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Introduction

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Introduction

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The essays for this issue of *The Lion and Unicorn* ask us to listen and make space for a broad range of voices, as we read, talk about, and teach texts for young readers.

Elizabeth Massa Hoiem's "Radical Cross-Writing for Working Children: Toward a Bottom-Up History of Children's Literature" challenges conventional histories of children's literature as produced by and for the intellectual and social elite of late eighteenth century. Instead, she discusses overlooked texts that "authorize a momentary reorientation of children's literature history around the contributions of working children." Studying ephemeral street literature and Radical periodical publications, Hoiem shows that children's literature engaged with radical and progressive themes far earlier than it is sometimes given credit for doing. Hoiem's recovery work, like that of Mitzi Myers and other scholars of Romantic-era children's literature, promises to challenge and even revolutionize our assumptions about child definition and agency.

Esther Raizen's "Last Road to Safety: The Making of a Holocaust Picture Book" recounts the story of *The Last Road to Safety: A True Story* (1975), which was one of the first picture books for children to deal with Holocaust themes. Raizen describes the collaboration of author-activist Peggy Mann and illustrator George Stavrinos with participants in the evacuation and other survivors to tell the story of the *Tiger Hill*, the last ship allowed to transport Jewish refugees to Palestine in 1939. The book anticipates later Holocaust picture book techniques, such as using documentary photographs as inspiration for drawings.

Eleanor Reeds' "Transatlantic Elegies of Boyhood: First-Person Adventure Narratives After 1865" addresses the conflict that arises when an adult narrator is re-imagining events, ostensibly for a child audience. This re-imagining takes the form of a nostalgic reverie, the narrator "hunting for treasure buried in the past, treasure which can never be found because the act of seeking was all that ever gave it existence." Looking at three

classic books in which the narrator is presumably recounting events from (an imagined) childhood, Reeds argues that the text in such instances becomes an “elegy for a lost state,” that the fictional boy (in all three cases the protagonist is male) becomes an unattainable ideal. These stories become, in Reeds’ term, “elegiac novels.” Taking as her texts Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*, Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*, and Edith Nesbit’s *The Story of the Treasure Seekers*, Reeds explores the nature of narrator’s reconstruction of a childhood (albeit one that probably never existed).

The balance of this issue provides space for perspectives that emerged during a panel at the 2016 Children’s Literature Association conference in Columbus, Ohio co-sponsored by the Diversity Committee and the Membership Committee on “Needs of Minority Scholars.” Based on that discussion, we offer here a forum titled “#WeNeedDiverseScholars,” which takes its name, as panel moderator and forum editor Katharine Slater explains, from the #WeNeedDiverseBooks movement: “This acknowledgment calls for a powerful organizational commitment, within and beyond the Children’s Literature Association, to active inclusion, active listening, and active awareness that we can—and must—do more for marginalized scholars and marginalized scholarship.” Toward that goal, essays by Sarah Park Dahlen, Michelle H. Martin, Laura Jiménez, and Marilisa Jiménez García bring together “theory, research, and lived experience to argue for an academic praxis that moves beyond acknowledging the value of diversity and, instead, actively works towards anti-racist equity.”

As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions for the journal. Please contact us at <lionunicorn@ksu.edu>.