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Constructing Emotions of Childhood: an analysis of Margaret Mahy's use of emotion in her literary contribution to the *School Journal*

(hereafter referred to as 'The MIS Research Project')

being undertaken by

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**Constructing the emotions of childhood: an analysis of
Margaret Mahy's use of emotion in her literary contribution
to the *School Journal***

by

Gemma Amy Helleur Hiscock

Submitted to the School of Information Management,
Victoria University of Wellington
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Abstract

This qualitative content analysis research study examines how Margaret Mahy used emotion in the *School Journal* to form insights into reader appeal, reader response and the social construction of childhood.

This research study examines Mahy's contribution to the *School Journal*. The study explores this body of work in terms of how its author uses emotion to captivate readers by evoking the feelings associated with childhood. The underlying objective of the study was to provide insights into why Mahy's work is so treasured and memorable; to explain how she uses emotion to captivate readers, and how this contributes to the social construction of childhood.

The prose and poetry Mahy contributed to the *School Journal* prove to be a significant, rich and uncharted resource for the purposes of this research investigation. Analysis of this body of work has allowed for greater insights and understanding into Mahy's contribution to children's literature. It has also allowed for a greater appreciation of how Mahy's use of emotion contributes to the social construction of childhood. This type of content analysis research study proves to be invaluable in the development of reader's advisory services to young people. The employment of a content analysis methodology, underpinned by a discourse analysis approach, enabled the emotional narratives of Mahy's text to be explained and understood. The study's findings, that lightness and aliveness are the most prevalent and persuasive emotions operating within Mahy's text, was substantiated through analysis of actual reader responses.

This investigation is most applicable to school librarians, children's librarians and educators. The study has broader implications for the improvement of client interaction and collection development in youth library services.

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Introduction

Margaret Mahy's contribution to children's literature was extensive and profound. David Glover (2012) Chief Executive of Learning Media, described Margaret Mahy as "a Kiwi treasure who touched the hearts of every New Zealander, and children around the world". This research study examines the literary contribution Mahy made to the *School Journal*. The study explores how Mahy used feelings of snugness, scariness, smallness, lightness and aliveness within her work to evoke feelings of childhood. The study provides new insights into how Mahy successfully captivated readers, through her use of emotion. The study considers how Mahy's use of emotion contributes to the social construction of childhood and how the feelings a snugness, scariness, smallness, lightness and aliveness correlate to actual reader responses to Mahy's work.

Literature Review

The School Journal

Margaret Mahy once described the *School Journal* as being "one of New Zealand's leading literary magazines" (Mahy as cited in O'Brien, 2007, p.7). The *School Journal* is a significant literary and cultural resource with a long and lively history. O'Brien (2007) explores the *School Journal's* unique and dynamic history in his work *A Nest of Singing Birds*,

"Over a century of dizzying change, there is one central aspect of the journal that has not altered – its preoccupation with literacy, with encouraging children to read... for a great number of New Zealanders, the School Journal was the beginning of a lifetime of reading. Relatively early in its history, it came to occupy a central place in classrooms and homes" (p.7).

The *School Journal* has proven to be the source of inspiration for numerous research studies. The earliest identified thesis on the *School Journal* is Jenkins (1937) exploration into the “Social, civic and moral attitudes in the New Zealand *School Journal*, 1907-1937”. Jenkins (1937) described the Journal as being “a kind of omnibus text - book on a wide range of subjects”. Jenkins (1937) goes on to describe the *School Journal* as “rich in material intended to form social attitudes; but this is not to say that the Journal has a clear and consistent social attitude”. O’Brien (2007) makes a similar observation,

“Persistent questions of what the values and ideals the School Journal should reflect... debates will continue as long as the journal exists: how children are depicted.... what exactly is childhood, and where do children stand in relation to the rest of society and the wider world around them? Such is the territory in which the School Journal must continue to function” (p.150).

Margret Mahy

Margaret Mahy was one of New Zealand’s most acclaimed and honored children’s writers. Mahy was not only an international literary treasure and an award winning children’s writer she was also a librarian. Hale (2005) describes how Mahy’s characters, like Mahy herself, are inherently intertwined with literature,

“passionately attached to words: witness the number of characters who read write or work with words for a living, as librarians, teachers, writers, readers, booksellers, lecturers... they enjoy words, speaking with wit and flair, twisting meaning, rhyming, rapping, punning and joking... they read too... revealing themselves as intertextual beings who orient themselves through literature”(p.10).

Influential and informative text on Mahy’s work included, Mahy’s own collection of reflective essays, *A Dissolving Ghost* (2000) and a collection of scholarly essays edited by Hale and Winters (2005) entitled *Marvellous Codes the fiction of Margaret Mahy*. Both texts inspire a deeper reading and critique of Mahy’s work. Hale and Winters’ (2005) collected

essays demonstrates the diversity in interpretations of Mahy's work, from pirate parenting to postcolonial ghosts.

Recent thesis on Mahy's work include Proffitt's (2011) "Margaret Mahy and the Golden age of children's literature" and Michael Pohl's (2012) "Classic Myth and Margaret Mahy's Young Adult Fiction". Proffitt's (2011) work proves particularly insightful when considering Mahy's use of fantasyscapes and the character development of Mahy's female heroes.

The Social Construction of Childhood

Mahy acknowledges the work of Jacqueline Rose as influencing her understanding of how childhood is constructed within children's literature. Mahy (2000) explains how the author and child are positioned within Rose's theoretical framework, "child as consumer and adult as originator, at times exploiter" (p.23). In Harper's article "Enfranchising the child: picture books, primacy and discourse" the adult to child reading relationship is described as emulating "discourses of imperialism and colonialism" (2001, p.5). Phillipe Aries' work *Centuries of Childhood* (1962) was seminal in informing understandings of childhood as a construct of modernity. Harper (2001) traces the origins of the commercial picture book to "the eighteenth century, with the birth of modern literary consumerism, the rise of the novel and the considerable expansion of the market for books" (p. 2). Rose argues that concepts of the 'child' and 'childhood' in children's literature are conceived for the benefit of authors, publishers and literary critics (Rose as cited in Lesnik-Oberstein, 1996, p.19). Librarians specialising in youth services could be added to Rose's list of benefactors. Zipes (2001, as cited in Baker, 2004, p.9) asserts that,

"children's literature is unique among narrative productions... children's literature specifically addresses children, yet it is generally written by adults; its publication is controlled by adults; and access to it by children is generally mediated by adults... a body of literature created by children for children and belonging to children, does not exist".

Lesnik-Oberstein (1996) highlights that “children’s literature and children’s literary criticism have not, in fact made much use of Rose’s argument... the very existence of these fields depends utterly on a posited existence of the child” (p.19). For the purposes of this study Rose’s work facilitates critical analysis and questioning of how childhood is constructed within children’s literature.

Emotion and Children’s Literature

The idea that children’s literature evokes an intrinsic emotional response connected to our memories of being young is explored by Mahy in *A Dissolving Ghost* (2000). Mahy describes the surfacing of a subconscious childhood memory prompted by the rereading of a story she had written,

“Overwhelmingly, I remember something I had not thought for many, many years – certainly not at the same time when writing the story. I remember myself as a very small child, three years old, sitting on my father’s knee and listening to a series of stories... suddenly it seemed to me that the lion in my story was the same lion my father had given me... I had not been inventing at all. I had been pushed by the energy of the moment into a secret remembering” (2000, p.15).

Harper (2001) suggests that our recollection of early encounters with literature represent a certain ‘interconnectedness of memory’ (p.5). He explains that these memories are not,

“Linear, never “historicist”, rather memory is fluid and multi-layered: the sensations of sight, sound, scent, and touch reach across time and space ...” (Harper, 2001, p.6).

Mahy’s description of the adult author’s secret remembering and Harper’s notion of the interconnectedness of memory of early encounters with literature, informs this study’s understanding of how children’s literature evokes an intrinsic emotional response connected to memories of being young.

Griswold (2006) asserts that the most successful children’s authors are connected to their childhoods (p.4). He explains that such authors “speak to the young... this is the source of their appeal... simply said, the great writers for children know – and their stories speak of

and reveal – what it feels like to be a kid” (p.4). In Griswold’s work *Feeling like a kid: childhood and children’s literature*, five prevalent and reoccurring emotions are identified in “classic and popular works of children’s literature” (2006, p.1). The five emotions identified by Griswold (2006) are the feelings of –

- Snugness
- Scariness
- Smallness
- Lightness
- Aliveness

Shifts and tensions in our understanding of the reading experience are evident across the literature. Mackey (1993) explains,

“Once upon a time, prose in a novel seemed transparent, a window onto an imaginary world. Now days, with self-conscious manipulation of narrative forms, we are more likely to think of the prose as a construct, something shaped by the author... we are more aware of the text, but we often still think of the reading process as transparent” (p.1).

These shifts and tensions in our understanding have influenced this research study’s approach and design. Wide reading uncovered the need to position analysis of Mahy’s work in terms of how it contributes to the social construction of childhood. Secondly, a review of the literature enabled a more insightful conceptualisation of the reading experience as a complex and dynamic interplay interweaving both memory and emotion.

Research Problem

This qualitative content analysis research study examines how Margaret Mahy used emotion in the *School Journal*, to inform insights into reader appeal, reader response and the social construction of childhood.

Research Questions

- How does Mahy use emotion in the prose and poetry she contributed to the *School Journal*?
- How do these emotions correlate to actual reader responses to Mahy's work in social media spaces?
- How does Mahy's use of emotion contribute to the social construction of childhood?

Theoretical Framework

Reader Response Theory

Ross (2005) asserts that "research performed within the framework of reader-response theory asks questions about the agency of the reader: What is the reader doing when she reads? What is the relation between the reader and the text? What happens in the process of the reader's making sense of text?" (p.303). Reader response theory allows for greater insights to be made into the reading experience and explains the relationship between text and reader. Louis Rosenblatt's transactional reading theory allows us to conceptualise the reading

experience as an emotional interplay between text and reader. This emotional transaction is explained by Rosenblatt,

“A story or poem or play is merely inkspots until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols. When these symbols lead us to live through some moment of feelings, to enter into some human personality, or to participate imaginatively in some situation or event, we have evoked a work of literary art (2005, p.63).

The premise, or assumption that this proposed research study draws from reader response theory is the concept that an emotional interplay between text and reader takes place during the reading experience and that this emotional transaction is significant and worthy of investigation. Rosenblatt’s transactional reading theory is fundamental to this study’s understanding of the reading experience. This theoretical perspective has informed the investigations analysis of Mahy’s work and the harvesting of reader responses to her work in social media spaces.

Methodology

This research study employed a qualitative content analysis methodology and was supported by a discourse analysis approach. Leedy and Ormond (2012) describe content analysis research as the “detailed and systematic examination of contents of a particular body of material for the purposes of identifying patterns, themes or biases” (p.148).

A strict quantitative content analysis limits “analysis to the surface level” (Baker, 2004, p.19). A qualitative discourse analysis approach however is “above the level of sentences. Discourse analysts tend to focus on how a particular phenomena are represented” (Krippendorff, 2012, p.22). This study identified the extent and frequency of Mahy’s use of emotion in the prose and poetry she contributed to the *School Journal*. A content analysis methodology enabled a close, strategic and systematic reading of the works. The data collection and data coding process generated tabulated data sheets mapping extent, frequency and trends in Mahy’s use of emotion in the *School Journal*. The five emotions Griswold

(2006) identifies in his work *Feeling like a kid: childhood and children's literature* informed the study's data collection and analysis.

A pilot study involving fourteen selected works was carried out to test the robustness of data collection sheets and the coding scheme employed within the study. The outcomes of this initial investigation allowed for the development of a single comprehensive data collection sheet and additional coding provisions.

The data collection process involved a close reading, coding and counting of language and stylistic features of the text, for example:

- The use of adjectives in the text to describe feelings of snugness, scariness, smallness, lightness, aliveness.
- The use of verbs in the text to communicate an action which demonstrates feelings of snugness, scariness, smallness, lightness, aliveness.
- The use of metaphor, similes, onomatopoeia, or rhyme to express feelings of snugness, scariness, smallness, lightness, aliveness.

The data collection process also involved a close reading, coding and counting of the narrative elements of the text, for example:

- Use of plot and/or plot shifts, themes, setting and characterisation to convey feelings of snugness, scariness, smallness, lightness, aliveness.

Field notes were also employed during the data collection process to support tabulated data collection sheets. This allowed for a more in depth discourse analysis of the works.

In the later stages of this qualitative content analysis study the research triangulated and branched across two distinct data sources. Actual reader responses' were harvested from social media spaces to inform a deeper analysis of Mahy's work and the reading encounter.

Research Sample

The *School Journal*

The study explored the entire body of work Mahy contributed to the *School Journal*. The sample period spans three decades, from 1961 to 1988. The sample included both prose and poetry published across all four parts (reading levels) of the Journal. The study identified and analysed a total of eighty works by Mahy published in the *School Journal*. One work of prose was identified twice in the sample; the work ‘The little witch’ featured in the Journal both in an original and later in an abridged form. Two works of poetry were identified twice over the sample period, ‘Alone in the house’ and ‘The little wild woman’. Both works were only counted once in the sample. The sample also featured four journals consisting entirely of Mahy’s work. The final sample consisted of fifty nine works of prose (short stories), twenty works of poetry, and one play.

Considerable attention was given to sample identification to ensure that all of Mahy’s works within the *School Journal* were accounted for. The chronological bibliography of Mahy’s works featuring in Duder’s work *Margaret Mahy: a writer’s life* (2012) provided useful. The *School Journal Index* (1970) and the *School Journal Catalogue* (1986) were also invaluable bibliographic tools.

Social Media Spaces

Actual reader responses’ to Mahy’s work were harvested across several social media spaces:

- Good Reads, an online reading community which allows members to share, review and rate books they have read. Thirty five reader responses to works which had originally featured in the *School Journal* were analysed from this social media site.
- Beattie’s Book Blog – unofficial homepage of New Zealand’s book community. Thirty nine memorial postings made by Mahy readers, in response to Graham Beattie’s tribute blog post were analysed.

- Muse, Craig Ranapia's Public Address Blog. Sixty four postings made by Mahy readers, in response to Craig Ranapia's tribute blog posting were analysed.
- Busy Town, Jolisa Gracewood's Public Address Blog. Forty eight postings made by Mahy readers, in response to Jolisa Gracewood's blog posting on Mahy's life and works were analysed.
- Motata's Blog Idle, a life style blog featuring on the New Zealand online News forum Stuff. Ninety four posting responding to Motata's blog posting on Margaret Mahy were analysed.

The selection and inclusion of these five social media spaces was based on the degree of interaction or comments made by followers. Collectively across the five social media spaces a total of two hundred and eighty reader responses' (or reflections on Mahy's work) were analysed.

Results

Snugness

Snugness is expressed in children's literature in descriptions of spaces and places. Griswold (2006) identifies twelve aspects to the literary expression of snugness in children's literature: enclosed, tight, small, simple, well designed, remote, safe, guarded, self-sufficient, owned, hidden, and cozy (pp.5-30). Feelings of snugness can also be connected to key or underlying themes within a work.

For the purposes of this research study three distinct codes were developed and employed to identify snugness within Mahy's work. The three codes employed in the investigation were: small spaces (small, tight, cosy spaces), small places (well designed, remote, simple and self-sufficient), and safe / guarded spaces (enclosed, hidden or owned spaces). The three codes consolidated the twelve distinct literary expression of snugness identified by Griswold. An additional code identifying the frequency of beds (or sleeping places) within the works was also employed. The need for a distinct code for beds and the ability to record the use of beds

within Mahy's works became apparent during the initial pilot study. The four codes proved to be an effective means of identifying, distinguishing and articulating the expression and experience and of snugness within Mahy's work.

Feelings of snugness are experienced in Mahy's narratives through the use of – beds, tree houses, cottages, forts, castles, islands, caves, cupboards, burrows, mouse holes and nests. These spaces and places are used to express and explore feelings of warmth, security, and self-sufficiency.

The Bed

Beds feature in fourteen of the works Mahy contributed to the *School Journal*. The first work of prose Mahy contributed to the *School Journal*, 'Teddy and the Witches' disrupts and plays with that especially snug sanctuary – the bed. The protagonist, Teddy is attacked by a pair of mischievous witches. Teddy's bed begins to "slide and glide, to bumble and stumble, to creep and leap" and take flight (Mahy, 1961, p.9). The bed is transformed into a winged horse, a winged dragon, and the wind. Teddy maintains self preservation and control over the situation through his ability to think positive thoughts,

'The bed became a great wind and it tossed Teddy like thistledown, but he lay limp in the wind and thought happy thoughts, and pretended he was being bounced in his bed at home' (Mahy, 1961, p.9).

The bed within this story is no longer a known, warm, or comforting place – like Teddy's bed at home. The protagonist is forced to defend himself against the dangerous mischievous forces disrupting the snugness of his world. This story illustrates how Mahy simultaneously disrupts and constructs feelings of snugness within her narratives.

The Tree house – and secure play spaces

Mahy explores imaginary outdoor play spaces in several of the works. Characters seek out and occupy hidden, snug, secure worlds to escape and engage in imaginary play. In 'The old bus' published commercially in 1974 as *'The bus under the leaves'*, two boys David and Adam transform an abandoned bus into an imaginary play space. The boys "make the bus

into a fort” (Mahy, 1964, p.15) and arm themselves with make believe guns. The boys create a second imaginary play space in some fallen trees. This space is described as “like a house full of rooms and passages” (Mahy, 1964, p.37). Griswold (2006) explains that feelings of snugness are experienced in children’s literature through descriptions of spaces such as, “the tent made of blankets and chairs... the tree house, the fort... the cave and other bastions of security and comfort” (p.6). These spaces are described by Griswold (2006) as being “self fortified and snug behind defense mechanism” (p.14).

Tree houses featured in three of the works within the sample, ‘Guy and the bears’, ‘Green Needles’ and ‘Ultra-Violet Catastrophe’. The protagonist Sally, in the ‘Ultra-Violet Catastrophe’ transforms herself into “Horrible Stumper the tree pirate” while engaging in tree climbing (Mahy, 1978, p.49). Teddy, the protagonist in ‘Green Needles’, describes his tree house as being ‘his secret piney room’ (Mahy, 1966, p. 21).

The snug, secure outdoor play spaces (rooms/ houses/ passageways) constructed in Mahy’s works enable characters (and readers) a means of escaping and engaging in imaginary uninterrupted play. Griswold (2006) highlights that “playing alone, engaging in solitary games in private enclosures, the child rehearses individuality” (p.14). Individuality and private spaces (tree houses and cottages) can be identified as prevalent in Mahy’s construction of snugness.

The Cottage – and self sufficiency

Depictions of cottages within several of Mahy’s stories convey a sense of individuality, solitude and self sufficiency. Three of the works Mahy contributed to the Journal feature a character called Mike, ‘Mike’s pet’, ‘The strange case of Old Squashy’, and ‘The remarkable birthday party’. Mike’s cottage is personified, described as the “little squatting cottage” (Mahy, 1971, p.22). Mike is described as living a solitary and self-sufficient life style in his cottage, “Mike lived there all alone, cooking his own dinners, ironing his own shirts and putting himself to bed” (Mahy, 1971, p.22). Griswold (2006) asserts that “related to guardedness is the vision of the self sufficient place” (p.13). Notions of solitude and self sufficiency are prevalent themes in ‘Guy and the bears’ and ‘Mr Rumfitt’. In a short poem

entitled 'The snail' Mahy (1965) describes an ultimate kind of solitude and self sufficiency, "he carries his house on his back, and his house had never a door" (p.26).

The acquisition of a small, secure dwelling place identified as being one's own home and a self sufficient life style are idealised in Mahy's text. The acquisition of one's own home is explored in the story, 'Concerning a Little Woman and How She Won Herself a House and a Servant and Lived Happily Ever After'. The protagonist overcomes servitude and significant obstacles to achieve home ownership. The story concludes with the little woman successfully securing herself a safe home "high in the honeysuckle" (Mahy, 1971, p.35).

Being snug – desire, disruption and defence

The words snug, snuggled and snuggle were identified in only two of the works Mahy contributed to the *School Journal*. In 'Teddy and the Witches' the farms in the valley are described by the witches, flying high above, as "snug-as-a-bug-in-a-rug" (Mahy, 1961, p.2). In the original version of 'The little witch' the snugness experienced through a physical embrace is explored. Within the story a mother bird calms her little chick – she "snuggled him into her features" (Mahy, 1964, p.4). The story's protagonist is described as wandering the lonely dark city streets, because "there was no-one to snuggle a little witch" (Mahy, 1964, p.4). Once again Mahy disrupts feelings of security and warmth. The story concludes with the little witch being rescued by an older witch woman, "she held out her arms and the little witch ran into them" (Mahy, 1964, p.8). The overt sentiment conveyed in this story is curious and uncharacteristic compared to other works within the sample. Even more curious is the exclusion (reworking) of these specific passages in the abridged version of the story, published in the *School Journal* ten years later. These specific passages were replaced with – the mother bird "put him under her wing" and the little witch was "alone in the empty streets" (Mahy, 1974, p.19). The embrace between the little witch and the witch woman is replaced with, "the little witch ran to her" (Mahy, 1974, p.22).

Snugness is desired, disrupted and defended within the storylines of Mahy's works. Private spaces – the bed, the tree house and the cottage are privileged and protected. Snugness is communicated in the intimacy, warmth, security, and self-sufficiency these places offer characters (and readers). Snugness is achieved and maintained through adversity – mischievous forces, servitude and isolation. Snugness is desired within Mahy's narratives however readers are reminded that snugness is easily disrupted and requires constant defense.

This is the emotional narrative of snugness Mahy communicates to children within the body of work she contributed to the *School Journal*.

Scariness

Scariness is expressed in children's literature through narrative elements of storytelling, for example through plot shifts and characterisation. Griswold (2006) identifies two literary manifestations of scariness in children's literature. He describes the first as "the good scare" (Griswold, 2006, p.37). Scary situations or characters enter the narrative – typically with an element of surprise or shock – feelings of being afraid are then resolved through "mastery" over evil (Griswold, 2006, p.45). Griswold (2006) also identifies "discomforting fun" (or the unsettling thrill of being scared) as prevalent in children's literature (p.45).

Two codes were employed in this research to identify scariness in Mahy's work: the good scare and discomforting fun. The two codes were derived from Griswold's understandings of how scariness operates within children's literature. Discomforting fun proved to be a more prevalent narrative feature within Mahy's works compared to literary instances of the good scare. Discomforting fun was identified within eighteen storylines in the sample. Mahy's use of sinister characters and unsettling themes evoke and explore the mixed emotions associated with feeling scared – anxiety, worry and fear.

Witches and villains – and other sinister characters

A total of twenty-seven characters were identified as contributing to the expression of discomforting fun within the body of works. The most frequently occurring sinister characterisation within the sample (across both data categories – the good scare and discomforting fun) was the use of a witch. Eleven witches were identified within the sample as contributing to the construction of scariness within the texts. This does not represent the total number of witches within the sample. It became apparent during the pilot study that Mahy's witches displayed diverse natures, not all were sinister and scary. In a short poem entitled 'The witch, my sister' Mahy (1961) presents a playful, gift-giving, witch sister. In 'A

witch poem' however Mahy (1961) depicts a sinister unsettling witch character. A chilling creepy atmospheric tension is generated within this work.

Villainous characters were often associated with violence and darkness within the works, for example "the black scratchy" (Mahy, 1977, p.35) and the "great black cloud" (Mahy, 1981, p. 28). The witch depicted within the story 'The girl who washed in moonlight' is described as being "black, black to the heart" and her darkness likened to a "black moss" (Mahy, 1968, p.16). These villainous characters engage in theft, slavery and inflict torture, terror and mayhem. In the story, 'The new house villain' the tree pirate is identified as possessing a "book of grips and tortures" (Mahy, 1976, p.42). He explains to Julia (the story's protagonist) that "people have no sympathy for Villains. They prefer them small and weak. They don't realise how a bit of danger brightens things up" (Mahy, 1976, p.46). The poem 'Plans go wrong' exemplifies just how violent and evil Mahy's characters can be,

"I'll wash their streets with blood and wine.

"A thousand cities shall bow and weep.

Their scrambling people shall die like sheep"

(1988, p.14).

Being scared – anxiety, worry and fear

Mahy's protagonists often expressed feelings of uneasiness, anxiety and fear. Nine stories were identified within the sample illustrating instances where characters overtly articulated feelings of being scared – 'A lion in the meadow', 'A witch in the house', 'Pillycock's shop', 'The boy with two shadows', 'Tai Taylor and his education', 'The boy who was followed home', 'The king of the broom cupboard', 'The mad puppet', and 'The cheating ghost'. The characters within these works articulate overtly the mix of emotions associated with feeling scared – anxiety, worry and fear.

Scariness is normalised within Mahy's texts, through overt and articulate expressions of both the psychological and physical sensations experienced when confronted with a scary

situation. The little boy in the 'A lion in the meadow' for example tells his Mother "I'm scared to go into the meadow" (Mahy, 1965, p.3). Teddy the protagonist in 'Pillycock's shop' describes how he feels "troubled inside" (Mahy, 1966, p.20). Scary characters within Mahy's works construct a provocative and sinister emotional narrative of scariness.

Smallness

Size and scale are often disrupted or played with in children's literature to convey feelings of smallness. Griswold (2006) identifies four literary expression of smallness in children's literature: descriptions of microcosms, depictions of alternative or shifting focal ranges, characters changing size, and situations or themes in the text challenging adult notions of what is important (pp.51-73).

For the purposes of this research study seven distinct codes were used to identify smallness within Mahy's work. The seven codes included a code for microcosm, miniature, focal ranges, character size, characters changing size, alternative scale and challenging adult notions of importance. The codes allowed overt expressions of smallness (for example descriptions of miniature worlds) to be captured as well as more covert expressions of smallness (for example subversive themes which challenge adult notions of knowledge and truth). Griswold (2006) explains that "the fascination of the young with smallness may be explained in terms of their size, but it is also a reflection of their diminished power" (p.53). Descriptions of smallness within children's literature "present alternatives to consensual notions of dimension and, consequently, adult notions of importance" (Griswold, 2006, p.73).

Smallness is a prevalent emotion within this body of work. Expressions of smallness are evident in the prolific array of physically small characters – the small boy, the little witch, the little man and the little wild woman. The works also present readers with more covert expressions of smallness, for example descriptions of alternative scales and subversive themes which challenge adult notions of knowledge and truth. Mahy's first published picture book *A lion in the meadow* (1969), which featured in the *School Journal* in 1965 demonstrates this,

*The mother said: "Little boy you are making up stories so I will make up a story too.
Do you see this match box? Take it out into the meadow and open it. In it will be a*

tiny dragon. The tiny dragon will grow into a big dragon. It will chase the lion away” (p.3).

The story concludes “the mother never made up a story again” (Mahy, 1965, p.4). The tale challenges parental authority and the morality of fabrication. The ending of the story was later changed for a commercial rerun of the picture book in the eighties. Mahy (2000) touched on this contentious issue in *Dissolving the Ghost*,

“Now I consider A lion in the meadow very cautiously, feeling the ruthlessness of the first ending still lurking under the second kinder one, and believing it to be the true ending” (p.18).

Small characters

Sally the protagonist in ‘Ultra-Violet Catastrophe’ is identified as a being a “little girl” (Mahy, 1978, p.51). Sally’s smallness is emphasised when her mother and Aunt Anne talk “over her head” (Mahy, 1978, p.51). Griswold (2006) highlights that “in terms of altitude, children constitute an overlooked underclass” (p.54). Sally’s experience of “being dwarfed in the universe is common among children” (Griswold, 2006, p.62). Sally however is not the only character within the story to be marginalised in a world too tall and too busy to take notice or care. Sally’s Great-Uncle Magnus Pringle is described as being a “little old man” (Mahy, 1978, p.51). He asserts that Aunt Anne treats him “like one of her pot plants. She waters me and puts me in the sun and leaves me alone. Serves her right if I grew up the wall and put out flowers” (Mahy, 1978, p.55-56). The young and the elderly are depicted as kindred spirits within this story and form an adventurous alliance.

A total of sixty four small characters featured within the sample and a total of fifty six descriptions (adjectives describing small characters) were recorded. Small characters were typically identified by name preceded with an adjective such as little or small. In the following works protagonists were simply identified as the little boy, the little man, the little witch, or the little wild woman. ‘The little man who went to sea’, ‘The little witch’, ‘A lion in the meadow’, ‘The little boy who wanted a flat world’, ‘The little wild woman’, ‘The boy with two shadows’ and ‘Concerning a little woman and how she won herself a house and a servant and lived happily ever after’.

The smallness of a character was often repeatedly emphasised throughout a work, for example within ‘Teddy and the witches’. Teddy is identified as being a “small boy” (Mahy, 1961, p.3). He is also referred to as “little Teddy”, “little fellow”, “little bird” and described as being “like a small wind” (Mahy, 1961, p. 4, 5, 12). In ‘The wind between the stars’ the protagonist is referred to as “little Phoebe” (Mahy, 1966, p.55). Phoebe grows old and is identified as being a “little old woman” (Mahy, 1966, p.60). She is described as being a “little grey mouse” and a “little withered creature” (Mahy, 1966, p.58, 59). Once again Mahy successfully explores the continuum (or connectivity) between the smallness experienced in childhood with the fragility experienced in old age.

Small worlds – and alternative scales

Griswold (2006) explains that “the busy worlds of ants and worms and other insects seems to invite in the young a notion of minute and populous universes, concurrent realms where might exit a race of tiny humans” (p.56). In a short poem entitled ‘Small world’ Mahy (1971) vividly portrays a secret microcosm within a garden bed. The poem explores the world from the perspective of two small creatures –

“The grass stems are a forest

To the ant who slides between;

The dandelion a golden sun

Bright in a sky of green”

(p.47)

The inaccuracies of one woman’s small world are described in the work, ‘Concerning a little woman and how she won herself a house and a servant and lived happily ever after’. The protagonist is described as being “so teeny, tiny, she could bath in a single raindrop” (Mahy, 1971, p.25). She wears clothing woven from mouse fur and petticoats made from flower petals (Mahy, 1971, p.26). When the little woman prepares for battle she arms herself with a “rose-thorn dagger” and wears a “breast-plate of snail shell” (Mahy, 1971, p.29, 30). The alternative scale presented to readers within this work is emphasized, “to you and me the

dragon would have been only a big spider, but to the little woman it was a monster as terrible as thunder and lightning, earthquakes and storms at sea” (Mahy, 1971, p.30). The vulnerability of tiny characters when threatened by bigger dangers is also explored in the story ‘The adventure of little-mouse’. Little mouse is told he is “too small” to venture beyond the mouse hole into the hallway (Mahy, 1965, p.32). He challenges parental authority, daringly escaping the confines of the mouse hole and braving a close encounter with a brontosaurus (which is actually the family vacuum cleaner). The story illustrates Mahy’s use of the miniature and alternative scales to emphasise smallness and the vulnerabilities associated with it.

Microcosms and descriptions of miniature realms were identified in a small number of the works, only in the storylines of five of the works. A distinction was made between depictions of microcosms (tiny independent communities) and descriptions of miniature realms (tiny characters or objects functioning within society). Mahy’s use of alternative scales within the sample was more prevalent – identified within the storylines of fourteen of the works. Alternative scales frequently disrupted and played with size to emphasis feelings of smallness.

Being small – misfits and marginalisation

Mahy explores feelings of smallness within her works through characterisation, exploring the voices of the marginalised. Social misfits are explored in the poems, ‘The little wild woman’, ‘How the world ended’, ‘King of the world’ and ‘A strange old man’. The characters portrayed within these works are identified as being strange solitary social misfits who challenge socially accepted notions of importance and truth. The homeless man, who has abandoned his responsibilities, depicted in ‘King of the world’ exemplifies this,

I’m tired of it all.

The crown I had to wear was my father’s and it didn’t fit me.

It was made of gold, but slid down over my eyes,

And I couldn’t see.”

(Mahy, 1971, p.3).

The characters Mahy depicts often live on the fringes of society – the homeless man, the circus performer, the witch. Mahy's use of physically small protagonists and social misfits construct an emotional narrative of smallness which challenges socially accepted ideologies concerning reasonability, truth and perspective.

Lightness

Griswold (2006) asserts that feelings of lightness are expressed in children's literature through aerial mobility, themes of liberation (or a sense of freedom), themes of enlightenment (or a sense of removal from the realities of the world) and a polymorphous perspective (or possessing shape shifter like qualities) (pp.75-100).

Five codes were developed to examine Mahy's use of lightness within the sample. The codes were based on Griswold's understanding of how lightness is presented with children's literature. Initially four codes were devised to capture Mahy's use of aerial mobility, liberation, enlightenment and polymorphous qualities (or shape shifting) within the sample. During the pilot study it became apparent an additional code, a distinct code for dance, would be required. The five codes employed in the investigation covered the extensive and prevalent nature of this emotion within this body of work.

Lightness is overtly expressed in Mahy's work through frequent incidences of flight and dance. Within the sample eighty incidences of aerially mobility were recorded. Aerial mobility included activities such as flying, swinging, jumping and climbing. The words dance, dancing and danced featured in the sample on seventy nine occasions. Feelings of lightness were also expressed through literary themes – the liberation and enlightenment of characters. The very high occurrence of aerially mobility and dance within the sample indicates (and substantiates) lightness as being the most influential and prevalent emotion identified in the investigation.

Flight – and freedom

Mahy constructs feelings of lightness within her works through actions involving aerial mobility – characters fly, swing, jump and climb. Incidences of aerial mobility were often

connected to underlying themes of liberation within the works. The freedom experienced when flight is achieved is explored in, 'Teddy and the witches', 'The little witch', 'The playground', 'An ordinary family' and "Small Porks". The characters within these works achieve personal liberation through aerial mobility.

Twenty six of the works within the sample were identified as exploring themes concerning the liberation or enlightenment of characters. The most infamous being 'The man who went to sea' adapted and published commercially as *The man whose mother was a pirate* (1985). The protagonist within the story, who is identified as a little man, escapes the drudgery of the city and his office job to live a more liberated life style at sea. The little man's clothes are described as growing "wild and happy to be free" (Mahy, 1962, p.29). The protagonist achieves an enlightened state of being, asserting that "one could be rich without making money; that if you are too afraid you lose the world; and that, though some things are not as good as you hoped they would be, others are much, much better" (Mahy, 1962, p.30). Griswold (2006) highlights that "behind images of lightness is also the endeavour to recover freedom, expand possibilities, and ultimately, dissolve the solidity of the world" (p.96). Mahy's characters reject the heaviness of adult responsibility and respectability to pursue alternative liberated enlightened lifestyles – they seek and find lightness.

Dance

One of the most profound and prevalent patterns to emerge from the content analysis was Mahy's use of dance. Dance can be identified as playing a significant role in Mahy's construction of both feelings of lightness and aliveness. Descriptions of dance featured extensively throughout the sample. The liberation and joy experienced through dance is explored in a number of the works, 'The procession', 'The adventure of Mr Thing', 'Right-hand men', 'The Merry-go-round', 'The witch dog', and 'The wind between the stars'. The elderly protagonist Phoebe in 'The wind between the stars' rediscovers her ability to dance, releasing herself from hardship and the dreariness of her existence. Phoebe achieves an enlightened state of being; she becomes airborne and is taken away by the wind between the stars. The story concludes,

“Carrying Phoebe on its back, riding her along like a queen in triumph, it swept three times around the world and off out between the stars once more... and if anyone wants to go with it, it will take them, but they mustn’t hope to come back again” (Mahy, 1966, p.64).

Being light – thistledown and shape shifting

Mahy’s frequent references to flight and dance construct a highly corporal narrative of lightness. In ‘Teddy and the witches’, ‘The boy with two shadows’ and ‘Mr Murgatroyd’s Lodgers’ Mahy employs a simile which compares characters to the lightness of thistledown. Characterisation is an essential element in Mahy’s construction of lightness. Mahy’s characters seek lightness through corporal experiences – flying and dancing. Mahy constructs more covert narratives of lightness through plotlines and themes exploring the liberation and enlightenment of characters. The corporal and the emotional experiences of lightness and liberation are interconnected within Mahy’s works. This is demonstrated in Mahy’s use of characters with polymorphous qualities. Sixteen characters within the sample were identified as having shape shifting abilities. The phrase shape shifter and shape changer appeared in two works, ‘Tai and his education (2)’ and ‘The baby sitter’. Mahy constructs a profound and dramatic narrative of lightness within this body of work, most vividly illustrated in the story “Small Porks”. The work concludes with aerial mobility, polymorphous transformation and character liberation,

“He was still a pig but he was a new pig – a pig metamorphosed – a pig transmogrified, transformed and utterly resolved – and all the means, simply, he was changed. He was still pink, but now he shone pink as a rose dipped in the fire of glow worms... from his back blossomed two wings, pink and white as shells fresh from the sea” (Mahy, 1966, p.11).

Aliveness

Feelings of aliveness are expressed in children’s literature through the aliveness of inanimate things and talking animals (Griswold, 2006, p. 109,106). Four codes were employed to examine Mahy’s construct of aliveness within the sample. The codes included – aliveness of things (personification of inanimate objects and natural forces), talking animals, talking

fantasy creatures, and talking toys. Mahy's use of characterisation, talking animals, talking fantasy creatures and imaginary friends, as well as descriptive passages expressing the aliveness of things, the personification of inanimate objects and the natural environment, communicate a strong sense of aliveness within this body of work.

Thirty two descriptions conveying the aliveness of things (personification of inanimate objects and natural forces) were identified within the sample. The aliveness of things was also a prominent feature within the plotlines and thematic narratives of the works, identified in twenty five of the works. Characterisation also proved to be a significant feature in Mahy's construction of aliveness within the works. Twenty-nine talking animal characters and twenty-two talking fantasy creatures were recorded.

Talking friends – animals, fantasy creatures and finger friends

Mahy's works feature an array of talking friends – talking animals, talking fantasy creatures and imaginary friends. The most common occurring talking fantasy creature within the sample was a dragon. In 'An ordinary family', published commercially as *The dragon of an ordinary family* (1992), the Belsaki family acquire a talking dragon as a family pet. The acquisition of talking pets or imaginary friends as a means of overcoming boredom and isolation featured prominently within the plotlines of the following works – 'Right-hand men', 'The follower' and 'The great stove transformation'. The protagonist Jake, in the story 'Right-hand men' engages in imaginary play, his fingers and thumb take on quirky personas and physical characteristics. Little Perky (Jack's little finger) has "pricked-up ears, sharp like a smart little dog's" (Mahy, 1965, p.41). Sarah, the protagonist in 'The great stove transformation' also acquires a set of finger friends. Each glove finger (like a finger puppet) taking on an individual personality, "one smiled, one sighed, one smirked, one snarled, one chuckled, one cheered, one goggled, and one giggled" (Mahy, 1982, p.41).

Griswold (2006) explains that "cosmic plasticity and companionable incarnation is present in the familiar childhood phenomenon of the imaginary friend" (p.120). He asserts that "boundaries between the self and the non-self, between humans and animals, are fuzzier and less distinct" in childhood (Griswold, 2006, p.109). Mahy's use of talking animal characters, fantasy creatures and imaginary friends exhibit the plasticity and companionship Griswold

discusses in his work. Imaginary friends and talking animals are presented within Mahy's works as a means to overcome adverse childhood feelings, such as loneliness and dreariness.

Aliveness of things – overcoming loneliness and dreariness

Inanimate objects and the natural environment come to life in Mahy's works through her imaginative word play and metaphoric descriptions. In "The little man who went to sea" Mahy (1962) describes intense feelings of aliveness experienced by the protagonist when confronted by the vastness of the ocean,

'the drift and the dream of it, the weave and the wave of it, the fume and the foam of it flooded him and never left him again. At his feet the sea stroked the sand with soft little paw; further out the waves pounced and bounced like puppies; and out beyond again and again the great, graceful breakers moved like kings into court' (p.29).

Sally, the protagonist in the 'Ultra-Violet Catastrophe' asserts that "everything felt very alive... the tree with its brunches and bark and its spring leaves bright against the blue sky. Sally pointed her nose at the sky too, and felt the sun shine thorough the leaves in hot spring freckles on her face" (Mahy, 1978, p.57). Within this story the natural environment is personified, the hedge attempts to hold Sally, and Sally's mother fears her daughter has been eaten by the tree (Mahy, 1978, p.49, 53).

Machinery and inanimate manmade objects, for example broomstick, beds, steam engines, balls of string, crayons and handbags, come to life in Mahy's works. In a poem entitled 'The silly song' Mahy (1976) constructs a lively humorous image of a telegraphy pole –

*"A telegraph pole is immensely absurd
It stands on one leg like a sort of a bird
It stands on one leg and pretends it's not there
While workers on ladders are plaiting its hair"*
(p.7).

The limitless plasticity of the universe and the ability of all things to take on human qualities communicate an awakened and liberating narrative of aliveness within this body of work.

Mahy's emotional narrative of aliveness interplays and compensates for other adverse emotions experienced in childhood, such as loneliness and dreariness

Reader Responses

The majority of reader responses harvested from selected social media spaces were memorial or tribute posts, posted in response to Mahy's death on the 23rd of July 2012. The blog postings all communicate a profound sense of grief and loss. The blog postings and the respective comments (made by blog followers) communicate insights into the emotional responses of actual readers, reflecting on their memories and experiences of Mahy's work. The reader responses harvested from the social media site Good Reads were the only reader responses within the sample pre-dating Mahy's death. The Good Reads site allowed specific works (works which had been published commercially) to be searched and the correlating reader responses to be harvested.

The most prevalent emotion to be identified within the reader responses was feelings of lightness. Fourteen reader responses articulated and attached feelings of lightness to Mahy's texts. The word light appeared in four of the reader responses, the words uplifting, iridescent, and fluffy also appeared. The physicality (or corporal nature) of lightness constructed within Mahy's texts was reflected in reader descriptions of her works. References to aerial mobility and dance featured in a number of reader responses, for example, "her words that stretched wide into the world like kites that swopped and dipped and filled us with grace and wonder" (Anonymous, 2012) and "she tap danced through words" (Hurley, 2012).

Feelings of snugness were identified in seven of the reader responses. Expressions of snugness were articulate in terms of the comfort and warmth experienced when engaging with Mahy's texts. Descriptions of Mahy's stories included, "warm hearted" (Larissa, 2009) and "great comfort" (Lilith, 2012). Expressions of a heightened sense of aliveness were evident in the reader responses. One reader described Mahy's works as "pulsating with such a vibrant and irrepressible life" (Lilith, 2012). Other readers touched on the energy, the excitement and sense of possibility experienced when engaging with Mahy's texts, for example, "exciting, challenging, and making the place I grew up in seem more full of possibilities and enchantment" (Vincent, 2012).

Only one reader articulated feelings of being scared when engaged with Mahy's work. The work identified was 'The follower', the reader asserted that "the book haunted me as a child... the story unsettled me a bit – I still prick my ears at the sound of dry autumn leaves scratching across concrete – and it seemed to me at the time to be quite eerie and haunting, yet also joyous" (Sarah, 2012).

There were some challenges in correlating reader responses to the five emotions examined within the study. Reader responses which demonstrated clearly the emotions under investigation only made up a small portion of the reader responses. Feelings of lightness and aliveness were articulated through a broad range of adjectives, which proved challenging to capture and correlate. The words magically, joyful, delightful and bright frequently appeared within the reader responses. The uses of such adjectives can be associated with feelings of lightness and aliveness however they do not directly demonstrate these feelings.

Conclusion

This investigation forges new understandings into Mahy's work; the study explains how Mahy used emotion, how these emotions engage readers and the emotional narrative of childhood Mahy constructs within her texts. This investigation informs greater understanding of text appeal and reader response, knowledge invaluable to the development of reader's advisory services to young people. This research is most applicable to school librarians, children's librarians and educators; and has broader implications cornering the improvement of client interaction and collection development in youth library services.

A content analysis research methodology enabled data to be harvested from the eighty works Mahy contributed to the *School Journal*. The employment of a discourse analysis approach allowed for an in depth analysis of the works. The validity and potential replication of the research investigation is limited by the following factors:

- A single rater (or reader) conducted the content analysis study.
- The concepts (emotions) being analysed had an inherent fluidity or interpretive nature.

- The effectiveness of coding schemes and tabulated data collection sheets to capture data of this nature (emotion in text).

The investigation was founded on the assumption that the reading experience can be conceptualised as an emotional interplay between text and reader.

- That there is an emotional narrative within text, constructed by the author.
- That the emotional narratives constructed in text and the emotional interplay between text and reader can be studied.
- That close analysis of both text and reader responses informs understanding of text appeal and the reading experience.
- That this type of investigation informs insights into larger social constructs, for example the social construction of childhood.

Feelings of lightness and aliveness were the most prevalent emotions expressed in reader responses to Mahy's texts. This validates the investigations findings, that lightness and aliveness are the most pervasive emotions operating within Mahy's works. Reader responses also supported the research's findings – that Mahy constructs a highly corporal narrative of lightness through extensive references to aerial mobility – flight and dance. The investigation exposed anomalies within Mahy's works outside of Griswold's analytical framework. The addition of a unique code, specifically employed to track Mahy's use of dance, exemplifies this. Dance proves to be a distinguishing and omnipresent feature within this body of work. Mahy uses dance within her texts to communicate feelings of liberation and joy – constructing a profound emotional narrative of lightness and aliveness. Mahy also interplays feelings of aliveness with more adverse emotions – feelings of loneliness and dreariness.

Further investigations and analysis of the stories and poems Mahy contributed to the *School Journal* would yield deeper insights into Mahy's construction of the New Zealand childhood; specifically the emotional narrative of loneliness and remoteness constructed within this body

of work. Analysis of Mahy's use of rural, remote and coastal landscapes (and fantasy spaces) to communicate feelings of loneliness and isolation would inform greater insights into Mahy's construction of the New Zealand childhood.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Coding scheme

Snugness:

SS = small spaces (small, tight, cosy)

SP = small places (well designed, remote, simple, self-sufficient)

SG= safe or guarded spaces (enclosed, hidden or owned)

Scariness:

GS = good scare

DF = discomforting fun

Smallness:

Mic = microcosm

Min = miniature

FR = focal ranges

CS = character size

CS/CS = characters changing size

AS = alternative scale

CI = challenging adult notions of importance

Lightness:

AM = aerial mobility

L = liberation

L/E =liberation and enlightenment

PP = polymorphous perspective

Aliveness:

AT = aliveness of things

TA = talking animals

TC = talking fantasy creatures or characters

TT = talking toys

Language and style codes:

Met = metaphor

Sim = similes

All = alliteration

Ono = onomatopoeia

Rhy = rhyme

Rep = repetition

Other codes:

W = witch

D = dance/dancing

G = ghost

C = clown

B = bed

P = pirate

WD = dragon with wings

WH = horse with wings

Appendix II: Data collection template – and example of coding

Identifying Information

Journal

Year: 1964 Part: 2 Number: 6 Page/s: 38-42

Title: ‘The Little Boy Who Wanted a Flat World’

Type: Prose

Illustrator: William Stobbs

Publication (commercial publication) The horrible story and others (cassette)

Publisher: Hall Audio Publishers

Date: 1992

Field notes:

- Time travel features in the story.

Snugness

Setting Descriptions of spaces / places	Themes
The protagonist is depicted in his bed dreaming. The bed is not described but the security and comfort of his bed allows him to escape into another world (i.e. travel back in time).	

Language and style

Narrative elements

Adjectives	Verbs	Metaphor/ similes/alliteration/ onomatopoeia/ rhyme / repetition	Plot/ plot shifts (storyline)	Themes (subject)	Setting (places and spaces)	Characterisation
					B	

Scariness

'The good scare'	'Discomforting fun'	Themes

Language and style

Narrative elements

Adjectives	Verbs	Metaphor/ similes/alliteration/ onomatopoeia/ rhyme / repetition	Plot/ plot shifts (storyline)	Themes (subject)	Setting (places and spaces)	Characterisation

Smallness

Descriptions of microcosms or miniature objects	Alternative scale or shifting focal range	Characters size/ changing size or alternative scale	Themes or situation challenging adult notions of what is important
		The protagonist is identified as the “little boy” throughout the story. He is also described as being a “very little boy” (p.38) and a “little child” (p.39)	The protagonist challenges the idea that the world is round, “he liked the idea of a flat world so much better than a round one” (p.38). The young protagonist also asserts that “all the nice things are pretending” (p.38).

Language and style

Narrative elements

Adjectives	Verbs	Metaphor/ similes/alliteration/ onomatopoeia/ rhyme / repetition	Plot/ plot shifts (storyline)	Themes (subject)	Setting (places and spaces)	Characterisation
CS			CI	CI		CS

Lightness

Aerial Mobility	Liberation / enlightenment	Polymorphous perspective / qualities
Dancing features in one line of a song recited by the character 'Wilkin' who the protagonist encounters when he travels back in time, "so dancing I went with a leap and a bound" (p.39).	The protagonist is reassured by his mother, "it depends... on what you think yourself" (p.42). The story concludes with the protagonist forming his own resolution (liberation and enlightenment) concerning the nature of knowledge, truth and independent thought.	

Language and style

Narrative elements

Adjectives	Verbs	Metaphor/ similes/alliteration/ onomatopoeia/ rhyme / repetition	Plot/ plot shifts (storyline)	Themes (subject)	Setting (places and spaces)	Characterisation
	D		L/E	L/E		

Aliveness

Aliveness of things	Living and talking toys, animals or fantasy creatures

Language and style

Narrative elements

Adjectives	Verbs	Metaphor/ similes/alliteration/ onomatopoeia/ rhyme / repetition	Plot/ plot shifts (storyline)	Themes (subject)	Setting (places and spaces)	Characterisation

