



L-Università ta' Malta
Faculty of Arts

Department
of English

The Child and the Book Conference

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Abstracts

Postgraduate Symposium Programme

Tuesday, 24th May 2022

Panel 1 - Rebellion and Nationalist Movements

Chaired by *Katrin Dautel*

1. Grammeni-Eleni Pourni

In Search of the Hill's Monsters: Children in front of the Face of the Evil

It is well-known that history repeats itself. Greece the recent decade faced multiple economic, political and social problems. Prominent Greek children's and adolescents' writer Loty Petrovits-Andrutsopulu foresaw the danger of neo-Nazis movement revival almost twenty years ago. In her teen novel *The Monsters of the Hill* (2002), the writer describes the adventurous story of two teenage girls in their effort to help a little immigrant boy from Africa. At the same time, she refers to the parallel story of two German-Greek teenagers living in Germany, who have been attacked by German neo-Nazis. According to research, racist and extreme right or left movements and groups are present not only in times of social and economic crisis, but also in everyday life during periods of prosperity and growth. The need to belong somewhere, parents' neglect towards children, the simple and straight way of thinking are some of the most common reasons that young people are following these movements. The danger to reappear is always present, so everybody must stay alert and keep their eyes open.

The two young heroines prove with their stance that the protection of the vulnerable and sensitive social groups is everyone's obligation starting with children to adults and state principles.

Grammeni-Eleni is a graduate of the Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Ioannina. She holds an MSc in Children's Literature and Reading Promotion from the Pedagogical Department of the National and Capodistrian University of Athens. Her thesis was about folk tales and modern fairy tales. She has taken part in global and national congresses about children's and adults' literature. She has published articles in printed and electronic journals, as well as short stories and poems. Her scientific interests are children's and adults' literature, history, folk tradition, cinema arts and sociology.

2. Camila Andonaegui

Rebel with a cause: Exploring teen political activism portrayed in recent Chilean cinema and series

Amidst the social revolt of 2019, the referendum for a new constitution in 2020 and the election of the youngest President in Chilean history in 2021, this presentation analyses the narrative practices and discourses underlying the portrayal of adolescent characters involved in political activism in contemporary Chilean films and series. The paper adheres specifically to the participation of youth in their pursuit of social justice as well as their representation in cultural products such as movies and series. Using purposive sampling, this research centred on *Mala junta* (2016) as a case study and two other narratives, *La jauría* (2020) and *El reemplazante* (2012), as counterpoints for an in-depth analysis. The central themes and discussion points that arose during the investigation are related to the concepts of agency, rebelliousness and the representation of adolescence. The interpretation was executed in the light of critical content analysis and postcolonial theory, utilising a hermeneutic paradigm. As for the findings, this presentation suggests that adolescent characters involved in political activism in Chilean cinema and series are depicted in various dimensions. They are portrayed as defiant, active, critical, compliant and victims of a faulty system. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that teenage characters exhibit agency within a spectrum while they are politically involved. Nevertheless, in this case, agentic conduct and collective rebelliousness were observed to mature gradually. The range of agency and rebellion is dependent upon the underlying discourses about youth. Notably, the emphasis on private rebellion is exhibited in narratives that denote a more paternalistic ideology. On the contrary, the presentation of public rebellion is showcased in narratives that subvert or challenge the dominant discourses. Hence, this study attempts to expand the existing knowledge on adolescents by exploring their political activism in the realm of cultural products such as film and series and analysing the Chilean context to better comprehend this phenomenon with a broader belvedere.

Camila Andonaegui is an educator, poet and researcher in children's literature and media. She recently graduated from the first cohort of the Erasmus Mundus Master in children's literature, media and culture dictated by the University of Glasgow, Aarhus University and the Autonomous University of Barcelona. From her experience as a secondary teacher and her vast participation in the promotion of reading projects, she has reflected on the discourses regarding childhood and youth within the school

system and other educational spaces. Recently, Camila has been interested in the ideologies embedded in the depictions of adolescence in Latin American cinema.

3. Carla Plieth

'How far would you have gone?': Extremist Youth Movements Spiralling Out of Control in Adaptations of *The Wave*

A comparison of the depiction of the two youth movements in Todd Strasser's novel *The Wave* (1981) and its book-to-screen adaptations *The Wave* (2008) and *We are the Wave* (2021) that respectively occupy the two ends of extremism, fascism and anti-fascism.

Carla S. Plieth is a PhD student at the Centre for Research in Children's Literature at the University of Cambridge where she previously completed an MPhil in Education. She also holds a B.A. in English and German Studies from the University of Bremen, Germany. Her doctoral dissertation focuses on the negotiating of identity, particularly gender identity, sexual orientation, and adolescent status, of sexually abused boys in adolescent literature. Carla has an article on picturebooks addressing child sexual abuse in publication with Bookbird. Her research is funded by a doctoral scholarship from the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes in her native Germany.

Panel 2 – Child and Adolescent Voices

Chaired by Smiljana Narancić Kovac̃

1. Michael Brodski

Sacred Child or Agential Individual? - The Ambivalence of Representing Greta Thunberg in Picture Books about Climate Change Activism

Analysing the case studies *Greta Thunberg* (2020) (part of the biographical series *Little People, Big Dreams*) as well as *Greta and the Giants* (2019), this paper aims to demonstrate both the points of potential and pitfalls related to including the non-fiction reference of Greta Thunberg as the centre of otherwise fictitious picture book narratives. In *Little People, Big Dreams*, Thunberg is portrayed as the lone offspring of today's climate justice movement, thereby neglecting the issue of the aim itself but rather putting focus on her as the glorified origin. A therefore paradigmatic illustration of the book shows several messages written in different languages in regard to today's children's and young adults' activist stance which seem to emerge out of her head, unmistakably depicting her as their ontological centre and thus implicitly devaluing all the different transnational voices. With further close reading, this paper will show an inherent danger of a specific adult interest as a display of moral investments in Thunberg as a medial phenomenon by engaging in the Western cultural tradition of sacralising children, where the child functions as a symbolic manifestation for higher values (e.g. moral purity) transcending its lived experience. On the other hand, *Greta and the Giants* can be read in quite a contrary, rather productive way: The narration seems to rather position Greta as a

communicative link for solving the stated problems rather than their sole solution. By employing the new materialist concept of agential realism, where “agency is not an attribute but the ongoing reconfigurings of the world” (Barad 2007), a close reading will demonstrate how it is rather the protagonist Greta’s mediating function (with animals of a forest, the adult-representing giants and also other diverse children) which is mostly depicted via the picture book rather than her individualistic persona like in *Little People, Big Dreams*.

Michael Brodski is a PhD candidate at the University of Mainz (Germany), where he also worked as an associate lecturer. He is working on a thesis on cinematic spectatorship in relation to various portrayals of childhood and child figures. Michael holds a MA in Film Studies and a BA in Film Studies and Philosophy. His main research interests include children’s film and intermedial representations of childhood and children’s culture, affect theory, Soviet and Russian cinema as well as fairytale and folklore studies. He works as a co-editor for the Journal for Fantastic Research.

2. Magdalena Kuczaba-Flisak

Missing Voices. A Space for Children that No One Asks About

Little Girl from the Shadow (2014) by Jan Karp and Marta Ignerska, published by Two Sisters in the series *A Young Connoisseur*, was inspired by Andrzej Wroblewski's shocking *Execution* painting (1949). In this book, the helplessness of the victims in the face of imminent death is juxtaposed with the exposure of the child's body. Additionally, characters are sensitive to the demands of adults to which they must conform. This paper explores the dualities of powerlessness and agency in contemporary children's literature through the lens of art and literature. It examines how the picture book displays social barriers to children's activism. *Little Girl from the Shadow* belongs to the category of books confronting the audience with difficult questions - this paper examines how art and books can be transformed into literary messages that address children's encounters with complex social problems of the 21st century. All literature, including children's literature, is political. Where are the voices of those who are actually excluded in modern society? Is it appropriate for child activists to claim the voices of those who are unable to speak for themselves? Should this be considered to be a utopian project without any chance of implementation? Which should remain the exclusive domain of art (including literature), that from the earliest times has spoken with the voices of those without the right to vote? Should this area be supervised by adults?

Magdalena Kuczaba-Flisak - PhD student at the Faculty of Polish Studies at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland. She is a member of the International Research Society for Children’s Literature (IRSCL) and the Polish Section of IBBY. Her scientific interests include children’s literature and its connections with digital humanities.

3. Anna Szirák

“We look like girls playing”: Girlhood as the Female Artist’s Constitutive Trauma in Margaret Atwood’s *Cat’s Eye*

The paper is a study of childhood and more specifically girlhood in Margaret Atwood’s *Cat’s Eye* (1988). The novel depicts the middle-aged painter, Elaine Risley’s return to Toronto for a retrospective exhibition, and her arrival unlocks a series of memories of her toxic friendship with her peers. Cordelia and her friends have created a quasi-dictatorial yet addictive regime under the guise of playing, in which Elaine has been the target of their brutal girlish aggression and bullying. The abuse has physically and mentally altered Elaine and through her remembrance, it becomes clear that her childhood trauma continues to influence her adult identity both as a woman and an artist. The recurring motifs of pretending and playacting enframe her narration and the very ways through which she views her world, consisting of distrust of other women and hatred for mother figures. As Elaine faces her early trauma, *Cat’s Eye* sketches a profane version of the Holy Trinity, in which the adult woman and the girl child encounter and become one entity, a kind of ageing Madonna by the end of the narrative. By regarding Atwood’s novel as a *Künstlerroman* in which girlhood affects the layers of the *Bildung* plot, this paper explores how *Cat’s Eye* situates the discourse of girls’ childlike relationships at its epicentre, and through it mirrors the crises of today’s world, such as Christianity, terror and terrorism, and Western traditions of art. In Elaine’s story, the crisis of the child not only maintains but explains the crisis of the adult realm; and through the vantage points of girlhood studies, gender studies and cultural studies, the paper ultimately claims that girlhood and the figure of the girl child are an apt cultural metaphor for this crisis.

Anna Szirák is a 1st-year PhD Student of English language literature in the Doctoral School of Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Debrecen, Hungary. Her field of research is concerned with girlhood studies, under the realms of gender studies and cultural studies. In her upcoming dissertation, she is focusing on the representations of girlhood in literature and film, with the understanding that girlhood is a productive motif which enriches texts and literary analysis, despite having been insofar largely ignored. In addition to girlhood studies, the representation of the literary female double is another research interest of hers.

Panel 3 - The Role of Books in Awarding Power

Chaired by Ana Margarida Ramos

1. Megan Farr

Exploring the Tir na n’Og Children’s Book Awards: Language, Identity and Power in Children’s and YA Books from Wales

The Tir na n’Og Children’s Book Awards have been running since 1976 and celebrate the best children’s and YA literature published in the Welsh language and in the English language with

an authentic Welsh setting. Administered by the Books Council of Wales and sponsored by CILIP Cymru Wales, the shortlisted books hold up a mirror to children in Wales, reflecting back to them their language, landscape, heritage and history. These books have the power to influence children's growing identity as a reader, as well as help develop the writers of the future who can play an active role in constructing this identity and influencing power. But how do you balance the ethical and aesthetic decisions of these awards? Who are the gatekeepers setting the boundaries and selecting the books? What role do Welsh authors see themselves as having through writing in Welsh and writing about Wales? And how is this reflected in the awards? How is it recorded by them? How are these books promoted in Wales and outside Wales? Both in the rest of the UK and internationally? How well will these books travel? This paper sets out to answer some of these questions through a historical overview of the awards and by exploring two recently shortlisted YA novels that examine language and identity. *Llyfr Glas Nebo/The Blue Book of Nebo* (2018) by Manon Steffan Ros is a dystopian novella written in Welsh, in which a mother and son aim to record and preserve the Welsh language through their diary, *The Blue Book of Nebo*. *The Short Knife* by Elen Caldecott (Anderson Press 2020) is a historical novel written in English, set in 5th century Britain which examines the influence of Anglo-Saxon culture and language and the emergence of a new Welsh identity.

Megan Farr has an MA (Hons) Degree in English Language and Literature from the University of Glasgow and is currently researching 'Strategic Action for Internationalisation of the Children's Publishing Sector in Wales' for a PhD at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David funded by KESS2 European Social Fund and sponsored by the Books Council of Wales. Research areas cover Welsh children's literature, comparative children's literature, translation studies and publishing studies. She is Publicity and Marketing Manager for Firefly Press and has extensive experience working in children's publishing and for literature promotion charities in the UK. She speaks Italian and French and is currently learning Welsh.

2. Natanae Sarai Garcia Santos

The Globalisation of the National Child: Jose Vasconcelos's *Classical Readings for Children in Mexico*

This presentation takes into consideration the two volumes of *Lecturas Cásicas Para Niños* (1924, *Classical Readings for Children*), written by the writer and politician Jose Vasconcelos (1882-1959), one of the most influential characters in the development, and international positioning, of post-revolutionary Mexico. In particular, I analyse an anthology of world literary texts, as a case study of his editorial work and interests in positioning Mexico on the global scene. This presentation also takes into consideration the changes that the concept of childhood underwent at the beginning of the century, and how the process of cultural production, in a capitalist era, modified the ethical and aesthetic concerns of the time. His role as a cultural ambassador and head of the Ministry of Public Education (1921), allowed him to build the foundations of a complex and debatable education integrationist project that, nonetheless, would bring an edifying image of Mexican citizenship through a politicised childhood, as the cultural future of the nation and Latin America.

Sarai Garcia was born in Mexico City. After earning her degree, she worked on the editorial staff at Penguin Random House. She has published several literary reviews and articles in Mexico City, and organised events on Latin American contemporary writers, translators, and filmmakers at the BU Pride Film Festival and the Center for Latin American Studies at the Pardee School of Global Studies. As a PhD candidate, her research focuses on the impact of globalisation, nationalism, culture, media, and the avant-garde movements on 20th-century children's literature in Mexico, and Latin American Literature.

3. Pooja Yadav

Remembering (Loss) of Childhood in War: An Analysis of Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*

Analysing fiction through questions of children's psychology, linked to larger societal and 'grown up' issues of class, ethnicity, and race helps delineate themes of exclusion, conflict, and violence. (Re)locating Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003) in an intersection of psychology and literary studies outlines the juxtaposition of two alternate childhood realities of Amir and Hasan, who live in the same house, where one is the rich employer's son, and the other, of the servant. The evident class differences in pre-war Afghanistan set in the 1970s are tangent on racial and ethnic lines, where the Hazara community are marginalised by the other powerful groups in Kabul, such as the Pashtuns. In my paper, I argue Hosseini uses the form of the novel as a site to advocate for children's rights in war-torn Afghanistan. Through the (re)creation of the figure of the child, the novel exposes the discrimination and various levels of hierarchies prevalent in Afghan society at that time through the eyes of children in the greater half of the novel. The tool of using the 'innocent' lens of childhood captures the nuances of Amir's and Hasan's character. Amir, due to his privilege, possesses power over Hasan and his life. The novel raises questions of children not always being completely 'innocent' and often being complicit in oppressive mechanisms by historicising their experience in an infamously turbulent time in Afghan history. Moreover, it articulates questions on the battle for human rights in the region, where often children's trauma is overlooked.

Pooja Yadav is a graduate student at the Department of Psychology at the University of Delhi. She completed her B.A. (Hons) in Psychology from Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi. Her research interests are in the field of Clinical Psychology and Cross-Cultural Psychology. She has a keen interest in the interdisciplinary nature of literature, gender and psychology. She grew up in Turkmenistan, England, Nepal, Australia and Bangladesh before relocating to India for university.

Panel 4 - The Role of Books in Awarding Power (Part 2)

Chaired by *Dorota Michulka*

1. Guilherme Magri da Rocha

Virginia Woolf as/in/and Children's Literature

This study was carried out to overview the probably lesser-known facet of novelist, essayist, publisher, and critic Virginia Woolf (1882-1941): her participation in children's literature and culture. In addition to writing stories for children, Woolf has already been turned into a fictional children's picturebook character, besides having her life told in illustrated books. This presentation covers these publications and discusses their modernist status through their radical (as defined by Reynolds, Mickenberg, and Nel) and challenging (as defined by Ommundsen, Haaland, and Kümmerling-Meibauer) potential towards their readers and within themselves (as experiments in literature), focusing on how they might broaden their reader's horizons of expectations through the development of their narrative imagination.

Guilherme Magri da Rocha is a Ph.D. student at the São Paulo State University (UNESP, Brazil), and currently a visiting student at the University of Aveiro (UA, Portugal). He's a São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) fellow, developing a project on the relationship between literary Modernism and children's literature.

2. Angela Patricia Melo Arévalo

Agency and Migration: Representation of Childhood in the Graphic Novel *Zenobia*

My presentation will discuss the concept of agency and the representation of childhood in the graphic novel *Zenobia* (2016) written by Morten Dürr and illustrated by Lars Horneman. Drawing upon Arizpe's (2019) idea of 'spacio-temporal distortion' in contemporary narratives of forced migration, I have identified three key aspects in the configuration of *Zenobia* (2016) which are significant for understanding the construction of the child character and its agency. These themes can be organised under the categories of play, food, and story. Such elements provide substantial evidence of the model of childhood underlying the novel and the agency attributed to the child protagonist.

Angela holds a B.A. in Education and a Master's degree in Communication and Media. She has experience in the field of education in a variety of international settings such as France, Trinidad and Tobago, and Colombia. She is also a recent graduate of the Erasmus Mundus Master in Children's Literature, Media, and Culture delivered by the University of Glasgow (Scotland), Aarhus University (Denmark), and Tilburg University (The Netherlands). Her research interests revolve around picturebooks, Colombian children's literature, childhood, multimodal literacy, and wordless narratives.

3. Emma Tueller Stone

Ask Before Biting: Supernatural Teens Encounter Progressive Politics in the Monster Hearts Manual

I will look at the game-play manual for *Monster Hearts* (2012, 2017), a table-top roleplaying game similar to *Dungeons and Dragons*, based on the tropes of early 21st-century young adult fantasy novel depictions of supernatural creatures. Focusing specifically on the segments in the manual that specify appropriate player-to-player interactions, I will discuss how different academic ideologies (queer theory, camp aesthetics, post-humanism) and political perspectives that centre on marginalised people have combined to re-create YA romance narratives.

Emma Tueller Stone is an MPhil student at Cambridge University researching the intersections of fantasy, queer theory, pop culture, theology and monsters. Her current dissertation research focuses on early-aughties vampire fiction, but she will enthusiastically tell anyone that she studies Twilight professionally. She is also the Research Communications Officer for the Cambridge Education Research Journal (CERJ). In her spare time, she's a dedicated plant mom who hosts a tragic (yet compelling) plant funeral. Find her @EmmaTueller everywhere on social media.

Panel 5 - The Power of Crafting Citizenship

Chaired by Megan Farr

1. Sadia Zafrin Lia

Animation Character Meena: Journey to Be a World Citizen

UNICEF introduced *Meena* (1993), an animated film series in South Asia that represents a non-western view of childhood with its agency and activism. In my paper, I will seek how *Meena* can be used to promote children's activism and agency not as a South Asian girl but as a global citizen. I will use a theoretical lens of Martha Nussbaum's "world citizenship" (1997) and Kristina Anne Bentley's "alternative view of childhood" (2006). For appropriating the concept of agency in *Meena*, I will also borrow the idea of A. James & A. James (2008).

Sadia Zafrin Lia (she/her), an Erasmus Mundus Scholar, is doing her second Masters in Children Literature, Media and Culture in University of Glasgow. Her first Masters was in English Literature from University of Dhaka. She has been teaching as a Senior Lecturer in English Department in Daffodil International University, Bangladesh. Currently, she is in the Reading Promotion pathway in Tilburg University, Netherlands. She is also working as an intern in the project CAFYR (Constructing Age For Young Readers) at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. Her hobby is travelling, cooking and painting. Her research interest includes crossover picture books, children's poetry and nursery rhymes and nonsense rhymes, Japanese manga.

2. Lily Stone

Tactile Picturebooks: 'Transmediation' and Constructions of Childhood

Tactile picture books are produced in a variety of contexts, from novelty books to books designed with blind and partially sighted readers in mind. The creation of such books relies simultaneously on the haptic and the visual, and involves a kind of translation or transmediation between different senses, which are often understood as discreetly packaged. Picture books can of course be expanded beyond the edges of the page into something more performance-based, for example in the form of oral storytelling involving props and puppets, and collections of objects like story sacks. Yet, the insistent reliance on the book format in the production of tactile picture books casts the book as a site of ritual, as the enactment of a set of practices around an object. The reasoning behind the need for the transmediation of this ritual is manifold but it is tied up in understandings of childhood; the picture book allows children to be understood, or read, as enacting childhood, a category bound up in understandings of citizenship, to which participation and literacy, both textual and visual, are central.

Lily Stone is a first-year PhD student in Education at the University of Cambridge. In 2021, Lily completed her MPhil in Arts, Creativity and Education, in which she explored the epistemics of touch through a collaborative arts project. Her doctoral research focuses on tactile picture books. She explores the practices and assumptions involved in their production and is interested in how we understand the haptic in storytelling practices.

3. Anastasia Patera

Literature as a Framework for SEL

Children's literature has a big impact on the development of children's personalities by displaying ideas, moral values, problem-solving techniques, emotional management and relationships among the protagonists, all of which contribute to the mental, social and emotional development of young children. Social and Emotional Learning is defined as "the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions". The Erasmus+ project "Literature as a framework for S.E.L." has been created for educators who want to learn more about SEL and implement SEL lessons through the use of children's literature in their classes. This project intends to develop and apply a preventive intervention methodology that will help students who are low on emotional well-being to acquire the socio-emotional skills they need to achieve their goals. The main objective is to ingrain a love for reading in students all over Europe and connect school classes to libraries, museums and other cultural institutions where the project activities could be carried out. The multi-culturally layered European context offers a complex vision and experience and a perfect frame for the development of ideas and activities.

Anastasia Patera is an English teacher, teacher trainer and school life counsellor. She holds a Master in Children's Literature from the Department of Preschool Education of The University of Thessaly. She is interested in Bibliotherapy and its application in education. She has taken part in many conferences

and seminars/workshops for teachers in Greece and Cyprus and is the co-author of the book "Filanagnosia (love for reading) and socio-emotional development of children" together with Professor of University of Thessaly Tasoula Tsilimeni. She has been certified in EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) with expertise in Preventing Early School Leaving by the Cervantes Institute in Spain. She has been a partner to the Laboratory of Discourse and Culture of the University of Thessaly and a member of the research team of the School Psychology department of the University of Crete.

Panel 6 - A Sense of Pride

Chaired by **Andrea Davidson**

1. Liliana Santos

***We Are Still Here* - Native American Childhood and Activism in Children's Literature**

Through the analysis of children's picturebook *We Are Still Here* (2021), this paper aims to examine how Native American childhood is strongly associated with activism, as well as to reflect upon the importance of having this minority group claim its voice and encourage child activism through a #ownvoices author, Traci Sorell.

Liliana Santos is a PhD candidate in Modern Languages: Cultures, Literatures, and Translation (American Studies) at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Coimbra, Portugal. Her PhD project focuses on her main interests: children's and young adult literature, matters of representation, inclusive literature, and political activism. Entitled "Informed Children, Empowered Citizens: Silence, Voice, Gender and Racial Representations in Effe Lee Newsome, Virginia Hamilton, and Jacqueline Woodson", her project aims at the activist role of children's and young adult literature which give voice to subaltern groups, providing positive models against discourses of power, such as racism and sexism.

2. Kaja Grimsgaard and Hilde Dybik

Why Everybody Counts: Agency and Impact on Life

A part of being human is understanding oneself as an individual and as part of a community. The award-winning picture book *Everybody Counts* ([Alle Sammen Teller], Roskifte 2018) shows that there is no contradiction between these aspects. The picture book calls attention to the diversity in our society by depicting a wide range of both children and adults in a variety of contexts and situations. The child as a reader is invited to play an active role in filling the gaps in the text (Iser 1978). Using picture book analysis, we want to explore how the interplay between text and image creates unlimited possibilities for interpretation (Nikolajeva & Scott 2001). Unpacking the stories requires an explorative reader able to interpret a complex iconotext. Further, we argue that the book promotes active citizenship and child agency (Bandura 1977), depending on the children to make their own interpretations and choices in the interaction with the text. Also, the theme of the book emphasises child agency. The protest march, which is a central motif, is a concrete expression of a democratic society where everyone has free speech and has the right to express their opinion.

Hilde Dybvik, associate professor at Oslo Metropolitan University. Kaja Bjølgerud Grimsgaard, assistant professor at Oslo Metropolitan University.

They both work at the Department of Early Childhood Education in the Faculty of Education and International Studies (LUI) at Oslo Metropolitan University. Dybvik's research interests are particularly concerned with the position of children's literature in kindergarten, and challenging picture books in kindergarten and in early childhood education. Additionally, she is a critic of children's literature for many years. Grimsgaard's research interests are particularly concerned with nonfiction picture books. Also, she is concerned with challenging picture books in kindergarten and in early childhood education.

3. **Valentina Baeli**

LGBTQIA+ Movements and Active Citizenship: A Survey on the Recent Children and Young Adults Literature Within the Italian Context

Within the discussions on human rights and gender equality, LGBTQIA+ movements are working hard to claim legitimacy and to participate actively in the development of the wider social community within which they live with their own identities. Actually, the redefinition of family structures, the fluidification of gender roles and the increasing visibility of LGBTQIA+ community are advancing further to the centre of public debate, highlighting new issues in the educational fields. Even in Italy, the voices of the LGBTQIA+ movements and associations are rising consistently, calling out to be heard. Namely, many social networks and associations related to the LGBTQIA+ world are currently coming up to claim visibility, promoting civil issues and demanding the recognition of democratic rights based on gender equality and active citizenship. Associations like "Famiglie arcobaleno", "Agedo", "Arcigay" and "Bossy" are working to promote both civil rights and educational interventions to support a culture based on gender equality. On the side of educational activism, it is interesting to notice how these associations promote books and readings for children and the young public strictly linked to these issues. The aim of my presentation is to analyse some of the main texts and readings proposed by these associations to better understand how they imagine these movements' respective cultures and what kind of pedagogical values they want to share. To reach these goals, my analysis is an attempt to follow the fil rouge that keeps connecting LGBTQIA+ movements and the contemporary children's literature by closely examining several popular texts suggested and published by these associations that are highlighting different ways of thinking and talking about gender.

Valentina Baeli is a PhD student at the Department of Educational Sciences, University of Catania. Her main research fields are: the studies in children's literature and in the history of the pedagogical publishing, focused on the relationship between education and gender identity; The vicissitudes of masculinity in postmodernity analysed in relation to the contemporary children's and young adult literature; reading education and its problems in postmodernity.

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