

a vision for a better society (136). Whilst this is a vast expectation, Dolan nevertheless puts forward a number of helpful and informative themes to support her belief. The books she introduces to exemplify this, however, are still presented in list format and she doesn't often refer to specific illustrations.

In her final chapter, Dolan focuses on picturebooks that she feels “embrace” the refugee experience, enlighten children about their plight and reassure refugee readers that there is life and hope for them. She defines refugee and asylum seekers for her adult readers and suggests a range of picturebooks which she feels share these themes. As with the other chapters, her research is sound, informative and followed by examples of carefully chosen picturebooks that could be used by teachers. Occasionally she does mention how visual cues are used to convey meaning, such as during her discussion about Shaun Tan's *The Arrival* (147) but these moments are rare. This is in fact the first chapter that includes any illustrations and none are from inside the books. A great pity, as this would have enabled her to illustrate in depth why picturebooks are so powerful in conveying the sometimes harsh reality.

You, Me and Diversity is a well-researched, illuminating book which sets out the aims of developmental and intercultural education clearly and fulfils its aim in suggesting themes and picturebooks that will help teachers to guide children on the path to learning about controversial and complex social issues. In her concluding chapter, Dolan states that teachers cannot expect picturebooks alone to teach a theme and hopes that *You, Me and Diversity* will help them (151). This is certainly likely to be the case in terms of knowledge but teachers may still need guidance on how to discuss the picture-text relationships semiotically in order to make full use of the picturebooks. To complement her approach, the methodology used in a number of academic picturebook projects, to help both teachers and children to learn more about intercultural themes through visual narratives, might be useful.

Penni Cotton

Literature = Education

Janice Bland and Christiane Lütge, eds. 2013. *Children's Literature in Second Language Education*. London: Continuum. 224 pp. ISBN 978-1441183521

If you look up the term ‘literature’ in a dictionary, you will find these definitions. Literature is “the production of literary work” or it presents “writings in prose or verse which have excellence of form or expression that support ideas of universal interest” and of course it is “the body of written works in a particular language, country or age”. Literature, naturally, is a form of art, and because it is a form of art it is hard to explain why something should be considered literature, and why something else should not. If you take the definition of literature from the Merriam Webster English Learner's Dictionary, you will find that: “literature presents written works that are considered to be very good and to have lasting importance”. In this arena we come across “children's literature”, and, as Bland puts it in her introduction, for a long time this term has been used generally to describe any kind of literary work, either written, illustrated or an oral interpretation, aimed at children and

teenagers. Fairy tales, nursery rhymes, graphic narratives and young adult literature have all been considered to reflect children's vast interests. However, what is children's literature exactly? Is it only aimed at a child audience, and can we use it to teach language? These questions are raised in the volume of work titled *Children's Literature in Second Language Education*.

This book, edited by Janice Bland and Christiane Lutge, offers a collection of studies by various authors as well as the editors' own reflections on the subject that focus on using literary texts as both literature and language-acquisition input. This is something that, until very recently, has been uncommon in modern research studies on the nature of English as a foreign language (FL) or second language (L2). The book is organised so that it offers a number of different approaches that show the advantages or potential disadvantages of using literature for L2 education. Bland and Lütge divide the studies of their fellow researchers and approaches into four major focal points, each addressed in detail within the individual authors' own chapters. The tone set in one chapter defines the next, guiding readers to see the quantifiable benefits of using literature to teach language.

Part one, "Extensive reading with children's literature", deals with the approach to extensive or free reading (reading for pleasure) inaugurated and studied by Stephen Krashen. Krashen's chapter "Free Reading: Still a Great Idea" presents the background for other studies in the first part of the book. He presents an extensive collection of the most recent empirical studies combined with his own research on free reading as a highly beneficial approach to learning. The findings show how this approach to reading leads to multiple benefits, such as better reading and writing skills. The other authors whose contributions are included in the first part, such as Beniko Mason, all expand upon Krashen's views and further validate them. Mason, in her text, makes a positive correlation between free reading and listening to stories, while other authors recommend an early start to free reading, deeming it highly beneficial since it allows the child to create language patterns and simply to enjoy language. The contributors generally agree with the claim that if children have learned to read properly in their first language, then extensive reading is appropriate at all stages of language learning. The never-too-early or too-late attitude, a wide range of reading material, as well as interest and enthusiasm coming from the teacher, can greatly help in motivating children to read.

The first part also includes a chapter on extensive reading of picturebooks in primary EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes by Annika Kolb and an account of a project on extensive reading by Johan Strobbe.

Part two, "Visual literacy with picturebook and graphic novels in ELT" (English Language Teaching), directly picks up on ideas presented in part one. For a child to become an avid reader, it is necessary for initial exposure to literature through picturebooks and graphic novels to be positive, interesting and motivating. Thus, the second part stresses the need for a "visual turn" in language teaching. The goal, of course, is not only to help the child develop into someone who loves to read, but also to think about what he or she is reading. In this sense, picturebooks are a nurturing ground for children to develop cognitively and to practise inferential thinking. Individual chapters focus on specific aspects of this topic. Eva Burwit-Melzer discusses the role of picturebooks and graphic novels in improving literary and language competence in EFL teaching, Sandie Mourão explores the

picturebook as an object of discovery, and Janice Bland focuses on fairy tales, especially postmodern versions, in the primary and secondary ELT classroom.

“Intercultural encounters with children’s literature”, focusing on intercultural communicative competence, presents the central point of the third part of this book. Here, the authors make connections between imagined storyworlds and intercultural competences. Literature can be a useful tool for children to develop the feeling of “otherness” and discover and appreciate diversity. This part also deals with (cultural) identity and context, themes often found in young adult literature. Specific topics comprise otherness in children’s and young adult literature, including the fantastic world of the Harry Potter books as a special case, i.e. “otherness turned magic” (101), addressed by Christiane Lütge, transcultural learning through young adult fiction addressed by Susanne Rechl, intercultural competence achieved through graphic narratives, addressed by Carola Hecke, as well as studies related to individual cultures as presented and conveyed by literature. Sigrid Rieuwerts analyses culture and ethnicity in Benjamin Zephaniah’s novels, raising the issues of British inclusiveness and London as a multicultural city. Li-Feng Lee shares the results of a reader response study of Taiwanese adolescents reading American young adult literature, showing that the students included in the study increased their intercultural understanding through literature, and that they “adopted a strategy of cognitive progression from wondering to reflection as they tried to understand a different culture” (147). Girt Alter “uncovers the problematic representation of First Nation and Native American cultures by analysing a selection of contemporary children’s books” (151) that frequently distort the image of the other by naming Canadian aboriginal peoples and Native Americans “savages” and “Indians”. The author suggests using authentic literature written by First Nation and Native American authors themselves in order to develop intercultural competence in young learners of English.

The final part of the book, “Empowerment and creativity through story”, highlights creative writing performance and active literary interpretation as vital steps towards linguistic creativity. Alan Maley focuses on creative writing with second language students, while Maria Luisa García Bermejo and Maria Teresa Eleta Guillén apply story making and storytelling and creative story writing in the EFL classroom. Maria Eisenmann describes how literary proficiency can be promoted in mixed-ability classes, and Paola Traverso focuses on a multi-sensory approach to storytelling and the potential of stories and children’s literature in general to enhance self-esteem in students. This part of the book stresses the important role of the teacher in the process of empowering children to express and create. Teachers themselves must improve their skills and knowledge, such as creative story making and storytelling, in order to help their pupils develop their creative expression.

Although all four parts have their own focus, the main questions posed throughout the book are on why we should use literature in primary and secondary school and what exactly hinders us from using it in language education. Questions of the availability of reading materials and access to motivating books are also commented on, as is children’s culture in teacher education. The contributors debate how much of the canon (works with the most artistic and educational merit) is usable in today’s classrooms, and ponder whether teachers should allow other works of literature that are more popular to be used to teach language or understand culture. The editors of this collection of works seek to provide readers with

arguments for the use of children's authors and works of literature that go beyond the canon at schools.

In her concluding chapter, Christiane Lütge gives a brief overview of the main focal points addressed in the book, i.e. extensive reading, visual literacy, inter- and transcultural learning and empowerment, and creativity, emphasising the potential that children's and young adult literature has for the an EFL or an ESL classroom. Finally, she opens a window on the future of children's literature research and second language education, and foresees an interest in electronic fictions for children, considering that "the connection with media literacy and the concept of multiliteracies may be of special importance for future developments in EFL contexts" (221).

Children's Literature in Second Language Education is perfect reading material for older and new generation teachers because it offers practical examples they can transfer into their classrooms. Students of primary education, as well as literature and language students and scholars, can find the described studies interesting and motivating. The book itself is written in an academic style, with some amount of education-related terminology, but it is not difficult to understand the underlying principles. In my opinion, younger, older, academic or non-academic readers can try this book and take advice from it. The most important being that our education lasts a life time, and it is never too late to learn something new.

Petra Beš

Literature in English Classes

Janice Bland. 2013. *Children's Literature and Learner Empowerment: Children and Teenagers in English Language Education*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. 344 pp. ISBN 978-1-4411-4441-6

It is quite natural to expect a book like this from Janice Bland since she is a well-experienced scholar and teacher of English for all ages, and literature has been frequently present in her teaching materials; she has published numerous papers and written her own drama scenarios, picturebooks and textbooks.

This hardcover book is divided into four main parts where the author's key ideas are laid out and developed: an introduction, and three chapters on visual literacy, literary literacy, and critical cultural literacy in the EFL (English Language Teaching) classroom. The book also includes a bibliography, references and an index.

There are similar books that advocate the use of literature in second language teaching (e.g. Parkinson and Reid-Thomas 2000) or first language teaching (e.g. Collie and Slater 1987; Lazar 1993). In this book, Janice Bland writes about including original pieces of children's literature in teaching students who learn English as a foreign language and covers a broad review of abundant previous scholarship on this topic, as well as example analyses, providing strong arguments for implementing children's literature in the (foreign) language education of both children and teenagers.