Picturing Canada: The Changing Face of Children's Book Illustration in Canada

The 11th Annual Sybil Pantazzi Memorial Lecture, October 19, 2017

Judith Saltman and Gail Edwards

We would like to begin this evening by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and the Haudenosaunee, and most recently the Mississaugas of the Credit River. This territory is covered by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg and allied nations that bound them to peaceably share and protect the lands and resources around the Great Lakes. We are grateful to have the opportunity to speak as settler-born guests on this territory, which today is the home to many diverse Indigenous peoples.

Almost twenty years ago, we began to plan the first stages of a research project that became *Picturing Canada*: *A History of Canadian Children's Illustrated Books and Publishing*, issued by the University of Toronto Press in 2010. We started with a series of seemingly straightforward questions about nationalism and identity in Canadian children's illustrated books. Do Canadian children see themselves reflected in the images and texts? What is particularly Canadian about the illustrations? Can Canadian children's books contribute to the development of Canadian cultural identity?

This evening we will explore change and continuity in the history of children's publishing in Canada over the last 150 years. We will argue that image and text in Canadian picture books continue to provide Canadian children with the opportunity to see their everyday lives and

communities, while also introducing them to broader global issues and concerns.

We thank the Friends of the Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books, the Toronto Public Library, and Leslie McGrath for inviting us to deliver the eleventh annual Sybille Pantazzi Memorial Lecture. At every step in our research, during repeated trips to Toronto, Leslie and the staff of the Osborne Collection provided us with invaluable access to the extraordinarily rich and important collections of children's illustrated books, manuscripts and artwork, and the unique archival records of children's library services at the Toronto Public Library - the sources of primary research on material culture of children's publishing. We are particularly indebted to Leslie who graciously and generously shared her scholarship and acted as a guide through the complexities of early publishing and book distribution in Canada. It would not have been possible to write *Picturing Canada* without the Collection – and without Leslie's assistance and support and encouragement.

The Big Picture – Childhood and Children's Publishing

Let's begin by thinking briefly about the ways that children's book publishing is distinct from other forms of publishing.

In 1982, the historian Robert Darnton asked the question "What is the History of Books," in a journal article that transformed the way that scholars conceptualize the production, transmission, circulation and dissemination of texts. He mapped out a communications circuit from author to publisher to printer to shipper to bookseller to reader.

What is different for children's book publishing is the way that adults mediate the encounter between children and books at every stage in the communications circuit. Authors and illustrators, editors, publishers, booksellers and reviewers, and the teachers, librarians, early childhood educators and parents who work with children all have ideas about the nature of childhood. They have opinions about what sorts of texts and images that children enjoy, and about what genres or categories of books children ought to like (or ought not to like). They often hold professional views about the role of reading, story, textuality, image and narrative in the intellectual, social, emotional and moral lives of children.

Thinking about the communications circuit of children's books encourages us to think about the various interconnected aspects of the book trade – the conditions in which texts and images are created, edited and published; the economies of how children's illustrated books are produced, marketed and consumed; and the technologies of the picture book - everything from developments in full colour printing to new digital methods of creation and dissemination.

And by exploring the ways that the communications circuit of children's publishing in Canada has changed over time, and by asking who child readers are and are imagined to be, we can begin to explore the changing and contested ideas about the nature of childhood itself.

Beginning

In England and the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, the idealisation of home and family among the growing middle class created a new culture of the nursery. Parents were

encouraged to purchase an expanding range of consumer goods designed to nurture children's intellectual and moral development, especially books and educational toys. The introduction of wood pulp paper furthered the circulation of magazines and newspapers for children's audiences, and lowered the cost of book production. Advances in printing technology facilitated the creation of new formats of print for children, including toy books and picturebooks.

In contrast, at the time of confederation in 1867, the communications circuit of children's books in Canada was fragmentary and incomplete. Canada's small, linguistically diverse population, a rudimentary interprovincial transportation system, the limited protection offered to authors by Canadian copyright legislation, the restrictions imposed by Imperial copyright, and direct competition from the larger American and British markets all hindered the growth of a healthy Canadian publishing industry. The difficulties of financing ensured that many Canadian publishers led a precarious existence. The children's book trade was focused primarily on the market for school texts, and on the distribution of imported titles and cheap reprints. There were no Canadian publishers with a strong list of Canadian children's trade books and no authors or illustrators whose work was primarily or exclusively intended for the juvenile market.

The majority of children's books with Canadian locations were created by non-Canadians who briefly visited Canada, or imagined the Canadian hinterland from a distant metropole, most usually London, New York or Boston. Generations of Canadian child readers read books imported from Britain or the United States in which Canada was shown as an exotic and strange place very unlike "home," a place characterized by wilderness, Indigenous peoples and winter.

- R.M. Ballantyne. *Snowflakes and Sunbeams, or, the Young Fur Traders: A Tale of the Far North.* London, Edinburgh, and New York: T. Nelson, 1856.

  Ballantyne's narrative of outdoor adventure emphasised his particular geographic knowledge gained during employment with Hudson's Bay Company. The title page incorporates imagery that firmly identifies setting of the story in the world of the fur trade. The elaborate frame includes Aboriginal people in feathers and buckskin hunting in a canoe and moving through the landscape on snowshoes, snow-laden evergreen branches, a beaver with its paw caught in a trap, a duck and ducklings swimming before a promontory with tipi and trees, a flock of geese receding in middle horizon, and a bison.

Ironically, it was the importation of American and British books that finally provided the Canadian book trade with opportunities for financial consolidation and expansion. In a small undercapitalized industry, publishers were extremely reluctant to issue titles that might not generate sales sufficient to recover the initial costs of publication. Some publishers required authors to provide a healthy subsidy to cover the cost of editing and printing, while others sold titles by subscription. The development of the agency system, however, provided a more secure revenue stream. Canadian publishers as agents contracted to sell and promote books from one or more foreign publishers in exchange for exclusive distribution rights. The agency system ensured protection of foreign copyrights by allowing Canadian publishers to republish works not previously issued in Canada as an authorized Canadian edition, either from stereotype plates or finished sheets printed outside Canada and bound by the agent. These Canadian produced editions of foreign books listed the Canadian publisher/distributor on the title page, and the original publisher's name on the copyright page. In addition to Canadian-owned publishers acting

as agents, seven major British and American publishing houses opened branches in Toronto between 1896 and 1913. They acted as the exclusive agent for the distribution of books issued by the parent company, and published original Canadian material – including a few children's titles.

By the turn of the twentieth century, there was a new interest in Canadian literary and artistic production. Canadian-owned companies like William Briggs that profited from the agency system, and the foreign owned branches of international publishing houses like Macmillan issued titles by Canadian authors and illustrators that attempted to represent Canada "from within" for Canadian readers. The limitations of domestic printing technologies, however, meant that almost all full-colour illustrated children's books sold in Canada were both published and printed outside Canada. Many of the most successful Canadian authors, however, preferred to publish with American or British firms to ensure the widest possible readership for their work.

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- [Boyle, David]. *Uncle Jim's Canadian Nursery Rhymes: For Family and Kindergarten Use*. Illustrated by C. W. Jefferys. London and Toronto: Musson, 1908.

  One of the first Canadian picture books, references to Canadian flora and fauna, royalty and government, people and places, sporting activities and Canadian industries were woven into both text and image. The well-designed book, with alternating two-colour and full colour pages and an elaborate full colour cover was printed in England for the Toronto-based publisher Musson, but was never distributed in Canada.

- Macmillan, Cyrus. *Canadian Wonder Tales.* Illustrated by George Sheringham. London: John Lane, The Bodley Head; Toronto: S.B. Gundy 1918.

  Macmillan's text was based stories from the oral tradition that he claimed to have collected during fieldwork for the Anthropology division of the Geological Survey of Canada. For Macmillan, the "traditions and tales" of Canada's "romantic past" were rapidly disappearing under the weight of neglect. He argued that publication of his retelling of Mi'kmaq stories about the transformer hero Glooscap would ensure that "children of the land" would continue to know the "traditions of the mysterious past."

Until the mid-twentieth century, access to books and other printed literature varied widely by geographic location. Urban areas might have a public library, bookstores, stationery shops that stocked textbooks and trade books, private subscription-based lending libraries in local shops, and news agents. Rural areas often were dependent on mail order access to books through the Eaton's catalogue and through provincial "travelling libraries." In the 1920s, the Canadian Authors' Association attempted to promote Canadian books through publicity campaigns, speaking tours and annual book week festivities. While many clubs and civic organizations in urban areas enthusiastically participated in book week activities, there was also significant resistance to the idea of book tours by some literary critics, who worried that the attempts to promote Canadian books by Canadian authors was nothing but hucksterism – a cheap ploy to sell books of dubious value to an uncritical public. The small children's library community, centred in Ontario at Boys and Girls House of the Toronto Public Library, focused on an enduring canon of "best books." and saw little literary merit in the majority of Canadian children's publications.

Authors and librarians and the book trade debated whether Canadians should be encouraged to read the “best books,” “books by Canadian authors,” or “the best Canadian books.”

- Gordon, R. K. *A Canadian Child’s ABC*. Illustrated by Thoreau MacDonald. Toronto and Vancouver: Dent, 1931.

  Gordon’s verses celebrate moments of Canadian history and geography through the lens of settler society moving towards modernity. Thoreau MacDonald’s illustrations played with simplified forms --balancing modernism with an interest in natural and rural imagery. The visual themes are announced with the design of the cover, printed for the cloth edition in green and red on a beige linen background. Images of conifers, maple leaves, tipis, bison and deer and sheaves of wheat are arranged in a diamond-shaped grid. These signifiers of Canadian identity are carried forward on the hand lettered title page.

The economic hardships of the 1930s resulted in a contraction of the market as library and school budgets for book purchase focused on the immediate, pragmatic need of replacing (if possible) worn copies of tried and true favourites. While publishing in Québec flourished during WWII, English-language trade publishing was severely hampered by labour and paper shortages.

In the postwar period, the baby boom stimulated a new emphasis on the cultures of childhood. The average size of families grew and a strong economy and relatively high wages increased the spending power of the middle class. Across Canada, school boards scrambled to build new schools and expand existing classroom spaces. Public library services for children expanded in urban communities, and libraries were built in new suburbs and in areas that previously had been under-served or lacking public libraries altogether. Children’s popular culture came under close

scrutiny as reformers brought public attention to the perceived threat to childhood innocence posed by comic books and other forms of mass media.

The children's book trade in English-speaking Canada continued to be dominated by children's books published in England and America. Children's librarians regularly evaluated domestically produced children's books and found them wanting. Canadian illustrated books, in particular, were criticized for their amateurish text and images and poor production values. In the retail market, the pricing of children's illustrated books did not fully reflect the cost of production – consumers expected that a 32 page picturebook should cost less than a 200 page novel for adult readers. Booksellers were reluctant to stock titles that were unlikely to sell in significant numbers, and sales were hampered by the lack of awareness among the general public about new children's titles. Newspapers reviewed children's books infrequently as they saw little public demand for such information. As a result, Canadian publishers could not afford to focus exclusively on children's trade books, and continued instead to concentrate on textbooks and titles that would appeal to the growing school library market. Publishers who did issue the occasional children's trade title usually regarded them as a secondary concern, unlikely to improve the cash flow or the prestige of the company.

- In 1957, four books on a list of thirty titles recommended for "Young Canadians," chosen by a committee of the Canadian Association of Children's Librarians for Young Canada's Book Week were written or illustrated by Canadians. No Canadian picturebooks were included in the recommendations for "the Youngest" readers. All four of the titles by Canadian creators, including Farley Mowat's *Lost in the Barrens* were first issued outside the country in England or the United States.

The professional criticism of poor production values in Canadian children's books began to change at the end of the 1950s, when the Canadian branch of Oxford University Press developed a ground-breaking Canadian children's list under the guidance of William Toye. Toye was a self-taught designer who recognized the significance of fine book design and typography, and was inspired by the work of his English editorial colleagues at the parent company.

- Barbeau, Marius. *The Golden Phoenix and Other French-Canadian Fairy Tales.* Retold by Michael Hornyansky. Illustrated by Arthur Price. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1958.

  Arthur Price, the son-in-law of Marius Barbeau, and a talented painter and sculptor, trained at the Ontario College of Art and had worked as an animator under the direction of Norman McLaren at the National Film Board. As printing costs continued to dictate design, the black and white illustrations skilfully incorporate striking spot colour accents.

Becoming

By the mid-1960s, the communications circuit of children's books began to shift as new consumer markets emerged, and existing markets were transformed. The first wave of the baby boom started to have children during a period of relative affluence and rising levels of participation in post-secondary education. The changing emphasis in school curricula from prescribed lists of authorized textbooks to expansive lists of recommended and supplemental educational materials, including children's trade publications, generated increased interest among branch-plant publishers in the potential of children's book sales in Canada. Children's sections in long established bookshops like Britnell's in Toronto and newer bookshops like Duthie Books in Vancouver expanded.

While non-Canadian books distributed through the agency system, accounted for approximately 90% of children's book sales in Canada, new public awareness of history and culture in English Canada was stimulated by the celebration of Canada's centennial in 1967, and heightened by debates about language and identity in response to the findings of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, and by assertions of Quebec sovereignty. In 1970, the sale of the venerable Canadian publishers WJ Gage and Ryerson Press to American publishing companies, and the near insolvency of McClelland and Stewart generated new public awareness of the economic fragility of the Canadian publishing trade. The resurgence of nationalist sentiments resulted in new Canadian publishing ventures and a new interest in Canadian cultural production.

At Oxford University Press, William Toye continued to collaborate with talented artists with European experience in book design to create picturebooks comparable in quality to those published in England and the United States. Between 1969 and 1979, Oxford University Press Canada published a quartet of Indigenous stories illustrated by Elizabeth Cleaver.

- Toye, William. *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham.* Illustrated by Elizabeth Cleaver. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969.

  At the time of the book's creation, Indigenous people were seen as marginal to modern Canadian society. Many children's literature experts argued that traditional stories had to be mediated by a non-Indigenous voice to make them acceptable to modern non-Indigenous children.

  Cleaver made careful notes on the details of Tsimshian and Gitxsan material culture in preparation for creating her layered collage artwork. While Cleaver's illustrations have

been sharply critiqued as misappropriation of sources, they also clearly reflect her respect for Indigenous story and image.

In Montreal, May Cutler established Tundra Books to issue picturebooks with images by established gallery artists, as well as works by emerging authors and illustrators. Cutler, who was meticulous about production values, struggled initially with obtaining public recognition and appropriate sources of funding in pursuit of her vision of children's books as works of art.

- Blades, Ann. *Mary of Mile 18*. Designed by Rolf Harder. Montreal: Tundra Books, 1971.

  Ann Blades, a self-taught artist wrote and illustrated her first picturebook about a girl's growing love for a part-wolf cub, during a year of teaching in a remote Mennonite community in north-eastern British Columbia. Blades used the inexpensive children's watercolours and rough paper available in her classroom to create a story that reflected the lives of her students and their community. The resulting picturebook was a critical success that found an audience in Canada and in translation in the international market.

At Macmillan of Canada, Hugh Kane, the president of the Canadian branch of the international publishing house was willing to take considerable financial risk in authorizing larger print runs and media campaigns than was usual for a Canadian title.

- Lee, Dennis. *Alligator Pie*. Illustrated by Frank Newfeld. Designed by Frank Newfeld. Toronto: Macmillan, 1974.

  Denis Lee was an established poet who had received the Governor-General's award for poetry, a co-founder of the House of Anansi Press, and a fierce Canadian nationalist. Frank Newfeld, an experienced illustrator and designer who could exploit the maximum

> graphic possibility in the interplay of image and text, turning the technical limitations of colour printing into a design feature. *Alligator Pie* marked a commercial and aesthetic turning point in Canadian children's publishing. The liveliness and inventiveness of Lee's poetry, and the novelty of the references to Canadian place names and cultural figures captured immediate popular and critical attention

The success of *Alligator Pie* encouraged trade publishers to expand their children's lists, and the communications circuit once again was transformed. The introduction of block grants and other forms of government funding created opportunities for new types of publishing ventures, including cooperatives and small specialist presses. A new group of artists and illustrators who had studied at art colleges and gained professional design experience found editorial support from children's editors at the major trade publishing houses, and peer support through the emerging network of children's book creators, advocates and readers. The boom in children's bookstores interacted symbiotically with the emergence of children's specialist publishers who combined a dedication to excellent literary and production values with an awareness of the business side of publishing and book retailing in Canada. With support from the Children's Book Centre (later renamed the Canadian Children's Book Centre), children's literature roundtables, and the Canada Council, authors and illustrators toured schools and libraries, gave public readings and gained media attention through popular reviewing programs on the CBC. New professional and reviewing journals brought Canadian titles to the attention of librarians responsible for collection development in public and school libraries.

The new specialist children's publishers, driven by social conscience and a commitment to Canadian voices and experiences expanded the rather narrow range of themes and images that had characterised children's literary production in Canada. Anne Millyard and Rick Wilks established Annick Press to issue books grounded in the lives and experiences of contemporary urban children, progressive social values, and Canadian cultural identity. The consistent look of the 8-inch square format that was Annick's house style made their books stand out in a bookstore display, despite the diversity of artistic styles employed by their illustrators.

- Stinson, Kathy. *Red Is Best*. Illustrated by Robin Baird Lewis. Toronto: Annick Press, 1982.

  A child's domestic life and familial relationships are treated with humour in a picturebook about a little girl's obsession with the colour red. Lewis's images capture the exuberance and stubbornness of the protagonist, fully exploiting the potential of simple line drawings highlighted with spot colour.

Patsy Aldana, founder of Groundwood Books, built a reputation for issuing picturebooks that combined a distinctive aesthetic sensibility with high production values. Aldana and designer Michael Solomon, who shared responsibility for the art direction, explored the potential of new printing technologies to enable the creation of picturebooks in which text, illustration, typeface and paratextual elements were integrated.

- Tim Wynne-Jones. *Zoom Away*. Illustrated by Ken Nutt. Designed by Michael Solomon. A Groundwood Book. Toronto and Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1985.

  Zoom, a small white cat and his companion Maria have a series of exotic adventures contained within the domestic space of a 1930s bungalow. In *Zoom Away*, the second of a

trilogy of picturebook fantasies, a door leads the pair on an imaginary voyage to the North Pole.

At the same time, in a competitive marketplace in which imports still predominated, many children's specialist publishers continued to look for new revenue streams to expand their operating budgets, attending international bookfairs to negotiate the sale of foreign and translation rights and copublication agreements that reduced that unit cost of individual titles by increasing the size of print runs.

The partnership of Valerie Hussey and Ricky Englander transformed Kids Can Press from a small cooperative to an internationally successful children's publisher that balanced commercial success and high literary and artistic standards.

- Paulette Bourgeois. *Franklin in the Dark*. Illustrated by Brenda Clark. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 1986.

  Franklin, the green and endearing turtle Everychild and his animal friends model ethnocultural diversity within a multicultural society in a series of bestselling picturebooks. Franklin was licenced to Scholastic Books in the United States, developed into animated television and video series, and cross-marketed as children's merchandise. Two decades after *Franklin in the Dark* was issued, more than thirty Franklin titles were in print, and had sold more than sixty million copies in more than thirty languages.

Expanding, Transforming and Consolidating

By the 1990s, every aspect of the communications circuit of Canadian children's publishing had been transformed yet again.

New regional publishers entered the market, providing space for authors and illustrators with distinctive voices strongly rooted in the specificities of place and culture to address both local and transnational concerns, including the preservation of the environment

- Sheryl McFarlane. *Waiting for the Whales.* Illustrated by Ron Lightburn. Designed by Christine Toller and Ron Lightburn. Victoria: Orca Book Publishers, 1991
  In British Columbia, Orca Book Publishers in Victoria issued picturebooks rooted in the regional that equally had national and international appeal. In *Waiting for the Whales,* a grandfather living by the sea in an unnamed west coast setting, passes on to his granddaughter his delight in the seasonal cycles of nature and the beauty of his island home. Lightburn describes his approach to illustration as cinematic – employing varying points of view, colour symbolism, repeating visual motifs, and the use of light as a dramatic compositional element.

At the same time, the tension between the desire of some Canadian publishers to create books that could speak to the experiences of Canadian children and the simultaneous economic pressure to create books that could compete in an increasingly international marketplace shaped editorial decisions. And while the daily lives of the majority of Canadian children are shaped by cultural pluralism and the built environment of urban spaces, picturebooks that reflect the diversity of contemporary Canadian childhood experiences formed a small portion of the market

– and were sometimes seen as niche subjects only of limited interest to people who didn't share the same social and cultural worlds as the story's protagonists.

- Jo Ellen Bogart. *Daniel's Dog*. Illustrated by Janet Wilson. Richmond Hill: North Winds Press, 1990.

  Janet Wilson's illustrations broke new ground in Canadian picturebooks in its matter-of-fact recreation of the cultural diversity of a Toronto neighbourhood. Ethnocultural difference was not the focus of the story, but the taken-for-granted social world of Daniel and his family.

- Ken Setterington. *Mom and Mum Are Getting Married!* Illustrated by Alice Priestley. Designed by Laura McCurdy. Toronto: Second Story Press, 2004.

  Setterington's simple urban story about a flower girl at the wedding of her two mothers and Priestley's realistic illustrations emphasizes the ordinariness of an event that is a celebration of love and family.

The growing market for sophisticated picturebook design encouraged illustrators and designers to play with the narrative interaction of text and image. Publishers issued new picturebook forms inspired by graphic novels and subject matter that moves beyond childhood experience and young child readers to speak to the concerns and interests of older readers.

- Reid, Barbara. *The Subway Mouse*. Toronto: North Winds Press, Scholastic Canada, 2003.

  Reid integrates found objects and allusions to the work of other artists into her modelling clay images to build texture, depth and a sense of scale. The careful lighting and skilled

photography of the three dimensional images, and the paratextual elements add temporal and geographical sequencing to the textual narrative.

- Nicolas Debon. *Four Pictures by Emily Carr*. A Groundwood Book. Toronto and Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2003.

  Debon explores Emily Carr' s struggles against the limitations of her life. His illustrations employ the graphic design traditions of bande dessinées, combining third-person narration, balloon dialogue, and first-person monologues in a creative, dynamic, and fluid narrative flow. He places Carr's paintings within the frames of his own illustrations, the interrelationship of the two serving as a visual meditation on the creative process.

- Ange Zhang. *Red Land, Yellow River: A Story from the Cultural Revolution*. Designed by Michael Solomon. A Groundwood Book. Toronto and Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2004.

  In his memoir of adolescence in China in the 1960s, Zhang combines computer graphics with archival and family photographs and evocations of the social realism of Chinese revolutionary poster art. Zhang's mixing of photographs, historical artefacts, and computer-generated art gives his autobiography a documentary sensibility.

Re-envisioning

The communications circuit of children's publishing in Canada has been altered by increasing globalization. Some independent, editorially-driven publishing houses have been subsumed into vertically-integrated international media conglomerates whose management is primarily profit-

driven. At the same time, the interconnected worlds of Canadian and American publishing have changed. The old agency system saw Canadian publishers acting as agents for American publishers as a source of revenue for domestic publishing programs. While government grants from Heritage Canada and the Canada Council are critical to financial stability, less than half of Canadian publishers' book sales are domestic. Direct sales into the much larger American market now comprise about 60% of Canadian publishers' book sales, and this additional revenue stream has allowed many of the independent children's specialists to survive. Canadian independent publishers compete successfully for international attention.[1] The North American Publisher of the Year Prize given by the Bologna Children's Book Fair was awarded to Groundwood Books in 2016, and Kids Can Press, in 2017, and both Second Story Press and Annick Press also have been nominated for the prize, which recognizes distinguished creative and publishing excellence.

The market for children's books has shifted in other ways as well. School boards across the country have reduced or eliminated teacher-librarians in place of paraprofessionals and volunteers (and in some cases eliminated school libraries altogether). Some public library systems have reduced the number of professional subject specialist positions and outsourced collection development to wholesalers. Library budgets for printed materials have been reallocated to the acquisition of digital materials and new technologies. Many of the surviving bookstore chains in Canada, the United States and Britain stock an increasingly limited selection of current books with strong visual appeal and brand recognition, ordered through centralized purchasing at a head office. Older titles have been relegated to online sales or digital editions, and additional floor space is reallocated to non-book merchandise with higher profit margins. In

[1] http://www.slj.com/2016/08/diversity/how-canada-publishes-so-many-diverse-childrens-books

response, publishers have reduced their initial print runs, reduced the number of new midlist titles to focus on best-selling authors and titles, reduced or eliminated reprinting, and allowed backlist books to go out of print once existing stock is sold or pulped.

Dissemination of information about children's books has changed with the loss of professional voices advocating for Canadian children's literature. Shifting priorities and budget cuts at Library and Archives Canada eliminated specialist children's literature services, collections and publications. In 2016 the Canadian Library Association voted to disband the organization after seventy years of serving as the national voice of the library community. In addition, the decline of independent bookstores, including specialist children's bookstores with knowledgeable staff to assist in book selection and the reduction or elimination of book review sections from newspapers have made it difficult for readers to learn about newly published books. And while newspaper sections dedicated to culture and the arts have shrunk or altogether vanished, reviews of children's books by non-specialists are more numerous than ever. The democratization of reviewing through Amazon and Good Reads, blogs and other social media sites connects books and readers in new ways. The work of the Canadian Children's Book Centre, which provides authoritative and reliable guides to book selection through its publications is more important than ever.

Narrative Forms – Graphic Novels, Translation and Grounded Experience

- Tamaki, Mariko. *Skim*. Illustrated by Jillian Tamaki. Toronto: Groundwood Books / House of Ananasi Press, 2008.
- Britt, Fanny. *Jane, the Fox and Me*. Illustrated by Isabelle Arsenault. Translated by Christelle Morelli and Susan Ouriou. Toronto: Groundwood/ House of Anansi Press, 2013. First published in French in 2012 as Jane, le renard et moi by Les Éditions de la Pastèque, 2012.
- Lawson, JonArno. *Sidewalk Flowers*. Illustrated by Sydney Smith. Designed by Michael Solomon. Toronto: Groundwood Books / House of Ananasi Press, 2015.
- Watts, Irene. *Seeking Refuge: A Graphic Novel*. Illustrated by Kathie Shoemaker. Vancouver: Tradewind, 2016.

Canada and the World

- Humphreys, Jessica Dee, and Michel Chikwanine. *Child Soldier: When Boys and Girls are Used in War*. Illustrated by Claudia Dávila. Edited by Stacey Roderick. Designed by Marie Bartholomew. CitizenKid. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2015
- Ruurs, Margriet. *Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey*. Illutrated by Nizar Ali Badr. Translated into Arabic by Falah Raheem. Designed by Teresa Bubela. Victoria: Orca, 2016.
- Wilson, Janet. Our Heroes: How Kids are Making a Difference.. Designed by Melissa Kaita. Toronto: Second Story Press, 2014.

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Indigeneity

- Flett, Julie. *Lii Yiiboo Mayaapiwak lii Swer; L'Alfabet di Michif; Owls See Clearly at Night: A Michif Alphabet*. Vancouver: Simply Read Books, 2010.
- Jordan-Fenton, Christy and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton. *When I Was Eight*. Illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard. Edited by Debbie Rogosin. Deisgned by Natalie Olsen / Kisscut Design. Toronto: Annick Press, 2013.
- Jordan-Fenton, Christy and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton. *Not My Girl*. Illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard. Edited by Debbie Rogosin. Deisgned by Natalie Olsen / Kisscut Design. Toronto: Annick Press, 2014.
- Florence, Melanie. *Missing Nimâmâ*. Illustratraed by François Thisdale. Designed by CommTech Unlimited. Richmond Hill: Clockwise Press, 2015.
- Daniel, Danielle. *Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox*. Designed by Michael Solomon. Toronto: Groundwood Books / House of Ananasi Press, 2015.

Conclusion

The communication circuit of Canadian children's books is shaped by the interconnected aspects of the book trade, and by ideas about the role of reading in children's lives. We hope that this overview of the history of Canadian children's publishing and illustrated books, serves as an introduction to contemporary issues and themes.

Over the last decade, we have reframed our research question of twenty years ago. Today we ask "now, more than ever do Canadian children need Canadian children's books in order to understand the diversity, complexity and contested nature of contemporary Canadian cultural identities?" And our answer continues to be a resounding YES.