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<td>“Children’s Voices? Youth in Crisis in Deborah Ellis’s Nonfiction”</td>
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<td>“Sticky Materials in the School Library. Mapping Intensities and Affective Attachments in Encounters with Armin Greder’s <em>The Island</em>”.</td>
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<td><em>Macarena García-González</em></td>
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<td>12:35 - 14:00</td>
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<td>15:45- 16:05</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
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<td>16:05 - 17:05</td>
<td><strong>Session Chair: Claudia Matus</strong></td>
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“Children’s Voices? Youth in Crisis in Deborah Ellis’s Nonfiction”
Peter E. Cumming

It is, by now, a truism that while most children’s and young adult literature is about children (even this has, of course, been interrogated by Jacqueline Rose and others), very little of it is by children and youth. Teaching children’s and YA literature in the context of a childhood studies program, I attempted to confront this paradox by designing a course “Writing by Children and Youth,” and, more recently, co-editing a special issue of IBBY’s journal Bookbird, “Another Children’s Literature”: Writing by Children and Youth (55.2 [2017]).

One prominent Canadian children’s and YA author who has attempted to facilitate the voices of children and youth—indeed, those in the midst of war, conflict, cultural dislocation, and epidemic—is Deborah Ellis in seven nonfiction books for (and at least partly by) young people: Three Wishes: Israeli and Palestinian Children Speak (2004); Our Stories, Our Songs: African Children Talk about AIDS (2005); Off to War: Voices of Soldiers’ Children (2008); Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees (2009); We Want You to Know: Kids Talk About Bullying (2011); Kids of Kabul: Living Bravely through a Never-ending War (2012); and Looks Like Daylight: Voices of Indigenous Kids (2013).

Ellis, best known for her fictional Breadwinner trilogy (now a tetralogy) about a young Afghani girl, Parvana, a series published in 25 languages and adapted into a feature-length animated film and a graphic novel, has received numerous national and international awards. However, it is in her nonfiction books that she most directly attempts adult-child collaboration in giving voice to young people. In both her fiction and nonfiction, there is no doubt about the author’s noble intentions—indeed, her courage in soliciting dialogic encounters among children and youth in extremely challenging circumstances. And she has not only “talked the talk”; she has “walked the walk,” donating almost two million dollars in royalties to organizations such as Women for Women in Afghanistan, UNICEF, and Street Kids International. Nonetheless, “framing” children’s voices as an adult always carries with it challenges, limitations, and risks.

This paper analyzes to what extent Ellis is successful in enabling the voices of young people, given the (inevitable? necessary? desirable?) layers of mediation by her as “author,” her editors, her designers, and her publisher in their deployment of paratextual apparatus: front cover illustrations, back cover text, construction of implied readers, photography, artwork, maps, introductions, commentaries, historical background notes, mini-biographies, assembled mini-autobiographies,
afterwords, and appendices. As Juliet McMaster argues, “[W]hen a child takes the pen in hand, that child is taking a determined step toward the control of language, of representation, of power. The child . . . has a lot to gain by wresting the means of representation from the adults” (277): does Ellis effectively enable her young subjects to “wrest the means of representation from adults”?

For some readers, these books are both moving and “educative” (providing not only knowledge, but also, more importantly, insight about and empathy for others) precisely because of the “authentic,” “candid and passionate,” “heart-wrenching, resilient and inspiring,” “articulate, funny, fiercely loyal, and sometimes fearful,” “tortured, powerless, and reclaimed,” “poignant, insightful, angry and hopeful” voices of the young people in the texts. For these readers, “Ellis stands back and let real children . . . talk.” Indeed, despite limitations in the adult selection and shapings of these youths’ voices, polarized reception of these controversial texts—at least one of which has been banned and age-restricted—may be symptomatic of how successfully Ellis ultimately allows youths’ divergent voices to “spill over” adult confines of writing, publication, and “knowing” what is best for children and youth. For example, a ten-year-old student was the first child to be awarded The Writers’ Union of Canada’s Freedom to Read Award for her defence of Ellis’s Three Wishes against library and school board censorship; she quotes Ellis as saying, “If children are tough enough to be bombed and starved, they’re tough enough to read about it.” And, I would add, speak and write about it!

Peter E. Cumming is Associate Professor Emeritus, York University, Toronto, Canada, where he taught children’s and young adult literature and coordinated the Children, Childhood, & Youth program. He is author of two picture books (variously translated into French, German, Danish, Welsh, and Japanese), a children’s novel, and two bilingual (English-French) plays for young audiences. In 2017, he co-convened the 23rd Biennial Congress of the International Research Society for Children’s Literature (IRsCL). He co-edited a special issue of IBBY’s Bookbird on “Another Children’s Literature’: Writing by Children and Youth” (Volume 55, Number 2, 2017).

2. “Depictions of Flight from War in Contemporary Children’s and YA Books Published in Sweden”
Åsa Warnqvist

During World War II, 70 000 Finnish child refugees were sent to Sweden. They travelled by boat across the Baltic Sea towards their new life in a Swedish family and in a new country, where they would remain until the end of the war. The collective mass evacuation of children during the war inspired a number of children’s and young adult books where the experiences of the child refugees are portrayed (Boëthius).

Flight is a common motif in children’s and young adult literature, in particular in fantasy and crime fiction. While depictions of flight that can be linked to war in concrete or symbolic ways are less common, they tend to increase during times of war and displacement. This has been the case in recent years, with more than 60 million people from Syria and other countries displaced by war. In 2015 more than 160 000 of these refugees sought asylum in Sweden, and the stream of refugee has made an impact on children’s and young adult literature. The number of books for children and young adults where flight as well as the everyday life and reception of refugees are depicted have increased gradually during the past years, in particular when it comes to books aimed at small children.

This paper will analyze books for children and young adults published in Sweden 2014–2018 depicting flight from war. In accordance with the children’s books about Finnish child refugees of
World War II, these picturebooks seldom problematize the actual experience of fleeing and arriving in a new country (Boëthius, Druker, Warnqvist). Particularly the picturebooks depict flight from war as a travel or adventure story with a happy ending rather than depicting flight as a trauma. Overall, the works adhere to an older tradition, demonstrating a conservative view on home and nuclear family. The strategy of authors and picturebook illustrators in making the flight comprehensible for younger children is thus to focus on stability and traditional values. However, this traditional framework does not necessarily make the picturebook characters any less mobile than the mobile child subjects of international children’s and youth literature, which according to recent scholarship (Reimer) challenge the earlier patterns by choosing homelessness and forming affiliations through choice rather than filial ties.

Åsa Warnqvist, PhD, Research Manager and Director of the Swedish Institute for Children’s Books, Stockholm, Sweden, and currently also affiliated with Linnaeus University. Warnqvist’s research has primarily been focused on the Swedish children’s book market, Canadian writer L. M. Montgomery, gender studies, and normativity studies. Warnqvist is the editor of Barnboken. Journal of Children’s Literature and has edited several scholarly anthologies, the latest one being a collection of essays on contemporary Swedish young adult fiction, Samtida svensk ungdomslitteratur (2017). She is also a board member and vice-president of International Research Society for Children’s Literature (IRSCCL), and she is the congress convenor of the IRSCCL Congress 2019.

3. “Researching Child Authors: Which Questions (not) to Ask?”
Elisabeth Wesseling

There is a burgeoning trend in children’s literature scholarship to re-think young people’s role in the creative literary process beyond the rather bleak assumption that literature produced by adults for children can only ‘take in’ (Rose), ‘colonize’ (Nodelman) or ‘suppress’ (Nikolajeva) the intended audience. Arguing that children’s literature is only informed by what adults want or imagine children to be, this critical argument likewise projects a specific childhood construct, i.e. the image of children as vulnerable, defenseless, passive receptacles or even victims of adult desire. This image of the vulnerable child is just as much an adult fantasy as notions of the ‘ignorant’ child eventually growing into rationality, the ‘innocent’ child which sadly looses its divine aura as it is socialized, and so on.

In a sustained attempt to rethink children’s creative agency, scholars such as Robin Bernstein, Marah Gubar, Victoria Ford Smith, Sarah Day, Richard Flynn and Christine Alexander & Juliet McMaster engage in painstaking historical research to reconstruct what children’s contributions to the creation of childhood artefacts has actually been. Their conclusion is that literary history has unduly marginalized children’s creative contributions, in line with the mythic notion of the author as a ‘solitary genius’, and that many classics of Anglophone literature are actually the result of creative partnerships between juvenile and adult creatives.

Building on this body of scholarship, which is basically Anglophone and historical in orientation, I would like to develop a contemporary transnational perspective on the problematic at hand, including continental European literature into the picture, and focusing on contemporary child collaborators in precarious circumstances, which makes issues pertaining to their (lack of) creative agency all the more urgent. My research deals with children and adolescents who have been displaced from their home countries and birth families through migration, adoption, homelessness or institutionalization in children’s homes. The question is how reading and writing may help them
cope with displacement by gaining a modicum of agency over circumstances that were inflicted upon them.

Research into the agency of migrant children in Europe tends to focus on their use of social media (cf. Leurs, Buckingham & de Block). To my knowledge, little attention has been devoted so far to the uses of basic literacy skills in gaining the upper hand over their constraining circumstances.

My presentation will discuss a sample of Anglophone, Dutch and German literature, mostly featuring works by the Canadian publisher Annick Press and the Dutch publisher Querido. The first has put out noteworthy works such as *The Bite of the Mango* by teen author Mariatu Kamara, *Fatty Legs* and *A Stranger at Home* by Christy Jordan Fenton and Margaret Pokian-Fenton, and the collective volume *Dreaming in Indian: Contemporary Native American Voices*. Querido has published the so-called ‘slash’ series in Dutch adolescent literature (not to be confused with slash fiction), which is a series in life writing that is co-authored by an adolescent who tells his or her life story to a well-established author of youth literature, with their two names appearing on the cover. Several books in this series deal with experiences of displacement, such as *The Fortune Finder* by Edward van de Vendel/Anoush Ellman, *Hou van mij* (Love me) by Corien Botman/Yasmine van Leur, *Miss Dakloos* (Miss Homeless) by Lydia Rood/Jojo Matthews and *Voor jou 10 anderen* (Ten a Penny) by Mirjam Oldenhave/Cynthia van Eck. My paper will address the question if and how these joint ventures exemplify the intergenerational kinship model forwarded by Marah Gubar, which constructs older and younger people in relational, rather than oppositional terms.

**Elisabeth Wesseling** is professor of Cultural Memory, Gender and Diversity at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of Maastricht University, the Netherlands. Her current research is on a Propagating, Silencing and Remembering Child Removal in the Dutch Indies, 1890-2010. It deals with the ways in which educative discourses addressing metropolitan Dutch children (textbooks, children’s fiction) were instrumental in recruiting Dutch children for the colonial cause of ‘uplifting the Indo’, in casting our colonial past into oblivion after the violent and traumatic loss of the Indies in 1949, and in searching for ways to re-address our colonial interventions into the lives of Indies children in the post-colonial present. Wesseling is the editor of *The Child Savage: From Comics to Games* (Ashgate, 2016) and *Reinventing Childhood Nostalgia: Books, Toys, and Contemporary Media Culture* (Routledge, 2017). She is the president of the International Research Society for Children’s Literature, IRSCCL.

4. “Sticky Materials in the School Library. Mapping Intensities and Affective Attachments in Encounters with Armin Greder’s *The Island*”.

**Macarena García González**

Empirical research on children’s literature reception has drawn on Louise Rosenblatt’s transactional theory indicating that readers breathe life into texts through their prior knowledge and personal experiences. Inquiries on experiences with picturebooks have begun to include explorations of these transactions not only through verbal responses, but also through image work (such as drawings, diaries, reversionings, and photo-projects, among others). We may also trace a growing attention to the affective and emotional dimension in reader-response, which up to now has been mainly theorized around claims on how literature would be key for the training of empathic abilities (Kokkola, 2018; Nikolajeva, 2014). In this paper, I work with the concept of new materialist ontologies (Coole & Frost, 2010) that allow us to consider language outside of the usual
information–communication model addressing the importance of materialities and on how they have contextual capacities to explore a range of emotional and affective investments in encounters with picturebooks. The new materialism lens opens possibilities to map the fluctuating assemblages of readers, texts (visual and verbal), and the spacetimematterings (Barad, 2011) in which reading takes place. My paper articulates a possible account of these relations reporting after an intervention with 2nd and 5th grade classes at a semi-public school in Santiago, where we presented “challeing” picturebooks (Evans 2015). In this presentation, I focus on encounters with The Island (Armin Greder, 2012), a picturebook labelled as related to immigration and refugees, mapping discourses and materialities during and after the reading. Using Brownyn Davies (2014) concept of “emergent listening”, I sketch out an argument about the potential of approaching the material in encounters with books to map those intensities—in the sense that Brian Massumi (Massumi, 2002) describes affects—between readers, books and the spacetimematterings of the readings. Acknowledging these intensities presents a possibility to deactivate reductive (pedagogical) approaches to signification—in that paradigm that privileges mind and culture—opening up that complex intertwining of discourse and matter.

Macarena García González is Associate Researcher at the Center for Educational Justice at the Universidad Católica de Chile. She holds a PhD in Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies from Zurich University (Switzerland) and a MA in Cultural studies from Maastricht University (The Netherlands). She is the author of Origin Narratives. The Stories We Tell Children about International Adoption and Immigration (Routledge, 2017) and of articles published in journals such as Children’s Literature in Education, Children’s Literature Association Quarterly and The Lion and the Unicorn. She combines narrative analysis of children’s books and media with research on posthumanist approaches to research on emotions, difference and literary education.

5. “Quantum Materialities in Children’s Literature Studies”
Justyna Deszcz-Tryhubczak

New materialist research in childhood studies focuses on understanding how discourse, matter, and children have co-productive agency in activities of play and learning where children intra-act with other humans and the more-than-human material world around them (Taguchi 2014). Children’s books can be seen both as representing human discourse and as belonging to the material environment with which children and adults ‘intra-act’ (Taguchi 2014) physically, cognitively and emotionally. Children’s books also have the potential to affect young and adult readers and can be affected by them in terms of materiality and meaning. I discuss the emergence of this ‘relational ontology’ (Taguchi 2014) in ChildAct–Shaping a Preferable Future: Children Reading, Thinking and Talking about Alternative Communities and Times, a participatory reader response project I have co-organized in Cambridge, UK, in the school year 2017-2018. Its goal is the creation of ‘common-worlds’ (Taylor and Giugni, 2012) in which young and adult readers collaborate towards a better understanding of how utopian literature shapes ideas for the desirable future, how these ideas evolve in the encounters with the materiality of readers’ local environment, and how they call readers into individual and collective action in relation to these environments. I argue that such a complex network co-constituted by discourse, socio-political concepts and matter, fosters and grants productive agency to children, adults and the world around them, thereby creating an opportunity for hope and change. As in new materialist analysis the researcher does not interpret the meaning of data or understand reality as something to be studied objectively but sees her-/himself as already an element of the reality studied (Barad 2007), I also focus on the relational processes among the child scholars and myself as a children’s literature researcher, including not only shifts in my own
perceptions of literature, utopianism and the materiality around me, but also changes in myself as the researched human bodymind. Finally, bearing in mind the new materialist commitment to understanding how researchers -- in their production of knowledge -- participate in shaping the future for humans, non-humans and the material environment (Barad 2007), I conclude with a reflection on the possible broader significance of the ‘material turn’ in children’s literature studies. While new materialism has been acknowledged predominantly through looking at fictional texts for children through the lens of ecocriticism, animal studies, plant studies, posthuman theories or cognitive criticism (Nikolajeva 2016), a focus on the material-discursive presence of children’s books in the common worlds of adults and children should lead us to the fundamental and yet substantially unexplored issue of how knowledge produced in our field can have materialist consequences and create new, ‘more livable’ (Haraway 2008) realities.

Dr. Justyna Deszcz-Tryhubczak is Associate Professor of Literature and Director of the Center for Young People’s Literature and Culture at the Institute of English Studies, University of Wroclaw, Poland. She is the author of Yes to Solidarity, No to Oppression: Radical Fantasy Fiction and Its Young Readers (2016). Her research focuses on speculative fiction, utopianism, and child-led approaches. She has taught courses children’s and YA literature and culture. She is a Fulbright, Kosciuszko, and Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow.

6. “Mediation as collaboration: how adopting an “abject” stance to reading challenging picturebooks to young children can contribute to horizontal reading practices”
Soledad Véliz

The work of an educator devoted to produce readers (a role called “mediator” in large part of Latin and Iberoamerica) demands a deep commitment to become accomplices, guides and facilitators of meaningful learning and long lasting relationship to books (Azúa, 2014). Many mediators conceive their role as essential for the promotion of equality and social equity in the distribution of cultural capital (Sainz, 2005). However, it is impossible to deny that, by positioning adults as the physical voice that mediates the relationship between books and children, adults play an active, authorial, curatorial and interpretive role in these meetings (Agüero, 2016). This power has enabled mediators to censor literary material in based on ideological and moral criteria (Guissani, 2014, Lundin, 2004). Moreover, many times mediators have shown refusal and resistance to engage themselves with certain texts, in particular when reading and discussing literary works on taboo, challenging or disturbing topics with children (e.g. Apol, Sakuma, Reynolds, 2002; Dedeoglu, Ulusoy, & Lamme, 2012). Studies have tried to find explanations for these acts of resistance, for example, as a product of conservative conceptions of childhood (Dedeoglu et al., 2012) and the existence of an "inherited discourse" of teaching and protecting children, which prevents teachers from getting involved in moral and epistemologically difficult questions that make them feel uncomfortable (James, 2012).

This article has a double purpose: first, to exhibit the problems and ethico-onto-epistemological (Barad, 2007) implications of the current conceptualization and application of the concept of “mediator” and to propose an abject and formless conception of the practices of mediation. The concept of "abjection" was introduced by Bataille (1934), who, focused on social processes, articulates it as an act of exclusion and non-recognition exerted on certain social groups. Kristeva (1982), on the other hand, takes it back as that which is neither an object nor a subject and which is associated with a crisis of the subject and the destruction of subjectivity. However, it is Georgelou (2014) who proposes to use abjection and formless as performative concepts that point to a process of undoing hierarchical and rationalized notions and structures "from within". This constant process of disruption and alteration is essential to the performative arts.
Cases of group reading with a mediator at a school in Santiago, Chile are analysed. Interviews with expert mediators using the picturebook: *La Madre y la Muerte* (FCE, 2015) are also included. We argue that bringing these notions to mediating practices with picturebooks considered taboo or challenging allows several disruptions. In the first place, it allows to register in the reading space embodied adult experiences associated with repulsion, fear, anxiety and others. It is proposed that these experiences be incorporated as physical and emotional events that reveal the limits of a traditional conception of mediation. It also allows to challenge the traditional production of the space of reading as one exclusively composed of positive and pleasurable emotions. We argue that these concepts can help to destabilize the position of the mediator as the expert who mobilizes the children's responses from the unknown to the known (Murris, 2015a). Finally, incorporating the concepts of *abjection* and *formless* allows conceiving the book as the “third thing” that brings mediador and readers together as readers, of which neither the adult nor the child possesses the meaning (Rancière, 2009). That is, it implies a theoretical approach to new materialisms that proposes books as mediating materiality.

Soledad Véliz I am a Phd candidate in Education at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. I am a psychologist and I have a Master of Arts (Children's books illustration) from the Cambridge School of Art at Anglia Ruskin University and a Msc in Forensic Mental Health Science at the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College in London. My thesis project is entitled: "Intensities around death: the emotional and affective production of picturebooks, readers and mediators in a school context". I investigate challenging, unusual or disturbing topics in picturebooks’s narratives and how they stimulate, alter and challenge the practices of literary education and reading in educational contexts. I work in the Development Center of Inclusion Technologies (CEDETi UC) and I participate in the research line of the Center for Educational Justice: "Biosociocultural Inclusion: Challenging the Homogeneity in Educational Contexts in Contemporary Chile".

7. “Children’s literature and reading communities in contexts of precarity and flux”

Evelyn Arizpe

Traditionally, children’s books are found and engaged within either the family or the school, but current conditions of migration and displacement call for their integration into different, often shifting, spaces. Among the countries affected by increasing migration flows are Egypt and Mexico and although these flows are not a new phenomenon in either country, the situation regarding displaced children has reached critical proportions. In both countries, spaces for sharing books and reading with these children have been opened in urban and rural areas through government, NGO or volunteer initiatives, often involving health and social workers and teachers but also writers, artists, storytellers and musicians. This paper will describe projects resulting from two “Global Challenges” grants from the UK (“Children’s Literature in Critical Contexts of Displacement” an AHRC Research Network and “Children’s Literature and International Safe Spaces: Toolkit development for third sector partners working with displaced children”, Scottish Funding Council). Both projects include a partnership with the Egyptian and Mexican sections of the International Board on Books for Young People (EBBY and IBBY-Mexico). These projects have allowed researchers to work together with mediators in Egypt and Mexico in order to develop a better understanding of the potential of children’s literature and arts-based activities in these spaces. Precedents for these projects can be found in the wider field of theoretical and empirical work with children’s literature and story and particularly picturebooks, as well as work with different forms of literacy, including intercultural and critical literacies. Children’s literature offers encounters with alternative worlds and ‘otherness’
(Kornfeld & Prothro 2005), offering the possibility to form new understandings of others (Ee Loh 2009; Short and Thomas 2011) and develop empathy (Nikolajeva 2016). Visual representations of self and others in picturebooks allow children to safely explore their self-identity, including their identity as migrants (Sleeter & Grant 2002; Arizpe et al 2015). The focus of the paper will be on the initial outcomes of the Mexican government’s Programme, Salas de lectura para comunidades migrantes y desplazadas (Reading rooms for migrant and displaced communities) designed by the University of Glasgow based on previous research (Arizpe et al 2014; McAdam et al 2014). This programme was also adapted for use with communities affected by the Mexican earthquake in September 2017. A ‘Toolkit for Picturebook Mediators’ is being developed collaboratively with the aim of supporting mediators in identifying and selecting books as well as introducing them to the affordances of the picturebook and helping them document their own responses to a range of picturebooks, using video and still image cameras, that can be shared with others. So far, results are showing that, in acquiring and preserving cultural heritage and creating emotional connections, children’s literature and arts-based practices can create new stories that help afford stability and identity cohesion among communities in contexts of precarity and flux.

Dr Evelyn Arizpe is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Education, University of Glasgow, where she coordinates the MEd Programme in Children’s Literature and Literacies and supervises doctoral students working in these fields. Her teaching and research attempt to bridge the gap between children’s literature and literacy and she has taught and published widely in both these areas. Evelyn has worked on a number of studies related to reading and response, involving both children and adolescents in various international contexts. Among other books, she has co-authored Visual Journeys through Wordless Narratives (2014) and co-edited Young people reading: Empirical research across international contexts (2018). Her most recent projects focus on migration and xenophobia and the creation of safe spaces through children’s picturebooks and other arts-based practices, in collaboration with government and NGOs in Scotland, Mexico and Egypt through grants from the Arts and Humanities Research Council Global Challenges Research Fund (AHRC-GCRF), the European Social Fund, and the Scottish Funding Council.

Vivian Yenika-Agbaw

In 2014, the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), a nonprofit organization drafted a report on the state of children with disabilities in Africa. The report noted that people with disabilities face insurmountable challenges and discrimination within society in general, and that the situation in Africa seems to be worse off than elsewhere. The report also posits that war and poverty are contributing factors. While the overall findings reveal that societal attitude toward children with disabilities is improving, there are still some concerns regarding the pace of the improvement. Based on this observation, the ACPF made recommendations that African governments implement policies that would effectively address the situation. Some of these include policies that protect children from discrimination, policies that promote healthy environment for all children, and policies that encourage advocacy for the rights of children with disabilities. As politicians seek to implement these recommendations through policy change, authors across the globe, are equally aware of the plight of children with disabilities in Africa and work to share their stories with the world. This paper will examine literature for children and adolescents –picturebooks and novels—published between 2014 when the report was released through 2018 to get a sense of the types of stories that are being published about children with disabilities in Africa. As politicians seek to implement these recommendations through policy change, authors across the globe, are equally aware of the plight of children with disabilities in Africa and work to share their stories with the world. It
will discuss who is publishing these stories, as it considers how the authors are working collaboratively with children to reconstruct and/or retell their stories within specific socio-cultural and/or historical contexts. Disability (Tobin Siebers, 2008), critical disability (David Hosking, 2008; Diane Pothier and Richard Devlin, 2006), and Race and disability theories (Dennis Tyler, 2017) will frame the analysis.

Vivian Yenika-Agbaw is professor of Education (Literature and Literacy) at the Pennsylvania State University, University Park, where she coordinates the graduate program in Literacies/English Language Arts, and the undergraduate/graduate programs in Children’s/Adolescent Literature Studies. She is the author/editor of several books including Representing Africa in Children’s Literature: Old and New Ways of Seeing (Routledge, 2008) and Does Nonfiction Equate Truth?: Rethinking Disciplinary Boundaries through Critical Literacy (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018). Her research focuses on historically underrepresented groups as constructed in texts with a particular focus on African and African diaspora literature and disability studies. Her most recent project focuses on the representations of Children and Deaf Cultures in literature and other media.

9. “When Objects and Subjects Braid”

Claudia Matus

In this presentation I question the notion of the ideal child that writes and reads. I argue that the “ideal child” is a passive and non-political approach to sustain acritical power relations, such as those present in the adult/child arrangement. The notion of an “ideal child” solidifies representational ideas of the subject understood as a static, empty, and ready to be filled container, completely separated from other things, from the object world, and “located” in space, not producing space. This disembodied notion of the “ideal child” is troubling particularly because it signals the acts of reading and writing as discrete activities carried out for themselves. Instead, I state that reading and writing are inevitably partial, performative, and often integrated to other activities (playing, dreaming, eating, etc.). The interplay of book-adult-child gives us the chance to rethink, for instance, traditional notions of “growing” (not necessarily growing up), and those affective relations among objects and subjects. As such, notions of the child who reads and writes must be interpellated.

Claudia Matus is Associate Professor at the College of Education at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. She leads the research group titled BioSocioCultural Inclusion in Education at the Center for Educational Justice. Her research interests include subjectivities and post-representational theories, space/time and movement theories, curriculum theory, and policy. In the last few years she has been publishing in these areas, especially on issues concerning the production of normalcy and difference in schools and universities. She is actually writing her coming edited book, “Ethnography & Policy: Entanglements of Normalcies and Differences in Schools” (Springer, forthcoming) where queer, feminist, and post-representational theories are used to explore on the implications of dominant ways of understanding the division between normal and different subjectivities to reiterate structures of inequality in schools.

10. “Gabriela Mistral betrayed by illustration”

Andrea Casals

In this presentation I engage in a comparative reading of Mistral’s poetic retellings of four traditional fairytales composed between 1924 and 1928, revealing her avant guard understanding of children’s rights and, particularly, girls’ status in society (Caperucita Roja, Blancanieve en la casa de los enanos,
La Cenicienta and La Bella Durmiente del Bosque). I elaborate a multi-layered comparative reading among Mistral's poems, the Grimm or Perrault preceding stories, popular film versions and the latest Chilean illustrated editions of Mistral's poetic retellings edited by the local publisher, Amanuta. Far from a romanticized idea of childhood, Mistral's poems do not conceal adult neglect or abuse, abandonment, or child labor, reveling an ethics of care and radical understanding of childhood. In her poetic recreation, Mistral embraces a feminist depiction of girls with agency; Mistral's girls escape princess stereotypes, presenting alternative gender models and a Latin American appropriation which Amanuta fails to convey.

**Andrea Casals:** I hold a PhD in Literature, an MA in Human Settlements and Environment and I am currently a postdoctoral fellow at Universidad Católica de Chile, researching on environmental awareness in millennial Chilean picture books for young readers where I am an Adjunct Assistant professor in the English Program. I am editor of the academic journal English Studies in Latin America(Universidad Católica) and I have published along the lines of green cultural studies in ISLE(Oxford Journals), Polifonía (Austin Peay University Scholarly Journal), Nueva Revista del Pacífico (Universidad Católica de Valparaíso), among other publications.

11. “Childhood, sense of agency and subversion: reading responses to postmodern books”

María José González & Constanza Ried

This paper presents some results of the research *First grade children reading responses to illustrated books in schools from three regions of Chile*, financed by the National Book and Reading Fund.

The image of children attentively listening to a story read aloud was the starting point of this research: What do they think when drawn into fiction? How do they relate to it? How to investigate the processes by which they appropriate a story, understand it, and incorporate it into their lives? What emotions, thoughts, and memories are triggered by these stories? Do different types of books result in different responses?

Based on these concerns, we decided to observe the way in which students faced different types of illustrated books, and particularly three postmodern picturebooks that critically address complex issues such as loneliness, abandonment and child abuse. How would children receive these “different” stories? Would they feel more comfortable with traditional stories, or would they be attracted to stories that would challenge their sensitivity when presenting daily problems in a more direct and realistic way? These questions and issues were at the origin of our interest in conducting research in the field of reading responses and literary conversation.

Our study focused on recording, categorizing and contrasting the reading responses of children between 6 and 7 years old, from vulnerable schools in three regions of our country, exposed to traditional and postmodern illustrated books. Based on the results obtained, we generated a model to approach reading responses, based on two general categories: **Analytical impulse** and **Imaginative impulse**.
Regarding postmodern books, we observed that the reading responses of children were more extensive, more reflective, deeper and more complex. In general, the students empathized with the subversive proposal of stories related to failures of the adult world, and they identified with the sense of agency shown by the protagonists.

The result of our work sheds light on the reactions of children to challenging themes, proposals and formats in postmodern children’s books. It also raises questions about mediation, objection and censorship that we as adults -main responsables in the selection of books children read- tend to exercise, often unconsciously.


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