
Papers

Explorations into Children's Literature

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EDITORIAL

The theme of the Eighth International Conference of the Australasian Children's Literature Association for Research (ACLAR), held at Victoria University of Wellington on 27-29 June 2008, was 'Other Worlds in Children's Literature: Fantasy, Reality and Imagination'. The topics of the 76 papers presented ranged from fantasy, folklore, morality, and power of language to sexuality, timeslip, humour and cyberculture. This issue of *Papers* comprises selected papers from this conference.

Roderick McGillis's stimulating plenary address 'Fantasy as Epanalepsis: "An Anticipation of Retrospection"' discusses fantasy as memory, nostalgia and desire. McGillis in particular examines the 'there and back again' movement of fantasy in which journeys are followed by a return home, and in which the reader is invited to 'look back at what never was'.

The first three articles address issues of narrative and motifs. Webb explores how J. K. Rowling's narrative strategies in the *Harry Potter* series gradually develop in the reader an increasingly intellectual recognition of reality. In her analysis of *The Incredibles* and *The Lion Boy* trilogy Chappell examines the fantasy motif of exceptionality versus homogeneity in contemporary culture. Schaefer considers the main character's journey in *The Neverending Story* as a narrative towards finding free will. Next, two articles deal with the question of cultural perspective. By focusing on works by Ihimaera and Duiker, Brown discusses the creation of an alternative fantasy within colonised cultures. Hammer exposes the problem of representing perspectives of marginalised cultures from a non-indigenous point of view in three Young Adult novels by Allende. Other types of perspective are presented by Yu and Free. Yu looks at how the relationship between character and reader creates a *mise en abyme* in MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind*, and Free peels away the layers of signifier and signified in Fisher's *The Oracle* in order to reveal the simulacrum within. Two articles then touch on matters of time and space. Marquis focuses on Antipodean time-slip narratives and the way in which their characters experience first-hand their postcolonial inheritance as living history. Questions of space, place and identity are explored by Lunt through the example of two Australian picture books, with a particularly interesting focus on the images of kites and streamers as hyphens bridging time and space. Toffoletti's discussion of the pitfalls of sexualisation and media technology in the teen series *Gossip Girls* brings this issue of *Papers* very much into the twenty-first century. At the last comes Mills's Bakhtinian, Kristevan and Freudian reading of Griffith's *Bum* trilogy and its focus on all things anal, which appropriately brings this issue to an end.

Let us return in an epanaleptic way to the plenary paper: McGillis opens this collection with the idea of anticipation and retrospection. This issue of *Papers*

includes only a retrospection of the many excellent papers presented at the 2008 ACLAR conference. It allows us to look back, not at a fantasy that never was, but at a very

real and exhilarating meeting of minds, the return of which we eagerly anticipate.

Tatjana Schaefer.