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# Papers

*Explorations into Children's Literature*

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## EDITORIAL

We commence this editorial with two announcements. The first is that Professor John Stephens (Macquarie University) has been awarded the 11th International Brothers Grimm Award. This prestigious biennial Japanese award is given to a scholar who has made an outstanding international contribution to research in children's literature. In addition to being a longstanding member of our Editorial Board and a staunch supporter of *Papers*, John has been President of the International Research Society for Children's Literature and is currently the ACLAR President. The award is worthy recognition of John's influential scholarship and publications, particularly *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction* (1992). He is the first Australian to receive the Brothers Grimm Award and will travel to Japan later in the year for the presentation ceremony. We congratulate John and invite all readers of *Papers* to join us in wishing him well.

Our second announcement relates to the future of *Papers*, which is now in its seventeenth year as Australia's only scholarly journal specialising in children's literature. As you will appreciate, printing and postage costs continue to climb each year, and our location in Australia means that our subscription base is relatively low. We are determined to ensure that *Papers* continues to publish high-quality work, especially at a time when research in children's literature is enjoying steady growth. The editors have made the decision that from 2008 we will publish the journal online, through a dedicated website. It will continue to be subscription-based, although our international subscribers will no longer be charged for postage. We realise that many of our readers would prefer to receive *Papers* in hard copy, and we make this move reluctantly but in the knowledge that we will not be able to sustain the production of the journal in its present form. We will provide more information about the website and about subscription options in our December issue.

The six essays which comprise this issue negotiate relationships and connections between texts for children and young people, and cultural practices and formations. Sue Saltmarsh's 'Spirits, Miracles and Clauses' takes a critical look at how childhood is reconfigured in three texts organised around Western culture and its celebration of Christmas: Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*; the 1947 film *Miracle on 34th Street*; and Disney's 1999 film *Santa Clause*. Saltmarsh considers the discursive shifts across these texts, which are widely separated in time but which are all imbued, though in different ways, with ideas and ideologies centred on economic and social orders. The setting of Christmas, with its practices of buying, selling, feasting and gift-giving, commonly evokes cultural anxieties about capitalism and its excluded: those who are marginalised by poverty and especially children who may fail to experience the lavishly-filled stockings enjoyed by their more fortunate peers. Saltmarsh adds to this mix a consideration of the gendering of economic orders,

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examining the extent to which capitalism and patriarchy are interdependent.

Anne-Kari Skardhamar introduces readers to a group of contemporary Norwegian children's texts – three novels and a picture book – which thematise 'nerves, violence and step-parents'. The narratives of these texts involve families where relations between parents have broken down, where a step-parent is introduced into the family, or where parents experience psychiatric disorders. Skardhamar considers how these texts both involve representations of traumatic and difficult situations, and position readers to reflect on the complex interactions they involve. The young protagonists of these texts are, she says, all 'resilient children' whose survival strategies model how children can 'keep up their courage in difficult situations'. A different set of strategies for dealing with adversity is considered in Rebecca-Anne Do Rozario's 'Pedagogy and Other Unfortunate Events'. Here Do Rozario considers how texts ranging from *Alice in Wonderland* to the *Artemis Fowl* and *Harry Potter* novels undercut their pedagogical agendas by advocating various forms of 'cheerful nihilism' which question authority, contest the binaries of good and evil proposed by authority figures, and take pleasure in the absurd.

In his essay '(Re)constructing Masculinity: Representations of Men and Masculinity in Australian Young Adult Literature', Troy Potter focuses on the discourses of masculinity which inform two recent Australian Young Adult realist texts: David Metzenthén's *Boys of Blood and Bone*, and Scot Gardner's *Burning Eddy*. Potter brings theories of masculinity to bear on his analysis of the narrative and linguistic features of these texts, concluding that both novels are 'constrained by elements of the normative and, to some extent, mythic Australian masculinity' which finds its expression in discourses of mateship, in representations

of males who are unable to express emotion, and in a pervasive rejection of homosexuality.

Attention to the linguistic features of texts is given a different treatment by Leah Gerber in her essay "'If I've arksed youse boys once, I've arksed youse boys a thousand times!':

Translation strategies in the German translation of Phillip Gwynne's *Deadly, Unna?*. Gerber's focus is on how certain Australian cultural signifiers are transferred from the Australian source text to the German target text through the act of translation. As Gerber explains, translators tend to employ one of two strategies: to domesticate the text by using domestically familiar equivalents words and phrases or to foreignise the text so as to move the reader closer to the foreign source text's culture. In the case of *Deadly, Unna?* Gerber demonstrates how the translator uses the strategy of 'foreignisation', which is supported by footnoting as a form of 'cultural aid', to explain specific Australian words and to maintain the 'Australian flavour' of the text.

Finally, in "'Biting the hand that feeds": Consumerism, ideology and recent animated film for children', Jillian Hinkins discusses the impact of consumerism on recent children's animated film. Her discussion considers some of the ways in which the medium is constructed in order to sell itself, and the effect that ideologies of consumption can be seen to infuse both the content and marketing of the films. In her close analysis of *Over the Hedge*, Hinkins concludes that while the overt message of the film appears to warn against aspects of consumer behaviours, the implicit message negates this point of view, especially in the closing scene when the animals are shown trying to retrieve Nacho Corn Chips from a vending machine. As Hinkins observes, 'Although the central message of the film is to avoid being greedy, the protagonists are ultimately unable to resist the bodily pleasures that are tempting them'.