predictable’ (12). She observes that ‘agency emerges through constant engagement with the stuff of our lives’ (ibid.).

The idea of a script also incorporates the idea of verbal action implicit in a noun. A *script* invites different kinds of *performing*. The actions are not present in the noun, but they are inherent in its potential. Our literate actions are prompted by the scripts incorporated in different kinds of text.

This chapter investigates the kinds of invitations entailed in the concepts of multimodality and multiliteracies. What kinds of performance, resistance, interpretation, and improvisation do these nouns invite and make possible? What scripts do they open up, and how are these openings manifested in the activities of producing and receiving? I will illustrate this discussion with examples of textual invitations to children.

Take, for example, *Zoomberry* (Lee and Petričić 2016). This bedtime poem board book invites incantation of its rhythmical lines, and, from time to time, instructs readers how to perform:

You have to say it softly,
You have to say it slow,
You have to whisper it at night
As off to sleep you go:
Zoomberry, zoomberry, zoomberry pie:
Zoomberry, zoomberry, now I can fly (2016: n.p.)

The line drawings frequently appear on a night-black page, and the wizard that the child approaches is created from an outline of stars. As the child whispers the spell, we

see him rise from his bed and float through an atmosphere filled with many other flying things, but it is not until the final two pages that we see that, even as he flies, his eyes remain shut. The words of the previous pages must now be re-cast to take account of the apparent fact that his spell is putting him to sleep.

The board pages clearly announce that this book is aimed at the very young, and yet even here, as the impact of the pictures changes the impact of the words, we see some of the synergy that makes the whole of words and pictures greater than the sum of its separate parts (Sipe 1998: 98). Even this very simple artefact is multimodal in its composition.

The picturebook *Night Light* (Blechman 2013) offers a more complex example, though it is still aimed at pre-reading children. This concept book presents a series of lights, increasing in number by the page, featuring an assortment of colours, and represented by the correct number of holes in the page. Each time this perforated page is turned, a new vehicle is discovered, each being driven by a young blond child. At the end of the book, all the vehicles are represented as toys in the bedroom of this same child. The child is sitting up in a bed built to resemble a car, and is reading a book that seems to be the same volume the real readers are holding in their hands.

The scriptive prompts of this book include counting, naming colours, identifying different machines, exploring the alternative value of the holes in the page as they appear in the illustrations on the verso pages, and addressing the metafictional conceit of the final opening. The prescriptive binding of the book holds the numbers in sequential order; the page turns offer the ‘reveal’ of what the lights suggest. This book draws on format as well as content to create a scriptive invitation that many children find very appealing, and its complexity is a reminder that the multimodal affordances of the paper book can be quite elaborate.

The Scriptive Invitation of Print

A page of print invites the act of reading. Even in a book less elaborately organised than *Night Light*, reading is a complex achievement. Edward Chittenden and Terry Salinger’s definition of reading does as good a job as any I know of summing up the complexity of this activity in a single sentence: *‘Reading is the act of orchestrating diverse knowledge in order to construct meaning from text while maintaining reasonable fluency and reasonable accountability to the information contained in writing’* (2001: 40; original italics). I would add a reference to the information contained in the images, but their attention is focused on the words.

In their conception, fluency incorporates aspects of anticipation and momentum, to be qualified by the necessity of accountability. ‘Anticipation sustains the momentum and flow of the action through time, while accountability ensures that the action stays on course’ (2001: 89). Learning readers in particular, they suggest, must learn to strike a workable balance between these two demands: ‘If something has to “give” in the skill performance of a beginner, it will be either momentum (in deference to accuracy) or accuracy (in deference to momentum). Both alternatives entail the risk of obscuring meaning’ (ibid.). Opting for one approach or the other is interpreted as ‘a manifestation of style differences in the ways children deploy attention and process information to construct meaning’ (90). Choosing to read for momentum or for accountability is one version of the ‘original, live variations’ that Bernstein (2011: 12) claims are entailed in how we respond to the invitation of a scriptive thing.

I admire the way that Chittenden and Salinger focus on reading as a verb, as an action that takes place in time. Momentum and accountability are nouns, but they are nouns which describe behaviours that develop through action and that display durational qualities. Print reading involves two participants: the reader is one, and the other, for the sake of simplicity, I will call the page. While the reader sets his or her autonomous pace through the act of reading by establishing a balance between momentum and accountability, the page provides a temporal stance that is conventionally described as permanent. What role does the page play in laying out an invitation to particular kinds of behaviour?

If the page itself offers stillness, a respite from movement (de Kerckhove 1997: 107), what kind of action does it invite? The question sounds paradoxical, but Lutz Koepnick offers some important points to contemplate as potential contrast for the ideas of multimodality and multiliteracy:

It is often said that proper reading relies on the art of taking a pause: on our ability to suspend the pressing rhythms of the everyday and allow ourselves to absorb, and be absorbed by, alternative structures of temporality. The clocks of the imagination do not run at the same speeds as the timetables of the real; to read is to inhabit the present at one's own pace and in the light of a multitude of unknown pasts and possible futures. (2013: 232)

When the words lie still on the page, a reader can set the pace for interpretation. The balance between momentum and accountability is determined by that reader – in relation to the demands of the content of the page. At the same time, the actions of the characters and the events of the plot on that page are developed in the mind of the reader. Readers set the temporal limits of the engagement; they may gallop through many incidents in short order, or imagine that the time of the actions corresponds closely to the time it takes to read about them, or pause reading altogether to construe or reflect. In the interior of their own consciousness, readers explore the interior consciousnesses of other, often imaginary persons. As writer Harold Brodkey famously observed, 'Reading is an intimate act, perhaps more intimate than any other human act. I say that because of the prolonged (or intense) exposure of one mind to another' (1985: 1).

Another book aimed at the preschool set offers such internalised intimacy to the very young. This example is an old one, but its appeal to the emotional understanding of young children is acute and still very current. Shirley Hughes's *Lucy and Tom Go to School* (1973) presents words that outline a series of images that address the same events, sometimes in close-up detail and sometimes in a broad sweep. First Lucy starts school and then Tom, her little brother, gets to go to playschool. The book presents details of school life. The words are still on the page, and a reader's eyes always know where to go to find them. The pictures present such a wealth of information that the eyes must be more active, even though the page itself is static. One of the invitations that Hughes offers very seductively and persuasively, especially with her panoramic views, is for the eyes to zoom and pan until they locate the small exchanges she has described in the words. Her work is not simply an exercise in figure and ground (though it is certainly that too), but also an example of a crucial emotional insight: what constitutes the ground on which a small child is standing is also part of a much larger social setting. By moving back and forth between these two perspectives, Hughes makes this

simple truth plain to the youngest reader, who simultaneously learns to occupy the heads of Lucy and Tom, understanding their uncertainties and their achievements, both in close-up and within a broader social framework. And because it is a book, the timeframe of that emotional commitment lies in the hands of the reader.

Multimodality

Reading print on paper is not a monomodal activity; at a minimum, it incorporates verbal and visual information, even when there are no pictures. For the sake of space and simplicity, however, this chapter will distinguish reading on paper from the act of processing a larger mix of semiotic channels. A paper book usually provides a bounded set of modalities. The format frequently is fixed prior to the moment of engagement, and it is not open to much manipulation by the reader; even when it is more loosely organised, it supplies a strictly limited and largely predetermined set of options. The binding of the pages is a significant constraint, even when there are no words to set up a linear invitation. Jae-Soo Liu's *Yellow Umbrella* (2001) offers a wordless invitation to a very orderly world; its bound pages reveal a bird's-eye view of an ever-increasing number of umbrellas passing down the street, pausing for a train to cross, causing cars to wait at the crosswalk, dancing through the playground, and more. The appeal of the book would be sufficient at this level, but the scriptive invitation includes further appeal. A CD, nested in an envelope on the back cover, offers correlated piano music that fades to invite a page turn; the playground music is lively, the train music includes the approach of the locomotive with its warning whistle, and so forth. To answer the full invitation of this book is to savour the lyric interchange between watercolours and music.

Yellow Umbrella, though innovative and charming, offers a restricted set of multimodal affordances. Many of today's texts offer a huge range of *blends* of different forms of information bearing. 'Multimodality, in its most fundamental sense, is the coexistence of more than one semiotic mode within a given context' (Gibbons 2012: 8). In many cases, each interpreter develops an individual 'reading path' (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 218) through plural forms of information on offer. It is important to acknowledge, however, that creating a personal reading path is also an option for processing print on paper (think of encyclopaedias), and it is often rendered more difficult in some texts that are clearly multimodal in nature (think of a film showing in a cinema).

Gunther Kress outlines something of the scale of contemporary change:

The semiotic effects are recognizable in many domains and at various levels: at the level of *media* and the *dissemination* of messages – most markedly in the shift from the book and the page to the screen; at the level of *semiotic production* in the shift from the older technologies of print to digital, electronic means; and, in *representation*, in the shift from the dominance of the mode of *writing* to the mode of *image*, as well as others. The effects are felt everywhere, in theory no less than in the practicalities of day-to-day living. (2010: 6; original italics)

The range of semiotic resources that can be encompassed under the heading of 'multimodality' is enormous but not infinite. Many, though not all, forms of multimodality involve a screen in some way, but Eve Bearne reminds us that multimodal texts need not necessarily be screen-based: 'A multimodal text is created by the combination

of: image, sound (including speech and music), gesture and movement and writing or print, communicated through paper, the screen, face to face meetings, performative space' (2009: 158).

The 'scriptive thing' of a multimodal text can be wildly variant and enormously complex. The invitation proffered by such a text does not simply entail selecting a few elements from the list and laying them side by side; presentations of image, language, sound, gaze, and movement interpenetrate and inflect each other. To take one small, simple, and very obvious example, the same image may supply contradictory information when accompanied by different music. We must learn to interpret the complete text, not just its separate elements.

Screen texts are multimodal but not necessarily interactive. A novel transferred to an e-reader or a film running on a tablet provides a scriptive invitation that is linear and not particularly open to negotiation (though any digital text is open to more manipulation than its analogue counterpart, whether paper or film). Many screen texts, however, include an invitation to participate in a variety of ways, and even if that invitation is not taken up, it remains inherent in how the text addresses its interpreters.

The challenge to an interpreter's powers of orchestration shifts when multimodal materials are on offer. I do not suggest that reading is simpler than processing media texts; in fact, I do not think that question is even useful to ask. Print and media texts vary considerably in terms of what they are able to outline explicitly for an interpreter and what they convey tacitly; and the response to the address of each kind of text is *different* rather than more or less complex.

It is useful, however, to explore the contrast between the abstract data supplied by print on the page and the more sensually specific and often referential information that often appears in a multimodal text. The black marks of the letters activate mental imagery – pictures, and also sound, gesture and other movement, even smell and touch – that exists entirely internally, exclusively within the mind of the reader. This private world remains a factor even when the interpreter is actually listening to words read aloud (though, in that case, the sensory input of the reading voice is external); they retain their abstract and arbitrary qualities even in that aural context. Linear words on a screen offer a similar access to abstractions that come to life only in the mind of a reader.

Multimodal materials, in contrast, frequently offer external sensory information – pictures, sounds, and, in some cases, motion. Imagining is still necessary but it works with different, often less abstract, more physically present and specified forms of raw input.

An example aimed at older children provides some insight into this contrast. Shaun Tan's *The Lost Thing* exists in both picturebook (2010) and animated (Tan and Ruhemann 2010) format. The Australian Centre for the Moving Image offers a fascinating website that explores some of the issues that arose from the transition from book to film, and a travelling exhibition offered insights into the same subject matter. The book, of course, does not just present the abstract marks of words; it also supplies the lines and shapes and colours of the pictures. But the film augments these elements with movement and music. A helpful article by Georgina Barton and Len Unsworth (2014) attends to some of the visual and verbal changes that occurred in the adaptation, but focuses even more closely on the role of the music, particularly in supporting the development of a strong emotional connection between the boy and the lost thing

– a connection that is less apparent in the book version. Changes in content are inevitable in any adaptation; Barton and Unsworth usefully demonstrate how one change is supported through a new semiotic channel in the film.

What happens in both print reading and multimodal construal is that interpreters activate the potential that is recorded in the text. Michael Reddy rejects the idea that texts *contain* ideas that are simply poured out into receivers. He says, ‘We do not preserve ideas by building libraries and recording voices. The only way to preserve culture is to train people to rebuild it, to “regrow” it as the word “culture” itself suggests, in the only place it can grow – within themselves’ (1993: 187). In such an activist account of ‘culture’, the logical extension of the metaphor is that the texts contain seeds, and the interpreters bring them to life, turning the nouns of the materials into the verbs of growing.

How does this shift occur? How is a multimodal scriptive prompt brought to mental life? A mind processing many kinds of information at once is necessarily very lively in its orchestration of multiple sources of semiotic input. Additionally, this busy mind must find extra resources for the acts of investing in the content and/or joining in the make-believe that is invited. What kind of blending produces a seamless and engrossing whole? We are still struggling to answer such questions.

We not only comprehend materials of this complex nature, we also learn to create them. The enormous increase in domestic and/or classroom access to assorted recording and editing devices broadens our expressive vocabulary far beyond words. Even young children are learning how to convey a story composed in their minds into numerous interweaving channels of information that possess the power to communicate to a stranger.

Local powers of distribution have been revolutionised as well. The past half-century has seen an enormous shift in the capacity for amateurs at home to produce highly sophisticated multimodal materials – recorded, edited, crafted – and also to find relatively simple ways of broadcasting these productions to others. Both halves of this seismic change are significant. Writing has always been relatively easy and cheap, but the complexities of distributing private writing supplied a substantial barrier to wider participation in a creative culture. Today, worldwide distribution is a few clicks away for the hundreds of millions of people with domestic or library access to a computer and the internet. Knowledge that the text they are creating can address the world is surely one element of the compositional rhetoric, for both written and multimodal creations.

Just as the practice of writing makes more discerning readers, so the ability to create multimodal texts sharpens the powers and perceptions of many contemporary users. We often discuss the skills of such users under the heading of ‘multiliteracies’.

Multiliteracies

The genesis of the concept of multiliteracies is almost always traced to a single source: the 1996 paper produced by the New London Group, a collective of ten Australian, British, and American academics, named for the place in New Hampshire where they met in 1994. From the outset, they planned that the term *multiliteracies* would serve a double-pronged purpose: ‘a word we chose to describe two important arguments we

might have with the emerging cultural, institutional, and global order: the multiplicity of communications channels and media, and the increasing saliency of cultural and linguistic diversity' (1996: 63).

'Multiliteracies', say the members of the New London Group, create 'a different kind of pedagogy, one in which language and other modes of meaning are dynamic representational resources, constantly being remade by their users as they work to achieve their various cultural purposes' (1996: 64). That capacity to 'remake' is a major component of the original idea of multiliteracies. The New London Group draws on the word 'design' to explore the potential of the concept. The concept of 'design' provides an attractive solution to some of the challenges that arise when we think of managing many forms of semiosis at the same time. Its capaciousness allows us to consider a single and powerful process of communication, one that entails the orchestration of many moving parts. It supplies a valuable verbal counterpart to the abstract qualities of the noun, but it can also stand in smartly as a noun itself if need be.

The New London Group subdivides the concept of design into three elements: Available Designs, Designing, and The Redesigned (all the capital letters are theirs). 'Together', they say, 'these three elements emphasize the fact that meaning-making is an active and dynamic process, and not something governed by static rules' (1996: 74). Available Designs include the resources on which designers draw: the grammars of language and other semiotic systems, and the larger orders of discourse that govern semiotic activity in particular institutions or societies. Designing is the act of reworking those resources into something new, a text that of necessity bears traces of what has previously been crafted with similar tools. The Redesigned is the new product.

Of course we know that when we write, even if we are obsessed with neologisms, we use words that have been used before by other people. In some ways, this knowledge makes it seem unreasonable to suggest that the New London Group seems unduly concerned with the drag of the previously expressed. Yet there does seem to be a retrospective cast to their account of creativity.

Perhaps I am sensitised to this perception of drag because the twenty-plus years since the New London Group met in 1994 have brought more genuine newness in design possibilities than they could possibly have anticipated. Early creators of computer code had little in the way of Available Design to draw on, for example; 3D printing has potential to open thoroughly new doors. It seems to me that one way of describing 'A pedagogy of multiliteracies' is to say that the New London Group takes a substantially conservative stance – which may go some way to explain why the article has retained its pivotal status for so long.

The New London Group is not alone in its focus on the already designed. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin take a similar position in their seminal book, *Remediation* (1999):

we call the representation of one medium in another *remediation*, and we will argue that remediation is a defining characteristic of the new digital media. What might seem at first to be an esoteric practice is so widespread that we can identify a spectrum of different ways in which digital media remediate their predecessors, a spectrum depending on the degree of perceived competition or rivalry between the new media and the old. (45; original bold)

Remediation is not something that came into the world with digital reworking, however. The trope of the movie that opens with the turning pages of a book as a testimonial to the fidelity of its translation from a previous format was commonplace for several decades and still shows up from time to time. The ways in which television incorporated conventions both from radio and from film are well known. And the activity of remediation is radically older than these examples; early print books reinscribed manuscript markings.

Remediation may be inbuilt into adaptation. *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore* (Joyce 2012) is a text that appears in four closely related formats: an animated film, an app, a picturebook, and an augmented reality app that requires the paper book to work. The film operates on a fixed temporality, but the other three forms are open to reader manipulation of time. The app version enables interaction with elements of the story – for example, it not only adds music but also permits players to pick out the tune of ‘Pop Goes the Weasel!’ on a virtual keyboard. The picturebook is the tersest version; even the augmented reality app that relies on the picturebook for its engine adds a soundtrack, offering, for example, the murmur of the books whispering to each other in the library. Nathan Heller, in a review of the book that takes account of the film and the regular app but not the augmented reality version, suggests that the book offers a smaller achievement than the other two texts:

Now, realized at last as a children’s book, his tale gains elegance but loses depth. The print-edition ‘Morris Lessmore’ is a stylishly paced, vividly illustrated parable for young readers, yet it somehow lacks the dreamy creativity of its animated precursors. Ultimately, Joyce’s book tells us something we may already suspect: that storytelling these days has a broader canvas than the hallowed space within the library doors. (2012: n.p.)

Although the story of Mr. Morris Lessmore is a tribute to the imaginative world of books, its incarnation in book form feels a little static in comparison to other editions.

The augmented reality app takes the question of remediation very literally. The iPad camera is focused on the page of the paper book, and then new elements are overlaid on that static illustration. The paper picture is actually represented in a new image.

Challenging the Early Work on Multiliteracies

‘A pedagogy of multiliteracies’, *Remediation*, and much of the work of Kress and van Leeuwen on multimodality all date from the 1990s, and it is surprising how robustly these approaches have survived. Recently, however, an increasingly critical view of the work both of Kress and of the New London Group has introduced some new and interesting alternative stances.

Many critics are concerned with the idea that both concepts are simply not dynamic enough to incorporate the reality of living as a twenty-first century interpreter and creator. In my own terms, I would suggest that, in drawing the line between the nouns and the verbs of these activities, the 1990s’ schools of thought leaned heavily towards the side of the reifications of the text. Our lives have become radically more interactive since the beginning of this century, and our notions of the innate fixity of text have shifted as a consequence. Possibly as a result, critics are beginning to question the primary assumptions of these seminal analyses.

Although theories of multimodality and multiliteracies have played a powerful role in our understanding of changing literacies over the past twenty years or so, new critiques are now flourishing. The challenges to these ideas that I located share an aversion to the emphasis placed by these theories on relatively abstract conceptions of a text that is neither situated in the amorphous context of daily practice nor grounded in a broader understanding of the political and economic conditions of its creation.

Cary Bazalgette and David Buckingham (2013) challenge multimodality theory as divorced from the actual practices of users. Kevin Leander and Gail Boldt (2012) call for a major reassessment of the New London Group's text-centric analysis. Both critiques focus on the use of the word 'design', which, in Bazalgette and Buckingham's terms, 'appears to imply a view of communication as a wholly rational, controlled process' (2013: 98). Bazalgette and Buckingham's critical perspective suggests that the scriptive potential of a text locks in not only future tense verbs of possible interactions with that text but also the past tense actions that have framed the production and distribution of that work (prior to its reception and interpretation) in a particular economic and political setting. A text does not simply *appear* in some free-floating way; it is the product of many active decisions. Such decisions are not simply confined to a selection of modes conducted in a communicative vacuum, they say. '[M]odal choices in everyday communication – especially in the case of work created by children in classrooms – are dictated by economics, power, convenience and perhaps assessability as much as by the suitability of mode to content' (ibid.). But communicators and interpreters do not always proceed in tidy and rational ways. 'The theory appears to ignore the haphazard and improvised nature of much human communication as well as its emotional dimensions. It is as if the scientific rationalism of the analyst has been vicariously transferred to the ordinary meaning-maker' (ibid.).

Bazalgette and Buckingham make the case for a media studies approach, which they describe as broader than any exploration of multimodality on its own terms:

Media Studies would require us to analyse not only the text itself but also its *production* (working practices, institutional contexts, commercial strategies and so on), and the ways in which it is used and interpreted by different *audiences*. By contrast, a social semiotic analysis typically infers the intentions of the text's producers and makes assumptions about its meaning based simply on an analysis of the text itself. (2013: 99; original italics)

Buckingham and Bazalgette argue that the weaknesses of multimodality theory are compounded when a simplified version is conveyed to teachers; such a watered-down theory 'ignores the specificity of different types of non-print texts; neglects the fact that print texts are also multimodal; loses sight of the important commonalities between print and non-print texts; and imposes a false, technologically determined uniformity on non-print texts' (2013: 100). It is a comprehensive critique, and it calls to mind other historic battles over the question of whether close reading of a reified text in a political and economic vacuum can ever be adequate to the needs of an interpreter.

Leander and Boldt explicitly challenge 'A pedagogy of multiliteracies' in their 2012 article in the *Journal of Literacy Research*. They address the issue of design but rather than questioning the inbuilt notion of historical drag that permeates the concept, their queries entail what might be described as a reverse problem. Their concern is more that the whole idea of design privileges the text itself, and, more particularly, the

planned and thoughtfully executed text. This perspective is restrictive, and fails to do justice to the playful and spontaneous ways in which literacies pervade people's lives. Instead, they observe,

Their language of 'available designs' and 'the redesigned' leads the New London Group to an interpretation of practice as primarily driven by a rational orientation toward the future; the design of texts to achieve already-known goals is projected onto students as the trajectory of their activities. Texts are read over the practice and are also the outcome of practice. (2012: 28)

Without a doubt, Leander and Boldt are on the side of the verbs. Their account of Lee and his friend Hunter, two ten-year-olds who spend a Sunday reading and acting out their manga, highlights the spontaneous improvised activities that flow in and out of their manga reading.

For Lee and Hunter, reading is clearly a verb that leads organically to other verbs: arranging related toys, practising hand gestures, leaping and posing, sword-fighting, searching for fan sites, drawing, and card sorting (2012: 26–7). For the most part, say Leander and Boldt, Lee did not 'articulate but rather enacted' (*ibid.*). Leander and Boldt consider these enactments to be part of his multiply-literate encounters with a text world, and look for ways of analysing these literacies that make room for these unplanned outcroppings of actions. The New London Group's approach, by contrast, ignores elements of Lee and Hunter's activity that nevertheless suggest 'script-like, purposeful, or rule-governed practices [that] were spontaneous and improvisational, produced through an emergent moment-by-moment *unfolding*' (2012: 29, original italics).

Leander and Boldt broadly attack some of the staid assumptions of literacy research in very attractive and appealing terms. Saying that research runs the risk of becoming 'a subtractive process' (2012: 41), they observe,

Literacy *is* unbounded. Unless as researchers we begin traveling in the unbounded circles that literacy travels in, we will miss literacy's ability to participate in unruly ways because we only see its proprieties . . .

Yet researchers subtract. We view a scene, with an infinite number of movements, interactions, possible rhizomatic lines, and we subtract from the scene all that makes the telling of a coherent post hoc narrative difficult. (2012: 41)

There is not space here to explore in detail the complex and fascinating new approach to an embodied, provisional, and emergent literacy that Leander and Boldt develop by drawing on the rhizomatics of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987). Gloria Jacobs, assessing their critique, suggests that the New London Groups analysis 'leads to a linear, bounded approach to understanding engagement with texts' (2013: 271). Leander and Boldt, in contrast, focus on the individual 'in a state of becoming rather than knowing what is to emerge' (*ibid.*).

Of course, when research is not being subtractive, the risk is that the topic will enter the realm of the Sorcerer's Apprentice and simply keep expanding and expanding until it is not only unmanageable but also actively incomprehensible. The concepts of multimodality and multiliteracy are already vast and growing vaster with every new technological development. To add all the scriptive potential for improvisation and play into our account may be theoretically necessary but in practical terms, it certainly

creates problems of scale. Nevertheless, an account of a scriptive invitation which does not include such potential is restrictive and potentially reductive.

Performance and Temporality

Time offers another dimension to this problem. The invitation is scripted in the text, but the response to the invitation is something that takes place over time, and varies in its attempts at fidelity to the potential built into the script. Interpreters may labour over an intensive exegesis; or they may riff in very tangential ways off the base of a few core suggestions in the text; and this account is true of child readers as well as adult scholars.

Bazalgette and Buckingham investigate this ‘further, vitally important, mode’:

time, which includes duration, rhythm, sequence and transitions. Time in film and TV is different from the time required to read a book or scan through a website, which is under our control. Time in moving-image media is an essential part of the repertoire of creative choices available to the film-maker in the same way that it is essential to composers of music . . . Time in the reading of print texts works in different ways. (2013: 100)

Bazalgette and Buckingham refer to moving images as their base format, but Drucker suggests that reading digital interfaces is an even more complex operation.

The cognitive load for processing media with multiple temporal modalities, distinct spatial coordinates and systems, or demands for embodied engagement goes beyond any explanation that can be provided by comparisons with film or video. Interface is more complex in the challenges it presents to what can be referred to as ‘frame jumping’ – shifting cognitive reference frames – than film ever was. (2013: 218)

Many moving image texts and many musical compositions share a quality with printed materials in that their scale is relatively knowable. I can gauge the demands on my time posed by a thick book or a thin book, and while the thin book may be a slow read with many pauses for reflection and the thick book may be fast-paced and easy to finish quickly, I still have some sense that the challenge is finite. Pieces of music, television programmes, and films all share a quality of being a specific length; even jazz operates, most of the time, on conventional measures of duration.

But such examples offer texts that behave according to Available Designs. The changes offered by the digital revolution affect some very basic components of multimodal possibilities. My final title, though it does not incorporate the most literary set of materials, provides an extreme and telling example of the opening up of textual time. *Minecraft* is a game of virtual blocks that can be used to make many different worlds. The homepage of its website describes the experience as follows:

Minecraft is a game about placing blocks and going on adventures. Explore randomly generated worlds and build amazing things from the simplest of homes to the grandest of castles. Play in Creative Mode with unlimited resources or mine deep in Survival Mode, crafting weapons and armor to fend off dangerous mobs. Do all this alone or with friends. (Minecraft website n.d.: n.p.)

Although many of the *Minecraft* books are handbooks, there are also some storybooks. Again, as with *Morris Lessmore*, the storybook is perhaps the lesser achievement – in this case because it is finite in a world of infinite possibilities. A movie announced for 2019 will also present a singular incarnation of this open-ended world. *Minecraft*'s digital existence permits it to mutate *ad infinitum*, unlimited by the constrictions (that to some extent curtail play with its real-life equivalent, LEGO) imposed by a material number of bricks.

The Digital Shift

As *Minecraft* illustrates, one drastic change introduced by digital formats is that the scriptive invitation today often does not allow for any realistic estimate of duration. The fictions of many digital games are completely open-ended and can take any amount of time to play. The internet is endless, and assorted forms of online exchange with other people know no temporal limits.

Much of this material is only somewhat pre-designed. A game may set up conditions for play, and the gamers may participate in extending the original design in ways unplanned by the original creators. The Available Designs may be explored and enhanced or they may be rapidly abandoned. The temporal conditions of the engagement are established 'in play' rather than being pre-determined.

The digital revolution opens up other questions as well. To the degree that Lee and Hunter have moved in and out of their manga comics, shifting between reading and assorted forms of acting out, postponing the closure of arriving at the last page, we may say that a text is not a closed universe. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that an analogue text is more closed than a digital one. Peter Lunenfeld refers to 'the universal solvent of the digital' (2000: 14); a digital text can always be opened up and changed. Once this possibility is built into the relationship between creator and interpreter, the originator of the text loses a great deal of control.

Other elements of usage in the digital age shift power to the receiver and away from the producer. Rather than thinking of time in terms of duration, Andrew Maier speaks of cadence in relation to digital texts, a term he defines as 'the ebb and flow of ideas' (2013: 5). It is possible to create a digital text which prescribes the order of use; but many are designed so that users can create the reading path for themselves. The creator needs to think through the grammar of design that will help 'control the flow of ideas' (Maier 2013: 7), but the user has the last word.

Texts at Hand

In 1999, Eliza Dresang published *Radical Change: Books for Youth in a Digital Age*. In this book, she investigated ways in which print books were changing in response to the digital revolution. Many of the examples she presented were multimodally dynamic print texts that paradoxically played off the stability of the paper page. Here, however, I want to pursue a smaller detail of her study. In her book, Dresang distinguished books from other forms of text by referring to them as 'handheld'.

Like so many other seminal studies discussed here, this work was published in the 1990s, and I suggest that Dresang's descriptor of 'handheld' has lost considerable potency with the arrival of smartphones and tablet computers. Many forms of

multimodality are now 'handheld'; very young children are today developing the manual skills of multiliteracy, including the capacity to create reading paths manually by tracing their fingers through the available options.

We need to know more about the cognitive impact of this kind of haptic relationship with audio, moving image, and verbal materials. We still have much to learn about the role of the hands in developing standard reading and writing skills; now we must also consider if and how the use of our hands affects the kind of attention we pay to multimodal texts.

Complex Challenges

With analogue multimodal texts such as film, as I noted above, the meanings conveyed and/or implied by different channels of information interpenetrate and modulate each other, leading to a complex mental task of orchestration. The same features hold true of digital multimodal texts as well, but in addition interpreters need to factor in that a text may be further interpenetrated and modulated by a whole participatory culture (Jenkins et al. 2006). To offer a simplistic comparison, it resembles the contrast in games of Tic-Tac-Toe as played in two-dimensional and three-dimensional space. Where reception is open to subsequent production, what we might call the 'playable moves' increase exponentially. As if *Minecraft* were not already massive enough, its reach is extended by fan fiction, including crossover fanfic that merges the *Minecraft* world with those of other well-known fictions.

For the most part, to continue with the Tic-Tac-Toe metaphor, our theoretical understanding of this complex new form of text-building tends to be divided into what might be called the horizontal or the vertical plane of this 3D construction. A rhetorical understanding of multimodality which includes its digital porousness as part of the *address* of the text and part of the challenge of orchestrating a response to it still remains to be established. It may well be that text creators also find it necessary to think in terms of one plane at a time, but we do not really have the empirical studies to support or contradict that supposition. There is much work remaining to be done.

Where are we Heading?

Print reading itself is a multimodal exercise; even an unillustrated book includes graphic components as well as words. More generally, however, we use the word 'multimodal' to include the idea of texts with many strands of semiotic communication. Multimodality theory is often brought to bear in order to analyse how different channels of input inflect each other to create a complex whole. Current critiques of this theory suggest that it does not cast its net broadly enough to include economic, political, and social complexities that contribute to its production and distribution.

The main focus of the New London Group's article which has dominated scholarly and applied thinking about multiliteracies for the past twenty years explores issues of design. Here, one contemporary critique is that the New London Group's definition of literacy is too bound to a planned and reified text and does not take enough account of literacy as a cast of mind that continues to be expressed even when the text is not in hand.

The implications of the digital revolution (as usual) expand all these ideas, perhaps to the point where they cannot be considered all at once under the same label. The

term ‘digital literacy’ frequently focuses on the participatory side of things, but does not necessarily include all the previous understandings of semiosis and design as part of how the term is applied in daily life. It may be that a richer definition of ‘digital literacy’ will solve some of our conceptual problems, but such an approach runs the risk of belittling the significant role that print literacy continues to play in a comprehensive account of literate behaviour. As the term is developing today, it also risks overlooking some of the economic and political foundations which have provided such important source material for media studies. A tablet literacy, for example, which pays no heed to the role and influence of Apple (as manufacturer and distributor) is limited from the start. All the productions I cite in this chapter – book, CD, animation, app, game – were created on purpose within a particular context, and deliberately marketed to children. How early in their childhood can their intended consumers benefit by understanding their texts as the outcomes of a process of making, and then of selling?

Until we gain agreement on some working meaning for a new kind of overarching ‘pan-literacy’ concept, we run the risk of ignoring one important element or another. Our terminological difficulties reflect deeper ontological and epistemological problems. This chapter has addressed some of the multiplicities at work – semiotic channels, orchestration of responses, economic foundations, participatory porousness – but has not come up with a clean solution or even a good suggestion for ongoing working vocabulary. Nevertheless, it is important to tackle the messy complexity of what is happening today to our ideas of literacy and our understanding of the complex invitations scripted into contemporary texts. Whatever confusion still reigns at a theoretical level, the power of literate understanding remains vital.

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SERENDIPITY, INDEPENDENT PUBLISHING AND TRANSLATION FLOW: RECENT TRANSLATIONS FOR CHILDREN IN THE UK

Gillian Lathey

INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC IN children's literature is a dynamic phenomenon which shifts according to trade partnerships, political alliances, cultural links and, recently, the global, multimedia and electronic markets. Since 1945 English has been the dominant language from which children's texts are translated into languages across the world, a factor that has marked consequences for the publication of translations in the UK. According to sociologist of international exchange Johan Heilbron (2009), a hierarchical system governs translation flow. Translations flow outward from a language occupying a central position in the system, with only a limited number travelling in the opposite direction. The UK, a world leader in the global export of children's literature, is therefore at a disadvantage in developing economic and cultural structures for the reception of translations for children. In countries such as Finland, where translations account for up to eighty per cent of children's books published in any one year, children's writers require support in the face of an overwhelming tide of translations. Young readers in the UK, on the other hand, with translations accounting for two to three per cent of annual output, have limited access to cultural, linguistic and aesthetic impetus that books originating in other countries provide. Publication of translations for children is inconsistent and, as the following snapshot of the publishing industry and strategies designed to raise children's awareness of the translation process will demonstrate, driven by small-scale enterprise and the impulse of cultural and educational initiatives.

Fluctuations in the numbers and sources of translations for children in the UK since 1945 defy any conclusive analysis: economic pressures, chance encounters and the determination of pioneering individuals all play a part in a diverse set of attitudes and practices towards translations in British publishing houses. From a high point between the 1950s and the 1970s which saw the introduction of British children to a variety of Nordic literature including the work of Astrid Lindgren and Tove Jansson, as well as translations from a wide range of languages, among which Hungarian and Greek (see Margery Fisher's personal review journal *Growing Point*, 1964 to 1992, for an indication of this range), to a phase in the 1980s and 1990s when numbers of translations for children declined, the trajectory of translations is erratic and sometimes surprising. Who, for example, would have predicted the appearance in the early twenty-first century of that rare entity, a best-selling children's author whose work

appears in English translation? German author Cornelia Funke's triumphant *Inkheart* (2005) and its sequels, with several appearances on the best-seller list of *The New York Times*, was, however, a matter of chance: her work initially reached the UK thanks to the enthusiasm of a young German relative of an employee at the then independent publishing company Chicken House.

Children's publishers attribute their wariness of translations to the high cost of production, the difficulty in identifying appropriate translators, the low level of sales or the uncomfortable process of having to trust a translator's report rather than their own gut instincts (see interviews with publishers by Joanne Owen 2004, or Annette Goldsmith's study of the selection of children's books for translation by US publishers, 2006). They do, however, recognise the potential and significance of bringing books from different cultures and languages to young readers and from time to time publish a specific author, title, or even a series. Klaus Flugge, founder of Andersen Press, has attributed a severe reduction in the number of translations on the Andersen list to their lack of commercial success (Flugge 1994), but nonetheless continues to issue occasional translations, notably Swedish Henning Mankell's autobiographical novels for young people. Other mainstream children's publishers have also promoted translations: Egmont created the short-lived 'World Mammoth' series from 2000 with the strapline 'The finest literature from around the world'; Bloomsbury produced the 2001 Marsh Award-winning translation from Hebrew by Betsy Rosenberg of David Grossman's *Duel*, and Walker Books has published a number of books from other countries in recent years, including a novel from China in 2015 (Helen Wang's translation of *Bronze and Sunflower* by Cao Wenxuan).

Alongside the shifting fortunes of translations within mainstream British children's publishing, a range of initiatives encompassing small-scale independent publishing houses, charities, educational enterprises, government and European organisations has created a groundswell of interest in translations and a commitment to introducing the process of translation to children. The emergence in recent decades of independent publishing houses presenting innovative children's books and modern classics from across the world has kept larger publishing conglomerates on their toes in this respect. At the same time, the rewarding of translators in the UK by the Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation (founded in 1996); the Arts Council funded Children's Bookshow with its recent emphasis on translation; the interactive website and promotion of translations by the charity Outside In World; and workshops at Europe House in London funded by the European Union have ensured a steady flow of public events devoted to translations for children. Financial support was also available from the Arts Council for the Book Trust 'In Other Words' project that aimed to showcase sample translations from 'outstanding' books to British publishers at the Bologna Children's Book Fair in 2017. Moreover, initiatives such as 'Translation Nation' which funds translators working in schools aim to ensure that translators are no longer invisible to the young.

A closer examination in this chapter of the activity of independent publishers, partly based on interviews, and a focus on innovative projects involving translators and young readers will offer insights into the origin, variety and impact of translations for children and the promotion of an understanding of translation in the UK today. Both these strands of activity combine to assert and consolidate the role of translated children's literature within the broader scene of multicultural publishing and education, and to encourage an increase in translation flow into the UK market.

Independent Publishing Houses: A Risky Commitment

In 1989, Aidan Chambers, a British author of fiction for young people and long-time champion of translated fiction, co-founded the children's publishing house Turton and Chambers with his Australian business partner David Turton, funded in part by the international success (particularly in Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands) of Chambers' own fiction. Translations were prominent on the list; indeed, Chambers' determination to publish an English edition of Peter Pohl's Swedish novel for adolescents, trans. Laurie Thompson as *Johnny, My Friend* (1991), was a major reason for establishing this independent company. *Johnny, My Friend* was applauded as a masterwork by children's literature critics and academics (for instance, Trites 2006), and it is a sure sign of the quality of the company's output that almost half the titles on the first Marsh Award shortlist in 1996 (six out of thirteen) were published by Turton and Chambers.

Although the eleven translated titles on the Turton and Chambers list did not sell well and the venture folded after six years, two of them – *The Dearest Boy in All the World* (1990) by Ted van Lieshout, translated from Dutch by Lance Salway, and *The Empty House* (1992) by Claude Gutman, translated from French by Anthea Bell – did achieve wider distribution when they were bought by Penguin and appeared under the Puffin and Puffin Plus imprints respectively. In a booklist in the form of an attractive pamphlet commissioned by Penguin, *Stories in Translation* (1993), Chambers comments that the list 'includes proportionately very few recent titles; it shows how much needs to be done if we want to make a wide choice of translations available to children and young people' (Chambers 1993: 1). The adoption of two titles from Chambers' own company represented one small step forward in this Herculean task.

Chambers' enterprising commitment to new fiction from outside the UK is also evident in Barry Cunningham's publication with Chicken House 2002 of *The Thief Lord* by Cornelia Funke, thus initiating Funke's success in the English-language market, and indeed in the risks taken by independent publishers of multifarious origins since the 1990s. Independent publishers are prominent in the list appended to the statistical report on all translated literature in the UK and Ireland compiled by Jasmine Donahaye of Swansea University (Donahaye 2012). In the follow-up report of 2015 editors Alexandra Büchler and Giulia Trentacosti pertinently ask: 'Who publishes translations is an important question to ask in the British context, where translations are brought out mostly by smaller and medium-sized independent houses' (Büchler and Trentacosti 2015: 21). It may well be the case that the small-scale publisher is able to expedite translations with a speed, efficiency and degree of personal contact that larger companies, with their hierarchies and complex marketing and approval systems, cannot match. Publishing a translation entails not only the possibility of limited editorial access to the language of the source text (it may be necessary to commission a reader's report), but also the time devoted to the translation process and, ideally, close collaboration between editor and translator – all of which is easier to manage when only a limited number of employees is involved. Aidan Chambers' detailed work with author Peter Pohl and translator Laurie Thompson on *Johnny, My Friend* (see Chambers 2001), is a rare instance of an intimate partnership of this kind.

In the last two decades a number of small independent companies have published books from a range of source languages. These include Alma Books, Aurora Metro,

Bloodaxe Books, Boxer Books, Gecko Press (based in New Zealand), Istros Books, Little Island Books (Republic of Ireland), Milet Publishing, Phoenix Yard, Pushkin Press, Sort of Books, Spindlewood Press and Tiny Owl Publishing. Sometimes a children's book appears as a rare instance on a list largely devoted to adult literature (the welcome anthology of translated children's poetry from award-winning poetry publisher Bloodaxe Books, *Sheep Don't Go to School: Mad and Magical Children's Poetry from Eastern Europe*, edited by Andrew Fusek Peters in 1997 is one example), whereas other small publishing houses regularly produce translations for children. A closer look at the practices and aims of four of these independent publishers based on email or telephone interviews with directors and editors identifies the impetus and direction of published translations. Two companies (Boxer Books and Aurora Metro) have been chosen because they occasionally publish translations for children within a broader output and address different age groups in each case, and two (Pushkin Press and Tiny Owl Publishing) because, despite culturally different starting points, each issues a children's list dominated by translations.

David Bennett, founder of Boxer Books (identified as an International Children's Book Publisher on the company's website) in 2005, traces his admiration for stories from other countries to two treasured childhood volumes of tales by Hans Christian Andersen and the Grimm brothers, as well as a memorable BBC TV series, *Tales from Europe*, shown in the original language with voice-overs: 'all thrilling, slightly dark and surreal – unlike many contemporary English stories of the time' (email communication 21 April 2016). That note of difference provided the catalyst for the publication by Bennett's first company, David Bennett Books, of one of its greatest successes, Werner Holzwarth and Wolf Erlbruch's picturebook *The Little Mole who Knew it was None of his Business* (1994), translated from German by Wolf Erlbruch, and the introduction to young British readers by his current publishing house, Boxer Books, of the whimsical stories of Dutch author Toon Tellegen. Bennett's story of the publication of Tellegen's *Letters to Anyone and Everyone* (2009) outlines a pathway typical of the serendipitous nature of many translations for children:

A good friend of mine at Albin Michel in France, Evelyne Guyot, introduced me to Toon Tellegen stories. She had acquired them from Querido in the Netherlands . . . We got to know Querido, who introduced us to the wonderful Toon Tellegen (an extraordinary man with extraordinary stories to tell). We engaged Martin Cleaver to translate the original texts and I could not have been more excited waiting for the stories to unfold in English . . . We approached Amelia Edwards to art direct and design . . . and she commissioned Jessica Ahlberg to illustrate.

By this circuitous route Tellegen reached the UK book trade; Boxer has since produced other titles by Tellegen and Martin Cleaver's translation won the Marsh Award in 2011. Although publishing only a limited number of translations, Bennett's concentration on the younger reader and publishing acumen are responsible for the promotion in the UK of the work of Erlbruch and Tellegen, two of the great figures of European children's literature in the late twentieth century.

Childhood reading inspired Bennett's receptivity to continental European talent, whereas directors of the other three independent publishers under review cite the limited availability of literature originating in other countries for their own children as a motivating factor. Aurora Metro's commitment to young people and continental

European fiction began in 1989 when the company published the work of a group of young women writers running writing workshops at the Drill Hall Arts Centre in London. Few women playwrights were published at the time so, as founder of the press Cheryl Robson explains, ‘we began with collections of women, black and Asian and disabled playwrights as well as female playwrights from Europe including Eastern Europe’ (Robson 2016). Gradually the company’s remit widened to include other genres and fiction, until a concern about the type of reading matter available to Robson’s own child triggered Aurora Metro’s expansion into the young people’s book market. When attending an interview at a prestigious school at the age of eleven, Robson’s daughter was the only girl to name a book other than *Harry Potter* as her favourite: she chose the diary of Anne Frank. Robson wanted to counteract the explosion of fantasy at the time by publishing ‘books about serious issues’, considering that ‘some young people want books which deal with the realities of growing up in an imperfect world’.

Despite the high cost of translation and need for subsidy which Robson regards as reasons for the paucity of translations for the young in the UK, eight of the twelve titles on the Aurora Metro 2016 Young Adult list are translations. Following the reference to Anne Frank and a general trend in postwar translations into English for the young relating to the Second World War and the Holocaust (Lathey 2010: 156–7), two of the earliest YA titles, Jean Molla’s *Sobibor* (2005) translated from French by Polly McLean and Stig Dalager’s *David’s Story* (2010) translated from the Danish by Frances Osterfelt and Cheryl Robson, address in turn the impact of the Holocaust on subsequent generations and a child’s experience of the Warsaw Ghetto. Aurora Metro has sourced titles from lists published by IBBY (the International Board of Books for Young People); other titles range from a novel recounting the dangers of Cubans fleeing by sea to the US (*Letters from Alain* by Enrique Pérez Díaz, translated from Spanish by Simon Breden 2008), and an insight into the conversion to pacifism of a young airman on returning home from missions in the Middle East (*My Brother Johnny* by Francesco D’Adamo translated from Italian by Siân Williams in 2007). Robson insists on the enlightening role of these translations: ‘These authors can give us insight into the fast-changing world beyond our shores and reduce our fear of those from other countries.’ Although books from outside the UK proved to be fruitful in the search for socio-political themes, and Aurora Metro titles were shortlisted for the Marsh Award in 2009, 2011 and 2013, Robson is disappointed that the books have not been reviewed in the press, at the reluctance of the book trade and librarians to order the books, and at the lack of interest in author promotion and visits.

A different perspective of literary heritage and material quality governs a new children’s list within a medium-sized independent publishing house that has already enriched and stirred the translated children’s book market in the UK. This development, too, owes a debt to a publisher’s children. In 1997 Pushkin Press began publishing novels, essays and memoirs for adults that included a high proportion of translations. Adam Freudenheim, one of the two Managing Directors of the company, refers to his three children when pinpointing a concern at the ‘extreme lack of translations for children’ as the motivation for starting a children’s list (Freudenheim 2016). Freudenheim had edited Penguin classics before becoming a director at Pushkin in 2012; the first children’s books appeared in the spring of 2013. An emphasis in the general literature lists on presentation, ‘to distinguish the books from those of other

publishers', on translations, and on the reissue or adaptation of classics is replicated in the children's list. Not only was the list a golden opportunity for the many translators and children's book experts who suggested titles as soon as its launch was announced, but publications for children have proved to be successful commercially. Accolades include translator Margaret Jull Costa's 2015 Marsh Award for her translation from Spanish of Bernardo Atxaga's *The Adventures of Shola* (2013), and the shortlisting in that same year of two other Pushkin titles (*The Good Little Devil*, 2013, by Pierre Gripari, translated from French by Sophie Lewis, and *The Letter for the King*, 2013, by Tonke Dragt, translated from the Dutch by Laura Watkinson). Freudenheim is particularly proud that Tomiko Inui's *The Secret of the Blue Glass* (2015, translated from Japanese by Ginny Tapley Takemori) was the only translated novel on the long-list for the 2016 Carnegie Medal, awarded annually to the writer of an outstanding book written in English for children and young people, in the very first year that its administrators accepted the nomination of translations.

Pushkin has in-house speakers of German, French, Italian and Russian, which Freudenheim sees as 'gateway languages' which offer access to books first published in a range of other languages. Books are selected because they have been successful in the source language, or because they have already enjoyed success as translations in languages other than English. In addition to in-house opinion, Pushkin may commission one or two readers' reports on a specific title, with a focus on 'middle grade' and young adult fiction rather than picturebooks. Its 2016 catalogue lists sixty-nine children's titles; the vast majority are translations, retranslations, rediscoveries (books such as Dragt's *The Letter for the King* or Inui's *The Secret of the Blue Glass*, first published in the Netherlands in 1962 and Japan in 1959 respectively) or retellings of previously translated classics. Such a high number of translations published within a short period is an extraordinary achievement for a strand of children's literature currently considered by many publishers to be difficult to assess and financially risky. Freudenheim also points out that sheer volume also creates the opportunity to work consistently and closely with the same translators, with Anthea Bell as translator of long overdue new editions of early twentieth-century German author Erich Kästner's *The Flying Classroom* (2014), *Dot and Anton* (2014) and *The Parent Trap* (2014), or with Laura Watkinson on translations of the work of Tonke Dragt from Dutch. A balance between new titles such as Anne Plichota and Cendrine Wolf's French gothic fantasy series, trans. Sue Rose, and beautifully presented classics likely to be bought by adults as presents, has reduced the risk associated with translations for children.

Pushkin's launch of a children's list on the back of a well-established concept in publishing for adults offers a positive model for future developments in the market as regards translations for children. A second company, also recently founded, has a far tighter remit in its initial focus on picturebooks from one country. Tiny Owl Publishing, started in 2014 by husband and wife team Delaram Ghanimifard and Karim Arghandehpour originated, once again, in response to a personal concern (Ghanimifard 2016):

Tiny Owl is the result of my family's confrontation with immigration and facing the lack of translated books, diverse books, and children's books that reflected our cultural background for my son. He was in year 5 when we came to the UK, and started school in a diverse community. There were many ethnic backgrounds in his

classroom, none of which were represented in the children's books in the library. We actually found a few bilingual books in the library, but they were too basic. We needed rich cultural books. The ones that we decided to publish ourselves.

A twofold purpose, firstly to enable her son to encounter his own culture, from thirteenth-century Persian mystic and poet Rumi to 'contemporary authors such as Behrangi' and, secondly, to create the opportunity to learn about literature from other parts of the world 'so that he could better understand his classmates' became a quest to broaden the perspectives of young British readers: 'Many English books are translated in Iran every year and children read them and like them. Shouldn't this be a two-way road, allowing English children to learn about other cultures as well?'

One of Ghanimifard's intentions is to introduce Iranian culture to young readers in the UK: 'Iran is different from how it is portrayed in the media, you never see anything about the culture or people' (Ghanimifard 2014). A first step in establishing the list was to ask an Iranian children's author to produce a list of the best 100 books available in terms of artwork and story; then to whittle this down to ten titles through careful discussion, and finally to offer children glimpses of the literary, artistic and philosophical history of the country in a collection of picturebooks. Currently there are fourteen titles on the list, one of which, *The Jackal who Thought he was a Peacock* (2015), is a handsome version of a fable by Rumi retold for children by Fereshteh Sarlak from Azita Rassi's translation, with artwork by Firoozeh Golmohammadi. Ghanimifard insists that books from Iran are just the beginning of the venture, with plans for matching 'the best authors that we know with the best illustrators and form a kind of a cultural dialogue' (Barnes 2016). A signal of interest in the public domain is the selection by *The Guardian* of Tiny Owl titles as two of the best children's books of 2015.

Pushkin's large-scale translations of classic and literary prose fiction and Tiny Owl's narrowly focused strategy of drawing on the Iranian artistic tradition represent divergent but equally necessary and innovative approaches towards the publication of translations for children in the UK. Indeed, unpredictable diversity of motivation and practice among four independent publishers leads to an eclectic collection of translated texts for young readers. Other small publishing houses echo notes sounded by these four, although always with a particular twist. Rediscovery and retranslation, evident in Pushkin's translation of Tonke Dragt and new editions of Erich Kästner's novels, are present, too, in publications from Alma Classics (for example a first publication in English in 2016 of Cécile Aubry's *Belle and Sébastien: The Child of the Mountains* published in French in 1965) and in the exclusive focus – at least as far as children's books are concerned – of Sort of Books on the Finnish-Swedish author Tove Jansson. When Mark Ellingham, co-founder with Nat Jansz of the Rough Guide travel series and Sort of Books, discovered a 'dusty second-hand edition of *The Book about Moomin, Mymble and Little My*' both he and Jansz 'were absolutely enchanted by the stunning images and calligraphy' (Jansz 2016). The new rhyming verse translation by poet and novelist Sophie Hannah, based on a literal rendering of Jansson's Swedish verse by Silvester Mazzarella, resulted in an edition that has remained in print since 2000. More Moomin picture books followed, but so did Jansson's stories for adults, collected, for example, in *The Summer Book* (2003) and *A Winter Book* (2006). In this manner, and starting with a title for children, a major twentieth-century writer and artist has enjoyed a revival in the UK.

A concentration on books from a specific country, area or language which characterises the initial output of Tiny Owl is also to be found in the company Istros Books ‘set up in 2011 in order to publish and promote literature in translation from SE Europe and the Balkans’ – although thus far Istros has published one children’s picturebook, *Hedgehog’s Home* (2011) by the Yugoslav author Branko Ćopić, translated by S. D. Curtis from Serbo-Croatian. Knowledge of just one language within the editorial team may also determine a publisher’s output. Phoenix Yard asserts on its website that ‘A flair for translation delivers the very best of French style’, a focus that originates in the strong French connections of both founder and editor (Langley 2016). Emma Langley was able to seek out books in French bookshops, through agents and book fairs, and undertook a fruitful visit to the Salon des Livres in Montreal, Canada. Publishers may also double as translators, for example in the case of Siobhán Parkinson’s translations from German for Little Island, Julia Marshall’s from Swedish for Gecko Press, and Alessandro Gallenzi’s version of a story by Carlo Collodi from the Italian for Alma Books. Moreover, one tiny ripple in independent children’s publishing may indicate a future strategy, since cultural dialogue of the kind proposed by Delaram Ghanimifard at Tiny Owl is also high on the agenda at Lantana Publishing, founded in 2015 to produce ‘diverse and multicultural children’s books’. According to founding Director Alice Curry, Lantana’s aspiration to bring together authors and illustrators from different cultures will definitely encompass translation (Curry 2016).

Involving Child Readers

Both small independent publishing houses and larger companies have taken part in new initiatives to raise the profile of translators in peritextual material and to interest child readers in the art of translation. Direct evidence of the translator’s presence within a child’s book is not new, of course, though historically prefatory remarks by translators were often authoritarian in tone and addressed to adults (Lathey 2006). In the twenty-first century publishers are beginning to make translators visible, so that the inclusion of information on translators in blurbs, prefaces and postscripts has become a marketing strategy to draw children’s attention to the translation process, or indeed to the very fact that they are reading a translation. On the back inside cover of *The Book about Moomin, Mymble and Little My*, both author Tove Jansson and translator Sophie Hannah (with a mention of Silvester Mazzarella) are introduced in brief profiles. Other postscripts give equal weight to author and translator in a child-friendly manner. Guy Puzey, translator of Maria Parr’s *Waffle Hearts* (2013) from Norwegian, is presented as a good choice because of his location ‘Puzey grew up in the Highlands of Scotland, just a short swim from Norway’ (2013: 240), whereas an introduction to the Australian translator of Ursula Poznanski’s German fantasy *Erebos* (2012), Judith Pattinson, emphasises the impact of childhood reading on the first step towards becoming a translator:

at an early age her reading transported her (in spirit) to the other side of the world – to chalets with flower boxes and hay-filled attics, and school hikes through the Swiss Alps full of friendly strangers who greeted you with ‘Grüss Gott!’ and ‘Bonjour!’ As a consequence she couldn’t wait to study European languages . . .

To maintain the tenor and tune of the reading experience the child has just enjoyed, the voice of the book's young protagonist introduces the translator in the English translations of Johanne Mercier's French-Canadian books, discovered by publisher Emma Langley on her trip to Montreal. In a postscript to *Arthur and the Mystery of the Egg*, Arthur addresses young readers directly:

Daniel Hahn translated the stories. He took my French words, and wrote them in English. He said it was quite a difficult job, but Cousin Eugene said he could have done it much better, only he was busy that day. So we got Daniel to do it, as he's translated loads and loads of books before. He also said he wrote the words for a book called *Happiness is a Water Melon on your Head*, but everyone else said that book was just plain silly. Daniel is almost as clever as Cousin Eugene and he lives in England in a house by the sea with a lot of books. (Mercier 2013: 41)

This new marketing focus on the translator extends to appearances at children's book roadshows, readings at children's book festivals, in bookshops, libraries and community centres and joint school visits by author and translator, where both give readings and answer children's questions. When well prepared in advance by teachers, these visits are enriching to all involved. Not all translators are temperamentally suited to such jamborees, but those who are can become ambassadors for their profession and engage children and young people in the excitement of translation.

Prize-winning translator of children's books Sarah Ardizzone describes one such initiative in the literary translators' journal *In Other Words* (2011). Ardizzone, together with teacher Sam Holmes, was the first curator of the Translation Nation project administered by the Stephen Spender Trust and Eastside Educational Trust, and funded by Arts Council England. The project, intended for schoolchildren aged seven to eleven, began both in London, where many children are multilingual, and on the Kent coast in schools with a large percentage of children from Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. A series of three-day creative workshops run by literary translators and volunteer assistants enabled these children to work on the translation of a favourite story from their heritage language (Amharic, Gujarati, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Somali, Spanish, Telugu and Urdu were the languages of the first cohort in London) into English, with the aim of taking part in a competitive performance. The winning stories appeared on the Translation Nation website. One of the major aims of the project, which ran from 2011 to 2014, was to encourage the next generation of literary translators and to enthuse monolingual English-speaking children by involving them in the editing and polishing of English versions of stories told or written by their classmates. As Ardizzone comments: 'this is a project where we have to tear up the usual job description of what it means to be a literary translator – an energizing if challenging step for everyone's continuing professional development' (2011:7). Such was the success of this first phase that the project has now developed into a 'Translators in Schools' programme funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and delivered by the Stephen Spender Trust. Trainee translators studying at master's level spend three days on lesson planning, classroom management, visits to schools and work with a mentor. Translation MA students who take part in such projects appreciate the opportunity to engage with a potential audience for their work, and to develop children's writing skills in English and their understanding of differences between languages.

Introducing children to the process of translation has multiple advantages that can only benefit the language-based aspect of diversity in British children's publishing in the long term. For all children in the UK, whether mono-, bi- or multilingual, an understanding of translation and the aesthetic and linguistic processes involved is likely to enhance literary and general intellectual development. The benefits of encouraging children to think about the way different languages operate are evident in Raymonde Sneddon's study of young bilingual children learning to read across two languages. Sneddon's research indicates a heightening of metalinguistic awareness – in one example an eight-year-old Turkish-speaking child explaining to an English-speaking friend the formation of the plural in Turkish after they have read a Turkish-English dual language text together (Sneddon 2009: vii). Insights of this kind can only increase an appreciation of language as the medium of literature for both children.

A further argument in favour of heightening children's awareness of the translation process, particularly in the UK where translations constitute such a small percentage of the market, is that children should not assume that all books they read were initially written in English or succumb to what Jack Zipes, in relation to Grimms' fairy tales, calls the 'non-recognition of translation' (Zipes 2006:198). Translation Studies scholar Lawrence Venuti's (2008) assertion that the invisibility of translation amounts to cultural appropriation is pertinent to children's responses to translations. A fluent translation which masks its origins through adaptation to the target culture (the changing of names, coinage, customs and foodstuffs for example), the anonymity of the translator or the relegation of a translator's name to tiny print on the copyright page is, Venuti argues, a product of cultural imperialism. He suggests that translators should avoid fluent translation that masks the 'foreignness' of the source text and retain moments of linguistic awkwardness to remind readers that they are reading a translation. Such a radical proposal has to be reviewed with care in books for the young who may find such practices alienating, especially in the British context where children read few translations. An educational project such as Translation Nation, however, enhances the mediation of the text by teachers, parents and librarians through drawing attention to a book's cultural and linguistic origins even where the translator has practised a degree of cultural adaptation. Pioneering work by publishers on the promotion of translators in the packaging of books, translators' readings and workshops all heighten sensitivity to the origins and qualities of source texts in a manner that counteracts the kind of cultural arrogance Venuti describes.

Linguistic Diversity – At the Outside Edge?

Educational and marketing events which place translators and translation centre stage all serve to remind UK librarians, teachers, booksellers and publishers that there is an untapped wealth of literature written in languages other than English to which young British readers deserve access. Alongside the continuing commission of translations by editors within large publishing houses, small-scale independent publishing adds an essential leavening agent to British children's publishing. It takes the passion of individuals with a precise focus and executive power to introduce a book of children's poetry from Eastern Europe or the verse of a medieval Persian mystic into the British market, and thus to extend the cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of children's publishing. A crossover of successful books from independent to mainstream publishing, as in the

case of two of the books published by Aidan Chambers, Erlbruch's *The Little Mole* or the novels of Cornelia Funke, together with the widespread distribution of books published by Pushkin in UK bookstores, indicate the potential of independent publishers to create influential currents in the wider market.

Nonetheless, translation for children maintains its awkward but potent position at the outside edge of children's publishing. Regarded as a specialised interest or niche market, the role of translated literature in ensuring that children read across cultures (enshrined in the UK National Curriculum), has not yet achieved due recognition within contemporary strategies to promote multicultural education and diversity in publishing. A telling example is that of the list of the fifty best culturally diverse books published by *The Guardian* in 2014, only one could be classed as a direct translation: Marjane Satrapi's account of her childhood in Tehran *Persepolis I and II* (2003, 2004), translated from the French by Mattias Ripa, and not originally published as a children's book. Such a tiny proportion of translations surprises in a list devoted to cultural diversity, and points to the sidelining of translation within discussions of diversity in British children's literature. Linguistic diversity of source texts adds a dimension to debates on the representation of cultural heritage that is fundamental to children's understanding of other cultures; its almost complete absence from this list testifies once again to the centrality of the English language and the resulting invisibility of translation. Across the world translations are embedded within national children's literatures and have for many years been eligible for prizes (for example the prestigious German Jugendbuchpreis). In a scenario in the UK where inward translation flow is weak, however, small-scale initiatives and personal crusades are essential to overcome the economic strictures of the market and ensure future progress towards an expansion of translations for children.

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THE PICTUREBOOK IN INSTRUCTED FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING CONTEXTS

Sandie Mourão

THIS CHAPTER BEGINS with a short general section on English language education in instructional contexts and a discussion around the language/literature divide within English language teaching. This is followed by a focus on the picturebook and an overview of how it has been incorporated into instructional contexts since the 1990s. The main part of the chapter will provide an overview of the research on using the picturebook in language learning contexts and examine the underlying theories behind including picturebooks in English language teaching. The titles considered in publications for teachers, as well as the different reasons teachers choose to include picturebooks in their planning, are analysed with a view to demonstrating the emerging trends which move from a focus on the written word and its topical content to a more general appreciation of the picturebook as an object in itself and valuing learners' responses. The chapter concludes by highlighting the relevance of teacher education in this very specific context.

English Language Education

English language education is one of the biggest global phenomena of the twenty-first century, prompting reforms that include improved proficiency in English as a key part of most countries' educational strategy (Graddol 2006: 70). The increasing prevalence of English as a subject in the school curriculum leads to the label 'instructed foreign language learning', which is quite different to bilingual or second language education, where children learn most, if not all school subjects, through another language – this includes children whose home language is not the language of the community (for example, heritage or minority language speakers in the UK), or children who attend bilingual or immersion schools (for example, Bilingual English and Malay schools in Singapore or English medium schools in India). Instructed foreign language (FL) classes provide a much lower exposure to the FL, often scheduled for fewer than three times a week and for as little as forty-five minutes at a time, resulting in exposure being barely forty-five hours over the academic year. The age at which children begin learning English as a FL has moved from its traditional lower secondary position to being firmly seated in primary and even pre-primary education (Eurydice 2012; Rixon 2013) and though the majority of formal English language teaching (ELT) worldwide occurs during compulsory schooling, only around 15 per cent of professional academic research into ELT in UK universities focuses on this learning community (Ellis

and Knagg 2012: 134) and a tiny fraction of this research looks at literature in the FL learning.

Literature in English Language Education

In a review of literature in language study in the twentieth century, Claire and Oliver Kramersch (2000) describe an array of avatars for literature: 'as the god of national greatness, as the patron saint of the written word, as a guide to moral conduct and as a warrant of cultural authenticity' (569), the latter associated with communicative language teaching (CLT), which emerged in the 1980s. Similarly Geoff Hall (2005) finds replicable evidence and confirms that, with the prominence of CLT, literature became an authentic text for authentic language use; the learner became central to the meaning-making process and as a result response-based approaches to literature took hold.

The notion that the selection of literary texts need not be dependent upon literary criticism, and that literature in the English language classroom could include popular fiction, fables, song lyrics and much more (McRae 1991: 15), has facilitated the entry of a diverse range of texts into the English language classroom. Additionally, an '(inter)-cultural turn' widened communicative engagement to include the 'socio- and inter-cultural dimensions' (Delanoy, Eisenmann and Matz 2015: 7) of language teaching and learning. Literature is now seen as a 'door into intercultural understanding' (Matos 2012: 1), a possible fifth avatar for the first decades of the twenty-first century, helping FL readers to 'decentre and take up the perspectives of the other, to see the world from another place' (2).

The two fields of language and literature studies in ELT have often been considered separate and alien to each other (Kramersch and Kramersch 2000), with literary theories regarded as minor or peripheral to linguistics and literature scholars berating the 'insensitive incomprehension of the cultural significance of texts' (Hall 2005: 3). Nevertheless, in the most recent state of the art, Amos Paran (2008) highlights a move towards integrating language and literature, despite a sadly small amount of empirically-based research to support the benefits of such a move. He suggests that the diversification of genres, due to the broadening of the concept of literature' (488), has created a space for children's and young adult literature. This is additionally appropriate when the vast majority of language learners are children and the inclusion of literature in any language class leads to far more than mere linguistic gains – affording 'significant educational goals' (Bredella 2000: 380).

Christiane Lütge has suggested that the term literary literacy, 'referring to different literary competences' (2012: 216), be adopted to encompass a progression of literary learning in schools. Taking the work of Wolfgang Hallet (2007) she proposes a progressive approach to the four basic competences in FL education – a reading competence, a cultural competence, a reflective competence and a foreign language discourse competence. These competences each contain sub-skills that can be realised and achieved progressively as learners begin interacting with literature at ever-younger ages in the FL classroom. An example would be within the reading competence: moving from general reading skills, onto the ability for close reading and finally emotionally responsive reading (Lütge 2012: 223). This she believes will 'substantiate the significance of literature' in FL education' (225).

Picturebooks in English Language Education: A Brief History

In the FL class, children's literature can appear in various forms, 'oral literature [such as traditional stories] and nursery rhymes, graphic narratives and young adult literature' (Bland 2013: 1) and the picturebook has been alluded to for over four decades (Ghosn 2013), despite more recently identified as 'largely an undiscovered treasure trove' (Birketeit 2013: 17). Even so, it is only recently that the picturebook has been correctly designated as 'a picturebook'; for over the last forty years it has been referred to as 'an authentic storybook' (Ellis and Brewster 1991, 2002, 2014; Ghosn 2013) or 'a real book' (Machura 1991; Dunn 1997; Mourão 2003). The latter harks back to the debate around real books or graded reading schemes for teaching reading in mainstream education in the 1980s (for example, Waterland 1988). There is still resistance to using the term picturebook, related to the notion that such books are for babies, but the term picturebook is now more widely used despite picturebook scholarship remaining largely unknown.

The inclusion of the picturebook in the English language classroom is associated with a desire to embrace authentic texts (Enever and Schmid-Shönbein 2006) and to offer an alternative to the unimaginative, graded texts found in course books and the 'purified or "disinfected"' language of graded English language readers (Narančić Kovač 2005: 65). The objective when using the picturebook in a language classroom is not usually to teach children to read but instead to furnish 'a context that [is] familiar to the child [as well as a] starting-point for a wide variety of related language and learning activities' (Ellis and Brewster 1991: 1). The picturebook is thus seen as a 'rich resource' (Enever and Schmid-Shönbein 2006: 7) where language and learning-related activities are usually prepared using a process of pre-, while- and post-reading activities designed to encourage students to make the most of the language, concepts and themes found in the picturebook.

The work of Gail Ellis and Jean Brewster is seminal in providing the structure for English teachers to include the picturebook in their planning. *The Storytelling Handbook for Primary Teachers* (1991) became *Tell it Again! The New Storytelling Handbook for Primary Teachers* when it was revised in 2002 and subsequently further revised and published open-access online by the British Council in 2014. Their practical, hands-on story-based approach is supported by an expansive list of reasons for doing so. The systematic criteria for selecting stories (designated storybooks) include reference to the linguistic, psychological, cognitive, sociological and cultural aspects of the picturebook, demonstrating that, if wisely selected, stories can and should support the development of the whole child in a language-learning context. Many of the titles in the first edition continue as firm favourites with pre-primary and primary English teachers, for example, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (1969) by Eric Carle, *My Cat Likes to Hide in Boxes* (1974) by Eve Sutton and Lynley Dodd, and *Meg and Mog* (1975) by Helen Nicoll and Jan Pieńkowski.

Also in the 1990s, Opal Dunn began *Real Book News* 'for adults helping children learn English as a foreign or additional language' (Dunn 1997). Her work with the picturebook was, and still is, outstanding. Dunn has passionately promoted 'REAL picture BOOKS . . . written for children's enjoyment and enrichment with no specific language teaching aim' (1) amongst teachers and parents. Dunn also suggested picturebooks which broke the mould of thematic-based selection – in one issue she focused on picturebooks for boys (Dunn 2002), proffering such titles as *Tusk, Tusk* (1978) by

David McKee, a book about hatred and tolerance, or the scatological masterpiece, *The Story of the Little Mole who Knew it was None of his Business* (1994) by Werner Holzworth and Wolf Erlbruch. Dunn recognised the significance of the visual in the picturebook, and encouraged readers of her newsletter to acknowledge their role in developing children's 'personal skills in "reading" pictures and getting meaning from them' (1999: 3). She highlighted the value of mediating access to the richness of styles of illustration, types of media and colour. A seemingly simple recommendation – 'talk about the pictures' (ibid.) – was ground-breaking for many classroom English teachers at that time, and remains an approach which still tends to focus on the words only.

The first article to discuss picturebooks in FL education through a more academic lens alluded to 'authentic children's literature' (Ghosn 2002), giving the picturebook a grandeur, thus far unrecognised. Irma Ghosn accentuated the value of the picturebook in developing academic literacy, thinking skills and as a change agent. She also championed the picturebook as a tool for preparing children for English medium schooling. Ghosn's conclusion reflects the earlier work of Ellis and Brewster and Dunn but reached a more academic audience – she combined the relevance of developing language skills alongside emotional intelligence and an intercultural awareness: 'children's literature can provide a motivating medium through which these needs can be addressed in the EFL class' (2002: 177).

In 2004 the first ever conference on picturebooks in English language education was held at the International Youth Library in Munich. The conference, together with the resulting edited volume (Enever and Schmid-Schönbein 2006), assisted in providing an increasing number of researchers and practitioners with a theoretical background for further researching and including the picturebook in their teaching. As a result, the last decade has shown a gradual but significant increase in references to the picturebook in publications about (children's) literature in language education (Birketveit and Williams 2013; Bland and Lütge 2013; Delanoy, Eisenmann and Matz 2015; Teranishi, Saito and Wales 2015). There has also been a recent surge of publications which discuss the picturebook in language education, often relating theory to practice (Ahlquist and Lugossy 2015; Bland 2013; Ghosn 2013). These last publications are making an important contribution to knowledge-based understanding of picturebooks in the primary and lower secondary classrooms, based on the authors' many years of experience.

Picturebooks in English Language Education: A Focus on the Words

Referring to the picturebook, Anna Birketveit and Gweno Williams suggest that 'authentic texts can offer a brief but effective experience of immersion language learning' (2013: 9), and although these authors highlight the relevance of visual literacy when including picturebooks in classroom approaches, they foreground the simplicity of the verbal text and the possibility of relying upon the images to understand the words that make picturebooks so useful for the classroom context. This represents the picturebook as a resource which is, in the main, selected for the words it contains and not for the opportunities it provides language learners for going beyond the verbal text or for talking about what they are experiencing through the interanimation of images and words. Evidence of this approach is confirmed in a small comparative study in which

I discovered that the most popular picturebooks used in primary FL classes were *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do You See?* (1967) by Bill Martin Jr and Eric Carle (Mourão 2015). These titles are favoured because they cover linguistic items and themes typically present in early English language programmes, for example colours, animals, days of the week, food and life cycles. I would also propose that these are popular choices due to the picture/word dynamic being symmetrical, so that when children look at the images, the meaning is immediately apparent reinforcing understanding of the words. This leads to a more passive language learner, especially when these picturebooks are used with children beyond the middle primary years.

It is accepted that the verbal text found in predictable books like *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* can introduce young children in low exposure contexts to chunks of very useful language, imitating how these books are often used to support emergent reading in the mother tongue – ‘a word or sentence pattern is repeated often enough to enable children to predict their appearance and thus begin to join in the reading’ (Trelease 2001: 220). Caroline Linse suggests that these particular verbal texts afford controlled language use through the repetitive and predictable language they contain – reminiscent of ‘audio-lingualism’ (2007: 54). Predictable books support language acquisition in the enjoyable context of a story, which can be repeated over several lessons, and, indeed, predictability and repetition in picturebook verbal texts is one of the many reasons language teachers select them as a classroom resource (Ellis and Brewster 1991, 2002, 2014; Elley 2001; Linse 2006; Dunn 2012).

As well as recommending predictable books for language acquisition, Linse highlights the relevance of images that make ‘both structures and vocabulary clear to the learner’ (2007: 53) as opposed to images that do not support the context or are ‘culturally ambiguous or confusing to the child’ (54). Her examples include *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you See?* – a book which I have already suggested is symmetrical in its picture/word dynamic. She also recommends *Goodnight Moon* (1947) by Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd, and *Good Night Gorilla* (1996) by Peggy Rathmann; both provide additional information through their images. In *Goodnight Moon* they expand on the verbal text, for example the lady and child in the words are shown as rabbits in the illustration. In *Good Night Gorilla* the images create an ironic counterpoint to the words as a sleepy zookeeper on his evening rounds is shown not to notice the animals being let out of their cages by a cheeky gorilla. Linse makes no mention of these additional visual storylines, which children will not experience quietly (see research by Lugossy 2012; Mourão 2012; Kaminsky 2013).

Further evidence that the words lead the selection of picturebooks is clear in two instances where *Rosie’s Walk* (1968), by Pat Hutchins, is discussed for the FL classroom. Well-known to children’s literature scholars for its ‘perspectival counterpoint’ (Nikolajeva and Scott 2006: 233) and its clever use of irony (Kümmerling-Meibauer 1999), perversely it is mentioned in countless resource books and online materials for mainstream education due to the use of prepositions in the verbal text. In FL education, Masuko Miyahara (2005) suggests classroom activities around *Rosie’s Walk* and though highlighting the ‘clever interplay of words and pictures’ (2005: 23) also emphasises the relevance of the prepositions for language learning purposes. She lists other vocabulary which can be learned from the images (for example, pond, haystack, mill) but nowhere does she mention the fox, considered the main character (Kümmerling-Meibauer 1999) due to his more interesting antics and his position on the verso page,

usually reserved for protagonists (Nodelman 1988: 136). In a study in Hong Kong, Margaret Lo provides an account of how a teacher in an English language class with six-year-old children uses the verbal text in *Rosie's Walk* to imply 'a single neutral version of the story' (2008: 77), while the children demonstrated multiple interpretations drawn from different alliances with the characters in the images, as well as an understanding of the irony created by the picture/word interplay – all responses ignored by the teacher. I have noted with this picturebook that pre-primary children talk incessantly about the fox and enjoyed 'giving away the punch line' (Mourão 2012: 255) – foretelling what will happen to the fox upon the page turn. 'Fox' was a label they picked up almost immediately and certainly before 'hen'.

Finally, describing empirical research in English classes in Germany, Kaminsky (2016) laments the use of picturebooks for didactic purposes only. In this instance not for focusing on the words only, but for selecting the picturebook for the topic its images may represent. In an example which is likely to be more typical than we might think, Kaminsky describes how *Winnie the Witch* (1987), by Lisa Thomas and Korky Paul, is shared in an FL class with a group of nine- to ten-year-olds to prompt language related to the house. The teacher summarised the story, so the children did not experience the picturebook verbal text, instead the focus was on furniture in the different rooms. Kaminsky declared that the picturebook 'cannot be experienced by the children [for] what is left of it becomes a didactic tool . . . used as a stimulus for form-focused language practice that is decontextualized from the story and its characters' (2016: 180).

All examples in this section confirm that when used in FL classes, the picturebook can be vastly misunderstood and selected for its verbal text, supporting the notion that the word is more important than the image. This reflects mainstream classroom practice to a certain extent; however, in FL contexts picturebooks may also be selected for the topic or theme for which the images provide visual support, substituting flashcards, a well-used resource in FL education employed especially with beginner learners. It is indeed a waste to use the picturebook in such a way.

Emerging Directions for the Picturebook in English Language Education

Running parallel to the inclusion of picturebooks in FL education merely for the words they contain, there is emerging evidence that researchers and practitioners are looking at the picturebook as a multimodal object and recognising the relevance of the picture/word dynamic for authentic language use together with access to a variety of topics that otherwise would not be present in the classroom. This section looks at the different ways in which picturebooks are used in the classroom to foster competences and skills beyond the acquisition of words and formulaic phrases.

Talk and the picturebook in a foreign language

Ghosn's (2013) very detailed description of her many years of research with picturebooks and pre-primary and primary learners shows that talk around picturebooks is qualitatively different to talk around textbooks in an FL classroom. She highlights the role of negotiation in the FL and provides evidence of 'more natural discourse' being

used by the students when they interact with picturebooks in the FL (Ghosn 2013: 63). Chen-Ying Li and Paul Seedhouse (2010) have found similar results in FL classes in Taiwan. Here, interaction in the story-based lessons was also considered more complex with greater amounts of student initiation around the images, albeit in their own Chinese language. The acceptance of the classroom language during the FL lesson is associated with a move to accepting the use of the classroom language alongside the FL (Hall and Cook 2012), which results in opportunities for children to talk about picturebook images, although it puts additional demands upon the FL teacher who is often unprepared for such an approach and may consider that there is just one interpretation of the visual/verbal narrative.

Janice Bland makes a clear argument for including picturebooks in the FL classroom in order to support the development of literary literacy, through ‘deep thinking on the interaction of words and images . . . stimulating [learners] to ask questions and construct their own interpretation’ (2013: 36). She highlights the importance of language teachers scaffolding meaning (for example, by using mime, gestures and facial expressions) as well as modelling language through ‘identifying the most useful, exciting and salient grammatical and lexical features in the picturebook, and . . . bringing them into the classroom discourse’ (39). As such, an example would be when using *No David* (2000) by David Shannon – an entertaining almost wordless picturebook about a mischievous boy and his misdemeanors. Bland suggests asking the children to consider why the author-illustrator has the same name as the child protagonist and for them to think about what David might be saying in each illustration, thus moving beyond usual classroom interactions of ‘What can you see in the picture?’ (teacher initiation), ‘A yellow duck’ (student response), ‘Very good’ (feedback) (44), typical of an FL approach to a book with few words and bold images.

These apparently evident approaches to encouraging talk are still considered innovative in the FL classroom and necessitate a confident teacher who is accepting of unexpected answers from their learners.

Response to the picturebook in a foreign language

Reader-response theories are integrated into the teaching of literature in language education for the reader as meaning-maker remains central to communicative language teaching and learners are encouraged to ‘express their personal perspectives’ around a book’s content (Lütge 2012: 215). That said, picturebooks are rarely considered in relation to response in language education due to a belief that picturebook images are merely effective scaffolding to support comprehension. Nevertheless, the burgeoning scholarship on children’s responses to picturebook images (for instance, Arizpe and Styles 2016) includes my own research (Mourão 2012, 2016), where I investigated responses to three picturebooks in English and adapted Lawrence Sipe’s grounded theory of literary understanding (2000, 2008) for an FL context. My results showed that Sipe’s theory of literary understanding created a basis for understanding how and why the children responded to the picturebooks using their linguistic repertoires (Portuguese and English). The children took an overwhelmingly analytical stance to each picturebook, as was the case in the research undertaken by Sipe (for example, Sipe 2000; Sipe and Bauer 2001) which suggests that there is very little difference between a response to a picturebook in a child’s own language or another language.

Réka Lugossy (2012) and Annett Kaminsky (2013, 2016) have also documented the responses of children in primary education in Hungary and Germany respectively during picturebook read-alouds, and both have highlighted the relevance of children making and talking about the intertextual connections that resulted from the picturebook images. Kaminsky encourages English teachers to accept and build on children's comments related to the picturebook images, alerting the learners to the fact that texts often refer to other texts, thus developing the learners' literary literacy and contributing to their development as proficient readers in the FL (Kramersch 1993). The understanding of intertextual references is an area of FL education still to be investigated – albeit that semiotics and translation studies are still grappling with the complexities of translating 'visual (and cultural) signs' (Oittinen 2004: 173).

A final area of response is related to picturebook design: beyond the body of the picturebook, front covers are recognised as relevant for their usefulness in prediction and language revision work (Read 2009; Birketveit 2013), but the relationships between the different parts of the picturebook with regard to the design element and considering the peritextual features were, until recently, of little consequence to picturebook users in this context. My research into response has provided evidence that the range of peritextual features in picturebooks can support FL learners in their development of narrative meaning by predicting characters, plot and setting, and through the 'promotion of critical and inferential thinking and interpretation skills' (Mourão 2013a: 82) together with multiple opportunities for using picturebook metalanguage in the FL. As a result there is a move towards including reference to these parts of a picturebook in teacher resources and publications (Birketveit 2013; Mourão 2013c, 2015, 2016).

Although a field of FL education which is embryonic, the research mentioned here demonstrates that the learners' responses are being seen as evidence of learning concepts that move beyond the linguistic objectives of an FL course, which recognise the relevance of reader response in such a context and which are beginning to include picturebook scholarship.

Intercultural awareness and the picturebook in a foreign language

The picturebook is seen as pivotal for the development of an intercultural competence, which is quite different to viewing culture as 'a product concerning information or knowledge about a foreign culture' (Matos 2012: 2) but instead focuses on 'the interrelationship between two cultures' (Fenner 2003: 102). Intercultural awareness has been foregrounded in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe 2001) and it is considered vitally important that teachers are able 'to organise learning situations and [mediate] individual's learning processes to foster the development of an intercultural awareness' (Fenner 2003: 102) – picturebooks are an excellent resource for this intention.

An example of such an organisation comes from a sequence of activities around *The Adventures of the Dish and the Spoon* (2006), by Mini Grey, suggested by Gillian Lazar (2015) for a group of young adult learners in Japan. She proposes a pre-picturebook activity of getting to know the original nursery rhyme and reviewing the

lexical area of crockery and cutlery, in so doing discussing the different eating utensils used in different parts of the world as well as preparing the learners for the picturebook and its visual/verbal puns. For the post-picturebook activity, learners are invited to think of an opening line from a children's song or rhyme in their own language and write a story of their own in English. This consistent reference to the learners' own cultures (food utensils and children's songs or rhymes) incorporates Michael Byram's (1997) *savoirs* of intercultural competence where learners are encouraged to observe and identify as well as interpret and relate, stances which contribute to developing a greater knowledge of self and other through auto-relativising and critically evaluating their own culture. Naturally these stances can only be fostered by a teacher whose objective is to develop these *savoirs* and an emerging discourse now supports FL teachers in making selections and considering an approach to developing an intercultural competence using picturebooks (see for example, Ghosn 2003, 2013; Ellis 2010; Bland 2013, 2016; Burwitz-Melzer 2013; Mourão 2013b, 2015; Dolan 2014; Lazar 2015; Bergner 2016).

Older learners and the picturebook in a foreign language

Using picturebooks with learners in secondary education (12 years and above) has long been recognised as relevant in mainstream education with picturebooks being used 'as interesting schema builders, anticipatory sets to begin lessons, motivators for learning, read-alouds, and springboards into discussion and writing' (Vacca and Vacca 2002: 52). Within English language education the picturebook is not so readily incorporated into programmes for teenage and adult FL learners where textbooks lead the stage and there is a misunderstanding of the picturebook's intended audience. However, the relevance of including picturebooks with older learners is now being recommended (Mourão 2011a, 2011b; Birketveit 2013; Bland 2013; Lazar 2015).

Gillian Lazar considers postmodern picturebooks in her research and refers to them as 'an "art object" rather than just as a pedagogic tool' from which learners can 'derive aesthetic pleasure and emotional engagement' (2015: 98). I suggest that certain picturebooks are suitable for this age group due to their more complex picture/word dynamic resulting in multilayered readings; this together with more demanding topics which are suitable for the older age groups (Mourão 2011b) and which develop a more critical approach to reading as well as the ability to 'dig deeply [and] look for multiple perspectives and explanations' (Leland, Lewison and Harste 2013: 3–4). Topics such as teenage depression (for example, *The Red Tree* by Shaun Tan, 2001), chauvinism (*Piggybook* by Anthony Browne, 2008), xenophobia (*The Island* by Armin Greder, 2008), war (*Tusk, Tusk* by David McKee, 1978) and substance abuse (*The House that Crack Built* by Clark Taylor and Jan Thompson Dicks, 1999) are appropriate for upper secondary FL learners, and it is the interpretative engagement these picturebooks foster together with a topic that is rarely brought into the classroom due to publisher censorship (Gray 2000) that make picturebooks so useful in an FL context.

I have documented the sharing of *The Lost Thing* (2000), by Shaun Tan, with sixteen- to eighteen-year-old Portuguese students learning English as an FL, where the picturebook was seen alongside its award-winning short animated film. Learners

engaged ‘in a semiotic experience with and around the picturebook and its film, interacting with their peers and teachers, socially negotiating their individual explications’ (Mourão 2013b: 100), and I believe the students used English for real, for they ‘demonstrated that they were able to read the world and critically talk about it in another language’ (101). This is reason enough to include picturebooks in an FL classroom, an environment that is often contrived and uninspiring. Although unpublished, I would also like to mention an MA project investigating picturebooks in FL lessons in a high-security male prison in Portugal. Entitled ‘An intercultural approach to teaching English in a prison context’ (Cristo 2013) it involved activities prepared around *The Island*, *The House that Crack Built*, and *The Arrival* (2006) by Shaun Tan, with a view to prompting discussion around democratic values and social justice, enabling learners to reflect on their past experiences in relation to tolerance and conflict resolution developing not only their linguistic competence, but their ability to understand otherness. The results showed that even convicts, imprisoned for crimes such as first degree murder and drug dealing, found picturebooks to be a facilitator for discussion. Filomena Cristo also noted that the inmates attending her classes were highly motivated by the picturebooks and the number of students attending her optional classes increased as the project progressed.

Extensive reading and the picturebook in a foreign language

Extensive reading involves learners reading a larger than usual number of self-selected texts (not always authentic), and usually individual silent reading (Day and Bamford 1998; Grabe 2009). In FL education ‘real’ extensive reading is not that common due, in many cases, to the dominance of the textbook with its excerpts of literature, and the difficulty many teachers have in providing children with access to a large variety of suitable, reading material in English (Bland 2013). Although it appears that extensive reading projects are the domain of graded readers and learner literature, evidence that picturebooks have been used in such projects has been documented with younger school-age learners.

Anneta Sadowska-Martyka’s (2006) study in Poland involved a gradual move over four years from shared read-alouds which valued book talk in class to sustained silent reading and borrowing books to take home over the weekend. She included series in this latter stage, for she believed that following characters on their different adventures is motivating for the children. Sadowska-Martyka maintained that her learners outperformed peers in listening and speaking tasks due to the opportunities provided for listening to, discussing and retelling the picturebook stories in class. Anna Birketveit and Hege Emma Rimmereide (2012) conducted an extensive reading study in Norway which included picturebooks, and the results showed a clear improvement in the post-study writing activity: children wrote longer texts, with a development in story-building skills and used more linking words and more variation in sentence structure. The children were also highly motivated by their encounter with such a large number of books. Annika Kolb’s (2013) study in Germany focused on documenting which strategies the children used for understanding the stories in an extensive reading project. Unsurprisingly, results indicated that the children used the picturebook images extensively to support their understanding of certain words, to fill the gaps in their

understanding and to make predictions about what would happen next. Importantly, many children noted that they were able to understand the story without understanding every word, which appeared to contribute to their motivation towards reading in English. The picturebooks in these three studies ranged from the popular, best-selling ‘conventional and acceptable books’ (Nodelman 2015: 34) to more challenging picturebooks that go well beyond the simple picture/word dynamic mentioned earlier in the chapter.

The approach used by Sadowska-Martyka demonstrates a real understanding of how to incorporate picturebooks into her planning, as well as how to support young FL learners to become successful readers; however, she is in a fairly unique position to have a self-financed classroom library. In my communication with Sadowska-Martyka about her extensive reading activities, which continue though undocumented, it became apparent that she now also uses picturebooks as ‘a starting point for discussion’ with her eleven- and twelve-year-old learners (Sadowska-Martyka, personal communication 11 October 2016). The result of her learners being introduced to picturebooks in English at six years old is an ability to discuss complex topics with ease in an FL six years later: an example being discussion around the challenging picturebook *Fox* (2000) by Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks, which requires a highly sophisticated interpretation. This carefully implemented sequence affords rich opportunities for ‘an investigative process, where readers are expected to generate, share and negotiate meaning in interactions with other readers’ (Serrafini 2005: 63) through an FL. This should be every FL teacher’s objective, though it is rarely seen in action, nor so successfully.

Teacher education and the picturebook in a foreign language

As a champion of the picturebook in English language education it is difficult to understand how this magical form of children’s literature can be so misunderstood and misused, despite the very positive experiences I have outlined above. Volumes discussing language teaching approaches include chapters on picturebooks (for example, Bland 2015) or reference to using picturebooks (for example, Read 2007; Pinter 2009), and there are multiple online teachers’ resources for using picturebooks, but unless picturebooks are incorporated into teacher education programmes in an appropriate fashion, misunderstanding, misuse and omission will prevail.

Little has been published which demonstrates how multimodal texts, in particular picturebooks, can be integrated into a language learning curriculum (Burwitz-Melzer 2013), beyond the inclusion of a storytelling approach (Ellis and Brewster 2014; McNicholls 2006), which though making a significant contribution to the acknowledgement of picturebooks as authentic texts in language education does not accord sufficient recognition to relevance of the visual in education and for language learning. It is thus welcome to see Smiljana Narančić Kovač (2016) relating an approach to incorporating picturebooks into a five-year English teacher education programme in Croatia, which has a long history of successful English language education (Vilke 2015) and picturebooks. Narančić Kovač describes three aspects of the training programme which she considers are essential: ‘familiarity with a corpus of picturebooks, picturebook theory and application in practice’ (2016: 10). She believes these

contribute to three main outcomes, ‘understanding what a picturebook is, developing criteria of evaluation and learning how to efficiently incorporate picturebooks into [a teaching repertoire]’ (ibid.). These are indeed essential requirements in the education of any English teacher but can only result successfully when language and literature are fully integrated into teacher education at all levels, and the picturebook is given the relevance it deserves as a sophisticated polyphonic form.

Future Visions

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe 2001) is presently being expanded and includes a new section on ‘Analysis and criticism of literature (including film)’, which contemplates three of the four competences mentioned earlier (the cultural competence has its own set of descriptors within mediation and pluricultural encounters); however, the focus is on the language of literature. Reference to any form of visual narratives where the images do not support the words has been ignored. Thus it is not clear how visual literacy will be incorporated into the revised framework beyond that related to a multimodal online environment. The document was open for public consultation but the final version is as yet unpublished (as at the beginning of June 2017). Such documents serve as a compass in FL education and the omission of a reference to multimodal texts in relation to the development of a higher level of language competences will be detrimental to the inclusion of the picturebook in FL education.

In each of the sections above, the positive results are brought to our notice, in the main, by teacher educators-cum-researchers who believe in the picturebook and its potential, when included in the FL classroom, to motivate and empower students, to foster deeper understandings and thinking dispositions, and to contribute to developing visual and literary literacy and intercultural learning – all the while promoting and sustaining language acquisition. There is a visible increase in the voices of such professionals in certain areas of English language education; nevertheless, for the singular reasons that picturebooks are misunderstood in mainstream education – in relation to an intended audience and the sophistication of the picture-word interanimation – using picturebooks in an FL also encounters a variety of cultural misunderstandings around approaches to education. There is still a long way to go before the picturebook becomes widely available and easily incorporated into the teaching repertoires of English language educators.

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Part III

Unmapped Territories

NEXT OF KIN: ‘THE CHILD’ AND ‘THE ADULT’ IN CHILDREN’S LITERATURE THEORY TODAY AND TOMORROW

Clémentine Beauvais

THIS CHAPTER MAPS contemporary directions in the theorisation of ‘the child’ and ‘the adult’ in children’s literature, using as its focal point, and occasionally as its counterpoint, Marah Gubar’s defence of a ‘kinship model’ of children’s agency in relation to children’s literature (Gubar 2011, 2013, 2016). Beyond its inherent interest, one of the great merits of Gubar’s model, I argue here, is to allow contemporary children’s literature theory to continue to think about children’s books using the adult-child relationship as a central theoretical variable, at a time when it would be tempting to forgo that focus. Through Gubar’s works and those of others, the two conceptual axes of childhood and adulthood are used in new ways, recovering or discovering transversal spaces of enquiry across children’s texts.

I begin this chapter with a presentation of the current, rather disenchanted, state of scholarly reflection around ‘the adult’ and ‘the child’ in children’s literature. I then present Gubar’s model, and discuss what I see as one of its most exciting early applications. Ultimately, I contend, kinship readings are primordially *kind* readings; ways of reading against long-cultivated critical reflexes of suspicion or cynicism. And that, in itself, is a new direction.

The X and Y Axes of Children’s Literature Theory

The question of the respective statuses of adult(hood) and child(hood) in children’s literature is one of the oldest, most multifarious, and conceptually richest in the field. In the early days of children’s literature criticism, reflections on childhood in contradistinction to adulthood were tied to definitional efforts by scholars attempting to delineate both their object of study and their disciplinary territory, yielding lines of enquiry still familiar today in introductory courses to children’s literature – What is a child? What is children’s literature? Can literature written by adults be for children? etc. In parallel, psychological and psychoanalytical approaches were, it goes without saying, always eminently concerned with those categories. Later, concerns about the child and adult parties in the children’s books took an ideological turn, aligning with contemporaneous debates, in neighbouring fields of criticism, about empowered and disempowered parties in other discourses. This opened up children’s literature criticism to stimulating conversations with postcolonial, feminist, queer and other

perspectives, and gave rise to some of the most prominent and useful contemporary concepts in children's literature scholarship – for instance, Perry Nodelman's 'hidden adult' (2008) or Maria Nikolajeva's notion of aetonormativity (2010). All the while, narratological approaches to children's literature have used the categories of adulthood and childhood as modulators for central claims regarding voice, genre, characterisation or implied readership, resulting in a toolbox of children's literature-specific concepts and hypotheses; such notions as the dual audience, 'childness' (Hollindale 1997), the identification fallacy (Nikolajeva 2010), or the didactic/aesthetic split are unthinkable without close reference to the adult-child relationship in children's literature. Non- or semi-literary perspectives, such as book history, empirical research with children, or the cultural sociology of children's literature, have also been guided by those categories.

De facto, it is not an exaggeration to say that thinking about the respective roles and representations of 'the child' and 'the adult' in children's literature is *the* theoretical staple of children's literature scholarship; its genesis, its identity, and its specificity. Through that thinking, concepts originally from other disciplines have been adapted and appropriated, new ones have been created, and only through that thinking has children's literature criticism has been able to make claims for its distinctiveness from English literature criticism and from educational studies. It is difficult to imagine an aesthetics or a poetics of children's literature which would not only acknowledge, but define itself in relation to, 'the child' and 'the adult' in children's literature: those two categories are the x and y axes of our field of study.

Yet, inevitably, we were bound to undergo some theoretical fatigue regarding a line of questioning now going back some fifty years, and seemingly so well-mapped already that any argument on the topic is beginning to sound like a 101. Reflections on 'the child' in children's literature, in particular, have become somewhat of a cliché within what Mike Cadden (2010: xvi) calls the 'apologia' typical of our field – the eager attempt to situate and legitimise what makes our work distinctive as children's literature scholars, generally found at the beginning of works of theory. Such apologia typically tiptoes around and across the question of the 'childly' (Hollindale 1997) and, let us say, 'adultly' aspects of children's literature, stressing both the ur-relevance of those categories and the utter impossibility and/or undesirability to generalise from them. My own four-page-long effort provides a representatively laborious template (Beauvais 2015: 7–11). This passage by David Rudd is more elegant:

I am suggesting that there are competing discourses at work in any text, some of which might more conventionally be accented towards 'adults', some towards 'children', but I am also keen to emphasise that this apportioning is always open to contestation. (2013: 27)

Positive claims have always been hard to make on the matter, and that fact is becoming increasingly obvious. Here and there on Goodreads (2009) and Amazon (n.d.), amusingly weary reviews of classic works of children's literature theory bemoan 'way too much analyzing of the question "What is children's literature?"', suggesting instead that 'We need to get over ourselves'. Definitional questions, organically connected to reflections about childhood and, by extension, of adulthood, seem to have lost their swagger in recent years.

This is to a great degree because the constructivist paradigm that once undergirded much of the energetic reflection on 'the adult' and 'the child' in children's literature is no longer in fashion. My use of scare quotes around 'the adult' and 'the child' – which I shall drop from this point – has been a convention in theoretical childhood studies since the rise of the new sociology of childhood (for instance, Wallace 2008); it is intended to highlight the (now banal) observation that those concepts are constructed, without essence, and yet also constructing, and therefore always-already suspicious. The scare quotes make visually obvious the kind of polite intellectual shrug we are always making when talking about those categories – the little steps we take to reassure readers that we have not fallen prey to thinking that these words actually *describe* anything; that we are using them only as workable concepts, in full awareness of their theoretical insufficiencies.

Positive claims are also hard to make because, despite the (over)emphasis, throughout those years, on the child and the adult as the two constitutive categories of children's literature, the former has been much more seriously analysed than the latter. As Vanessa Joosen argues in a book currently in preparation, *Adulthood in Children's Literature* (potentially the first monograph in children's literature criticism to address that question frontally), critics and theorists have paid some attention to adult 'types' in children's literature – especially to parent figures, teachers, etc. – but not truly to 'the adult' as representative of a constructed stage in the life course, with cultural, psychosocial, existential, and biological characteristics. Instead, adulthood, too, has been an 'impossibility' in children's fiction. Concepts like the hidden adult or adult normativity have been immensely helpful for exploring characteristics of voice and age hegemony in children's literature, but what is meant by the label 'adult' in those coinages requires other constructs, such as wisdom, authority, or oppression, which have flattened rather than flaunted the variety of meanings potentially encapsulated by the word 'adult'. Ironically, thus, in a field that so deplores the othering and reification of childhood, the adult has fared much less well than the child as an object of conceptual exploration in children's literature theory. Perhaps this is a scholarly variation of what Vanessa Joosen calls, in her chapter on age studies in this volume (Chapter 6) and elsewhere, the 'seesaw effect' in age representation within books that feature different generations: for children to become empowered, adults must be disempowered. Compensating for the lack of attention towards the child in society, culture, and theory, children's literature scholarship has turned a generally non-compassionate, uninterested, or hostile glance on the adult.

Elementary Pictures of Kinship: Gubar's Model

Yet children's literature scholars have never stopped thinking about the adult-child relationship, the respective roles of adult and child and/or their merging or converging. One of the most sophisticated and revolutionary outlooks on the question over the past few years has come from Marah Gubar, in the form of what she calls the 'kinship model' of children's agency. To locate her model within existing theorisations, Gubar frequently presents what she sees as a triad of theoretical positionings in relation to the two poles of the adult and the child in children's literature, especially as regards the question of child agency. The first is the 'difference model', namely the theoretical hypothesis of

an insuperable difference – whether ontological or constructed – between adults and children as agents. The ‘deficit model’, which according to Gubar follows dangerously often from the difference model, posits more clearly an inherent lack of agency on the child’s side, and thus assumes the superiority of the adult in this domain. Gubar identifies (I believe rightly) the difference and deficit models as direct inheritors of what may be called the ‘Rosean’ tradition in children’s literature, namely derived from Jacqueline Rose’s *The Case of Peter Pan* (1984). Gubar’s alternative model, and the only one she advocates, is the kinship model. That model has as its theoretical starting point the assumption of multiple existing similarities between adult and child; it focuses, therefore, on what we share across generational divides or constructed age categories, rather than what sets us apart. Children and adults, Gubar states, ‘are separated by differences of degree, not of kind’ (2013: 454).

As Gubar points out, kinship theorisations of childhood and adulthood are not a recent find. Gubar’s frame of reference is childhood studies, a field which has gone very far in problematising the dichotomy between adulthood and childhood, and equally in theorising the relationships between (real) adults and children. But within our discipline that strand of thought runs deep. The work of Peter Hollindale, especially *Signs of Childness in Children’s Books* (1997), was already laying the ground for a kinship model. Hollindale’s concept of childness – an enigmatic quality which signals the successful encounter between child and book – allowed for a fluid and floating conceptualisation of childhood, not tied down to a particular age range, and recoverable in later life. Adults and adult-authored texts for other adults, he argued, can ‘have’ childness, or moments of it. The more precisely defined ‘kinship model’, as is beginning to emerge today from the works of Gubar and others – such as Alison Waller, who also assumes in this volume (Chapter 11) a fluidity of reading experience through the life course – can be read as distant descendants of Hollindale’s theorisation.

Sporadically in the past thirty years similar suggestions have emerged in children’s literature theory, often energised, interestingly, by similar conversations with childhood studies. Thus Tom Travisano, in 2000, suggested that we pay more attention to the experiences of ‘divided consciousness’ of adult and child as individuals, which, he posited, was the core of literature; literature concerns itself with ‘the awareness of a division that exists *within* the self, and this may be experienced by either a child or an adult’ (23). Travisano wanted scholars to regain a sense of how that divide may be expressed from individual to individual, and how the fact of being a child or being an adult modulates it.

For such scholars, and for Gubar, many experiences are *akin* from person to person (which does not mean that they are ‘the same’), whether in childhood or adulthood. Caring, or not caring, about others – human and non-human; intellectual curiosity and self-discipline; resilience and fortitude; the delights and distress of work we don’t want to do; those are daily occurrences for the smallest kindergartener as they are to the teenager, the CEO, the teacher, and the stay-at-home parent. Gubar’s kinship model of children’s literature proposes to pay attention to those moments of shared emotions and comprehension, especially insofar as they build bridges of understanding between children and adults. In fact, by electing *not* to see the kinship between adults and children within children’s literature, Gubar argues, we are shutting off our readings to the richness of those encounters through which all, child or adult, find themselves on the same wavelength.

'Kinship Model' in Action

At the time of writing, given how recent Gubar's coinage is, there have been no studies claiming their own kinship to the kinship model. However, we do have an exceptional example of what such a study might look like, in the form of Anna Redcay's unpublished PhD thesis (2012, supervised by Gubar) on child-authored texts of the 1920s. Redcay's thesis, although it does not refer to the kinship model (which at the time of her writing had not quite yet been formulated by Gubar), enacts the kind of fluid trans-versal reading and metacritical awareness that Gubar promotes. The central theoretical interest of Redcay's (proto-)kinship approach is the lack of *a priori* distinction between child authorship and adult authorship in the formation of a corpus. Redcay analyses juvenilia (child-authored texts) alongside, rather than 'against', adult-authored texts, splitting her corpus thematically or generically rather than according to age categories. At the same time, she proposes an important reflection on what might constitute the 'childness' (Redcay does not use the word, but Hollindale's concept fits her purpose well) of any text, adult- or child-authored, in a historical context marked by a strong aesthetics and even eroticism of child writing. In other words, she refuses to unlock text through the master key of the author's age. Instead, she proposes that texts in appearance written by a child – whether the 'actual' writer is a child or an adult – rely on a dynamic of artlessness and artfulness, recognised as childlike when activated by an act of reading which supposes the inexperience of the writer and the shrewdness of the reader – regardless of age. In reading juvenilia as in reading Stevenson's texts about childhood, we enter a 'dialectical exchange between knowledgeable reader and ignorant author' (Redcay 2012: 126).

In doing so, Redcay offers a radical answer to the theoretical aporia of child authorship. The proposition of a literary text authored by a child is ever problematic: its being written by a child calls into question its literary status, or its literariness casts doubt over its author being a child; either way, something is awry. The idea of a child author triggers a triple suspicion which, regardless even of questions of literariness or artistry, makes it difficult for their writings to be theorised. Firstly, children are not generally considered intentional enough – or conscious enough of their intentions – to render worthwhile the literary exploration of their works. This is the case, Redcay notes, even as contemporary literary criticism supposedly discards authorial intention; the condition of childhood, we could say, has been so far an insuperable limit to the death of the author. Secondly, the child-authored text is viewed as imitation, with varying degrees of mastery, of adult-authored texts, at the risk of being corrupted by that influence; the assimilation of the child's work with that of a copyist or plagiarist is of course reinforced by the conflation in educational practice of creative writing exercises with the practice of penmanship. As a result, the 'good' children's text should not express this influence too strongly, but rather reveal the 'nature' of childhood. Finally, virtually each historical example of child writing, especially when the above two dimensions are weak enough as to suggest more expert writing than expected of a child, is accompanied by a large dose of suspicion as to the authenticity of the text. These three aspects of the child author correspond to three aspects of what have later been labelled Romantic, 'Golden Age' or neo-Romantic visions of childhood: the notion that children are spontaneous and unconscious writers, the perception of the child as gradually corrupted by adult influence, and the increased

concerns surrounding the professionalisation of children. The corollary of these both positive and negative visions of the child-authored text is its being located firmly outside of 'general', 'normal', adult-authored literary production.

The challenge for scholars of juvenilia such as Gubar, Redcay and others (for instance, Halverson 1999; Langbauer 2009) has been to invalidate this triple suspicion or to otherwise reclaim its usefulness for theory. Using a (proto-)kinship reading enables Redcay to focus on the literariness of the production, regardless of the writer's age. The kinship reading in Redcay's thesis allows for resistance to the notion that the structuring concept of age in the adult-child relationship is primarily divisive. Instead, she turns her analytical radar towards similarity and resonances, finding meeting points rather than dichotomies between adulthood to childhood. This forcefully anti-Rosean view allows for the consideration of children's voices and texts not in comparison with adult-authored texts *per se*, but rather in conversation with other texts that share generic or thematic traits: we could imagine, for instance, an anonymous child-authored diary studied alongside Anne Frank's diary and an adult-authored fictional diary of a child. Such comparative studies do not focus primordially on the differences between adult and child viewpoints in writing the self, but rather on writing the self as a human endeavour modulated by a great number of things – historical context, medium of writing, individual experiences, etc. – with the age of the writer as just one among many variables.

Such a reading itself, of course, has to come with its own healthy dose of 'apologia'. Redcay devotes a non-negligible amount of time to cultivating in the reader a kind of willing suspension of disbelief towards child writers: 'As I consider individual juvenilia . . . I take it as a matter of course that the child author herself negotiates cultural ideals, granting her credit, as we would any other author, for her pithy social commentary and apt handling of her characters' actions' (Redcay 2012: 20). This requires an intellectual shift of some magnitude, because, historically, children who write, whether in fiction or in reality, are never left in peace. Child-authored texts released into the public realm have historically been escorted by vast quantities of critical, paratextual, and editorial adult additions. Like an army of prying aunts, with a mixture of loving admiration and disbelieving curiosity, adults read over the shoulders of child writers, commenting, analysing, comparing, marvelling about their works. In their attempts to unearth child-authored texts, to study their reception or to smith tools for their literary or sociological analysis, researchers interested in such works necessarily wrestle with the abundance of adult discourse surrounding children's literary productions. But in Redcay's study, and for any kinship approach of this kind to work, the reader must reconfigure their judgement regarding what they intuitively take to be an intrinsic difference between adult and child intentionalities in the writing of text.

For kinship readings to work, therefore, it is not enough to switch the theoretical lens in order to pay extra attention to similarity and resonance: it is necessary to change the whole optics – to see differently because one truly *believes* in the existence of shared experiences, of considerable magnitude, between adult and child. This is far from easy, and Gubar warns: 'Adherents to the kinship models insist first and foremost on how alike younger and older people are. Only after emphasizing this elemental similarity do they acknowledge – using obstinately tentative language – the possibility

of age-related differences and deficiencies' (2016: 300). The caveat as a martial art: the everlasting curse, perhaps, of all children's literature scholarship.

Generous Readings

Kinship readings may or may not take off, and they may or may not take off in theoretically productive ways – a risk, of course, is to fall into studies that blandly point out meeting places between adult and child in children's literature, assert *ad nauseam* the sharedness of meaningful human experiences, or cultivate a critical reflex against any suggestion that 'child' and 'adult' refer to different things. Kinship readings are likely to encounter the mistrust, or even hostility, of new materialist approaches: at a time when much children's literature scholarship is re-emphasising anew the physical and developmental differences between child and adult, readings searching for what we have in common might appear naive. Yet that may simply be a superficial obstacle. For instance, Maria Nikolajeva, in her latest book on cognitive poetics (2014), proposes that 'child' and 'adult' labels, from a cognitive perspective, could be fruitfully discarded or at least nuanced; 'novice' and 'expert' readers are more relevant categories to her purposes, since a gluttonous child reader may be significantly more advanced in their reading strategies than a thirty-year-old who never opens a book. Such transversal relabelling is very much in tune with Gubar's vision. Kinship readings may also fruitfully contribute to posthumanist criticism, where generational dividing lines are far less relevant than other liminalities: between traditional understandings of human and animal, of organic life and robotics, of death and existence.

Doubtless, there will be some scholars (among whom I include myself) who will resist an all-encompassing switch to a kinship model in children's literature. In my own work, I have defended the difference model, partly in the name of the continued relevance of constructivism despite the rise of other theoretical fashions, and partly because of what I see as an existentially specific parameter of the adult-child relationship: a temporal imbalance, leading to the crucial presence of death as a horizon of the adult's project when interacting with a child (Beauvais 2015). There are generational conflicts and anguishes which, I believe, a kinship reading may not capture. Other emerging perspectives in children's literature theory, prominently age studies (see in this volume Joosen (Chapter 6)), cannot by definition adopt a solely 'kinship' lens, based as they are on the premise that variations in lived experience occur throughout the life course – some mappable, others less so, as is any psychosocial phenomenon. Joosen's work on adulthood in children's literature, and my own work on the adult-child relationship, highlight the necessity to pay attention to adults, to keep working on conceptualising adulthood, indeed even to care about adults and 'the adult' when looking at texts for and/or by children. This does not mean to systematically point out fault lines or to redraw boundaries, but to listen to differences; our difference readings are not dichotomous readings, but, I think, generous readings, too.

Regardless of those theoretical discrepancies, Gubar's kinship model may and, I would say, should become a cardinal point on the children's literature theory's compass rose. Any reading – even 'deficit' readings, which still very much exist – of the adult-child relationship will benefit, if nothing else, from the thought experiment:

‘while I may see oppression and irreducible difference here, what is *akin* in the experiences of each category? And even – do I need those categories to make my argument? Let’s pretend they don’t exist. Or, let’s acknowledge that they exist, but let’s find diagonal ways of slicing up that text; other analytic purposes, other texts to compare it with’.

In the process, what children’s literature theory will gain is, at the very least, some slack from the Rosean vice; at best, an entirely redesigned corpus of texts, looked at with true transdisciplinarity, and new conceptual toolboxes. We will also have won a less obvious but perhaps more precious thing: a refreshing way out of cynicism, deconstruction, and suspicion – the poststructuralist *fides*, *spes*, and *caritas* – which does not, hopefully, condemn us to return straight back to the sentimentalism of early children’s literature criticism. Kinship readings are kind readings, and that is no small feat for a critical perspective in the late 2010s.

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CRITICAL PLANT STUDIES AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Lydia Kokkola

CRITICAL PLANT STUDIES is based on combinations of biological research with literary, philosophical and cultural enquiry. The terms 'critical plant studies' (Marder 2011), 'human-plant studies' (Ryan 2012) and 'cultural botany' (Ryan 2011) all relate to a branch of ecocriticism that emerged in the first decade of the millennium. It is only secondarily a form of literary analysis. Primarily, critical plant studies is a political movement which argues nothing less than that the survival of the planet is dependent on plant life. The use of critical plant studies within literary analyses highlights this argument and draws attention to works of fiction which concretise human dependence on plants. Its presence in children's literature explains this belief and reflects adult concerns about the environment children born today will inherit.

Ecocriticism, to place it within the history of literary theories, emerged from deconstruction. In *Of Grammatology* (1997), Jacques Derrida introduces the notion of *violent hierarchies*. A hierarchy is deemed to be violent when one part of a binary is consistently granted a higher value than another. Derrida's own example is 'phonocentrism', whereby speech is deemed to be central and the foundation for writing. This, Derrida suggests, is a violent hierarchy as writing is then rendered peripheral. His approach was to reverse the hierarchy. This tactic was embraced by a number of schools of thought which endeavour to reverse a central binary. Notable examples include feminism (male-female), queer theory (straight-queer) and ecocriticism (human-environment). Within the study of children's literature, Maria Nikolajeva has considered the value of reversing the adult-child hierarchy (2010).

Ecocriticism highlights the ways in which human-environment discourse operates, and endeavours to undermine the assumption that humans are more important than the environment they share with other living animals and plants. By pointing out that human life is dependent upon the existence of an ecosystem that provides breathable air and uncontaminated water, for instance, ecocritics endeavour to reverse the violent hierarchy and place the environment centre stage and situate humans as dependents of the environment. Ecocritical children's literature, as Alice Curry's *Environmental Crisis in Young Adult Fiction* (2013) clarifies, is dominated by fantasy and dystopia as authors imagine the consequences of consistently placing human desires before environmental imperatives. Curry combines feminism and ecocriticism to form readings of young adult fiction that challenge the centrality of humans, and instead creates a "poetics of planet" to foreground human dislocation from the earth' (2013: 15; see also Curry's chapter in this volume (Chapter 5)). The works she examines are primarily apocalyptic, and she

uses the notion of planetary alienation to highlight ‘tipping points’ when the characters recognise the unsustainability of the human-environment hierarchy, and acknowledge how human desires have caused the destruction of all life on the planet. Critical plant studies highlights the centrality of plants in determining the fate of life on the planet.

Although ecocriticism has only existed in its current form since awareness of the environmental crisis posed by greenhouse gases became clear, criticism of the violent hierarchy of human-nature relations can be traced back to the eighteenth century and to criticisms of the Linnaean classification system. *Systema Naturae* (1735) was developed by the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus to provide a universal system which could enable people around the world to refer to their lived environment in the same way. It also enabled botanists to establish evolutionary relationships before the emergence of DNA technology. The categories in the Linnaean system are generated from the plants’ physical appearance and their means of reproduction without reference to the physical environment in which they grow. As a result, the Linnaean system is deliberately constructed as a context-independent, hierarchical system.

John Ryan demonstrates that prior to Linnaeus’s taxonomy ‘knowledge of plants was intimately linked to the human body through herbal medicine’ (2011: 4). Whilst this might suggest a maintenance of human-plant hierarchy, Ryan notes how works such as Nicholas Culpeper’s *The Complete Herbal*, first published in 1653, encourages readers to regard the human body as existing in a reciprocal relationship with the vegetable world. Even when it was first published, Linnaeus’s work was questioned by a Swiss naturalist, Albrecht von Haller, who ‘argued for the role of geography in understanding flora and that temporal changes over time are as crucial as morphological anatomies fixed in a single synchronic moment of perception’ (Ryan 2011: 7). Linnaeus’s determination to separate the vegetable world from the very soil in which it flourishes is part and parcel of a larger project of assuming that plants are passive and that humans are always the active partners in determining human-plant relations. Critics working within critical plant studies pose the question of what would happen ‘if we were to consider how plants *act upon* us, contributing to the co-generation of our cultural practices, values, perceptions, relations, artifacts, and all else through their volitions in the *umwelt* of which all living things are part?’ (Ryan 2012: 104). This formulation suggests intentionality, but can also be understood without requiring consciousness.

The humble tomato illustrates how plants can act upon humans without recourse to intentionality. Tomato seeds are so delicious that we willingly eat them and so ensure that the plants’ offspring will germinate in a rich bed of organic substance produced by the human digestive tract. In this case, we do not need to believe that plants have a conscious awareness of the processes by which they design their seeds to suit the digestive tract, any more than humans have a conscious awareness of their own production of differing chemical compounds evident in the formation of products such as faeces or urine. The process is dubbed evolution – the survival of the fittest – and is generally considered to be a passive process. Human capacities to meddle in this process have been causing concern from the development of contraceptives to the recent birth of a child formed from three people’s DNA. Vegetable meddling may not be so extreme, but proponents of critical plant studies – such as Stefano Mancuso and Alessandra Viola – claim that ‘arguments for denying plants’ intelligence rely less on scientific data than on cultural prejudices and influences that have persisted for millennia’ (2015: 2). When judged by the criteria used for animal intelligence, plant behaviour reveals sentience.

In *The Botany of Desire* (2001), Michael Pollan identifies four principal human desires which have shaped human-plant relations: sweetness, beauty, intoxication and control, which he discusses in relation to the apple, the tulip, marijuana and the potato. Somewhat curiously, Pollan ignores the medicinal value of plants, touching only briefly on the capacity of marijuana to numb pain and thus serve as a medicine in the treatment of cancer and multiple sclerosis. Nevertheless, the world of pharmaceuticals is almost entirely dependent on plants for producing the raw ingredients. The centrality of plants in providing human sustenance, clean air and shelter is taken for granted. By focusing on desires that are not central for survival, Pollan reveals the active role plants play in human-plant relations. For instance, many plants cannot reproduce without human assistance. Long before genetically modified organisms technology became ubiquitous, humans have been systematically breeding plants to the extent that varieties of many commonly eaten plants, such as apples and potatoes, will not grow true from seed. They are dependent on humans' grafting or cuttings. This allows humans to consider themselves to be active and the plant passive, but for Pollan and others within critical plant studies, this is evidence of how humans are servile to the needs of plants.

Moreover there are areas of plant activity that indicate both sentience and intent (and thus intelligence): movement and signalling. Plants are generally referred to as 'growing' rather than 'moving'. But 'growing' is simply a slow form of movement, and in the case of climbing plants such as beans, hops and vines it can be quite fast. During the growing seasons, these plants move so quickly that gardeners and farmers have to tie the shoots daily, and must follow the plants' wishes. Bean shoots and cucumbers wind themselves around supports clockwise: if a gardener winds them anticlockwise, they will unwind and rewind themselves. Similarly, plants' ability to seek light has revealed intelligent behaviour. Stanisław Karpiński and Magdalena Szechyńska-Hebda (2010) have investigated plants' perceptions of light and concluded that plants have both memory and intelligence. Their study was published in *Plant Signaling and Behavior* (established 2005), a forum providing cutting-edge scientific evidence on the physiological and neurobiological basis of adaptive behaviour in plants. These studies demonstrate that plants have an impressive array of mechanisms for perceiving and responding to their environment. Mancuso and Viola report on findings that playing music to vines produces bigger grapes which resist insects better and propose that plants are able to hear the sound of roots growing (2015: 74–6). These findings are still deemed provocative since they indicate plant intelligence.

This intimate relationship between plants and humans also opens up new ways of thinking about social history and literature. Elsewhere, I have suggested that examining how plants act upon humans can open up new ways of understanding nationhood (Kokkola 2016). Furthermore, by highlighting the active nature of the vegetable world – not as a metaphor but as a lived reality – authors and critics provide a new way of promoting changes in human behaviour in relation to the lived world. Within children's literature, attempts to express such thinking range from early, overtly didactic ideas in works such as Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree* (1964) and Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* (1971), anthropomorphic trees in C. S. Lewis's *Narnia* series to more a subtle highlighting of human dependency on plants for medicine in Patrick Ness's *A Monster Calls* (2011).

The Giving Tree, like plants in the real world, provides people with all their needs so long as it receives gifts from humans in return. *The Lorax* was Seuss's conscious

attack on the logging industry. Both these early ecocritical picturebooks are most readily interpreted as didactic messages about the need for humans to become better custodians of the earth. Read in this way, the human-plant hierarchy is not challenged: humans still have the upper hand and the power to change the situation. More specifically, a small boy is given the responsibility for healing the world by caring for the trees, an extension of the Romantic thinking that connects the child to the natural world most fully examined in Roni Natov's *The Poetics of Childhood* (2003) and also in Zoe Jaques's discussion of trees in *Children's Literature and the Posthuman* (2015: 111–42). To read these picturebooks through a critical plant studies lens, we would need to reject the idea that humans are guardians of the earth and highlight the dependence of humans on the plants. The resulting behaviours might be similar, but the power relations are decidedly different. Romantic assumptions that children are closer to nature, as evident in Seuss's works, can suggest that they hold the key to saving the earth. Read this way, critical plant studies can be a means of empowering children as they are positioned alongside the powerful plants against the polluting adult world. The image of the young child alone at the end of both works, however, should alert us to the terrible burden that this places on children.

There certainly are texts which easily proffer themselves up to readings in which plants are actors. Plants are less frequently anthropomorphised than animals, but when they are they tend to have very distinct personalities. The plants studied in J. K. Rowling's Herbology classes in the *Harry Potter* series (1997–2007) are not merely sentient; they very consciously act upon people. But as Zoe Jaques clarifies in her discussion of Rowling's plants, even very powerful plants, such as the Whomping Willow, are most easily read in terms of the use value they hold for wizards, rather than as autonomous living beings (2015: 132–40). The anthropomorphic trees in Narnia, despite the decidedly hierarchical organisation of the kingdom, are more obviously actors and thus offer easy access points for critical plant studies readings. Narnian trees provide the fruit of knowledge in *The Magician's Nephew* (1955) and it is only when they join the battle in *Prince Caspian* (1951) that the Narnians are able to gain the upper hand. Even more recent works, such as the Swedish novel *Pojkarna* (*The Boys*, 2011), by Jessica Schiefauer, in which a flower enables the female protagonists to change sex and experience life as boys, plant characters determine the course of human events. The problem with reading these texts from a critical plant studies perspective is not identifying vegetable intent (their intentions are part of the plot). The problem is understanding the plants' behaviour as a reflection of *plant* issues: they are more easily interpreted in terms of their contribution to human endeavour.

More recent fiction incorporating human-plant relations suggests that the thinking that underlies critical plant studies is being made accessible to young readers. French author Timothée de Fombelle has created a society of miniature people who inhabit an oak tree and do not believe that life exists beyond its borders. The first novel, *Toby Alone* (2008), ends when Toby is forced to leave the tree and meets the grass dwellers. He returns in *Toby and the Secrets of the Tree* (2010) to rescue Elisha who is half-Grass and half-Tree person. Gradually, Toby learns to appreciate the interconnections between plant and human life. But where de Fombelle highlights human dependency on plants for shelter and sustenance, Frances Hardinge's eerie novel *The Lie Tree* (2015) presents human-plant relations on an emotional plane. Set in the Victorian era when Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) was causing humans to question their belief in

God, Hardinge's novel suggests that loss of faith served to strengthen belief in human supremacy even as her plant character refutes this possibility. The Lie Tree is a plant that can only flourish in the dark. It feeds upon the lies humans tell. After the mysterious death of her botanist father, Faith realises that the plant holds the key to determining how her father died. She quickly learns how telling the plant lies changes human behaviour and causes the plant to grow, filling the dark cave when it has been hidden. The events come to a head, and Faith recognises the powerful, evil sentience of the Lie Tree. She brings about its destruction by exposing it to the light (just as shedding light on a lie destroys its force). Although the Lie Tree is evil, and although readers are encouraged to align themselves with Faith against the tree, the novel easily lends itself to critical plant studies reading. The comforting lies we tell ourselves about our capacity to control the greenhouse effect – that simply by recycling our plastic shopping bags or replacing them with reusable fabric totes we can continue to drive to the shops and fly around the world – are feeding a malign force. In the end, plants will determine the fate of life on the planet.

More typically, as Zoe Jaques (2015) also observes, plants form part of the setting which, although they may last longer than humans, places them at the lower end of the hierarchy. Their absence is sometimes picked in dystopian fantasies, but novels containing individual plants tend not to be dystopian. The antagonist in Ness's aforementioned *A Monster Calls* is a rare example of a plant that reflects both human and plant issues. The yew tree, which provides ingredients for cancer treatment, forces the young protagonist into admitting that he sometimes wishes his mother were dead. Thus it holds the balance of power over both the mother's life and her son's peace of mind. The intentionality of the plant character is foregrounded in relation to these human issues. A critical plant studies reading would also highlight the long history of human dependence on the yew. Traditionally, yews were grown for their strong, flexible branches from which archers' bows could be formed. They were often grown in churchyards both to protect them from browsing farm animals, and also to protect the animals from the poisonous yew. Yew hedges continue to be grown to form attractive windshields and create privacy. By providing shelter, security, beauty and medicine, the yew has ensured that humans will willingly take cuttings and care for young offspring, keeping them alive in their gardens for as much as six hundred years. Without human intervention, they would die much earlier and produce far fewer offspring. The tree in Ness's novel understands their mutual dependence and is one of the few books to proffer a critical plant perspective as one of its easiest lines of interpretation.

Greta Gaard, an influential critic within feminism and ecocriticism, poses the blunt question 'what in the world are we doing by reading environmental literature?' (2009: 321). Noting the mismatch between reading about environmental concerns and engaging with ecocritical politics in an informed, meaningful manner, Clare Bradford argues that many environmental children's books are 'strong on articulating ecological crises, but weak on promoting political programs or collective action' necessary to address these crises effectively (2003: 116). Gaard suggests that children's literature has an important role to play in developing ecopedagogy. Ecopedagogy clearly differs from traditional environmental education which champions 'sustainable development'. Instead, ecopedagogy places the unsustainability of endless growth and demands a

radical reconsideration of human-nature politics. Understanding that plants – not humans – hold the balance of power over the future of the earth, as critical plant studies promotes, is a key step in this endeavour.

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HEALTH, SICKNESS AND LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN

Jean Webb

HEALTH AND SICKNESS are part of the matter of life and, as such, are reflected in writing for children. Considering the representation of health and sickness in children's literature from various perspectives opens up new ways of thinking, and raises questions about how writing for children both reflects and critiques society and culture. Those questions may be answered by deploying an interdisciplinary approach. The range of potential is considerable when combining the literary study of writing for children and, for instance, disability studies, psychology and developing approaches in the treatment and conceptualisation of mental health in the medical humanities, in interaction with writing for children as well as more traditional interactions between literary studies and history. One emergent aspect is how childhood and the child are constructed in contemporary Western culture. My emphasis on 'Western culture' is justified by the fact that, to date, there has been only one 'non-white' study on health in children's literature, which discusses the situation of adolescents and the matters of AIDS in the African continent (Sonyem 2016). Additionally, there are no mentions of 'non-white' subjects in the suggested texts for teaching awareness of disability in the English National Curriculum, nor in the Disability Action Alliance resource packs (n.d.). The absence of such awareness in the materials produced by the Disability Action Alliance is surprising, since it is made up of a multicultural cross-section of organisations working together in the UK.

The question arises as to why there is so little representation of cultural diversity in the primary texts, at least in the English National Curriculum, and what this means for disability studies and potentially in the corpus of children's literature internationally. The matter deserves further research. My study of changing approaches to food in children's literature, which included representation of the obese child (Webb 2013), found specific cultural attitudes in, for example, British Asian writing, which influenced the 'ideal' body image and exposed subtle interracial conflict which affected the adolescent subject. A consequence of writing for children and associated literary criticism is that they can expose and interrogate, mask and make silent: the work of the writer and the academic can establish expectations and norms.

What is considered to be 'normal' in society has far-reaching effects on how individuals are viewed and treated with regard to legislation, educational policy, social behaviour and how individuals perceive themselves. Sally Shuttleworth's work on normalcy in *The Mind of the Child* (2010), an excellent example of interdisciplinarity including literary studies, history and social studies, brings into consideration the

medical model of the child. The concept of 'normalcy' was established in medical terms over the period of 1840–60 (Davis 2010: 4). The establishment of the medical model of 'the norm' is widely applied, for instance, to health, well-being, body size, physical and intellectual achievement, as well as to mental and emotional states. It is the model which has defined and, to a great extent, still defines the disabled subject both medically and socially. Furthermore, the question of who or what it is to be 'normal' frequently arises for adolescents and young adults. For the medically defined disabled child, all of these matters are exacerbated. The importance of political and social attitudes towards disabled people cannot be overestimated when one considers the determination by the Nazi regime, for instance, to eradicate disabled people, with an estimated 250,000 disabled people being murdered (Holocaust Memorial Day Trust n.d.). One of the means of raising awareness to their views was propagandist literature; this should heighten our awareness of the influence and power of the written word. The attention given by authors and critics to the subject of disability in literature for children and adolescents therefore takes on an importance of the highest level, for it is their work which will have an influence on the reading and viewing population, as literary texts are translated into various media forms.

Contemporary literary work and criticism demonstrates a shift from the medical model of impairment, as employed by the critical work of Lois Keith on classic texts for girls (2001), to a social model where disability is socially constructed. The social constructivist approach interrogates and analyses the representation of disability, as exemplified by Patricia A. Dunn in *Disabling Characters: Representations of Disability in Young Adult Literature* (2015). Dunn leans on the 'social model' of disability. As Michael Davidson explains:

The medical definition of disability locates impairment in the individual as someone who lacks the full complement of physical and cognitive elements of true personhood and who must be cured or rehabilitated. The social model locates disability not in the individual's impairment but in the environment – in social attitudes. (Davidson 2010: 136)

The shift in emphasis to the awareness of the importance of social attitudes has had a considerable influence on approaches taken by educationalists who are also literary scholars. For example, Beverley Brenna's thesis, 'Characters with disabilities in contemporary children's novels: Portraits of Three authors in a frame of Canadian texts' (2010) and ongoing work as both an academic and a writer, derives from an educational intervention in Saskatchewan, Canada. Brenna worked as a special education consultant supporting special educational needs and was a member of a government-sponsored advisory committee. Brenna's work covers the period in Canadian writing for children from 1995 to 2010 plus an analysis of fifty Canadian texts for children which include the subject of disability. Coming from a disability studies approach of social constructivism, Brenna identifies a shift in contemporary writing where:

the characters with disability are not as a whole relegated to submissive positions and a full exploration of their feelings seems to have replaced the trend to have these characters make the best of things. None of the titles suggests that impairment is a punishment for bad behaviour, and while bullying and acceptance are common themes in many of the novels, the message is not that people with disabilities

should be pitied. In addition, faith is not suggested as an opportunity to cure disabilities, and the narration of a journey towards a disability's disappearance is not a common theme in this group of texts. (Brenna 2010: 5)

Brenna has extended the work emanating from her doctoral studies in *Stories for Every Classroom: Canadian Fiction Portraying Characters with Disabilities* (2015). This is a valuable resource which provides critical insight, information such as the location of the IBBY Collection for Young People with Disabilities with IBBY Canada; an annotated bibliography of Canadian texts portraying characters with disabilities including picturebooks and texts across the spectrum from work for younger readers to young adults, plus suggestions for how this work can be effectively used in teaching situations.

Brenna's perspective is necessarily that of an academic becoming immersed in the questions of the representation of disability from the perspective of a non-disabled person. The collection of essays *Unseen Childhoods: Disabled Characters in 20th-Century Books For Girls*, edited by Helen Aveling (2009), is from the perspective of the critic and commentator who is also disabled. Aveling writes:

The decision to commission chapters from disabled women was a very conscious one. There is little in the way of writing by women with impairments about how they see the portrayal of disability or illness in fiction as a whole, and even less when it comes to stories for girls. (2009: 3)

She continues: 'The studies of disability, children's fiction and women's lives have, to date, existed almost in isolation from each other' (ibid.). The collection therefore 'straddles three distinct disciplines, Women's Studies, Disability Studies and Children's Studies' (ibid.). The contributions pursue such subjects as 'social attitudes to disability in children's fiction with specific reference to the postwar obsession with beauty and its equation with physical perfection' by Linda Dick; Louise Norlie considers the believability of disabled characters; whilst Ju Gosling and Julie Newman open up the debate to mental and emotional health and the 'rejection of medicalized treatments in favour of folk dancing, crafts, nature and . . . friendship as a means of gaining health' (9–10).

Aveling's collection is a mixture of American and British viewpoints, Brenna's work centres on Canadian texts, and Dunn's work, cited above, comes from an American perspective. What does seem evident is that there are considerable gaps in this area of study: one might well interrogate cultural influences, such as legislation, race and class, on the representation of disability and further consider gender. Kathy Saunders, a UK scholar writing in 2004, raised the matter of the 'apparent lack of engagement between scholars of disability studies and those of children's literature' (2004: 1). In the decade since her comments, pockets of development have emerged; nonetheless, there is still much to be done.

Matters are, however, improving in terms of the availability of texts. A disabled blogger on *The Guardian* children's books website in 2015 stated that:

There are a lot more books around to provide comfort to many disabled children who won't have to crave representation of people just like them as I did. But are there enough of those books? No. One day I'd love there to be so many disabled protagonists that every disabled person can find comfort in being able to read

about someone who is just like them. One day I'd like more disabled characters who are upfront about the discrimination they face, so that people understand that ableism is a big issue in today's society, and I'm not constantly told that I'm overreacting when I voice my opinions on it. One day I'd like to read a disabled character who has my disability (Quadriplegia, Cerebral Palsy) so I can finally find that voice that I've been looking for since I was 12. (writer-on-wheels 2015)

One of the ways of enabling such a voice and interrogating matters represented in children's literature is by research from a reader-response approach, which would move the field on from the already well-established 'issues approach'. Scholars such as Kimberley Reynolds in *Radical Children's Literature* (2007) have provided starting points for further development, particularly in areas concerned with mental illness. There are databases, for instance on the Goodreads website, where texts on disability and mental illness are identified (Goodreads n.d.). The number of texts for adolescents and young adults on the subjects of, for example, eating disorders and mental health problems in teenagers, has escalated in the past few decades. The Goodreads website currently lists more than 1,000 fiction titles on matters pertaining to mental illness published for teenagers and young adults in the UK and US markets since 2000. Such is the impact of this publishing development that the term 'Sick-Lit' has been coined to describe these texts. Concerns about the influence of this work in 'suggesting' to adolescents that depression and anxiety and the associated mental states are 'norms' of adolescence have been raised in the popular press in the UK, for instance in *The Daily Mail* (Carey 2013).

'Sick-Lit' has also come to the attention of scholars of children's literature, resulting in a conference in 2014 followed by the publication of an international collection of essays: *Narrating Disease and Deviance in Media for Children and Young Adults*, edited by Nina Holst, Iris Schäfer and Anika Ullman (2016). The editors define 'Sick-Lit' as the creation of a 'picture of a suffering individual' and also with a pedagogic purpose so that '[t]he young reader may learn more about a specific mental disease and sometimes might be able to identify with the protagonist' (10). Notably, the editors point out that 'these diseases and deviances are the product of an artistic process rather than the product of a medical discourse' (9). Their perspective is reinforced in their discussion which highlights the use of language and literary devices in these novels (275–6). Medical and literary discourses come together in the field of medical humanities, an internationally-established interdisciplinary field. The purpose of such study is to consider what and how the humanities can contribute to healthcare and what can they reveal and tell about illness.

UK psychiatrist Gordon Bates is leading a new initiative focusing on children's literature as a means of understanding the culture(s) of childhood and the ways in which understanding can be gained into the conditions suffered by their patients. Bates is in the early stages of launching *Narrative Matters*, a new journal in child and adolescent mental health. His premise for the need for such a journal is that:

child mental health workers are interested in people's stories. They try to make sense of the random events they are told and weave the threads of narrative into a coherent tapestry of biography. In this way the professional listeners become the story-tellers. Physicians such as Rita Charon have shed light on the importance

of listening for Narrative Medicine (Charon 2008). For some young people with disrupted early backgrounds this process itself can be both integrative and therapeutic. An interest in narrative and the forms of story-telling is common in our field. (Bates 2016: 138)

In small measure I have discussed the differing narrative strategies employed in selected texts which take mental illness as the problem, yet there is still much to be done (Webb 2016). Contemporary narrative approaches to depicting disability and mental illness are endeavouring far more to communicate the interior experiences of the child and the adolescent, both from the perspective of the impaired subject and their siblings. Authors are engaging with a wide range of narrative approaches and subjects. Linda Vigen Phillips' *Crazy* (2014), for instance, is a verse novel which depicts the teenager's experiences and emotional reactions and ways of coping with her mother's mental illness. Approaches to coping with mental illness are also the subject of Jennifer Niven's *All the Bright Places* (2015) where teenagers are trying to cope with suicidal tendencies and the aftermath of untimely death combined with the confusion of adolescent relationships. Confusion can be said to be a subject of Emma Henderson's character Grace in *Grace Williams Says it Loud* (2011), for the novel depicts the experience of a severely mentally and physically impaired child born in the UK in the late 1940s. Henderson graphically describes the institutionalisation of such children and how Grace and her friends fight to establish a sense of identity and community despite being treated as 'non-people' by the system and society. Henderson's novel was shortlisted for the Wellcome Book Prize, which rewards texts with 'a central theme that engages with some aspect of medicine, health or illness. This can cover many genres of writing – including crime, romance, popular science, sci fi and history' (Wellcome Trust n.d.).

The intention in setting up the Wellcome Book Prize comes from the fact that:

At some point, medicine touches all our lives. Books that find stories in those brushes with medicine are ones that add new meaning to what it means to be human. The subjects these books grapple with might include birth and beginnings, illness and loss, pain, memory, and identity. In keeping with its vision and goals, the Wellcome Book Prize aims to excite public interest and encourage debate around these topics. (Wellcome Trust n.d.)

This is where researchers in children's literature, medics, psychiatrists and mental health social workers can come together to produce a more informed understanding of both literature and the medical conditions of childhood.

In the UK alone it is estimated that one in ten children suffers from mental health problems – a highly disturbing statistic in a society where the government has conducted surveys on happiness and well-being. One might consider how the representation of happiness and well-being has changed across time and how this reflects differing approaches to childhood and the state of society and culture. Thus far my discussion has circulated on the subjects of disability and mental health; however, there is much to be learned by focusing on health. Ongoing interdisciplinary work on health and children's literature by Alysa Levene, a medical historian, and myself as a critic of children's literature, interrogates the divergences and alliances between political policy,

medical history, attitudes towards childhood and how writers for children represent and respond at a particular historical moment as in our study of mental health in English children's literature post-World War II (Levene and Webb 2011).

As Sally Shuttleworth points out in relation to her work on the Victorian period:

If we extend our textual base . . . to include a whole range of discourses focused on the child, from fictional and domestic to medical and scientific, we are able to construct a far more complex picture, and to explore a wider spectrum of Victorian childhood. (2004: 108)

Her observations are applicable to any period in history and offer ways of developing wider conceptualisations of models of childhood. For instance consideration of the political model which can be described as 'the policy' child and the lived experience of children is explored and critiqued by contemporary authors such as Anne Fine in *Blood Family* (2013). Edward is a traumatised, abused child who has been kept away from society by his dominating violent father. On being rescued, Edward is passed through the operations of the various child care agencies, police, social workers, foster parents and psychiatrists. The psychiatrist has a model of the child who has experienced normal interaction with social situations which she is employing to assess Edward, yet this is one which is not applicable to his lived experience, for he has been isolated. Fine is able to juxtapose these contradictory models and explore the confusing effects experienced by both psychiatrist and child simultaneously critiquing an overly complicated and bureaucratic system. Edward is far from the Romantic model of the 'ideal child' perpetuated in nineteenth-century studies: in the twenty-first century, new models need to be considered that are applicable to increasingly complex worlds of childhood portrayed by contemporary authors. Writers create the narratives which scholars interrogate and place in wider literary, cultural and historical contexts; paradoxically, pursuing the representation of sickness in children's literature is resulting in an increasingly healthy and robust field of study.

In conclusion, I trust that this consideration will open up thinking in the study of children's literature and the interaction with the subjects of health, sickness and the experiences of children and adolescents. Some questions about the representation of health and sickness and gaps in the fields which might be pursued; however, I am sure that others will identify other considerations so that in both study and teaching as a community of scholars, teachers and thinkers will gain a more rounded and deeper understanding of childhood, culture and society through children's literature.

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EVOLUTIONARY CRITICISM AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Maria Nikolajeva

EVOLUTIONARY, OR NEO-DARWINIST, literary criticism is a relatively new direction of enquiry which has produced the bulk of its book-length publications in the 1990s onwards (for instance, Barkow et al. 1992; Carroll 1994, 2004, 2011; Gottschall and Wilson 2005; Boyd 2010; Gottschall 2012). As a theory based on biology and biopsychology, evolutionary criticism is extremely hostile toward most twentieth-century literary studies, in particular new criticism and various directions of critical theory. Instead, it claims that any study of literature and art must take biological aspects of human existence into consideration. In this stance, evolutionary criticism constitutes a similar turn as ecocriticism (see Alice Curry's chapter (5) in this volume) and cognitive criticism (see Roberta Trites' chapter (8) in this volume).

This chapter will tentatively discuss how children's and young adult literature, among other forms of art, has emerged and developed, and how it has been supported by evolution, even though evolution seems to have no interest whatsoever in the existence of stories specifically targeting children (or any stories at all). Throughout the chapter I will be committing the unforgivable sin of anthropomorphising evolution, that is, saying things such as 'evolution wants to' or 'evolution is interested in'. I am aware of the inappropriateness of this usage, but find it helpful for the sake of argument.

Evolutionary literary criticism draws our attention to the significance of natural and imagined orders in the history of humanity. Imagined orders, as opposed to natural orders, include culture, arts, science, religion, ethics, property, law, social hierarchies, interpersonal relationships, social justice and education, that is, activities that do not directly contribute to evolution. The only thing evolution is interested in is that genes are passed on. Because of this aim, evolution does not invest in anything that is not beneficial for survival. Subsequently, we can infer that imagined orders have been prioritised by evolution as beneficial. This is pure speculation within evolutionary literary studies: there is no reliable research yet to support this line of thought, and may never be. While some evolutionary scholars view arts as a form of sexual display, most of the argument deals with the question of whether arts and literature have adaptive function, that is, why and how they are favourable for survival (Boyd 2010).

So far, evolutionary theory has not been employed by children's literature research on any considerable scale, although evolutionary scholars have discussed children's books to illustrate their argument. Brian Boyd, for instance, uses Dr. Seuss' *Horton Hears a Who!* alongside *Odyssey* to demonstrate how evolutionary theory can be

translated into practice (2010: 319–79). Yet evolutionary theory feels particularly tempting for a children’s literature scholar, because it not only justifies the existence of storytelling, but also explains the adults’ urge to tell stories to children, whether for instruction or amusement. Recent scientific debates claim that human beings are far less unique as a species than formerly believed. For instance, all young animals, including human animals, need instruction and protection before they can take care of themselves. All adult animals, including human animals, teach their young to find food and to avoid danger. Non-human animals typically do this individually, parent to child, and each child has to learn it all over again. However, human animals seem to have acquired the capacity to tell fictional stories about things beyond those right in front of them; stories built on memories and previous experience, individual as well as communal. Rather than letting their young make mistakes and be exposed to danger, our distant ancestors used storytelling to communicate previously accumulated knowledge. Evolutionary historians and evolutionary psychologists call this development, which occurred 70,000 years ago, the Cognitive Revolution (see Harari 2011: 3–74). The question of whether human brains developed because of storytelling, or whether storytelling was the effect of brain development, is a chicken and egg conundrum. However, evolutionary theory claims that we have survived as a species thanks to our ability to tell stories. Storytelling was and still is a more effective way to transmit knowledge and experience than straightforward instruction.

The simplest examples are folktales. A child may ignore the message ‘Don’t talk to strangers’, but is likely to remember the story of Little Red Riding Hood. Folktales in all cultures regulate relationships within close communities, such as families, as well as between communities. Children’s literature, borrowing numerous superficial as well as more complex traits from folktales, also offers young people examples of appropriate behaviour. It is repeatedly stated that children’s literature is didactic by nature, which does not have to be perceived in a pejorative sense (cf. Beauvais 2013).

In *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice finds a bottle labelled ‘Drink me’, and here is what the text says:

It was all very well to say ‘Drink me,’ but the wise little Alice was not going to do *that* in a hurry. ‘No, I’ll look first,’ she said, ‘and see whether it’s marked “poison” or not’; for she had read several nice little histories about children who had got burnt, and eaten up by wild beasts and other unpleasant things, all because they *would* not remember the simple rules their friends had taught them: such as, that a red-hot poker will burn you if you hold it too long; and that if you cut your finger *very* deeply with a knife, it usually bleeds; and she had never forgotten that, if you drink much from a bottle marked ‘poison,’ it is almost certain to disagree with you, sooner or later. (Carroll n.d.)

While the author may be making mock of contemporary education, this passage makes a lot of sense. Alice remembers this good advice because she has read stories rather than because she has been instructed by wise adults.

What happens in the brain when we are exposed to stories is, hugely oversimplified, that the brain either recognises a script, which thereby is confirmed, or stores a new script in memory, to be retrieved when required. A script is a recurrent pattern that makes us recognise a particular action or event. Pattern recognition is one of the most important brain functions that is essential for survival. In my examples, a little girl meets a dangerous

stranger and a child remembers salient scripts she has learned before. In both, the listener or reader is expected to engage with the script, cognitively and emotionally.

Storytelling was a significant step in the development of human consciousness. The brain was no longer exclusively dependent on immediate sensory perception. You did not need to see, hear, smell a predator; a verbal sign could evoke an image. You did not have to taste food to find out whether it was poisonous; the concept of poison could be transmitted by storytelling. The human brain evolved to allow imagination. Storytelling also required attention and memory – capacities which, together with imagination, constitute the core of cognition. Attention, memory and imagination provided for the ability to infer, predict and make decisions.

Storytelling leads to something which nature has not supplied human animals with and that, paradoxically, seems to counter-work and even inhibit evolution. This ‘something’ involves the imagined orders I have already mentioned. As follows from the label, imagined orders do not exist except in human minds; they have no direct connection with the natural world and do not require sensory engagement; yet they constitute the foundations of human civilisation.

Delineating the World

Evolutionary criticism prompts considering how storytelling, and by extension children’s literature, has contributed to human beings’ survival, both individual survival and survival as a species. Survival, in terms of evolution, implies successful procreation so that the genes can be passed on. Moreover, evolution favours genes that are most likely to procreate. If storytelling has emerged as a spontaneous mutation, the hypothetical storytelling gene was favoured over the non-storytelling gene because it was advantageous for successful procreation. Two conditions for successful procreation are food and protection: the organism has to receive nutrition to grow into maturity, and it has to be protected so that it does not die before it has procreated. Let us remember Alice’s lessons from storytelling: don’t go into woods where wild animals might eat you; don’t hold a red-hot poker because it will burn you, and don’t drink from the bottle labelled ‘poison’ because you will die. Through this story, valuable knowledge is passed on to young readers. There is, however, a paradox that evolutionary scholars have pointed out. Logically, evolution favours an individual’s genes. Evolutionary scientist Richard Dawkins has suggested the concept of ‘the selfish gene’ (Dawkins 1976); however, he has demonstrated that, contrary to this concept, evolution also supports altruism. You would expect the selfish gene to prompt only sharing knowledge and experience with individuals who carry your own genes, which include your siblings and your children, who carry 50 per cent of your genes; your grandchildren and your nieces and nephews, who carry 25 per cent of your genes, and so on. You would expect the selfish gene to prevent you from sharing valuable knowledge about red-hot poker and bottles of poison with strangers, that is, individuals who only carry a negligible percentage of your genes. However, evolution is more complex than this. Dawkins argues that in many situations evolution supports altruism: kindness to other people without any gain for yourself. Evolution endorses altruism because in the long run, survival of a group, community, nation or species proves more important than survival of an individual. This is what imagined orders,

including children's literature, endeavour to convey and promote. Due to its didactic nature, children's and young adult literature particularly promotes altruism and condemns selfishness.

Finding food and distinguishing good food from bad food is the first and perhaps most important aspect of survival that all living organisms share. Storytelling made it possible for humans to accumulate knowledge about finding food, about distinguishing between food and non-food, and about recognising poisonous food. We do not have to teach our children from our own individual experience; we can rely on information provided in stories, whether these stories are presented in textbooks, cook books or novels. For instance, our young human ancestor should be able to know that meeting an antelope promises a good meal, while meeting a lion probably means ending up as a meal. A wide range of children's stories revolve around the issue of eating or being eaten, of hunger and gluttony (Daniel 2009; Keeling and Pollard 2011). Food also served another purpose: distinguishing between ingroup and outgroup, which was crucial for survival and protection. Food preferences were and still are strong signals of belonging. Prohibition against certain food is a way to delineate the boundaries of ingroup, and to recognise members of ingroup. Children's stories convey this by the many instances where food is offered, shared and sometimes declined; where eating 'alien' or forbidden food leads to enchantment, death or global disasters. As the everyday necessity crucial for survival, food is a powerful factor in storytelling, more powerful than simple nutrition advice.

Most stories told in the past 6,000 years of which we have evidence, in some way or other are about distinguishing between 'us' and 'them', the own and the alien, ingroup and outgroup. In children's literature, this distinction can be based on species (human/animal), animacy (human/toy), age (child/adult), familial ties, gender, class, race, nationhood and other alterities. It is easy to find texts illustrating such distinctions in classic and contemporary children's literature (see, for instance, Karen Coats', Victoria Flanagan's and Zoe Jaques' chapters in this volume). The reason can be explained in evolutionary terms as a survival strategy. Early groups of *Homo sapiens* moved around in groups of about twenty, and when they met other groups it could lead to a conflict over territory and prospective mating partners, or to negotiations and exchange. The principle 'Love thy neighbour' that many of us in the Western world have grown up with does not, as it is frequently interpreted, imply being kind to *any* neighbour; it only means recognising and being kind to the immediate members of your ingroup. 'Love thy neighbour' is an excellent example of an imagined order. From an evolutionary perspective, there is nothing to win by loving your neighbour, that is, being altruistic, but as a community, being kind to your own was good for survival. Therefore evolution has supported stories that propagate being kind to your own – an ethical principle prominent in children's literature, realistic as well as non-mimetic, such as fairy tale, fantasy or dystopia. Children's literature promotes loyalty to your immediate family, extended family, friends, school, football team, wider community, nation and occasionally species. It alerts young readers to the potential danger of outgroup members: stepmothers, wolves, monsters or space invaders.

As prehistoric human communities grew larger it was no longer possible to know every member of your group. Psychologists today claim that an average individual can fully recognise, remember and reciprocate with no more than 150 other individuals. Thanks to chronicles, church registers, student registers, tax accounts, censuses,

diaries, letters, address books, phone books and today's social media, people can keep track of other people, both those whom they know in real life and those they had never met. For instance, we are familiar with people such as Julius Caesar, Henry VIII, Napoleon, Anne Frank and David Attenborough; and we are also familiar with Macbeth, Elizabeth Bennet and Harry Potter, that is, people who have never existed. Yet whether they existed or not, all these people belong to imagined orders, conveyed from one individual to another and from one community to another through storytelling. From each of these people and their lives, we can learn something potentially important for our own survival. I would like to emphasise *potentially* because this potential is not necessarily realised.

However, already 6,000 years ago the world had become too large to rely on oral storytelling. The knowledge accumulated by an individual could be transmitted to other individuals or larger groups, but this demanded mobility, and valuable knowledge disappeared if its bearers died. It became necessary to record stories which could be both carried far away and transmitted from generation to generation. The emergence of writing demanded special skills that were appreciated and financially rewarded. Scribes had high status and social capital in all known societies, and high social status ensures higher probability for procreation – therefore evolution has supported literacy, even though it seemingly has no direct benefit for evolution. While the principal structure of the human brain has remained the same for the past 40,000 years, the internal pathways and connections in the brain have adjusted due to transition from oral to written storytelling (Wolf 2007).

We do not know whether early written fictional stories, such as the *Gilgamesh Epic*, were told for educative or entertaining purposes; possibly for both. For instance, they conveyed beliefs as well as rules of behaviour and interpersonal relationships, such as choice of partners or prohibition of incest. These written stories were not only transgenerational, as oral stories were, when the elders told them to children. They were also transcultural; they could reflect events, characters and settings that neither storytellers nor readers had experience of, something that needed huge leaps of imagination. This was a significant evolutionary gain for humanity. The parts of the brain that once were employed to memorise lengthy stories for oral transmission became redundant with the invention of written language (Wolf 2007). We do not know for sure what our ancestors' brains used the released capacity for, possibly to enhance imagination that made storytelling more elaborate. Once again, if art has an adaptive function, then more efficient storytelling would be supported by evolution. From that, it is not far-fetched to infer that evolution favoured art and artists. In plain words, art and literature are favoured by evolution because educated, creative individuals are on average more likely to survive and procreate, and their progeny is also more likely to survive and procreate.

Maryanne Wolf (2007) claims that the invention of the Greek alphabet around 750 BCE, which made learning to read substantially more efficient, accounts for the explosion of philosophical thought and creative storytelling in Ancient Greece. This can be contended, but is a fascinating idea. If storytelling is the essential feature of being human, then more elaborate storytelling presumably makes us more human. Philosopher and psychologist Iain McGilchrist's (2008) argument that certain historical periods show clear preference for certain types of art, depending on the supremacy of one of the cerebral hemispheres, suggests that the ultimate victory of the left

hemisphere coincided with the inventing of the printing press. It was also the beginning of the Age of Reason. Written communication became more accessible; literacy was valued and gained high social status. Printed books containing knowledge, ideology and reflections could spread widely and quickly. This was possible because people who had spent their lives copying old manuscripts could instead engage in more productive and creative activities.

However, printed culture also made it possible for a certain kinds of imagined orders to proliferate: stories told for pure entertainment and pleasure. Unlike philosophical treatises, scientific accounts, historical and geographical records, law codices, biographies and autobiographies, fiction's foremost purpose is to amuse rather than convey practical information. Cognitive criticism claims that fiction offers a perfect training field for such cognitive-affective capacities as mind-modelling (Theory of Mind) and empathy, which in turn enhance social skills (Nikolajeva 2014; see also Roberta Trites' chapter in this volume (Chapter 8)). This is particularly beneficial for children and adolescents whose cognitive and social skills are in the making. Children's literature which, as most scholars agree, emerged in the seventeenth century, can be viewed as evolutionarily beneficial since it significantly amplified the process of learning and socialisation.

Imagined Orders in Children's Literature

In the final part of this chapter, I will briefly discuss some central imagined orders which are likely to be favoured by evolution and therefore proliferate in children's literature. Once again, according to evolutionary historians, only those imagined orders which are beneficial for evolution will be passed on to next generations. Hence stories which persist can be considered robust in evolutionary terms. I have already mentioned the abundance of food and food-related topics in children's books. However, food is not only a signal of belonging, but also an important power mechanism. Adults are in a position to grant or deny children food, as has been repeatedly illustrated through Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) but is also prominent in novels such *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Dahl 1964) or *The Hunger Games* (Collins 2008). Adult/child subordination is an imagined order which can be viewed from various perspectives, from repression (Trites 2000; Nikolajeva 2010) to subversion (Beauvais 2015). This subordination is supported by evolution because in the natural order human children need protection significantly longer than most other species. The imagined order, however, prescribes a child's gradual liberation from adult protection, as well as conveys the message that adults are not necessarily omniscient and omnipotent. In carnivalesque children's literature, child characters are empowered in ways that seemingly subvert evolution; yet evolution benefits from 'survival of the fittest', and fictional children are allowed to take over the world from less adaptive adults.

Peer relationships are an essential imagined order because they enhance the natural order of procreation. For instance, there is no biological ground for romantic love. Yet, because humans are a promiscuous species, romantic love is an imagined order necessary to control our sexual behaviour. Children's and particularly young adult novels abound in romantic love, and in many cases this script proves more strongly anchored in our minds than both legal and ethical considerations. In plain words, we

are prepared to forgive criminal and unethical behaviour if it is dictated by romantic goals – an example is Patrick Ness' *Chaos Walking* trilogy (2008–10). However, evolution supports this imagined order because it is interested in the strongest genes to reproduce. It has therefore preserved the storytelling gene which encourages individuals to seek the best possible partner. Evolution does not care that this gene has resulted in suffering as our dreams of a perfect partner, enhanced through stories, are shattered. The script is enduring because evolution favours it over promiscuity, since promiscuity is not the best strategy to protect progeny. In her chapter on carnality in this volume (Chapter 7), Lydia Kokkola points out how protagonists in young adult novels are punished for sexual behaviour deemed inappropriate in a certain culture. Imagined orders are powerful ways of indoctrinating young people in behaviour that is most favourable for successful procreation. Let us remember that evolution is ethically neutral, and it is only through imagined orders that ethics can be introduced into human consciousness.

Most children's stories propagate for communal prosperity rather than individual happiness. Logically, evolution should not support social justice since on the contrary it favours the strongest genes and discards the weakest. The idea of social justice, then, is an imagined order that regulates the individual's goals and makes individuals consider communal goals instead. Children's literature strongly supports the idea of justice; however, as any imagined order, justice is a historically and culturally dependent category, which we see clearly if we consider some famous stories in their historical and cultural context (see Oziewicz 2015). Poetic justice is a story script that maintains that good always wins over evil. For instance, in all fairy tales, the hero wins over the villain. Of course, in real life this is not true: heroes and villains equally can survive or perish. And yet stories of poetic justice persist. Again, this script emphasises that acting towards the greater good is advantageous. Children's literature offers examples of behaviour that in the long run proves evolutionarily beneficial. The idea of retributive justice has caused immense suffering, justified wars, genocides and terror. This script is based on the division of the world into 'us' and 'them', inclusion and exclusion, that apparently was initially supported by evolution. As already mentioned, loving your neighbour, in the sense of your family, your clan, your community, was essential for survival. In evolutionary terms, retributive justice was not merely justifiable, but necessary, since it ensured that any intervention of alien genes was promptly eliminated. Stories of war, territorial conflict, family feuds and power succession probably constitute the bulk of fiction in any given culture. The Old Testament, arguably the most influential model for imagined orders in the Western world, repeatedly emphasises retributive justice: 'Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise' (Exodus 21:24–5). Contemporary fiction suggests that retribution may not be the best solution, and indeed what we try to teach our children today, both through peace education and through children's literature, is that restorative justice is more beneficial for individuals, for the community and for society as a whole. It may be contended whether restorative justice is beneficial for evolution, yet again altruism proves a better outcome than selfishness. Thus children's literature which emphasises an individual's sacrifice for the sake of community, society or the whole world has always been central and today dominates over the stories of tribal feuds and retribution, as clearly seen in many recent popular texts such as Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy (1995–2000),

the *Harry Potter* series (1997–2007) or *The Hunger Games*. When we teach children about democracy, equality and social justice today, either directly or through fiction, we are using imagined orders that regulate relationships between individuals and societies, and that apparently are supported by evolution, because otherwise they would not be sustained. For whatever reason, evolution has eventually decided that peace is better than war and equality is better than inequality. Even though the real world still abounds in violence and social injustice, imagined orders in children's literature help us envision a better world and play out various scenarios in a safe mode.

In his book *Entranced by Story: Brain, Tale and Teller, from Infancy to Old Age* (2014), psychologist Hugh Crago offers a fascinating overview of an age-related preference for different stories, based on what we know at present about the development of the human brain from birth into adulthood. Crago claims that each particular stage prioritises a specific kind of storytelling: playful minimal narratives produced for and by very young children, five-year-olds' fixation on damage and loss, older children's fascination with magic, adolescents' obsession with romance, young adults' focus on status and procreation, middle-aged people's indulgence in memories, and finally old people's reconciliation with imminent death. One may agree or disagree with Crago's categorisation, but it is certainly thought-provoking. After all, both empirical research and anecdotal knowledge indicate that young children enjoy books with pictures, pre-teens devour repetitive series, adolescents choose narratives with existential themes, and thirty-plus readers are likely to be interested in books about life achievements. In all these cases, it may be speculated, evolution has supported what it considered favourable for survival at a certain stage in life. Through stories, through imagined orders, valuable knowledge has been transmitted from generation to generation and has contributed to the proliferation of human thought, knowledge and learning.

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THE GENETIC STUDY OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Vanessa Joosen

IN 'THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR' (1977), Roland Barthes declared that the resort to authorship to interpret literary texts needed to make way for the liberation of the reader. Somewhat ironically, roughly around the same time the author was brought back onto the scene in a field of research that is now known as genetic criticism. The French National Library's acquisition of Heinrich Heine's manuscripts in 1966 was an important milestone for this field, which expanded steadily in the 1970s and 1980s (Hay 2004: 17) and has also attracted children's literature researchers. In this chapter, I will first introduce the aims and methods of genetic criticism, and reflect on its specific merits for studying children's books. I will then present an analysis of the drafts of Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (1988) to illustrate how genetic criticism differs from traditional textual criticism, and how it can supplement literary analyses of the published text.

Textual Criticism and *Critique Génétique*

Genetic critics study the notebooks, drafts, manuscripts and proofs that precede a published work, as well as marginalia in authors' copies of books and paralinguistics – additional documents supporting the writing process. The term 'genetic criticism' unites various research methods, aims and types of output. The first aim of genetic critics is to organise and make accessible the relevant documents that precede a book's publication (Grésillon 1994: 15). That usually involves compiling and deciphering relevant documents, establishing a chronological order, and then transcribing and editing the texts (Van Hulle 2007: 28). Textual criticism (also called traditional philology and text-critical analysis) uses genetic material as well as published texts to compile a reliable edition or supplement an important work of literature with annotations. Hence, textual critics tend to focus on the final stages of the writing process (Van Hulle 2004: 2). Daniel Ferrer calls it a 'critique de restitution' (2011: 30) – a criticism aimed at restoring the original.

Textual criticism has a strong Anglo-American and German tradition. French *critique génétique*, by contrast, tends to approach an author's archive from a different perspective, studying the *avant-texte* (documents preceding the publication) as interesting literary material in its own right. As Dirk Van Hulle (2004: 3–4) points out, this type of genetic criticism relies on textual criticism for making the *avant-texte* accessible, but its methods and output differ. The more abstract goal of *critique génétique* is to reconstruct 'the movement of writing' (Deppman, Ferrer and Groden

2004: 2) and to raise ‘awareness that the published text is less of a finished product than it may seem’ (Van Hulle 2004: 4). To do so, critics perform a literary analysis of individual drafts and/or reconstruct the writing process by tracing the origin of ideas, scenes and fragments, and then following their development, interpreting and contextualising often small, and sometimes bigger, changes in the text (De Biasi 1996: 27).

In drawing attention to the labour and craftsmanship of the creative process, genetic criticism interrogates the author as divine genius, who effortlessly produces literary masterpieces out of nothing (Lernout 2004: 303). Rather than limiting the possible interpretations of a text, as the search for authorial intention supposedly does, entering ‘the workshop’ of the writer (Hay 2004: 19) reveals the dynamics of literary creation and destabilises the notion of a fixed text that contains one true meaning. Even when a book is published, its reception may inspire further changes. After Eleanor Cameron slashed Roald Dahl’s *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* for racism (Mangan 2014), the illustrations of black pygmy Oompa-Loompas were replaced when the book was reissued. The second edition of the Brothers Grimm’s *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1819) contained various changes that responded to the criticism that the tales were not suited for children. The Grimms deleted, among others, a tale in which a child’s throat is sliced and changed Snow White’s and Hansel and Gretel’s evil mothers into stepmothers (see Rölleke 1975). Genetic critics use the term ‘epigenesis’ for studying this part of the writing process.

As writing processes and editorial practices change in the light of new technologies, genetic criticism has also evolved, drawing on up-to-date theories and methods. For example, the completeness of the ‘genetic dossier’ depends on an author’s awareness of the importance of keeping notes and drafts for research purposes. Contemporary authors’ archives often have a strong digital component, as they usually write their texts on computer. Recuperating older, overwritten drafts is difficult, but if the files are retained, digital archives facilitate the comparison, using collation programs. Moreover, creating accessibility increasingly involves digitising genetic material for online consultation (see, for example, the website for Manuscript Desk, which offers tools for transcribing notebooks and manuscripts as part of the European DARIAH network). The work of genetic critics also evolves under the influence of new approaches to literary studies. Van Hulle, for example, draws on cognitive approaches and suggests that genetic material can be studied as an author’s ‘extended mind’ (2014: 1) and that the traces of the writing process reveal how storyworlds and fictional minds are created.

Genetic critics rarely pay attention to children’s books (see De Biasi 1996: 55), though some children’s literature specialists do focus on or take into account the genetic process when discussing a given text. Several archives which collect material related to children’s literature offer impressive collections that facilitate such research in various ways. *Seven Stories* in Newcastle, UK, and the Kerlan collection in Minnesota, USA, for example, preserve large bodies of children’s book manuscripts. The making of children’s books has specific features and poses specific questions that have not yet been systematically addressed in genetic studies. For one, the creation is often a collaborative process. Some authors work closely together with an illustrator, and publishers may have a strong hand in raising ideas for stories and setting up the collaboration between a given author and illustrator. In addition, children can act as co-creators of cultural products intended for them (Gubar 2016). These are interesting phenomena to study with genetic tools, which may challenge traditional text-oriented

methods as well. Moreover, genetic criticism can reveal how the publisher acts as a powerful gatekeeper who decides what passes into the field of children's literature (see Galef 1993; Joosen 2010). For example, the manuscript for *Breaktime* which Aidan Chambers sent to the Bodley Head in 1977 started with the sentence 'Literature is crap.' It was moved to the second page because the editor, Margaret Clark, feared that librarians would read only the first page and might not purchase the book if it had a swear word in the first sentence (Chambers 2015). In addition, more systematic genetic research can offer children's literature studies the tools and context to explore the important notion of the implied child reader in the construction of a literary work. Various children's authors claim not to write for children (Hollindale 1997: 26), yet, as genetic criticism reveals, authors cannot always be trusted when they talk about their aims and writing process.

Matilda, From Monster to Miracle

Genetic research can only take place if enough material is available. In this case, I have consulted Roald Dahl's manuscripts and notebooks at the Roald Dahl archive in Great Missenden. The archive is rich with drafts, manuscripts, typescripts, paralipomena, correspondence, and so forth. Some authors mainly develop their ideas in their heads before putting them to paper. Although the distinction is not always black and white, Dahl is what Siegfried Scheibe (1982) calls a *Papierarbeiter* ('paper worker') rather than a *Kopfarbeiter* ('mind worker'). To a large extent, he developed his ideas on paper. The genesis of *Matilda* goes back to one of Dahl's 'idea books'. There, the following scene can be found (in the transcription of the manuscripts, I strike out the text that is deleted on the page, and use \wedge with superscript for added text):

The small boy sat in class hating the teacher.
 The teacher said things to him.
 The glass of water on the teacher desk.
 Boy if only ~~it~~ he would tip it all over his lap, by mistake.
 Boy stared at the glass.
 It wobbled.
 He kept staring.
 Slowly it tipped.
 'Who did this?'
 Johnny felt a little peculiar.
 Had he done it? Had he really?

Readers familiar with *Matilda* may recognise this scene as one that occurs in the novel. Its development illustrates how storyworlds get shaped. The scene departs from a conflict between a child and a teacher. Concrete elements gradually emerge: the protagonist is first described as 'the small boy', and only gets named in the penultimate line. Some details prove to be interchangeable. In the published book, Johnny has become a girl, Matilda, and further specificities have been added (what the teacher says to anger the child). What is retained throughout is the classroom setting, the telekinesis, its slow development (with the glass first wobbling, then tipping), which creates narrative tension, and the child's amazement at his accomplishment. The magic and sympathy

with a child's rebellion against adult authority which are already contained in this draft would ultimately drive the entire narrative for *Matilda* and can be considered the most central elements of its storyworld.

Dahl is 'best known for his humorous and macabre novels' (Martin 2006: 377) – an aspect of his writing that various critics have explored. The genetic material for *Matilda* adds an interesting dimension to this research, revealing that Dahl paid constant attention to humour and the uncanny, exploring how far he could go. The first full manuscript of *Matilda*, entitled 'The Miracle Child', offers a far darker version of the story than the one eventually published. In the published novel, Matilda is introduced as a gifted child, who resorts to nasty tricks because she is treated badly by her parents and the school's head. In the early manuscripts, however, Matilda is described as downright evil, and nasty without being provoked:

Some children are born to be angels. They are always loving and kind.

Some are born mischievous, and although these are often a bit of a nuisance, they can also be rather fun.

But what about the wicked ones, the ones who are born wicked? [. . .] Wicked ~~wicked~~ children are happiest when they are making somebody else miserable. To them, being wicked is a pleasure.

There is no doubt that Matilda was one of these. She was born wicked and she stayed wicked no matter how hard her parents tried to make her good. She was just about the most wicked child in the world. ('The Miracle Child', dated 'Summer 1986'; see also the Roald Dahl website (Roald Dahl Online 2015a) for a picture of the text.)

Part of the pleasure in Dahl's novels derives from the unabashed badness of his characters. Readers of the first draft of *Matilda* can relish in the descriptions of her evil deeds, which are not mitigated by any retribution motive. Yet it proved hard to sustain the story along those lines. The genesis of *Matilda* exposes the difficulty of having an unlikeable child protagonist and its incompatibility with an unambiguously happy ending. About halfway through 'The Miracle Child', Dahl integrated an adapted version of the water glass scene from his notebook. The teacher is now named as Miss Hayes, precursor to Miss Honey. Matilda's nasty forerunner has quite a different relationship with Miss Hayes, who is described as 'positively frightened of the child'. When Matilda manages to tip the water over Miss Hayes, she is so overwhelmed by her magical abilities that she confides in her teacher. When Miss Hayes offers help, the girl repents: 'There you are, Matilda thought. How decent she is when I'm not trying to do devil things to her.' Miss Hayes recognises that she is an intelligent pupil and helps her find a better purpose for her telekinetic abilities. The final chapter of 'The Miracle Child' can only be called bizarre and macabre. A school bus is crushed under a huge truck, which Matilda manages to lift with magic. This strains her to the point of collapse. She dies a martyr, leaving Miss Hayes bewildered. 'What on earth happened?' are the final words of this draft manuscript, retaining the sense of closure that readers would usually get from Dahl's novels.

Dahl was not satisfied with this open ending, as a subsequent manuscript ('The Six-year-old-wonder', dated 4 December 1986) reveals. In the changed ending the converted Matilda no longer dies. By using her visionary abilities in horse betting, Miss Hayes and Matilda can earn a living. The ending to this version is coated in sugar. The

teacher tells the girl to cherish her talents, and says: ‘thank you, my darling, for saving me, I’m going to spend my own life paying you back’. The shift is extreme, going from the uncanny to the didactic and sentimental. This ending proved unsatisfactory too, and was hence discarded, though not entirely lost. Just as Dahl adapted the water glass scene to fit *Matilda*, he recycled the visionary horse betting, using it as the climax to ‘Snow White’ in *Revoltin’ Rhymes* (1982), where the magic mirror is used to make a living from betting on horses. Genetic criticism thus unearths intertextual links that are difficult to trace in the published versions of the texts, and shows that Dahl’s stories share elements (in this case magic and humour) that allow for an interchangeability of scenes and characters.

Dahl called *Matilda* an exception in his writing career, suggesting that it was rare for him to rewrite a book entirely. Still, after six to eight months’ work, Dahl had to conclude that ‘It just wasn’t right’ (Roald Dahl Online 2015b), and the problem was not limited to the ending. The traits of the main characters needed to be shifted in order to make the story more coherent, plausible and appealing to an implied reader who might have certain expectations based on Dahl’s previous works. Once he had revised the opening, the plot fell into place. *Matilda* was turned into a good-hearted, unusually gifted, but mistreated child, making a straightforward call on the reader’s sympathy from the start. Lucy Rollin has noted a similar shift in Disney’s Mickey Mouse, who is now known as a cheerful, innocent character, but was originally cast as ‘a different kind of child – sadistic, aggressive, mischievous’ (Rollin and West 1999: 31). In order for Mickey to appeal to a wider audience, ‘he was eased into the safe, easily controlled world of popular children’s books, where the uncanny is often repressed’ (31). The writing process that precedes *Matilda* reveals how repression takes shape. As Ferrer argues, genetic criticism thus ‘destabilizes’ the published text ‘by confronting it with the whole of its drafts’ (2011: 30), opening up again the avenues that a story could have taken, but that were ultimately abandoned.

In later phases, Dahl still applied stylistic changes, and errors were corrected. He had confused Tiny Tim with Pip as the protagonist of *Great Expectations*, for example, and assigned *Jane Eyre* to Emily instead of Charlotte Brontë. Since these mistakes were only corrected in the final stages, it is plausible that Dahl relied on an editor to fix the gaps in his literary knowledge. In addition, Dahl further developed the narrative tension and characterisation, as in the following example, when the Wormwoods are introduced:

They had a son called Michael and a daughter called Matilda, and the parents look upon them as ^{Matilda in particular} as nothing more than a couple of scabs. [. . .] Mr. and Mrs. Wormwood looked forward enormously to the time when they could pick their children ^{little daughter} off and flick them [sic] away, preferably into the next county or even further than that.

Whereas initially the parents seem to detest both their children equally, Dahl’s revisions single Matilda out as the sole target of their aversion. Dahl’s changes intensify the Cinderella motif in *Matilda*, whose increased loneliness serves to evoke the implied reader’s sympathy. A genetic study of *Matilda* reveals that the fairy-tale aspects that Deborah Thacker (2012) discusses as central to the book were only introduced at a fairly late stage of the writing process, and preceded by a less straightforward characterisation and closure to the story.

Dahl's notebooks and manuscripts reveal the hard work which went into *Matilda's* creation, and the limits to the type of stories he was able or willing to create. Dahl ultimately abandoned his plan for an evil protagonist and an open ending, in favour of a book that stuck to the formula of his earlier best-sellers, writing a humorous and imaginative plot with a lovable protagonist and a conventional happy ending. Genetic research lays bare the crucial steps in the creative process, and opens up to readers variants that were abandoned in favour of a more feasible, interesting or conventional story. Considering the genetic material as a whole, aspects that critics have explored at length, such as the fairy-tale elements of the plot, the unusual giftedness of Matilda and her difference from her family (see Beauvais 2015), are shown to be more contingent than the core elements of magic, bullying and humour, which remain stable throughout the writing process. Studying *Matilda's* genesis helps to understand, moreover, how certain conventions of children's literature are sustained, either by the author, or by the publisher. The vast richness of unexplored genetic material holds further promises for gaining a better understanding of how children's literature is created, and what considerations dominate the decision-making process – not just in the aspects that I have focused on here, such as content and character development, but also the construction of setting, narrative voice and style, and the collaboration between writer and illustrator. In the process of studying these traces, researchers may end up unearthing variants that may not have made it to the stage of publication, but are interesting to read and analyse in their own right.

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DISTANT READING AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Eugene Giddens

Distant Criticism or Distant Reading?

Children's literary criticism frequently takes an 'array' approach, whereby primary texts can be numerous and grouped together in unexpected ways. The consideration of large numbers of books is not only a conventional technique in children's literary criticism, it can become an expectation. The discipline, as Kimberley Reynolds points out, has often required scholars to 'know about everything that has ever been published' (2005: 2). Consider, for instance, the way in which Colin Manlove characterises a half-century of children's literature:

The more indulgent attitude to the child and childhood that appears in the fantasy of the 1890s continues, with local modifications, until after the Second World War. If we put Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) beside Beverley Nichols' *The Tree That Sat Down* (1945), we find the same English pastoral note; if we compare E. Nesbit's *Five Children and It* (1902) with Mary Norton's *Bonfires and Broomsticks* (1947), we will see a similar idea of fantasy as a collection of treats. (2003: 40)

While such generalisation might seem somewhat flimsy to wider criticism of early twentieth-century literature, a typical review by a children's literature scholar will critique not what has been too broadly conceived, but what has been *left out*. Michael Levy and Farah Mendlesohn's recent *Children's Fantasy Literature*, for instance, accuses Manlove of being 'highly selective' (2016: 5), a common charge against monographs by children's literature scholars. Ironically, Levy and Mendlesohn's own book is reproached by a reviewer for citing Lewis Carroll 'only . . . eight times, each one en passant. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* does not even appear in the text!!' (Lewis Carroll Society of North America 2016). As Levy and Mendlesohn themselves note, there is 'simply too much to cover' (2016: 5). The question remains, 'why try?' Such attempts, with resulting charges of failure, occur because children's literary criticism demands a Pokemon-like inclusivity. Compare, say, a review of a monograph on Shakespeare, and one would be hard-pressed to discover even a bitter rival scholar complaining that *Coriolanus* or *Cymbeline* has been left out. Complete coverage, an impossible condition even for a field hoping to 'catch them all', is rarely desired within wider literary scholarship.

What the works of Manlove and Levy and Mendlesohn attempt is a form of distant criticism – an understandable aim of covering a large corpus in one piece of scholarship, but an act that ironically occasions dissatisfaction within the field itself. Recent theorisations of distant reading (Moretti 2005, 2013), surface reading (Best and Marcus 2009), or thin description (Love 2013) offer the opportunity to align such modes of children’s literary criticism with wider literary scholarship, which has had an unfortunate tendency, in the words of Colin Manlove, to view our field with ‘veiled condescension’ (2003: 7). Distant reading might offer an especially helpful method for those starting a career in children’s literature scholarship, which demands seemingly instant knowledge of a large corpus. The implication is that such knowledge was first gained, Matilda-like, in childhood, but that suits only certain kinds of bookish and, in these days of disappearing libraries, well-off backgrounds. A further challenge faced by those just starting out in the profession is that while the discipline encourages sweeping accounts, ‘theories of’, or ‘approaches to’ children’s literature – including impossible questions like ‘What is it? Who is it for?’ – tenure asks for specialisation. These difficulties can be accommodated by modes of distant reading that can efficiently lead to new, broad-scale knowledge.

Leah Price has noted that: ‘One way to describe “the way we read now” is to say that we don’t read at all’ (2009: 120). That might seem like an undesirable technique for a literary scholar, but it has several potential benefits to the field. One is the decanonisation of certain types of children’s literature which seem time and again to resurface in critical accounts. Manlove, for instance, argues that ‘Children’s fantasy is for most of its history a middle-class literature’ (2003: 11). Such claims, if believed, might explain why an important writer of US black, working-class childhoods, like Virginia Hamilton, is often ignored – a search of JSTOR, 2000–10, reveals only sixty-one mentions, many of them false positives. Katharine Capshaw Smith notes that the author ‘may be unfamiliar to some . . . readers’ even of the *Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States* journal (2002: 3). To Levy and Mendlesohn’s credit, they counterpoise a neglect of Lewis Carroll, who receives enough attention elsewhere, with the inclusion of Hamilton (2016: 163). Distant reading should first and foremost embrace such acts of recovery, ensuring that the same privileged texts do not constitute a child-friendly play area within a Bloomian gated community (cf. Bloom 1995, which hardly mentions children’s literature).

This chapter aims to discuss a range of ‘big data’ interpretative acts – in particular those advocated by Franco Moretti’s *Graphs, Maps, Trees* (2005), Stephen M. Best and Sharon Marcus in ‘Surface reading: An introduction’ (2009), Margaret Cohen in ‘Narratology in the archive of literature’ (2009), and Heather K. Love’s accounts of ‘Close reading and thin description’ (2013). I will address the practical possibilities of *not* reading children’s literature while also attempting to give readings of it, focusing on three bundles of techniques that scholars have used for such interpretations: bibliographical, digital, and archival.

Bibliography Building: Graphs, Maps, Trees

Franco Moretti is a founding scholar in the discipline of distant reading, which he presents as ‘not an obstacle, but a *specific form of knowledge*’ (2005: 1, original emphasis). (I will not discuss Moretti’s recent *Distant Reading* (2013), as it deals more with issues

of global literature – surely an important topic for children’s literature, but one that deserves its own, separate consideration.) Moretti starts his short *Graphs, Maps, Trees* with a practical concern that scholars read very little, ‘less than one per cent’, of relevant material in the field of nineteenth-century novels, and even ‘reading a novel a day every day of the year would take a century or so’ to cover the field (2005: 4). Distant reading techniques seek to overcome this limitation. Moretti deliberately eschews the digital and archival in favour of ‘building upon’ the work of book historians (ibid.).

Some starts towards a taxonomy of children’s genres are made by Moretti himself. Within ‘graphs’, his date ranges for ‘children’s adventures’, 1851–83; ‘school stories’, 1857–81; and ‘nursery stories’, 1876–1906, might be useful for scholars, although I would argue that nursery stories should be extended further back, including nursery-based ‘object’ lessons from the eighteenth century. His sources for these dates are well regarded, especially Gillian Avery’s *Nineteenth Century Children: Heroes and Heroines in English Children’s Stories, 1780–1900* (1965), but he relies upon just three of them (one for each generic category), and they might justly be considered out of date.

Moretti’s ‘maps’ outline cultural geographies within texts, for example how far a village girl might travel in the space of the narrative. Children’s literary studies has been significantly more advanced in this area, with the journal *Children’s Geographies*, founded in 2003, including children’s literature, storytelling, and narrative. Equivalent approaches are also outlined in Maria Nikolajeva’s chapter ‘The aesthetic of the scene’ (2005: 127–43) and later in articles by Gabrielle Cliff-Hodges and colleagues (Cliff-Hodges et al. 2011, 2012). Such geographies might become increasingly important as the age-old conflicts between ‘the city and the country’ have greater political ramifications for a new generation. ‘Trees’ traces the interrelation of elements of narrative or elements of style, using the concept of the biological tree to show growing developments over narrative or historical time. In many respects this technique fits well with the distant criticism already prevalent in the discipline, but should encourage us towards greater use of graphical representations of interrelations and clearer statements about methodologies.

Before we can move to Moretti’s scale of thousands of books, however, significant archival work is needed in the UK, and to a lesser extent the USA (comprehensive bibliographies do exist in other national contexts – see Grenby 2002). Back in 1977, Brian Alderson claimed that ‘at the nuts-and-bolts level, there is much elementary bibliographical work still to be done’ (203), and although researchers have covered individual authors and genres since, substantive gaps remain, as Matthew Grenby attests: ‘Alderson was . . . surely correct to argue that children’s literature does still lack a firm bibliographical base’ (2002: 204). Grenby charts significant efforts in particular areas, including, for instance, D’Alte Welch’s *Bibliography of American Children’s Books Printed Prior to 1821* (1972) or R. J. Kirkpatrick’s *The Encyclopaedia of Boy’s School Stories* (2000), which Moretti would have benefited from consulting. More recently, the bibliographies compiled by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC), University of Wisconsin, helpfully provide small-scale lists such as fifty works on ‘Grief and Loss’ (CCBC 2012). The CCBC has also produced exhaustive statistics on ethnic-American children’s literature, which detail, for instance, the number of children’s books by African American authors across the period 2001–15, with a low of sixty-eight (2012, 2013) and a high of 107 (2015). That might appear to be a micro-trend, but sixty-nine were published in 2001 and ninety-nine in 2004, so the variation

across the period is minimal (CCBC 2016). These figures interestingly demonstrate that diversity in US children's books has not expanded over the early 2000s. Indeed, Joel Taxel discusses earlier examples of these figures and quotes a commissioning editor of children's books who notes that 'multicultural is definitely out' (2002: 176). Such worrying publishing trends shape our discipline and are worth serious consideration. A wider use of publishing data, which might for earlier periods include the advertisements that appear at the end of books, such as the Routledge Shilling Picture Books of the late nineteenth century, would help us to gain a greater sense of what is available to child readers in a given period. The field desperately needs research cognate to, for example, Simon Eliot's brilliant *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing, 1800–1919* (1994), which would consider the detailed numbers beyond publishing patterns for children's books in the eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, and early twenty-first centuries. Even solid research on children's publishing, such as Lucy Pearson's *The Making of Modern Children's Literature in Britain* (2013), would benefit from a greater deployment of maps, graphs, and trees, or at least complete lists of publishing data.

Electronic Not Reading

Moretti somewhat oddly eschews digital resources, which offer the most powerful tools for examining texts in bulk. But if children's literary studies is behind when it comes to underpinning bibliographic research, it suffers even more in terms of digital corpora. Resources such as *Early English Books Online* or the *English Short Title Catalogue* are simply unavailable to those interested in contemporary children's literature, partially for understandable copyright reasons. One must rely instead upon the cataloguing work of individual libraries to access large bodies of books. The University of Florida's catalogue of its Baldwin Collection, for instance, offers a powerful tool for analysing children's books in North America. Owing to the size of the collections, scholars can gain a good sense of shifts in children's publishing on the macro or micro level. For instance, a search of books for children with the word 'army' in their titles discloses that the Baldwin holds thirty-two such books (out of 22,831) for 1850–1900, forty-two (out of 21,776) for 1901–50, and only six (out of 25,083) for 1951–2000. These results might reflect that the first period, containing the devastating American Civil War, and middle period, covering two world wars, naturally have more interest in soldiers. Another explanation might be a decreasing willingness to discuss war with children. While L. Frank Baum could happily produce the surprisingly gung-ho *The Army Alphabet*, an ABC for early readers, in 1900, by the 1950s titles shifted to the more peaceable and feminised sides of warfare, such as Harriet Evatt's *An Army in Pigtails* (1962), Lawrence Fellows' *A Gentle War: The Story of the Salvation Army* (1979), and Betsy Kuhn's *Angels of Mercy: The Army Nurses of World War II* (1999). Searches of this nature can disclose the surprising rarity of books about democracy for children, for instance, or correct Moretti's sense that the period for adventure stories emerges from 1851 – since the Baldwin lists over 100 adventure titles from the decade before that, including senses of the word perhaps not intended by most scholars, like *The Babes in the Wood: Containing a New Story of Their Adventures, by a Lady* (Anon. 1850).

Digital techniques also allow one not to read smaller bodies of text, by a single author or pair of authors. The traditional challenge of such an approach, obtaining digital copies that were until recently unavailable even for popular work by J. K. Rowling or Phillip Pullman, is somewhat obviated by the growing e-text market. Moreover, with Ofcom, the UK's communications regulator, reporting that the internet is now a dominant mode of childhood encounters with the world, including 80 per cent of those aged 8–11 using a tablet computer and 28 per cent using an e-book reader, digital happily reflects an important way in which children read today (Ofcom 2016). It is now possible to determine how many adverbs are in *Harry Potter* and their rhythmic frequency across the seven books, or to compare that frequency to *His Dark Materials* to trace comparative adjectival insistence, for instance. Such techniques have been deployed by Murray Knowles and Kirsten Malmkjaer (1996), but scholars have found their linguistic arguments, based upon collocations of words that appear frequently together, to be at times at odds with their wider conclusions about ideology and power. Reviewers once again point to notable absences, such as Knowles and Malmkjaer's dismissal of books for girls and works from the first fifty years of the twentieth century (see Hastings 1998). The connections between the linguistic and the literary-interpretative continue to be strained within the field of children's literature. Ed Thomas' recent analysis of word frequency in 5.5 million words of children's literature, the complete *Children's Bookshelf* from Project Gutenberg, 1863–1913, offers information that a literary scholar might find difficult to associate with meaningful interpretation. His two main findings are that 'Past tense verbs dominate the word frequency list of this corpus, although the adjective *little* ranks highly too' and 'Many of the most frequent collocations in this corpus were not particularly interesting lexically (*it was, was a, I am, I have*)' (2015: 95). Such results seem to offer little beyond highlighting a certain linguistic simplicity in books for young people, which most in the field, I suspect, would seek to contest through sensitivity to the unusual, ambiguous, and complex. More successfully, the work of Carmen Fought and Karen Eisenhauer on Disney 'princess films' (2016) deploys a wider perspective on gendered speech to exciting effect. They find, for instance, that males speak 59 per cent of the lines in *Frozen*, but only 29 per cent of the lines in *Cinderella*, highlighting that the supposed move to feminocentric Disney might be questionable. On a more localised level, a scholar might make interesting findings out of even smaller bodies of words. One interested in young adult romance can discover that the protagonists' first kiss in Patrick Ness's *Chaos Walking* series comes 72 per cent through the third book (and that Viola does the kissing: '. . . I pull myself towards him – And I kiss him. And it feels like, *finally*', Ness 2013: loc. 5613), without having to read the series. The narrative movement to first base across a range of books might quickly be discovered, permitting wider analysis of desire and hesitancy in young adult fiction.

There are at least as many approaches to digital texts as there are scholars. Leaving aside whether my particular examples might be interesting or not, a range of potential research projects have been suggested above: the representation of the army, early adventure stories, linguistics, or romance. Playing with digital catalogues and texts can lead to critical insight in and of itself, of the type seemingly demanded by the wide histories of and introductions to children's literature, or, more fruitfully, it can be applied to narrow themes locally or transhistorically.

Skim-reading the Archives

Margaret Cohen has noted that ‘Over the past twenty-five years literary studies has experienced a “return to the archive,”’ but that ‘. . . as soon as scholars start to work on the archive of forgotten literature, techniques of close reading come up short’ (2009: 51, 59). Major collections of children’s literature at Harvard, Princeton, Toronto, New Brunswick, Florida, the British Library, and elsewhere have luckily long been available to scholars. Kenneth Kidd, Lucy Pearson, and Sarah Pyke do point out, however, that any experiences of the archive ‘are framed in a context of privilege’ (2016: 176), as time spent in them is available only to those with access to personal or institutional wealth. The pressures of job seeking and tenure make spending years in such libraries reading Moretti’s imaginary book per day untenable.

Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus (2009) and Margaret Cohen (2009) outline a series of thin-reading techniques which help scholars work around this problem. Best and Marcus describe surface reading as considering ‘what insists on being looked *at* rather than what we must train ourselves to see *through*’ (2009: 9), thereby deliberately eschewing symptomatic readings of occluded subtexts. Instead, they offer several modes of attention to surface, some of which are relevant in the field of children’s literature. Considering ‘the intricate verbal structure of literary language’ (10) is one such method, by ignoring hidden or deep meanings for the complexity of the language itself. Here close reading is opposed to historicism, which of course saves a great deal of archival time in reading and considering context. Another method is to ‘embrace the surface’, taking pleasure in ‘accepting texts’ instead of ‘using them as objects’ to fit a particular interpretative paradigm (*ibid.*). Further suggestions include ‘attention to surface as a practice of critical description’ (11), a claim that finds in texts themselves all of the necessary critical questions and ambiguities that need to be applied to them; locating ‘patterns that exist within and across texts’ (*ibid.*), much as Moretti advocates; or seeking ‘literal meaning’ (12), taking the facts of a narrative at face value. These methods have clear overlaps, but are not necessarily likely to lead to efficiency or a greater number of considered texts than other forms of critical practice, unless scholars train themselves actively to ignore what we have been trained to see.

Margaret Cohen, on the other hand, more directly advocates the need for speed in an interrelated series of reading techniques which allow scholars to negotiate a body of unexamined or forgotten archival material. She, too, borrowing from Sharon Marcus, advocates ‘Reading for patterns’, whereby one will, ‘Once a pattern starts to take shape . . . read around in literature of the time’ (2009: 60) to trace the circulation of that particular pattern only. For ‘Just reading’, another technique first put forward by Marcus, Cohen points to the need to read seemingly mundane and everyday elements of a text that critics otherwise neglect. ‘Just enough reading’ espouses knowing when to stop, maintaining ‘humility before the vastness of the task’ in tackling ‘the great unread’ (61). Seeking ‘The representative example’, which can speak for a variety of texts for ‘the abstraction of a class rather than in its unique specificity’, provides a next step in surface reading. ‘Scaling to the case’ is an active form of reading whereby the critical framework is continually readjusted as new material is encountered, but always carrying those ‘received set of categories’ to the archive as a basis for revision. ‘Different modes of forgetting’ asks scholars to consider the lost as a way of regaining not just individual texts themselves but ‘lost poetics’ (62). By focusing on the

neglected, one can then reassemble ‘The forgotten canon’, thereby reshaping the texts that are read in a given field, and by implication reshaping the field itself. Heather Love summarises these surface readings techniques as seeking to ‘. . . describe patterns of behavior and visible activity but that do not traffic in speculation about interiority, meaning, or depth’ (2013: 404). As a salutary reminder that these techniques are not a stripped-down form of New Criticism, Love highlights the politics at the heart of surface reading: ‘Treating the book as a material object, a commodity, or a social fact, these methods put books back in contact with hard surfaces of life including trade, industry, craft traditions, marketplaces, publics, geography, and discourse networks’ (411). Love advocates the techniques of Erving Goffman in examining narrow ‘strips’ of text, including literary and non-literary texts, to understand ‘behaviour that belongs to no one’ (Love 2013: 427), whose exemplarity parallels aspects of the human condition. An example might be the complexities of a first kiss, including books, but also films, blogs, *Twilight* T-shirts, and teenage descriptions of their own praxis.

Cohen, Best and Marcus, and Love do not give detailed methods towards surface reading. That is left to the development of individuals, who might flick through images, read only the final pages, skim read – or just read at full speed, which seems to be the technique they imagine. Instead they describe and defend an approach which is attentive and deliberate, but is meant to be more akin to an augmented reading for pleasure than conventional close reading. These techniques might fit the way many critics read children’s books now – not with the deliberation that might be given to a Shakespearean sonnet, but with an advanced form of the child-like joy of reading an anticipated new book. Indeed, Kidd, Pearson, and Pyke (2016) have recently explored the ways in which that research might playfully be conducted in the archive. In Kidd’s graduate seminar, ‘Working off Franco Moretti’s *Graphs, Maps, Trees*’, several students are noted to have ‘experimented engagingly with quantitative approaches to Baldwin holdings’ (2016: 159), but we are not told exactly how they did so. Kidd, Pearson, and Pyke more fully give attention to ‘browsing’ as a technique able to achieve serendipitous archival findings, but again the specific methods are somewhat occluded and left open to individual researchers. Both digital (catalogue) browsing and physical browsing are described as ‘addictive and somewhat crazy-making’ (173) by students and scholars made uncertain ‘by the constant pressure to produce “research outputs”’ (176).

This chapter has examined the challenges and potentials of distant reading, covering various approaches to not reading the huge numbers of children’s books produced annually. Distant reading is both impossible for a child and a childish thing. It is reminiscent of an early reader enjoying the story and skipping the difficult bits. Equally, however, children would find it very difficult, if not impossible, to practise distance reading, which requires an attention to literary patterns that is probably best found only in those with years of training. Distance reading also accords with accounts of the kinds of ‘shallow’ or ‘inattentive’ reading said to afflict digital natives, who appreciate ‘big data’, if only obliquely, through Google or YouTube searches. It offers a new way of conducting an established critical practice, deliberately wielding a series of anti-immersive methods to open up the canon of children’s literature more widely. Distant reading practices are a ‘natural’ cognate to existing children’s literature scholarship; they need only to be embraced explicitly to bring more exciting possibilities for not reading works for young people.

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HOGWARTS VERSUS SVALBARD: CULTURES, LITERACIES AND GAME ADAPTATIONS OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Andrew Burn

Twin Titans

J. K. ROWLING AND PHILIP PULLMAN are twin giants of contemporary children's literature, whose works follow similar paths, yet invite stark contrasts. The same can be said of the wider constellation of media transformations surrounding them. In previous work, I have addressed the lack, in the research literature, of detailed analysis of the game texts and children's engagements with them, in respect of the Harry Potter adaptations. This chapter will build on previous research on the Harry Potter game adaptations (Burn 2004, 2006), to consider selected episodes from the game of *The Golden Compass* (Shiny Entertainment 2007), and the game of *Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secrets* (Electronic Arts 2002). The argument of the chapter will be that the Rowling and Pullman phenomena are interesting at least partly because they confound conventional judgements of taste, categories of cultural value, notions of literacy, and indeed limiting conceptions of children's literature. It will explore how they might be seen as playful texts, in ways illuminated by the relatively recent medium of videogames, into which they have both been adapted; and it will ask how we need to rethink textuality, cultural value and the models of literacy associated with them in the light of such transformations.

Both sets of novels create plucky central characters, who can be seen as judicious mixtures of folktale hero/ine and *Bildungsroman* protagonist (Burn 2006). In respect of the former category, they slay their respective metaphorical giants, assisted by magical creatures, artefacts and innate heroic qualities. They are both chosen ones: Harry Potter, the Boy who Lived; Lyra Belacqua, the gifted reader of the alethiometer, possessed of a mysterious destiny, eventually to become Pullman's new Eve in the final novel of the trilogy. They are both fairy-tale orphans, literally in Harry's case, apparently in Lyra's, wrenched from a parentage soaked in the aristocracy of magic, a significant part of their mission to uncover the mysteries of this lineage. Their stories follow the classic pattern of the *Bildungsroman*, summarised by Jerome Buckley as 'a convenient synonym for the novel of youth or apprenticeship' (Buckley 1974: 13). Expelled from their homes, they move through rites of passage into an early adulthood, leaving the innocence of childhood, discovering a kind of sexuality, rather obliquely in Harry's case, more explicitly in Lyra's.

If these textual and narrative features render the two series similar in important respects, their treatments in the world of media adaptation also bear some resemblances, though also differences. The Rowling series, as is well known, progressed through adaptation into a hugely successful Warner film franchise, and thence into videogame

adaptation and extensive merchandising, all subject to considerable control by J. K. Rowling. The Pullman series began its adaptation journey very differently, as a stage play with giant puppets at the National Theatre. The film adaptation of the first book, *Northern Lights*, under the name of *The Golden Compass*, was produced by New Line Cinema, which also produced the cross-platform videogame which followed. No film or game sequel has followed, the franchise dogged by religious objections (Heritage 2009). However, a BBC series has been commissioned in 2016, for screening in 2017, again produced by New Line, with close involvement from Pullman.

Finally, both series have enjoyed the characteristic popular cultural accolade of fan fiction, inspiring creative extensions to and reimaginings of the narrative and the characters by devoted fans. These include fan activism deploying the Potter mythos (Jenkins 2012), fan adaptations of Pullman's work (Mackey 2012) and slash fiction, the imagining of explicit sexual relations between characters where such liaisons are either implied or non-existent in the source texts (for instance, Tosenberger 2008). In the case of the Pullman novels, a popular trope is the relation between Mrs Coulter and Lord Asriel, resulting in the conception of Lyra (oswhine 2015).

In respect of the novels, a dominant preoccupation of adults, whether academics, educators or librarians, is the vexed question of cultural value. A pervasive discourse of distinctions runs through the transformations, commentary and public face of the two franchises, a discourse which produces a sense of Rowling's work as popular culture, and Pullman's as something more literary. Rowling is both castigated for her popular cultural qualities, notably by Harold Bloom (2000), and praised for them, notably by Stephen King (2000a). Meanwhile, Pullman fares rather better with the critics, who are generally enthusiastic about the invocations of Milton and Blake which suffuse the books. A good example is the collection of essays edited by Steven Barfield and Katharine Cox (2011), which considers the literary, religious and dramatic implications of the books, the stage adaptation and the film. The wrangle over literary merit is complicated in relation to children's literature, not least by the fact that distinctions proposed by literary critics represent a very different engagement with fiction from the engagement of children, as Michael Rosen points out emphatically (1992).

The opinions of children remain a seriously under-researched area in this field, as do the opinions of teachers and librarians. An article reporting an empirical study of teachers' opinions of the quality of fiction for adolescents is revealing in respect of Rowling and Pullman (Hopper 2006). It acknowledges the argument for the value of popular fiction, the importance of children's tastes and the problems of canonicity. Yet it cannot avoid distinctions of literary merit by teachers and librarians which produce several references to Pullman's work, including a recommendation of a pack of teaching materials and three citations in the References; while Rowling's work is mentioned nowhere in the article, an omission which seems astonishing given the size and impact of the Potter phenomenon.

This chapter will return to these kinds of distinction, not least because they appear very different from the point of view of transmedia adaptation.

The media franchises have received rather less academic attention than the novels. There is some work on the Potter cross-media franchise (Mackey 2001; Appelbaum 2003), but little detailed analytical work on how exactly the stories are transmuted across different media, with a few exceptions, such as a detailed analysis of the game of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Gunder 2004); and multimodal analyses of book, film and game of *The Chamber of Secrets* (Burn and Parker 2003; Burn

2004, 2006). More recently, Margaret Mackey has looked across the breadth of the Pullman adaptations, considering transformations across book, film, game, merchandise and fan fiction (2012). This is a welcome, even-handed evaluation of the work of the reader, broadly conceived, from the ‘cognitive and emotional effort’ of imagining a literary fictional world (115), through the different sensory engagements with film and theatre, to the ergodic actions (Aarseth 1997) demanded by the game and the inventiveness of fan fiction authors.

The following sections will look at the relationship between literature and play, moving on to consider episodes from two games: *The Golden Compass* and *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*.

Playful Literature, Literary Games

A conundrum of literature-into-game adaptation is that in many cases it can appear that the literary text itself has been designed to be the perfect videogame, even though the biographies of the authors tell us that this is impossible. The obvious example is Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, which gave rise to an entire genre of role-playing games (RPG), first as table-top Dungeons and Dragons, then as digital games following two distinct trajectories in Japan and the USA/Europe (Carr et al. 2006), and finally as a wide range of medieval-themed online RPGs such as *Skyrim*, the fifth instalment in *The Elder Scrolls* series (Bethesda Game Studios/Bethesda Softworks 2011). One answer to the conundrum is that games thrive on archaic forms of narrative in their structure, designed as it is around the algorithms of the game engine and the programmed repeatable behaviours of character, combat, quest and mission, similar in many ways to the oral-formulaic structures of ancient poem-narratives. Like these pre-modern texts, games are ideally suited to fantasy content, where quests, potions, puzzles and magical resolutions suit the programmed nature of the narrative, and the appetites of player communities for transmedia fantasy. By the same token, the ‘heavy hero’ qualities discerned by Walter Ong in his account of the ‘psychodynamics’ of oral narrative (2002) work well in videogames, and in contemporary popular film and television. Protagonists with a few memorable qualities, agonistic in their inclination to solve problems through external action rather than internal angst, suit videogame design well, where action can be readily modelled and programmed (Burn and Schott 2004).

Lyra and Harry are more complicated entities, however. As noted above, many of their qualities belong to the *Bildungsroman* tradition. They undergo certain forms of psychological development, we are party to their thoughts and emotions through the narrative focalisation implemented by their authors, and they operate through strategy, cunning, planning, negotiation of social relationships and friendships, as much as they do by action. However, they also operate by the mechanisms of folktale: Harry’s wand, spells, cloak of invisibility; Lyra’s daemon, alethiometer and armoured bear, buttressing the child protagonist against the power of the adult world. By the same token, these are game-devices-in-waiting. The affordances of formulaic folktale entities, eminently programmable in the algorithms of game engines, provide the satisfying balance of ludic structure and narrative structure which adventure games and RPGs seek (Carr et al. 2006).

In these and other ways, the books can be said to be playful texts, which aspire to the condition of games, a claim which can be made of children’s fantasy literature in general. When we consider familiar cultural extensions of the franchises, we can expand this claim somewhat. Merchandise surrounding best-selling texts, especially ones

followed by a film adaptation, might be perceived as a crass commercialisation from the viewpoint of, for example, the Marxist critique of Disneyfication offered by Jack Zipes (1995, 2012). By contrast, positive readings of media culture and audience agency are to be found in Chris Richards' account of a young girl's engagement with Disney's *Little Mermaid* which allows for the performative exploration of gendered identity (Richards 1995). The present study might consider how dressing up as Harry, in the Gryffindor cloak and scarf, a lightning bolt transfer, plastic spectacles, a wand, and a stuffed Hedwig, allows the child to inhabit the role, to dramatise it, perhaps with friends, perhaps at school book days or at fancy dress parties. Such activity enters the realm of play Roger Caillois termed 'mimicry' (2001): in effect, role-play, realised in myriad forms in all cultures, including in the virtual embodiment of videogame avatars (Burn 2014).

Textual adaptations in the context of convergence culture and transmedia narrative will extend, then, to children's own adaptations combining the found resources of playground, home and their own bodies with those provided by commercial media. This is part of the context in which videogame adaptations are located. The following analysis will explore what transformations occur in the videogame versions, and how they expand the textual offer to the reader/viewer/player, asking what kinds of resources for cultural engagement they provide; and what models of literacy would be adequate to such engagement.

From Literature to Game I: Cunning, Combat and Magic in *The Golden Compass*

The Golden Compass is an action adventure game released on all platforms, drawing on both the book and the film. The analysis here focuses on Lyra's encounter with Iofur Raknison, king of the armoured bears in Svalbard. In the novel, Lyra faces Iofur with four advantages: her wits, her daemon, Pan, the alethiometer, and Iorek. Like Odysseus, she succeeds by cunning, lies and persuasiveness: rhetorical weapons styled in the vernacular of the tomboy and street-urchin characteristics that Pullman creates in the dialogue. The alethiometer provides the strength of knowledge, which, although quasi-scientific in its workings, confers a mystical, soothsaying character on Lyra. Pan operates as a second self and an extension of Lyra's body. Iorek Byrnison, the armoured bear, whom she commands with a debt of gratitude, provides the physical strength required for the agonistic function of what Ong terms the 'heavy hero' of oral narrative (2002), and, like Pan, works almost as an extension of her narrative role.

The game adapts these qualities into game mechanics. The most straightforward of these is a shifting point of view in which the player moves between Lyra, Pan and Iorek, playing with their respective qualities or weapons. In each point of view, the player's health meter changes to represent the appropriate character. In narrative terms, the focalisation set up by the videogame operates more specifically than focalisation in the novel. It is not simply a question of the reader's closeness to the character in question, or even through whose eyes they see. The point of view is structured by the game screen: we are positioned fixedly behind the character; the health meter represents the character; the game controls produce different movements, actions and on-screen consequences.

Pan and Iorek function as interchangeable ludic consciousnesses and virtual embodiments. Both offer an extension of Lyra's virtual body, Pan allowing her to swing across spaces to navigate difficult territory, Iorek allowing her to gallop through

the icy wastes of Svalbard, swiping wolves and witches who threaten their progress. Both serve as proxy actors for the child protagonist, supplementing her powers, rescuing her from situations in which her physical power would fail her. Lyra survives partly by her own wits and skill, partly by the might and magic of her fantastic aides.

To this extent, the games can be said to strengthen the folktale elements of the narrative. Indeed, such an effect might be expected. Games, like oral narrative, are made up of formulaic structures. They may seem very different; but a game character, a bundle of media databases animated by the algorithms and rule systems of the game, is not so different from a character in oral narrative, except that the databases there are made up of linguistic tropes and repeatable clusters, and the algorithm is narrative and in some cases prosodic. To put it simply, games are good at formulaic narratives in the sense that they are programmed entities: folktale is what they do well, specifically Ong's psychodynamics of oral narrative, such as redundancy, 'heavy heroes' built of a few memorable traits and an agonistic approach to narrative obstacles (Ong 2002; Burn and Schott 2004).

However, a different kind of transformation is produced by the game mechanics representing Lyra's cunning and the alethiometer. The former is represented by a screen mode which challenges the player to succeed in a series of mini-games in order to secure an effective lie, a certainty that Lyra's next statement will be believed by the character facing her (Figure 26.1). While the mini-games bear no lexical relation to the statement, being a generic series of catching, matching and avoiding games, rather like embedded Space Invaders or PAC-MAN games, they do emphasise qualities of skill and quick-wittedness which are appropriate for Lyra's behaviour in a more general sense. Also, they remind us that, in her ingenious lies to the adults of Jordan College and Bolvangar alike, she is playing games with the adults. In this sense, the literary text anticipates the game, enacting the dangerous game of deceit Lyra plays with Iofur Raknison, a game formalised in the videogame mechanics. Such ludic structures have an origin in folktale, as in Stith Thompson's index of deception motifs (see Dundes 1997).



Figure 26.1 Deception mini-game in *The Golden Compass*

The function of the alethiometer in the game is again a mechanic translating a feature of the novel. Lyra uses it in the novel to convince the bear-king, Iofur Raknison, that she is Iorek Byrnison's daemon – so ironically the truth-device is used for deception in the interests of the protagonist's progress towards her goal, and indeed as a defining feature of her character, Lyra Silvertongue. In the book, the account of the alethiometer's use at this point is extremely brief: the elaborate learning process presented earlier in the story has now become a simple asking of questions. The first question posed by Iofur Raknison as a test is that she tell him the first creature he had killed. The process is conducted in two short sentences:

What was the first creature he had killed?

The answer came: Iofur's own father.

In the game, the player must collect symbol meanings, and these can only be deployed in the alethiometer sequence if the player has successfully collected them, and thus 'knows' them. The alethiometer then displays the three symbols required to answer the question, and the player uses the game controls to move the device's hands to each symbol in turn, triggering the answer to the question (Figure 26.2). In this case, the symbols produced by the alethiometer are Death (an hourglass), The Masculine (Wild Man) and Sin (an apple). The player must successfully turn the hands of the alethiometer to these symbols to find the answer:

The first creature King Ragnar ever killed was his own father. Ragnar had been alone on the ice as a young bear, and had come across a solitary bear. They had quarrelled and fought, and Ragnar had killed him.

It is clear that various processes of expansion and contraction, elaboration and reduction, are happening in this series of transformations, and it cuts both ways. The novel elaborates the dialogue, the representation of the protagonist's emotion, and the description of action; it contracts the process of consulting the alethiometer. The game does the reverse – contracting the dialogue, expanding the alethiometer's function. How might we account for such transformations?

A multimodal analysis suggests some answers. Games are multimodal assemblages incorporating the representational modes of language (spoken and written), visual design, animated dramatic action, virtual embodiment, music and sound, and the 'orchestrating' mode of rules and computer code (Burn 2017). Here, we can observe that the language of the dialogue is stripped back to the elements needed to correspond to the ludic interchange between the player's avatar, Lyra, and the non-player character (NPC) Ragnar. However, the transition to game has also involved transduction from printed dialogue to dramatic voice acting, in Dakota Blue Richards' performance for the game of the role she played in the film. The affordances of tonal contour, timbre and dynamics of pace and volume extend the semiotic reach of the printed dialogue, just as they do in the film, adding affective charge. The visual design, meanwhile, adds detail: the richness of Ragnar's palace, the fur of his body, the movement of Lyra's hair. Meanwhile, in the mini-games determining the success of Lyra's deception and her use of the alethiometer, the modality of the game shifts from a 'naturalistic modality' (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 160), resembling the dramatised action of films and animation, to a 'technological modality', a screen of information and icons. This modality is the fur-

thetst the game goes from book and film, the least naturalistic, the closest to the modality of arcade games which are the antecedents of these mini-puzzles. In this modality, the expansion of the detailed procedures of the game represents an amplification of the ludic process only briefly hinted at in the corresponding part of the novel.

A further mode to consider is that of virtual embodiment, incorporating movement, voice and other audiovisual representations of embodied agency. In this respect the virtual body of the avatar functions as an apparatus for the normal processes of focalisation as we are familiar with it in narratological theory (Genette 1980). It determines who we are connected with in the game, from whose perspective we ‘see’ the events, whose thoughts we hear. However, games go further in fusing what social semiotic theory describes as the ‘represented participant’ and the ‘interactive participant’ – in more familiar terms, the character and the reader/player (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). In the sequence which follows Lyra’s meeting with Iofur, the player is cast in the role of Iorek, as he engages in single combat with the bear-king.

In the fight with Iofur (re-named Ragnar in the game), a major confrontation with an enemy character (in narrative terms), and a powerful end-of-level boss (in ludic terms), the actions available to the player include slashing and blocking moves and biting actions, all executed with the controls of the respective console or the PC keyboard. The attack moves are: High Bite, Mid-Slash, Low Belly Slash and Body Slam. Figure 26.2 shows the player executing a low belly slash. In the case of the Nintendo Wii, the Wii’s two controllers, the Wii-mote and nunchuk, are waved, involving a dynamic, gestural engagement more akin to dramatic action than the pressing of keys on the PC keyboard.



Figure 26.2 The player executes a low belly slash as Iorek

Such actions may seem reductive and sparse compared to the language of the book. A good example is the sentence describing Iorek’s final, decisive blow:

Like a wave that has been building its strength over a thousand miles of ocean, and which makes little stir in the deep water, but which when it reaches the shallows rears itself up high in the sky, terrifying the shore-dwellers, before crashing down on the land with irresistible power – so Iorek Byrnison rose up against Iofur, exploding upwards from his firm footing on the dry rock and slashing with a ferocious left hand at the exposed jaw of Iofur. (Pullman 1995: 353)

It may seem to the casual observer – more so to the devoted bibliophile – that the quality of detail in this extended simile makes a wave of a nunchuk or a PS3 button press absurdly inadequate. The reply to such an objection lies in the nature of the player's engagement. The controls by this time will be invisible, and the player's cognitive and affective engagement will be invested in what I have referred to elsewhere as the 'semiotic amplification' (Burn and Parker 2003) of these apparently reductive actions: the audiovisual representations on the screen triggered by the player's action, so that they *feel* as if they are, at this moment, Iorek. Such investment, played out through game controls, interface and the feedback loop between these and the screen animation and sound, constitutes the role-play into which the player enters.

As in the previous sequence, the procedural nature of the game mechanics may seem to contrast sharply with the quality of Pullman's prose; yet echoes of the oral-formulaic appear at critical moments. This sentence, for example, describes the battle between Iorek and Iofur:

Iron clashed on iron, teeth crashed on teeth, breath roared harshly, feet thundered on the hard-packed ground. (Pullman 1995: 352)

This is not the language of Blake or Milton, but is closer to the Beowulf-poet in its Germanic lexis, its redundancy, its alliteration, its balanced clauses. The agency of body-weapons, armour and teeth, and the onomatopoeic action verbs, *clashed*, *crashed*, *thundered*, *roared*, conduct the agonistic narrative function of the focalised character here, just as the biting and slashing mechanics do in the game. The differences are the multimodal expansion of the text in audiovisual media; and most importantly, the translation of these verbs into the feedback loop of player action. In terms of the audience's cognitive-affective engagement, the imagined projection of reader response becomes ludic action, ergodic engagement, as Mackey notes (2012: 120).

The nature of such an experience must remain largely speculative until the research can include examples of actual play, to determine the extent to which the game does in fact provide the experience of 'being' Lyra or Iorek, and what this might mean to a fan, or to a casual reader (or indeed a casual player). The following section, then, will draw on a study of a Harry Potter game which included interviews with young players.

From Literature to Game II: Spells, Strategy and Player Culture in *The Chamber of Secrets*

The game of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* was released on all platforms, and combined a strong narrative trajectory in which the player is drawn inexorably through the main events of book and film, with side games (notably the arcade-style adaptation of Quidditch), puzzles, collecting challenges which unlock features and

provide rewards, and set-piece end of level battles against powerful ‘boss’ enemies, game transformations of giant opponents in the novel and film.

The research project on which this section draws took account both of the multimodal adaptations of Rowling’s novel in film and videogame, as well as reports of play by eight twelve-year-olds who had read the book, seen the film and played the game (Burn 2004). The study focuses on a sequence which depicts the confrontation between Harry and the giant spider Aragog, who, like Iofur/Ragnar, functions as a powerful opponent in narrative terms, and an end-of-level boss in ludic terms.

While I have argued above that Pullman’s prose owes something to the muscularity of archaic, Germanic narrative as well as the more obvious modern literary influences more commonly noted, Rowling’s style is arguably even closer to oral narrative. In this respect, the distinction here is not only between adult and children’s literature, but between the aesthetics of popular and ‘literary’ fiction, with Rowling’s prose located firmly in the former category, and Pullman’s at least partially in the latter. Though this results, as we have seen, in unfavourable critical judgements for Rowling, her prose derives its dynamic from a different lineage: not Blake and Milton, but folktale (witches, dragons, shape-shifters, magic mirrors), superhero film fantasy (flying cars, cloaks of invisibility), irreverent comic strip (grotesque relatives, wacky potions, exaggerated bullies). Its style conforms in many ways to Stephen King’s robust defence of popular fiction (King 2000b) in its general lack of markers of high literary style:

Even as he reached for his wand, Harry knew it was no good, there were too many of them, but as he tried to stand, ready to die fighting, a loud, long note sounded, and a blaze of light flamed through the hollow. (Rowling 1998: 207)

In certain ways, the language bears out the claim that Rowling’s stories are close relatives to oral narrative. Sentence boundaries give way to the flow of clauses, the more important information unit in speech, memorably described by Michael Halliday:

The complexity of the written language is its density of substance, solid like that of a diamond formed under pressure. By contrast, the complexity of spoken language is its intricacy of movement, liquid like that of a rapidly running river. (1989: 87)

Furthermore, Rowling’s prose, like the more ludic aspect of Pullman’s, displays a predominance of Anglo-Saxon vocabulary here. Elsewhere in this episode, the affective quality of the prose is created partly by verbs which are again predominantly Anglo-Saxon in origin, representing extreme or intensified sensory experience: *flamed, thundering, screeching, knocking, yelled, seized, slammed, crashed, howling*.

In this sense, Rowling’s prose is ludic: a style suited to the agonistic quality of the protagonists of oral narrative by the same token invokes the agonistic dimension of games identified by Roger Caillois (2001). If young people engage in the ludic mimicry of the Potter mythos, then they also enjoy the combat around which the whole sequence of novels is organised: the perennial struggle between Harry and Lord Voldemort.

The confrontation with Aragog is a side mission, but is structured like the battle between player and end-of-level boss nonetheless. However, the remarkable difference between the book and the game is that Harry barely fights in this sequence in the novel, only performing five actions:

Harry spun round
 . . . he reached for his wand . . .

. . . he tried to stand . . .
 . . . diving into the back seat . . .
 They smashed their way through the undergrowth.

An explanation of Harry's passivity here may be that Aragog's function in the wider narrative structure of the book is as a smaller obstacle en route to the final confrontation with Voldemort and the basilisk. This progression of increasingly powerful enemies resembles the hierarchy of opponents in action adventure games and RPGs: end-of-level boss monsters delay the player briefly, but the end of the last level features the battle with the main boss. In RPGs, such hierarchies are demonstrably derived from older forms of narrative, in particular Tolkien's, which themselves derive from archaic narrative, and *Beowulf* in particular (Carr et al. 2006).

The game is markedly different. The player, as Harry, has to cut the masses of web suspending the platform on which Aragog stands, so that the spider sinks into a pit, defeated. He cuts the web and attacks the spider using the *Rictusempra* spell (left mouse button); and evades the attacks of Aragog and an ever-multiplying host of small spiders by running (arrow keys) and jumping (control key) (Figure 26.3). These actions are effectively the verb-stock of the game grammar – we have control over six actions Harry can perform (four directions of movement, spell-casting and jumping). In narrative terms, this might seem profoundly impoverished; but in game terms, it is entirely normal to work with a 'restricted language' (Halliday 1989); and the pleasure lies in the skill of the player to deploy these resources well to meet the challenge of the game. This narrative of the game, then, effectively reverses the transitivity sequence of the novel, enhancing the agency of the protagonist.



Figure 26.3 The player as Harry shooting the web in *The Chamber of Secrets* game

The novel – indeed, the whole sequence of novels – balances the necessary vulnerability of the protagonist required by the *Bildungsroman* against the magical agency which is characteristic of the folktale hero. The former displays vulnerability in the interests of the plot trajectory and the growth of the character. The latter displays power in the interests of the agonistic function of the folktale protagonist, who in effect never grows but endlessly repeats his satisfying victory. Rowling has created, in effect, two Harry Potters: one who changes, develops, grows from child to adult, satisfying the young reader's aspirations to future maturity; and one who, like Jack the Giant Killer, is perpetually locked in combat with Voldemort, satisfying the perennial audience fantasy of the small person in an adult world. It is this latter folktale incarnation which the game is best suited to develop and amplify, translating the agonistic features of the folktale hero into the agonistic game mechanics of spells, power and health economies.

In all this, the question of cultural value remains elusive. In relation to the book it is partly addressed by the arguments above: by the vindication of popular fiction articulated by Stephen King, and applied to Rowling; and by the argument that Rowling's work continues features of folktale, to which judgements of canonicity are hardly relevant. However, it is much less clear how judgements of cultural value might extend to the media adaptations. Perhaps the most productive move here is to shift the focus of attention from the intrinsic features of the texts to the judgements of the audience: in effect, to adopt Bourdieu's model of the judgement of taste (Bourdieu 1984). It may be that this begs the question of the relationship between cultural value and textual design; but it does at least respond to Michael Rosen's previously-cited argument that the valuations of critics and adults in general have very little to do with those of children.

In this spirit, then, we can note that the game of *The Chamber of Secrets* is often cited by fans as among the best of the series adapted as part of the Warner franchise. A comment by the online fan 'Luna' gives an indication of its appeal:

I just loved how this game opened up Hogwarts to you and the world you're in, it felt like you were playing 'Grand Theft Potter', you could fly anywhere on your broomstick, there were a lot of collectibles to find and it had a lot of Zelda like elements to it for unlocking spells to go to different areas and simple RPG elements as well. (Luna n.d.)

This comment reveals a dramatic, virtually-embodied engagement with the modality of the game, an interest in the ludic mechanisms which the game engineers from literary tropes in the book, and a 'ludic literacy' (Buckingham and Burn 2007) connecting the game with her experience of *Grand Theft Auto* and the role-playing game genre. The perception by this fan of RPG elements is significant. RPG protagonists are notable for the development of the avatar, who grows through the course of the game, acquiring assets, powers, weapons and other qualities as they move through the levels (Carr et al. 2006). In this respect, while Rowling manages the growth of her hero in respect of the *Bildungsroman*, as noted above, she also manages his growth in ways immediately recognisable from the point of view of RPG structure. He acquires increasingly powerful and diverse spells, magical aids such as the cloak of invisibility, magical forms of transport such as the Ford Anglia, the Hippogriff and the broomsticks, and weapons in the form of wands. In this way, then, her work prefigures specific ludic structures in videogames.

The value of the game was recognised in different ways by the children participating in the research project. It was defended by some. Ali, for example, recognises the increased agency of the game player-character:

ALI: I've played the computer game version and I don't remember it that well, but I'm pretty sure that when the spider jumps up, or something, um, yeah, jumps up or something, you have to hit the cobweb underneath it till that breaks and the spider falls through . . . In the book and the film you just kind of, you talk to Aragog and then you jump in the car and you have to get away as quickly as you can, but in this one you actually have to do something.

She also makes a judgement about difficulty:

AB: To go back to the Aragog thing: is it easy?

ALI: No, cos the spider, I'm pretty sure that the spider, I'm pretty sure he lunges at you every now and then, you have to keep on running round the web so he, so that when he jumps forward to try and bite you, that you get out the way.

AB: And when you played this, did you kill the spider or did you get killed?

ALI: I think I had to try it a couple of times before I gave up and told my sister to do it for me, but I did try it several times.

This judgement is ambivalent – but the recognition of challenge in a game can be positive. Later in the interview, in response to a question about whether they feel they become Harry Potter, Ali replies:

ALI: It's kind of like someone who's inside Harry's head, um, spectating everything that's happening, and they know what he's feeling, and they know what he's seeing, and they, and they don't know anything else, it's like a little person sitting inside his head and listening to his thoughts and feelings.

While other participants felt less close to the player-character, she seemed to position herself much closer, as a kind of guiding consciousness for the avatar, which is interesting both as a description of focalisation in a videogame, and as an indicator of her positive valuation of the game.

By contrast, a boy in the group, Ochirbat, was dismissive of the game, describing it as 'lame', and going on to say:

OCHIRBAT: Yeah but Harry Potter's like sad, he's just like such a little, um, um, he's like a teacher's pet, he's just running around doing this stuff . . .

I'd like it if he could get better spells –

ILANA: Like Avada Kedavra, or something, a killing spell?

OCHIRBAT: No, like flame, like a flamethrower [*laughs*]

Though this looks like a deliberate provocation of those in the group who defend the Harry Potter stories, it appears that he has two motives for his critique of the game.

One is a general dislike of the Harry Potter character, who seems increasingly to represent a form of masculinity he wishes to distance himself from: too good, a ‘teacher’s pet’. The other is a specific judgement about the game itself. The apparently irreverent remark about the need for better spells, like a flamethrower, is made humorously, but also derives from his extensive experience of videogames. An earlier interview had revealed his experience of the *Resident Evil* series, in which the player does indeed acquire and use flamethrowers to defeat zombies. In some ways, then, his judgement of *The Chamber of Secrets* is that it fails to meet requirements for a satisfactory shooting game, judged by the standards of the genre.

Across the group of eight participating in this interview, there were many indications of what might count as an expanded form of literacy. They demonstrated understandings of how the agency of the characters changed across book and game; of how point of view, conventionally understood as first and third person in literature lessons, becomes something different in relation to games; of intertextuality – how elements of Rowling’s text were indebted to other texts, one girl citing Arthur Ransome’s *Pigeon Post* as a source for Harry’s owl, Hedwig; a boy noting the similarity between Aragorn and Tolkien’s giant spider, Shelob; yet another boy suggesting that Harry’s and Ron’s friendship resembled the loyalty of Sam Gamgee for Frodo in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Narrative Anatomies, Multimodal Literacies

To look across the texts of these towering figures of children’s literature, and then to look across from literature to game, and from game to child-player, suggests three conclusions.

Firstly, while the critical literature has emphasised, even exaggerated, conventional literary judgements of differences between the two, they may be more similar than is often suspected. The architecture of their imaginary worlds, the narrative trajectories of their protagonists, elements of their prose which most strongly deploy the legacy of oral narrative, all indicate their ludic nature, prefiguring specific aspects of games.

Secondly, the connection made in this chapter between oral narrative and the procedurality of videogames suggests why the games are not simply an adaptation of the books, but cast a new light on their ludic qualities. Rather than viewing them as commercial spin-offs, or as a regrettable descent into a debased form of media, we might consider a kind of conversation between game and book. One version of such a conversation is, of course, the design process of the videogames: the evolution of the alethiometer mini-games, for example, and the collection of the symbols from the book. Another is the critical conversation of the literary critic, who, rather than following the conventional trajectory of adaptation from one form to another, might consider a dialogic process in which the bones of the narratives are partially disarticulated by the videogame and offered for re-articulation by the critic or analyst.

Thirdly, this kind of process of anatomy can also describe the extended forms of cultural engagement practised by readers, fans and player communities. They too disarticulate the texts, refashioning disguises, adaptive fictions, play strategies and myriad forms of role-play. In the narrower world of education, this process goes by the name of ‘literacy’. But the kinds of anatomising beloved of literature curricula the world over, with their metaphor hunting, reductions of narrative to setting/character/plot, and their

canonical systems of cultural value, are not adequate to these wider cultural processes, nor do they do justice to these two authors, especially Rowling. Literature curricula need multimodal models of literacy to do justice to transmedia narrative and remix culture; the related art forms of literature, film, drama and videogame need to be connected in pedagogy as they are in the worlds of children and young people (Burn and Durran 2007). Meanwhile, the heritage models of culture which applaud the debt of Pullman to Milton and Blake while remaining blind to his debt to popular culture, while agonising over Rowling's literary merit, need to accommodate the energy of the popular aesthetic, and its growing importance in the digital practices of contemporary life.

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HYBRID NOVELS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

Eve Tandoi

PICTUREBOOK SCHOLARSHIP HAS developed into a vibrant field which draws on a range of disciplines to create a nuanced framework within which to explore primary texts and children's responses to them. However, when it comes to the increasing numbers of novels in which visual and verbal elements are brought into a 'synergistic relationship' (Sipe 1998: 98), recent studies suggest that picturebook theory may need revising before it can be applied to these kinds of texts. Despite novels with integrated visual elements like Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2003) and Liz Pichon's *The Brilliant World of Tom Gates* (2011) gaining increasing prominence and winning critical acclaim, there is still relatively little research conducted on such works.

One of the challenges of working in this area lies in the lack of a common term and, so far, researchers have used: 'multimodal novels' (Fjellestad 2010), 'multimodal experimental novels' (Gibbons 2012: 1), 'fusion texts' (Evans 2013: 3) and 'hybrid novels' (Sadokierski 2010; Walker 2013). On the whole, these terms all refer to novels in which a degree of narrative complexity is displaced from the semantic to the iconic level, making it impossible to read and respond to the story without attending to the visual elements. These may include illustrative elements including comic strips, diagrams, ephemera such as newspaper articles or screenshots, photographs and design elements including typography, layout and paratextual material. Due to the relative lack of research on these kinds of texts, I shall begin by explaining my own preference for the term 'hybrid novel' before going on to explore a handful of empirical studies that point towards the need to adapt picturebook theory to suit hybrid novels. Then I shall touch upon work conducted on hybrid novels from a Bakhtinian perspective, before looking more closely at examples of hybrid novels that draw on the comic tradition and conclude by briefly considering how this new term might facilitate further study into twenty-first-century children's and young adult's literature.

My own preference for the term 'hybrid novel' draws on postcolonial critic Homi Bhabha's theorisation of hybridity as a process that neither fuses nor reconciles opposites, but intervenes in the 'exercise of authority not merely to indicate the impossibility of its identity but to represent the unpredictability of its presence' (1994: 163). Working on hybrid novels written for adults, Katherine Hayles shows how these texts insist on their own materiality by employing 'strategies that entice readers to become intimate with the novels' bodies through the physical manipulations of their printed forms' (2013: 227). To picturebook scholars, the ways in which novels like Mark

Danielewski's *House of Leaves* (2000) display a heightened self-awareness is nothing new. However, the integration of visual elements that 'seduce us into stopping to look' (Sipe 1998: 101) has the potential to disrupt what Roland Barthes (1990) refers to as the proairetic code that encourages readers to engage in a process of anticipation and retrospection, building connections between narrative events. By inviting readers to consider alternative ways of making meaning, hybrid novels systematically draw attention to themselves as artefacts in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality.

In doing so, hybrid novels engage in a similarly deconstructive task to that described by Bhabha, making use of the book's potential to engage readers visually and kinaesthetically as a means of contesting the supremacy of written language in novels and disrupting its referential function. Reflecting on contemporary children's publishing, Margaret Mackey writes that 'even paper is taking on hybrid qualities' (2009: 5) as a result of new, often digital, approaches to textual engagement. Her observations echo those of Eliza Dresang who argued, ten years earlier, that 'connectivity, interactivity and access in the digital world' (1999: 14) explain some of the fundamental changes taking place in children's books. These changes include the introduction of new kinds of graphics and the use of different formats that facilitate experimental nonlinear structures, multilayered narratives and more interactive formats.

In *Children Reading Picturebooks* (2016), Evelyn Arizpe and Morag Styles point out that because children expect picturebooks to have words and pictures they are more likely to appreciate how the picturebook would be incomplete if either visual or verbal elements were removed. On the other hand, the same is not necessarily true for novels; when asked to read and respond to Walter Dean Myers's *Monster* (2001), Susan Lee Groenke and Michelle Youngquist (2011) found that a class of fourteen- to fifteen-year-olds neglected to attribute significance to the text's graphic elements. Consequently, the young people struggled to successfully navigate the combination of visual and verbal elements within the hybrid novel because they were unaware of the role that design elements play in prompting readers to adapt their reading approach to suit the different text-types – such as film scripts, diary entries and photographic portraits – contained within *Monster*. Similarly, Jen Aggleton (2016) found that young people of a comparable age needed to be encouraged to recognise the role that Jim Kay's dramatic illustrations played in their reading of Patrick Ness's *A Monster Calls* (2011). She found that the lack of explicit references to the illustrations in *A Monster Calls* did not necessarily mean that the visual elements had not played a part in the young people's reading experience because, when prompted, they were able to discuss 'returning to illustrated moments in the book to re-examine the scenes' (n.p.) and reconsider their understanding of the story. In my own research (Tandoi 2016), I have also found that, when discussing David Almond's *My Name is Mina* (2010), eleven-year-olds made use of the text's different typefaces and layouts to identify moments within the book that they wished to share and reflect on. Like the young people in Aggleton's and in Groenke and Youngquist's studies, the children I worked with did not tend to refer to the text's visual aspects unprompted. However, the ease with which they used visual aspects to navigate the text by flicking backwards and forwards in the book enabled discussions that involved a high degree of textual scrutiny and reflection.

The recursive and reflective reading approaches which hybrid novels support are strongly reminiscent of those identified by picturebook researchers. However in

contrast to picturebooks, the relationship between visual and verbal elements in hybrid novels is normally stacked in favour of the verbal with visuals having to work much harder to seduce the reader into 'stopping to look'. Consequently, it is important to remember that the multimodality of hybrid novels may have an unsettling effect. This can be seen in Ness's *The Knife of Never Letting Go* (2008) which is set on a planet where men's thoughts are public and accessible to those around them as 'Noise'. In this book, the protagonist Todd's first-person narrative is represented using evenly spaced and justified text, which is then interspersed with sections of overlapping and scrambled phrases in a variety of fonts and sizes that bleed into the margins and off the page. These sections are designed to represent the cacophony of men's thoughts as they intrude upon Todd's consciousness and the reader's perusal of the story. In choosing to use typographical effects to represent Noise, Ness invites readers to look through the page and imagine how Noise affects characters within the fictional world and to look at the page and consider how thoughts – be they those of Todd or the community of which he is a part – are represented and read in novels.

The opportunity to look both *through* the page and *at* the page in a hybrid novel is often supported within the text by the protagonist or narrator engaging in metafictional discourses. Mackey (1990) argues that metafictional devices may support young readers learning how to negotiate more complex narrative structures because they make explicit the way in which these structures work, thereby supporting readers' understanding of them. The metafictional nature of hybrid novels is something that Maria Nikolajeva (1996) and Robyn McCallum (1999) each note in the final chapter of monographs that deal with much wider projects. In their separate work they examine a variety of hybrid novels for young adults published in the 1970s and 1980s that make use of reports, documents, newspapers, footnotes, epigraphs and transcripts to foreground the 'interplay of different voices' (Nikolajeva 1996: 113) within the text.

Although neither Nikolajeva nor McCallum refers to these texts as hybrid novels, their discussions provide an important springboard for my research. In particular, they both devote substantial space to analysing Aidan Chambers' *Breaktime* (1978) in which the protagonist, Ditto, writes as a means of reflecting on issues related to his father's illness and his own sexuality, as well as a means of responding to his friend's challenge that literature is no more than an outmoded game people play that reduces life to a set of neat untruths. Despite employing a single first-person narrative voice, *Breaktime* refrains from depicting the young protagonist's subjectivity as stable and unified by introducing a range of different text types that are representative of the diverse reading and writing practices of young adults in the 1950s, such as handwritten letters, typewritten documents, graphic panels, manuals and play scripts. These construct an understanding of subjectivity that is in keeping with Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of language as heteroglossic – composed at every level by a coexistence of different discourse including social dialects, professional jargons and generational languages (Bakhtin 1981). Like Nikolajeva, McCallum draws on Bakhtin to argue that 'an individual's consciousness and sense of identity is formed in dialogue with others and with the discourses constituting the society and culture s/he inhabits' (1999: 3). These discourses tend towards being either '*authoritative*' or '*internally persuasive*' (Bakhtin 1981: 342, original italics). That is, they can either aspire to being authoritative, hermetically sealed and self-contained structures that accept no challenges or they can aspire towards being internally persuasive and open to being 'freely developed,

applied to new materials, [and] new conditions' (346). The diverse text types included within *Breaktime* draw attention to the heteroglossia inherent in individuals as well as societies making it an example of internally persuasive discourse. Both Nikolajeva and McCallum recognise that the hybrid novels they examine have this in common because they all involve the reader in 'active processes of inferring and constructing both story and meaning' (McCallum 1999: 207) by engaging with the interplay of different discourses represented within them.

In keeping with a Bakhtinian understanding of language as socially situated, the typewritten documents in *Breaktime* draw attention to the technologies of inscription present at the time. However, since *Breaktime* was published, the modes and means through which young people communicate have changed, and this is beginning to be reflected in the much wider range of integrated visual elements used in hybrid novels that include ephemera such as screenshots, text messages, emojis and emails. However, in keeping with earlier examples, hybrid novels like Almond's *My Name is Mina* and Frank Cottrell Boyce's *The Unforgotten Coat* (2011) make use of the synergy between visual and verbal elements to explore the tensions and contradictions inherent in storytelling. Some texts slip into hybrid forms for short sections of the narrative, such as in Anthony McGowan's *Henry Tumour* (1999) and Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief* (2007) where comic strips are employed to represent moments within the narrative where words appear insufficient. Dave McKean is an illustrator who has collaborated with a number of authors such as S. F. Said to explore how dream-like states or intuitive knowledge may be represented in fiction for children and young adults. However, perhaps one of the most commercially successful forms of hybrid novels for children and young adults circulating at the moment is the cartoon diary.

The popularity of series like Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: A Novel in Cartoons* (2008) or Pichon's *The Brilliant World of Tom Gates* (2011) is particularly interesting as such books appear to function as both literary phenomena and playground fads. Despite their apparently close alignment with the age-old genre of the teenage diary, these series are closer both in kind and for their position on the market to the older comic series of the 1950s and 1960s. The result is a hybrid novel which integrates into the diary format the quick, at times slapstick, and at other times dry, humour of the comic strip, in the form of wilfully rushed and clumsy cartoons. Anecdotal reports from teachers seem to associate these series with the speedy and pleasurable consumption normally associated with sweets or loom bands because the books are collected and exchanged in the playground. From their closeness to cheap comics, furthermore, these series are anchored within a kind of reading traditionally disapproved of by adults.

However, although there are many copycats, there are also hybrid novels which put a similar tradition of dry and slapstick humour to work for different ends. Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2008) makes use of cartoon sketches to satirise stereotypes of Native Americans while still acknowledging their enduring appeal. The story follows the life of Junior, a member of the Spokane tribe who decides to attend a white school outside the reservation in which he lives. The book is brutal in depicting the poverty and violence of life on the reservation and the hostility that Junior faces when he decides to leave it. However, as Adrienne Kertzer points out in her excellent analysis, Ellen Forney's light-hearted and humorous comics play a major role in minimising the violence and rage in the text through the counterpoint they create. The result is a hybrid novel that is rich in 'risky laughter and radical

potential' (Kertzer 2012: 51). Hovering unsteadily between the verbal and the visual, between the valued format of a book and the – to many adults – distasteful suspicion of a fad, Kinney's, Pichon's and Alexie's hybrid novels are transgressive in their form, unsettling cultural expectations by working across different modes and storytelling traditions.

Throughout this chapter, I have touched upon a variety of hybrid novels which make use of the synergy possible between visual and verbal elements within the text to draw attention to the manner in which stories are told. There are, of course, many more examples of popular and award-winning hybrid novels which have not been discussed; one need only think of how paratextual elements are used in Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* (1999–2006) to subvert readers' expectations or how Brian Selznick's *Wonderstruck* (2011) makes use of wordless graphic panels to explore the perspective of its young deaf protagonist. However, although hybrid novels appear to be experiencing a surge in popularity, the notion of integrating visual elements into a written text has been around almost as long as the European novel; Lawrence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1762) also employs visual elements including use of blank pages, diagrams, em-dashes and asterisks to satirise the discourses of the novel. As the literary critic Terry Eagleton points out:

The novel from Defoe to Woolf is a product of modernity, and modernity is a period in which we cannot agree even on fundamentals. Our values and beliefs are fragmented and discordant, and the novel reflects this condition. It is the most hybrid of literary forms, a space in which different voices, idioms and belief systems continually collide. (2005: 6–7)

Eagleton's understanding of the novel as a literary form or space in which current voices, idioms and belief systems collide is in keeping with Bakhtin's definition of it as 'a zone of contact with the present' (1981: 7) that makes 'wide and substantial use of letters, diaries, confessions, the forms and rhetoric associated with recently established courts and so on' (33). Both critics point to the way in which novels draw on different discourses to construct an image of the heteroglossia present within society and, in so doing, establish a living contact with the reader's own reality.

Therefore, the question must be raised as to what the term 'hybrid novel' adds to children's literature theory? It could be argued that all novels are fundamentally hybrid because they are all a product of modernity and they all seek to reflect the fragmented and discordant state of our values and beliefs. However, like the term 'picturebook', the term 'hybrid novel' draws attention to the way in which some novels make use of the semantic, iconic and at times physical properties of books to explore ways in which stories are told. In the twenty-first century, it is hard to deny how important it is for children and young adults, who receive steady streams of information, entertainment and cultural knowledge from a variety of multimodal forms, to be not just literate but 'multiliterate' (Cope and Kalantzis 2000: 5; see also Margaret Mackey's chapter in this volume (Chapter 17)). The term 'hybrid novel' alerts the reader to the manner in which authors are increasingly making use of a range of modes which act as 'dynamic representational resources' that invite readers to engage actively with texts, continuously remaking them 'to achieve various cultural purposes' (ibid.). There are still a wide variety of hybrid novel types which need to be explored and there is not yet enough empirical evidence to be able to say how children and young people respond

to them. However, agreeing upon a common term is an important first step towards exploring these new constructions of contemporary childhood.

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CYBERSPACE AND STORY: THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MEDIA ON PRINTED CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Victoria Flanagan

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY HAS exerted a profound influence on human communication over the past decade, changing the way in which many of us conduct our daily lives. Printed books have not become redundant as a result of this transformation, as some feared, but have instead showed signs of change and renewal (see also Martin Salisbury's chapter in this volume (Chapter 15)). Children's authors, in particular, have embraced the digital revolution and sought to produce books that reflect the nature of communication in the digital era. Such narratives adopt the format and style of social interactions in cyberspace: novels are produced in blog or chat room format, they incorporate digital messaging into more traditional story formats, and are thematically concerned with the relationship between real and virtual selves. A significant effect of this phenomenon is therefore ideological, as printed children's books which engage with cyberspace not only endorse experimental narrative forms but also validate the role of digital technology in the development of children's identities and in their perception of how social interactions are conducted. Children's fiction published in the new millennium, especially literature for adolescent readers, frequently depicts young people as actively engaging with digital technology in ways that are productive and empowering. As a result, these fictions demonstrate the stylistic responsiveness of literature to technology but are also involved in a project that promotes children's engagements with cyberspace as meaningful and ultimately beneficial to the processes of identity formation and maturation.

Cultural Anxieties about Digital Technology

Computer technology now plays an extremely prevalent role in the lives of children and adolescents. Public debate about these technologies, however, has often focused on the potential harm that may be caused to children who use them. Such debates have centred on risks such as exposure to inappropriate (or illegal) content, potential encounters with paedophiles, and the phenomenon of cyberbullying, amongst other concerns. David Buckingham further explains that 'the individualised provision of technology undermines the potential for parental control and mediation' (2013: 11). Parents are unable to scrutinise what kinds of content their children are accessing digitally, which can ultimately lead to a lack of understanding

and induce anxiety. The combined effects of media hysteria about the detrimental effects of digital media on children with genuine parental concern have created a popular perception that the relationship between children and digital media is one primarily characterised by risk – and this negative focus has ‘often come at the cost of a broader appreciation of the benefits of the convergent media environment’ (Crawford and Lumby 2011: 5).

Noga Applebaum’s 2010 study of technology in science fiction writing for children and adolescents confirms that literature for children often pursues an ‘anti-technology’ agenda. She concludes her project with an explicit warning about the dangers of ‘supplying young people with an excess of cautionary tales that not only demonise technology but also ignore its creative potential’ (159). The result, she argues, is that ‘a child reader absorbing these messages may be ill-prepared for growing up in an increasingly technologised age’ (ibid.). An example of this type of ideological representation is M. T. Anderson’s celebrated young adult novel, *Feed* (2002). Set in a future where individuals have an internet ‘feednet’ hardwired into their brains, the narrative is a comic satire about the use and abuse of communications technology. Critical discussions of the novel all focus on the state of passivity that the feednet engineers in Titus and his fellow citizens (Bradford et al. 2008: 166–8; Bradford 2010; Flanagan 2014: 130–6; Schwebel 2014: 198), a position summed up by Clare Bradford when she explains that, ‘the dystopian setting of *Feed* is a state of emptiness where the young are offered consumerism as a substitute for participation in citizenship’ (2010: 128). Instead of facilitating more engaging human relationships, the feednet results in diminished social connections and the death of language.

Feed explicitly reproduces the technophobic paradigm outlined by Applebaum as dominant in children’s literature from the 1980s. Fortunately, a counter-trend has emerged in books published since 2000, many of which seek to redress the previously established ‘technophobic’ trend in children’s fictions. Fictions which offer a positive depiction of children’s engagement with digital technology also function as a riposte to continued media representations of digital technology as harmful to children, as they thematically explore the varied ways in which cyberspace can enrich young lives. In addition to this ideological shift in terms of the way that children’s literature has begun to explore – in a positive fashion – the impact of digital technology on child subjectivity, a corresponding transition has occurred in relation to genre. Works of science fiction, such as *Ready Player One* (2013) by Ernest Kline and the young adult novels of Cory Doctorow, *Little Brother* (2008) and *Homeland* (2013), remain popular, but many children’s texts which deal specifically with the internet and its impact on young people tend now to be works of realism. These realist narratives, which I have referred to as belonging to an incipient genre of young adult fiction called ‘techno-realism’ (Flanagan 2014: 155) provide readers with realist representations of child and adolescent experiences in which the use of digital technology is depicted as a routine element of daily life. These books thus normalise the role of digital technology in the development of child and adolescent identity. The subgenre of techno-realism is responsible for significant textual innovation (fragmented narratives, polyfocalised narration, genre mixing, linguistic experimentation), but is also remarkable because it heralds an ideological shift in terms of how digital technology is conceptualised in printed books for children.

Adolescent Identity in Cyberspace

In *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (1999), N. Katherine Hayles warns that the conventional dichotomisation between virtual reality and materiality will have the detrimental effect of devaluing physical presence. A more preferable ideological direction, she argues, would be to conceive the disembodied nature (or 'pattern') of electronic data and embodied materiality as complementary. This, I propose, is exactly how children's novels published since 2000 construct the relationship between physical and digital selves. Within these techno-realist novels, cyberspace is presented as a very 'real' space for the acting out of identity development and peer relationships. One of the problems associated with the term 'cyberspace', which was first coined by William Gibson in his seminal work of science fiction, *Neuromancer* (1984), is that it can be defined in multiple ways. Robert Markley suggests that it 'has become a catch-all term for everything from email to GameBoy cartridges, as though each computer screen were a portal to a shadow universe of infinite, electronically accessible, space' (1994: 434). A more precise and technical definition would be one that refers to cyberspace as a 'spatialized visualization of all information in global information processing systems' (Novak 1993: 228). However, this characterisation fails to encompass the social dimension of cyberspace, and it is this aspect that children's literature has seized upon. My use of the term 'cyberspace' within this chapter therefore conforms with the definition offered by Chip Morningstar and F. Randall Farmer, who state that 'cyberspace is defined more by the interactions among the actors within it than by the technology with which it is implemented' (2003: 664). Children's literature, most specifically young adult fiction, published post-2000 has more and more frequently sought to depict cyberspace as collective, heterogeneous and empowering for child and adolescent subjects. Importantly, these narratives demonstrate that many of the rites of passage associated with the transition from adolescence to adulthood are now being played out on social media.

Although narrative representations of cyberspace have been evident in children's literature since the 1990s (with an exponential increase after 2000, reflecting children's increased access to digital media since this time), critical attempts to theorise textual engagements with cyberspace have been limited. Scholars have until now confined their attention to the genre of science fiction (Mendlesohn 2009; Applebaum 2010), or examined the practice of online gaming (Beavis, O'Mara and McNeice 2012). Alternatively, writers have focused on the process of digital adaptation, whereby printed books are adapted into iPad applications or ebooks (Hateley 2013). A notable exception to this is the work of Eliza Dresang, whose pioneering *Radical Change: Books for Youth in a Digital Age* (1999) was the first scholarly publication to embrace the changes engendered by the development and popularisation of the internet within printed literature for children. Interestingly, Dresang's arguments centre on printed books that share a common ethos with digital technology (rather than strictly depicting narrative engagements with technology). According to Dresang, there are three digital concepts that 'underpin and permeate all the radical changes that are taking place in literature for youth: connectivity, interactivity, and access' (1999: 12). Her work thus focuses on books which, for example, endorse interactive subject positions for their readers – and Dresang consequently explains that many of the children's books to which she refers pre-date the digital revolution. It must also be pointed out that Dresang's ideas about the relationship between cyberspace and printed books for children were published

just prior to the major transformation that has occurred in Western societies in the third millennium: in that many aspects of daily life (social, as well as business) have been transferred to the online arena.

The question of how digital technology affects daily life and individual experience has quite evidently resonated with children's authors over the past decade – especially since children, and teenagers in particular, have proven themselves to be sophisticated and highly adaptive users of new technologies. The propensity for cyberspace to reshape human identity and culture has been a key element of posthumanism for the past three decades (see also my chapter on posthumanism in this volume (Chapter 2)). For Katherine Hayles, whose work is seminal in the fields of literature and science, cyberspace is a deeply ambiguous realm that has the simultaneous potential to 'expose the presuppositions underlying the social formations of late capitalism and to open new fields of play where the dynamics have not yet rigidified and new kinds of moves are possible' (1993: 175).

Social Media on the Printed Page

One of the more radical ways in which printed children's literature engages with cyberspace is in its simulation of digital genres. Rather than being rendered out of date by digital forms of communication and entertainment, printed books for children have actually been revitalised by incorporating both stylistic and ideological change in response to the increasing ubiquity of social media. In doing so, these narratives have adopted hybridised generic forms – because they don't simply mimic communication in cyberspace, they instead function by imposing more traditional narrative structures upon the collective, dialogic and frequently chaotic exchanges that are typical of social interaction in cyberspace.

Train Man (Nakano 2004), a wildly popular Japanese novel that was later translated into English, is one of the earliest examples of young adult fiction which uses typographic and narratological experimentation in order to recreate a digital experience within the confines of a traditional printed page. *Train Man* is best described as chaotically polyphonic, as it contains posts from what appear to be hundreds of different contributors. The novel is remarkable because it forsakes most narrative conventions: it is genuinely dialogic, the plot is meandering and lacks the linear causality typical of fiction for children and adolescents and its pages abound with the specific forms of typographic experimentation (emoticons, pictograms) that characterise digital communication. Other key examples of young adult fiction structured so as to imitate digital genres include Lauren Myracle's *Internet Girls* series (2005–14), which takes the form of instant messages and chat room posts, and the improbable but nevertheless entertaining *OMG Shakespeare* series, in which Shakespearean plays are comically retold in text message format. Titles include *srsly Hamlet* (2015) and *Macbeth #killingit* (2015). (The authorship of both titles is attributed to 'William Shakespeare and Courtney Carbone'.) Each title in this series adheres to the basic plot structure of its pretext, so is not a radical reversion in that respect, but inventively modernises the language and register of the characters' dialogue. For example, after Hamlet has mistakenly murdered Polonius, he sends his mother, Gertrude, a photograph of a bloodstain on the floor, captioned: 'Anyone know a good lawyer?' (59). The

use of contemporary, idiomatic language in this series functions to problematise the presumed universality and high-culture status of Shakespeare's work, as it transforms these texts into comic parody.

In addition to prompting experiments with narrative form and structure, the increasing prominence of cyberspace in the lives of children and young adults has motivated authors to explore the ideological impact of online forms of communication on the formation of child/adolescent identity. Megan Musgrave's important study of this phenomenon, *Digital Citizenship in Twenty-First-Century Young Adult Literature: Imaginary Activism* (2017), argues that such literature draws adolescent readers into philanthropy and political activism by imaginatively exploring the ways in which cyberspace brings communities together and encourages young people to exercise their citizenship rights. Issues such as privacy, surveillance and freedom of information are explored in the young adult fiction of Cory Doctorow, for example, but Musgrave also extends her analysis to look at how cyberspace is presented to young readers as a forum for exploring topics such as disability, gender and sexuality. One of the most exciting recent developments in young adult fiction is the ideological construction of cyberspace as a safe, nurturing, exploratory and pro-feminist space for young women. Rainbow Rowell's novel *Fangirl* (2013), a metafictional examination of feminine subjectivity and sexuality in the context of fan fiction, and Susie Day's short story, 'Tumbling' (2015), about how two girls with a shared love for Sherlock/Watson slash (a form of fan fiction that imaginatively creates homoerotic relationships between characters from a particular text) embark on a romantic relationship, are a testament to how cyberspace is crafted in fictions for young readers as social space that enables the safe expression of non-heteronormative subjectivities and sexual desire.

In many of the fictions referred to within this chapter, cyberspace is not represented as something that is experienced 'separately' from the young protagonists' social reality. Instead, it is experienced in conjunction with their everyday lives, and the behaviours that they engage in while online are as integral to the construction of their individual identities as anything else that they experience in the real world. Adolescent subjectivity is represented in these techno-realist narratives as digitally mediated, networked and fluid, and, perhaps most importantly, the internet is constructed as a space that enables young people to engage in acts of self-styled expression and collective political activism.

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CODA

ALICE TO THE LIGHTHOUSE REVISITED

Juliet Dusinberre

EARLY IN *ALICE IN WONDERLAND*, Alice thinks of herself as two people, a child who cries, and another child, who is a cry-baby. The idea of two people runs right through the *Alice* books – a little girl or a serpent? – a tiny person or an enormous one? – a mad person or a sane one? – a human being or a creature? Many of the creatures are also dual – a baby or a pig? – a White Rabbit or . . . an Oxford don? – a frightening Queen with her courtiers, or just a pack of cards?

Alice's author knew all about being two persons – the mathematician and logician called Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, don at Christ Church College Oxford, and Lewis Carroll, creator of the *Alice* books. The two-person Lewis Carroll continues to fascinate and bewilder. Is he a Victorian gentleman whose love of little girls creates unease in modern sensibilities, reinforced by sentimental moments and cloying photographs; or a coruscating iconoclast, parodist, exploder of myths about children, an insurgent voice recognised and saluted by some of the most radical artists and writers of the next 150 years? How to reconcile these conflicting persona? Carroll the Victorian sentimentalist is there in the opening poem of the two *Alice* books – ‘Childhood’s dreams’, ‘Memory’s mystic band’ and in its farewell verses: ‘golden gleam’ . . . Life, what is it but a dream?’ (Carroll 1970: 23, 345), but in the texts themselves the Duchess would have had the head of this dreamer chopped off before he could paint a white rose red.

If Carroll allows the metaphors surrounding his memories of the childhood of the Liddell sisters to overpower him when his tale is told, the tale itself shows a robust awareness of the ways in which children were bedevilled by metaphors. At the beginning of *Alice in Wonderland* Alice, bored and restless, wonders whether ‘the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies’. The daisy chain, however, comes with literary baggage, as Carroll would certainly have been aware, being the title of the best-known work (1856) of Charlotte M. Yonge, famous in Carroll’s day for her children’s books. Yonge’s daisy chain forms the (unlikely) dream of a boy called Martin: ‘The Daisy Chain hung from the sky, and was drawing me upwards . . .’. His sister interprets it for him: ‘It is what we all feel, is it not? That this little daisy bud is the link between us and heaven’ (Yonge 1856: 61). Daisies and heaven. ‘What shall I do to be saved?’ cries Bunyan’s Christian in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, a book owned by every Victorian household boasting even a few books. Carroll’s question dumps the last three words, and offers instead a bored child asking only ‘What shall I do?’ (Dusinberre 1999a: 54–5). Alice’s answer is to bolt down a rabbit hole after a White Rabbit.

It is almost impossible to conjure up the mental and physical world children inhabited when *Alice in Wonderland* shot out of the sky like a meteor ready to obliterate

daisy chains and heaven in one blow. The Victorians struggled with two conflicting images of children: little angels or imps of Satan. Nothing was free from the benignly malignant hand of religion, which allowed a thin sugar coating to cover the medicine of moral improvement, as noted by Elizabeth Rigby as early as 1844 in an essay for the *Quarterly Review*:

The obvious intention of these writers is to do good, but the very officiousness of their services renders them unpalatable. The truth is, there is no getting rid of them. From the moment you open the book the moral treads so close upon your heels as to be absolutely in the way. (Rigby 1844: 7–8; quoted in Dusinger 1999a: 42)

Children were fed these books for Sunday reading, of which the most notorious was Maria Louisa Charlesworth's *Ministering Children* (1854), known to twentieth-century readers through the ribald revolt of E. Nesbit's Oswald Bastable in *The Wouldbegoods* (1901). The dumping of religion and the secularisation of children's books was a reformation comparable to that which ushered in Shakespeare's plays on the heels of the medieval mystery and morality plays. Gwen Raverat, artist, granddaughter of Darwin, friend of Virginia Woolf and author of *Period Piece: A Cambridge Childhood* (1952), remembers being told by her cousin Frances Darwin (later Cornford) 'that it was not at all the thing nowadays to believe in Christianity any more. It simply wasn't done'. Raverat reflects: 'Now I could read *The Daisy Chain* . . . and just take religion as the queer habits of those sorts of people, exactly as if I were reading a story about Mohammedans or Chinese' (Raverat 1952: 219; Dusinger 1999a: 73, 295 n.7). Freeing children's books from end causes, the pointing of morals and the stealthy promotion of religion had enormous consequences for writers for children after Lewis Carroll, but also for adults, as here with Raverat, who was part of the generation that had grown up with the *Alice* books. As the Duchess and Alice watch a croquet game, and Alice remarks that it is going quite well, the Duchess replies:

'Somebody said,' Alice whispered, 'that it's done by everybody minding their own business.'

'Ah, the moral of that is – "Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love, that makes the world go round!" well! It means much the same thing,' said the Duchess, digging her sharp little chin into Alice's shoulder as she added, 'and the moral of *that* is – "Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves."'

'How fond she is of finding morals in things!' Alice thought to herself. (Carroll 1970: 120–1)

With the deace of the moral of a story, the tyranny of meaning is overthrown. Carroll said that he was content for the books to mean anything the reader wanted. Virginia Woolf refused to allow that the lighthouse in *To the Lighthouse* was a symbol. It was just a lighthouse. Let the metaphors go hang.

The Duchess's pronouncement, 'Take care of the sense and the sounds will take care of themselves', provides another clue to Carroll's iconoclasm. The playing with sense and sounds is one of the hallmarks of the *Alice* books: the tortoise that taught us; the mustard mine: 'The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours'; catching a crab: 'a dear little crab, I should like that, said Alice'; and cats and bats: "'Do cats eat bats? Do cats eat bats?'" and sometimes, "Do bats eat cats?" for, you see, as she

couldn't answer either question, it didn't much matter which way she put it' (Carroll 1970: 28). In all these cases the dominance of meaning (sense) has to give way to the imperatives of sound – pence and pounds, sense and sounds, reeling, writhing and fainting in coils. Words become playthings, as they are to all children, a perception articulated by Robert Louis Stevenson in a brilliant essay called 'Child's Play', published by Leslie Stephen (father of Virginia Woolf) in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1878. Woolf called *The Waves*, no doubt with double meaning, as the voices of the children who form dialogues and monologues as in drama, 'a play-poem' (Woolf 1977–84: 3: 139). As the publisher of Freud's works (trans. James Strachey), she would have known his dictum that 'every child at play behaves like a creative writer, in that he creates a world of his own' (Freud [1908; 1907] 1978: IX: 143).

Alice to the Lighthouse – a title which initially made its publisher turn pale – is about the ways in which the *Alice* books became a seed-ground for different ways of writing for children and different ways of thinking about them. Alice is often a dissident, quietly dissenting from the world in which she finds herself, though often too polite and well-brought-up to do so openly. The author gives Alice her own space, often a silent space, in which her consciousness judges and ridicules the creatures around her without their being aware of it. This dissidence is present in many late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century children's books – Mary Louisa Molesworth's *The Cuckoo Clock* (1877), E. Nesbit's *The Story of the Treasure Seekers* (1899) and its companions, Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911), Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* (1930) with the feisty pirate Nancy Blackett – but this arresting change of direction is equally evident in books for adults, becoming a hallmark of works associated with the development of modernism. The Ramsay children in *To the Lighthouse* sit round the dinner table suppressing laughter while Mrs Ramsay serves *Boeuf-en-Daube*, just as Alice sits at the Mad Hatter's tea party inwardly passing judgement on her hosts. In Virginia Woolf's earliest novel, *The Voyage Out* (1915), the two young women, Helen Ambrose and Rachel Vinrace, provide a silent audience – 'highly trained in promoting men's talk without listening to it' – while Ridley and Mr Pepper discuss their colleague, whose book will never see the light of day because 'someone else has written it for him'. Pig and Pepper. Helen and Rachel leave the table: 'Glancing back, at the doorway, they saw Mr Pepper as though he had suddenly loosened his clothes, and had become a vivacious and malicious old ape' (Woolf 1915: 10–11; Dusinberre 1999a: 91–2). Here emerges another motif which can be traced back to Lewis Carroll, the relation between human beings and animals.

Lewis Carroll was the first to raise, six years after the publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859, the question of taxonomy. How are we to classify children? Aren't they nearer animals than adult human beings? A hideous baby but a rather fine pig? Many mothers would recognise the feeling (and not only mothers): 'I doubt that I shall ever have a baby', Virginia Woolf wrote to Violet Dickinson, describing her new nephew, Julian Bell: 'Its voice is too terrible, a senseless scream, like an ill omened cat. Nobody could wish to comfort it or pretend that it was a human being' (Woolf 1975–80: I: 331). The children in Nesbit's *The Wouldbegoods* consider the High-Born Baby they have stolen 'a rummy little animal'. But they are less complimentary when its screams cannot be silenced: 'Daisy was walking up and down with the Secret in her arms. It looked like Alice in Wonderland nursing the baby that turned into a pig' (Nesbit [1901] (1958): 158, 160). When Alice wanders in the wood in *Through the*

Looking-Glass she becomes confused about who she is, and joins up with a fawn, walking with her arm affectionately round his neck. But when they come out of the wood: “I’m a fawn!” it cried out in a voice of delight. “And, dear me! you’re a human child!” A sudden look of alarm came into its beautiful brown eyes, and in another moment it had darted away at full speed’ (Carroll 1871: 227). Alice is disappointed, but at least she can now remember her name. The question of taxonomy recurs with Alice’s encounter with the Unicorn: “‘What – is – this?’ he said at last’. On being told it is a child he remarks: “‘I always thought they were fabulous monsters’”. Alice retorts that she always thought unicorns were fabulous monsters, and the Unicorn proposes a pact: “‘If you’ll believe in me, I’ll believe in you. Is that a bargain?’” (Carroll 1970, 287; Dusinberre 1999a: 192–3). We have moved a long way from little angels dying doleful deaths and slips of the devil, for whose idle hands Satan is only too quick to find occupation. Carroll was the first children’s writer to see children in a continuum with animals, rescinding the barriers which separated them into different species, an innovation which has created a fruitful field for the study of children’s literature, as Zoe Jaques’s *Children’s Literature and the Posthuman* (2015) amply demonstrates.

With the collapse of a meaning dictated by the terms of life as a pilgrimage towards an afterlife, which had been so dominant in children’s books and which derives largely from the immense popularity of Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, often judiciously cut, abridged and illustrated – Maggie Tulliver in Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss* colours in the pictures of Apollyon – one large section of writing for children was speedily binned, namely the death narrative. Lewis Carroll’s unremitting death jokes in the *Alice* books slaughter some of the sacred cows of the Religious Tract Society and Victorian culture. If Alcott’s *Little Women*, published in 1868, exactly between the appearance of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871), is still structured on *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, with the death of Beth almost as powerful as that of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) (also a Pilgrim novel), how different is the funeral scene in Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, published in 1876, only five years after *Through the Looking-Glass*. Tom and his supposedly deceased friends burst into their own funeral service just as the minister is intoning his eulogy on them. The demise of the death narrative, which had exact parallels in every day Victorian life, fanned out from children’s books into the modernist experiments of the early twentieth-century. The representation of death was an imposition of power, not only in a social context, but in a literary context: the imposition of authorial power over the child reader, which the *Alice* books undermined, liberating authors for adults as well as for children.

Virginia Woolf, who suffered from the lugubrious lamentations for her own mother, who died when she was thirteen, depicts in *The Years* (1937) a child trying not to laugh at the excesses of the deathbed scene. Mrs Ramsay’s famous bracketed death in *To the Lighthouse* decentres death textually as well as emotionally. The dispatching of Rachel Vinrace in *The Voyage Out* is even more summary. Her acquaintances are less inclined to eulogy than Tom Sawyer’s: “‘Dead?’ she [Mrs Paley] said vaguely. “‘Miss Vinrace dead? Dear me . . . that’s very sad. But I don’t at this moment remember which she was’” (Woolf 1915: 441). The narrative which surrounds Colin Craven’s invalidism in *The Secret Garden* is a form of dominance which only the matter-of-fact and literal Mary Lennox can expose: “‘See here,’ she said. “‘Don’t let us talk about dying; I don’t like it. Let us talk about living. Let us talk and talk about Dickon. And

then we will look at your pictures” (Burnet [1911] 1971: 120; Dusinberre 1999a: 131). Virginia Woolf recalls that after their mother’s death her brother, Thoby Stephen, remonstrated: “‘It’s silly going on like this . . .”, sobbing, sitting shrouded, he meant. I was shocked at his heartlessness, yet he was right, I know; and yet how could we escape?’ (Woolf 1976: 95).

One mode of escape for a whole generation of children was through the re-establishment of the literal. In Beatrix Potter’s *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (sadly not represented in *Alice to the Lighthouse*) Old Mrs Rabbit warns Peter and his sisters against trespassing in Mr McGregor’s garden: ‘Your father had an accident there; he was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor’ (Potter 1902: 10). Beatrix Potter’s illustration of the pie didn’t make it to the printed version. But she was equally literal in *The Tale of Little Pig Robinson*. The two pigs Aunt Dorcas and Aunt Porcas ‘led prosperous uneventful lives, and their end was bacon’ (Potter 1930: 22). In Laura Ingalls Wilder’s *Little House on the Prairie* the cow and her calf are sold. Laura sighs: ‘There went all the milk and the butter’ (Wilder [1935] 1964: 212; Dusinberre 1999a: 259). One of the ways in which Lewis Carroll creates a space for a child’s voice to be heard in the *Alice* books is by insisting on the literalness of that voice.

‘Mine is a long sad tale,’ said the Mouse.

‘I can see that it is long,’ said Alice, ‘But why is it sad?’ (Carroll 1970: 51)

The words are printed on the page in the shape of a tail. Alice’s literalness is one of the most authentic aspects of Carroll’s representation of a child.

Arthur Ransome, also underrepresented in *Alice to the Lighthouse*, captures this literalness many times in his depiction of the swallows and amazons, never better than in *Winter Holiday* with the depiction of Dorothea, the most Alice-like of all of the children. Peggy and Dorothea decide to make the doctor stop in his tracks and explain Nancy’s illness. Peggy says it’s only jaw-ache, and Dorothea counters that their mother obviously thinks she’s really ill:

‘Oh, that’s just mother,’ said Peggy. ‘Well, anyway, we’ll give a bit of a shock to the doctor.’

‘He’s probably accustomed to illness,’ said Dorothea.

‘Holding him up, I mean,’ said Peggy. (Ransome [1933] 1974: 96)

The child’s common sense – a doctor will be accustomed to illness – aligns Dorothea with Alice.

The reinstatement of the literal in preference to the literary was to become a prime tenet in the development of modernism, both in art and literature. Roger Fry dismissed Victorian art as mawkish and sentimental, noting: ‘Perhaps we must reckon *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Rose and the Ring* as the only jewels that we have picked out of that mud’ (Fry 1934: 107). The *Alice* books were quickly recognised as a beacon for a new kind of representation. What was that representation to be like?

Robert Louis Stevenson was by no means the hero of Fry and Virginia Woolf and the new generation, who considered him mannered and artificial. But his conviction that what matters in writing is the medium not the message, words not meanings, is plentifully displayed in the *Alice* books and becomes a *credo* of modernism. The long tail printed on Carroll’s page is not only a tail, however, but a serpent, that creature with an undulating mythical, literary and moral heritage. Carroll robs it of

mythical significance, giving it instead a typographical identity: words arranged on a page. For the generations of children brought up on the *Alice* books words have their own life. This is a world inhabited by children as well as writers, and explored by Virginia Woolf in *The Waves* where each child has a special relationship with words (Dusinberre 1999a: 162–5). Many writers and artists wanted to escape the tyranny of meanings imposed by an authoritarian culture. Roger Fry was fascinated by Marian Richardson's experiments with children's drawings, and exhibited them in the Omega workshops, arguing that art could only move forward by rejecting a false reverence for tradition, and returning to the freedom of a child's untaught vision (Dusinberre 1999c: 22).

This different mode of perception is in part the consequence of a new interest in child psychology and development, pioneered in education by Froebel, in psychoanalysis by Freud and in child development by James Sully and others. *Alice to the Lighthouse* is not just about children's books and how they relate to adult writing, but about a whole culture turning towards childhood. This new direction was empowered by a consciousness that childhood offered a source of fresh feeling (as perceived earlier by Wordsworth and Coleridge), and that it was also vital to the understanding of adult development. This deepened interest in child awareness reaches its apotheosis in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* where the literal dawn is also a dawning of consciousness, as Woolf noted in her draft, 'Sensations'. Woolf wrote (on 20 August 1927) of the children's soliloquies in the novel: 'The thing is to keep them running homogeneously in and out in the rhythm of the waves' (Woolf 1977–84: 3: 312; Dusinberre 1999a: 153–4). The key concept of rhythm, so central to Virginia Woolf's creative processes, applies to both the waves and to language. She used metaphors of painting to describe what she was trying to do in the novel. Words must be used like paint. Roger Fry wrote to her after the publication in 1918 of her essay 'The mark on the wall': 'You're the only one now Henry James is gone, who uses language as a medium of art, who makes the very texture of the words have a meaning and quality really almost apart from what you are talking about' (Spalding 1980: 212).

Carroll pioneered in the *Alice* books the perception of language with a life of its own separate from meaning: 'Alice had not the slightest idea what Latitude was, or Longitude either, but she thought they were nice grand words to say' (Carroll 1970: 27). This is, whether the modernists liked it or not, Stevenson's country. He claimed that 'the motive end of any art whatever is to make a pattern' (Stevenson 1885: 543), to create volume and shape. Humpty Dumpty asks Alice her name, only to comment that it's a 'stupid name enough. . . . What does it mean?'

'*Must* a name mean something?' Alice asked doubtfully.

'Of course it must,' Humpty Dumpty said with a short laugh: '*my* name means the shape I am – and a good handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost.' (Carroll 1970: 263)

The abrogation of meaning is also an abrogation of control, which again surfaces in a dialogue between Humpty and Alice, when she protests that 'glory' does not mean, as he claims, 'a nice knock-down argument'.

'When *I* use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.'

‘The question is,’ said Alice, ‘whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.’

‘The question is,’ said Humpty Dumpty, ‘which is to be master – that’s all.’ (Carroll 1970: 269)

Children’s books before the *Alice* books celebrated the mastery of adult over child, but also of author over reader. When the new generation of *Alice* readers came of age, it was a different story.

E. Nesbit wrote at the beginning of *Five Children and It* (about a sand-fairy) that she was not going to write anything which would encourage the adult reader to write ‘How true!’ or ‘How like life!’ in the margin (Nesbit [1902] 1977: 22). Like many other children’s writers after Lewis Carroll, she wanted to free the child reader from the dominance of adult concepts of truth: the worship of facts, the dead hand of religion. Helen in *The Voyage Out* is afraid that when she returns her children may be saying the Lord’s Prayer, and declares, to the (pretended?) scandal of her listeners, that she would rather they told lies. Oscar Wilde in *The Decay of Lying* yearns for a time when ‘facts will be regarded as discreditable, truth will be found mourning over her fetters, and Romance, with her temper of wonder, will return to the land’ (Wilde 1891: 51). So is this a regression to the world of metaphor which had produced such a stultifying version of reality for children? Not really. A child’s view of truth and reality and even of facts is always different from an adult’s, and it was this fresh perception that creative writers and artists wanted to revitalise. Fry declared that art ‘demands the most complete detachment from any of the meanings and implications of appearances’ (Fry 1920: 51). Woolf thought of dedicating *To the Lighthouse* to him, but thought it wasn’t good enough. She drew her ideas about Lily Briscoe’s painting directly from Fry’s essay, ‘The artist’s vision’, in *Vision and Design*. In the novel William Banks is taken aback that Lily represents Mrs Ramsay and the six-year-old James by a purple triangle. She explains that she needed that shape and that darkness at that point in her design: ‘Mr Banks was interested. Mother and child then – objects of universal veneration, and in this case the mother was famous for her beauty – might be reduced, he pondered, to a purple shadow without irreverence’ (Woolf 1927: 85; Dusinberre 1999a: 103). Irreverence, the overriding spirit of the two *Alice* books, is a prime mover in the art and literature associated with the development of modernism in the early twentieth century.

Mother and child might be revered in Victorian culture, but the reverence accorded to Great Men became a prime focus of the next generation’s rebellion, a revolt fuelled by the *Alice* books. In *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* Alice is baffled by the Caucus Race in which the creatures ‘began running when they liked, and left off when they liked, so that it was not easy to know when the race was over’. After half-an-hour the Dodo calls out that the race is over, and they all gather round asking ‘But who has won?’ The question baffles the Dodo, ‘and it stood for a long time with one finger pressed upon its forehead, (the position in which you usually see Shakespeare, in the pictures of him)’ (Carroll 1970: 48). The statue of Shakespeare in the Poet’s Corner at Westminster Abbey is in just such a pose. *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* was published in 1865, just one year after the tercentenary celebrations of Shakespeare’s birth in 1564. The Dodo was supposed to be modelled on Carroll himself, its name aping Carroll’s own stutter when he tried to articulate Dodgson, his own

middle name. Beneath the Dodo's pose, reminiscent of the Bard, lies a dynamite fuse which will eventually blow up the revered icons of Victorian culture. Think forward to Virginia Woolf, and on the way, call on Thackeray, whose daughter was Leslie Stephen's first wife. In 1850 Thackeray brought out a children's Christmas book called *The Kickleburys on the Rhine* in which 'Lady Kicklebury remarks that Shakespeare was very right in stating how much sharper than a thankless tooth it is to have a serpent child' (Titmarsh [Thackeray] [1850] 1851: 78). In Nesbit's *The Railway Children* (1906) Phyllis says: 'It's quite right what it says in the poetry book about sharper than a serpent it is to have a toothless child, – but it means ungrateful when it says toothless.' In 'The hunting of the snark' the Captain intones: "Friends, Romans and countrymen, lend me your ears!" / They were all of them fond of quotations' (Carroll [1876] 1939: 684). He is followed by the Bellman's oration:

For England expects – I forbear to proceed:
'Tis a maxim tremendous, but trite. (Carroll [1876] 1939: 689)

In *The Waves* the Doctor 'has bid us "quit ourselves like men". (On his lips quotations from the Bible, from *The Times*, seem equally magnificent)' (Woolf 1932: 42). E. Nesbit is a rollicking participant in this act of defacement. When the butter tubs have sunk to the bottom of the moat in *The Wouldbegoods*, Denny declares: 'After the mud in that moat not all the perfumes of somewhere or other could make them fit to use for butter again' (Nesbit [1901] 1958: 46). Carroll's coruscating parodies – Tennyson, Longfellow, Swinburne, Isaac Watts, and many other lesser known writers – pepper the pages of the two *Alice* books. Alice is herself one of the parodists. Watts' 'How doth the little busy bee' (from *Divine and Moral Songs* (1715), specially devised for children) becomes 'How doth the little crocodile', with its suavely rapacious second verse:

How cheerfully he seems to grin,
How neatly spreads his claws,
And welcomes little fishes in,
With gently smiling jaws.

'I'm sure those are not the right words,' said poor Alice. (Carroll 1970: 38)

Toppling great authors, garbling canonised texts, toppling great men and women: this is Carroll's playing field and it found plenty of cricketers to carry the game to the next generation. E. M. Forster wrote a spoof piece called 'My own centenary', envisaging the celebrations in his honour in 2027 (Dusinberre 1999b: 90).

In *The Voyage Out* Clarissa calls Rachel a monster for not liking Jane Austen, and then says she's brought *Persuasion* to read on the voyage 'because I thought it a little less threadbare than the others'. Richard Dalloway snores after a very small dose of *Persuasion* (Woolf 1915: 66–7). In Nesbit's *The Wouldbegoods* Oswald refuses to make a fashionable watering-place in the stream, saying he doesn't like 'fashionableness'.

'You ought to, at any rate,' Denny said: 'A Mr Collins wrote an Ode to the Fashions, and he was a great poet.'

'The poet Milton wrote a long book about Satan,' Noel said, 'but I'm not bound to like *him*.' (Nesbit [1901] 1958: 137)

One might conclude that this debunking of canonised writers is a pleasure only for an adult reader. But Carroll's middle-class child readers would have learnt by heart, as was the custom of the time, very many poems which children commonly recited at tea parties and other gatherings, a practice which continued well into the twentieth century. Behind all the jokes is a determined attack on the giants of the cultural establishment.

The attack on the literary was central to the modernist aesthetic, just as in a different era it had been the jumping-off ground for Wordsworth's dismissal of the artificialities of poetic language in his Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*. *Alice to the Lighthouse* compares the writings of Willa Cather about pioneer America with the children's books about pioneer life by Laura Ingalls Wilder, suggesting that Wilder has a firmer grasp on how to represent a landscape without literary associations, because children never have those associations. Roger Fry had urged that painters should only paint what they see, not what they think they see. When Laura describes landscape for her blind sister and says that the road stops, Mary protests that it doesn't, it goes all the way to Silver Lake, reproving Laura: 'We should always be careful to say exactly what we mean.' Laura retorts: 'I was saying what I meant' . . . But she could not explain. There were so many ways of seeing things and so many ways of saying them' (Wilder [1934] 1978: 47).

So what was *Alice to the Lighthouse* trying to do? In the first instance it was trying to explain the extraordinary hold the *Alice* books had on subsequent generations of child readers, and what this hold meant for them when they became adults, and in some cases writers and artists. If a child who has imbibed *The Pilgrim's Progress* writes *Robinson Crusoe* or *The Old Curiosity Shop*, then a child who has imbibed *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* writes *The Voyage Out*, or *To the Lighthouse*. If this sounds bald and simplistic, *Alice to the Lighthouse* intended to show a whole culture turning, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth century, to a new understanding of, and interest in, children, which was not dominated by precepts and prejudices and fantasies created in literature, art and religion. Something much more scientific and mundane – psychology, evolution, educational theory – created the groundwork for ideas about children which radically changed the sort of books written about them, and for them. Before *Alice* most of the books written explicitly for children were really written for the adults reading out loud to children. Even Catherine Sinclair's *Holiday House* (1839) ended each chapter with prayers, though of course a judicious reader, child or adult, could simply skip the prayers. Lewis Carroll told his *Alice* stories to the Liddell children when they were out in a boat. Like Beatrix Potter writing to the Moore children about Peter Rabbit, he knew his audience. But like her also, it seems certain that he wrote to please himself – whichever self he happened to be – arguably his iconoclastic self, more than his Victorian sentimental one.

In the mid-1980s, when I wrote *Alice to the Lighthouse*, children's literature was considered, as Maria Nikolajeva pointed out in 1996 in *Children's Literature Comes of Age: Toward a New Aesthetic*, primarily as a branch of pedagogics. In the old universities the subject was in the main dismissed as suitable for women, without academic rigour, discipline or sufficient challenge to the intellect. It looked like an applied subject, rather than a pure one, too closely related to the practice of education to enter the more abstract and philosophical traditions of the humanities. Other countries,

Scandinavia, the USA and Russia, were quicker to grasp the importance of children's books for mainstream literary study.

Books about children's literature were often written either by teachers or librarians with first-hand experience of children's reading. Brian Alderson made a specialist study of children's books in his Richmond (Yorkshire) bookshop, but also translated fairy tales (as did Iona and Peter Opie) and himself wrote children's books, as did many other writers about children's literature – Gillian Avery, Roger Lancelyn Green and John Rowe Townsend, to name only a few. F. J. Harvey Darton's (1932) important history of children's books grew out of his own publishing firm. Iona and Peter Opie were pioneers in exploring children's culture, games, folklore and language. Peter Coveney, Peter Hunt, Geoff Fox and above all, Humphrey Carpenter, editor and compiler with Mari Pritchard of the *Companion to Children's Literature* (1984), made important contributions to an emerging field of interest. Theoretical study was just beginning, as in Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale* (1958), but literary theory in Britain, which started to dominate the academy in the 1980s, had barely touched children's literature. Jacqueline Rose's *The Case of Peter Pan or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction*, published in 1984, just three years before *Alice to the Lighthouse*, perhaps marks the beginning of a new era in the relation of the perception of the potential of children's literature for in-depth study and research.

The enormous changes of the last thirty years, with the old polytechnics becoming universities and running much wider-based and innovative courses, together with a big increase in the numbers of women attending university, and also the number of students coming from Europe and other countries to study in Britain, have created an environment more hospitable to the academic study of children's literature. I owe a special debt to Clare Hall, Cambridge, itself a pioneer establishment with many overseas scholars, for electing me to a research fellowship in 1979 on the basis of a project in children's literature which would become *Alice to the Lighthouse*. I don't think any other Oxbridge College would have been interested or taken it seriously.

Revisiting the book almost thirty years on, I find that the biggest challenge it offers lies in the breaking down of the barriers between high culture and the subculture category to which children's books were relegated, and possibly to some extent still are. Strangely Bloomsbury, often dismissed as the scion of high culture, was in fact instrumental in recognising the importance of children's vision, and of children's ability to see things afresh without offering preconceived interpretations. The *Alice* books pioneered a practice of integrating text and pictures. The exhibition mounted at the British Library in 2015 for the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* showed many different illustrators of the book. One was left out. Beatrix Potter did some illustrations for *Alice*, in which the White Rabbit is certainly a forerunner of Peter Rabbit. What stood out in the exhibition was how important Tenniel was for realising Carroll's world. In emphasising illustration, the creators of the exhibition perhaps downplayed language. For the biggest revolution brought about by the *Alice* books was the focus on how to write instead of what one writes. The rubbish fed to children in the mid-nineteenth century was dominated by a view that content is everything, language nothing.

Lewis Carroll, storyteller, and Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, academic logician, knew that words are power, and that there is no need to be confined within the limits of what society ordains you to be. One person, two people? Who cares? Virginia Woolf's

Orlando (1928) revels in multiple selves. A tale or a tail? The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours. The *Alice* books tolled the death knell of the authoritarian author. Enter the free reader, whom Virginia Woolf hailed as an ally. In this fertile soil *Alice to the Lighthouse* took root.

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INDEX

- 47 (Mosley), 108
- Abrams, Lynne, 145
- Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, The* (Alexie), 21–2, 108, 120–1, 332
- Actual Size* (Jenkins), 207
- Adams, Carol, 76
- Adoration of Jenna Fox, The* (Pearson), 33
- Adorkable* (Manning), 36
- Adventures of Shola, The* (Atxaga), 237
- Adventures of the Dish and the Spoon, The* (Grey), 252
- Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The* (Twain), 345
- Aesop, 46
- aetonormativity, 93, 97–8, 266
- age studies, 79–89, 92, 137, 267
- Aggleton, Jen, 330
- Aiken, Joan, 179, 181, 185–7
- Ainsworth, Harrison, 183
- Alcott, Louisa M., 345
- Alderson, Brian, 307, 351
- Aldridge, John, 198
- Alexander, Neal, 66
- Alexie, Sherman, 21–2, 108, 120, 332–3
- Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Carroll), 39, 51, 290, 305, 342–52
- All the Bright Places* (Niven), 285
- Almond, David, 168, 330, 332
- Althusser, Louis, 92
- Altmann, Anna, 85
- Al-Yaqout, Ghada, 208
- American Born Chinese* (Yang), 20, 108
- Andersen, Hans Christian, 235
- Anderson, M. T., 337
- Angels of Mercy* (Kuhn), 308
- Animal Farm* (Orwell), 46
- animal studies, 5, 36–8, 42–52
- Anne of Green Gables* (Montgomery), 105, 169
- Annie on My Mind* (Garden), 98
- app *see* digital literature; picturebook
- Appiah, Anthony, 19, 20, 24
- Applebaum, Noga, 32, 337
- Applegate, Katherine, 50
- Appleyard, J. A., 138
- archives, 155, 298–303, 306, 310–11
- Ardizzone, Sarah, 240
- Arghandehpour, Karim, 237
- Arias, Santa, 65
- Aristotle, 43
- Arizpe, Evelyn, 6, 330
- Army Alphabet* (Baum), 308
- Army in Pigtails, An* (Evatt), 308
- Arrival, The* (Tan), 130, 254
- Arthur and the Mystery of the Egg* (Mercier), 240
- Assmann, Aleida, 155
- At the Back of the North Wind* (MacDonald), 162
- Attebery, Brian, 57
- Atxaga, Bernardo, 237

- Aubry, Cécile, 238
 Austen, Jane, 349
Avatar series (Kostick), 66
 Aveling, Helen, 283
 Avery, Gillian, 307, 351

Babes in the Wood, The (a Lady), 308
 Baccolini, Rafaella, 77
 Bachelard, Gaston, 63
 Badmington, Neil, 32
 Baker, Deirdre F., 65
 Baker, Jennifer, 25
 Baker, Steve, 42
 Bakhtin, Mikhail, 58, 329, 331–2
 Bang, Molly, 206
 Barfield, Steven, 315
 Barrett, Frank, 56
 Barrie, J. M., 47, 66, 169
 Barthes, Roland, 2, 298, 330
 Barton, Georgina, 221
 Bates, Gordon, 284
 Baum, Frank L., 169, 308
 Bavidge, Jenny, 112
 Bawden, Edward, 197–8, 200
 Bazalgette, Cary, 225, 227
 Beardsley, Monroe C., 2
 Bearne, Eve, 220
Beautiful Birds (Roussen and Walker),
 207
Beauty and the Beast (movie), 51
 Beauvais, Clémentine, 71–2, 76, 82,
 132, 138, 185
 Beauvoir, Simone de, 79, 81
 Beckett, Bernard, 34–5
Before Green Gables (Wilson), 169
Behemoth (Westerfeld), 188
 Bell, Anthea, 234, 237
Belle and Sébastien (Aubry), 238
 Belloc, Hilaire, 49
Beloved (Morrison), 144
 Benedictus, David, 169
 Bennett, David, 235
 Benton, Michael, 125

 Berger, John, 48–50
 Bernstein, Robin, 217–18
 Bertagna, Julie, 73–6
 Best, Stephen M., 306, 310–11
Between Shades of Grey (Sepetys), 163
Beyond the Chocolate War (Cormier),
 168
 Bhabha, Homi, 329–30
Big Lie, The (Mayhew), 185
 Bird, Hazel Skeeky, 60
 Birketveit, Anna, 248, 254
Birthday Cake for George Washington,
 A (Ganeshram), 17–18
Black and White (Macauley), 204
Black Beauty (Sewell), 46
 Blackall, Sophie, 17
 Blackman, Malorie, 52, 187, 189–90,
 192
 Bland, Janice, 251
 Blatterer, Henry, 137
Blink and Caution (Wynne-Jones),
 118–20
 Block, Francesca Lia, 93–4, 99
Blood Family (Fine), 286
Bloodtide (Burgess), 97
 Bloom, Harold, 154, 315
 Blount, Margaret, 46
 Bluck, Susan, 137
 Blume, Judy, 95
 Blyton, Enid, 168
 Boldt, Gail, 225–6
 Bolter, David, 223
 Bond, Michael, 46
Bonfires and Broomsticks (Norton), 305
Book about Moomin, Mymble and
 Little My, The (Jansson), 238–9
Book Thief, The (Zusak), 332
 Bordo, Susan, 103
 Borges, Jorge Luis, 124
 Borten, Helen, 200
Boxcar Children, The (Chandler
 Warner), 169
 Boyce, Frank Cottrell, 332

- Boyd, Brian, 289
Bradford, Clare, 29, 32, 77, 120, 278, 337
Breaking Dawn (Meyer), 95
Breaktime (Chambers), 95, 300, 331–2
Breden, Simon, 236
Brenna, Beverley, 282–3
Breslin, Theresa, 163
Brewster, Jean, 247–8
Briggs, Raymond, 201
Brilliant World of Tom Gates, The (Pichon), 329, 332
Brodkey, Harold, 219
Brontë, Charlotte, 302
Brontë, Emily, 302
Bronze and Sunflower (Wenxuan), 233
Brookes, Wanda, 129–30
Brooks, Ron, 255
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do You See? (Martin and Carle), 249
Browne, Anthony, 49–50, 253
Browne, Susan, 129–30
Bruner, Jerome, 104
Büchler, Alexandra, 234
Buckingham, David, 201, 225, 227, 336
Buckley, Jerome, 324
Buell, Lawrence, 116–17, 119
Bunyan, John, 342, 345
Burciaga, José Antonio, 25
Burgess, Melvin, 96–7
Burn, Andrew, 5
Burnett, Frances Hodgson, 334
Burningham, John, 201
Bushell, Sally, 59
Byram, Michael, 252
- Cadden, Mike, 266
Cai, Mingshui, 128
Caillouis, Roger, 317, 322
Cameron, Eleanor, 299
Campbell, Caroline, 107
Campbell, Edith, 25
Capshaw Smith, Katharine, 306
Carbon Diaries: 2015, The (Lloyd), 66
Carle, Eric, 247, 249
Carlin, Laura, 201
carnality, 6, 90–9
Carpenter, Humphrey, 351
Carroll, Jane, 5
Carroll, Lewis, 25, 51, 305–6, 342–52
Castañeda, Iván, 29
Cather, Willa, 350
Cautionary Tales for Children (Belloc), 49
Cecire, Maria Sachiko, 56, 65, 113
Chambers, Aidan, 95, 234, 242, 300, 331
Chandler, Pauline, 183
Chandler Warner, Gertrude, 169
Chaos Walking (Ness), 295, 309
Charlesworth, Mary Louisa, 343
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (Dahl), 294, 299
Charlton-Trujillo, e. e., 25–6
Chicken Run (movie), 51
Chittenden, Edward, 218–19
Chocolate War, The (Cormier), 168
Chomp (Neimann), 210
Christmas Carol, A (Dickens), 107
Chronicles of Narnia (Lewis), 64–5, 162, 276–7
chronotope, 58, 155
Cinder (Meyer), 34
Clark, Margaret, 300
Clark, Timothy, 72–3, 76
Clarke, Michael Tavel, 75, 77
Clever, Martin, 235
Cliff Hodges, Gabrielle, 119, 307
Clute, John, 180
Coats, Karen, 5, 107, 113
Code Name Verity (Wein), 163
cognitive narratology, 3, 5, 102–9, 126, 171
Cohen, Margaret, 306, 310–11

- Cold Awakening* (Wasserman), 33
 Cole, Matthew, 42
 Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 347
 Collins, Suzanne, 66
 Collodi, Carlo, 239
 comics, 167, 228, 322, 329, 332
 computer game *see* game studies
 Cooper, Susan, 56, 66
 Ćopić, Branko, 239
Coriolanus (Shakespeare), 305
 Cormier, Robert, 168
 Cosgrove, Denis, 55, 59
 Cosslett, Tess, 46
 Costa, Margaret Jull, 237
 Coveney, Peter, 351
 Cox, Katharine, 315
 Crago, Hugh, 138, 140, 296
Crazy (Phillips), 285
 Cristo, Filomena, 254
 Crossan, Sarah, 163
Cuckoo Clock, The (Molesworth),
 58, 344
Cuckoo Tree, The (Aiken), 186
 Culpeper, Nicholas, 275
 Cunningham, Barry, 234
*Curious Incident of the Dog in the
 Night-Time, The* (Haddon), 329
 Currie, Mark, 139
 Curry, Alice, 239, 274
 Curtis, S. D., 239
 Curwen, Harold, 197–8
 Cutter-Mackenzi, Amy, 77, 113
 cyberspace, 36, 66, 336–41
 cyborg, 30–6, 109; *see also*
 posthumanism
Cymbeline (Shakespeare), 305

 D'Adamo, Francesco, 236
 Dahl, Roald, 82, 298–303
 Daiches, David, 56
Daisy Chain, The (Yonge), 342–3
 Dalager, Stig, 236
 Daly, Maureen, 94

 Damasio, Antonio, 144
Dangerous Angels (Block), 93–4
 Danielewski, Mark, 330
Dark is Rising, The (Cooper), 56
 Darton, F. J. Harvey, 351
 Darwin, Charles, 277, 343
David's Story (Dalager), 236
 Davidson, Jenny, 187, 191
 Davidson, Michael, 282
 Dawkins, Richard, 290
 Day, Alexandra, 47–8
 Day, Lucienne, 194
 Day, Robin, 194
 Day, Susie, 340
Dear Nobody (Doherty), 96
Dearest Boy in All the World, The (van
 Lieshout), 234
Decay of Lying, The (Wilde), 348
 Defoe, Daniel, 161
 Deleuze, Gilles, 30, 226
 Dennett, Daniel, 146
 Derrida, Jacques, 43–4, 274
 Descartes, René, 43, 51, 102
 Dewan, Pauline, 63
Diary of a Wimpy Kid (Kinney), 332
 Dick, Linda, 283
 Dickens, Charles, 107
 Dickinson, Peter, 37, 52
 Dickinson, Violet, 344
 Dido Twite series (Aiken), 179
 digital literacy *see* literacy
 digital literature, 5, 174, 203–14,
 217–30, 336–40; *see also*
 multimodality
 disability studies, 3, 5, 281–6
Divergent (Roth), 66
 diversity, 5, 13–28
Divine and Moral Songs (Watts), 349
 Dobrin, Sidney, 113
 Doctorow, Cory, 337, 340
 Dodd, Lynley, 247
 Doherty, Berlie, 96
Dolls' House, The (Godden), 31

- Dolphin Tale* (movie), 51
 Donahaye, Jasmine, 234
 Donovan, John, 98
Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus (Willems), 206
Don't Let the Pigeon Run This App! (Disney), 210
Dorothy Must Die (Paige), 169
Dot and Anton (Kästner), 237
 Drabble, Margaret, 56
 Dragt, Tonke, 237–8
 Dresang, Eliza, 204, 228, 330, 338
Driftway, The (Lively), 58
 Driza, Debra, 34
 Drucker, Johanna, 227
 DuBois, W. E. B., 18
Duel (Grossman), 233
 Dumas, Alexandre, 183
 Dunn, Opal, 247–8
 Dunn, Patricia A., 282
 Dusinberre, Juliet, 2, 6
 Duvoisin, Roger, 200
 dystopia, 66, 163, 274, 278, 292, 337;
 see also posthumanism; young adult
 fiction
 Dzigurski, Alexander, 38
- Eagleton, Terry, 141, 333
 ecocriticism, 3, 70–7, 116–17, 274–9;
 see also ecofeminism; place;
 spatiality
 ecofeminism, 70–7, 108; *see also*
 ecocriticism; place; spatiality
 Einstein, Albert, 102
 Eisenhower, Karen, 309
 Ekman, Stefan, 59–60, 62
Elidor (Garner), 64
 Eliot, George, 345
 Eliot, Simon, 308
 Ellingham, Mark, 238
 Ellis, Gail, 247–8
 embodiment, 15–21, 29, 71, 76, 108,
 317–20; *see also* materiality
- Empty House, The* (Gutman), 234
Erebos (Poznanski), 239
 Erlbruch, Wolf, 235, 242, 248
 Estok, Simon, 70
 ethics, 3, 38–9
Eva (Dickinson), 37, 52
 Evatt, Harriet, 308
 Everett, Hugh, 184
 Ewers, Hans Heino, 157
Explosionist, The (Davidson),
 187, 191
- Fables* (Aesop), 46
 Falconer, Rachel, 140
Famous Five, The (Blyton), 168
 fanfiction, 5, 173, 174, 315, 340
Fangirl (Rowell), 340
*Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find
 Them* (Rowling), 170
*Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find
 Them* (movie), 51
*Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris
 Lessmore, The* (Joyce), 224
 fantasy, 5, 55–66
 Farmer, F. Randall, 338
Feed (Anderson), 337
 Feelings, Tom, 207
 Fellows, Lawrence, 308
 feminist theory, 5, 70–7
 Ferrer, Daniel, 298, 302
 Field, Hannah, 56, 113
 Field, Rachel, 31
Finding Nemo (movie), 51, 131
 Fine, Anne, 286
Fine Dessert, A (Jenkins), 17–18
 Finn, Kavita Mudan, 56, 113
 Fish, Stanley, 145
 Fisher, Margery, 232
Five Children and It (Nesbit), 169,
 305, 348
Five Children on the Western Front
 (Saunders), 169
 Flanagan, Victoria, 5, 71, 109

- Flip Flap Farm* (Scheffler), 209
Flotsam (Wiesner), 130
 Flower, John, 56
 Flugge, Klaus, 233
Flying Classroom, The (Kästner), 237
 Fombelle, Timothée de, 66, 277
 food, 44, 91
Forbidden (Suzuma), 97
Forever (Blume), 95
 Forney, Ellen, 332
 Forster, E. M., 349
 Forward, Toby, 169
 Foucault, Michel, 92–3, 97
 Fought, Carmen, 309
Four Children and It (Wilson), 169
Fox (Wild and Brooks), 255
 Fox, Geoff, 351
Free Willy (movie), 51
 Freedman, Barnett, 197–8
 Freud, Sigmund, 1, 42, 344, 347
 Freudenheim, Adam, 236–7
 Frey, Charles, 158
 Froebel, Friedrich, 347
 Fry, Roger, 346–8, 350
 Fukuyama, Francis, 35
 Funke, Cornelia, 233–4, 242

 Gaard, Greta, 70–1, 278
 Gallenzi, Alessandro, 239
Game Girls (Waite), 97
 game studies, 170, 174–5, 195, 205–10, 227–30, 314–28
 Ganeshram, Ramin, 17–18
 Garden, Nancy, 98
 Gardner, Sally, 163, 182, 190–2
 Garner, Alan, 58, 64, 168
Gena/Finn (Moskowitz and Helgeson), 36
 gender, 15, 20, 22, 25, 30–3, 38, 55, 70, 77, 84–5, 98–9, 105, 108; *see also* queer theory
Genesis (Beckett), 34–6
 Genette, Gérard, 57–9

Gentle War, A (Fellows), 308
 Ghanimifard, Delaram, 237–9
 Ghosn, Irma, 248, 250
 Giadalupi, Gianni, 56
 Gibson, William, 336
 Gilbert, Pamela K., 63
 Gilead, Sarah, 57
Gilgamesh Epic, 293
 Giorgi, Amedeo, 143
Giving Tree, The (Silverstein), 276
 Gleitzman, Morris, 167
 Godden, Rumer, 31
 Goffman, Erving, 311
 Goga, Nina, 56, 60
Golden Compass, The (game), 314
 Goldsmith, Annette, 233
Goliath (Westerfeld), 188
 Golmohammadi, Firoozeh, 238
Good Dog, Carl (Day), 47–8, 51
Good Little Devil, The (Gripari), 237
Good Night Gorilla (Rathmann), 249
Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site (Oceanhouse Media), 205
Goodnight Mister Tom (Magorian), 80–8
Goodnight Moon (Wise Brown and Hurd), 249
Goosebumps (Stine), 168
 Gosling, Ju, 283
 Gould, Stephen Jay, 42
Grace Williams Says it Loud (Henderson), 285
 Graham, Elaine, 32
 Grahame, Kenneth, 46, 169, 305
 Grant, Helen, 163
Great Expectations (Dickens), 302
 Greder, Armin, 253
 Green, Lorraine, 80–1, 84
 Green, Roger Lancelyn, 351
Green Boy (Cooper), 66
 Grenby, Matthew, 307

- Gressnich, Eva, 107
 Grey, Mini, 49, 252
 Griffith, John, 158
 Grimm, Jakob and Wilhelm, 235, 241, 299
 Gripari, Pierre, 237
 Groenke, Susan Lee, 330
 Grossman, David, 233
 Grosz, Elisabeth, 93, 102–3
 Grübel, Rainer, 155
 Gruen, Lori, 76
 Grusin, Richard, 223
 Guattari, Félix, 30, 226
 Gubar, Marah, 138, 265, 267–71
 Guillory, James, 155
 Gullette, Margaret Morganroth, 79, 80, 81, 84
 Gutman, Claude, 234
 Guy, Rosa, 98
- Habermas, Jürgen, 20
 Habermas, Tilmann, 137
 Hables Gray, Chris, 32
Hacking Harvard (Wasserman), 36
 Haddon, Mark, 329
 Hahn, Daniel, 240
 Hale, Kathleen, 200
 Hall, Geoff, 246
 Hallet, Wolfgang, 246
 Halliday, Michael, 322
 Halpern, Faye, 77
 Hamilton, Virginia, 306
 Hannah, Jonny, 201
 Hannah, Sophie, 238–9
 Haraway, Donna, 31–2, 34, 44–5, 48, 52, 109
 Hardinge, Frances, 277–8
 Harley, J. B., 60
Harry Potter series (Rowling), 5, 51, 98–9, 156, 162, 168, 170, 173, 174, 236, 277, 296, 309, 314–27
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (game), 314–27
Harry Potter and the Cursed Child (Thorne), 170
Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (game), 315
 Hartnett, Sonya, 37, 163
 Hayles, N. Katherine, 32, 35, 329, 338–9
 Hazan, Haim, 80, 85
 Head, Ann, 95
 Hearld, Mark, 201
 Hearn, Jeff, 81, 84
Heart and the Bottle, The (Jeffers), 208
Hedgehog's Home, The (Ćopić), 239
 Heidegger, Martin, 43, 90
Heidi (Spyri), 84
 Heilbron, Johan, 232
 Heine, Heinrich, 298
 Helgeson, Kat, 36
 Henderson, Emma, 285
 Henneberg, Sylvia, 79–80, 84
Henry Tumour (McGowan), 332
 Herbrechter, Stefan, 36
 Herman, David, 102, 104
 Herrmann, Leonhard, 154
 Hinton, S. E., 25
His Dark Materials (Pullman), 162, 168, 187, 295, 309, 314–27
Hitty: Her First Hundred Years (Field), 31
 Hoban, Russell, 31
Hobbit, The (Tolkien), 59, 61, 162
Holiday House (Sinclair), 350
 Hollindale, Peter, 109, 268–9
 Holmes, Sam, 240
 Holst, Nina, 284
 Holzwarth, Werner, 235, 248
Homeland (Doctorow), 337
Horton Hears a Who! (Seuss), 289
 Horwood, William, 169
House of Leaves (Danielewski), 330
House that Crack Built, The (Taylor and Thompson Dicks), 253–4

- Hughes, Langston, 23
 Hughes, Shirley, 219
Hunger Games, The (Collins), 66, 294, 296
 Hunt, Peter, 351
 Hurd, Clement, 249
 Hurston, Zora Neale, 18
 Husserl, Edmund, 136–42
 Hutchins, Pat, 249
- I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth the Trip* (Donovan), 98
 Ingarden, Roman, 136, 138–9
Inkheart (Funke), 233
Internet Girls (Myracle), 339
 Inui, Tomiko, 237
Invisible Things (Davidson), 187
 Iser, Wolfgang, 2, 138–9
Island, The (Greder), 253–4
It's OK If You Don't Love Me (Klein), 95
- Jackal who Thought he was a Peacock, The* (Rumi), 238
 Jacobs, Gloria, 226
 Jacques, Brian, 168
 James, Henry, 347
Jane Eyre (Brontë), 302
 Jansson, Tove, 232, 238–9
 Jansz, Nat, 238
 Jaques, Zoe, 5, 31, 39, 277–8, 345
 Jay, Alison, 48–9
 Jeffers, Oliver, 38, 208
 Jenkins, Emily, 17
 Jenkins, Steve, 207
Jenna Fox Chronicles (Pearson), 33
 Jennings, Jazz, 25
Jim (Grey), 49
Johnny, my Friend (Pohl), 234
 Johnson, Mark, 105, 107
 Johnston, Wayne, 103
 Jones, Barbara, 197
 Jones, Diana Wynne, 59–60
- Joosen, Vanessa, 267, 271
 Jordan, J. Scott, 102
- Kaminsky, Annett, 250, 252
 Kamm, Josephine, 94
 Kant, Immanuel, 43, 45
 Karpiński, Stanisław, 276
 Kästner, Erich, 237–8
 Katz, Stephen, 79, 81
 Kay, Jim, 330
 Keats, Ezra Jack, 23–4
 Keen, Carolyn, 168
 Keith, Lois, 282
 Kelleter, Frank, 155
 Kelley, Emma, 18
Kensuke's Kingdom (Morpurgo), 161
 Kerr, Judith, 46
 Kertzer, Adrienne, 33, 332
Kickleburys on the Rhine, The (Thackeray), 349
 Kidd, Kenneth, 113, 153, 310–11
 King, Stephen, 315, 322, 324
 Kingsley, Charles, 162
 Kinney, Jeff, 332–3
 kinship theory, 265–72
 Kipling, Rudyard, 14
 Kirkpatrick, R. J., 307
 Klein, Norma, 95
 Kline, Ernest, 337
 Klutz, Ed, 201
Knife of Never Letting Go, The (Ness), 331
 Knowles, Murray, 309
 Koepnick, Lutz, 219
 Kokkola, Lydia, 6, 79, 105, 295
 Kolb, Annika, 254
 Kostick, Conor, 66
 Kramsch, Claire and Oliver, 246
 Kress, Gunther, 220, 224
 Kuhn, Betsy, 308
 Kümmerling-Meibauer, Bettina, 56, 60, 104, 157

- Kuznets, Lois, 31–2, 63
- Lacan, Jacques, 1, 24
- Lady: My Life as a Bitch* (Burgess), 96
- Lakoff, George, 105, 107
- Langley, Emma, 239–40
- Larrick, Nancy, 14–15, 19, 20
- Larsen, Nella, 18
- Last Battle, The* (Lewis), 64
- Latour, Bruno, 4
- Lawson, Jonardo, 25
- Lazar, Gillian, 252–3
- Le Guin, Ursula, 42
- Leander, Kevin, 225–6
- Lebow, Richard, 183
- Lee, Nick, 85, 87
- Lee, Tanith, 32
- Lefebvre, Henri, 65
- Lennon, Tom, 98
- Lester, Julius, 17
- Letter for the King, The* (Dragt), 237
- Letters from Alain* (Pérez Díaz), 236
- Letters to Anyone and Everyone* (Tellegen), 235
- Levene, Alysa, 285
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 42
- Leviathan* (Westerfeld), 188
- Levy, Michael, 305–6
- Lewin, Angie, 200
- Lewin, Simon, 200
- Lewis, C. S., 64–5, 91, 162, 276
- Lewis, Sophie, 237
- Li, Chen-Ying, 251
- Lie Tree, The* (Hardinge), 277–8
- Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman, The* (Sterne), 333
- lifespan theory, 137–8; *see also* age studies
- Lindgren, Astrid, 232
- Linnaeus, Carl, 275
- Linse, Caroline, 249
- Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe, The* (Lewis), 64, 91
- Lively, Penelope, 58
- literacy
- literary, 130, 246, 251, 252, 256
 - multiliteracies and digital literacy, 132, 217–31, 314–28
 - reading, 103, 108–9, 124–7, 131, 137, 167, 171, 213, 293–4
 - visual, 61, 130, 248, 256
- Little Brother* (Doctorow), 337
- Little House on the Prairie* (Wilder), 346
- Little Mermaid* (movie), 317
- Little Mole who Knew it was None of his Business, The* (Holzwarth and Erlbruch), 235, 242, 248
- Little Red Riding Hood* (folktale), 91, 290
- Little Women* (Alcott), 345
- Liu, Jae-Soo, 220
- Lloyd, Saci, 66
- Lo, Margaret, 250
- Locke, John, 43
- Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, 349
- Lorax, The* (Seuss), 276
- Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien), 162, 316, 326
- Lost Thing, The* (Tan), 221, 253
- Love, Heather K., 306, 311
- Lucy & Pogo* (Cats n Dogz), 206, 209
- Lucy and Tom Go to School* (Hughes), 219
- Lugossy, Réka, 252
- Lumino City* (State of Play Games), 209
- Lunar Chronicles* (Meyer), 34
- Lundin, Anne, 156
- Lunenfeld, Peter, 228
- Lütge, Christiane, 246
- Lyotard, Jean Francois, 185
- Lyrical Ballads* (Wordsworth), 350
- Macauley, David, 204
- Macbeth #killingit*, 339

- McCallum, Robyn, 29, 30, 331–2
 McCaughrean, Geraldine, 169
 McCormick, Patricia, 97
 MacDonald, George, 162
 McGilchrist, Iain, 293
 McGowan, Anthony, 332
 McGuire, Sandra, 80
 Machor, James L., 124
 McKean, Dave, 332
 McKee, David, 248, 253
 Mackey, Margaret, 103–4, 106, 124, 126,
 129, 132, 140–1, 316, 321, 330–1
 MacLachlan, Patricia, 169
 McLean, Polly, 236
Maggot Moon (Gardner), 163, 182,
 190–1
Magician's Nephew, The (Lewis), 91, 277
 Magorian, Michelle, 80–8
 Maier, Andrew, 228
 Mallan, Kerry, 29, 33
 Malmkjaer, Kirsten, 309
 Mancuso, Stefano, 275–6
 Manes, Christopher, 44
 Manguel, Alberto, 56
 Mankell, Henning, 233
 Manlove, Colin, 205–6
 Manning, Sarra, 36
 Manolessou, Katherina, 201
 maps, 57–62; *see also* place; spatiality
Maps (Mizielinska and Mizielinski), 195
 Marcus, Sharon, 306, 310–11
Marisol (Soto), 15
Mark of Edain, The (Chandler), 183
 Markley, Robert, 338
 Marshall, Julia, 239
 Martin, Bill, 249
 Marx, Enid, 197–8
 Massey, Doreen, 115–19, 121
 materiality
 of the book, 61, 65, 103, 194–202,
 212–14, 217, 221–30, 236, 239,
 298–303, 311, 329; *see also*
 multimodality
 of the child/ teenager, 3–4, 32–3, 71,
 77, 102–3, 108, 271, 329, 338;
 see also embodiment
Matilda (Dahl), 82, 298–303
 Mayhew, Julie, 185
 Mazzarella, Silvester, 238–9
 Meek, Margaret, 130
Meg and Mog (Nicoll and Pieńkowski),
 247
 Melson, Gail F., 45
 memory, 136–46
 Mendlesohn, Farah, 57, 63–4, 305–6
 Mercier, Johanne, 240
 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 91
 Meyer, Marissa, 34
 Meyer, Stephenie, 95–6
Middle Passage (Feelings), 207
Midnight Zoo, The (Hartnett),
 37–8, 163
Mila 2.0 (Driza), 34
Mill on the Floss, The (Eliot), 345
 Milne, A. A., 31, 87, 169
Minecraft (game), 227–9
 Miyahara, Masuko, 249
 Mizielinska, Aleksandra, 195
 Mizielinski, Daniel, 195
 Molesworth, Mrs, 58, 344
 Molla, Jean, 236
 Monmonier, Mark, 59
Monster (Myers), 330
Monster Calls, A (Ness), 276,
 278, 330
 Montaigne, Michel de, 43
 Montgomery, L.M., 169
Moon Over Manifest (Vanderpool),
 117–18
 More, Hannah, 162
 Moretti, Franco, 306–11
 Morningstar, Chip, 338
 Morpurgo, Michael, 161, 163, 182
 Morrison, Toni, 144
 Morrissey, Lee, 155
 Moskowitz, Hannah, 36

- Mosley, Walter, 108
 Mourão, Sandie, 6
Mouse and His Child, The (Hoban), 31
 Moustakas, Clark, 142
Mr and Mrs Bo Jo Jones (Head), 95
 multiculturalism, 19–20, 127–9;
 see also diversity
 multimodality, 38, 61, 126, 132, 210,
 217–31, 250, 255–6, 319, 321–2,
 326–7, 329–33; *see also* comics;
 digital literature; game studies;
 picturebook
 Munari, Bruno, 196–7
 Murphy, George, 105
 Musgrave, Megan, 340
My Brother Johnny (D’Adamo), 236
My Cat Likes to Hide in Boxes (Sutton
 and Dodd), 247
My Name is Mina (Almond), 168,
 330, 332
 Myers, Christopher, 15
 Myers, Walter Dean, 330
 Myracle, Lauren, 339
- Nancy Drew* series (Keen), 168
 Narančić Kovač, Smiljana, 255
Narnia series (Lewis) *see Chronicles
 of Narnia*
 Nash, Paul, 198
Nation (Pratchett), 161
 Natov, Roni, 277
 Nayar, Pramod, 30
 Needle, Jan, 169
 Neimann, Christoph, 210
 Neisser, Ulrich, 144
 Nel, Philip, 153
 Nelson, Claudia, 87
 Nesbit, Edith, 169, 305, 343–4,
 348–9
 Ness, Patrick, 276, 278, 295,
 309, 330–1
Neuromancer (Gibson), 338
Neverland (Forward), 169
New Policeman, The (Thompson), 58
 Newcomer, Sarah, 131
 Newland, Jane, 107
 Newman, Julie, 283
 Nichols, Beverley, 305
 Nicoll, Helen, 247
Night Light (Blechman), 218
Nightbirds on Nantucket
 (Aiken), 186
 Nikolajeva, Maria, 46, 66, 93, 104,
 107, 119, 126, 144, 208, 266, 271,
 274, 307, 331–2, 350
Nineteen Eighty-Four (Orwell), 191
 Niven, Jennifer, 285
 Nix, Garth, 61–2
No David (Shannon), 251
No More Saturday Nights
 (Klein), 95
No Place like Oz (Paige), 169
 Nodelman, Perry, 2, 5, 103, 131–2,
 144–5, 171, 266
 Norbury, Kate, 108
 Norlie, Louise, 283
Northern Lights (Pullman), 179, 182,
 184, 187–9, 315
 Norton, Mary, 305
Noughts and Crosses (Blackman),
 189–90
 Nugent, Cynthia, 207
Nymph (Block), 93–4
- Odyssey* (Homer), 289
Old Curiosity Shop, The (Dickens),
 345, 350
Old Kingdom/Abhorsen (Nix), 61–2
OMG Shakespeare series, 339
On Beyond Zebra (Seuss), 25
Once series (Gleitzman), 167
One and Only Ivan, The (Applegate),
 50
 Ong, Walter, 316–18
 Opie, Iona and Peter, 351
 Oppermann, Serpil, 70–1

- Origin of Species, The* (Darwin), 344
Orlando (Woolf), 351
 Orr, Mary, 107
 Orwell, George, 46, 191
 Osterfelt, Frances, 236
 O'Sullivan, Emer, 62, 157
 O'Sullivan, Keith, 56
Outsiders, The (Hinton), 25
 Owen, Joanne, 233
 Oyama, Susan, 102
 Oziewicz, Marek, 106
- Paige, Danielle, 169
 Paran, Amos, 246
Parent Trap, The (Kästner), 237
 Parkinson, Siobhán, 239
 Parr, Maria, 239
 Paruolo, Elena, 153, 157
 Pattinson, Judith, 239
 Paul, Korky, 250
 Paul, Lissa, 153
 Pavlik, Anthony, 60
 Payne, Phillip G., 77, 113
 Pearce, Lynne, 141
 Pearce, Philippa, 58
 Pearson, Lucy, 308, 310–11
 Pearson, Mary E., 33
Pennington's Heir (Peyton), 95
Percy Jackson and the Olympians
 (Riordan), 168, 173
 Pérez Díaz, Enrique, 236
 Perrone, Michael Holloway, 98
Persepolis (Satrapi), 242
Persuasion (Austen), 349
Peter and the Wolf (Camera Lucida), 209
Peter and Wendy (Barrie), 66
Peter Pan (Barrie), 86, 169
Peter Pan in Scarlet (McCaughrean), 169
 Peters, Andrew Fusek, 235
 Peyton, K. M., 95
 phenomenology, 136–46
 Phillips, Linda Vigen, 285
 Pichon, Liz, 329, 332–3
- picturebook, 5–6, 124–33, 194–202,
 203–14, 245–56, 329–30; *see also*
 comics; multimodality
 Pieńkowski, Jan, 247
Pig Heart Boy (Blackman), 52
Pigeon Post (Ransome), 326
Piggybook (Browne), 253
Pilgrim's Progress, The (Bunyan), 342,
 345, 350
 place, 3, 5, 55, 112–21; *see also*
 ecocriticism; spatiality
Playing at Settlers (Lee), 107
 Plichota, Anne, 237
 Pohl, Peter, 234
Pojkarna (Schiefauer), 277
 Pollan, Michael, 276
 posthumanism, 3, 5, 29–39, 42–52,
 71; *see also* animal studies;
 cyborg
 Potter, Beatrix, 207, 346, 350–1
 power, 3, 90–4
 Poznanski, Ursula, 239
 Pratchett, Terry, 161
Press Here (Tullet), 210
 Price Gardner, Roberta, 128
 Price, Leah, 306
Prince and the Pauper, The
 (Twain), 183
Prince Caspian (Lewis), 277
Princess Mononoke (movie), 51
Prisoner of the Inquisition (Breslin), 163
 Pritchard, Mari, 351
Private Peaceful (Morpurgo), 182
 Propp, Vladimir, 62, 351
 Proust, Marcel, 139
 Prout, Alan, 4
 publishing, 194–202, 232–42
 Pugh, Tison, 98–9
 Pullman, Philip, 57, 65, 162, 168, 179,
 181, 184, 187–8, 190, 192, 295,
 309, 314–27
Push (Sapphire), 95, 97
 Puzey, Guy, 239

- Pyke, Sarah, 310–11
- queer theory, 5, 98–9; *see also* gender; sexuality
- race, 3, 5, 13–28; *see also* diversity; multiculturalism
- Railway Children, The* (Nesbit), 349
- Ransome, Arthur, 140, 161, 326, 344, 346
- Ranson, Clare, 61
- Rassi, Azita, 238
- Ratelle, Amy, 36–7, 51
- Rathmann, Peggy, 249
- Raverat, Gwen, 343
- Ravilious, Eric, 197–8, 200
- reader-response theory, 112–21, 124–33, 251
- Ready Player One* (Kline), 337
- Red Tree, The* (Tan), 253
- Redcay, Anna, 269–70
- Reddy, Michael, 221
- Redwall* series (Jacques), 168
- Reese, Debbie, 18
- Regan, Tom, 43, 45
- Reid, Alan, 77, 113
- Reid, Razi, 99
- Relph, Edward, 114–17, 121
- remediation, 223–4
- Return to the Hundred Acre Wood* (Benedictus), 169
- Revoltin' Rhymes* (Dahl), 302
- Reynolds, Kimberley, 96, 284, 305
- Richards, Chris, 317
- Richardson, Marian, 347
- Rigby, Elizabeth, 343
- Rimmereide, Hege Emma, 254
- Riordan, Rick, 168
- Ripa, Mattias, 242
- Robinson Crusoe* (Defoe), 250
- Robson, Cheryl, 236
- Rollin, Lucy, 302
- Rollins, Charlemae Hill, 23
- Rooftoppers* (Rundell), 163
- Rose, Jacqueline, 268, 351
- Rose, Sue, 237
- Rose and the Ring, The* (Thackeray), 346
- Rosen, Michael, 315, 324
- Rosenberg, Betsy, 233
- Rosenblatt, Louise, 112, 128–9
- Rosie's Walk* (Hutchins), 249–50
- Roth, Veronica, 66
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 19
- Roussen, Jean, 207
- Rowell, Rainbow, 340
- Rowling, J. K., 51, 98, 162, 168, 170, 277, 309, 314–27
- Roy, Malini, 56, 113
- Ruby* (Guy), 98
- Rudd, David, 71, 167, 266
- Rumi, 238
- Rundell, Katherine, 163
- Ruthner, Clemens, 155
- Ryan, John, 275
- Ryan, Rob, 201
- Sadowska-Martyka, Anneta, 254–5
- Said, Edward, 155
- Said, S. F., 332
- Salinger, Terry, 218–19
- Salway, Lance, 234
- Sapphire, 95, 97
- Sarlak, Fereshteh, 238
- Sasser, M. Tyler, 23
- Satrapi, Marjane, 242
- Sauer, Carl Ortwin, 62
- Saunders, Kate, 169–70
- Saunders, Kathy, 283
- Schäfer, Iris, 284
- Scheffler, Axel, 209
- Scheibe, Siegfried, 300
- Schiefauer, Jessica, 277
- science fiction, 32–4
- Scott, Carole, 107
- Scott, Walter, 180–1

- Seamon, David, 115
Secret Garden, The (Burnett), 344–5
Secret of the Blue Glass, The (Inui), 237
 Seedhouse, Paul, 251
 Seibert, Ernst, 156
 Seifert, Christine, 96
 Selznick, Brian, 333
 Sendak, Maurice, 45–6, 294
 Sepetys, Ruta, 163
Series of Unfortunate Events, A (Snicket), 167, 333
 Serpell, James, 48
 Seuss, Dr, 25, 211, 276–7, 289
Seventeenth Summer (Daly), 94
 sexuality, 3, 90–9; *see also* gender; queer theory
 Shakeshaft, Richard, 33
 Shakespeare, William, 305, 339–40, 343, 348
 Shannon, David, 251
 Sheehan, Paul, 39
Sheep Don't go to School (Peters), 235
 Sherwood, Maria, 162
 Shuttleworth, Sally, 281, 286
 sick-lit, 284
 Siddall, Stephen, 55
 Sidney, Philip, 184
 Silva, Roberta, 104
Silver Metal Lover, The (Lee), 32
 Silverstein, Shel, 276
 Sinclair, Catherine, 350
 Sipe, Lawrence, 128, 251
Skeleton Creek (Carman), 203
Skellig (Almond), 168
Skippyjon Jones (Schachner), 24–6
 Slapin, Beverly, 24–5
 Smith, Louisa, 56
 Sneddon, Raymonde, 241
 Snicket, Lemony, 167, 333
Snow White (movie), 51
Snowy Day, The (Keats), 23–4
Sobibor (Molla), 236
Sold (McCormick), 97
 Soto, Gary, 13–15, 17
 Sowers, Jacob, 115
 Spacks, Patricia, 140
 spatiality, 3, 5, 55–66; *see also* ecocriticism; ecofeminism; place
 Speer, Nicole K., 104
Spot (Wiesner), 206
 Spring, Erin, 6
 Spufford, Francis, 140–1, 145
 Spyri, Johanna, 84
srsly Hamlet, 339
 Stahl, J. D., 158
 Stephen, Leslie, 344, 349
 Stephen, Thoby, 346
 Stephens, John, 2, 29, 30, 103, 105, 107
 Sterne, Lawrence, 333
 Stevenson, Deborah, 157
 Stevenson, Robert Louis, 59, 269, 344, 346
 Stewart, Kate, 42
 Stine, R. L., 168
Stone Book Quartet, The (Garner), 58, 168
Story Buddy (Tapfuze), 210
 Strachey, James, 344
 Styles, Morag, 330
Subtle Knife, The (Pullman), 65
 Sullivan, Heather, 71
 Sully, James, 347
Summer Book, The (Jansson), 238
 Sundmark, Björn, 58, 60
 Sutton, Eve, 247
 Suzuma, Tabitha, 97
Swallows and Amazons (Ransome), 140, 144, 161, 344
 Swinburne, Algernon Charles, 349
 Szechyńska-Hebda, Magdalena, 276
Tale of Little Pig Robinson, The (Potter), 346
Tale of Peter Rabbit, The (Potter), 346

- Tales of Beedle the Bard, The* (Rowling), 170
- Tales of the Willows* (Horwood), 169
- Tally, Robert T., 55, 62
- Tan, Shaun, 130, 221, 253–4
- Tapley Takemori, Ginny, 237
- Tate, Claudia, 18
- Taxel, Joel, 308
- Taylor, Clark, 253
- Taylor, Charles, 19, 159, 161
- Taylor, Liz, 119
- teen fiction *see* young adult fiction
- Tellegen, Toon, 235
- Tenniel, John, 351
- Tennyson, Alfred Lord, 349
- Thacker, Deborah, 302
- Thackeray, William M., 349
- Thief Lord, The* (Funke), 234
- This Moose Belongs to Me* (Jeffers), 38
- Thomas, Ed, 309
- Thomas, Lisa, 250
- Thompson, Kate, 58
- Thompson, Laurie, 234
- Thompson Dicks, Jan, 253
- Thoreau, Henry David, 45
- Thorne, Jack, 170
- Through the Looking-Glass* (Carroll), 39, 342–52
- Time Before Me, A* (Perrone), 98
- Titanic* (movie), 131
- To the Lighthouse* (Woolf), 2, 343–4, 348, 350
- Toby Alone* (Fombelle), 66, 277
- Toby and the Secrets of the Tree* (Fombelle), 277
- Tolkien, J. R. R., 59, 162, 316
- Tom's Midnight Garden* (Pearce), 58
- Townsend, John Rowe, 351
- Train Man* (Nakano), 339
- translation, 213–14, 232–44, 252
- transmediality, 173–4, 210–14
- Travisano, Tom, 268
- Treasure Island* (Stevenson), 59
- Treasure Seekers, The* (Nesbit), 344
- Tree That Sat Down, The* (Nichols), 205
- Trentacosti, Giulia, 234
- Trimmer, Sarah, 162
- Trites, Roberta Seelinger, 5, 91–2
- Tuan, Yi-Fu, 45, 48, 114–15, 118, 121
- Tullet, Hervé, 210
- Turrión, Celia, 204
- Turton, David, 234
- Tusk, Tusk* (McKee), 247, 253
- Twain, Mark, 183, 345
- Twilight* series (Meyer), 96–7
- Ullman, Anika, 284
- Ulysses* (Joyce), 2
- Unforgotten Coat, The* (Boyce), 332
- Unsworth, Len, 221
- Van Hulle, Dirk, 298–9
- van Leeuwen, Theo, 224
- van Lieshout, Ted, 234
- Vanderpool, Clare, 117–18
- Vanishing of Katharina Linden, The* (Grant), 163
- Venuti, Lawrence, 241
- Very Hungry Caterpillar, The* (Carle), 247, 249
- videogame *see* game studies
- Vidović, Ester, 107
- Vint, Sherryl, 32
- Viola, Alessandra, 275–6
- Violet and Claire* (Block), 99
- von Haller, Albrecht, 275
- Voyage of the Dawn Treader, The* (Lewis), 64
- Voyage Out, The* (Woolf), 344, 348–50
- Waffle Hearts* (Parr), 239
- Waite, Judy, 97

- Walker, Emmanuelle, 207
Wallace, David, 98–9
Waller, Alison, 66, 268
Wang, Helen, 233
Warf, Barney, 65
Warner, Marina, 52
Wasserman, Robin, 33, 36
Water Babies (Kingsley), 162
Watkins, Tony, 55
Watkinson, Laura, 237
Watson, Victor, 167, 171
Watts, Isaak, 349
Waverley (Scott), 180
Waves, The (Woolf), 344, 347, 349
Weetzie Bat books (Block), 93–4
Weight of Water, The (Crossan), 163
Wein, Elizabeth, 163
Welch, D’Alte, 307
Welcome to the Zoo (Jay), 48–9
Wenxuan, Cao, 233
Wesseling, Elisabeth, 82
West, Cornel, 108
Westerfeld, Scott, 187–8, 190, 192
When Everything Feels Like the Movies (Reid), 99
When Love Comes to Town (Lennon), 98
When Sophie Gets Angry (Bang), 206
When We Was Fierce (Charlton-Trujillo), 25
Where the Wild Things Are (Sendak), 45, 106–7, 294
White, Hayden, 184
Whitley, David, 50–1
Whyte, Pádraic, 56
Wiesner, David, 130, 206
Wild, Margaret, 255
Wild Wood (Needle), 169
Wilde, Oscar, 348
Wilder, Laura Ingalls, 346, 350
Wildsmith, Brian, 201
Williams, Gweno, 248
Williams, Siân, 236
Wilson, Budge, 169
Wilson, Jacqueline, 169
Wimsatt, William K., 2
Wind in the Willows, The (Grahame), 169, 305
Winnie-the-Pooh (Milne), 31, 61, 87, 169
Winnie the Witch (Thomas and Paul), 250
Winter Book, A (Jansson), 238
Winter Holiday (Ransome), 346
Wise Brown, Margaret, 249
Wolf, Cendrine, 237
Wolf, Maryanne, 293
Wolf, Virginia, 63
Wolfe, Cary, 29
Wolves of Willoughby Chase, The (Aiken), 181, 185
Wonderful Wizard of Oz, The (Baum), 169
Wonderstruck (Selznick), 333
Wood, Denis, 61
Wolf, Virginia, 343–52
Wordsworth, William, 347, 350
Wouldbegoods, The (Nesbit), 343–4, 349
Wright, Richard, 18
Wynne-Jones, Tim, 118–19
X-Indian Chronicles (Yeahpau), 18
Yang, Gene Luen (Eugene), 20, 108
Yarova, Aliona, 38
Yeahpau, Thomas M., 18, 19
Years, The (Woolf), 345
Yellow Umbrella (Liu), 220
Yokota, Junko, 6
Yonge, Charlotte M., 342
young adult fiction, 5, 32, 90–9, 102–9, 112–21

Young Mother (Kamm), 94–5

Young-Bruehl, Elizabeth, 86

Youngquist, Michelle, 330

Zenith (Bertagna), 73–6

Zipes, Jack, 241, 317

Zoo (Browne), 49–50

Zoom Zoom Zoom (Manolessou),
201

Zoomberry (Lee and Petričić), 217

Zunshine, Lisa, 104

Zusak, Markus, 332