

Editorial: Dynamic encounters

In the last number of *CCL*, the first of two issues devoted to studies of Canadian illustrators and picture books, the articles focused on how theory from a spectrum of disciplines could suggest useful approaches to specific texts. While continuing to provide close readings of Canadian picture books and other illustrated texts, most of the articles in this number widen the discussion, by placing the texts they deal with in the context of the skills and needs of young audiences.

Dave Jenkinson's survey of Canadian picture books which have been subjected to censorship attempts shows just how often adults make the incorrect assumption that they can know exactly how children will understand the books they read. In articles that test that assumption, Ted McGee analyzes how alphabet books encourage beginning readers to make important connections between words and pictures, and our French contributor, Flore Gervais, describes how some actual kindergarten and grade six readers make sense of—i.e. translate and transform into pictures—the books they experience.

Tim Blackmore's discussion of the comics artist Dave Sim raises questions about comprehension and young readers in a different way. Sim's audience, once mostly adolescents, is now mostly adults. Blackmore's article suggests much about the shifting boundaries between children's literature and literature for adults, and the many levels and kinds of response made possible by both simple and complex texts.

All these articles—indeed, all the articles in both issues—confirm what Doug Thorpe suggested in his discussion of his young daughter's reading in the last issue: a picture book is "both something to be known and something to be explored not a static object to be controlled, but the site of a dynamic encounter."

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