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Constructing childhood for children: an analysis of 1970s award-winning children's literature from the Children's Model Collection at Auckland City Libraries

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By

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## Abstract

Childhood is not simply a personal experience of an individual human in their early years of life. It is also a social construct which governs the way a society treats its youngest members – if they are considered to be members yet at all.

Children's literature is an acknowledged source of information about the ideologies adults have both intentionally and unintentionally offered children to help them understand the world and their place in it.

This research involved both content analysis and discourse analysis of award-winning children's books from the 1970s, which form part of the Children's Model Collection held at Auckland City Libraries. These books, considered by local librarians to be 'model literature' for New Zealand children to read, were used as a window onto the constructions of childhood in this society at that time.

Traditional children's literature in English supported particular relations of domination through certain 'institutions' of childhood – family, friendship, gender, race and religion. The 1970s books also imparted ideologies through these institutions along with themes of land, coming of age and war; all interacting under a humanistic umbrella. Through their treatment of these themes or 'institutions', texts in this sample often deliberately challenged traditional relations of domination – with varied levels of success. Children were constructed as leaders in waiting, the hope for the future; a future where tolerance and respect would overcome prejudice, thinking for one's self would replace conformity and the individual could be the best they could be. However, underlying linguistic mechanisms and ideologies transformed many of these texts into conservators of the very relationships they were intending to change.

The methods of analysis used in this project were successful in locating the ideologies in books created for young people and revealing the degree to which these are agents of their time. These methods then are both eminently suitable for future research and would be a valuable addition to the multi-literacies with which we equip young people.

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## Part 1: Introduction

Childhood is not simply the personal experience of an individual human in their early years of life. It is also a social construct which governs the way a society treats its youngest members – if they are considered to be members yet at all.

This research involved both content analysis and discourse analysis of award-winning children's literature from the 1970s, which form part of the Children's Model Collection held at Auckland City Libraries. Children's literature is acknowledged to be a route by which adults intentionally and unintentionally transmit ideologies to children; ideologies that adults believe will help them understand the world and their place in it. However, until this research was carried out, award-winning books for children from a single decade had not yet been used as a window on the constructions of childhood in the society that produced and/or 'consumed' them. This research provides a New Zealand perspective through a sample of books considered by local librarians to be 'model literature' for New Zealand children to read, and focusing on the 1970s, which was a decade of tremendous social change in this country.

## Background

*...there can be and are different conceptions of childhood, and ... these different conceptions imply different general values, priorities and assumptions. After all, the way we see the difference between children and adults owes everything to what concerns us about being adults in an adult world.<sup>1</sup>*

### What is meant by the social construction of childhood?

It is Philippe Ariès<sup>2</sup> who is thought to have first contended that 'childhood' as a concept is socially constructed, and thus differs across time and place. Ariès backed up his argument by demonstrating the changing representations of children in art and written accounts, in the clothing they were expected to wear and the activities they were expected to engage in from sixteenth century France to the 1960s in which he was writing. Since his book was published, a great body of work has been created supporting his general thesis, if not always the specifics of it, and tracing the historical nature of childhood in many places and times.

In 1993, David Archard summed up the previous 30 years of research on the subject by stating that in different times and places, childhood differs across its boundaries, its dimensions and its divisions.<sup>3</sup> The *boundary*, he wrote, is the point or age at which childhood is thought to end, the *dimensions* are the factors that are thought to be associated with the difference between children and adults and the *divisions* are the milestones within childhood that are acknowledged in a particular culture.<sup>4</sup>

Archard wrote that attaining the physical, moral or intellectual maturity to become responsible for one's own actions, to sustain one's own life, to contribute economically, to

<sup>1</sup> David Archard, *Children: Rights and Childhood* (London: Routledge, 1993). 28.

<sup>2</sup> Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, trans. Robert Baldick (London: Jonathan Cape, 1962).

reproduce, to participate in the running of the community or to wield a weapon are all possible ways to view the difference between adults and children.

*The selection of significant differences depends on broad value-judgements. If, as John Locke and many others have believed, rationality is the distinctive and unique attribute of the human species, then it would be natural to see the acquisition of reason as the key criterion of maturation. On the other hand, the basis upon which childhood is seen to differ from adulthood may be no more than a reflection of prevailing social priorities. In a society where sustaining and reproducing life is of overriding importance, the ability to work and bear offspring is a strikingly obvious mark of maturity.<sup>5</sup>*

This research project has focused primarily on the dimensions of childhood – adult ideology about *what* childhood is – since its boundaries and divisions are of more interest to law-makers and ethnologists than to librarians.

The socio-culturally agreed dimensions of childhood, or the ways in which children and adults are believed to differ, provide the framework for the lived experience of children in contemporary (adult) society. Adults have power as role models, law and policy-makers, information and resource-holders and storytellers, and use this power to shape and circumscribe the child's world based on their constructions of children's roles, needs, capabilities and desires.<sup>6</sup>

A number of approaches have been taken to uncovering the cultural constructions of childhood and how these have affected the lives of children.<sup>7</sup> Researchers interested in concepts of childhood and in the day-to-day social and physical lives of children have drawn

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<sup>3</sup> Archard, *Children: Rights and Childhood*.24.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 24-26.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>6</sup> For example: Bronwyn Dalley, *Child Welfare in Twentieth-Century New Zealand* (Auckland: Auckland University Press in association with the Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1998).15.

<sup>7</sup> Hugh Cunningham, "Histories of Childhood," *American Historical Review* 103 (1998).1196.

on “advice literature, diaries and autobiographies, visual images of children, material culture, and a miscellany of written material”.<sup>8</sup>

### Children’s literature as a source

*Our genius [as a species] lies in our capacity to make meaning through the creation of narratives that give point to our labours, exalt our history, elucidate our present, and give direction to our future.*<sup>9</sup>

Story is a carrier of meanings that are both encoded by the writer/ artist/ teller and editor and interpreted by the listener/ viewer/ reader within a social environment of meaning.<sup>10</sup>

*“A narrative without an ideology is unthinkable: ideology is formulated in and by language, meanings within language are socially determined, and narratives are constructed out of language.”*<sup>11</sup>

Children’s literature is unique among narrative products in several ways. First, 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 – be they parents, booksellers, librarians or teachers. In fact, ‘children’s literature’, a body of literature created by children for children and belonging to children, does not exist.<sup>12</sup> Works of so-called ‘children’s literature’ contain what adults want to say to children and/or what adults believe children want to hear. Throughout the creative, publishing and distribution processes of children’s literature, adults are involved in judgements about what children are, what they need and what they like; in other words, creating constructions of childhood. Judging

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 1201.

<sup>9</sup> Neil Postman, *The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995; reprint, Fourth printing 1996). 6-7.

<sup>10</sup> John Stephens, *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction* (1992). 8.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>12</sup> Jack Zipes, *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001).40.



children's books to be suitable for awards, and judging those award-winners to be suitable for collection, simply add additional layers of adult intervention, and make the works used in this research a fruitful source to examine such social constructions.

*Children's books make us who we are, culturally and individually. They teach us things about language's relationship to power — the power of self and the power of others.*<sup>13</sup>

Second, children's literature is believed to have a powerful influence on the child reader. The stories we encounter as children are often experienced as formative; as veteran New Zealand film-maker Gaylene Preston stated in a recent interview, adults are drawn back not only to the landscapes of our childhoods but also to the stories<sup>14</sup>.

Of course it is important not to overstate this power to imprint children with ideology. Readers and writers are individuals and, just as much as adults, children are "active interpreters of the social world around them and its symbolic forms".<sup>15</sup> Yet, as Clare Bradford argues,

*In the ways in which they address [those] child readers, in the language through which they position children to prefer one character to another, and to approve certain behaviours but not others, in what they say and do not say, children's books yield up the ideologies which inform them.*<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, the widespread belief adults have in the power of narrative to influence children, means that children's literature is widely used as a conscious tool of 'socialisation'.

*Children's books seek to promote socio-cultural values that incorporate views about the past (about the cultural meanings and traditions of the past), about the moral*

<sup>13</sup> Karen Coats, "Conventions of Children's Literature: Then and Now," *Style* 35, no. 3 (2001). 390.

<sup>14</sup> Gaylene Preston, "Interview with Kim Hill," in *Saturday with Kim Hill*, ed. Kim Hill (Auckland and Wellington: National Radio, Te reo irirangi o Aotearoa, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Murray Knowles and Kirsten Malmkjaer, *Language and Control in Children's Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996). 46.

<sup>16</sup> Clare Bradford, *Reading Race: Aboriginality in Australian Children's Literature* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001). 3.

*and ethical questions important to the present, and about a projected future in which child readers will be adults.*<sup>17</sup>

Third, children's literature can be seen as developing in relation to two cultures of meaning; that of children and that of adults.<sup>18</sup> Whereas the cultural norms or 'codes' within children's literature have shifted in relation to changes in adult literature, adult literature, until recently, did not refer to children's literature at all.<sup>19</sup> The fact that children's literature was for so long felt to have nothing to contribute to adult literary culture says a great deal about how childhood has been constructed by adults – as both separate, rather than continuous, and as lesser.

### **Constructions of childhood in books for children**

*...the conventions of children's literature change with the changing conception of children and what they need and want.*<sup>20</sup>

In New Zealand society, constructions of childhood since the time of British settlement have evolved in constant dialogue with Britain and, later, with Australia, Canada and the US as well. Studies addressing different aspects of New Zealand childhood suggest that similar social trends could be discerned in this country as occurred in those societies over the same period, although naturally not without significant local influences as well.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>18</sup> Maria Nikolajeva, "Children's Literature as a Cultural Code: A Semiotic Approach to History," in *Aspects and Issues in the History of Children's Literature*, ed. Maria Nikolajeva (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press under the auspices of the International Research Society for Children's Literature, 1995), 39.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>20</sup> Coats, "Conventions of Children's Literature: Then and Now," 391.

<sup>21</sup> Mary Trewby, *The Best Years of Your Life: A History of New Zealand Childhood* (Auckland: Viking, 1995). ; Helen May, *Politics in the Playground: The World of Early Childhood in Postwar New Zealand* (Auckland: Bridget Williams Books with the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 2001). ; Helen May, "School Beginnings: A History of Early Years Schooling, Case Study One: Missionary Infant Schools for Maori Children, 1830-40s," (Wellington: Institute for Early Childhood Studies Te Pumanawa Rangahau Kohungahunga, Victoria University of Wellington Te Whare Wananga o Te Upoko o Te Ika a

The literary products of Victorian society dubbed 'traditional juvenile fiction' by Knowles and Malmkjaer<sup>22</sup> have had a broad and lasting influence in the English-speaking world.

These writers contend that this literature adhered to a strict canon in which the British boy, supported by his inheritance from Anglican Church, the Victorian family and the English public school system, had a moral duty and innate ability to dominate the 'Other'<sup>23</sup> (be this 'savages' half a world away, girls, people of the lower classes or boys who didn't live by the 'code' of sanctioned power relations at school). This ideology was transmitted through the textual representations of five 'institutions':

- family,
- friendship,
- gender,
- race, and
- religion.<sup>24</sup>

The work of Claudia Marquis, in her 1999 paper *Romancing the Home: Gender, Empire and the South Pacific*, confirms the importance of these institutions and demonstrates how they interacted in imperial adventure tales set in this part of the world.

*...the islands of the South Pacific are beautiful, a new Eden, but they are inhabited by peoples whose evolutionary development differentiates them from the young English [boy] reader; tale after tale leads him to understand that these people need his mastery. ...[T]he British boy's privilege of proving by his actions [in these adventure tales] his right to manage imperial affairs in the antipodes is often*

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Maui, 2003). ; Jill Holt, "Children's Writing in New Zealand Newspapers, 1930s and 1980s" (PhD thesis, University of Auckland, 2000). ; Trewby, *The Best Years of Your Life: A History of New Zealand Childhood*.

<sup>22</sup> Knowles and Malmkjaer, *Language and Control in Children's Literature*. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 81-113.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 31-32.

*underwritten by the presence of the woman – his orderly relationship with her finally must displace his hostile relationship with the savage.*<sup>25</sup>

This orderly relationship is based on the Victorian “sense of social place” and “devotion to the Law of the Father”; where the “rightness of the British way of life [is] given added force by [a] continued insistence that God’s is the guiding hand”.<sup>26</sup>

Here only the British hero has ‘proper’ feelings for his family:

*Whereas the settler heroes of these stories live out their male adventures in exemplary relation to the family, the Maoris do not. Maoris have no mothers. There are women among them, and children, but there is no mother; there is a pa, but no talk of families. A cultural distinction is elaborated and constantly observed.*<sup>27</sup>

Friendships were also used to bolster the ‘natural’ relations of domination; the meeting of mutuals often replaced with relationships of evangelism and subjugation.<sup>28</sup>

‘Traditional children’s literature’ in English, in other words, constructed childhood to be a time in which the child is preparing to take his or her place in the ‘natural’ social order. Understanding the rightness of this order (and actively upholding it) was the rite of passage to the adult world in this Victorian literature and what we know of Imperial British society bears out its validity as a socio-cultural window.

The books children have been encouraged to read have continued to reflect the way they are constructed by their society. In this passage, Karen Coats summarises the constructions of children over the last two centuries in relation to the books US children have read in each generation:

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<sup>25</sup> Claudia Marquis, “Romancing the Home: Gender, Empire and the South Pacific,” in *Girls, Boys, Books, Toys: Gender in Children’s Literature and Culture*, ed. Beverly Lyon and Higonnet Clark, Margaret R (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). 58-9.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 61-2.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 63.

...the child as smaller version of the adult gave way to the ideally hedonistic child of the Romantics. Then followed the Evangelical child who, though cherished, needed rigid instruction unto repentance. Next, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, came the psychologically active child who set busily about repressing and sublimating his or her psychosexual desires through Victorian fantasy, Golden-Age literature, and Maurice Sendak's wonderful fantasyscapes, and who sought peace and a simple, just life through the works of authors like Wanda Gag, the Reys, Munro Leaf, Ludwig Bemelmains, and Dr Seuss. In the 1960s and 1970s, the social realist child had her problem novels and picture books, and today's multicultural child finds images of every kind of self imaginable reproduced in the 5000 children's books published each year.<sup>29</sup>

### The New Zealand literary context

The Victorian corpus found its way both into the hands and hearts of New Zealand children as well. Surveys of school children conducted in Taranaki in 1927 and 1929 show that even in the late 1920s, Victorian adventure stories such as *Masterman Ready* (first published 1841), *Coral Island* (1858) and *The Story of Red Feather* (1908) remained in the top 11 favourite books for both boys and girls in Standards 4-6.<sup>30</sup>

That Pakeha New Zealanders saw themselves as part of the great imperial enterprise is indicated in myriad ways, including the enthusiasm with which this country went to war for the Empire.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Coats, "Conventions of Children's Literature: Then and Now." 391.

<sup>30</sup> N. R. McKenzie, "Taranaki Education District, New Zealand : School Surveys, 1927 and 1929 / Arranged by N. R. Mckenzie," (Hawera: North and South Taranaki Branches of the New Zealand Educational Institute, [1930]). Reproduced in: Shirley Williams, "Children's Voices: Insights into the History of New Zealand Childhood through an Examination of Children's Pages in New Zealand Newspapers and Magazines in the 1930s" (Masters thesis, University of Waikato, 1998). Appendix III.

<sup>31</sup> In 1899, for example, the New Zealand Parliament voted overwhelmingly to support Britain in the South African (aka Boer) War and was declared by Prime Minister Seddon to have been the first legislature in the Empire to have done so; from John Crawford, *South African War: A Brief History* [Website] (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2000 [cited 29 June 2004]); available from <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/Gallery/SAW/hist.htm>. ; New Zealand was one of the first countries to become

Betty Gilderdale chronicled the ongoing influence of overseas English-language literatures on New Zealand writing for children along with a growing nationalistic desire, in common with other colonial societies, to produce material with a unique local flavour<sup>32</sup>; both for the local and the overseas audience. The revival in interest in folklore in Europe, for example, prompted a similar literary focus here – in the collection of Maori ‘fairytales and legends’ and in the writing of fantasies that integrated the two traditions – a pre-occupation that lasted until the 1930s.<sup>33</sup> The family story, influenced by Louisa May Alcott in the US, L.M. Montgomery in Canada and Ethel Turner in Australia, also featured prominently in local writing for children.<sup>34</sup> And the school story, a significant part of the Victorian corpus carried forward into the 1920s and 1930s by such popular writers as Angela Brazil, also saw its New Zealand variants – fictional schools where pupils were taught to be “hardy and self-reliant as well as educated”.<sup>35</sup>

Depression and war interrupted the development of children’s literature in New Zealand, according to Gilderdale, and New Zealand children showed a marked preference for imported literature where available. New Zealand children were required to ‘grow up’ pretty quickly during these tough years and appeals for help for the poor and jobless even found their way onto the children’s pages of some metropolitan newspapers.<sup>36</sup>

In the 1940s, however, there was a significant drive to support local writing for children. The *School Journal* became more focused on literature; library services for children were

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involved in what became the second world war in September 1939, having also leapt to do its bit for the Empire when the King of England declared war in 1914; from Ian McGibbon, ed., *Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, vol. Second World War, *Nzhistory.Net New Zealanders at War* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>32</sup> Betty Gilderdale, “Children’s Literature,” in *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*, ed. Terry Sturm (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998). 529.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 529-31.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 532.

<sup>35</sup> Phillis Garrard, *The Doings of Hilda* (Blackie, London 1932), 157 in Ibid., 536.

expanded across the country; and the New Zealand Library Association instituted the Esther Glen Award for local children's literature in 1945.<sup>37</sup>

The revival of the traditional adventure story in the 1950s produced a great many stories aiming to tell "a new generation of city- and suburban-born [Pakeha] children about the bush and how to survive in it, as well as inculcating a respect for Maori culture",<sup>38</sup> and towards the end of that decade this focused particularly on "revisiting New Zealand history (the settler period and the Land Wars)"<sup>39</sup>. Features of local literature in the 1960s were "attempts by Pakeha writers to offer a more truthful perspective on the Maori experience of colonization, and to avoid the sentimental or disparaging stereotypes that had occurred in so much earlier writing"<sup>40</sup> as well as the continuing pre-occupation with giving name to the features of this land. Gilderdale quotes Anne de Roo on her purpose in writing for children:

*Exploring New Zealand, its people and scenery and history and what it means to be a New Zealander, Maori or Pakeha, with the hope that the reader will find something of herself or himself, that the real world and the book world will not be as completely divorced as they were when I was a child, when books were all set in Europe or America and life had to be lived in a country that had no words to describe it.*<sup>41</sup>

This then was the background for the production and consumption of children's literature in New Zealand in the 1970s. Local literature in English had been developing in dialogue with certain other English-speaking countries but increasingly focused on finding words to describe the realities of (Pakeha) children's experiences in this one. (I write "Pakeha children's experiences" because, despite the stated intentions of such writers as de Roo,

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<sup>36</sup> Holt, "Children's Writing in New Zealand Newspapers, 1930s and 1980s". 88.

<sup>37</sup> Gilderdale, "Children's Literature." 537-8.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 542.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 539.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 545.

<sup>41</sup> Anne de Roo in Ibid., 548.

above, to address readers both Maori and Pakeha, New Zealand publishing at this time was not redolent with Maori voices writing of Maori experiences from the inside.<sup>42</sup> ) In addition, local children's literature only formed a part of the literary landscape for New Zealand children. Children here both sought and were encouraged to read books from the wider English-speaking world – particularly Britain, Australia, Canada and the US.

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<sup>42</sup> Roger Robinson and Nelson Wattie, *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature* [Website] (New Zealand Book Council Oxford University Press, 2002 1998 [cited 13 July 2004]); available from <http://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writers/gracep.html>.



## Methodology

### Investigating ideology in children's literature

A variety of approaches have been taken to investigating the operation of ideology – of “meaning in the service of power”<sup>43</sup> – in children's literature. Few, if any, have specifically addressed conceptions of children and constructions of childhood and none from the perspective of a New Zealand children's book collection.<sup>44</sup>

This research was designed to combine two quite different approaches – a quantitative content analysis followed by discourse analysis or close reading of a representative sub-set of the texts.

### Content analysis

Content analysis is a technique that has been used widely in the social sciences to summarise the approach to a particular issue taken throughout a single text or a group or series of texts. This technique of creating a coding scheme to “count” the instances in which a particular situation or representation occurs within a text can be applied to any text – from television advertisements and programmes, to musical scores, from children's books to newspaper comic strips.<sup>45</sup>

Brabant and Mooney,<sup>46</sup> for example, used content analysis to investigate the social construction of family life in weekly comic strips running in US newspapers, with a particular

<sup>43</sup> Knowles and Malmkjaer, *Language and Control in Children's Literature*. 262.

<sup>44</sup> Jill Holt, Personal communication, January 2004.

<sup>45</sup> Shulamit Reinharz and Lynn Davidman, *Feminist Methods in Social Research* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).; Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, ed. F Gerald Kline, vol. 5, *The Sage Commtext Series* (Beverly Hills, London: Sage Publications, 1980).

<sup>46</sup> Sarah Brabant and Linda A Mooney, "The Social Construction of Family Life in the Sunday Comics: Race as a Consideration," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 30, no. 1 (1999).

focus on whether and how race affected portrayals of family relationships. These researchers reviewed the social science literature to uncover any differences that had been observed in the family lives of Black and White Americans. They then analysed 78 individual strips from three comic series for features related to these possible differences. The clearly delineated “measures” they used and the essential uniformity of the material they were analysing (in form, length, frequency and even, to some extent, purpose) made this content analysis a success.

Closer in some ways to the current project was a content analysis which compared the behaviour of characters in texts to the behaviour of real people in life. Heather Paton<sup>47</sup> looked at recent picture books in a local library collection that featured a “small human female protagonist” and coded them for such features as location of action (indoors vs outdoors), physical activity, adventurousness, aggression, problem-solving abilities, and creativity. She then compared her findings with observations of little girls in the real world. Interestingly, this research found that the little girls in modern picture books were not portrayed realistically; writers and illustrators having strayed too far from the traditional ‘stereotypes’ of little-girl behaviour. Too much content analysis research, she concluded, had led picture book publishing to ‘over-correct’ its sexist portrayals of girls, creating new, opposite stereotypes that were equally unrealistic.

Such discussion highlights one of the weaknesses of “all the counting” as content analysis research was described by Roger Clark in 2002<sup>48</sup>; in some ways it limits analysis to the surface level. In the case of picture books, it had apparently resulted in a simple reversal in the activities most commonly associated with picture book girls (and boys). In children’s

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<sup>47</sup> Heather Paton, “Sugar and Spice? The Characteristics of Little Girls in Modern Children’s Picture Books,” *Talespinner*, no. 10 (2000). :53-64.

books, as in other texts, ideologies operate at many different levels, many of which are inaccessible to 'counting'.

### **Discourse analysis**

The second strand of the design of this research was to use discourse analysis on a subset of the sampled texts to describe the ideologies of childhood they conveyed. Discourse analysis addresses not only the story, as traditionally approached in literary analysis – looking at plot, setting, characters and themes, for example – but also at the way in which the story is told (including consideration of the illustrative text). The study of linguistics has provided many of the understandings that have contributed to this methodology and linguistic techniques can be used to deconstruct a text right down to the chosen vocabulary and the arrangement of words in a sentence.

In this project it was intended that the content analysis would provide data that could be generalised across the sample of texts and allow valid comparisons to be made between, say, books awarded in different countries, or picture books versus novels. Analysis of discourse, using a representative subset of texts, was to offer a look below the surface where systems of 'counting' don't reach.

Preliminary reading of a small group of texts however, established that a purely quantitative approach to content analysis was not practical, given the sheer variety in the texts under examination. A mixed coding sheet was developed<sup>49</sup> which was designed to capture some information about the way important themes were dealt with in the texts as well as other salient features that could be counted.

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<sup>48</sup> Roger Clark, "Why All the Counting? Feminist Social Science Research on Children's Literature," *Children's Literature in Education* 33, no. 4 (2002):285-295.

<sup>49</sup> See Appendix 1

The entire sample was then read and the coding sheets filled out for each book. Some analysis of the coding sheets was carried out to inform selection of a representative sub-sample for close reading. While the results indicated some trends in the sample, the variety and complexity of the texts stymied reliable conclusions. One item recorded, for example, was the age and sex of major characters. In fact, 'main' characters were non-existent in some books, non-human (and of indeterminate sex) in others and too numerous not to sway analysis in other books again. This sample included novels, short story collections, picture books and non-fiction materials and varied in length from the brief lines in a picture book to the 413+ small-print pages of *Watership Down*.

The selection of texts for closer analysis was a careful process of balance and judgement. The books were categorised according to the themes they illustrated, their format and the source country of their awards and these factors were held in balance to select a group that fairly represented the whole. Throughout the process of analysis, conclusions were checked against my content codings for the entire sample.

The five 'institutions of childhood' outlined above<sup>50</sup> were revisited in this sample of 1970s award winners and additional themes were drawn out and explored where they appeared. My discourse analysis involved both a "top-down" and a "bottom-up" approach to texts, combining understandings from linguistics and literature within a socio-cultural framework<sup>51</sup>.

By attending to both story and meaning, language and context, a reader can understand how ideology, both overt and implicit, is in operation in a text. It has been suggested that there are three levels at which ideology works in children's literature<sup>52</sup>:

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<sup>50</sup> Knowles and Malmkjaer, *Language and Control in Children's Literature*. 31-32.

<sup>51</sup> Stephens, *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction*. 14.

<sup>52</sup> Peter Hollindale, "Ideology and the Children's Book," *Signal* 55 (1988). in Knowles and Malmkjaer, *Language and Control in Children's Literature*. 65-8.

- Overt ideology (open advocacy)
- Passive ideology (implicit assumptions)
- Fixing the limits of expression (the captivity of language to time and place)

John Stephens suggested that by paying attention to certain features of narratives, these different levels of ideology could be revealed. His model identifying the “Frame of narrative transactions” is helpful to understand these features.<sup>53</sup>

Between the actual world author and actual world reader lies the text; itself containing an implied author (who the reader imagines the author to be); a narrator (who appears, in the text, to be telling the story); the events (plot), the setting, and the interactions, functions and speech acts of characters in the narrative; the narratee (who appears, in the text, to be hearing/reading the story); and the implied reader (who the author imagines the reader to be).

This framework becomes important when you consider point of view in a text, a feature that has profound implications for understanding implicit ideology. The questions: “Who sees?” and “Who interprets?” reveal a great deal about how readers are prompted (or ‘positioned’) by the text to favour some voices over others and to make some interpretations rather than others.

*...textual structures such as the representations of direct speech, and especially conversation, have a powerful influence in implicitly predetermining the significances readers may find. ...[N]arrative discourse implicitly offers its audiences a range of possible subject positions: aligned with narrators and / or focalizers; in opposition to unreliable narrators or unlikable characters; and so on.*<sup>54</sup>

An essential point about the top-down and bottom-up approach adopted in this paper is that author – reader communication occurs in a social context. Even where texts do not

promote the reigning ideologies of their time, they will still be written in relation to these; social conditions will always 'constrain' writers in the way they express themselves; and this can be read within the discourse of a text.<sup>55</sup>

*Our habit is so much to cherish individualism ... that we often overlook the huge commonalities of an age, and the captivity of mind we undergo by living in our own time and place and no other. A large part of any book is written not by its author but by the world the author lives in. To accept the point one has only to recognize the rarity of occasions when a writer manages to recolour the meaning of a single word: almost all the time we are the acquiescent prisoners of other peoples' meanings.*<sup>56</sup>

Closure of narratives is another feature that has been attended to in this analysis. Story closure is a powerful conveyance of ideology – the way relationships and events are rounded off (or not) positions the reader to take a particular meaning from what they have read.

### Choosing the sample

For this research, a sample of 61 books was chosen by applying the collection policy of the Colson Children's Model Collection to the decade of the 1970s. The Colson Children's Model collection is one strand of a collection held and maintained by Auckland City Libraries and built up with funds from a 1972 gift to the library from Mrs Geraldine Colson.

Children's literature was such an active area of cultural production in New Zealand in the 1970s that it is easy to defend the use of local books from this decade as a source for sociological understandings. However, as we have established, 'indigenous' children's books

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<sup>53</sup> Stephens, *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction*. 21.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>55</sup> Hollindale, "Ideology and the Children's Book." 15.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 15

have only ever formed a part of what young New Zealanders actually read<sup>57</sup> and were encouraged to read, so access to a broader range of “sanctioned” children’s books was necessary to answer the research question.

The Colson Children’s Model Collection was created to exemplify the best in children’s literature. As such, it was decided by local librarians that the winners of eight children’s book awards from New Zealand, Australia, the US and the UK were to form the core of the collection. These awards are:

- Esther Glen Medal (NZ)
- Russell Clark Award (NZ)
- Children’s Book of the Year Award (AUS)
- Picture Book of the Year Award (AUS)
- Carnegie Medal (UK)
- Kate Greenaway Medal (UK)
- Caldecott Medal (US)
- Newbery Medal (US)

All 63 1970s winners of these awards were sought for this project, of which 61 were located and used – four from sources other than the Colson Collection itself. The criteria for inclusion were for a book to have won one of the listed awards between 1970 and 1979, rather than necessarily having been published within that date range. Variations in the operation of some awards meant that a couple of the books included were first published in 1969, while a couple of award-winners published in 1979 were excluded, having won awards in 1980. Honour books (or highly commended) were excluded.

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<sup>57</sup> For example, see books listed as favourites by children in the 1920s and 1930s in Williams, “Children’s Voices: Insights into the History of New Zealand Childhood through an Examination of Children’s Pages in

Such a sample choice was not without limitations, however. The number of award-winners from each of the four countries varied from seven (New Zealand) to the full 20 (US); thus reducing the reliability of inter-country comparison. The very small sample from New Zealand, with only one among them a novel, was disappointing given that New Zealand was a major target of the project. It remains true, however, that as a representation of what children were being guided to read in the 1970s, this ratio would have been close to the mark.

Another issue is that individual books were not examined and approved for the Colson Collection by local librarians but were accepted as winners of the chosen awards. This would appear to reduce their interpretive power as indicators of New Zealand society at the time. Yet, this collection policy was instigated in the 1970s, presumably on the basis of the perceived suitability of these award-winners for the local audience by the librarians of the time.

## The books

As mentioned, sixty one books were analysed in this research of the 63 1970s winners of the Caldecott Medal, Carnegie Medal, Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year and Picture Book of the Year Awards, Esther Glen Medal, Kate Greenaway Medal, Newbery Medal and Russell Clark Award<sup>58</sup>. The UK Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medals and the US Newbery and Caldecott Medals were awarded each year in the decade, however only nine Australian Children's book of the year and six picture book of the year awards, and five New Zealand Esther Glen and two Russell Clark Awards were given.

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New Zealand Newspapers and Magazines in the 1930s". 134-136 and 177-185.

<sup>58</sup> See full list with brief notes in Appendix 2



Thirty-one of the total were picture books, three of these non-fiction. Of the seven books from New Zealand in the sample, five were picture books, one an illustrated short story collection and only one a novel.

Eight of the books, including *Watership Down*, had non-human characters only, while 22 others, including *The Rainbow Serpent*, had one or more non-human characters; all together making up half of the sample analysed. (This does not include pets and other animal companions that are there more as part of the setting.)

Many of the books were re-tellings of traditional stories, a great proportion of these from indigenous or minority cultures, and many were overt (although generally entertaining) vehicles for serious messages. Only nine of the books I characterised as “just for fun” works of the imagination and, interestingly, four of these are New Zealand award-winners: *The First Margaret Mahy Storybook*, *My Cat Likes to Hide in Boxes*, *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch* and (with reservations) *A Lion in the Meadow*. There were only seven New Zealand books in the 63 book sample, so this would seem to be a disproportionately high number. Another four of the nine ‘books for fun’ were UK award winners: *The Haunted House*, *The Post Office Cat*, *The Wind Blew* and *Mr Gumpy's Outing*; with only one, *The Westing Game*, from elsewhere (US).

## Part 2: Ideologies

As expected from the literature review, the books in this sample revealed both intentional and unintentional ideologies. The five “institutions of childhood” were still visible and in the cases of race and gender, remained significant pre-occupations in the 1970s. The Victorian relations of domination expressed through these institutions in ‘traditional children’s literature’ in English, had generally undergone or were undergoing a re-evaluation in this decade. Some of this re-evaluation, however, existed only at the surface and was contradicted by deeper levels of the discourse. Additional themes also emerged as significant in the 1970s award-winners.

In this section, 1970s representations of Knowles and Malmkjaer’s ‘five institutions’ are analysed along with the new themes that were particular pre-occupations in this decade.

### Family

Families did not fit into one consistent pattern in this sample of books, and neither did the ideologies surrounding them. This may be telling in itself, in comparison with the rigid structures of family life idealised in traditional children’s literature. Young people were sometimes portrayed as being isolated, even within their families, through misunderstanding or unrealistic expectations on the part of parents. Individuation from family, or following one’s own path, was a value promoted in some of the novels. (see *Coming of Age* below) Siblings were sometimes close, other times distant, in some books a responsibility. Finding one’s place in the web of family and community relationships was a value promoted by some of the books. One or more imperfect parents were often present for the events narrated rather than acting as an absent god-like ‘guide’ for the young person protagonist. Violence

towards children appeared in the sample; not only towards step-children or orphans but from 'natural parents' as well.

Different kinds of families were presented: nuclear, extended, sole parent/grandparent, couples, aunts, uncles, cousins. And substitute families as well: travelling companions, 'band of brothers', peer groups and friends. The family, and more particularly the contrast between real and 'ideal' families, would appear to have been undergoing a re-evaluation in this decade.

### **A separate world for children?**

Children inhabited a separate world from adults in a number of the books in this sample. One example is *A Lion in the Meadow*<sup>59</sup>, where the written and visual texts work in counterpoint. The un-named protagonist of this story, 'little boy', is alienated from his mother who believes that nothing he's telling her is real. The written text has the mother quite harshly rejecting the boy, a rejection accentuated through her non-use of his name, while the illustrative text shows her tending lovingly to his baby sibling.

*The little boy said, "Mother, there is a lion in the meadow."*

*The mother said, "Nonsense, little boy."<sup>60</sup>*

By the close of the narrative, however, the relationship is somewhat re-aligned. The exasperated mother joins what she thinks is a fantasy and gives her son an imaginary dragon in a matchbox to frighten his imaginary lion from the meadow. When the dragon also turns out to be real, the mother is drawn into the world as the child sees it rather than the other way around. This conclusion is surprising. More commonly in texts for children the resolution of such alienation occurs when the child 'graduates' to the world-view of adults instead.

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<sup>59</sup> Margaret Mahy and Jenny (illustrator) Williams, *A Lion in the Meadow* (Harmondsworth: Puffin, 1972).

### Families pull together in adversity

But separate worlds are not always the rule. In *The October Child*<sup>61</sup>, as in *Summer of the Swans*<sup>62</sup>, a family member's disability and the effect of this on the rest of the family, is the main focus of the narrative. In both of these novels the young protagonists retain a strong sense of their importance in keeping their family unit going under difficult circumstances.

For Douglas, in *The October Child*, family is family even though his autistic young brother Carl is desperately difficult to deal with. Not so for oldest brother Kenneth who responds here to their mother's discoveries about Carl on a trip to a paediatrician in Sydney:

*But why should it make any difference to us?  
It had been a typical reaction from Kenneth, on that January day when Beth,  
Douglas and Carl had returned from the Sydney visit. ....  
'What do you mean – "us"?' [Douglas] asked crossly. 'We're all part of the same  
family, aren't we? And Carl's our brother.'  
... 'He doesn't seem like my brother,' Kenneth said.*

Douglas' attitude is the one the reader is positioned to adopt by this discourse and this is achieved partly through the focalisation of events through him. Focalisation is the use of a particular character's ideas and responses to colour the reader's view of a story even when it is told by a third party.

The novels about Black American families (in most cases written by Black Americans) also manage to foreground young protagonists while keeping them inside the web of family relationships.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Eleanor Spence and Malcolm (illustrations) Green, *The October Child* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1976).

<sup>62</sup> Betsy Byars, *The Summer of the Swans* (New York: Avon Camelot, 1970).

In *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, for instance, 9 year-old Cassie tells the story while making frequent references to the other members of her family – their experiences, actions and what they have said to her. What Cassie and her siblings learn from the elders of the family helps them make sense of their world and this makes them keen to adopt the same values. Furthermore, Cassie's family always sticks together even at personal cost. Here for example, Cassie supports her youngest brother when he angrily rejects a school book he is given on his first day of school. As the teacher is poised to whip her brother:

*"Miz Crocker, don't please!" I cried. Miss Crocker's dark eyes warned me not to say another word. "I know why he done it!"*

*"You want part of this switch, Cassie?"*

*"No'm," I said hastily. "I just wanna tell you how come Little Man done what he done."*

*"Sit down!" she ordered as I hurried toward her with the open book in my hand.*

...

*I started slowly toward my desk, but as the hickory stick sliced the tense air, I turned back around. "Miz Crocker," I said, "I don't want my book neither."<sup>63</sup>*

This loyalty is held up in stark contrast to T.J. Avery, a friend of Cassie's brother Stacey's,

whose weak character is portrayed from the first through his willingness to let his little

*Papa's smile faded. "I didn't mean for that to happen, Hammer."*

*Uncle Hammer put his arm around Papa. "What good's a car? It can't grow cotton. You can't build a home on it. And you can't raise four fine babies in it."*<sup>65</sup>

But it is not just family loyalty that shows in this novel but the willingness of the adults in Cassie's life to acknowledge their children's developing capabilities and understandings.

Perhaps for families and communities under stress, individuation is not as important as survival through the strength of the collective. And in an environment of institutionalised inequity, perhaps humanistic idealism has to be tempered with pragmatic concern for survival.

### Imperfect parents

Parents have in most cases come down from their pedestals in this 1970s sample of books. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the social environment in which they were written and judged. Child abuse had been re-discovered, in New Zealand at least, in the 1960s<sup>66</sup> and the 1970s saw a growing children's rights movement in the world,<sup>67</sup> the first International Year of the Child (1979) and the origins of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was finally approved by the international community in 1989<sup>68</sup>.

Parental imperfections were dealt with both affectionately in these books, as here in *Thunder and Lightnings*:

*Andrew climbed into his attic with a piece of polythene and adhesive tape to mend his window.*

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>66</sup> Dalley, *Child Welfare in Twentieth-Century New Zealand*. 250.

<sup>67</sup> For example: John Holt, *Escape from Childhood* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1975). ; M Hoyles, ed., *Changing Childhood* (London: Pathfinder Press, 1979). Both of which outline a need for children's rights.

<sup>68</sup> *The Convention on the Rights of the Child* [Website] (UNICEF, [cited 2 July 2004]); available from <http://www.unicef.org/crc/convention.htm>.

*'We'll get a piece of glass for that soon,' said Mum, calling upstairs from the landing. Andrew thought that probably it would not be soon.<sup>69</sup>*

and chillingly, as here, also in *Thunder and Lightnings*, when Andrew accidentally treads on a sheet his friend Victor has just cleaned at the laundrette:

*He looked up and saw Victor's mother standing in the doorway. She looked at him, at Victor and at the sheet, then without saying anything, she smacked Victor hard, three times, across the side of the head. Victor rocked on his feet and put his hand to his head, but he said nothing either. Andrew was shocked by the silence of it. In his house, any trouble was accompanied by much shouting and table-thumping, all over in a few moments because no one could ever get angry enough to keep it up.<sup>70</sup>*

Even so, the violence in these books is far more often from outside the family than from within it and hard-hitting portrayals of family violence were by no means a dominant feature.

### **Substitute families**

Rabbit brothers Hazel and Fiver are the only family each other have in *Watership Down* and it is their sibling relationship which forms the core of the 'band of brothers' that gathers around them. This is a very military-style substitute family – the company is all-male (the female rabbits they seek out are for reproductive purposes and are not inducted into the main axis of relationships), they work together to survive in a strange land and to deal with physical threats from other rabbits, a hazardous environment and even demoralising political systems.

Another substitute family is found in *Tulku*, where following a raid on his father's Christian mission in China, sole survivor Theodore takes up with eccentric English botanist

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<sup>69</sup> Jan Mark and Jim (illustrations) Russell, *Thunder and Lightnings* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Kestrel Books, 1976). 14.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 159-60.

Mrs Jones and her Chinese assistant Lung on their travels through China and into Tibet. Ultimately though, Theodore has to come of age (see later) and find his own path to the future.

## Men and women as role models

Families in literature often provide adult men and women who may operate as role models constructed by the author for the benefit of the child reader. In this sample, significant adults had various roles in the narratives.<sup>71</sup> These were recorded in the content analysis and later grouped together, and they demonstrate that some roles were more likely to be performed by women than men and vice versa. (See Gender)

## Friendship

Friendships in these 1970s books routinely cross the strict social boundaries that were maintained in the Victorian novels. Characters reach across differences in age, class, sex, race, beliefs, time and even species to deliver strong messages about the essential humanity (so to speak) of everyone underneath surface differences.

*Thunder and Lightnings*<sup>72</sup> has a beautifully engraved relationship between middle-class, city-born narrator Andrew and working-class local Victor. Andrew's internal dialogue charts the process of negotiating intimacy – how far teasing can go, for example, before it offends.

*'You think I'm an idiot, don't you?' said Victor.*

*'No,' said Andrew. 'I'm sorry.' He knew he kept hurting the feelings that Victor pretended not to have. He decided only to ask questions, taking care not to argue with the answers.*<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> See Appendix 3

<sup>72</sup> Mark and Russell, *Thunder and Lightnings*.



In *The Exeter Blitz* Colin, through whom the events of this narrative are focalised, re-evaluates the prejudice that has prevented him from making friends with Terry, in this passage of deliberate ideology from author David Rees:

*By the time the all-clear sounded, Colin had decided Terry Wootton wasn't a bit unpleasant, but almost, if you knew him, someone you wouldn't mind having as a real mate. Why hadn't he discovered this before, he wondered; all that stupid nonsense about evacuees and local yokels: they had all made up their minds, really, to be enemies before they'd found out anything about each other. Neither side had given its opponents a chance.<sup>74</sup>*

However, many of the cross-boundary friendships in this sample are less than equal and may unconsciously serve the opposite ideology to that intended.

In *Take the Long Path*<sup>75</sup> by Joan de Hamel, David Regan's friend Hemi is a convenient tool for the author to give out certain information,

*'Hemi, do you know many Maori words?'*  
*Hemi rolled over. 'Me? Not me. My grandmother does though. Karani we call her.*  
*She can talk Maori.'*

and to illustrate his step-father's racism against Maori before we find out that David is Maori himself. When Hemi is not impelling the plot, he doesn't exist. David neither considers Hemi's motivations nor his feelings, a fact highlighted by his obsession with the personalities and dramas of the penguins he looks after.

In *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler*, Tyke's relationship with her best friend Danny is praised in the story for offering Danny something positive to counter his negative family environment. However, by analysing the words associated with Danny in the text (known as

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>74</sup> David Rees, *The Exeter Blitz* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978). 70.

<sup>75</sup> Joan De Hamel and Gareth Floyd, *Take the Long Path* (Guildford, Surrey: Lutterworth, 1978).

the study of collocation or proximity analysis), it is possible to see that this friendship is horribly unequal. Tyke keeps comparing her friend Danny to a dog.<sup>76</sup> For example:

*And when he's found out, he gets this mournful look, like my dog...*

and:

*Danny jumped up and down.*

and:

*Danny wouldn't hurt anything. He's so gentle.*

It is not until almost 100 pages into the book that Tyke's first person account gives any mention of Danny having a positive value as a person:

*He can draw better than what I can...*<sup>77</sup>

Mark and Dutch immigrant Joss have a similarly unequal relationship in *The Family at the Lookout*. The intentional ideology of the novel is to counter prejudice, as demonstrated here by Mark's encounter with xenophobic character, the Major:

*Joss?' he frowned. 'Joss – D'you mean that foreign boy?'*

*'Yes. He's our friend.'*

*'Friend?' The Major snorted. 'A fine friend for an Australian boy!'*

*'There's nothing wrong with Joss,' I said. I felt angry, and was ready to show it.*

*'We all like him.'*

*His eyebrows bristled. He was quite as angry as I was. 'He's not a Britisher, is he?'*

*Too many foreigners running round this country.'*<sup>78</sup>

And here where Mark thinks so sympathetically about migrants:

*Most migrants are anxious to please. I'd known quite a few at my last school. Some of them are so anxious to please that they get on your nerves, though you couldn't blame them. Migrants ... I've thought about them quite a lot. To leave your own*

<sup>76</sup> See Appendix 4

<sup>77</sup> Gene Kemp and Carolyn (illustrations) Dinan, *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler*, Large print ed. (Bath: Chivers Press, 1986). 93.

<sup>78</sup> Noreen Shelley and Robert (illustrator) Micklewright, *Family at the Lookout* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972). 76.

*country, all your friends and the things you're used to, and come thousands of miles  
to a strange place... It must be grim, to put it mildly.*<sup>79</sup>

Yet Joss *is* always anxious and eager to please, as can be seen in the proximity analysis in Appendix 5<sup>80</sup>. Wherever Mark leads, Joss always follows; even when he thinks that what Mark is doing is wrong<sup>81</sup>. And when the bushfire threatens Mark's new house, Joss is there to help him try to save it rather than staying in the subway to help his own mother and two little sisters<sup>82</sup>.

## Gender

Gender was most definitely an area of contention in the 1970s award-winners, unsurprising given the social context in which they were written and chosen for awards. One effect of the wave of feminism which swept the 'Western' world in the 1970s was a re-evaluation of gender roles and representations. New Zealand society was no exception, as demonstrated by the flurry of anti-sexist research activity in that decade. The national bibliographic output during the 1970s sports numerous studies examining children's literature for sex-role stereotyping along with multiple lists of safely 'non-sexist' children's books.<sup>83</sup> This research suggested that children's books were reinforcing stereotyped sex roles and that active, interesting female characters were lacking in books for children.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>80</sup> Here the references to Joss are displayed in the centre, with a few words appearing on either side. These are called concordance lines.

<sup>81</sup> Shelley and Micklewright, *Family at the Lookout*. 89-90.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 139-141.

<sup>83</sup> This was revealed through a search of the New Zealand National Bibliographic Database, Te Puna, using the subject heading 'Sex role in literature' combined with the key-word 'children'. ; For example: T Wainwright, "Run, John, Run: Watch, Janet, Watch: A Study of Sex-Role Stereotyping in Infant Readers," (Wellington: Working Party on Sex-Role Stereotyping, 1975).

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

In my sample of 1970s award-winners, this conclusion is generally borne out. Appendix 6 charts the age and sex distribution of major characters in these books, where major characters could be discerned<sup>85</sup>. Overall, masculine characters were dominant, although in the US award-winners main characters were more evenly split between the sexes, perhaps indicating the earlier impact of the feminist movement there.

By limiting the analysis of main characters to those through whom the story events were viewed or understood, even greater masculine dominance is revealed. Thirty of the narrators or focalisers in these stories were males compared with nine who were females.

*The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler*<sup>86</sup> is a novel which is interesting for its approach to gender. Almost the entire narrative is focalised through 'Tyke' (a nick-name); carefully giving the impression that this character is a boy while never actually using any attributions either way. At its climax it becomes apparent that Tyke is in fact a girl, and the reader is positioned to realise she or he has made assumptions based on sexist stereotypes.<sup>87</sup>

Yet such turning of boys into girls by sleight of pen does not really address the deeper concerns about gender in juvenile fiction<sup>88</sup>. To me, *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler* is an example of what John Stephens warned about when he wrote:

... attempts to introduce affirmative representations of women [or girls] can stumble into a tension between one kind of gendering at a story level and another in the discourse.<sup>89</sup>

As the analysis of actions associated with male and female adults in this narrative<sup>90</sup> shows, the women are written, through Tyke's eyes, no less, as unpleasant and one-dimensional.

<sup>85</sup> The preponderance of stories written in oral storytelling style made narrator analysis difficult.

<sup>86</sup> Kemp and Dinan, *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler*.

<sup>87</sup> A gender schema by John Stephens, for example, sets out the stereotyped characteristics of males and females in traditional literature and can be found in Appendix 7.

<sup>88</sup> John Stephens, "Gender, Genre and Children's Literature," *Signal* 79 (1996). 17.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

Tyke's enemy Mrs Somers is ugly as well as unsympathetic while beautiful "Miss" has all the important attributes in the apparently all-important competition for a man,

*... I liked Bonfire and I liked Miss as well. Only Miss is so super star she could get anyone, say a first division footballer or a pop star, whereas Bonfire was lucky to go out with Sir in the first place.<sup>91</sup>*

and has all the other women in the book spitting with envy. Tyke's mother is bossy, irrational and has no relationship with her daughter until Tyke takes ill near the end of the book. Even then, when Tyke is trying to tell her something important, her mother would rather drug her to sleep than listen to her concerns:

*'Mum,' I cried. 'It isn't true...' '...never you mind, my love,' Mum said gently, 'stop crying and I'll give you a tablet and you can lie down and have a lovely long bye-byes.... I lifted up my voice and howled.<sup>92</sup>*

The men in the book are the ones who understand; who are rescuers and guides. Their single and common flaw is the ability for an attractive woman to turn their heads, and even though they get angry, they are more frequently good natured and humorous as well. Mr Merchant, Tyke's hero teacher, even finishes telling the story, bringing the narration, as well as the events of the story, to a tidy close.

Field mouse Mrs Frisby, in *Mrs Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*<sup>93</sup>, is quite a different female role model. It is her love for and responsibility to her sick child that drives her to seek out help and to solve problems and throughout this narrative she shows herself to be courageous, resourceful and heroic. Mrs Frisby takes risks, but they are generally calculated ones and do not involve "proving anything" to anyone. Mrs Frisby may never have a name

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<sup>90</sup> See Appendix 8

<sup>91</sup> Kemp and Dinan, *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler*. 110.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 116-7.

<sup>93</sup> Robert C. O'Brien and Justin Todd, *Mrs Frisby and the Rats of Nimh*, Puffin Modern Classics (London: Puffin, 1994).

of her own, (she is known as Mrs Frisby or Mrs Jonathan Frisby throughout the story) yet she is none-the-less accorded a great deal of respect as a character.

“Mrs Frisby, the head of a family of field mice, lived in an underground house in the vegetable garden of a farmer named Mr Fitzgibbon,” begins the story. The reader is told by the authoritative, third-person narration that the Frisby family is very lucky in its warm, waterproof winter home, which was discovered and utilised by Mrs Frisby and that “through luck and hard work”<sup>94</sup>, she had managed to keep her family happy and well fed despite the earlier loss of her husband.

This mouse is an active agent in the narrative; through close focalisation the reader sees her making use of available resources while negotiating the dangers of the mouse’s world.

*‘With her forepaws and sharp teeth she pulled off a part of the husk from the top ear of corn and folded it double to serve as a crude carrying bag. Then she pulled loose as many of the yellow kernels as she could easily lift, and putting them in the husk-bag she hopped off briskly for home. She would come back for more after breakfast and bring the children to help.’<sup>95</sup>*

Mrs Frisby is brave and takes risks to help others – first the crow, Jeremy, all tangled in a fence and being stalked by the cat, and then her son Timothy. Timothy is too ill to be moved while the day fast approaches that the entire family must shift away from its winter-home in a field due for ploughing. When Mrs Frisby decides to seek advice from an old owl who lives in the very top of the tallest tree in the area, she hitches a lift on Jeremy’s back:

*‘It’s all right,’ he said kindly. ‘There’s nothing to be nervous about. I fly over the woods a dozen times a day.’*  
*Yes, thought Mrs Frisby, but you’re not riding on your back, and you can’t fall off.*  
*‘All right,’ she said as bravely as she could. ‘I’m ready. ...’ With a small leap she was on Jeremy’s back, lying as flat as she could and holding tight to the glossy*

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 2.

*feathers between his wings, as a horseback rider grips the horse's mane before a jump.*<sup>96</sup>

However, other aspects of the text belie this positive gendering. Mrs Frisby is accepted (initially at least) by the rats and the owl by virtue of her relationship with her husband (and 'his' children) rather than on her own account; although she does earn their respect on her own terms later on. Much of Mrs Frisby's knowledge is also attributed to her husband, however her mastery of it and skills like reading, are the more extraordinary in her as she, unlike he, had not been genetically enhanced.

But the society of the rats is a feature of this narrative that decidedly works within rather than against traditional gender stereotypes. The rat leadership is exclusively male (the females lack interest in attending meetings), the only female rat the reader meets by name is quite traditionally 'feminine', and the only contribution ascribed to the female rats amongst the marvels of their underground town is an unnecessary but attractive decoration:

*Justin was watching her and smiling. 'Do you like it? The carpet and coloured glass we don't really need. Some of the wives did that on their own, just for looks. They cut the glass, believe it or not, from old bottles. The carpet was a bit of trim they found somewhere.'*<sup>97</sup>

Yet, even given these factors, the overall effect is to challenge negative stereotypes, as here where Mrs Frisby volunteers to put the sleeping draught on the farm cat's food; a necessary element of the rats' rescue plan for her ailing son. The challenge to traditional roles is made more powerful by the acknowledgement of prevailing attitudes towards females:

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 72.

*Mrs Frisby interrupted quietly. 'There is another way,' she said. 'If Mr Ages can get into the kitchen, so can I. If you will give me the powder and show me the way, I will try to put it in Dragon's bowl.'*

*Justin said quickly: 'No. It's no job for a lady.'*

*'You forget,' Mrs Frisby said. 'I'm Timothy's mother. If you, and Arthur, and others in your group can take risks to save him, surely I can too. And consider this: I don't want any of you to be hurt – maybe even killed – by Dragon. But even more, I don't want the attempt to fail.'*<sup>98</sup>

And the end of the narrative, where Mrs Frisby tells her children the story of their father, his adventures and her own, the linguistic power is firmly in her mouth.

*'It's not something we have to decide tonight,' said Mrs Frisby. 'I'll think about it.'*

*And now it's late. It's time for bed.'*<sup>99</sup>

## Sex roles challenged but acknowledged

Another text that challenges through comparison is *Thunder and Lightnings*, in which young protagonist Andrew's mother is used to make some wry observations about boys' and girls' reading material:

*Mum... propped herself against the fridge.*

*'How's Mutt Michigan getting along?' she asked Victor. 'Still winning the war single-handed, armed only with his Stilson wrench?'*

*'Mitch Mulligan,' said Victor. 'And that's a spanner, not a wrench. I don't know.'*

*'I didn't get that this week. ...I'm going off him,' he added.*

*'Well, if that's so,' said Mum, 'I'll let you in on a secret. When I was at school my young brother used to have a comic and Mitch Mulligan was in it, only he wasn't called Mitch Mulligan then.... I recognized him at once.'*

*'Did you read them, then?' asked Victor.*

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 231.



*'Oh yes,' said Mum. 'I used to enjoy them, too. They were much more exciting than the girls' comics. Those were all about how Trudy unmasked the Phantom Hoaxer and saved the school from ruin; or how Sally Stringbag danced her way to fame with a wooden leg and saved her father from ruin. I expect they still are,' she said.*<sup>100</sup>

In *Bridge to Terabithia* contrast is used again. Here an adult's change of mind is a powerful cue to overcome sexism. Early in this narrative, Jess's father is appalled that his son is interested in 'unmasculine' pursuits:

*He would like to show his drawings to his dad, but he didn't dare. When he was in first grade, he had told his dad that he wanted to be an artist when he grew up. He'd thought his dad would be pleased. He wasn't. 'What are they teaching in that damn school?' he had asked. 'Bunch of old ladies turning my only son into some kind of a —' He had stopped on the word, but Jess had gotten the message. It was one you didn't forget, even after four years.*<sup>101</sup>

However, their distant relationship is resolved at the close of the story following the death of Jess's friend Leslie. Here Jess's father understands his grief and indicates to Jess and the reader that he has had a change of heart:

*[Jess] screamed something without words and flung the papers and paints into the dirty brown water. The paints floated on top, riding the current like a boat, but the papers swirled about, soaking in the muddy water, being sucked down, around, and down. He watched them all disappear. ... He put his head down on his knee. 'That was a damn fool thing to do.' His father sat down on the dirt beside him. ... His father stroked his hair without speaking. Jess grew quiet. They both watched the water.*<sup>102</sup>

In *Take the Long Path*, gender operates differently at different levels. Helpful David is contrasted positively with his (step)father who never lifts a finger in the domestic sphere at all. And yet females both penguin and human are portrayed as feeble-minded and lacking

<sup>100</sup> Mark and Russell, *Thunder and Lightnings*. 157-8.

<sup>101</sup> Katherine Paterson, *Bridge to Terabithia*, Puffin Books (London: Puffin Books, 1980).13.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

initiative. In this passage, David positions himself as equal to the male penguins as expert in everything “penguin” while hapless female penguins cannot function properly without the leadership of a strong male:

*...David could tell at a glance that this was the male, Abel. His breast feathers were tucked like an eiderdown over his egg, which was without doubt resting warmly on his fat pink feet. His feckless wife, Mabel, would have stood up by now, poised for departure. She simply did not have the know-how about incubating eggs. ‘You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Mabel,’ David had expostulated once, but it seemed she was not. She had even managed to let one egg roll out of the nest. David had found it, stone cold, and given it a modest funeral.<sup>103</sup>*

David later transfers this construction of female penguins directly onto his mother:

*David sat down on the grass to recover. Why couldn’t his mother make decisions and stick to them? Fuss, fuss. She was all fluster and impulses, and could do with some tidying up – yes, and a bit of preening too.<sup>104</sup>*

### Traditional roles framed as old fashioned

In *Josh*, traditional sex-roles are framed as old fashioned through their association with elderly Aunt Clara. It is evidently a mother’s job to keep in touch with the paternal Aunt, according to Josh’s great aunt:

*“Your sister is six now. I’m still waiting for photographs. Will you remind your mother, again, please. Nothing I say has any effect and a letter each Christmas doesn’t go far...”<sup>105</sup>*

And a father’s to earn the bread:

*“...An undernourished Plowman. Goodness me. What’s wrong with your father? Can’t he earn the money to feed you? Does he spend it on motor-cars? ...”<sup>106</sup>*

<sup>103</sup> De Hamel and Floyd, *Take the Long Path*. 13.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>105</sup> Ivan Southall, *Josh* (London: Heinemann, 1973). 8.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 10.

Her ideas of masculinity are also very restrictive:

*"... Have you outgrown your strength? Malt and cod-liver oil for you. I should have known when they told me you wrote poetry. Unnatural activity for a boy. Do you play sport?"*

*"Yes, Aunt Clara, of course I do!"*

*"Manly sports?"*

*"Yes, Aunt Clara! Running and Cricket! You name it!"*<sup>107</sup>

Aunt Clara's misunderstanding and alienation of Josh and the demands she placed on him as a Plowman, were not untypical of the important women characters in the sampled texts. Appendix XXX shows the main roles of significant adult characters each story where this could be determined and groups them according to sex. Certain roles were much more likely to be attributed to adult males (Guide, tell stories, pass on wisdom, give gifts; Threaten, bully, torment; Fight, destroy) and others to adult females (Nurture, protect, provide the necessities of life; Try, work at, labour; Harp on, demand).

## Race

Issues of race were another significant theme amongst this sample of award-winning books. Unlike the Victorian novels that conveyed a consistent supremacist ideology based on race, these stories conveyed a consistently humanistic approach – that underneath people's superficial differences we are essentially the same. Through education and understanding come tolerance, in the humanist construction, and judging by this sample, reaching young people who are not yet 'set in their views' was a significant goal of book production in this decade.

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 10.

The preponderance of books directly addressing issues of race, particularly from the three colonial societies in the sample – the US, New Zealand and Australia – gives some hint of the renegotiation of relationships that was occurring in the 1970s. Included are numerous re-tellings of stories from indigenous cultures, stories I call ‘recovered histories’ that tell about the past from a non-dominant group’s perspective and fantasies that draw heavily on the folklore of indigenous people.

### Retelling indigenous stories

One only has to look at this list of titles: *The Funny Little Woman*<sup>108</sup> (Japanese), *The Quinkins*<sup>109</sup> (Aboriginal Australian), *The Rainbow Serpent*<sup>110</sup> (Aboriginal Australian), *Why Mosquitoes Buzz In People’s Ears*<sup>111</sup> (African), *A Story, A Story*<sup>112</sup> (African), *Arrow To The Sun*<sup>113</sup> (Pueblo Indian), *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses*<sup>114</sup> (Native American), *The House Of The People*<sup>115</sup> (Maori) to see how enthusiastically the indigenous story was taken up in this decade.

Re-tellings in general feature prominently in children’s literature compared with adult literature because of their presumed role in transmitting cultural values and common touchstones to a new generation<sup>116</sup>. But the passion for this genre in the 1970s may be

<sup>108</sup> Arlene Mosel, Blair Lent, and Lafcadio Hearn, *The Funny Little Woman* (Harmondsworth: Longman Young, 1973).

<sup>109</sup> Percy Trezise and Dick Roughsey, *The Quinkins* (Sydney: Collins, 1978).

<sup>110</sup> Dick Roughsey, *The Rainbow Serpent* (Sydney and London: Collins, 1975).

<sup>111</sup> Verna Aardema, Leo Dillon, and Diane Dillon, *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears : A West African Tale* (New York: Dial Press, 1975).

<sup>112</sup> Gail E Haley, *A Story a Story: An African Tale* (New York: Atheneum, 1970).

<sup>113</sup> Gerald McDermott, *Arrow to the Sun; a Pueblo Indian Tale*, 1st ed. (New York: Viking Press, 1974).

<sup>114</sup> Paul Goble, *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses* (Scarsdale, N.Y.: Bradbury Press, 1978).

<sup>115</sup> Ronald Leonard Bacon and R. H. G. Jahnke, *The House of the People* (Auckland [N.Z.]: Collins, 1977).

<sup>116</sup> John Stephens and Robyn McCallum, *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture: Traditional Story and Metanarratives in Children's Literature*, *Garland Reference Library of the Humanities Children's Literature and Culture ; V. 5* (New York: Garland, 1998).4.

summed up in this statement by Diane Dillon; joint illustrator, with her husband Leo, of

*Why Mosquitoes Buzz In People's Ears*<sup>117</sup> and *Ashanti to Zulu: African traditions*<sup>118</sup>:

*We are interracial [as a couple] and we decided early in our career that we wanted to represent all races and to show people that were rarely seen in children's books at that time.*<sup>119</sup>

As with the Dillons, the majority of these books “representing” indigenous peoples were created by writers and illustrators who were not of the cultures they were writing about, but were admiring outsiders. Paul Goble is a white Englishman who was adopted into the Sioux and Yakima tribes of Plains Native Americans<sup>120</sup>; Diane Dillon is a white American, Leo Dillon is the son of West Indian immigrants to the US<sup>121</sup>, Gail E. Haley appears to be a white American<sup>122</sup> and even the acclaimed Aboriginal Australian illustrator Dick Roughsey (Goobalathaldin) was not of the same people whose stories he and long-time collaborator Percy Trezise brought to life in their famous series of children's books<sup>123</sup>.

Furthermore, these stories are written as universal: 18 in the sample have no characters as such, a number have no names. Instead they are representations – the oldest tohunga,<sup>124</sup> the boy,<sup>125</sup> the people,<sup>126</sup> etc. And often these stories are written in the style of oral

<sup>117</sup> Aardema, Dillon, and Dillon, *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears : A West African Tale*.

<sup>118</sup> Margaret Musgrove, Leo Dillon, and Diane Dillon, *Ashanti to Zulu : African Traditions* (New York: Dial Press, 1976).

<sup>119</sup> Diane Dillon, *Diane Dillon's Interview Transcript* (2004-1996) [Webpage] (Scholastic Inc, 2003 [cited 21 May 2004]); available from <http://www2.scholastic.com/teachers/authorsandbooks/authorstudies/authorhome.jhtml?authorID=210&collateralID=11116&displayName=Interview+Transcript>.

<sup>120</sup> Contemporary Authors Online, *Paul Goble* [Online database] (Gale Group Literature Resource Centre, 22 May 2001 2001 [cited 21 May 2004]); available from <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/LitRC>;

<sup>121</sup> *Leo Dillon's Biography* [Web page] (Scholastic Inc, 1996-2004 [cited 21 May 2004]); available from <http://www2.scholastic.com/teachers/authorsandbooks/authorstudies/authorhome.jhtml?authorID=29&collateralID=5147&displayName=Biography>.

<sup>122</sup> XXXX SATA

<sup>123</sup> Bradford, *Reading Race: Aboriginality in Australian Children's Literature*. 154-5.

<sup>124</sup> Bacon and Jahnke, *The House of the People*.

<sup>125</sup> McDermott, *Arrow to the Sun; a Pueblo Indian Tale*.

<sup>126</sup> Roughsey, *The Rainbow Serpent*.

storytelling/history; putting each person who reads them out loud (as intended) in the position of teller of the story, immediately from the opening:

*One morning a mosquito saw an iguana drinking at a waterhole.*<sup>127</sup>

*Far off in Dreamtime there were only people, no animals or birds; no trees or bushes; no hills or mountains.*<sup>128</sup>

*Late one night, for no particular reason, something stirred in the black mud at the bottom of Berkeley's Creek.*<sup>129</sup>

Such 'universal' stories, re-told and consumed from outside their cultural frame, are positioned as crossing the barriers of cultural difference to tap into the 'essential truths' about what it is to be human<sup>130</sup>. And therein lie some problems. Stephens and McCallum outlined one in relation to what they called the "Western meta-ethic". A meta-ethic is a shared set of values and expectations that shape story, language and meaning within a particular culture. Narratives which take up the beliefs and stories of indigenous peoples within such post-colonial societies as North America, Australia and New Zealand, they wrote, "even when not extremely insensitive to the metanarratives of another culture" are highly likely to be distorted and misunderstood:

*Because metanarratives are invisible and self-evident and Western audiences assume their metaethic is naturally universal, it is very difficult to resist Westernizing a story at the stages both of production and reception.*<sup>131</sup>

Bradford similarly argued that narratives that purport to "speak for" a group of people, particularly when the speaker is from the dominant group in the relations of power, may

<sup>127</sup> Aardema, Dillon, and Dillon, *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears : A West African Tale*.

<sup>128</sup> Roughsey, *The Rainbow Serpent*.

<sup>129</sup> Jenny Wagner and Ron (illustrations) Brooks, *The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek* (Ringwood, Victoria: Puffin Books, 1990).

<sup>130</sup> Robyn McCallum, ed., *Ideologies of Identity in Adolescent Fiction: The Dialogic Construction of Subjectivity* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999). 5.

<sup>131</sup> Stephens and McCallum, *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture: Traditional Story and Metanarratives in Children's Literature*. 7.

actually perpetuate the power relationship their creators may be trying to contest. The implication is that those people spoken for are unable to speak for themselves.<sup>132</sup>

## Different voices

Several Newbery (US) winners in this sample gave American children a look at a less familiar side of their history. *The Slave Dancer* tells a story of the slave ships from the perspective of an unwilling accomplice, a white American boy who is kidnapped onto a slave ship to play his pipe for the slaves to exercise to. *Sounder* tells the story of a black boy whose poor, share-cropper father is sent to jail and then a chain-gang because he stole some pork to keep his family from starving.

*Sounder* deals directly with racial prejudice:

*Just past the edge of the porch three white men stood in the dim light. Their heavy boots rattled the porch floor, and the boy backed quickly into the cabin as they pushed their way in.*

*“There are two things I can smell a mile,” the first man said in a loud voice. “One’s a ham cookin’ and the other’s a thievin’ nigger.”<sup>133</sup>*

The narrative conveys the depth of hatred through the casual abuse of power by the white sheriff and his deputies:

*“Chain him up,” said the sheriff.*

*The boy thought they were telling him to chain up Sounder [the dog], but then he saw that one of the men had snapped a long chain on the handcuffs on his father’s wrists. As the men pushed his father into the back of the wagon his overalls caught on the end of the tail-gate bolt, and he tore a long hole in his overalls. ... The man holding the chain jerked it, and the boy’s father fell backward into the wagon. The*

<sup>132</sup> Bradford, *Reading Race: Aboriginality in Australian Children's Literature*. 109.

<sup>133</sup> William H Armstrong and James Barkley, *Sounder* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1973). 21.

*man swung the loose end of the chain, and it struck the boy's father across the face.*<sup>134</sup>

*Sounder* shares a characteristic with the re-tellings above in that the characters have no names; in this case they are simply 'the boy', 'his mother'/'the woman', 'the father'. The author, William H. Armstrong, says in his preface that he was told the story in his childhood by the man whose own childhood it describes, a travelling preacher who quite naturally adopted the cadence of the Bible stories he often told.

*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* tells the story of a black Southern US family struggling to keep hold of their small piece of land during the Depression, in the face of the racism and resentment of their wealthy white neighbour who will do anything to return his holdings to their former vastness. Similarly, *M. C. Higgins the Great's* family has formed an intense connection to the land they have lived on since M.C.'s great-great-grandmother Sarah fled slavery and made a home for herself and her baby there. M.C.'s family land is threatened by large-scale mining activities taking place further up the mountain. M.C. feels trapped in a disaster about to happen but also responsible to find a way to secure the safety of the land and his family's connection with it for the benefit of future generations. Land is power and identity in both of these books, and both black families are having to struggle against the odds to protect what they have.

*"It's good when you own," Banina said softly. "Least the roof is yours, no one can take it."*<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 24.



## Land and legitimacy

Land and legitimacy are issues similarly tied up with race in a number of books from Australia; books that have been identified as caught up in the so-called 'colonial discourse'.<sup>136</sup>

*Colonial discourse claims to tell the truth about the events of colonisation and about indigenous peoples subjected to colonial rule, and is based on what Peter Hulme has called 'the classic colonial triangle – the relationship between European, native and land'.*<sup>137</sup>

*Longtime Passing*<sup>138</sup> is a good example. This novel opens with an account of "the earliest coming of the white man" to the "secret country" of Longtime; the place, in the Blue Mountains, where author Hesba Brinsmead grew up. The story told of how first-generation Australian-born Archibald Bell "discovered" a way into the centre of the Blue Mountains by tracking an Aboriginal woman is shocking in its brutality.

True to a Victorian adventure romance, "young Archibald" had "learnt the lore of the hunter, to track his quarry as skilfully as the Aborigines themselves". And the style of a Victorian adventure is used to relate the events of his "discovery", in contrast with the first person account by the author in the dominant part of the book. Bell follows a naked young "lubra" (Aboriginal woman) he has spied on while she was "singing and swaying rhythmically" by the light of a night-time fire. The reader is told of how Bell "forced himself to follow" her to her secret home in the mountains, although the terrain was incredibly harsh, how he "struggled on, near to exhaustion", how he "hoisted himself by clutching at

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<sup>135</sup> Virginia Hamilton, *M. C. Higgins, the Great* (New York: Macmillan, 1974).120.

<sup>136</sup> Bradford, *Reading Race: Aboriginality in Australian Children's Literature*.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>138</sup> H. F. Brinsmead, *Longtime Passing* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1971).

the jutting roots” and how: “All that day and the next he followed her,” as “she led the way”.<sup>139</sup>

Once they cross the mountain shield, Archibald and the unnamed girl are captured, tied to trees and, amidst a night-time “ritual” involving “dancing and ... singing against a strange background of wailing women”, the girl is “crucified” by “the elders” of her own people, her blood becoming part of the land.<sup>140</sup>

“Did she know that Archibald would follow?” asks the text<sup>141</sup> in a way that could implicate this woman in her own victimisation. Outside the narrator’s speculation, however, is how a naked woman felt being followed by a man for days and nights across a tortuous landscape. What his intentions might have been on catching up to her are not raised in this children’s book either, and the account of her murder by her own people, attributed to solely settler sources, is never questioned. From the point of the nameless woman’s gruesome death, there is no reference to living Aboriginal people in the book. The implication is that the Daruk have ‘disappeared’; been supplanted; died out following the loss of their land. All that remains are the land and its spirits, named and understood by the Daruk people but older even than them (and somehow available to those white settlers who have ‘inherited’ their connection to the land.)

*The colonial past is treated as a chapter in the story of Australia now over and gone; the dispossession of the indigenous is no more than a sad footnote to the present, carrying no implications for [the characters] or for the implied readers of the novel about how they might act in the present and the future.*<sup>142</sup>

<sup>139</sup> H. F. Brinsmead, *Longtime Passing* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books in association with H. J. Ashton, Auckland and Sydney, 1973).3-4.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>142</sup> Bradford, *Reading Race: Aboriginality in Australian Children's Literature*. 7.

Sensitivity to the old spirits of the land lends a new kind of legitimacy to those white settlers who share it. This technique is also used in the novels of Patricia Wrightson. In *The Nargun and the Stars*, for example, orphaned white Australian boy Simon is offered a home with his mother's cousins on a remote mountain sheep station, Wongadilla. Their connection to the land is spoken of before Simon enters the story:

*Charlie Waters and his sister Edie live in the white house. They are old now, but they were children there.*<sup>143</sup>

Simon encounters the land spirits, the Potkoorok and the Turongs, soon after arriving on the station. Here he's discussing them with Charlie (my emphasis):

*'Edie and I ... didn't know if you'd see them; not many people do.'*

*'Do other places have them? Or is it only Wongadilla?'*

*'I don't know about that, boy – I never heard of any others. Edie and I used to talk sometimes: whatever there was before white men came, like elves and spirits and that, they must live somewhere when you come to think about it. We only know the Wongadilla ones, because they've always been here and we happened to come across them when we were kids. ...'*

*'...you couldn't have Wongadilla without them. I reckon they're part of it – like the gully.'*

*'You're all right, then. That's about what Edie and I always reckoned.'*

Charlie and Edie have been legitimised on the land by time, while both they and Simon have "seen" the land's spirits (and have thus, somehow, been 'accepted' by them) and have taken on the role of protecting them from the incursions of the modern world. Aboriginal people and culture are mentioned only in the past tense in this book; and it is implied that those with knowledge of their 'old ways' are their inheritors now that they've gone. (See also Religion)

## Memorials as tools of colonization

This strategy of memorialisation – legitimating current power structures through paying respects to a people past and ‘inheriting’ (or appropriating) their culture – is common in children’s literature and serves to absolve the (white) people of the present from dealing with any uncomfortable issues<sup>144</sup> such as the continuing life and rights of indigenous people.

As New Zealand historian Peter Gibbons wrote, the presentation of colonization as something of the past, as if the society has since moved on to a new phase of uncontested national identity, is itself a tool of colonization.<sup>145</sup>

In *Family at the Lookout*, white Australian boy Mark has just come with his family to live in an enormous house perched in the midst of the Blue Mountains. The house has been inherited from a reclusive uncle by Mark’s father; an inheritance not wholly accepted by everyone in the small community they enter. The family’s ‘belonging’ in their new home is cemented once they have fought a bushfire alongside their neighbours. The Aboriginal people who must once have lived on this land are mentioned only once in the entire novel, when Mark wonders idly where to display his genuine ‘Aboriginal flints’ in his new bedroom.

*Take the Long Path* is a New Zealand fantasy which, although written by a Pakeha, draws on Maori cultural concepts in its telling. The intention of the author to promote respect for Maori culture (particularly its concern for the environment) and to oppose racism is made apparent through her representation of David Regan’s racist (step)father Bob who, according to David, has “really got it in for Maoris”<sup>146</sup> and who would not be patient with

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<sup>143</sup> Patricia Wrightson, *The Nargun and the Stars* (London: Hutchinson, 1973). 13.

<sup>144</sup> Holt, Jill. Personal communication. June 2004.

<sup>145</sup> Peter Gibbons, "Cultural Colonization and National Identity," *New Zealand Journal of History* 36, no. 1 (2002). 14.

<sup>146</sup> De Hamel and Floyd, *Take the Long Path*. 39.

David's interest in the penguins nesting on their farm. Bob Regan is portrayed in a totally unsympathetic way,

*As he approached he could hear his father's angry voice swearing at the dogs.<sup>147</sup>*

*Bob grunted and filled his mouth untidily with salad. When he had finished and gone out, David stayed behind to give his mother a hand with the dishes.<sup>148</sup>*

*'David!' roared Bob from the race gate, his voice gritty with dust and abuse.<sup>149</sup>*

and personifies all the racist attitudes the author positions the reader to reject:

*Through the sound of water running off the roof into the tanks and the splash of overflowing gutters, he could hear his father's voice, the familiar rise and fall, relating the calamities of the day and the inefficiency of all Maoris – indeed of everyone and everything except himself.<sup>150</sup>*

However, the Maori culture de Hamel is trying so hard to engender respect for she also relegates to the past by memorialising. As here, for example:

*... Henare was broad and muscular, like most Maoris. He reminded David of the picture at school of Tarewai the warrior, with a feather cloak strung across his giant shoulders.<sup>151</sup>*

And here:

*David's skin was exceptionally fair and freckled, like his mother's, though his eyes were as brown as Hemi's. He flopped down beside Hemi.*

*'Actually, I was thinking about the tribe that used to live here, the Kati Mamoe.' 'Hey!' exclaimed Hemi. 'You've got that right. My Karani told us kids about this place. I remember now. Right here there used to be fishing huts. The village was along there by the creek. There's some tapu ground there too, because of burial places.'*

*'Does your Karani remember the Kati Mamoe village?'*

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 26.

*'Don't be daft. How old do you think she is? It's just she knows the stories. And the museum people dug around and found remains which prove the stories are true.'*

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Curiously, it is my understanding that if Hemi's grandmother knows all those stories then they are of her tribe, and Hemi's, and those stories would still have relevance to him. Yet in this narrative, Hemi is simply a 'generic' Maori able to inject some 'authentic' information but somehow distanced from a legitimate claim to consideration in the present.

Not only is it interesting that the tribe's oral history requires confirmation from a Pakeha institution in order to be 'true', but David, half-Maori by inheritance but Pakeha by upbringing, is already portrayed by this stage as some kind of expert even as he takes his first steps into a culture Hemi has lived in all his life. The passage continues, thus:

*David nodded. 'Did you get a chance to ask her more about that word?' he asked.*

*'What word?'*

*'You know. About Oha, and whether the promises were always kept, and what happens if they weren't.'*

*'Ah gee, Oha. Yes I did. And I got the lot,' sighed Hemi. 'She goes on for hours once she's got started.'*

Despite Hemi having gleaned a fantastic story from his grandmother, the reader is positioned to believe that had forgotten all about it; and somehow needed David's questions to understand its significance.

*Now at last Hemi was listening properly. His eyes lit up.<sup>153</sup>*

*Take the Long Path* does introduce some land issues into the present of the narrative, however these are neatly turned aside from being any threat. They relate to "a few acres of land" Bob Regan bought "in good faith" as extra to his 'genuine' holding. By David's mother's account, these acres had to be given back to "the Maoris" when their claim it was

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 72.

tribal land stacked up; without compensation because the Maori “refused to pay”.<sup>154</sup> The main concern for Bob Regan in the story is portrayed as his loss of face over the affair.

Not only is this situation of dubious accuracy, but it tends to suggest that Pakeha ownership of the rest of the farm’s acreage is natural and legitimate, and safely distant from any of the uncomfortable history surrounding the ‘extra’ land.

At the close of this story, David is aware of his ancestry, has found a whalebone patu (weapon) that rightly belonged to his father’s family and is reconciled with his non-Maori mother and step-father. His guide to his Maori heritage, the ghost of his grandfather, has ‘taken the long path’ to the resting place of the spirits and there is no indication that David will be part of any Maori life. He knows about the past and that apparently settles everything.

### **Do mention the war**

The approach to race in books from the UK in this sample was noticeably different. Here the focus was on learning the lessons of the past – particularly in relation to the Second World War.

In *The Machine Gunners*, for example, German airman Rudi represents the human side of ‘the enemy’ to the children of the story. In the midst of all their hatred for their enemy, ‘the Germans’, in general, the children find themselves drawn to Rudi, ‘this German’, in particular.

However, not only does Rudi not conform to the children’s ideas about what a Nazi is supposed to look like, but he is presented as “the ideal type of a non-German”.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>155</sup> Emer O’Sullivan, “Germany and the Germans as Depicted in British Children’s Literature from 1870 to the Present,” in *Aspects and Issues in the History of Children’s Literature*, ed. Maria Nikolajeva (Westport,

*To the same degree to which "the Germans" are dehumanized in the imaginations of the English in the book, the humane German is de-Germanized.*<sup>156</sup>

The function of Rudi in the book, wrote Emer O'Sullivan, is to remind modern-day readers that there are "nice Germans" too.

*The time setting is that of the Second World War, the logic of the children's actions tallies with that period, but the exclusively positive German owes everything to the time in which the book was written, the 1970s.*<sup>157</sup>

## Religion

In the 1970s novels, child readers were not generally positioned to acknowledge the 'rightness' of a particular religion. However in a different guise religion was still important – a humanistic 'essential spirituality' replacing the restrictions of organised religion.

This is exemplified in *Bridge to Terabithia*, where Jess' friend Leslie, from a non-church-going family, comments after her visit to Jess' family's church:

*'That whole Jesus thing is really interesting, isn't it?'*

*'What d'you mean?'*

*'All those people wanting to kill him when he hadn't done anything to hurt them.'*

*She hesitated. 'It's really kind of a beautiful story like Abraham Lincoln or Socrates – or Aslan.'*

*'It aint beautiful,' May Belle broke in, 'It's scary. Nailing holes right through somebody's hand.'*

*'May Belle's right.' Jess reached down into the deepest pit of his mind. 'It's because we're all vile sinners God made Jesus die.'*

*'Do you think that's true?'*

*He was shocked. 'It's in the Bible, Leslie.'*

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Connecticut: Greenwood Press under the auspices of the International Research Society for Children's Literature, 1995). 72.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 72.



*She looked at him as if she were going to argue, then seemed to change her mind. 'It's crazy, isn't it?' She shook her head. 'You have to believe it, but you hate it. I don't have to believe it, and I think it's beautiful.'*<sup>158</sup>

Later, Jess's alienation from his father is resolved after Leslie's death via the medium of faith. Jess has been told that people go to hell when they die if they don't believe in the Bible. He is worried because his friend Leslie had been "more at home with magic than religion"<sup>159</sup>.

*Finally his father said, 'Hell, ain't it?' It was the kind of thing Jess could bear his father saying to another man. He found it strangely comforting, and it made him bold.*

*'Do you believe people go to hell, really go to hell, I mean?'*

*'You ain't worrying about Leslie Burke?'*

*It did seem peculiar, but still – 'Well, May Belle said ...'*

*'May Belle? May Belle ain't God.'*

*'Yeah, but how do you know what God does?'*

*'Lora, boy, don't be a fool! God ain't gonna send any little girls to hell.'*

*He had never in his life thought of Leslie Burke as a little girl, but still God was sure to. She wouldn't have been eleven until November.*<sup>160</sup>

### Laying claim through spiritual connection

Another prominent theme, as discussed under Race above, is that of laying claim to a place through spiritual connection. This strategy, examples of which are found from all of the three "post-colonial" societies in this study, is exemplified in *Longtime Passing*. Here the reader is told, through elderly local character, Abel O'Leary, that the land they have come to doesn't accept 'just anyone':

<sup>158</sup> Paterson, *Bridge to Terabithia*. 95.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

*‘I took up this nice little pocket of land, see. Ah, there’s plenty of folk have tried to make a go of it, at Longtime. They surveyed it as soldiers’ settlements. ‘Veterans’ they were, see. Their country owed ‘em something. So they gave ‘em Longtime. Or tried to. But the mountains didn’t like ‘em. The mountains drove ‘em out. ... This country ... it’s right for some people and wrong for others. If it don’t like you, it breaks yer spirit. The soldiers could fight wars, by all accounts. But they couldn’t fight the forest. They just sort o’ drifted away. And not a trace did they leave.’<sup>161</sup>*

By implication, those who stay are somehow accepted by “the land” on a spiritual level and legitimated in holding it. Here the writer’s father discovers the ‘spiritual heart’ of the mountain country:

*“I think,” he told us later, “that it was some very, very ancient and sacred place. Perhaps it was the exact heart of the mountains, of the Daruk territory. It was so old that the Dreamtime would have swallowed up its meaning. Somehow I knew that the Daruks believed their gods had sprung from this ground, and that to it the spirits of their tribesmen would return. And I had half a mind to believe that anyone who invaded that place would inherit an old curse. Perhaps the same curse as that of the Garden of Eden. He who destroys others and other things ... destroys himself.”<sup>162</sup>*

Later, the writer herself finds this place and is ‘accepted’.

*The old gods closed their eyes again. The old, secret things settled back into the soil. They slept sound once more.*<sup>163</sup>

And at the close she suggests this connection remains even when she leaves the land herself:

*Mother cried when I went off. I think she remembered what old Abel O’Leary had said, that day, years ago, when Boo was newly born. ‘Kids are no good to yer. Just when they’re worth feedin’, they up and leave home. And then what have you got, after all?...*

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<sup>161</sup> Brinsmead, *Longtime Passing*. 74-5.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 165-6.

*But she had forgotten the roots. Children, and older folk too, when they planted the freshly turned earth, somehow planted themselves; so that always and for ever, wherever they went, when a season had passed, and the sap ran down again ... the roots would draw them back.*

*This was Longtime.*<sup>164</sup>

In the novels from England, a spiritual sense of belonging in a place is also derived from a sense of the past, although the issue of who inherits this is somewhat less fraught. *The Exeter Blitz*, *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler*, *The Ghost of Thomas Kempe*, and *Thunder and Lightnings* all relate knowledge of the past to belonging in the present. (see Land)

Although the spiritual element is more often raised in a secular context in this collection of texts, a non-specific sort of Christian tradition seems to be in the background for many of the characters.

## Land

As discussed above, appeals to indigenous knowledge and history, and sensitivity to the spirits that remain in a land after the indigenous people have 'disappeared', have been used to legitimate land ownership by "the non-indigenous European land appropriator"<sup>165</sup>. One of the key elements of this legitimization is that the newcomers take up the mantle of 'guardian'; somehow valuing the land in a way that their less sensitive countrymen don't and therefore seeking to conserve it.

In *The Nargun and the Stars*, Simon and his guardians try to protect Wangerra from the intrusion of the bulldozers and the road they are there to build. In *Family at the Lookout*, they

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>165</sup> Monica Jarman, "Postcolonialism and Language Use in Australian Children's Literature: A Case Study of the Children of Mirrabooka," in *Something to Crow About: New Perspectives in Literature for Young People*, ed. Susan Clancy and David Gilbey (Wagga Wagga: Centre for Information Studies, Charles Sturt University and ACLAR, 1999). 52.

see themselves as saving not just their own property from the bushfire but the Blue Mountains, and particularly the native bird-life, themselves. In *Take the Long Path*, Pakeha-raised David has somehow 'inherited' a Maori instinct to protect the penguins nesting on the land where he lives, and in *The Ice is Coming*, "Inlander" George Morrow plays his part in saving the land from the ancient threat of The Ice.

## Environmental concerns

Caring for the environment was a more general concern in this sample.

*Julie of the Wolves*<sup>166</sup> is a novel which concerns itself with the devastation of Alaska by "the modern world", particularly in relation to the Arctic wolf. Young Julie/Miyax manages to survive without human company out on the ice by using her indigenous knowledge to become part of a wolf-pack. She takes advantage of the wolves' extraordinary level of adaptation to this harsh environment as well as learning to treasure her culture at a time when the old ways are being lost.

In *M. C. Higgins the Great*, the threat posed to his family's lives and land by mining fuels the story. From his favourite perch on a 40 ft. pole M.C watches the mountain to which his great-grandmother fled to escape slavery many years before. He is pre-occupied with the coal mining that started two years before, higher up on the mountain, using bull-dozer his father calls 'heathen destroyers'. M.C.'s dreams predict the slippage of an enormous spoil (slag) heap directly onto his family's home.

*...a numbing cold rose around his ankles. It climbed to his knees and then his neck. His leg muscles jumped, but he could not run. He was rooted to the*

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<sup>166</sup> Jean Craighead George, *Julie of the Wolves* (Harmondsworth: Puffin Books, 1976).

*mountainside as the sour and bitter mud of the spoil oozed into his mouth and nostrils.*<sup>167</sup>

At first he believes the solution is to leave the mountain, but he comes to realise through contact with the ghost of his escaped-slave great-grandmother, the importance of owning land and how connected his family is to this place.

Another novel pushing strong environmental values to the young reader is *Watership Down*. In this story the nature is 'good' while Man's propensity to dispense with the natural order is responsible for everything 'bad'. This is conveyed through direct (and authoritative) address to the reader by the narrator as here,

*... how the rabbits judged the passing of the time is something that civilized human beings have lost the power to feel. Creatures that have neither clocks nor books are alive to all manner of knowledge about time and the weather; and about direction too...*<sup>168</sup>

and here:

*Few places are far from human noise — cars, buses, motor-cycles, tractors, lorries. The sound of a housing estate in the morning is audible a long way off. ... During the last 50 years the silence of much of the country has been destroyed.*<sup>169</sup>

And through the eyes of the rabbits as here,

*Hazel looked down at the road in astonishment. For a moment he thought that he was looking into another river ... Then he saw the gravel embedded in the tar and watched a spider running over the surface.*  
*'But that's not natural,' he said, sniffing the strange, strong smells of tar and oil. ... Blackberry ..was opening and shutting his mouth ... much as a cat does when something disgusts it.*  
*'You say they're not dangerous, Bigwig,' he said quietly. But I think they must be for all that.'*

<sup>167</sup> Hamilton, M. C. *Higgins, the Great*. 66.

<sup>168</sup> Richard Adams, *Watership Down*, Second ed. (London: Rex Collings Ltd, 1973). 37.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

*In the middle of the road was a flattened, bloody mass of brown prickles and white fur, with small black feet and snout crushed around the edges. The flies crawled upon it and here and there the sharp points of gravel pressed up through the flesh.*<sup>170</sup>

and here:

*'...There's terrible evil in the world.'*

*It comes from men (said Holly). All other elil do what they have to do and Frith moves them as he moves us. They live on the earth and they need food. Men will never rest till they've spoiled the earth and destroyed the animals...*<sup>171</sup>

This novel was not written specifically for children, although the subsequent film adaptation and abridged editions were. Even so, it won a children's literature award and thus its values were thought 'suitable' for the youth of the time.

## Coming of Age

Young adult literature, with its particular focus on "personal maturation"<sup>172</sup> or 'coming of age' emerged in the 1970s and a number of examples can be found in the novels in this sample.

Ivan Southall's novels are particularly interesting as they chart the development of an individual's sense of self, almost from the inside, at the time of some kind of 'watershed' event. Southall was a pilot in World War 2 and made clear in his writing that he was greatly influenced by the experience of war. His novels celebrate the individual as an antidote to the tyranny that plunged the world into that conflict.

In *Josh*, 14 year old Josh Plowman realises he doesn't need to fit his Aunt Clara's idea of "the Plowman way" in order to live by that name. When the Plowman cousins said, "Until

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 130.

you see Aunt Clara you haven't lived", they really meant, "You're nothing, Josh; until you do you're not alive." Thus Josh begs his reluctant mother to allow him to visit Aunt Clara, out at Ryan Creek on the Plowman land. When he gets there, Josh discovers he really can't fit in and the pressure of family and community expectation starts to drag him down. Josh is entirely unwrapped, both physically and metaphorically, at Ryan's creek. His most secret self, his poem book, is invaded and examined by Aunt Clara and ultimately destroyed in a misunderstanding with some local youngsters. Josh's first encounter with the family homestead shows the reader his feelings; contrasting images of homeliness with his sense that he doesn't belong:

*Inside. Smells of flowers and wood smoke and old furniture. . . .  
As if he had stepped into a museum after hours, as if he should not have been there,  
as if someone had their centuries topsy turvy. Great-grandfather Plowman, whiskers  
and side-burns, watch-chain and all, darkly looking down from the wall. Darkly  
and disapprovingly as if someone had waved a smell under his nose.*<sup>173</sup>

The point of view in this novel is very complex, heightening the effect of both Josh's isolation and his turmoil. It shifts from a third person narration rather reminiscent of a film or a book of old photographs, as here: "Josh sitting on a tombstone in the Plowman plot of earth,"<sup>174</sup> to one that voices not only Josh's interpretations, as here: "Josh thought the idea was mad,"<sup>175</sup> but his very thoughts as if they are speech, addressed to others but not spoken aloud: "Gosh, Aunt Clara, this living on two fronts is tearing me to tatters"<sup>176</sup>.

In this way a great deal of distance is built in to the text, as if distance is in fact the reality between people:

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<sup>172</sup> McCallum, ed., *Ideologies of Identity in Adolescent Fiction: The Dialogic Construction of Subjectivity*. 7.

<sup>173</sup> Southall, *Josh*. 11.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

*Josh looking back to the bridge put there by Great-grandfather in 1882, looking back again and again, the least he could do while they stood to watch him go. Looking back and waving, picking different faces while faces could be seen, Aunt Clara with a tablecloth flapping it up and down as if saying here I am, here I am, Josh, come back, change your mind. Josh waving each time until she was gone from view.*<sup>177</sup>

But in Southall's books distance is freedom; it is life affirming and should be embraced.

When Josh breaks free and takes to the road, we have the first hopeful passage in the book – its last:

*Blue sky and yellow stubble, golden yellow plain, singing in the sun, kicking up his heels; brother, it can even rain.  
Go away, crows. Find yourselves a body that's had its day. I'm walking mine to Melbourne town and living every mile.*<sup>178</sup>

### Protection becomes a prison

In *The Machine gunners*<sup>179</sup>, the position of children in family and society is examined in the context of northern England during the Blitz. The child protagonists feel helpless in the face of all the destruction, danger and loss, and particularly isolated as their child status makes them irrelevant to the all-encompassing struggle the rest of society is engaged in – the war. After Chas discovers a still-working machine gun on a shot-down German plane the children leap at the opportunity it presents to do something; to fight the enemy themselves.

That Chas feels irrelevant in the activities of his society is evident from the beginning of the book, where his parents let him sleep despite being exhausted and desperately busy themselves, however he does know how to use this position to advantage:

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 179.



*Chas... ate silently, listening to his parents. If he shut up, they soon forgot he was there. You heard much more interesting things if you didn't butt in.*<sup>180</sup>

Fourteen year old Chas' status as child is eventually challenged by his father, who asks Chas to join him in checking on 'Nana and Granda' after a night of heavy bombing in their area:

*"Don't take the bairn, Jack," said his mother, fingering her apron.  
 "He's going," said his father grimly. "He's fourteen now, and there might be errands to run, and clearing up to do." ...  
 They walked side by side down the road. Chas felt proud that his father needed him.  
 It was a solemn occasion, a family occasion, an adult occasion. But his hands wouldn't stop shaking.*<sup>181</sup>

But dealing with what comes to you, is not enough for Chas. He and his friends want to take a more active role in the war and they don't want any of the grownups forcing them back onto the sidelines. Here Chas does not want to tell his father about their stolen machine gun and the fortress emplacement they have built to house it:

*He couldn't even pretend his father was some kind of Gestapo swine, like the police sergeant, or the Head flexing his cane. His father understood how kids really felt about things; more than most. Ever since he was little, Dad had meant safety: large, solid, bristly-faced, smelling of tobacco. ...  
 But could any grownup keep you safe now? They couldn't stop the German bombers. They hadn't saved Poland, or Norway or France. Or the battleship the German submarine torpedoed in Scapa Flow itself.  
 Their own air-raid shelter at home — it wasn't as safe as the Fortress. It was only covered with a foot of soil. Couldn't Dad have done better than that?  
 He looked at his father, and saw a weary, helpless middle-aged man. Dad wasn't any kind of God any more. Chas screwed himself up to lie.*<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Robert Westall, *The Machine Gunners* (Harmondsworth: Puffin, 1975).

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

It is not only Chas who comes to realise the fallibility of adults in this novel.

When Ben Nicholl's home is bombed out he is the only survivor:

*"We must tell some grownup," said Carrot-juice. "They all think he's dead. It'll be in the records at the Town Hall and things. People will be worrying."*

*"Who?" asked Clogger. "Who is there who cares?" There was silence. Carrot-juice set his face stubbornly.*

*"Grownups know what's best!"*

*"They dae what's best for grownups," said Clogger. "They'll tidy him awa' into a Home and forget about him, like they did wi' me when Ma died. They gie ye porridge wi'out sugar and belt ye if ye leave your shoes lying about."<sup>183</sup>*

The children decide that Nicky should take up residence in the fort and Clogger volunteers to join him:

*"He'd better not live here alone," said Clogger. "Ah'll come and live wi' him."*

*"But what will your auntie say?"*

*"Ah'll mek her think Ah've gone home tey Glasgow."*

*"But she'll be worried sick!"*

*"Not her. ... She wasn't sae keen tey have me in the first place, and we're sleeping three in a bed. She'll miss the money ma dad sends, that's all."*

*"But doesn't she ... love you?" Chas blushed as he said it.*

*"Love me? You kids don't know you're born. All she and ma uncle love is the beer and fags..."<sup>184</sup>*

At the close of the novel, when the adults are moving to re-assert the 'proper' authority over the children and put the events of the story into "more comfortable shapes", the following passage tells the reader things will not be the same:

*"I'll not say much for my lad," said Mr. McGill slowly, "except he thought he was fighting the Germans."*

*"Oh, hush," said Mrs. McGill. "Chassy could have killed somebody."*

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 91.

*"I'm not talking about his sense, missus. I'm talking about his guts."*

*"Aye," said Cem Senior, looking hard at Mr Parton. "That's one thing the kids didn't lack. Guts." And he spat on the ground.<sup>185</sup>*

In *Thunder and Lightnings* coming of age means attaining an understanding about the world. Here, Andrew has just witnessed his friend Victor being beaten by his mother and is talking about it with his own mum:

*'It wasn't fair.'*

*'Nothing's fair,' said Mum. 'There's no such thing as fairness. It's a word made up to keep children quiet. When you discover it's a fraud then you're starting to grow up. The difference between you and Victor is that you're still finding out and he knows perfectly well already. He doesn't even think it worth mentioning. I bet you've never heard him say, "It's not fair," have you?'*

*I suppose not,' said Andrew. 'But she shouldn't have hit him. I don't care whether he expects it or not, that doesn't make it right.'*

*'What price a clean house?' said Mum.*

*I don't believe that's got anything to do with it,' said Andrew. 'Some people are just nasty.'<sup>186</sup>*

That Andrew is reaching that point himself is indicated by his asserting his own interpretation in the face of his mother's opinion.

*Bridge to Terabithia* is another coming-of-age novel. In this case, Jess grows up when he accepts that his friendship with Leslie may have opened his mind, but despite her death he has not been reduced, he still has something to offer the world:

*It was Leslie who had taken him from the cow pasture into Terabithia and turned him into a king. He had thought that was it. Wasn't a king the best you could be? Now it occurred to him that perhaps Terabithia was like a castle where you came to be knighted. After you stayed for a while and grew strong you had to move on. For hadn't Leslie, even in Terabithia, tried to push back the walls of his mind and*

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 184-5.

<sup>186</sup> Mark and Russell, *Thunder and Lightnings*. 161.

*make him see beyond to the shining world – huge and terrible and beautiful and very fragile? (Handle with care – everything – even the predators.)*  
*Now it was time for him to move out. She wasn't there, so he must go for both of them. It was up to him to pay back to the world in beauty and caring what Leslie had loaned him in vision and strength.*<sup>187</sup>

## Subordinate subjects

Finding one's own agency may have been a deliberate theme in many of these novels yet in some ways the authors failed to trust their readers to do the same. As discussed earlier, children's literature is essentially a transaction between adult society and child readers. Part of this power relationship is encoded in the positioning of reader by text.

The vast majority of these novels are written in the third person, a point of view which in varying degrees works to subjugate the reader to the authority of the narrator. Of the 61 novels examined, 54 use a third person perspective, only 14 use first-person at some point and even fewer used first-person exclusively.<sup>188</sup> The narrator varied in his/her/its distance from the characters concerned – from the unearthly 'Voice of God' style or 'hieratic voice' in many of the re-told stories, to those accounts closely focalised through one participant. The more distant the implied narrator, the more difficult it is for the reader to contest the reading they are positioned to make.

## War

War is not a surprising theme to emerge in the '70s, given that many of the writers in this decade were children during World War 2 and would also have experienced some effects of

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<sup>187</sup> Paterson, *Bridge to Terabithia*. 140-1.

<sup>188</sup> A number were combined

the subsequent and ongoing conflicts that continued into that decade itself. As already discussed, a major pre-occupation in discussions of war was to teach young readers the 'lessons of the past' – that intolerance and prejudice, accepting tyranny and following without question can have appalling consequences. Thus young Josh<sup>189</sup> breaks free of community pressure and has the courage to find his own path, Rudi<sup>190</sup> is portrayed as a non-threatening German in the midst of English hatred for their enemy country and Colin<sup>191</sup> overcomes prejudice to make a good friend.

But it is particularly in *Longtime Passing*, that tyranny of obedience is shown up in its most glaring cruelty in this story about Uncle Sean who came back from the shell-fire of Flanders a cynical and disillusioned man.

*Sean stood in the burned ruins of a French farmhouse. Around him, other cottages – the village, in fact – lay charred and smouldering. An old woman who had lived in the farmhouse clung to the young soldier, weeping bitterly. He had to push her away. Brutally. But what else could he do? His unit was moving on. They must march and leave the old woman, the few survivors, the very old, the very young.*  
*"Truelance! Fall in! March!"<sup>192</sup>*

When they next halted for a rest, Sean met a "straw man", a soldier from Russia who was lost, alone and starving and was relying on straw packed inside his ragged uniform to keep him warm. Sean shared his bread with him, cried with him over photos of their families and tried to keep him warm.

*The huge gaunt Russian, the Straw Man, kissed Sean on both cheeks and repeated the one word of English that he had learnt: "Brother."*  
*"Truelance!" came the imperious command. "Fall in! March!"*

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<sup>189</sup> Southall, *Josh*.

<sup>190</sup> Westall, *The Machine Gunners*.

<sup>191</sup> Rees, *The Exeter Blitz*.

<sup>192</sup> Brinsmead, *Longtime Passing*.

*‘But this chap – “said Sean. “He won’t last out the night.” ... “Truelance! You’ll report tomorrow, for discipline! March!”*

*Sean marched. Rebellion seethed within him. Rebellion kept him warm. But he marched with his company. Orders were orders.*

*In the morning they passed that way again. The Straw Man was still there. Dead. Frozen where he sat. Starved and frozen. The life in that gaunt frame had flickered out like a candle in the darkness.*

*Somehow, for the rest of Sean’s life, the taste of salt tears and bitter bread never went out of his mouth.”*<sup>193</sup>

## Humanism

An ‘umbrella ideology’ in this sample of books was humanism, the notion that every individual has his or her own unique ‘selfhood’ or subjectivity and that this is an essential part of being human we all share beneath our myriad variations.

*...humanism’s two most important and constant characteristics are first, that it focuses on human beings and starts from human experience ...; and second, that individual human beings have a value themselves, grounded in the power to communicate, and in the power to observe themselves, to speculate, imagine and reason. These powers enable freedom of choice and will, innovation, and the possibility of improving the self and the human lot. Two things necessary for this are individual freedom and cultivation of a person’s humanness.*<sup>194</sup>

There are two broad manifestations of humanist ideology in this collection. The first is in ‘coming of age’ tales and the foundations for these are described in the passage quoted above: understanding one’s own essential self, taking the power to speculate and imagine outside the socio-cultural ‘square’, and making free choices. The humanist assumption is that

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 148-9.

<sup>194</sup> Stephens and McCallum, *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture: Traditional Story and Metanarratives in Children’s Literature*, 19.

such ‘actualised’ individuals will be tolerant and respectful of others, realise their own potential and have the courage to resist oppression.

The second manifestation is in those texts that focus on or present previously invisible characters or perspectives – such as those of women, blacks, indigenous people, economic and regional sub-cultures. These stories– from *The Rainbow Serpent* to *Sunder*, from *Arrow to the Sun* to *The Ice is Coming* – are windows onto the subjectivity of people with cultures and perspectives other than those that traditionally dominated. The humanist assumption is that if we understand other people we will seek, and likely find, a way to live with them in peace.

However, humanism can unwittingly lead to the institutionalisation of inequitable relations of domination. It is an ideology that tends to trivialise real differences between peoples and once differences are ‘unimportant’, then they can safely be disregarded.

Furthermore:

*...humanist ideology is often rightly accused of falsely or naively constructing a unified subject as a romantic unitary self capable of action outside ideological systems, and such a notion of the self pervades children’s literature*<sup>195</sup>.

The development of this agent; this self, is of such primacy in the humanistic framework, that any culture or political system perceived as restricting the individual may be regarded as less advanced in the moral progress of the human race.

On the other hand, humanism is a hopeful ideology, allowing room, as it does, for young people to make choices and changes, and not be entirely products of their social and linguistic structures, “incapable of agency”<sup>196</sup>.

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 20-21.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 21.

### Part 3: Conclusion

The 61 award-winning children's books investigated here are complex cultural products created for different purposes in different countries but all recommended by adults to young readers in New Zealand. Through themes of family, friendship, gender, race, religion, land and conservation, coming of age and war; all interacting and overlapping under a humanist umbrella; texts in this sample conveyed intentional and unintentional ideologies that reflect the pre-occupations of their time.

So what were these preoccupations? If we create a composite 'child' from them, we will have a male youth, of Anglo 'stock', who is imaginative, creative and/or sensitive and thus in touch with what could be termed his 'feminine' side. This youth could come from any of a variety of families providing support and guidance and/or conflict and misunderstanding. His friendships will cut across traditional boundaries of sex, culture, race, religion or class and he will most likely have to fight prejudice in others in order to maintain these friendships.

If he lives in one of the post-colonial societies, he will value and understand the natural environment and seek to protect it. This understanding of the environment will have a spiritual dimension, which will indicate his legitimacy as an inheritor of the land. Our colonial boy will be interested in and respectful of the indigenous people of the place who have now, unfortunately, disappeared. He will think for himself, dislike conformity and not need to go to church in order to be spiritual.

If he is the creation of a British author, our lad will have a sense of history – of the people who have gone before in his place. He will be by background Christian but (with one



notable exception in *Tulku*) is unlikely to be concerned with matters spiritual. He may well attend church but this is just part of the fabric of life.

The '70s child will come of age when he starts to know himself, accept and understand others and have the courage of his own convictions. He was deliberately inculcated with humanistic values which were to promote his self-development and his tolerance of others, and generally offered hope that his generation would learn from the past and make the world a better place.

This composite 'child', however, comes with a number of cautions attached. A number of the texts did not have human characters, or even characters, as such, at all. Where it was not possible to locate or to ascertain the characteristics of a character, they were not accounted for in this analysis. Furthermore, the assignment of "main" or "major" character status by the researcher was necessarily a subjective process and thus open to contest. Further research, perhaps focusing specifically on novels, might be able to flesh-out this '70s construction with more confidence.

*...ideology is an inevitable, untameable and largely uncontrollable factor in the transaction between books and children, and that ..is so because of the multiplicity and diversity of both 'book' and 'child' and of the social world in which each of these seductive abstractions takes a plenitude of individual forms. Our priority in the world of children's books should not be to promote ideology but to understand it, and find ways of helping others to understand it, including the children themselves.<sup>197</sup>*

In general, the combination of content analysis and discourse analysis in this research was successful in locating the ideologies of individual books along with trends in the sample as a whole. The strength of the content coding was its consistency across the texts, allowing

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<sup>197</sup> Hollindale, "Ideology and the Children's Book." 10.

comparisons and generalisations to be made. The strength of the discourse analysis was the level of meaning it allowed the researcher to access in an individual text.

Examining discourse from two perspectives – both top-down and bottom-up – was successful in producing a greater understanding not only of the messages authors intended to convey in their books but also those operating at an unconscious level. What this analysis found was that challenges to traditional ‘relations of domination’ that were deliberately written into these texts were often undermined by less deliberate processes, operating more powerfully for being less apparent. For example, many writers from dominant cultural groups were congratulated in this decade for creating texts that supposedly brought the voices and values of indigenous peoples to the fore. As we have seen, however, these texts tended to reassure the contemporary reader that indigenous-flavoured westernisation was a future acceptable to everybody. Another example of such ideological inconsistency is the fact that many of the very texts that actively promoted values of individual agency and independence of thought had distant and authoritative narrators, which generally placed the child reader in a subjugated positions. Faced with the ‘voice of god’, the reader had little choice in his or her interpretations of the characters or situations presented.

At this point I have to acknowledge that this research is located within a humanist meta-ethic. Implicit in this research are certain assumptions:

- that stories are windows to other people’s subjectivities,
- that stories for children are important because they can influence the development of individual subjectivities, and
- that the development of an individual’s subjectivity empowers her or him to make choices.

However, the success of this methodology in identifying the ideologies outlined above, suggests such techniques may be usefully employed elsewhere. Further research applying this method to the award-winning children's books of other decades could yield some valuable comparisons with this one. And young (and adult) readers could well be empowered by using these techniques of analysis to understand the way texts are agents of their times.

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## Appendix 1

### Coding Sheet

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

1 Award Country

\_\_\_\_\_

2 Age Major

Character(s) \_\_\_\_\_

3 Sex Major

Character(s) \_\_\_\_\_

4 Family Situation(s) of Major Characters

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5 Fullness of significant friend/companion

\_\_\_\_\_

6 Adult role(s) in story

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7 Main location(s) of action -

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8 Role of religion for major

character(s) \_\_\_\_\_

9 Role of spirituality for major character(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

10 Point of view

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## **Coding Scheme Guide Sheet**

1 Award Country – New Zealand, Australia, US, UK

2 Age Major Character(s)

3 Sex Major Character(s)

4 Family Situation(s) of Major Characters – Single parent, Two parent, Guardian;  
1 / 4 (eldest of four children) etc

Absent parents/siblings important to story will be recorded also

5 Fullness of significant friend/companion – Is this a real character with his or her own subjectivity or just an object – a foil or literary device?

6 Adult role(s) in story – guide (present or absent; positive, negative, neutral), prompt (story involves running away from (negative), neutral, searching for (positive) adult), example/role model (but no personal interaction – otherwise would be a guide)

7 Main location(s) of action –domestic, school, neighbourhood, wilderness\*; action within family/community context, action outside family/community context (\*here I'm trying to capture information about safe/familiar vs threatening/unfamiliar locations for main character(s), so somewhere in the neighbourhood that is threatening may be coded as wilderness as well)

I did want to code the most frequent adult/child interactions as interrogative, imperative, sharing etc, however given the number of possible interactions this becomes very difficult to "code". I will, however capture something of this in the adult role in the story category and will look carefully at this in my close reading of selected texts.

8 Role of religion for major character(s) – positive, negative, neutral

9 Role of spirituality for major character(s) – positive, negative, neutral

10 Point of view – First Person, Third Person; focalised through which character

## Appendix 2: The Sample

**Aardema, Verna, Leo Dillon, and Diane Dillon. 1975. *Why mosquitoes buzz in people's ears : a West African tale*. New York: Dial Press. (Picture book)**

Iguana blocking his ears to mosquito's 'big lie' sets off a whole train of events that has Mother Owl grieving for her dead owlet and refusing to hoot for the dawn to come. Only when King Lion court establishes mosquito's fault does the Owl do her duty.

**Adams, Richard. 1973. *Watership Down*. Second ed. London: Rex Collings Ltd. Original edition, London: Rex Collings Ltd 1972.**

A group of young male rabbits escapes the destruction of their entire warren by human developers by heeding the warnings of prescient rabbit Fiver and his natural leader brother Hazel. Their adventures surviving in a new environment and founding a new community are used as an allegory about human society, favouring freedom and initiative over tyranny and force.

**Ahlberg, Janet and Alan. 1999. *Each Peach Pear Plum*. Board book edition ed. London: Viking. Original edition, London: Viking, 1978. (picture book)**

A number of traditional nursery rhymes and fairytales are linked together here in a narrative centred around sharing a plum pie made by Mother Hubbard.

**Aiken, Joan, and Jan Pienkowski. 1971. *The Kingdom Under the Sea and other stories*. London: Jonathan Cape.**

In the title story, a lonely fisherman prays to the Dawn Maiden for some comfort and cheerfulness in his life. She sends him an orphan girl to be his wife and to tell him fantastical stories to ease his heart. But he sends her away in anger when she fails to make her marvellous stories come true, setting in motion his own and their baby son's imprisonment in the Kingdom under the sea. Finally, the faithful wife rescues them and teaches the fisherman to be grateful for what he has.

**Ambrus, Victor. 1975. *Horses in Battle*. London and New York: Oxford University Press. (non-fiction picture book)**

The use of horses in battle throughout history is the focus of this book.

**Armitage, Ronda and David. 1994. *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch*. London: Scholastic. Original edition, London : Deutsch, 1977 (picture book)**

Seagulls will keep stealing Mr Grinling's delicious home-made lunches as soon as Mrs Grinling sends them off to him on the house-to-lighthouse flying fox. That is until Mrs Grinling devises a cunning plan involving some extra-strong mustard to put them off for good.

**Armstrong, William H, and James Barkley. 1973. *Sounder*. London: Victor Gollancz. Original edition, Harper, 1969.**

Sounder is a hunting dog and the loyal companion of a poor black sharecropper in the southern US before the turn of last century. When the sharecropper is dragged off in chains after stealing some food for his starving family, Sounder is shot and almost killed trying to follow his master. The animal's dogged refusal to die gives the man's son hope and courage in the ensuing years of his father's absence.

**Bacon, Ronald Leonard, and R. H. G. Jahnke. 1977. *The house of the people*. Auckland [N.Z.]: Collins. (picture book)**

The oldest kaumatua tells of how a great meeting house, the house of the people, was constructed by the entire community using materials and motifs gathered from the natural environment.

**Briggs, Raymond. 1974. *Father Christmas*. Harmondsworth: Puffin. Original edition, London: Puffin, 1973. (picture book)**

This is a film-strip style account of a very English Father Christmas grumbling about having to get up in the cold of midwinter to perform his Christmas Eve duties with the reindeer.

**Brinsmead, H. F. 1971. *Longtime Passing*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson.**

A semi-autobiographical account of life in an isolated part of the Blue Mountains in New South Wales during and after the Depression. The history of the place, part 'fact' and part fairytale, beyond the life of the family features strongly in the book.

**Burningham, John. 1970. *Mr Gumpy's Outing*. London: Cape. (picture book)**

Mr Gumpy sets out for a pleasure trip in his boat when a series of friends (including various farm animals) ask to come along for the ride. Everything goes well until his passengers break the rules. The boat capsizes and they all fall in. Mr. Gumpy isn't angry, however, he simply carries the wet gear back to the house and invites them all in for a cup of tea.

**Byars, Betsy. 1970. *The Summer of the Swans*. New York: Avon Camelot.**

Sara is a teenager who lives with her aunt and her brother with Down's Syndrome, Charlie. Their mother is dead and their father is mostly absent, unwilling or unable to take on fatherly responsibilities. Sara wishes she was pretty and popular and is fed up watching over her intellectually disabled brother. However, when Charlie disappears from the house one night, Sarah realises how much she loves him and finds she is not alone in facing the challenges of family and teenage life.

**Cooper, Susan, and Michael Heslop. 1975. *The grey king*. 1st ed. New York: Atheneum.**

A Welsh legend is the basis for the action in this story. Will Stanton comes to Wales to recover from a severe illness. But when he meets Bran, a strange boy with a white dog, he begins to remember the quest he is on. Will is the last-born of the 'Old Ones', immortals dedicated, in this series by Susan Cooper, to saving the world from the forces of evil. With the help of the mysterious Bran, Will completes the tasks described in the legend and prepares for the last battle between the Dark and the Light.

**De Hamel, Joan, and Gareth Floyd. 1978. *Take the long path*. Guildford, Surrey: Lutterworth.**

David is unhappy at home. His (step-)father is angry and demanding and his mother meekly follows his lead. David's sole comfort is in caring for the penguins who nest on the farm until an elderly Maori man takes up residence on the property and interests David in his culture and his quest for an old family treasure. Slowly David discovers that this man is the spirit of his dead grandfather, who could not 'Take the Long Path' to the spirit home of Hawaiki until the quest had been passed on to the next generation.

**Dickinson, Peter. 1979. *Tulku*. London: Gollancz.**

Thirteen year old Christian boy Theo finds himself stranded in China when his father's mission is laid waste in the anti-foreign violence of the Boxer revolution. Theo falls in with amateur botanist and eccentric Mrs Jones and her Chinese assistant Lung, and all three manage to escape into the forbidden territory of Tibet and the wealthy and isolated Dong Pe monastery. There they are waylaid by the senior Lama who believes that one of their company is the Tulku – the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. The ensuing clash between Theo's rigid Christian upbringing and the powerful mysticism in the monastery create a tense drama.

**Fox, Paula. 1974. *The slave dancer*. London: Macmillan.**

Thirteen-year-old Jessie is press-ganged aboard a slave trading ship while running an errand for his mother. But it is not for his strength he's been chosen; Jessie plays the fife and has been stolen from his home to provide music for the ship's "cargo" of Africans bound for

the slave markets of Jessie's home, America. While Jessie plays, these prisoners are forced to "dance"; slaves with good muscle tone will fetch a higher price at the market for their captors.

**Garfield, Leon, Edward Blishen, and Charles Keeping. 1970. *The God Beneath the Sea*. London: Longman.**

In this book, many of the familiar stories of the Greek gods have been combined in a single, continuous narrative. Jan Pienkowski's black and white silhouette illustrations are the highlight of the book.

**George, Jean Craighead. 1976. *Julie of the wolves*. Harmondsworth: Puffin Books.**

Miyax is thirteen, believes herself to be an orphan, and is living as a kind of slave in her husband's parents' home. Miyax, or Julie, as she is to her pen-pal Amy, runs away, hoping to make her way to Amy's home in San Francisco. But instead she becomes lost in the Alaskan tundra without food, transport or compass and is forced to rely on her knowledge of the old ways of her culture. Miyax remembers stories told her by her father and takes up with a pack of wolves in a desperate bid to survive.

**Goble, Paul. 1978. *The girl who loved wild horses*. Scarsdale, N.Y.: Bradbury Press. (picture book)**

A native American girl has a special bond with horses, was excellent at caring for them and wished to spend all of her time with them when not busy helping her family. One day a storm frightens the horses, including the one she is riding, and they carry her away. When reunited with her people some time later, the girl can't settle down to being happy at home. She takes ill and only recovers when her family let her go to live amongst the wild horses; returning every year to bring them a colt.

**Haley, Gail E. 1970. *A Story A Story: An African tale*. New York: Atheneum. (picture book)**

A re-telling of an African folktale about trickster spiderman Ananse. All the stories in the world are kept in a box by Nyame, the sky god. When Ananse tells Nyame he wants them, Nyame sets him three tasks to complete believing they are impossible and Ananse has to fail. However he hasn't counted on the tricks and wit of Ananse.

**Haley, Gail E. 1976. *The Post Office Cat*. London: The Bodley Head. (picture book)**

This story of a cat named Clarence was inspired by the discovery that cats were once employed by the royal mail to keep the rats down in the country's post offices. Clarence leaves his overcrowded home on the farm and almost starves until he proves his value and finds himself a valued employee of His Majesty's Mail Service.

**Hamilton, Virginia. 1974. *M. C. Higgins, The Great*. New York: Macmillan.**

Ever since M.C.'s great-grandmother Sarah sought refuge there as a runaway slave, Sarah's Mountain has been home to the Higgins family. But now it is threatened by the strip-mining that has left a giant slag heap perched precariously above their house and poisons in the water that feeds their neighbours' crops. M.C. is making plans to somehow get his family off the mountain to save them from impending doom, but maybe leaving their home is not the way out he is looking for.

**Hogrogian, Nonny. 1972. *One fine day*. London: Hamish Hamilton. (picture book)**

This is a re-telling of a European folktale, in which a cheeky fox licking milk out of an old woman's pail finds itself embarrassed and without a tail. The fox has to learn some humility and find a stranger with a kind heart if she is to succeed in getting the woman to sew her tail back on.

**Hughes, Shirley. 1977. *Dogger*. London: The Bodley Head. (picture book)**

Dave loses best toy Dogger when picking his sister up from school. It turns up the next day on a stall at the School Fair but by the time Dave has found enough money to buy it, some little girl has got there first. Older sister Bella finally saves the day by volunteering her newly won big yellow teddy as a trade for her brother's favourite soft friend.

**Hunter, Mollie. 1974. *The Stronghold*. London: Hamish Hamilton.**

Coll is foster-son to the head of the Boar tribe living in the remote islands of the Orkneys, Scotland in about 100 B.C. Crippled from infancy following a Roman slave raid, Coll is determined to figure a way to protect his tribe from further such aggression. Coll designs a totally new fortified tower, a Stronghold, but then faces the challenge of persuading his people to give it a try – despite religious conflict, political machinations and scepticism about its worth.

**Hutchins, Pat. 1993. *The Wind Blew*. New York: Aladdin Books. Original edition, London: The Bodley Head, 1974. (picture book)**

As the wind makes its way from the country to the city, everybody seems to be losing something to its playful insistence.

**Kemp, Gene, and Carolyn Dinan. 1986. *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler*. Large print ed. Bath: Chivers Press. Original edition, Faber and Faber, 1977.**

Tyke Tiler's friend Danny keeps getting himself into trouble and it's resourceful young Tyke who takes responsibility for helping him out. When a teacher leaves a purse full of money lying around, it sets off a chain of events that will have Tyke stretched to her limits to make it all right.

**Lively, Penelope, and Anthony Maitland. 1973. *The Ghost of Thomas Kempe*. London: Heinemann.**

James is the only one who believes that the strange messages and breakages in their ancient new home are not him, James, pulling a prank. Realising he is on his own, James sets out to deal with the ghost of Thomas Kempe, sorcerer, before the poltergeist's increasingly violent activities cause anyone serious harm.

**Macarthur-Onslow, Annette. 1969. *Uhu*. Sydney: Ure Smith. (non-fiction picture book)**

Uhu was the name given to a two week old owl found injured by the author after falling from its very high nest. Annette tells of her and her partner's experiences trying (unsuccessfully in the end) to rear a wild bird of prey and what they learned from its life and its death. The book includes a quote from L. Lorenz: "The truth about nature is always far more beautiful even than what our great poets sing of it..."

**Mahy, Margaret, and Jenny Williams. 1972. *A Lion in the Meadow*. Harmondsworth: Puffin. Original edition, New York : Watts, c1969. London : Dent, c1969. (picture book)**

When the boy tells his mother of the lion in the meadow she tells him he is talking nonsense. When he insists on being frightened she gives him a matchbox and tells him there is a dragon inside which will scare off the lion. When the dragon turns out to be real as well, the mother is very surprised.

**Mahy, Margaret, and Shirley Hughes. 1972. *The First Margaret Mahy Story Book: story and poems*. London: Dent.**

The story I sampled from this collection was called The Great Tractor Rescue. In it Teddy and Gerard find themselves rescuing the eccentric Mrs Weeds with a tractor when she is set upon by a thief and a bandit. Mrs Weeds in turn shares with them her local knowledge of herbs and such.



**Manley, Ruth, and Marianne Yamaguchi. 1978. *The Plum-rain Scroll*. Sydney: Hodder and Stoughton.**

Taro, a foundling, lives with his capable Aunt Piety and eccentric Uncle Thunder and helps his Aunt run the family business while her husband undertakes noisy, unpleasant and apparently pointless experiments in his study. When Aunt Piety disappears in suspicious circumstances, Taro feels it is his duty to follow and rescue her, which gets him involved in a series of bizarre adventures through a comic-fantasy version of feudal Japan.

**Mark, Jan, and Jim Russell. 1976. *Thunder and Lightnings*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Kestrel Books.**

Andrew has just moved to a new house in the country and is nervous about starting a new school without any friends. When his mother forces him to attend the final week of term, he encounters a neighbour, Victor, with whom he develops a friendship over the long holidays. By the time the new school term begins, Andrew not only has a friend but has also learnt a lot about himself and his new home.

**McDermott, Gerald. 1974. *Arrow to the sun; a Pueblo Indian tale*. 1st ed. New York,: Viking Press. (picture book)**

This is a retelling of a Pueblo Indian story. The boy is teased for having no father; his father the sun having returned to the sky. He finds a way to reach his father by being turned into an arrow by the wise old arrow-maker. His father makes him undertake three trials to prove himself then finally transforms him with some of his power and sends him back to earth to bring light to his people.

**Mosel, Arlene, Blair Lent, and Lafcadio Hearn. 1973. *The funny little woman*. Harmondsworth: Longman Young.**

This is a retelling of a traditional Japanese story. The Funny Little Woman sells rice cakes from her home. When one rolls down a crack in the earth she follows it and finds herself in a subterranean world inhabited by strange, ugly monsters. They force her to be their cook until she tricks them to escape back into the world.

**Musgrove, Margaret, Leo Dillon, and Diane Dillon. 1976. *Ashanti to Zulu : African traditions*. New York: Dial Press. (non-fiction picture book)**

This is an unusual alphabet book in which each letter is related to the name of an African tribal group. The text describes one cultural event or icon that is of significance to each tribe while the illustrations capture men, women and children in "traditional costume" and involved in "typical" activities of their way of life.

**O'Brien, Robert C., and Justin Todd. 1994. *Mrs Frisby and the rats of NIMH, Puffin modern classics*. London: Puffin.**

Mrs Frisby, a widowed field mouse with four children, finds herself in a difficult situation early one spring. Her son Timothy is ill and will die if he goes out in the cold, yet the family must soon move out of their warm winter home because it is soon to be turned under by the farmer's plough. When Mrs Frisby seeks help from an old owl at the instigation of a crow she has rescued from the farmer's cat, she begins to discover that her dead husband had a fascinating secret. He was one of a group of rodents, the majority of them rats, who escaped from an experimental facility after having been genetically altered to increase their ability to learn. These 'rats of NIMH' have created a high tech home underground on the farm based on food and materials stolen from humans. Yet their master plan is to flee the human world altogether and set up their own self-sufficient society. But first they might just be able to solve a problem for the family of their old friend Mr Frisby, who died trying to help them achieve their dream.

**Paterson, A. B. (Banjo), and Desmond Digby. 1970. *Waltzing Matilda*. Sydney and London: Collins. (picture book)**

This classic Australian poem relates the story of an old tramp who is caught stealing a sheep from a farmer and would rather drown himself in the billabong than submit to the law.

**Paterson, A. B. (Banjo), and Quentin Hole. 1974. *The Man from Ironbark*. Sydney: Collins. (picture book)**

In this, another Banjo Paterson poem, a young man from the country decides to enjoy some city life in Sydney. When he goes to the barber for a trim, the barber decides, for the amusement of the city folk, to play a trick on his unsophisticated customer. He pretends to try and cut his throat while shaving him. When the young man screams blue murder, the police come running, and the young man tears off back to the country, swearing off hair trims for the rest of his life.

**Paterson, Katherine. 1980. *Bridge to Terabithia*, Puffin books. London: Puffin Books.**

Jess is the only boy in a large family and is trying to 'be something' by training as a runner in the family's cow paddock during the summer break. He is very artistic but hides this interest from his father who considers it unmasculine. When a new family moves in next door and Leslie enters his life, Jess's eyes are opened to a wider world of imagination, literature, art and spirituality that leave him changed for ever. When Leslie dies in an accident, Jess decides to value the gift she brought him by sharing it with others.

**Pienkowski, Jan, Jane Walmsley, and Tor (paper engineer) Lokvig. 1979. *Haunted House*. London: Heinemann. (pop-up picture book)**

Turning pages in this pop-up book opens doors in the haunted house with new horrors jumping out in every room.

**Raskin, Ellen. 1979. *The Westing Game*. London: Macmillan. Original edition, New York: Dutton, 1978.**

This intriguing mystery starts out when a group of people are given offers they can't refuse to move into a brand new apartment building across from Westing Mansion, the home of reclusive millionaire Samuel Westing, who is apparently found murdered in his home shortly after they all move in. Little do they know that they have been hand-picked to play the Westing Game, a puzzle that will win the pair that solves it first the bulk of the millionaire's estate. The group of sixteen individuals rides an emotional roller-coaster through a blizzard, bombings in their building and the belief that one of their number is a murderer and their very lives might be at risk.

**Rees, David. 1978. *The Exeter Blitz*. London: Hamish Hamilton.**

Colin, who is nearly 15, lives with his parents in Exeter during the war. His dad works as an assistant curator of the glorious old stone Cathedral that dominates the city, a building he adores for its architecture, music and antiquity. Colin himself is not really sure what all the fuss is about until the building, like the rest of the city, is threatened by a blitz of heavy bombing. The events of these few days and nights make Colin grow up, overcome some prejudices and learn to value history, community and family.

**Roughsey, Dick. 1975. *The Rainbow Serpent*. Sydney and London: Collins. Original edition, Sydney: William Collins Publishers 1975. (picture book)**

Explains how the rainbow serpent, Goorialla, created the features of the landscape as it travelled the country looking for its people. Goorialla finds the tribe and teaches them some important things but then turns around and eats some of them up. Warriors then go after it and slit it open to let their people out.

**Shelley, Noreen, and Robert Micklewright. 1972. *Family at the Lookout*. London: Oxford University Press.**

Mark's father is the artist nephew of a famous writer and illustrator of books about Australian birds. When the old man died, he left Mark's father his property in a remote part of the Blue Mountains; a guesthouse-sized 'lookout' perched on a cliff-top and frequented by native birds. The family move there, hoping that completing the uncle's final book will be a breakthrough chance for Mark's father's career in art. But when they arrive to the ministrations of the old man's former assistant, the whereabouts of some of the paintings for the book are a mystery. A bushfire which threatens to engulf the entire community is the catalyst for the family finding its place in this new home.

**Southall, Ivan. 1974. *Fly West*. London: Angus and Robertson. (non-fiction)**

This is a retrospective account of the authors real-life experiences as a Sunderland pilot for Australia during World War 2. It is written in a conversational style and describes the reality of living with the constant threat and fear of death.

**Southall, Ivan. 1973. *Josh*. London: Heinemann. Original edition, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1971.**

Josh is 14 and is visiting his father's Aunt Clara and the family holding for the first time. His father's family is big in Ryan's Creek and there is a great deal of expectation riding on Josh's visit. While trying to meet his Aunt and her community's expectations, Josh is completely misunderstood and finds himself embroiled in a violent conflict. Although eventually sorted out, Josh prefers to walk home to Melbourne and 'be his own man' rather than making a place for himself in Ryan's Creek society.

**Southall, Ivan. 1970. *Bread and Honey*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson.**

Thirteen year old Michael lives with his Gran. His mother is dead, his older brothers, both men, live elsewhere and his father is away a great deal. It is ANZAC day morning and Gran is fast asleep. Michael and Gran have never missed a dawn parade and Michael eventually gives up on waiting and tries to get there by himself. But he is driven away by the insensitivity of his former best friend Ray and his mother and finds himself in the uneasy company of a young girl, Margaret, on the beach.

**Spence, Eleanor, and Malcolm (illustrations) Green. 1976. *The October Child*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.**

Douglas's family has a pretty idyllic existence running the store in a small, coastal community but when a new baby is born that just doesn't behave as he should, their lives are turned totally upside down. It turns out that young Carl is autistic, completely unable to understand or respond to other people, and coming to terms with him as part of the family is a challenge for all of them.

**Spier, Peter, and Jacobus Revius. 1977. *Noah's ark*. 1st ed. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday. (picture book)**

A re-telling of the Bible story with very detailed, domestic images of how they actually managed to live with and care for all those animals and each other during the long days and nights of rain.

**Steig, William. 1969. *Sylvester and the magic pebble*. New York,: Windmill Books. (picture book)**

Sylvester finds a magic pebble and accidentally makes a wish that finds him trapped as a rock. Everyone thinks he has disappeared and his parents are grieved but eventually he manages to free himself and return home.



**Sutton, Eve, and Lynley Dodd. 1973. *My Cat Likes to Hide in Boxes*. London: Hamish Hamilton Children's Books. (picture book)**

A simple refrain compares a series of exotic fantasy cats from around the world with 'my cat' who 'likes to hide in boxes'.

**Taylor, Mildred D. 1976. *Roll of thunder, hear my cry*. New York: Dial Press.**

Young Cassie is from one of the few Black families in the rural Mississippi of the time to own their own land. She and her siblings are trying to come to terms with a world in which they are second-class citizens because of the colour of their skin. Their white neighbour, who basically runs the whole town, is deeply resentful that Black folk own land that used to belong to his people; (his family was forced to sell to pay debts after the Civil War) and he will stop at nothing to get it back.

**Treloar, Bruce. 1978. *Kim*. Sydney: Collins. (picture book)**

This book gives us a 'day-in-the-life-of' type of view of young Kim, a girl who lives with her grandmother and their dog on an isolated coast of Norfolk Island. The environment is the main focus of the narrative.

**Treize, Percy, and Dick Roughsey. 1978. *The Quinkins*. Sydney: Collins. (picture book)**

Moonbi and Leealin stay in the camp while their mother and father go off hunting. When the children think they hear their father calling, they go off on their own to find him, not realising they have been tricked by the Quinkins and are being drawn to their lair in the red mountain of Boonbalbee. It is other spirits of the land who move in to save the pair and take on the murderous tricksters themselves.

**Turska, Krystyna. 1972. *The Woodcutter's Duck*. London: Hamish Hamilton. (picture book)**

Young Bartek is a woodcutter who is teased for being fond of a duck. One day he hears a cry for help and rescues a dried-out frog stuck in a bush. In return the frog gives him the power to summon a flood. Soon the Great Hetman arrives at the head of a large army, takes over the village and tries to force Bartek to give up the duck for his dinner. Bartek uses the power the frog gave him to rescue the duck but in the to-ing and fro-ing the dishonesty of the Great Hetman is revealed to his men and he loses their loyalty and respect. Instead they choose Bartek as their leader and he rides away with them to a life of adventure, the duck tucked under his arm.

**Wagner, Jenny, and Ron Brooks. 1977. *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat*. London: Viking Kestrel. (picture book)**

Rose lives with her dog John Brown, who is increasingly taking care of her in her old age. When a midnight black cat arrives at their home, John Brown tries to keep her away but Rose is comforted by having her close. Finally John Brown accepts the cat's presence and watches as Rose and the cat's growing closeness brings Rose peace.

**Wagner, Jenny, and Ron Brooks. 1990. *The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek*. Ringwood, Victoria: Puffin Books. Original edition, Longman Young Books/ Childers Pty, 1973. (picture book)**

When late one night a Bunyip emerges from the mud of Berkeley's Creek he asks the passing animals to tell him about himself. Their responses are insulting to say the least. Finally, when a female Bunyip emerges from the Creek as well, the first Bunyip takes the initiative and tells her things about Bunyips that make them both happy.

**Westall, Robert. 1975. *The Machine Gunners*. Harmondsworth: Puffin. Original edition, London: Macmillan, 1975.**

14-year-old Chas is fed up with being helpless during the chaos and destruction of his Northern English city during World War 2. His only interest is the ongoing competition to collect war souvenirs but when he finds an intact machine gun on a downed German plane

he sees a chance for himself and his friends to have a real role in the fight. Their accidental capture of an injured German airman adds a personal face to their hated foe.

**Wrightson, Patricia. 1977. *The Ice is Coming*. London: Hutchinson.**

Wirrun is a young Aboriginal man who, although uninitiated into manhood in the ways of his tribe, is forced to take action when he recognises signs that indicate that a balance has been broken and the land is under threat from the ice. Wirrun finds help in the form of Mimi, an old spirit of the rocks, and travels the country in pursuit of the ice until he can organise for a person with the appropriate knowledge to come and restore balance to the land.

**Wrightson, Patricia. 1973. *The Nargun and the Stars*. London: Hutchinson.**

An ancient elemental spirit of the land, the Nargun, has moved in to a new territory where it 'doesn't belong'. When orphaned 11 year old Simon moves in with his mother's cousins on their isolated station in the mountains, he makes friends with the old ones of the place – the Potkoorok and the Nyals – but also realises the threat caused by the presence of the Nargun – on whom he has accidentally scratched his name. With the help of modern technology, Simon and his guardians manage to seal the Nargun in a cave deep in the mountain while at the same time rescuing the region from insensitive development.

**Zemach, Harve, and Margot Zemach. 1974. *Duffy and the devil : a Cornish tale retold*.**

**Harmondsworth [Eng.]: Kestrel Books. (picture book)**

In this Cornish variation on the Rumpelstiltskin story, Duffy is thrown out of her aunts house for being lazy. She is rescued by a kind-hearted old squire who takes her home to help out his aging housekeeper. Duffy's boasting about her abilities with the needles, finds her working in a room alone wondering how she is going to explain her lack of produce. The little devil makes his deal with her and her prodigious stocking-making earns her an offer of marriage. But when the devil turns up for his end of the bargain, Duffy confesses her trouble to the right person; the housekeeper is actually a witch and knows just how to outwit the Devil and find out his name.

### **Unavailable**

**Ambrus, Victor. 1975. *Mishka*. London: Oxford University Press.**

**Harding, Lee. 1979. *Displaced Person*. Melbourne: Hyland House.**

### Appendix 3: Role in story of adult characters by sex

Role in story of adult characters	Male	Female	Most Often
<b>Guide: tell stories, pass on wisdom; Give gifts</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Male</b>
Advocate	2	2	
Listen; Understand; Accept	2	5	Female
<b>Nurture; Protect; Provide Necessaries of life</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Female</b>
Judge; Restore order; Solve problems; Accept responsibility	6	3	Male
Be a role model (physically absent for narrative action)	3	1	
Lead; Make the tough decisions	7	4	Male
<b>Try; Work at; Labour</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Female</b>
Play tricks	3	2	
<b>Harp on; Demand</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>Female</b>
Give up; Be despairing	2		
Reject; Criticise harshly	2	3	
Misunderstand; Alienate	4	8	Female
Be absent	5	4	
<b>Threaten; Bully; Torment</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Male</b>
Be helpless; Be needy	2	6	Female
<b>Fight; Destroy</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>Male</b>

#### Appendix 4: Proximity analysis of Danny in *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler*

His face was sad, like my dog at home,...

And when he's found out, he gets this mournful look, like my dog...

He began to tremble, like that dog of mine...

He lifted up his face to Chief Sir and his eyes swam with tears.

Danny danced about...

... Danny jumped up and down.

He put the bones in and gathered it to his chest. The bag went soggy.

He managed to remember me for a moment and stretched out a mitt

Danny pulled at me.

Danny pushed open a door.

Danny wouldn't hurt anything. He's so gentle.

He was there. Curled up behind the boxes.

## Appendix 5: Concordance lines around Joss in *Family at the Lookout*

I saw the boy's face. It was rather red, and looked so worried  
...wasn't Australian. He was a migrant. You could tell  
    ...He spoke so carefully, trying not to make mistakes  
    He looked more worried than ever  
I felt sorrier for him than I'd ever felt  
    He slid out of the tree and landed beside us with  
    His face was as bright as if someone had switched on a  
'Is good!' Then he grinned at me.  
    Joss looked surprised ... then he looked worried again  
    He was anxious to please.  
.. something to stop him from looking so anxious  
    Joss was puzzled  
    Since then, Joss has made me feel rotten more than once  
    ...he's just too good, sometimes.  
    He stopped looking anxious,  
    His face clouded over.  
    His face always shows his feelings very plainly.  
I thought of Joss waiting for us,  
I suddenly thought of Joss. He was the one who'd be tired, waiting all this  
    'Joss's been waiting all this time,' I said.  
    'I bet he's given up and gone home long ago.  
    Joss was still waiting for us. I could hardly believe it,  
But there he was, grinning as if we were his long-lost cousins.  
    He took Lindy's basket from her  
    ... with his European-style good manners  
    ...not to worry: Joss had us for friends now  
    'Yes,' I said, and Joss said : 'I will help.'  
    He... handed it .. with one of his little half-bows.  
    Joss said he'd help me  
    Joss shone the torch for me;  
I liked it a lot, and so did Joss.  
    Joss and Lindy came and did the same.  
    'Is it broke?' asked Joss, his face suddenly pale  
    and Joss and I helped her  
    Then Joss took charge, and he suddenly seemed ... older.  
    'Is it right I go, Mark?' Joss asked,  
    'Is wrong,' he said again, unhappily  
    He gave me a hurt look. 'You go, you know I go with

## Appendix 6: Age and Sex of Major Characters

### Australia

Young children		Children		Young adults		Adults	
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2			3	1	6	2	4

### New Zealand

Young children		Children		Young adults		Adults	
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
	1		2		1	4	3

### United States

Young children		Children		Young adults		Adults	
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
		1	2	7	8	4	5

### United Kingdom

Young children		Children		Young adults		Adults	
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
1	1		2	1	11	2	4

### Totals

Young children		Children		Young adults		Adults	
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
3	2	1	9	9	26	12	16

## Appendix 7: Gender Schema

Schema for Masculinity	Schema for Femininity
strong	beautiful (therefore, good)
violent	non-violent
unemotional, hard, tough	emotional, soft, yielding
aggressive, authoritarian	submissive, compliant
transgressive (= 'nature' when sexual)	obedient, pleasing (= 'culture' when sexual)
competitive	self-effacing, sharing
rapacious	caring
protective	vulnerable
'hunter'; powerful	'victim'; powerless
player	prize
independent	dependent
active	passive (active = evil)
analytical	synthesizing
thinks quantitatively	thinks qualitatively
rational (= culture, civilization)	intuitive (= nature, the primitive) [intuition = 'lateral thinking' when + male]

After Stephens, John. "Gender, Genre and Children's Literature." *Signal* 79 (1996): 18-19

## Appendix 8: Action Analysis of main adult characters in *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler*

Here is a record of the actions associated with the main adult characters.

### The women

#### Mrs Somers:

*mincing* round the corner  
*skimmed* towards me  
*used* my real name  
she would have to *push her nose in*.  
*screeched* a high shrill shriek  
went *grinding on* for ages  
*breathed* Mrs Somers, *tapping a pointed foot*.  
if Mrs Somers *gets talking*.  
Somers *sounded really angry* now...  
*snapped* Mrs Somers.  
...Mrs Somers said in a *voice like a dentist's drill*...  
*insisted* that the police be called in  
*shouted*, her face red and corrugated:  
*stayed angry*

#### Tyke's Mum:

*stopped* us  
*called up* the stairs. 'Tyke, take the dog for a walk.'  
*kept going on and on*  
will *wallop me* if I get mucky again  
*taken* Aunt Marge to view our new posh lilac bath...  
*said* it was that scream just as much as the sight of me...  
*shouted up* the stairs.  
*snapped* Mum.  
*belted* me. 'Get this room cleaned up. I shall be late for work at this rate.  
*doesn't allow* it.  
*didn't see*, of course. She never does where he's concerned.  
Mum *snapped*. She was in a heck of a mood...  
*handed* me some money..  
*wouldn't have her* in the house, stinking like that  
he and Mum *went for* one another like Punch and Judy...  
Mum *says*.  
*wouldn't notice* particularly.  
..if she'd *caught* me with them I'd've been for it.  
*wiped* it up. She didn't make him do it. *Unfair*.  
*frying* bacon and eggs for everybody...  
"You're always fussy," Mum *grumbled* over my plate.  
*clattered* plates loudly.

At this point Tyke takes ill and everything changes:



*tidied up my bed,*  
*gave me drinks and tablets.*  
*looked gentle, her nursing look.*  
*smiled and I fell asleep.*  
*made him leave Fatty behind.*  
*was speaking.*  
*looked up as I went in.*  
*smiled.*  
*continued to speak.*  
*patted me.*  
*said gently*  
*marching up and down the room banging with the umbrella and trying to put on her coat at the*  
*same time.*  
*calm down before broke something with it.*  
*I thought Mum was going to hit her with the umbrella*  
*almost leapt on him.*  
*Mum and Dad snogging in the kitchen...*  
*sighed.*  
*looked all soft and purry*

**"Miss" Jenny the teacher's college student:**

*finally managed to get her lesson started.*  
*said*  
*read us some poetry...*  
*read us The Sword in the Stone,*  
*told us about the man who wrote it...*  
*read us some really fantastic poetry and we did a terrific mural on the wall...*  
*said*  
*had gone pink and just a bit cross-looking*  
*decided to do a play about King Arthur.*  
*was pleased...'Absolutely super.' She said 'soopah', but we didn't mind.*  
*there stood Miss, smiling.*

**The Men:**

**Dad**

*came in I jumped on him*  
*'Submit,' he said. I submitted. P18*  
*moved fast as he pushed me up the stairs.*  
*says he hates the new lilac bath and Mum must've been mad to choose such a colour.*  
*would never have got rid of him in case he felt hurt.*  
*went on cheerily, handing over hundreds of pieces of paper. P54*  
*overslept and was late for work*  
*he and Mum went for one another like Punch and Judy*  
*he slammed out of the house. P75*  
*came in and started beaming and nodding*

*banding out leaflets* to everyone. P104  
*wearing* his big rosette...  
didn't know anything about it but he asked us if we did.  
*was grinning*. P108  
*was going* to London for a week, he said.  
*came back* and then the row began ...  
Mum and Dad *argued* I tried to tell them the truth  
*will never let you go*  
*doesn't believe in*  
*tried to* get her to put down the umbrella  
*said wearily*. P119  
Dad *said*, trying to sit her down  
Mum and Dad *snogging* in the kitchen...  
*was grinning* and I knew I didn't have to go

### Mr Merchant, or Sir, Tyke's favourite teacher:

*came in*, and the noise died down.  
*tells us* that these Roman guys were...  
*looked up*.  
*told us* to shut up at this point...  
*took us* and our belongings to pieces.  
*complained*, ...  
*suddenly roared*:  
*spotted* Fatty and *did a flying tackle*...  
*said* he couldn't bear the smell...  
*looked* all pleased and shining.  
*grinned* Sir.  
*went on to talk* about the city and its history  
*exploded like a volcano* and we got out our folders in silence.  
*grinning* from ear to ear and that's a pretty fair distance for a grin.  
Mrs Somers didn't let me, last year, but Sir *does*.  
*told us*.  
*speaking*, eyes ablaze  
*showing* us the city and History.  
*shouted* into the green hill.  
*grinned*.  
*paused* and looked at the crowd, which had grown even larger.  
*was away* on a course.  
*was away*  
*came* Mr Merchant, Sir. ... If he was there, it would be fair. It would be all right.  
*came in* and admired the mural  
*sat* on the desk and said...  
*got off* the desk and went over and ruffled her hair. P93-4  
*was grinning*  
*dropped his voice* but we could still hear  
*picked me up* and there was Danny and Berry. P110

*drove me* to the paper mill.