

Papers

Explorations into Children's Literature

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Contributions to *Papers* are welcomed. Please submit typed double-spaced manuscript, together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope if it is to be returned.

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The cover image by Ernest H. Shepard, from *Dream Days* by Kenneth Grahame, London, John Lane/Bodley Head, 1942; p 81.

EDITORIAL

This issue of *Papers* presents four essays canvassing a diverse range of theoretical and textual interests. Beverley Pennell's 'Ozzie Kids Flee the Garden of Delight: Reconfigurations of Childhood in Australian Children's Fictions' tracks shifts in how childhood is conceptualised in contemporary Australian fiction for children, using as focus texts Joanne Horniman's *Sand Monkeys* and Odo Hirsch's trilogy of 'Hazel Green' books. This essay argues that cultural discourses around children and childhood have shifted from an emphasis on adulthood and childhood as distinct and separate domains of experience, and from the idealisation of childhood as it manifested in Romantic textuality, to a blurring of boundaries between children and adults. In Australian texts, Pennell sees this shift as incorporating an increasing democratisation of power relations between adults and children, and an appreciation of the diversity of child populations. This essay invites comparative studies which explore the extent to which representations of childhood in Australian texts are similar to those evident in other national literatures for children.

Nicole Humphrey's essay, 'The Uses of Irony and the Carnavalesque in Leigh Hobbs' Picture Books' focuses on these popular Australian texts to consider their carnivalesque and interrogative qualities. Humphrey argues that the 'Old Tom' books, and Hobbs' *Horrible Harriet* deploy a number of features of carnivalesque textuality, notably the grotesque realism with which bodily functions are depicted, strategies of role-playing which disrupt social norms, and the interrogation of hierarchies and status.

Very little has been published on the topic of Chinese literature for children, and Xiangshu Fang's essay 'Neo-Confucianism in Chinese Children's Books' is an important contribution to the discussion of a body of texts read by huge numbers of children and promoting ideologies relating to conceptions of the ideal Chinese citizen. Xiangshu argues that following the death of Mao Zedong and the end of the Cultural Revolution, the new leadership fell back on the concept of patriotism as the main plank of post-Mao ideologies. After the turmoil of the 1980s and the suppression of the democracy movement, Confucianism was reintroduced as a strategy of stabilisation. Xiangshu's essay incorporates translations of a number of neo-Confucian texts along with his discussion of the principles of Confucianism and their deployment in contemporary Chinese texts.

Kate McNally's queer reading of Sarah Walker's *Camphor Laurel* demonstrates that this text is one of a few Young Adult fictions which destabilise cultural assumptions concerning a normative heterosexuality. McNally argues that this novel's representation of same-sex desire by young female characters moves beyond the models of maturational development and identity politics which inform most mainstream fiction. This essay both draws on and complicates Lacan's model of psychosexual development.

With this issue of *Papers* we welcome Kerry Mallan to the editorial board. Kerry is an Associate Professor at Queensland Institute of Technology in Brisbane, and has published widely on children's literature and literacy. Her most recent book is an edited collection of essays (with Sharyn Pearce), *Youth Cultures: Texts, Images and Identities* (Praeger, 2003).

Following discussion with the editorial board, the editors of *Papers* have decided to reduce the number of issues per year from three to two, commencing in 2004. Since the introduction of GST in Australia, our production costs have increased, as have demands on academics, and we believe that the preparation of two instead of three issues will achieve economies both in cost and in the work of producing the journal. We intend to publish the same number of essays as we currently do in each volume—that is, between twelve and fifteen, but divided between two instead of three issues, produced in April and in October. Subscription fees will remain unchanged.

ERRATA: Vol 13, No. 1

We wish to correct an error and rectify an omission from our last issue, Volume 13, Number 1.

Clare Bradford

We apologise to Erica Hateley, author of the article titled 'Shakespeare as National Discourse in Contemporary Children's Literature', for mis-spelling her name.

Secondly, we apologise for omitting Claudia Nelson's acknowledgement of the financial assistance she received from UNSW that made possible the writing of her article 'Ethel Turner and the "Voices of Dissent": Masculinities and Fatherhood in *The Cub* and *Captain Cub*'. Claudia's missing acknowledgement read: 'I thank the University of New South Wales for its generosity in providing the Visiting Fellowship that enabled me to research this article'.

