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Editorial: The Global Reach of Children's Literature and ELT
– from BANA Countries to the Majority World

Scholars have criticized for at least two decades that ELT textbooks too often concentrate their cultural references on what have been termed BANA countries – Britain, North America and Australasia (Holliday 1994, p. 3). This in no way reflects the reality of English use throughout the world in the Anglosphere, in other countries of the West where English is not the majority language, or in the Majority World. The Anglosphere is an expression often used to cover nations where English is the native language, including the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, Ireland and New Zealand. The Majority World encompasses the developing nations of the continents Asia, Africa and Latin America – increasingly known more neutrally as the Majority World – also because this is where the majority of people live. The term was first introduced by Shahidul Alam, a Bangladeshi social activist and photographer promoting Fair Trade Photography <http://majorityworld.com/>.

Already in 2004, David Crystal reported in *The Guardian*,

India currently has a special place in the English language record books – as the country with the largest English-speaking population in the world. Ten years ago that record was held by the US. Not any more. [...] In 1997 an India Today survey suggested that about a third of the population had the ability to carry on a conversation in English. [...] And given the steady increase in English learning since 1997 in schools and among the upwardly mobile, we must today be talking about at least 350 million. This is more than the combined English-speaking populations of Britain and the US.

Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer writes in her review of *The Routledge Companion to International Children's Literature*, in this issue: 'Besides several African countries, where English is still the official administrative language (e.g. Nigeria, South Africa, and Zimbabwe), English children's books also appear in Hawai'i, India, Malaysia, and some countries in the

Caribbean area, such as the Bahamas and Jamaica, side by side with children's books published in indigenous languages' (pp. 63-64). The need to balance English languages and literatures for outward-looking empowerment with support for indigenous languages and literatures is a constant theme with a number of children's literature and ELT researchers. Both research areas increasingly dialogue with (post)colonialism, plurilingualism and the support of home languages and multiple literacies (in all nuances of meaning), as well as English and the common classroom language. There have been several studies of linguistic imperialism in ELT: Suresh Canagarajah, for example, argues that for L2 speakers both appropriating English *and* maintaining their vernacular(s) will support empowerment and linguistic competence in the culturally hybrid postmodern world that confronts them: 'The maintenance of polyvocality with a clear awareness of their socio-ideological location empowers them to withstand the totalitarian tendencies – of local nationalist regimes and Western multinational agencies – enforced through uniformity of thought and communication' (1999, p. 197).

A critical interest in children's literature from around the world is a recurring theme in this issue of the *CLELEjournal*, as well as in previous issues. Another recurring theme is the fantasy genre, which often creates a secondary world with echoes of the real world seen from other perspectives. Bridge building and intercultural learning are further *CLELEjournal* themes, inspired by the increasing hybridity and fluidity of many cultural identities in the twenty-first century. Finally, critical literacy is a dominant theme, connecting children's literature and ELT research. In her article in this issue, Grit Alter demonstrates that all texts are value-laden. This has been noted by ELT and children's literature scholars alike, who recommend, with Alter, 'appreciative and resistant, ideology-critical readings' (Delanoy, 2018, p. 143) and emphasize 'when choosing texts for language education, it makes sense to include many experiences from around the world, so that no one particular perspective predominates' (Bland, 2018, p. 3).

Narrative imagination is the ability to inhabit a strange world for a time and share in it cognitively and emotionally, and this is the 'promise of literature' according to Martha Nussbaum:

It is for this reason that literature is so urgently important for the citizen, as an expansion of sympathies that real life cannot cultivate sufficiently. It is the political promise of literature that it can transport us, while remaining ourselves, into the life of another, revealing similarities but also profound differences between the life and thought of that other and myself and making them comprehensible, or at least nearly comprehensible. (Nussbaum, 1998, p. 111)

In the first article in this issue, Jessica Hanssen presents a fascinating way of employing a work of fantasy in teacher education. Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights* won the Carnegie of Carnegies in 2007, naming the book as the best-loved winner of the Carnegie Medal for an outstanding work of children's fiction since the inauguration of the prize in 1936. With 'Interpreting the *Dæmonicon*: A Decade of Teaching Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights*', Hanssen gives an account of a project that reveals the discovery potential for future teachers as they accompany the protagonist, Lyra, on her journey (internal as well as external) and with a quest of their own – toward becoming an English teacher. Hanssen makes interesting and creative use of the *dæmon* concept, invented by Pullman, to help student teachers confront 'unanswered questions about their adult identity, including their future profession, and [...] help them form a fixed, adult image of their experiences, talents, and potential, in a way that feels authentically in the moment' (p. 4).

Grit Alter's paper follows, 'Integrating Postcolonial Culture(s) into Primary English Language Teaching'. Referring to the ELT textbooks produced in Germany, Alter criticizes in her paper that 'textbooks for primary schools mainly focus on the UK and the USA and offer rather superficial and stereotypical content'. This represents an even narrower focus than the BANA countries referred to above. With Nussbaum, Alter argues that 'picturebooks can enhance primary-aged children's intercultural communicative competence by developing empathy and making them curious about further English-speaking places around the world'. At the same time, she discusses and presents criteria for the careful selection of picturebooks for

ELT, to avoid books that discriminate against dimensions of identity and offer inappropriate representations of cultures.

The next paper, 'The Use of Children's Literature in ELT in Brazil', demonstrates how children's literature is used in a number of ELT educational scenarios. Here, the authors Dilys Rees, Danilo Pereira and Layssa Mello refer to 'critical interculturality, which we define as a space of encounter and of re-creation which opens up new alternatives, categories, and horizons' (p. 46). Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer's book review introduces *The Routledge Companion to International Children's Literature* (Ed. Stephens with Belmiro, Curry, Lifang & Motawy, 2017). This is an ambitious, wide-reaching and innovative volume. It offers an introduction also to English-language children's books 'published in regions and countries that are usually neglected in academia and educational circles' (p. 67).

Our feature, Recommended Reads, is supported for this issue by the educators Helena Lopes, Sandie Mourão, Vicki Palmquist and Claudia Rey – the books they present are recent picturebooks ideal for sharing with different age groups. We are always grateful for these recommendations, and would like to take this opportunity to encourage colleagues to make further recommendations with a view to showcasing literature from lesser represented parts of the world.

As always, we thank our contributors and all who have been involved in creating this issue.

Happy reading!

Janice Bland and Sandie Mourão

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