

Call for Papers: Conflict and Controversy

IBBY UK/NCRCL MA CONFERENCE, 13 NOVEMBER 2010 Roehampton University, London.

Children's literature has always courted controversy, from eighteenth-century debates concerning the dangers of fairy tales to publications of the last fifty years—such as *Falling* (1995) by Anne Provoost or *Doing It* (2003) by Melvin Burgess—that further challenge notions of what is suitable reading material for young readers. Nor can children's authors stand aside from the conflicts and political debates of their age, since these will resonate at some level in all writing for the next generation. This conference will address controversial subject matter in children's fiction; the fictional coverage of national and international conflicts, and question any lingering assumptions that children's literature is, or should be, apolitical.

The conference will include keynote presentations by well-known writers, publishers and academics. Proposals are welcomed for workshop sessions (lasting about 20 minutes) on the following or other relevant issues/areas from any period in the history of international children's literature:

- representations of war - from a historical perspective, or thinking about the way in which children's books engage with contemporary/ongoing conflicts;
- generational conflict - an area of conflict that has been explored throughout the history of children's literature and that crosses literary form and genre;
- sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll: counterculture in children's literature;
- the engagement with gender/sexuality in books for young people;
- depictions of violence - in prose fiction, picture books or graphic novels;
- the way in which books challenge or subvert prevailing constructions of childhood;
- dystopian children's literature;
- controversies ensuing from perceived tensions between authors' lives/biographies and their child audience;
- breaking formal boundaries - considering alternative narrative forms such as experimental novels or picture books; electronic narratives; fan fiction etc.;
- historical perspective and its impact on the subversive/controversial nature of children's literature - the way in which ideological shifts can generate new readings or/ reactions to children's books;
- controversies thrown up at different points in the history of children's literature;
- the multifarious ways in which children's literature has engaged with religious or political issues;
- the ways in which children's literature has broken/challenged boundaries, traditions and taboos.

We welcome contributions from interested academics and other researchers in any of these areas. Brief accounts of the papers that are presented at the conference will be published in the Spring 2011 issue of *IBBYLink*, the journal of British IBBY.

The deadline for proposals is 31st August 2010. Please email a 200-word abstract (for a 20-minute paper), along with a short biography and affiliation to Laura Atkins: L.Atkins@roehampton.ac.uk