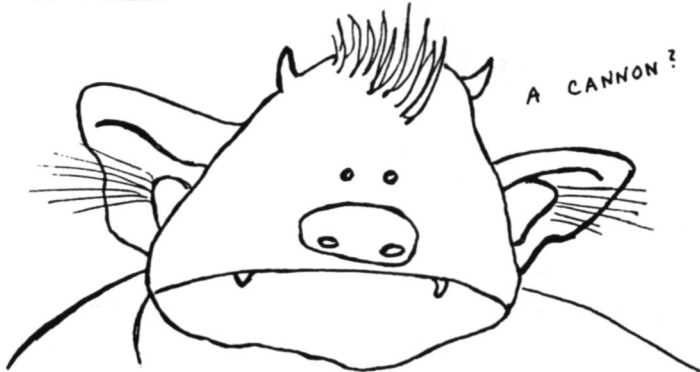


## Children's Literature Canon Comment

The article about developing a canon of children's literature that appeared in the Summer 1980 Quarterly ended with a request for comments and suggestions. We have received both. Pat Pflieger, English Department, University of Minnesota had these questions:

First, why is Fungus the Bogeyman on the list? For historical reasons? I have read the book and did not find it of much interest. Also, why is Edward Eager represented, but not Jane Langton, whose fantasies are of similar quality?

Deidre Ann Johnson shared Pat Pflieger's objection to Fungus; she says, "I cannot see any literary or historical value in the book." (My defense of the book is threefold: I like it, my five-year-old son likes it, and I think it marvellously evokes a strain of childlike behavior that rarely appears in children's books. I willingly admit that the first two of those reasons are utterly beside the point; but I stand by the third. On the other hand, I'd be willing to replace Fungus with either The Snowman or Father Christmas, or both.)



Adapted, with apologies, from Raymond Briggs' Fungus the Bogeyman.

Both Pflieger and Johnson suggested additions to the list. Pflieger's are mainly historical:

- H Jacob Abbott--the Rollo books
- H Samuel Goodrich--the Peter Parley books
- H Chapbooks--Guy of Warwicke, Tom Thumbe, etc.
- H Charles Kingsley--The Water-babies
- H Burnett--Little Lord Fauntleroy
- H Maria Edgeworth--The Parent's Assistant, the Harry & Lucy books
- Catherine Sinclair--Holiday House
- Jean Ingelow--Mopsa the Fairy
- Johann Wyss--The Swiss Family Robinson
- H John Foxe--The Book of Martyrs

- H The Babee's Book and other medieval courtesy books
- H Madame de Genlis--Tales of the Castle  
Johnson's suggestions are more extensive:  
Picture books

- Alexander, Martha, various titles
- Lenski, Lois, various titles
- Brown, Margaret Wise, various titles
- H Greene, Carla, career titles
- Kellogg, Steven, various titles
- Munari, Bruno, various titles
- Vigna, Judith, various titles
- Wells, Rosemary, various titles
- H Wright, Dare, Lonely Doll series
- Bright, Robert, Georgie series
- Peet, Bill, various titles

### Fantasy

- Butterworth, Oliver, The Enormous Egg;  
The Trouble with Jenny's Ear
- Godden, Rumer, The Doll's House
- Curry, Jane Louise, various titles
- H Gruelle, Johnny, Raggedy Ann series
- Packard, Edward, Choose Your Own Adventure series
- McKillip, Patricia, Forgotten Beasts of Eld
- Langton, Jane, Diamond in the Window
- Nichols, Ruth, Walk Out of the World
- H Burgess, Thornton, various titles
- Lampman, Evelyn, City Under the Back Steps
- Uttley, Alison, Traveller in Time
- Ormondroyd, Edward, Time at the Top
- Heinlein, Robert, various titles
- H Appleton, Victor, Tom Swift series
- Appleton II, Victor, Tom Swift, Jr. series
- Lang, Andrew, various titles
- Wrightson, Patricia, Nargun and the Stars
- Lagerlof, Selma, various titles
- Norton, Andre, various titles

### Realistic fiction

- Snyder, Zilpha Keatley, various titles
- Holland, Isabelle, Man Without a Face
- Peck, Robert Newton, Soup
- Peck, Richard, various titles
- Blume, Judy, various titles (not just Margaret)
- Robertson, Keith, Henry Reed series
- Taylor, Sidney, All of a Kind Family series
- Hentoff, Nat, I'm Really Dragged, But Nothing Gets Me Down
- H Lenski, Lois, Strawberry Girl
- Donovan, John, I'll Get There, It Better Be Worth the Trip
- Neville, Emily, It's Like This, Cat
- Danziger, Paula, Can You Sue your Parents

for Malpractice?

- Lowry, Lois, various titles  
Duncan, Lois, various titles  
Cleary, Beverly, Henry Huggins series  
Conford, Ellen, Dreams of Victory  
H Perkins, Lucy Fitch, Twins series  
H Hope, Laura Lee, Bobbsey Twins series  
Warner, Gertrude, Boxcar Children (this is too popular to omit)  
Christopher, Matt, sports titles  
Haywood, Caroline, Betsy series  
Lovell, Maud Hart, Betsy-Tacy series  
Cavanna, Betty, various titles  
duJardin, Rosamund, various titles  
Kerr, M. E., Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack  
Kerr, Judith, When Hitler Stole Pink

#### Rabbit

- H Porter, Gene Stratton, various titles  
H Fielding, Sarah, The Governess  
H Edgeworth, Maria  
H Trimmer, Sarah  
H chapbooks

(While I think many of these are excellent suggestions, I object to the vagueness of "various titles." In naming specific titles we force ourselves to make subtle but important critical distinctions.)

Ethel Heins, editor of Horn Book, made these comments:

Unanimity of opinion would be neither desirable nor possible, but I did find Perry Nodelman's list a bit peculiar - as I'm sure other people have also done. Nevertheless, the project itself is certainly engaging -- and worthwhile.

Mrs. Heins offers for consideration some lists of her own: "Fifty Good Stories," "Fifty Good Picture Books," "Thirty Mid-Century Children's Books Every Adult Should Know," and "Fifty Children's Books Too Good to Miss." These and other lists may be ordered from The Horn Book Inc., Park Square Building, Boston MA 02116. I list here some titles which appear in Mrs. Heins' lists that were not included in my tentative canon:

- Anno. Anno's Alphabet.  
Ardizzone. Little Tim and the Brave Sea Captain.  
Briggs. Father Christmas.  
Brown. Goodnight Moon.  
Burton. Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel.  
DuBois. Lion.

- Graham. Harry the Dirty Dog.  
Potter. The Tale of Tom Kitten.  
Rey. Curious George.  
Ungerer. The Three Robbers.  
Waber. Ira Sleeps Over.

#### Others

- Byars, The Midnight Fox  
Fleischman, By the Great Horn Spoon!  
Fox, How Many Miles to Babylon?  
Langton, The Diamond in the Window  
Lively, The Ghost of Thomas Kempe  
Snyder, The Headless Cupid  
Haugaard, The Little Fishes  
Hautzig, The Endless Steppe  
Townsend, The Intruder  
Westall, The Machine Gunners  
Burch, Queenie Peavy  
De Jong, The House of Sixty Fathers  
Enright, Gone - Away Lake  
Garner, Elidor  
George, My Side of the Mountain  
Godden, The Dolls' House  
Hamilton, Zeely  
Stevenson, The Bushbabies  
Serraillier, The Silver Sword  
Sutcliff, Knight's Fee  
Ullman, Banner in the Sky  
Walsh, Fireweed

(Many of these are valuable suggestions. As a group they make clear a deficiency of my original list: not naming enough books that were first published in the fifties and early sixties. We tend to forget about books published much more than a decade ago unless they're continued to be immensely popular; and we tend to bypass earlier good books by writers who continue to publish.)

Eleanor Cameron, whose many children's books include The Court of the Stone Children and the recently published Beyond Silence, wrote of the difficulty of making lists:

What a searching of one's taste it takes, doesn't it? It's a confoundedly hard job, and I kept remembering, and reconsidering, and cutting and adding and putting back, and then considering for the fifth time, or the sixth. And when I compared my final list with yours, I was pleased to see how much we agreed. You had some there (like Scarry) that I wouldn't have thought of, and I send some titles to you that I hope you will consider.

These are additional titles Mrs. Cameron suggests:

- Bond, Nancy - A String in the Harp

Briggs, K.M. - Hobberdy Dick  
 Byars, Betsy - The Summer of the Swans  
 Childress - A Hero Ain't Nuthin' But a Sandwich  
 Dickinson, Peter - The Dancing Bear  
 Eckert, Allen W. - Incident at Hawk's Hill  
 Eager, Edward - Knight's Castle (Half Magic)  
 is a poor imitation of Nesbit, while Knight's Castle is truly excellent and funny and original. Please reconsider!)  
 Edmonds, Walter D. - Drums Along the Mohawk; Bert Breen's Barn  
 Enright, Elizabeth - Gone-Away Lake (I can't resign myself to seeing you omit such a fine writer)  
 Erickson - A Toad for Tuesday  
 Farjeon, Eleanor - The Little Bookroom  
 (Must, must!!)  
 Fleischman, Sid - Humbug Mountain (He's master in his field)  
 Gardam, Jane - A Few Fair Days (A little gem); The Summer After the Funeral; A Long Way From Verona. (Which to use? perhaps the first and last?) (She's a marvel!)  
 Hamilton, Virginia - The Planet of Junior Brown (Some will argue for Higgins, but I like this the better of the two.)  
 H Irving - Rip Van Winkle and the Legend of Sleepy Hollow  
 Highwater, Jamake - An American Odyssey  
 James, Will - Smoky the Cowhorse  
 H Jewett, Sarah Orne - The Country of the Pointed Firs  
 Lively, Penelope - The Ghost of Thomas Kempe; The House in Norham Gardens  
 (Lively can't possibly be left out - she's a top writer, and these two titles are her best, along with Going Back, but two are perhaps enough.)  
 London, Jack - The Call of the Wild  
 Mayne, William - A Game of Dark (A classic of its kind - High fantasy, or time fantasy, whichever you wish to call it.)  
 Peyton, K.M. - The Beethoven Medal; A Pattern of Roses (Wonderful time fantasy)  
 Richter, Conrad - The Light in the Forest  
 Sachs, Marilyn - The Bears' House  
 Sandburg - Rootabaga Stories  
 Singer, Isaac B. - The Fearsome Inn; Zlateh the Goat and Other Stories  
 Steinbeck - The Long Valley; The Pearl  
 Uttley, Alison - A Traveler in Time  
 Wells, H.G. - The Time Machine  
 Wojciechowska, Maia - Shadow of a Bull

I forgot:

Gates, Doris - Blue Willow  
 Kendall, Carol - The Gamage Cup  
 Krumgold, Joseph - ...and Now Miguel  
 Should there be more poetry re-presented? And how about Elizabeth Coatsworth?  
 Finally, a few comments of my own. Everyone who wrote suggested additions; and their suggested additions are all at least worth considering. But there was only one requested deletion. The enormity of the task confronting the canon committee is now clearer to me than it was before-- it comes down to a simple matter of leaving things out. There are lots of good books; but how do we distinguish between the merely good ones and the very good ones, between the merely important and the essentially significant? I have no answer to those questions: furthermore, I am not particularly surprised that there are still some important books that nobody has got around to mentioning, including myself. How about Julia Cunningham's Dorp Dead? Dennis Lee's Alligator Pie? Ezra Jack Keats's Apartment Three? And so on, and so on.

Perry Nodelman

## ChLA Conference

The Eighth Annual Conference of the Children's Literature Association will be held March 27-29, 1981 in Minneapolis. Featured speakers include Betsy Byars, Newbery Award winner, Karla Kuskin, winner of the 1979 NCTE Award for Poetry for Children, and noted critic, Zena Sutherland.

Also featured are discussion groups, panels and papers focused on the conference theme, Children's Books: From Creation to Criticism.

The conference will be held at the Sheraton Ritz Hotel. Conference fees are as follows: \$35.00 for ChLA members (includes banquet); \$20.00 for Saturday and Sunday only; \$15.00 for student ChLA members; \$50.00 for Non-members (includes banquet and ChLA membership); \$25.00 for student non-member (includes banquet and membership.) The price of the theatre ticket and bus to the theatre is \$5.75. This is not included in conference fee.

Please make checks payable to ChLA. Send registration to Virginia Wolf, Dept. of English, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, WI 54751.