‘It was good to be home’:


Robin Moncrieff Morrow

Thesis submitted for degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 2003
Certificate of Authorship/Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

Robin Moncrieff Horn
Acknowledgements

My supervisor, Rosemary Ross Johnston, as well as offering an inspiring role-model of scholarship, has provided me with a fine balance of sustaining words and words of challenge.

My dear friend and mentor, Maurice Saxby, encouraged me to persevere.

The support of all the family has been essential, especially James who helped reproduce the illustrations. And of course I owe a debt of gratitude to David, as usual, for his near-endless patience.
# Table of Contents

## Chapter 1: Introductory Chapter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginnings</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical and critical context</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Ideology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Ideology in literature</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Ideology in children's literature</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The development of critical approaches to picture books</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My personal framework for critical analysis of picture books</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaping the study</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The two images from Watkins</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Maps of meaning</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) 'Homes' in the world</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Choice of the sample</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Adult authority and the CBCA honoured books</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Defining Picture Books, and 'Australianness'</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Choice of period (1970 to 1997)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The emphasis on illustrations</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A note about pagination</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: the sample</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) The 'long list': CBCA Picture Book awards, 1971 to 1997</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Arriving at the final sample</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) The final sample: amended list after deletions</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) The final sample, with bibliographic details</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: the Children's Book Council of Australia and its awards,</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>particularly for Picture Books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Nostalgia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary note</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostalgia: the term and its negative connotations</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive or reflective nostalgia</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books as sites of nostalgia</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood as a site of nostalgia</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's books as doubly nostalgic</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating longed-for homes for children</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 3: Time</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A nostalgic concept of time: <em>kairos</em> as opposed to <em>chronos</em></td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kairos</em> and its rural links: Arcadian, pastoral, idyllic and utopian</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostalgic <em>kairos</em> in politics and marketing</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kairos</em> and childhood</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kairos</em> and <em>chronos</em> as a means of categorising children's books</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iterative frequency in verbal texts</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iterative frequency in illustration</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Stopped time' and 'timelessness'</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of iterative illustrations</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples of iterative in the sample picture books</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification of the sample books</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arcadian picture books</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnivalistic picture books</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old age, but not death in Arcadia</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remaining in the world of <em>chronos</em></td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative readings: <em>kairos</em> or <em>chronos</em>?</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space: thematised place</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postcolonial national space</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian concepts of ‘home’</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The country vs city dichotomy</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary shift to the city</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics of the sample</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The city, an undesirable space</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad skyscrapers: <em>Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons</em></td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘A tiny creature in a huge city’: <em>Felix and Alexander</em></td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The suburbs: between country and city</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundless play: <em>Drac and the Gremlin</em> and Bob Graham’s world</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaside</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 5: The Australian cottage: a particular nostalgic space</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The idealised house</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Australian cottage</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An analysis of some features of the Australian cottage</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrugated iron</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooden boards</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The verandah</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The water tank</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The improvised swing</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tree house or cubbyhouse</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of features</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Features as represented in the sample</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Australian cottage as perfectible home</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Brooks’s perfectible cottages</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Perfectible working farms</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Traditional cottages as the space of ‘feminist’ tales</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) ‘It was good to be home’: defining and seeking the perfectible home</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Perfectibility in the face of death and anger</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker’s depiction of the cottage as environmental threat</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural markers in a city context</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter 6: Family, community and neighbourhood**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostalgic concepts of family</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian families in the ‘golden age’</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes to family since the ‘golden age’</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The changing family in children’s fiction</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and neighbourhood</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural embeddedness; and the trace</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nuclear family: children and parents</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A picture book trace (a): the mother</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparents and extended families</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older child as main character</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older adults as main characters</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood in the suburbs</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood in the country</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood in the city</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday neighbours</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School communities</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A picture book trace (b): Aboriginal people</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A picture book trace (c): ethnic diversity</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter 7: Nostalgic representation of food and clothes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Nostalgic representation of food</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Food as symbol of security: maternal provision</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Mothers’ providing food for animals</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnivalesque treatment of food</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers as carnivalesque food providers</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate food provision metonymous for bad parenting</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Food as symbol of belonging and community</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Food as magical agent</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Nostalgic representation of clothing</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes indicating security and comfort</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral clothing</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes indicating community</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magical clothes: colour</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magical clothes: ‘dressing-up’</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chapter 8: Conclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘It was good to be home’</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The thesis journey</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective nostalgia and children’s books</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for further study</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examining changes after the sample date</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study of the award system itself</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison with picture books of other countries</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study of the same or similar books, from different theoretical bases</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix No 1: Two picture book homes in the world, outside the sample</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix No 2: Animals in picture books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals contributing to nostalgia</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leach's animal categories</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Wild animals</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Game</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Livestock</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Pets</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Pets as substitute humans</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Pets as companions to child characters</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Pets as social ice-breakers</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of animals as sinister</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) The Picture Book sample</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Other children's books referred to</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) References</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# List of Illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Plate</th>
<th>Follows page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lester, Alison <em>The Journey Home</em> Melbourne, Oxford University Press 1989 p 29</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Shepard, E H in Milne, A A <em>The House at Pooh Corner</em> London, Methuen 1928 p 177</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vivas, Julie in Wild, Margaret and Vivas, Julie <em>The Very Best of Friends</em> Hunters Hill, Margaret Hamilton 1989 p 7</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tanner, Jane in Baillie, Allan and Tanner, Jane <em>Drac and the Gremlin</em> Ringwood, Penguin 1988 spread 30/31</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Greenwood, Ted <em>Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons</em> Cremorne, Angus and Robertson 1972 spread 20/21</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Denton, Terry <em>Felix and Alexander</em> Melbourne, Oxford University Press 1985 p 13</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Brooks, Ron <em>Annie’s Rainbow</em> Sydney, Collins 1975 p 8</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Brooks, Ron in Wagner, Jenny and Brooks, Ron <em>John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat</em> Harmondsworth, Penguin 1977 endpaper illustration</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Power, Margaret in Hilton, Nette and Power, Margaret <em>The Long Red Scarf</em> Norwood, Omnibus 1987 spread 28/29</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Harvey, Roland and Levine, Joe in Hirst, Robin and Sally; and Harvey, Roland and Levine, Joe <em>My Place in Space</em> Fitzroy, The Five Mile Press 1988 spread 6/7</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Smith, Craig in Gleeson, Libby and Smith, Craig <em>Where’s Mum?</em> Norwood, Omnibus 1992 p 1</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Graham, Bob <em>Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten</em> Ringwood, Penguin 1992 p 13</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sendak, Maurice <em>Where the Wild Things Are</em> New York, Harper &amp; Row 1963 p 37</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Graham, Bob <em>Crusher is Coming</em> Sydney, William Collins 1987 spread 14/15</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Baker, Jeannie <em>Where the Forest Meets the Sea</em> Lane Cove, Julia MacRae 1987 p 29</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Plate</td>
<td>Follows page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Graham, Bob <em>Greetings from Sandy Beach</em> Melbourne, Lothian 1990 spread 28/29</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>James, Ann in Wild, Margaret and James, Ann <em>The Midnight Gang</em> Norwood, Omnibus 1996 p 27</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Lester, Alison <em>The Journey Home</em> Melbourne, Oxford University Press 1989 p 32</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Rawlins, Donna in Wheatley, Nadia and Rawlins, Donna <em>My Place</em> Blackburn, Collins Dove 1987 p 34</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>King, Stephen Michael in Stafford, Liliana and King, Stephen Michael <em>Amelia Ellicott's Garden</em> Hunters Hill, Margaret Hamilton 2000 p 26</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract

‘It was good to be home’: Nostalgia in Australian Picture Books 1970–1997

The initial aim of this thesis was to uncover representations of societal ideologies in Australian picture books. As a close study of the books proceeded, the key ideology to emerge was nostalgia. While nostalgia has generally negative connotations, the concept of reflective nostalgia (Boym 2001), introduced to the study of children’s books by McGillis (2001), provides a positive base on which to build the production and study of children’s books.

A sample of thirty picture books, successful in the Children’s Book Council awards system between 1970 and 1997, and apparently revealing contemporary Australian life, was selected. A framework of critical strategies from a range of sources was employed, paying particular attention to the analysis of the illustrations.

In shaping the study, two images were extremely influential, those of maps of meaning and ‘homes’ in the world (Watkins 1992); together with an examination of the concept of home, they led to analyses of the two elements of time and space and their representations in the picture books. Nikolajeva’s (2000) concept of the importance of kairos or circular time in children’s books was applied, and was found to be the prevalent time in the majority of the books. The rural and Arcadian, associated with kairos, were also found to characterise picture book space, which is predominantly benign, often perfectible. The traditional Australian cottage, with its semiotic features referring
nostalgically to a national past, was significant in many of the books. Families of the ‘golden age’, community and neighbourhood were all pervasive concepts; and many visual details, including those of food and clothing, revealed the characters’ cultural embeddedness. Some societal groups (mothers, Aboriginal people, other ethnic groups) were present only in the form of a trace.

The study concluded that most Australian picture books of the period reveal, especially through their illustrations, a secure, nostalgic world.
Chapter 1

Introductory Chapter

Introduction

This thesis was begun with the aim of uncovering representations of societal ideologies in Australian picture books. As a close study of the books proceeded, the key ideology to emerge was nostalgia. This introductory chapter opens with an account of the origins of the study, and in particular of the seminal importance of two images, *maps of meaning* and *homes in the world* (Watkins 1992), especially applicable to picture book study. A section follows of historical and critical context for the study, with a brief examination of the concept of *ideology*, its history and the way it became applied to literature, and more specifically to children's literature; and of how criticism applied to picture books enlisted the concepts of ideology, following developments within the books themselves, and taking in the terminology of visual literacy. This section not only places the study in its context, but also provides definitions and an outline of the theoretical framework, built from an eclectic range of components, that will be applied to the analysis of picture books throughout the thesis.

The introductory chapter proceeds to explain how the study was shaped: how it developed from Watkins' two images, which helped both to point to nostalgia as the key ideology, and to determine the subject areas of further chapters. A rationale is then provided for the choice of the sample of picture books, from those endorsed by the Children's Book Council of Australia award system; and reasons are given for the emphasis on examining the illustrations. This rationale is enhanced by details in the two appendices that conclude the chapter: Appendix A, a detailed account of the sample and its selection; and Appendix B, an account of The Children's Book Council of Australia and its award system, particularly for Picture Books.
Plate 1
Lester, Alison *The Journey Home* Melbourne, Oxford University Press 1989 p 29
Beginnings

Picture books . . . (because of the amount of visual detail used to depict the 'seen but unnoticed' aspects of the everyday) may unwittingly disclose . . . deeply rooted societal ideologies, attitudes and cultural assumptions.

(Johnston 1998 p 25)

This thesis began as a search for those 'deeply rooted societal ideologies' most commonly to be found in Australian picture books. (The term 'ideology', as will be discussed a little later, is here being used to refer to the espousal or assumption of cultural values, whether overt or covert.) It had become clear to me in my extensive work with children's books—as bookseller, reviewer and publisher—that many adults were prepared to expend time and energy in choosing picture books for the children in their charge, treating this selection as serious and important, and bringing their own criteria (conscious or subconscious) to bear on the choice. Such intensity in the selection process is attributable to several factors. Picture books are viewed by many adults as an important influence on children, especially because they are usually introduced to children when they are very young—before they start school, or in the earliest school years. The images and words of picture books form for many children some of their earliest cultural experiences, and these cultural experiences are almost always shared with an adult. Picture books are arguably a special case of the phenomenon referred to by Wall1 (1991) as 'double address', in which book creators are consciously addressing the adult as well as the child reader: picture books are usually mediated by a reading-aloud adult, commonly a parent or other carer (unlike the novels or other books read by independently-reading children, say, from the beginning of their primary school years). The mediating adults also realise (even if they do not articulate the fact), that children will often hear the same books read aloud repeatedly, learning by heart the verbal texts, and poring over the illustrations for long periods, so that these too are 'learned' and can be revisited in the imagination.

1 Wall (1991 p 9) distinguishes single address (the writer addressing children without being conscious of possible adult presence); double address (the writer consciously addressing both adults and children); and dual address ('a fusion of the two').
In reflecting on the importance attributed to these books, it seemed to me that the following words of Tony Watkins, encapsulating the ideological importance of children's books, were especially applicable to picture books:

Stories contribute to the formation and re-formation in our children of the cultural imagination, a network... of patterns and templates through which we articulate our experience... So the stories we tell our children, the narratives we give them to make sense of cultural experience, constitute a kind of mapping, maps of meaning that enable our children to make sense of the world. They contribute to children's sense of identity, an identity that is simultaneously personal and social: narratives, we might say, shape the way children find a 'home' in the world.

(Watkins 1992 p 183)

In this passage Watkins does not refer specifically to picture books, but the concept of 'patterns and templates' fits them admirably. If 'the stories we tell our children' are powerful enough to constitute 'maps of meaning', then surely picture books are doubly influential in building such 'maps' because they use both words and pictures. The interaction of the two in picture books results in a powerful tool for building, visually and verbally, 'an identity that is simultaneously personal and social'. In starting on the search for ideologies in picture books, this quotation from Watkins provided both an impetus and two enduring images: the map, and the 'home in the world. These metaphors will be revisited below, in the section on 'Shaping the Study', and an account will be given of their leading to the discovery of a core ideology in picture books—nostalgia—and their significance for the chapter divisions of this thesis.

Historical and critical context

This thesis concerns itself with Australian books, but it is necessary to place the books in a context of world developments in criticism and publishing of picture books. The following is a brief account of these developments.
A. Ideology

This project, of discerning ideologies in both words and illustrations of picture books, is part of the wider study of ideology in children's literature, which in turn is a sub-section of the study of ideology in literature generally. My preferred definition of 'ideology' is the one provided by Sarland: that ideology refers to 'all espousal, assumption, consideration, and discussion of social and cultural values, whether overt or covert' (Sarland 1999 p 41). The highlighting of both 'overt' and 'covert' is vital to a definition to be applied to children's literature, where it can be assumed that the readers themselves are sufficiently inexperienced to be unaware even of 'overt' ideologies. Such a wide-reaching definition of 'ideology' has certainly not always found favour. Although coined by Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836) to refer to 'the radically empirical analysis of the human mind', the term 'ideology' underwent changes through the influence of Kant (whose emphasis on the mind suggested that the world, though existing as a thing in itself, was no longer available for inspection by humans in its pure form), and notably of Hegel, with his conception of human nature and human reason as subject to historical development and therefore open to influence from the changing conditions of individual and social life. It thus became possible to entertain the possibility of multiple ideologies (Knowles and Malmkjær 1996 p 42). In the time of Napoleon the term 'ideology' came to be associated with subversive ideas, and took on some of the negative connotations which persist even today. Marx and Engels used the term to refer to thinking inimical to their own; their teachings were in turn subjected to the pejorative description of 'ideological'. Ideology is used sometimes loosely to equate with 'belief system', but this phrase implies a self-consciousness and consistency—and an innocence—not always present. Important implications are stated in Thompson's (1990 p 56) claim that studying ideology is 'to study the ways in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of domination'.

B. Ideology in literature

This study, which was begun at the end of the twentieth century, will draw on the analyses of ideologies that became a major part of the development of
literary criticism in the second half of the century, as emphasis was placed on
the realisation that literature is ideological both in its production and
consumption. In applying ideological analysis to literature, as long ago as 1929
Volosinov had argued that all sign systems, including language, have not only a
simple denotative role, they are also evaluative and thus ideological. The Swiss
linguist Ferdinand de Saussure viewed language as a social construct and
claimed that linguistics should be seen as part of the study of ‘semiology’, the
science of signs. The influence of Saussure, and of French critics such as Roland
Barthes, was far-reaching, resulting in a general acknowledgement in the latter
years of the twentieth century that all writing, and indeed all communication, is
ideological. All literature is ideological since all writing either assumes values
even when not overtly espousing them, or is produced and also read within a
social and cultural framework which is itself suffused with values, with ideology
(Sarland 1999 p 41). Furthermore, ideology can be perceived in literature both
as a product of a particular society (or, in the commonly used metaphor, as a
mirror held up to reflect it); and also in its involvement in shaping that very
society. In the words of Joan Rockwell:

Fiction is a social product but it also ‘produces’ society. . . It plays a
large part in the socialisation of infants, in the conduct of politics
and in general gives symbols and models of life to the population,
particularly in those less-easily defined areas such as norms, values
and personal and inter-personal behaviour.

(Rockwell 1974 quoted in Richards 1992)

One area in which the ideological study of literature has had a strong influence
is in the examination of postcolonial literatures, both worldwide and specifically
in Australia. By drawing attention to the manner whereby ‘meaning serves to
establish and sustain relations of domination’, writers such as Hodge and
Mishra (1991) have made it impossible to view the works of Australian
literature without an awareness of their ideology, especially as regards matters
of race. Commentators such as these have helped to blur the dividing lines
which previously existed between the disciplines of literary criticism and those
of sociology and cultural studies. This thesis will benefit from such a blurring of
divisions, and draw on a number of authorities in the fields of sociology and cultural studies.

C. Ideology in children's literature

If literature in general plays a part in 'producing' society, then the literature specially devised for children must be especially active in such 'production', influential as it is in 'the socialisation of infants' (Rockwell, quoted above). The dual character of children's literature, like that of literature in general, as reflecting and producing, has been noted by Watson (1990). The (intentionally or not) didactic nature of literature for children makes it a key site for the transference of ideologies.

Since children's literature is didactic it must by definition be a repository, in a literate society almost the quintessential source, of the values that parents and others hope to teach to the next generation.

(Musgrave 1985 p 17)

The ideology of a society can be so condensed in this 'repository' that it can provide a convenient site for exploration; one commentator goes so far as to suggest that '... one very quick way to access the attitudes, beliefs, and preoccupations of a culture is to survey the books produced for its young people' (Rubio 1997 p 4). A corollary of this claim is that an examination of children's books, such as that undertaken in this thesis, will throw light not only on the ideology of the books themselves, but also on the wider culture of which they form a part. And this concept of children's literature as a 'repository of values' presages the powerful tendency to nostalgia in children's books (which will be explored in chapter 2).

The values that are promulgated by adults in children's books—or 'relations of domination', in Thompson's term (1990 p 56), began to engage the attention of scholars in the field of children's literature in the 1970s. In studies of literature generally, such relations of domination were usually discerned in matters of class, gender or ethnicity. That children's books did not represent all children or
their worlds equally, was made apparent in the work of Dixon (1977) and Leeson (1977), who pointed out many biases in representation of race, class and gender, particularly in the works regarded as classics. However, when dealing with books for children, an important extra relationship is the inter-generational one. As Knowles and Malmkjær point out (1996 p 44), adults exercise direct control over children in many ways but also indirectly control them through the use of language; and the adults doing the controlling include the influential group of adult writers producing books for children. Robert Sutherland (1985) claimed that writers for children transmit ideologies in three different ways: firstly in overt ways, as in the didactic novels of Victorian times and later, writers of such works of ‘advocacy’ usually knowing ‘what they are about’ (1985 p 146); secondly, through the politics of attack, which in varying degrees from amusement to outrage is used to target social institutions, weaknesses or ‘evil-in-the-abstract’ (1985 p 147); and thirdly, through the politics of assent, which simply affirms ideologies: these ideologies are usually internalised established ones, so that readers do not recognise them as such (1985 p 151). Sutherland cites the ‘tag-along’ roles of girls in many novels as one such internalised assumption (p 154).

Peter Hollindale (1988) was most influential in introducing the concept of ideology in children’s literature to scholars in the field, as he emphasised the permeation of ideology throughout all texts, and the importance of acknowledging this fact, describing ideology as ‘an inevitable, untameable and largely uncontrollable factor in the transaction between books and children’ (Hollindale 1988 p 10). He, too, claimed three ‘levels’ of ideology: firstly, the explicit beliefs of an individual writer; secondly, the individual writer’s unexamined assumptions; and thirdly, ‘the huge commonalities of an age, and the captivity of mind we undergo by living in our own time and place and no other. A large part of any book is written not by its author but by the world its author lives in’ (Hollindale 1988 p 15). It is this ‘world its author lives in’—and, for the purposes of this thesis, ‘author’ will be taken to include writer and illustrator—that will be seen to reveal itself as this study proceeds.
Peter Hunt drew attention to the special ways in which (adult) authorial control is exercised in children’s literature. ‘By attempting to control the text in certain ways, writers “require” readers to read only within both implied and defined limits, and texts become, in Bakhtin’s terms, “monological” rather than “dialogical” or “polyphonic”’ (Hunt 1988 p 163). The ways of controlling the reader, according to Hunt, include maintaining the voice of the ‘residual storyteller’ (p 172) who tells rather than shows, and employing a large proportion of dialogue in a highly organised manner. John Stephens (1992) showed how narrative focalisation and the shifts and gaps of narrative viewpoint imply certain ideological assumptions. Stephens also saw particular problems with the way children read: because verisimilitude is over-valued, masking the processes of production of meaning, and children are asked to identify with the main character, they are susceptible to manipulation (1992 p 4). So by the end of the twentieth century the criticism of children’s literature had largely accepted the assumptions of ideological underpinnings. One further point must be made, however: that ideologies are not usually transmitted in a pure, unmixed form. Even the most didactic books, such as those published from 1812 by the Religious Tract Society (forerunner of Lutterworth Press) and ‘designed for the Sunday School reward-book market’ (Watson 2001 p 604), or those produced in China during the Cultural Revolution, can contain contradictions to their overriding ideologies.

To see literature as a straightforward response to social conditions is too deterministic and reductive. Literary creation is a process in which the writer often struggles with the world he or she sets out to depict, so that while some works undoubtedly do reflect their society in very passive ways, others articulate its contradictions, question its values, or even argue against them.

(Butts 1992 xiii)

However, the existence of such complications does not detract from the particular ideological power wielded by literature for children.
D. The development of critical approaches to picture books

While children's literature criticism, chiefly of novels, began to incorporate an awareness of ideology from the 1970s, there was a parallel growth of interest in the need for criticism to pay particular attention to picture book illustrations. At first this attentiveness did not use the term 'ideology'. Aesthetic judgements remained dominant: Barbara Bader retained the label 'art form' in her influential definition, while embracing awareness of the commercial and social context:

A picturebook is text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historical document; and foremost an experience for a child. As an art form it hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning page.

(Bader 1976 p 1)

Bader's definition was ground-breaking in emphasising the relationship of pictures and words, and it remains a useful one which I employ as a basis for analysis. After the phrase 'a social, cultural, historical document' I would, however, prefer to insert the phrase 'revealing ideologies not just of the writer and illustrator but of the world they live in'; in this way Bader's definition would be extended to include the critical approach expounded by Hollindale.

Bader's phrase 'the interdependence of pictures and words' was an early acceptance of the fact that that picture books could no longer be considered merely as verbal texts with pictures added; but it does not include the idea that illustrations are bearers of significant meaning, that they are, in fact, semiotic. The study of the semiotics of pictures had been pioneered by Barthes (1957) who pointed out that pictures as well as words could be 'read' as signs representing ideology. Some tentative application of this concept to illustrations was made in the 1980s: for example, although he does not explicitly discuss the picture book, using as examples longer textual works such as Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* with its illustrations by Tenniel (1865), Sutherland
does make the point that the use of illustrations adds another dimension through which ideologies may be transmitted:

In studying the promulgation of ideologies in children's literature through the politics of advocacy, attack, and assent, investigators also should not overlook the role that graphic illustrations might play in reinforcing (or perhaps undercutting) the ideologies inherent in the written texts.

(Sutherland 1985 p 156)

But a thoroughgoing application of such ideas to the picture book was not to be implemented until critics had absorbed the implications of the radical developments that were occurring in the picture books themselves.

The long tradition of illustrated books, especially sacred books, in the history of European publishing, had begun to give way, early in the twentieth century, to the idea that illustrations were only for children (although illustrated editions of some novels, such as those of Charles Dickens, intended for adult readers, continued to be available for some time). Picture book publishing flourished particularly in post-World War II USA; a contributing factor was the emigration of many talented graphic artists from Europe, some of them skilled in folk art traditions that transferred successfully to illustrating for children. Certainly the developments in colour printing were a strong influence in the expansion of picture book publishing (see below for reference to the importance of this factor in Australia). But two influences helped to keep alive the concept that a picture book was simply a story to which decorative illustrations provided a pleasant addendum. One was the historical development of the form: it was true to say that the picture book had evolved in exactly that manner, as a story with illustrations that just happened to become bigger and brighter as technology allowed, with a consequent tendency to shorten the verbal text. The other factor was that critical discussion of the picture book took place in pedagogic and literary circles, with little input from authorities on visual art or from the world of wider cultural commentary.
Some individual picture books were ground-breaking. The publication of *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak 1963) and *Rosie's Walk* (Hutchins 1968), both in the USA, changed perceptions of the possibilities of the picture book, especially in redefining the relationship of pictures to verbal text. The two ‘Shirley’ books by John Burningham, published in the UK (1977 and 1978), presented parallel narrative worlds, one mundane and the other highly imaginative. But criticism was slow to keep pace. Admittedly the impact of *Rosie's Walk* as an innovative book was marked by the English literacy scholar Margaret Meek, who extolled its pedagogical usefulness, especially in encouraging young readers in the skills of anticipation. ‘[In *Rosie’s Walk*] the reader is in league with the author; this is one of the rules of the reading game, and best learned early’ (Meek 1982 p 47).

Uri Shulevitz, himself a creator of picture books, provided a definition that acknowledged the communicative function of illustrations, claiming they could no longer be regarded as purely decorative: ‘In a picture book, the pictures extend, clarify, complement, or take the place of words. Both the words and the pictures are “read”’ (Shulevitz 1985 p 15). While this definition includes the idea of visual literacy, of ‘reading’ pictures just as one reads text, the definition is still text-centred, in that all four verbs ‘extend, clarify, complement, or take the place of’ name processes which occur to an (apparently pre-existing) text. By such a definition there is an implication that the wordless spreads in a picture book such as *Where the Wild Things Are* act as some form of ‘substitute words’.

It was the work of Maurice Sendak, writer/illustrator of *Where the Wild Things Are* and other innovative books, which was to provide the catalyst for further critical development in picture book studies. Stephen Roxburgh (1983) published an article analysing the narrative content of the illustrations in *Outside Over There* (1981), Sendak's recent and controversial book. Roxburgh noted the lack of theoretical attention to picture book illustrations up until that time, especially their narrative function; he claimed that ‘[such critical theory] needs to be expanded if we, as adult readers of literature for children, want to understand the semantic structure of picture books’ (Roxburgh 1983 p 20).
Furthermore, claimed Roxburgh, 'it is crucial when discussing picture books, that our notion of the “text” be expanded to include all sequences of images, whether or not there are also words' (1983 p 22). Roxburgh proceeded to use some critical vocabulary new at the time but later to become commonly accepted; for example, he described Illustration 5 as the centre of the book 'physically and thematically' (1983 p 28). He ended the article with a call for critics of children’s literature to ‘acknowledge the uniqueness of the picture book genre and adapt existing critical theory to what is, in effect, a new form of narrative’ (1983 p 33).

William Moebius was one critic who was quick to treat picture books as an entity: he claimed that ‘we read images and text together as the mutually complementary story of a consciousness’ (1986 p 141), and proposed a ‘code’ in Barthes’ sense for reading picture books, drawing some terminology from film study and discussing codes of size, perspective, framing and so on.

It was not until 1988 that a full-length exposition of the critical theory of the picture book was published, by the Canadian scholar Perry Nodelman. In his *Words About Pictures*, Nodelman claimed that the narrative function of pictures in picture books makes them unique, and they need to be analysed not in the traditional manner, from a pedagogic viewpoint, but by making use of semiotic theory derived from critics such as Barthes and Iser. Picture books, according to Nodelman, are subtle and complex, combining the verbal and the visual into a whole that is different from the parts (1988 p 21). Nodelman’s analysis is fundamental to the present thesis—and I take it as axiomatic that the picture book in totality is more complex, more subtle than a mere addition of its two components.

Nodelman claimed that expectations are set up by such physical properties as a book’s size, shape, paper stock and cover art, the use of framing, the placement of verbal text, the use of colour and the medium used. The context for reading
picture book art is the whole of visual history (1988 p 124) but cultural norms are crucial to such reading. Nodelman particularly analysed the ways in which picture books imply movement, through conventions such as showing an action just before its climax, and making use of the reader's assumptions of cause-and-effect to indicate the passage of time; he pointed out that illustrators are restricted in the number of moments they can depict, so must choose these moments carefully. The discussion of time in chapter 3 of this thesis owes much to this analysis.

Central to Nodelman's definition of picture books is the concept of irony. He claimed that verbal narratives occupy time, whereas pictures occupy space, and are descriptive; and pictures convey uniqueness—rather than 'extending' the verbal text (as in Shulevitz's definition) they limit it (1988 p 220).

Because they communicate different kinds of information, and because they work together by limiting each other’s meanings, words and pictures necessarily have a combative relationship; their complementarity is a matter of opposites completing each other by virtue of their differences. As a result, the relationships between pictures and texts in picture books tend to be ironic: each speaks about matters on which the other is silent.

(Nodelman 1988 p 221)

Nodelman claimed that in a picture book 'the words tell us what the pictures do not show, and the pictures show us what the words do not tell'; and he defined irony as a state in which 'we know something more and something different from what we are being told' (1988 p 222). As well as the ironic relationship between objective pictures and subjective words; and that between temporal stories and the timelessness of pictures; there is also the irony in that the verbal text is always from one character's or narrator's viewpoint, but pictures objectively include that character. Finally Nodelman drew attention to the rhythms of picture books, brought about by the tension between the words which urge the reader to move on, and the pictures which urge the reader to
pause and consider them (1988 p 246). \footnote{2}{It is noteworthy that the year of publication of Nodelman’s \textit{Words About Pictures} also saw the publication in Australia of \textit{Drac and the Gremlin} (Baillie and Tanner 1988), a picture book, discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis, in which the ironic relationship between words and pictures is foregrounded.}

Despite his vital contribution to the language of picture book criticism, Nodelman did not focus on ideology (the word ‘ideology’ makes no appearance in the index to his book). It was the Australian critic John Stephens, whose work was referred to earlier, who was to stress the ideological import of picture books: ‘Picture books ... can never be said to exist without either a socialising or educational intention, or else without a specific orientation towards the reality constructed by the society that produces them’ (Stephens 1992 p 158). He specifically included illustrations as ideologically charged: ‘... as all texts carry within them attitudes and ideologies, so also do pictures’ (1992 p 162).

While these developments in criticism were taking place, outside the academy, or on its fringes, discussion was building in children’s literature forums about the need to pay due attention to the visual art in picture books; this debate usually took the form of attempts to redress a perceived neglect of illustration by reviewers and educators, who continued to be drawn from the world of literature rather than the world of visual art. The editorial director of the influential US review journal \textit{Horn Book} stated that many reviewers were ‘less than adequate as critics when it comes to talking about art’, and advocated paying more attention to the artist’s technique and ability, and ‘a careful look at the physical aspects of the book itself’ (Silvey 1990 p 102). In Australia the illustrator Donna Rawlins made an impassioned plea, claiming that reviewers of picture books concentrated too much on the words to the neglect of the pictures: she surveyed ‘hundreds’ of reviews and stated that ‘only 3.5 per cent seemed to truly address illustration as if it were important to a picture book’ (Rawlins 1994 p 136), and added that commentators on the picture book often mentioned only the colour palette when discussing visual elements. One result of protests such as these was the introduction of the practice, by many publishers, of including on the imprint page of a picture book some details of
the materials used by the illustrator (such as gouache, pencil, water colour).

The visual arts viewpoint and vocabulary gradually entered the mainstream of picture book discussion. Jane Doonan, an artist and teacher in the UK, was influential in familiarising others with this specialised vocabulary. She introduced the term ‘ beholder ’ for a person reading a picture book; and stressed that reading a picture book results in the making of a composite text (Doonan 1993 p 58). Doonan’s emphasis has remained on the study of picture book aesthetics, but the label she gives to her methodology, ‘ close looking in context ’ (1993 p 21), accurately implies that ideological, as well as aesthetic, disclosures can result from it.

Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen proposed a complete grammar of visual design, providing an analytical framework for examining particular features of pictures to discern ideologies. These two researchers, the former from a background in linguistics, the latter in film and mass communication, published pioneering work on the theory of images in the early 1990s. Their work, and that of other semioticians, resulted in the inclusion of ‘ visual literacy ’ in school and university curricula. Among their major claims were that visual communication is always coded, and that society had until recent times valued language more highly than other codes (Kress and van Leeuwen 1991 p 32), claims that were obviously to be important in the study of the picture book. Of the ideology of pictures they wrote:

Pictorial structures do not simply reproduce the structures of ‘ reality ’. On the contrary, they produce images of reality which are bound up with the interests of the social institutions within which the pictures are produced, circulated and read. They are ideological.

(1991 p 45)

Although they have had little to say about the picture book as such, their attention focussing rather on the design of textbooks and teaching materials,
the grammar proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen is applicable to discussing picture books, and has provided a vital tool for this study.

By the late 1990s a rich discourse of criticism had grown, worldwide, around the picture book, with notable contributions from Australian critics including Stephens, Johnston, and Anstey and Bull (2000). These, and all of the scholars already mentioned in this section, have helped to build a critical framework for analysing picture books, and all have influenced this present work.

Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott published *How Picturebooks Work* in 2001, with a detailed typology of books based on a categorisation of the consonance, symmetry or complementarity of the word/image relationship. The insight for which I am most indebted, of all those in this thoroughgoing analysis, is that the tension between words and images in the picture book can best be examined by hermeneutic methods.

Hermeneutic analysis starts with the whole, proceeds to look at details, goes back to the whole with a better understanding, and so on, in an eternal circle known as the hermeneutic circle. The process of ‘reading’ a picturebook may be represented by a hermeneutic circle as well. Whichever we start with, the verbal or the visual, it creates expectations for the other, which in turn provides new experiences and new expectations. The reader turns from verbal to visual and back again, in an ever-expanding concatenation of understanding.

Nikolajeva and Scott (2001 p 2)

The methodology described, of hermeneutic analysis, is a desirable one both because it is true to ‘real’ readings of picture books to child listeners/viewers; and because it removes the distraction of ideas of competition between words and illustrations.

3 Examples of such terms are vectors (lines equivalent to ‘action verbs’ in language); salience (which creates hierarchy in images); and modality markers (such as colour saturation).
My personal framework for critical analysis of picture books

In undertaking this study, many of the developments outlined above have been deeply influential in shaping my approach to the analysis of picture books. Important among these influences are Bader’s definition, the emphases on ideology of Hollindale and Stephens, the semiotic analysis of Nodelman, and the grammar of visual codes proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen. To this eclectic mix of influences, I have added my own particular methods of viewing the books, based on thirty years of professional experience in examining picture books. As this experience has included responsibilities in the areas of bookselling, editing and publishing, I am especially alert to the book’s existence as ‘an item of manufacture and a commercial product’ (in Bader’s terms). The necessity to work closely with designers and marketing teams has led to my paying attention to the holistic design of the books; and treating as important such matters as the interconnectedness of illustrations and typefaces, the layout of double-page spreads, variety of perspectives in illustrations, attention to the page turns and the gutter, white space used for narrative significance, framing of illustrations or bleeding to the edge of pages, and the import of endpapers. In balance with attention to such matters, experience with reading picture books aloud, and running courses to help adults acquire skills in this area, have served to increase my awareness of the value of respecting the ‘composite text’ (Doonan 1993 p 58), with its rhythms set up by both words and pictures; and the advisability of using the hermeneutic approach recommended by Nikolajeva and Scott.

Shaping the study

The sections above serve to provide the wider context for this examination of selected picture books of late twentieth century Australia, and to outline the framework of critical approaches to be employed. The specific shape of this study came from questions triggered in response to the quotation from Watkins, and influenced the choice of the sample books, as shown below.
A. The two images from Watkins

At the beginning of this chapter, two key images of children’s literature, derived from Tony Watkins, were cited: maps and 'homes' in the world. When planning the shape of this thesis, these two images recurred, and were to provide vital input to its development.

(i) Maps of meaning

Watkins’ idea that the stories we tell our children constitute ‘maps of meaning’ (1992 p 183) invites examination of the image of the map, and the changes that this concept has undergone. There is nothing neutral about any map; maps must now be considered (even if the fact was not always admitted) as ideologically charged. As the scientific world-view came to predominate in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, maps were seen as part of the triumph of the scientific over the subjective, and much emphasis was placed on their accuracy. But recent theorising about maps claims that they are in fact social constructions: the idea of maps as two dimensional and fixed is considered masculinist and colonial; three dimensional maps are favoured, and the need for continual remapping is emphasised (Pile and Thrift 1995 p 4). It is claimed that people map themselves into socially sanctioned regulations of body and self (Pile and Thrift 1995 p 48), and the childhood self in particular is bounded by others and by the spaces of home and locality. These boundaries of time and space help construct childhood; at first the family protects the child, but gradually the world ‘seeps in’ (Sibley 1995 (b) p 126). The degree to which childhood is bounded varies according to many factors, including those of economic situation, location and fashions in child rearing.

The picture books read to or by a child can clearly form part of the world that is ‘seeping in’ to the child’s consciousness. These books also represent imaginary worlds that themselves reproduce, overlap with or challenge the ‘maps of meaning’ constructed by the child, contributing to the need for remapping. It seemed to me that an important question to ask was: What are some of the features of the ‘maps’ provided by these picture books? While attempting to
answer this question, I noted that as children are busily remapping their expanding worlds, adults—including the creators of picture books—may be engaged in a process of longing to return to the simpler, perhaps securer maps of their (real or imaginary) childhoods. The longing for a return to a childhood map is part of that complex mix of emotions labelled *nostalgia*. By tracing the connotations of the concept ‘maps of meaning’, it became clear to me that nostalgia would be a central concept in an examination of picture books.

Contemplating the image of the map contributed to the shaping of this thesis in a second way, by leading also to the realisation that the two dimensions, of *time* and *space*, that bound and construct childhood, form vital components of the structure of picture books; this realisation, together with Nodelman’s emphasis on the difference between verbal narratives which occupy *time*, and pictures which occupy *space*, led to the devotion of chapters 3 and 4 to examining these two elements.

(ii) ‘Homes’ in the world

Closely related to the concept of a map of meaning is the second concept derived from Watkins, that of a ‘home’ in the world. *Home*, in terms of childhood, is a word evoking a continuum of places, from the smallest (perhaps ‘bed’ or ‘cot’) through ‘bedroom’, to ‘house’, and into other parts of the world that ‘seep in’ to the child’s experience. So ‘home’ becomes both ‘personal and social’ (Watkins 1992 pp 183–4).

In considering this ‘social’ aspect of home, Watkins quotes Ernst Bloch who, discussing the principle of hope, offers the following profound meaning of ‘home’ in the cultural imagination:

> What is envisioned as home in childhood is in actuality the goal of the upright gait toward which human beings strive as they seek to overcome exploitation, humiliation, oppression and

---

4 It is interesting to note how many classic books of childhood contain actual physical maps, often presented on the first endpapers as an introduction to the imaginary world that can be entered and explored within: *Winnie-the-Pooh* (Milne 1926); *Milly-Molly-Mandy Stories* (Brisley 1928); and *My Place* (Wheatley and Rawlins 1987) are just three examples of many.
disillusionment. The individual alone cannot achieve such a goal, which is only possible as a collective enterprise.

(Bloch 1988 p xxvii)

This concept of ‘home’ as a collective enterprise towards lack of oppression is so idealised, so connected to ideas of a wished-for good place, that it evokes nostalgia as effectively as the concept of a childhood map. Consideration of this push to nostalgia raised the question: are the ‘homes’ presented in the picture books consistently comfortable and welcoming ones? Johnston claims that Australian children’s literature has contributed to the conceptualisation of home as country/nation as well as house of abode. ‘Australian children’s literature forms a vital part of the wider cultural context of Australia’ (Johnston 1999 p 13). In considering this ‘wider cultural context’, is home a continuing good place?

In seeking to answer these questions, not only did the concept of nostalgia appear increasingly central to the study, with an examination of nostalgia, its history, development and application to picture books becoming of necessity the focus of the following chapter, but further chapter topics emerged. One very specific kind of idealised ‘home’ recurred so often in the picture books that its semiotic significance required the devotion of a whole chapter to it: the Australian cottage (chapter 5). And the concept of ‘dependence on other beings’ required acknowledgement of the importance of the family, community, and neighbourhood in which picture book characters are embedded (chapter 6). Two pervading functions of communal and social life that are revealed externally—and so can be discerned in illustrations—are food and clothing, and they are the subject of the final chapter of the thesis (chapter 7). It became clear that nostalgically desirable maps and homes were emerging as templates for the subject matter of all these chapters.

The project of examining maps and homes was to necessitate the inclusion of concepts from the disciplines of geography and architecture, as well as those from sociology and cultural studies, referred to earlier (Section B). It was again a matter of benefitting from the blurred dividing lines between separate disciplines.
Two appendices to the thesis will examine, firstly, two books which do not come within the sample, but which use different houses to express the national Arcadian dream; and secondly, the roles of animals in contributing further to the maps and homes in the sample.

B. Choice of the sample

In the search for societal ideologies in Australian picture books, a sample of appropriate books was required. I chose to use a sample of picture books that had received the accolades of 'winner' or 'honour book' from the Children’s Book Council of Australia awards system. Following is a rationale for this choice.

(i) Adult authority and CBCA honoured books

It has earlier been stated that children’s books form a repository of values to be passed from one generation to the next (Musgrave 1985 p 22); and the Australian critic Brenda Niall claims that ‘endorsed by adult authority, children’s books reveal a good deal about the social values of their time’ (Niall 1996 p 13). While it may be generally true that children’s books provide quick access to a culture (as claimed by Rubio, and quoted earlier in this chapter), books that have been specifically ‘endorsed by adult authority’, through a system of prestigious awards, can be expected to provide an especially rich source of study. Surely books honoured by such awards—selected by adult judges—will reveal the ideologies most approved of by a society’s elders for passing on to its younger generations. The judges examine the books published in the previous year, and declare winners and honour books according to literary and artistic standards (see Appendix B for a more detailed account of this process). The honoured books achieve wide distribution in Australian schools, libraries and families, and are perceived as critically and socially acceptable.

Early in this chapter, reference was made to the concept of ‘double address’ in children’s literature (Wall 1991); such attempts to appeal to both adults and
children have many practical repercussions in the publishing world. It is a well known paradox that, even to reach publication, books for children must be approved by a number of adult ‘gatekeepers’, including publishers and editors; and to reach the children themselves, other ‘gatekeepers’ must approve, such as booksellers, teachers, librarians and parents. Picture books are even more subject to control by gatekeepers than are other books for children, because of their special need for a dual readership of adults and children. This fact is overlooked in much critical discussion of picture books, but the dual readership is a driving force in the commercial world of book publishing and retailing, where it is acknowledged that parents, teachers and librarians select and pay for most picture books. Because of the visual content of a picture book, an adult prospective purchaser usually leafs through the book and examines at least some of the spreads before choosing it⁶, in a process that is quite different from the selection of, say, a fiction book for a teenager, in which case the selection is usually based on the scrutinising of blurbs and author information on the outside covers. The ability to ‘sample’ the artwork of a picture book, in a cursory flicking through of the pages, means that the illustrator, editor and designer are constantly aware (at some level of consciousness) of the need for visual appeal to adults as well as children. And writers and illustrators similarly are conscious that their work depends upon the reception of both adults and children, as picture books are commonly read aloud. Stanton (1998 p 2) states that this dual readership can lead to high quality books: ‘When a picture book fully succeeds, it unites its pairs of readers in a special bond. Because the children’s picture book is designed to provide the context for an intimate transaction involving the imaginations of both parent and child, there is a social value to the form that lends a special poignancy to the pleasure it provides.’ (And it will be argued in chapter 2 that this dual readership contributes to the nostalgic content of picture books).

---

⁶ The prospective purchaser of a picture book may even find herself (or an idealised version of herself) represented in the illustrations. An example is the mother figure in the ‘welcoming’ scene of The Journey Home (p 29, see Plate 1).
(ii) Defining Picture Books, and Australianness

As has been demonstrated above, definitions of the picture book are multiple and shifting, and to select books and categorise them as ‘picture books’ could be problematic. My classification for the purposes of this study has been made according to a very simple criterion, making use of the ready-made classification by the Children’s Book Council of Australia: one of the CBCA award categories is the Picture Book of the Year Award, and the sample has been selected from books successful in this category. They are almost without exception books of thirty-two pages; all in the sample have coloured illustrations; all except two have a verbal text as well.

In a similarly simple fashion, the assessing of ‘Australianness’ of authors and illustrators has been accepted ready-made according to the CBCA criteria. Any book entered for the CBCA awards must be the work of creator/s who are either Australian citizens no matter where resident, or residents in Australia for at least two years prior to the year of publication (Children’s Book Council of Australia 2002 (a) p 9). There is no requirement for the books entered to be set in Australia; but I further limited the sample by eliminating eight books set in countries other than Australia (see Appendix A).

(iii) Choice of period (1970 to 1997)

The sample books were chosen from the period 1970–1997: the start because that year is acknowledged as a turning point for Australian picture books, and the end because it was soon after that time that the study began. The two

---

6 The criteria for the judging of the Picture Book category are stated thus: Picture Book of the Year awards will be made to outstanding books of the Picture Book genre in which the author and illustrator achieve artistic and literary unity, or, in wordless picture books, where the story, theme or concept is unified through illustrations. As a general guideline, judges may consider the relative success of a picture book in balancing and harmonising the following elements: artistic style and graphic excellence; effective use of media and technique; colour, line, shape, texture; relationship between illustration and text; consistency of style, characterisation, information and setting; clarity, appropriateness and aesthetic appeal of illustrations; quality of book design, production, printing and binding; appeal to the child reader. (Children’s Book Council of Australia 2002 (a) p 8). Note that there is no attempt at a definition of a picture book.
foremost authorities on the history of Australian children’s literature, Saxby and Muir, agree that 1969/1970 marked the beginning of a flowering of picture books. Saxby claims that ‘the modern Australian picture book sprang into life, as it were, fully formed. With the publication in 1970 of Desmond Digby’s illustrations for A B Paterson’s Waltzing Matilda, Anne Bower Ingram of Collins’s Children’s Books established the picture book in this country as an art form’ (Saxby 1993 p 77). Muir describes Sly Old Wardrobe (Southall/Greenwood; Picture Book of the Year Award 1969) as heralding the successful picture books of the 1970s (Muir 1982 p 126), and goes on to say that when Waltzing Matilda received the award in 1971 ‘there was a heady feeling that the Australian picture book had really at last arrived’ (Muir 1982 p 128).

Several factors had combined to bring about this ‘arrival’. The influence of publishing trends in other parts of the world, especially the English-speaking world, was vital (see, for example, mention above of the ground-breaking picture books of Sendak and Hutchins). Individual publishers in Australia brought talent and energy to the encouragement of authors and illustrators; the economy was prospering; children’s sections in public libraries, and libraries in schools were expanding, the latter encouraged by government grant money; and the technology was available for colour printing, especially attractive (and affordable) if managed ‘off shore’.

Due to the reduced costs of printing books in South East Asia: Asia, picture story books7 produced by Australian publishing companies could be marketed at a price that placed them in fair competition with the reasonably priced, well produced and colourful picture story books that had been flowing into Australia from the United Kingdom and the United States since the early 1950s.

(Prentice and Bird 1987 p 121).

The flourishing of the picture book in Australia during the 1970s and later has been documented by Ingram (1987). See also Appendix B for an account of the CBCA awards and their influence, especially in the institution of a Picture Book

---

7 Prentice and Bird use the term ‘picture story book’ as was common until the 1980s; from then the simpler form ‘picture book’ has prevailed.
category. The picture books of 1970–1997 represent an established art form of considerable commercial and cultural success.

C. The emphasis on illustrations

Once the choice of sample had been made, the books were examined in close detail, enlisting the critical framework described earlier, and paying attention to their construction as whole art works with both verbal and visual components, but particularly analysing their illustrations. There are two reasons for this emphasis on the illustrations. One flows from Johnston’s proposal (1998 p 25), already quoted at the beginning of this chapter, that the visual depictions of the picture book provide a rich field for ideological study, with their unwitting disclosure of cultural assumptions. Because the aim of this thesis was to uncover societal ideologies in the books, the study of visual detail seemed particularly likely to bear fruit. It soon became clear that nostalgic background permeated the sample (another phrase for which I am indebted to Johnston), a disclosure facilitated by concentration on the illustrations.

The second reason for the emphasis on illustrations is a deliberate attempt to redress an imbalance: at the time of beginning this study, less attention had been paid to the illustrations than to the verbal texts of picture books in reviewing (see Silvey 1990 and Rawlins 1994 quoted above), and fewer studies had concentrated solely on the illustrations. As recently as 1999, Reeder was able to comment that librarians and teachers usually have a good understanding of written language but when it comes to picture books ‘only truly read and fully appreciate half the story’, neglecting the illustrations (Reeder 1999 p 2). Certainly in very recent times attempts have been made to make up for this neglect: it has become the practice, for example, of the Children’s Book Council of Australia to publish all lists of picture books with the illustrator’s name first, before that of the writer; and many courses and conferences now treat concepts of visual literacy and the art of illustration.

By concentrating on the illustrations I do not wish to imply any superiority of illustrations over the verbal text. Picture books are integrated art works; both
words and pictures contribute to the impact of the whole, and in many cases it is true to say that the book would not exist if the verbal text had not been first produced by the writer: in Nodelman's terms, the verbal text comes first (1988 p 40). Ron Brooks, acclaimed illustrator himself, states 'The words are the thing, really . . . It is a great privilege to work with such texts, to try and transform them from words only, as wonderful as they may truly be, into living, breathing picture books' (2002 pp 16–18). And, as claimed above, the hermeneutic method of study recommended by Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) is preferable to any method that attends disproportionately to one element in a picture book. I decry any failure to acknowledge the importance of the authorship of (verbal) texts of picture books; and have learned from first-hand experience in the publishing industry that a book which appears to be a triumph for the illustrator may very well have begun life as a manuscript, carefully worked out by the writer to provide a showcase for the illustrator's skill. If a swing of the pendulum was needed until recently, so that illustrators received their due acknowledgement in the creation of the total work, it is important that the pendulum does not swing so far in the other direction that the contribution of writers is downplayed. I began this study with admiration for the picture book as a whole art work; and ended it with that admiration unchanged.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter has described background and rationale for the shaping of the study. The following appendices will explain the context and the criteria for selection of the picture book sample. From chapter 3 onwards, this sample will be examined closely for the aspects revealing nostalgic content. Meanwhile, in chapter 2, an exploration will be made of the concept itself: nostalgia, its origins and applications to children's books.

A note about pagination

The pages of picture books are not normally numbered. Picture books almost universally consist of 32 pages. The books in the sample have 32 pages, except for three early examples:
Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons 46 pages
Marty Moves to the Country 40 pages
Sunshine 28 pages

For ease of reference, I have numbered the pages of the sample books, and have followed the convention that recto pages (righthand) are odd (1, 3, 5 . . .) and verso pages (lefthand) are even (2, 4, 6 . . .). In most cases, the double-page spread is treated in my analyses as a visual entity, so most page references will be, for example, to ‘spread 4/5’.
Appendix A: the sample

Books were chosen from the Children’s Book Council of Australia award lists, from the years 1971 to 1997 inclusive. The original ‘long list’ sample is the following list of 55 books honoured by the CBCA, in the category Picture Book of the Year. From 1971 till 1987 the terms ‘winner’ and ‘highly commended’ were used; then in 1987 the system changed and the terms ‘winner’ and ‘honour books’ were adopted, and it became usual practice to announce two ‘honour books’.

The list is marked ‘w’ for winner, ‘hc’ for highly commended, until 1987; from then the abbreviations are changed to ‘w’ for winner, ‘h’ for honour book.

(i) The ‘long list’: CBCA Picture Book awards, 1971 to 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>Waltzing Matilda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td></td>
<td>no award or commendation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>hc</td>
<td>Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>The Bunyip of Berkeley’s Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>The Man from Ironbark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>The Rainbow Serpent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hc</td>
<td>Annie’s Rainbow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>hc</td>
<td>ABC of Monsters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hc</td>
<td>The Lighthouse Keeper’s Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>The Quinkins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hc</td>
<td>The Trouble with Mr Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>One Dragon’s Dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>hc</td>
<td>Marty Moves to the Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>Sunshine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hc</td>
<td>The Tram to Bondi Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>Who Sank the Boat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hc</td>
<td>The Train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>Bertie and the Bear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hc</td>
<td>Possum Magic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>hc</td>
<td>The Inch Boy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>Felix and Alexander</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hc</td>
<td>A Piece of Straw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>Kojuro and the Bears</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Animalia</td>
<td>PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Murgatroyd’s Garden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>Crusher is Coming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Where the Forest Meets the Sea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>The Long Red Scarf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>Drac and the Gremlin</td>
<td>PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>w</td>
<td>The Eleventh Hour&lt;sup&gt;8&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>My Place in Space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>The Very Best of Friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Grandad’s Magic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>The Journey Home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>Greetings from Sandy Beach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Counting on Frank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Hector and Maggie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>Window</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>William Tell</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Hist!</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Belinda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Where’s Mum?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>First Light</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>The Paw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Dog Tales</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>The Watertower</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Bamboozled</td>
<td>PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>The Deliverance of Dancing Bears</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>The Hunt</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>The Story of Rosy Dock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>The Race</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>Not a Nibble!</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>The Midnight Gang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Let’s Eat!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>8</sup> In 1989 there were joint winners in this category.
(ii) Arriving at the final sample

The amended list, in section (iii) below, was arrived at by deleting books in certain categories (of my own devising). The aim was to arrive at a sample of manageable size and greatest applicability. Of the original list of 55 books, 25 have been deleted, leaving a total of 30 books. Each of the remaining 30 books has at least one major character who is human; is apparently set in Australia; and is apparently intended to depict life at approximately the time of the publication of the book.

The deleted books seemed less likely to reveal ideologies of contemporary Australian life. I concede that arguments could be made for inclusion of these categories: for example, books set in earlier times are nonetheless products of the time of publication; and animal characters often ‘stand in’ for human characters. While aware of such arguments, I chose to reach a manageable sample by retaining only the contemporary, local books with human characters.

The codings for the deleted books are as follows:

F denotes set in a country other than Australia (UK, Japan, Switzerland, Turkey and Spain).

PP denotes a picture puzzle book.

A is a book with animal characters only. *Bunyip of Berkeley’s Creek* has one fleeting appearance by a human character, but the other books so coded have no human characters. Books with interacting animal and human characters, such as *Belinda* and *Dog Tales*, have been retained.

H is set obviously in a historical or mythical past.

D denotes Aboriginal Dreamtime story.
(iii) The final sample: amended list after deletions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Annie’s Rainbow</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Marty Moves to the Country</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sunshine</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Felix and Alexander</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Murgatroyd’s Garden</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Crusher is Coming</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Where the Forest Meets the Sea</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The Long Red Scarf</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Drac and the Gremlin</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>My Place in Space</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The Very Best of Friends</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Grandad’s Magic</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The Journey Home</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Greetings from Sandy Beach</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Counting on Frank</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Hector and Maggie</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Window</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Belinda</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Where’s Mum?</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>First Light</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>The Paw</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Dog Tales</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The Watertower</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>The Story of Rosy Dock</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>The Race</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Not a Nibble!</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The Midnight Gang</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: On the following page, this list is repeated with full bibliographic details. The publication date for each book will appear as the year before the date listed here, which is the date in which the award was given.
(iv) The final sample, with bibliographic details

1 Greenwood, Ted *Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons* Cremorne, Angus and Robertson 1972
2 Brooks, Ron *Annie's Rainbow* Sydney, Collins 1975
3 Wagner, Jenny and Brooks, Ron *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat* Harmondsworth, Penguin 1977
4 Walker, Kate and Treloar, Bruce *Marty Moves to the Country* Ryde, Methuen 1980
5 Ormerod, Jan *Sunshine* Harmondsworth, Penguin 1981
6 Denton, Terry *Felix and Alexander* Melbourne, Oxford University Press 1985
7 Zavos, Judy and Zak, Drahos *Murgatroyd's Garden* Richmond, William Heinemann Australia 1986
8 Graham, Bob *Crusher is Coming* Sydney, William Collins 1987
9 Baker, Jeannie *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* Lane Cove, Julia MacRae 1987
10 Hilton, Nette and Power, Margaret *The Long Red Scarf* Norwood, Omnibus 1987
11 Baillie, Allan and Tanner, Jane *Drac and the Gremlin* Ringwood, Penguin 1988
12 Hirst, Robin and Sally; and Harvey, Roland and Levine, Joe *My Place in Space* Fitzroy, The Five Mile Press 1988
13 Wild, Margaret and Vivas, Julie *The Very Best of Friends* Hunters Hill, Margaret Hamilton 1989
15 Lester, Alison *The Journey Home* Melbourne, Oxford University Press 1989
16 Graham, Bob *Greetings from Sandy Beach* Melbourne, Lothian 1990
17 Clement, Rod *Counting on Frank* Pymble, Angus&Robertson 1990
18 McLean, Andrew and McLean, Janet *Hector and Maggie* North Sydney, Allen & Unwin 1990
19 Baker, Jeannie *Window* London, Julia MacRae 1991
20 Graham, Bob *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten* Ringwood, Penguin 1992
21 Allen, Pamela *Belinda* Ringwood, Penguin 1992
22 Gleeson, Libby and Smith, Craig *Where's Mum?* Norwood, Omnibus 1992
23 Crew, Gary and Gouldthorpe, Peter *First Light* Melbourne, Lothian 1993
24 Prior, Natalie Jane and Denton, Terry *The Paw* St Leonards, Allen & Unwin 1993
25 McLean, Andrew and McLean, Janet *Dog Tales* St Leonards, Allen & Unwin 1993
26 Crew, Gary and Woolman, Steven *The Watertower* Flinders Park, Era 1994
28 Mattingley, Christobel and Spudvilas, Anne *The Race* Sydney, Ashton Scholastic 1995
29 Honey, Elizabeth *Not a Nibble!* St Leonards, Allen & Unwin 1996
30 Wild, Margaret and James, Ann *The Midnight Gang* Norwood, Omnibus 1996

Note: Where one name only appears, that person produced both verbal text and illustrations; where there are two, the first is the writer, the second the illustrator; except for *My Place in Space*, which has two writers, Robin and Sally Hirst, and two illustrators, Roland Harvey and Joe Levine.

This list is reproduced in the bibliography at the end of the thesis.
Appendix B: the Children’s Book Council of Australia and its awards, particularly for Picture Books

The Children’s Book Council of Australia had its beginnings in the surge of optimism at the end of World War II, that a world of international understanding could be built through children’s books. Staff at the US Information Library in Sydney had been told about the idea gaining ground in America to hold an International Children’s Book Week, to be held in November 1945. These enthusiastic librarians hosted a dinner in Sydney in September that year, formed a committee and immediately set to work to organise a book exhibition, distribution of posters with the slogan ‘United Through Books’, and publicity on the ABC, in schools and libraries (Pownall 1980).

The Children’s Book Council (at first called the Committee for International Book Week) began as it was to continue, as a band of volunteers who wanted to support quality books of educational value. The emphasis quickly moved to support in particular for local publications. For its second Children’s Book Week, the Australian Book Society, encouraged by Eve Pownall, offered to organise judging for a Book of the Year award. Book Week 1947 saw the announcement of Karrawingi the Emu (Rees/Cunningham) as Book of the Year. Although the text of this book is long by today’s standards, Karrawingi is, in the terms of the 1940s, a picture book. The Book of the Year award over the next few years went to novels, and to some books which would now be termed ‘information’ books, but picture books were being published, and some of them were being commended by the judges.

In 1952 the awards were divided into two sections, according to age of readership: under eight years (Picture Book of the Year) and for eight to fifteen year olds (Book of the Year). In that year the judges chose The Australia Book by Eve Pownall as Book of the Year, not as Picture Book of the Year, although the
illustrations by Margaret Senior are a vital component of the book and make up half of its content.

Two features of the Picture Book Award in its early years are of interest to the modern observer. Firstly, from 1952 to 1968 the award was given only three times; it was not in fact awarded for the first time until 1956, four years after its establishment as a separate category. This implies that in this area the CBC was 'ahead of its time'; the category appeared important enough by 1952 to have its own award, but the quality of publications failed at first to reach the standard hoped for by the judges. The Book of the Year, on the other hand, was 'not awarded' only in 1947 and 1975 (and in 1949, when there was no contest). The second point of interest is the age grouping: in 1952 there was the implication that a picture book was intended only for readers under the age of eight. This must surely be the reason that The Australia Book was awarded the Book of the Year, not the Picture Book award; it would now be viewed as a 'picture book for older readers', a phenomenon not allowed for in the age categorisation at the time.

From 1963 a national panel of judges was formed with a judge from each member state, and this method of forming the judging panel has continued with little change until the present time. In outlining the growth of the awards, Pownall notes that it was easy at first for a few NSW judges to make the selection from the small field of nominations, but 'it could not stay that way for times were changing, influenced in part by the Award itself as publishers, increasingly aware of its potential, published more...’ (Pownall 1980 p 14). In the later years of the twentieth century, as the number of entries for the awards settled at well over 300 books per year, the organisation of the judging process required a formal structure that could be seen as consistent and equitable.

Each state judge is appointed for a two year term, and the criteria for appointment are: 'recognised standing and qualifications in the field of children's literature; wide and recent knowledge of children's literature; knowledge of illustration techniques, design, editing, printing and production processes' (Smith and Hamilton 1995 p 35). A number of restrictions on
eligibility make it difficult for members of the book trade to become judges, so most judges are librarians or teachers. Judges are exhorted to judge chiefly on literary merit, although child appeal is also taken into account. For the Picture Book of the Year Award, the judges must also consider ‘artistic and literary unity’ (Children’s Book Council of Australia 2002 (a) p 8; and see footnote no 6).

An indication of the uncertain status of picture books for many years is the history of medal-giving. In 1959 the NSW branch produced for the first time a presentation medal for award winners. ‘For some years the Picture Book medal was given to the illustrator only. More recently, the author has also received a medal’ (Pownall 1980 p 101). Contrary to the discourse of the perceived neglect of illustrations (discussed above in ‘Historical and Critical Context’, Section D), it was here a matter of overlooking the author of the verbal text. In the earlier years when neither a medal nor prize money was presented to any award winners, there would have been no call to examine the question of the relative contributions of author and illustrator to the newly evolving art form of the picture book. The first Picture Book award was presented in 1963 to Elisabeth MacIntyre for Hugh’s Zoo; as Elisabeth MacIntyre was responsible for both text and illustrations no such question arose. The Picture Book award was not given again until 1969, for Sly Old Wardrobe, a book with separate author and illustrator, Ivan Southall and Ted Greenwood respectively. In the 1970s the list of Picture Book winners reads as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Illustrator(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>no award</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Waltzing Matilda</td>
<td>A B Paterson ill D Digby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>no award</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>no award</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>The Bunyip of Berkeley’s Creek</td>
<td>Jenny Wagner ill Ron Brooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>The Man from Ironbark</td>
<td>A B Paterson ill Quentin Hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>The Rainbow Serpent</td>
<td>Dick Roughsey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>no award</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat</td>
<td>Jenny Wagner ill Ron Brooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>The Quinkins</td>
<td>Dick Roughsey &amp; Percy Trezise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Banjo Paterson, author of Waltzing Matilda, had died in 1941, the question of equal input from author and illustrator, and therefore equal acknowledgement in the form of a medal—if it had troubled the judges in 1969 in the matter of Sly...
Old Wardrobe—was not to arise again until the success of the Jenny Wagner/Ron Brooks books. Certainly by the late 1970s there was a move afoot to give a medal to the author as well as the illustrator of the award-winning picture book, and to give medals retrospectively to the writers of earlier winning books (and certificates retrospectively to the authors of Commended books).

Then there was the question of prize money. From the time when Literature Board money became available, from the mid sixties, and some cash was given as well as a medal, discrepancies appeared. In 1974 the writer Jenny Wagner received a cash payment of $250 from this prize fund for *The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek*; the illustrator, Ron Brooks, received $600 as one of the first awards made by the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council. In the same year the joint illustrators of the picture book, *Mulga Bill's Bicycle* (Paterson and Niland, K and D 1973) received $1,500 from the Visual Arts Board, although the book was not the CBC winner. From 1988 all the funding from the Australia Council (both Literature Board and Visual Arts Board) was discontinued, and the prize money donated by private sponsors (and later, from the Awards Foundation) has been divided equally among the three categories.

In dealing with the picture book, it seems that judges, publishers and members of the Children's Book Council executive gradually came to some kind of clarification: that they were dealing with an art form sometimes produced by a single author/illustrator, but increasingly likely to be the result of a combination of talents from two creators. There is nothing static about the treatment and definition of the picture book, however. There has been lively debate in recent years about the perceived neglect of the youngest age group of readers, since the flourishing of picture books for older readers, and their success in the Picture Book category. The resulting changes have been: firstly, the change of the Picture Book category into a kind of ‘floating’ category, with no age guidelines, and into which judges can move any book entered by publishers in any other category; and secondly, the introduction (in 2001) into the awards of a new category, 'Early Childhood'. The EC winner, in theory, does not have to be a picture book, but can be any book suitable for children up
to the age of about seven or eight. In practice, the winners so far have been picture books: in 2001, *You'll Wake the Baby!* (Jinks and McLean 2000), and in 2002 *‘Let’s Get a Pup!’* (Graham 2001)\(^9\).

All of these changes confirm the shifting nature of publishing and its categories. The CBCA and its awards have reflected some of these changes; have played no small part in bringing some of them about; and, especially in the establishment of a Picture Book award, have anticipated the development of an art form.

---

\(^9\) The judges’ report describes *You’ll Wake the Baby!* thus: ‘a rainy day and a sleeping baby challenge the well intentioned pre-schoolers to develop an endless range of inventive games . . . The adult reader also enjoys and knowingly identifies with Mum’s repeated pleas for quiet, her growing exasperation and her regained patience’ (Children’s Book Council of Australia 2001); and *‘Let’s Get a Pup!’* thus: ‘. . . the family confronts the challenge of finding the “best” pup . . . Beneath the obvious humour and entertainment that children will derive from poring over the details of family life, runs a strong theme of love and acceptance . . .’ (Children’s Book Council of Australia 2002 (b). These comments make clear that such judgements enlist the vocabulary of ideological assessment.
Chapter 2

Nostalgia

Introduction

As argued in chapter 1, the search for the maps of meaning and 'homes in the world' (Watkins 1992), which are presented to children in their picture books, uncovered the key ideology of nostalgia. This chapter examines the concept of nostalgia, beginning with its origins as the name of a medical condition, and then tracing changes as its use diversified to be applied politically and culturally, often with negative connotations. Boym has recently proposed that nostalgia can be positive or 'reflective', moving from examination of the past to providing a base on which a better future may be built; and McGillis has proposed applying this reflective nostalgia to the study of children’s literature. This chapter argues that there has been a recent movement towards regarding books themselves as objects imbued with nostalgia, and that childhood is also a site of nostalgia around which cluster connotations of sexless simplicity and purity; when books and childhood come together, in children’s books, a strong site of nostalgia can be produced: nostalgia may be present at the points of their production, marketing and reception. It is further argued that beyond the general nostalgia of children’s books, picture books have an especial tendency towards nostalgia, because illustrations are more ‘committed’ than verbal text, so picture book images will disclose particular settings and images, of either a personal or communal past, or both. Examples from international picture books, Sendak’s In the Night Kitchen and the Ahlbergs’ Peepo!, demonstrate nostalgic detail in illustrations, in the latter case two generations out-of-date at the time of its publication. The chapter continues by examining concepts of home, and the role children’s books play in providing a sense of Heimlichkeit, of a desirable home which is widely (but not universally) present in the world of picture books.
Preliminary note

Chapter 1 concluded with details of the background and selection process through which a sample of Australian picture books was decided on. This present chapter, however, does not immediately engage with the sample. It concerns itself with the concept of nostalgia and its applicability to picture books in general; in building this theoretical framework, reference will be made to some internationally influential picture books from the US and the UK, and they are cited both because of their notably nostalgic content, and because of the unusual amount of documentation that exists about the process of their creation. From chapter 3 onwards the focus will be on the Australian sample.

Nostalgia: the term and its negative connotations

The concept of *nostalgia*, which has been shown to be a vital one in examining books for children, has a long history, and has always been inextricably linked with the term *home*. One of the founding works of classical European literature depicted the nostalgia of a Greek hero, Odysseus, who pined while he was on Calypso’s island, longing to return to his native land of Ithaca. The *Nostoi* or ‘Returns’ were ancient Greek stories describing the difficult journeys of their characters back to their homeland, and *The Odyssey* was just one example of these: it has endured not least because the reader understands the strength of the longing for home (Fiennes 2002 p 109). Nostalgia also became a feature of Renaissance European culture as it hankered after the glories of ancient Greece and Rome. The word ‘nostalgia’, however, was not coined until the seventeenth century, when Johannes Hofer, a military doctor, discovered a malady suffered by Swiss mercenary soldiers while they were serving away from home. He combined the Greek terms *nosos* and *algos*, ‘return home’ and ‘pain’, to name this ‘powerful yearning to return home’. The word corresponded closely to the condition denoted by the modern word ‘homesickness’ (Davis 1979 pp 1–5). Hofer’s list of symptoms exhibited by his patients included despondency, anorexia, melancholia, instability of emotions and bouts of weeping. It was their wish to return to the alps and valleys of their childhood, apparently, that brought
about this distressing condition in the Swiss soldiers, and it was reported by Rousseau and others in the nineteenth century that to ward off nostalgia, the Swiss soldiers were forbidden to play, sing or even whistle the alpine tunes they had grown up with (Lowenthal 1985 p 10). For Hofer the remedy entailed either sending the soldier home or, failing that possibility, the administration of youthful libations—young wine or beer (Probyn 1996 p 115).

By the nineteenth century, with the emergence of modern medicine and the study of pathology, ‘nostalgia’ became understood not as a physical condition; although it is interesting to observe that as late as 1943, Flicker and Weiss of the US Army Medical Corps published a paper entitled ‘Nostalgia and its Military Implications’, in which they considered nostalgia to be a contagious disorder, albeit of morale, with patients tending to idealise their home environments: ‘... distance lends enchantment, so that one forgets the many unpleasantnesses of his home or usual surroundings and can think only of the more desirable aspects’ (quoted in Fiennes 2002 p 123). Gradually a more generalised meaning developed, as ‘nostalgia’ lost the necessary association with the place-related ‘home’, and came to suggest also, or alternatively, the time-related ‘sense of one’s own past’. In recent times the word has come to evoke generalised feelings about ‘the beautiful past and the unattractive present’ (Davis 1979 p 18).

To build on this defining phrase of Davis’s, it is possible to regard the word ‘home’ as applying to a time as well as a place, and to reach, therefore, a definition of nostalgia: a yearning for the beautiful, longed-for ‘home’ of the past, as viewed from the unattractive present in which one feels not-at-home. It then becomes possible to understand that persons or even a whole people may be in a state of constant ‘homesickness’ for a time, real or imaginary, when things seem to have been as they should be—home-like. (The interconnectedness between nostalgia and concepts of ‘home’ will be examined more closely in the latter part of this chapter.)

Nostalgia flourished in Britain particularly in the early 1900s, when there was an all-pervading sense of looking back, especially in domestic architecture with the popularity of mock-Tudor as the predominant style in the 1920s and 1930s, and
with the use of ‘quaint’ and ‘old-fashioned’ as terms of praise (Lowenthal 1985 p 9). Throughout the twentieth century as the pace of life accelerated in the developed world, even the recent past came to be regarded as a nostalgic site: fashions in films, music and clothing are revived after very short intervals, and antique dealers, who formerly dealt in goods one hundred years old, now trade objects produced only a few years earlier.

The word ‘nostalgia’ has been theorised in different disciplines, each with associated clusters of conflicting connotations, political and cultural, usually decried as self-deluding, more rarely being lauded as positive. While noting that nostalgia plays an important part in the continuity of identity, both for persons and for groups or nations (Davis 1979; Hewison 1987), some commentators claim that the ‘beautiful past’ of present-day nostalgia has not ever existed in reality, and so nostalgia is linked to a falsifying of history. Nostalgia, in celebrating the past, diminishes it and transmutes it into a means for engaging the present (Davis 1979 p 45); the term is used in a derogatory sense to describe a wished-for ‘guilt-free homecoming’ (Boym 2001 p xiv). Lowenthal points out that nostalgia does not always hark back to times that were prosperous or secure—a Londoner in an interview recalled war-time bombing as ‘pure, flawless happiness’ (1985 p 7). Hewison sees nostalgia as linked to an irrecoverable past: ‘Nostalgia . . . deliberately falsifies authentic memory into an enhanced version of itself. It is a strangely powerless emotion, a sweet sadness conditioned by the knowledge that the object of recall cannot—indeed, must not—be recovered’ (Hewison 1987 p 134). Stewart puts a strong case for this emptiness and lack of authenticity at the heart of nostalgia:

By the narrative process of nostalgic reconstruction the present is denied and the past takes on an authenticity of being, an authenticity which, ironically, it can achieve only through narrative . . . Nostalgia is a sadness without an object, a sadness which creates a longing that of necessity is inauthentic because it does not take part in lived experience . . . Hostile to history and its invisible origins, and yet longing for an impossibly pure context of lived experience at a place of origin, nostalgia wears a distinctly utopian face, a face that turns towards a future–past, a past which has only ideological reality.

(Stewart 1984 p 23)
Little wonder, then, that Davis (1979 p 34) claims that nostalgia always occurs in a context of present anxieties which threaten discontinuity; or, as described by Rybczynski in a study of nostalgia and domesticity, it ‘reflects a desire for custom and routine in a world characterised by constant change and innovation’ (1986 p 9). Particular periods in which nostalgia has peaked have been documented by historians: in the state of Victoria, for example, Griffiths claims that the 1850s, 1890s, 1930s and 1970s were ‘high seasons of memory’ that were prompted by ‘loss, depression or disruption’ (1996 p 197), or in Davis’s terms referred to above, times of anxieties which threatened discontinuity. The reappearance of nostalgia at such times is, according to Boym, an inevitable defence mechanism (2001 p xiv).

Such present-denying nostalgia is usually associated with political conservatism; those with most to gain from maintaining hierarchies rely heavily on appeals to the authority of the past to justify order and tradition. Kuznets regards nostalgia as not just a sentiment but a ‘rhetorical practice that can be used to preserve traditional place with regard to race, class, and nationality as well’ (1994 p 205). Boym has coined the term ‘restorative nostalgia’ (2001 p xviii) to refer to this impulse to deny the present, and to rely on two main ‘plots’, the return to origin and the conspiracy: this restorative nostalgia underlies nationalist revivals (Boym 2001 p 41) and, at its worst, leads to conspiracy theories about threats to the ‘home’ that result in pogroms and the like (p 43). Feminist critics have long noted a nostalgia among many men for a time when men were ‘rightly’ in charge of everything and women knew their (inferior) place. Nationalists in many lands cling to the belief that there was a Golden Age of their nation, when the homeland—as is claimed by some Australians of Australia—consisted of ‘an initial homely space’ that was later perturbed by immigration (Hage 1998 p 74). But such nostalgia can form a vital element in the myths of the Left as well as of the Right. ‘The most revolutionary innovators hark back to some legitimising past: Luther invoked St Paul, the Girondists early Rome, nineteenth century Pre-Raphaelites and ecclesiastical restorers “pure” Gothic’ (Lowenthal 1985 p 41). And one of the most powerful of myths, drawn on by socialist and Green ideologies, is that of ‘prelapsarian agricultural simplicity’, a myth that has survived three
hundred years of industrialisation (Hewison 1987 p 47). This strong pull to a nostalgic rural life will be referred to later (in chapter 3) in discussing terms such as ‘Arcadian’ and ‘pastoral’ and their links to theorising time as circular, not linear.

The nostalgic myths of nationalism, at all points on the political spectrum, can be observed in present-day Australia. This nation, as a postcolonial society, can be expected to be particularly ‘hostile to history’ in Stewart’s terms. Such ‘hostility to history’ is paradoxical, in that it is accompanied by an apparent fascination with the past, a ‘longing for an impossibly pure context of lived experience at a place of origin’ (Stewart 1984 p 23). White settler societies, when shaking off their colonial shackles, feel the need for an authenticating history, the ‘legitimising past’ referred to by Lowenthal. ‘They cast about for myths of origin: tales of early pioneering, sagas involving ... bush-cutters in the interior’ (Boehmer 1995 p 112). In the case of contemporary Australia, an example of one such powerful myth of origin is that of the Anzacs, with their brave deeds at Gallipoli often being represented, in Stewart’s terms, as ‘impossibly pure’.

The myths of origin may be expected to feature strongly in the literature intended for the teachable children of a postcolonial society. There is a widely acknowledged didactic impulse in all literature for children, and didacticism will always have an interest in turning back the clock: Musgrave’s claim, that children’s literature is didactic, and therefore a ‘repository’ of values that adults hope to teach children, has already been referred to in chapter 1 of this thesis (Musgrave 1985 p 22). The term ‘repository’ is a significant one; among definitions for ‘repository’ are ‘a place in which something is accumulated’ but also an earlier meaning of ‘a place in which specimens ... are collected; a museum’ (SOED 1978 p 1799). Its implications include the concept that the values and ideology stored therein for the benefit of children may already be discarded by adults in their daily life (see below for discussion of obsolete physical objects).
Positive or reflective nostalgia

In contrast with these emphases on nostalgia as inauthentic and perhaps deluding, and on its hollowness and indeed, at times, tackiness, some rehabilitation of the term is now taking place. Boym, McGillis and Fiennes all point out the possible benefits of forward-looking nostalgia. Boym claims that a distinction can be drawn between the falsifying 'restorative nostalgia' and what she terms 'reflective nostalgia'. The former tries 'to conquer and spatialise time', to experience again the past that seems so attractive, whereas the latter 'cherishes shattered fragments of memory and temporalises space' (Boym 2001 p 49). Reflective nostalgia is surely the impulse being expressed by Fiennes when he writes:

Somehow I had to turn my nostalgia inside-out, so that my love for the house [the ironstone house of his childhood], for the sense of belonging I experienced there, instilled not a constant desire to go back but a desire to find that sense of belonging, that security and happiness, in some other place ... The yearning had to be forward-looking.

(Fiennes 2002 p 204)

In the practice of 'reflective nostalgia', longing and critical judgment are not necessarily opposed, as 'affective memories do not absolve one from compassion, judgment or critical reflection' (Boym pp 48–49). At its best, nostalgia can act as a benefit, not just for individuals but for communities, as an intermediary between collective and individual memory (Boym 2001 p 54), so elements from the past can be used as building blocks in the construction of culture.

McGillis (2001) applies this concept of reflective nostalgia to the study of children’s books, claiming that it can provide the base for a project of construction. McGillis points out that mementos from the past have the power either to keep one’s mind fixated on the past, or to allow memory to keep recreating and rethinking that past—and such mementos include both the look and content of many examples of children’s books, old and new (2001 p 6). While
acknowledging the nostalgia inherent in the agenda of studying children’s books, McGillis optimistically envisages the worthwhileness of this study, as a project with a thrust towards the future (and note the recurrence of the concept of ‘home’): ‘We cannot go home again, but we can use our attachment to a past home as an incentive to build a better one’ (2001 p 3). Nostalgia that encourages those who experience it to be reflective, to be forward-looking, and to build a better home, is no longer a negative cluster of emotions but a site of potential growth.

Books as sites of nostalgia

The tensions between ‘restorative nostalgia’ and the potentially forward-looking ‘reflective nostalgia’ have been reflected in attitudes towards the book itself towards the turn of the millennium. In recent years some have viewed books of all kinds, not only those intended for children, as ‘mementos from the past’, in McGillis’s term. In this conceptualisation there is some conflation of the two definitions of ‘book’: the physical object that can be picked up, opened and read; and the less tangible contents reached by means of this physical object, the ‘story’, or set of ideas accessed by reading. With the rise of new communication technologies in the 1990s, the book, as a bound object made from paper, was seen as near obsolescence, and there was a paradoxical emergence of voices speaking on its behalf, with its best-known advocate the US critic Sven Birkerts. Sometimes a distinction was drawn between the likely demise of ‘the book’ as physical object, and its survival in other electronic forms, but more often a generalised nostalgia was expressed for ‘the book’, both form and content. Birkerts claimed that by moving from the order of print to the electronic order, ‘we are poised at the brink of what may prove to be a kind of species mutation,’ and stated that in drawing attention to this threat he had been ‘accused of being . . . prey to excessive nostalgia’ (Birkerts 1994 p 31). The elements that can be described as nostalgic in Birkerts’s advocacy of the book include a valuing of the leisurely pace at which book-reading can progress, allowing the absorption of ideas and subtleties not provided for in the newer media. This slow pace of reading can stretch as far as rereading books in their entirety: adults when discussing the books they loved as children will often mention the pleasures of
rereading, of immersing themselves time and again in an imaginary and familiar world; and on the subject of his own independent childhood reading, Birkerts (1994 p 88) claimed, ‘When I picked up a book it was as much to get back to something as it was to set off to the new.’

A separate—but apparently not unrelated—nostalgia flourishing particularly from the 1990s, and continuing at the time of writing, is for the book as designed object. In contrast to the ephemeral production of most fiction books, in paperback and on short-lived paper stock, a number of Australian novels (in the adult market) have been produced with features such as the appearance of embossed art on the cover (Modjeska’s The Orchard 1994); ‘deckled edge’ pages in imitation of hand-torn paper (Drewe’s The Drowner 1996); and different coloured typefaces to distinguish different sections (Flanagan’s Gould’s Book of Fish 2001). All such features draw attention to the book as ‘precious’ object. This trend can be seen either as fighting back against the idea that the book is doomed, or as an admission that these are indeed the last days for the book and that such lavish specimens will help to add their notes to an appropriate swansong. Apart from Birkerts, other commentators who have envisaged the (perhaps imminent) decline of the book include Alberto Manguel:

The past of that history [of reading] lies ahead of us, on the last page in that cautionary future described by Ray Bradbury in Fahrenheit 451, in which books are carried not on paper but in the mind.

(Manguel 1996 p 23)

Another is Barry Oakley, who in his fable set in the year 2050 has an eccentric narrator visit the ‘Consumerama’ to experience the feel of real books, ‘beautiful things on art paper from the dying days of publishing in the first decade of this century . . . They’re secured by chains, as they once were in medieval monasteries’ (Oakley 2000 p 8). Behind such a humorous treatment of the subject can be detected not a small measure of elegiac sadness—a measure, in short, of nostalgia.
Childhood as a site of nostalgia

Childhood is also viewed nostalgically in many contexts. Adults who entertain nostalgic ideas of childhood may admit that it is not a matter of things being better in the past but a sense of having lived more vividly as a child; 'we mourn a lost immediacy that makes the past unmatchable' (Lowenthal 1985 p 8). The sentiments of Wordsworth would be agreed with by such adults:

There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore—
Turn wheresoe' er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen, I now can see no more.

(Wordsworth 1806)

It is widely agreed nowadays that concepts of childhood are socially constructed. Since the publication in 1962 of *Centuries of Childhood* by Philippe Ariès, scholars have examined the gradual trend towards separation of children from adults which began in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe. Postman claims that the invention of the printing press was the turning point in the evolution of childhood—and here the two areas under scrutiny, the book and childhood, appear to have been passing each other, one on an ascending and one on a descending staircase—as the widespread rise of literacy required that children spend long hours learning its rudiments, so schools multiplied and 'from print onward, adulthood had to be earned' (Postman 1983 p 36) The separation of children from adults in schools was accompanied by the development of children's dress, language, and—rather later, if measured from the generally agreed starting point of Newbery's first publication, in 1744—literature.
In England and other European countries the rise of childhood was particularly linked to the rise of a mercantile class. According to Du Boulay, the surplus money of the eighteenth-century English bourgeoisie was used in this fashion:

They invested it in larger homes, with additional rooms for privacy, in portraits of themselves and their families, and in their children through education and clothing. The surplus of money made it possible to use children as objects of conspicuous consumption.

(Du Boulay 1970 quoted by Postman 1983 p 44)

In nineteenth-century England the whole idea of upbringing gathered importance. The influence of the philosophers John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau was widespread, and though they differed widely on many issues, they were in agreement that, contrary to the teachings of traditional Christian theologians, children were not born evil. Rousseau in particular was to influence many educational theorists, with his Romantic ideals of nature, fresh air and physical exercise. The Romantic tradition with its belief in the natural goodness of children, and its surrounding of their actions and feelings with pathos and sentiment, came into conflict with the ideology of the Puritan tradition nourished by the Wesleyan and Evangelical movements, with its belief in original sin and the need to break the child’s will. The Romantic approach gradually gave ground, and the process is conspicuous in the English children’s books of the time (Grylls 1978 p 43).

The influence of Rousseau was strong in America, however, where Emerson and Thoreau, Whitman and Beecher extolled the virtues of a ‘natural’ childhood (Schorsch p 94). Catherine Beecher in particular, in *The American Woman’s Home* (1869, quoted in Schorsch p 97) spiritualised the outdoors, encouraging gardening and the use of tools as educational activities for the young. Schorsch comments on the contradiction between the pedagogical literature and the world of childhood as depicted in the art of the period:

On the one hand, Catherine Beecher and her distaff colleagues espoused an otherworldly atmosphere of ‘sacred play’ [which combined exercise and benevolence]. On the other, contemporary paintings and prints demonstrate an abundance of toys and games
and amusements very much of this world. From bicycles and building blocks to doll carriages and hoops and tops, the world of children in Victorian art is a world of commercial, mass-produced, isolating toys.

(Schorsch 1979 p 101)

Further contradictions are pointed out by Coontz, both in relation to the Romantic view of innocent childhood in American colonial days—she claims that 'eighteenth-century spelling and grammar books routinely used *fornication* as an example of a four-syllable word, and preachers detailed sexual offences in astonishingly explicit terms' (1992 p 10)—and in the fact that most children did not have the luxury of being shielded from the harshness of economic reality:

For every nineteenth-century middle-class family that protected its wife and children within the family circle . . . there was an Irish or a German girl scrubbing floors in that middle-class home, a Welsh boy mining coal to keep the home-baked goodies warm, a black girl doing the family laundry, a black mother and child picking cotton to be made into clothes for the family, and a Jewish or an Italian daughter in a sweatshop making ladies' dresses or artificial flowers for the family to purchase.

(Coontz 1992 p 11)

Certainly there were tensions at the time of the industrial revolution, as the source of cheap labour supplied by poor children was exploited to the full. Postman claims that by the 1850s throughout the western world childhood was an established social principle and social fact (1983 p 51)—others contest that the principle may have been more firmly established than the fact; but by 1900 childhood was seen as the birthright of every person in the USA. With the widespread influence of the English-speaking countries, the concept of childhood as a time of particular rights became a universal one in theory if not in practice.

Despite challenges to some of his generalisations, Postman’s thesis that childhood is disappearing in the face of television and other electronic media has been widely influential; if ‘the disappearance of childhood’ gains momentum, the twentieth century may come to be known (nostalgically?) as the century of childhood. Pertinent to this discussion is Postman’s quoting as evidence of the
‘disappearance’ the phenomenon that when a social artefact becomes obsolete, it is turned into an object of nostalgia and contemplation (1983 p 5). The more that nostalgia proliferates in relation to childhood—in such visible areas as toys, clothes and books—by this reasoning, the more likely it is that childhood is indeed threatened with extinction.

My thoughts on this topic are particularly focused by recently observing the play items in a local park newly refurbished for young children: although the slides and climbing frames are of modern materials in bright primary colours (unlike the wooden swings and harsh metal slippery dips of my childhood), they include a copy of a steam engine, complete with a painted-on class number. It is likely that neither the children climbing on this model engine, nor even their parents, have ever seen such an engine working as a means of transport. The play equipment reflects a real-life object that has not been in practical use for two generations. As Ariès has stated, the domain of childhood consists to a large degree of objects, material or cultural, that have fallen out of use in the adult world (quoted in Randaxhe 1985 p 157). Past fashions in many areas can be found reflected in the toys and clothing we provide for our children: look carefully, and a child can be glimpsed playing on the toy steam engine, and clothed in an outfit nostalgic for an even more distant past, an outfit imitating the uniform of a late nineteenth-century sailor. The nostalgic play equipment and costume for young children are designed and chosen by adults who, it appears, are intent on providing the components of a beautiful, longed-for ‘home’ of the past, so apparently are not themselves feeling contentedly at home in the present.

Postman states that the distinction between adulthood and childhood has been maintained, over the last four hundred years, by the maintenance of silence by adults about many secrets or ‘mysteries of life’, including sex, money, violence, illness, social class (1983 p 15). In a literate world these secrets are gradually accessed by the reading adolescent and adult. If these ‘secret’ matters are all absent from a child’s world this world resembles that described by Nikolajeva (to be examined in chapter 3) as that of kairos, with its absence of repressive aspects of civilisation such as money, labour, law or government, absence of death and sexuality and, as a result, general sense of innocence (2001 p 21). By contrast to
the gradual loss of innocence in the literate world, the world of modern media lays bare all such secrets for anyone of any age to access.

The beginning of the end for childhood was 1950, according to Postman, when television became widespread in the USA, and with its combination of the forces of electric communication and the graphic revolution eroded forever the power of managed information, sequential learning and maintaining innocence. Postman’s thesis over-simplifies the many influences at work in eroding the separateness of childhood. But in Australia, where television was not to arrive till 1956, the Children’s Book Council of Australia and its award system were founded in 1945, just in time, in the terms of this argument, for adults to start to be nostalgic about childhood and the artefacts associated with it. (Another important factor in the founding of the Book Council, the burst of post-war optimism, was referred to in chapter 1, Appendix B).

The late twentieth and early twenty-first century is a period of inherited attitudes to children (in western cultures) which remain strongly influenced by the thought of the nineteenth century, with its cult of juvenile innocence—embryonic in Christianity, maintained as a version of primitivism, full-grown in the writings of Rousseau, and providing a strand in the Romantic tradition which encouraged the growth of concern for children’s rights, but also created a widespread mood of ‘nostalgia for sexless simplicity’ (Grylls 1978 p 38). The two strong impulses of society towards childhood are described by McGillis as products of a schizoid beginning, manifesting ‘a society’s desire to protect and nurture the young . . . and a contrasting desire to preserve the individuality of the child as the site of that which we—adults—desire’ (McGillis 2002 p 7). Although the needs of society for productive citizens are strong and enduring, according to McGillis adults also have a strong need to believe in ‘the possibility of innocence and liberty’ which is associated with the site of childhood.

Within the culture at large, images of children are used in journalism and advertising to represent such innocence and purity. Sibley quotes a Volkswagen television commercial which shows ‘the vulnerable child, a symbol of purity in a defiled city’ (1995 (a) p 62). The commercial with its image of a blonde-haired
little girl implies that the car will transport her securely through the city to the safety of the suburbs; the car will be a ‘protective capsule which insulates the owner from the hazards of an outside world populated by “others”’. (Sibley 1995 (a) p 63). Although the forces of marketing and advertising use such imagery to their purposes, these very forces have been implicated, along with pressures from education and psychology, by those who decry the shrinking of childhood, commentators such as Elkind with his claim that ‘we do our children harm when we hurry them through childhood’ (1981 p 3).

Nodelman states that the nostalgia surrounding childhood is a matter of adults imposing their own idea of childhood ‘exactly to free ourselves from knowledge of what childhood is.’ He goes so far as to claim, somewhat extravagantly, that childhood is a Utopian fantasy on the part of adults (2000 tape). Whatever the motivation on the part of adults, the attitude of many, from Wordsworth to contemporary advertisers, can be seen as some kind of attempt either to revisit their own childhoods or to set up conditions for children to do so, as they hanker for the beautiful, longed-for ‘home’ of past days.

Children’s books as doubly nostalgic

With nostalgic attitudes clustering about both books themselves and concepts of the child and childhood, it is not surprising that the world of children’s books is an especially nostalgic one. It needs to be emphasised that this nostalgia is on the part of the adults involved, not of the child receiver or reader of the books (Saxby 2003). In chapter 1 attention was drawn to the importance of adult ‘gatekeepers’ in the creation and reception of children’s books; and at all points in the intricately interconnected processes of the books’ creation, their sales and marketing, and their reception, as will be demonstrated, nostalgia on the part of these adults plays a part.

Firstly, nostalgia exists at the point of creation, when books are written and illustrated. Many writers for children have described the process as writing the kind of book they would like to have read as a child. Even in the case of a writer who would not make such a claim, the preoccupations and imagery in the books
an adult writes are of necessity based, to varying degrees, on memories of the writer's own childhood, usually at least thirty years earlier than the time of writing.

Illustrators are especially likely to use images from a real or imagined past. Visual artists make more commitment than writers of verbal text: Kress states that to draw or otherwise depict visually the shape of an elephant is to make a commitment greater than that of the writer who uses the word 'elephant' (Kress 2000). The writer leaves readers of the word 'elephant' to fill the word with their own specific meaning, whereas the artist is forced by the medium itself to commit to specificity. In the words of Nodelman, 'an artist cannot choose but to identify the typical by depicting it as if it were actual' (1988 p 203). Because of this commitment, this actuality, it is almost impossible for a picture book to have an indeterminate setting; and the memory banks of images on which visual artists draw, especially when searching for images of childhood, are often filled with items from past times. These items all contribute, some in very subtle ways, to the nostalgic background already referred to as common in picture books. If Johnston's assertion (1998 p 25), already referred to, is true—that picture books disclose deeply rooted cultural assumptions—then it can be claimed that one of these cultural assumptions is a tendency to link settings and objects from the past with the world of children.

It is probable that some of the images from the past chosen by an illustrator will be communal, and some more specific to the individual artist. In the Night Kitchen by Maurice Sendak (1970) is an example from the world of international, classic picture book illustrators, and appropriate to cite here because it is one of the rare cases of detailed documentation of an illustrator's sources. After working on roughs for this book for a long time, including four complete dummy books, Sendak finally turned it into 'a near cinematic tribute . . . to his own thirties childhood in New York. The artist pays scrupulous attention to authentic period details within what, on the face of it, looks to be a broad, comic-book style of illustration' (Lanes 1980 p 182). As well as providing an entertaining story for children of the 1970s (and later)—and the book includes some details that were very up-to-date at the time of publication, such as the pictures of the small boy
unclothed—Sendak was also creating a *map of meaning* on which these modern details were placed as a kind of overlay on a map, both communal and personal, of the 1930s city. Details from a communal past which are included in the book include a twenties Art Deco chandelier, a thirties console radio, and ‘a pair of fringed, gossamer curtains so palpably real that just seeing them on the page is like recovering a bit of the past’ (Lanes 1980 p 182). Sendak spoke of the eclectic influences on this book, including the ‘crappy toys and tinsel movies’ he had enjoyed as a child, especially Mickey Mouse (quoted in Lanes 1980 p 185). Many people who have lived through the same period—and a number who have not—are able to recognise the chandelier, curtains, toys and Mickey Mouse figures of *In the Night Kitchen*. But there are also numerous nostalgic references in this book that are purely personal: the many labels on salt, flour and cream containers, as well as the city buildings with their commercial signs, have allowed the author/illustrator to code in private messages such as the names of friends and fellow artists and of his parents, and even (on a container for shortening) a reference as esoteric as ‘Killingworth, Connecticut’, the birthplace of Jennie, his beloved pet dog (Lanes 1980 p 182). Sendak described his role as that of a ‘creative artist whose prime concern is exploring the riches of his own remembered childhood and presenting them transmuted into artistic form for children’ (quoted in Lanes 1980 p 270). This statement renders explicit a process that is undertaken by picture book artists with varying degrees of conscious intention.

Randaxhe sees a quest for the artist’s own childhood as a great motivator of the picture book:

> Pour de nombreux graphistes, illustrer un album pour enfants suscite la quête de l’enfance personnelle et oblige donc, comme nous l’avons vu à propos de *Cuisine de Nuit*, à une plongée dans le passé où se mêlent l’individuel et le collectif, le souvenir fidèle ou déformé et la nostalgie d’un «âge d’or» à exhumer. Selon l’illustrateur belge René Hausman, il s’agit d’essayer… ‘de réaliser l’album que l’on aurait aimé posséder étant enfant.’

For many artists, illustrating a picture book for children instigates a quest for the artist’s own childhood and so necessitates, as we have seen in the case of *In the Night Kitchen*, a plunge into the past with its blend of the individual and the communal, faithful and distorted memories, and nostalgia for a ‘golden age’ that needs to be
disinterred. According to the Belgian illustrator René Hausman, it is a question of trying...‘to produce the picture book one would love to have owned as a child.’ [my translation]

(Randaxhe 1985 p 161)

This mention of an ideal or wished-for book that would have satisfied the creator’s own childhood self is a complicating factor, adding another layer to the nostalgia at work here. Writers for children are often especially mindful of the actual books they enjoyed reading when young, which were the work of writers who in turn were recreating childhood memories from their past. In diagrammatic form this ‘memory’ process could be pictured as a set of steps, with a child of today reading a book written by a writer whose own childhood occurred one step back in time, but was influenced in turn by the works of those one further step back, and so on, receding into the past. And the treads of these steps may be quite widely spaced. It has been noted that many of the English language favourites enjoyed by children in the early nineteenth century were still being read a hundred years later (Wheatley 2001). Although there has been an acceleration of change in the last fifty years, with the books read by children today being less certain to include many which were read by their parents or grandparents, it is still the case that childhood books are retained in many households, and recommended by parents to their children, with the result that many of them survive from one generation to another. How else to explain the tenacity of Enid Blyton’s numerous works into a new millennium? Books enjoyed in childhood, and emulated in some fashion by the authors and illustrators of the next generation, continue to exert a conservative pull on each crop of new books. Like the model steam engine that is played on by contemporary children, there will often be more than one generation of out-of-datedness contributing to even some of the most recently published books intended for their reading.

In the sales and marketing of children’s books, nostalgia also plays an important part. The phenomenon of ‘double address’ (Wall 1991) has already been referred to in chapter 1; in their efforts to sell all children’s books, publishers are aware of the doubleness of their market: these books must be sold to mediating adults as
well as to the ultimate consumers, the child readers. Even in the case of books sold ‘directly’ to children through such channels as school book clubs, there are mediating adults at every point in the supply chain. Nostalgic elements in both the look and the content of children’s books may often be included (with conscious intent or otherwise) to appeal to these influential adults. It was also claimed, in chapter 1, that the picture book is a special case, mostly chosen for reading aloud by adults to younger children. And unlike most toys for this youngest age group, which need only to appeal to adult eyes and taste initially so that they will be purchased (and here in the case of the book such features as the cover art, and the palette of colours and the typefaces used throughout may influence the initial selection), picture books will usually need to have a sustained appeal to the adult purchaser—because the toy, once bought and taken home, will usually be played with only by the child, but the picture book will require reading aloud, time and time again, by the adult.

So, finally, the reception of the picture book as a pleasurable object is dependent on an agreement between adult and child that the book is worthy to be read repeatedly. Stanton refers to this ‘unusual partnership’ between parent and child as creating a context in which excellence can prosper, because ‘picture book writers and artists cannot afford to bore or mystify either parent or child’ (1998 p 2). A similar idea is expressed in positive terms by Spufford (2002 p 48), who claims that the best picture books give the adult intermediaries who offer them to a child something for themselves, ‘pleasing the social intelligence of adults on the quiet’. As well as providing a context for excellence, this partnership of adult and child is likely to ensure that nostalgia will constitute an intrinsic element in the content of many picture books.

Such nostalgia is exemplified in another picture book that has become an international classic—and has also, like In the Night Kitchen, been documented in an unusual degree of detail: Peepo!, by the English wife and husband team, Janet and Allan Ahlberg (1981). Peepo! has been one of the most critically acclaimed and popular books for young children, attracting such descriptions as ‘The best book ever published for babies’ (quoted, from review in Books for Your Children, on the opening flyleaf of recent editions). Some of the book’s appeal can be attributed to
its use of the age-old nursery game of ‘Peepo!’ in the book managed by using
dye-cut round holes in alternate pages to allow a glimpse into an illustration,
which on turning the page is revealed fully. But I make the claim that the book’s
nostalgic background also forms a large part of its appeal. Because the
illustrations, with only one exception (the scene on p 19 in which the baby has
been taken by his grandmother to the neighbouring park), are scenes of
domestic life, restricted to a fairly small house with a tiny garden, it can truly be
claimed that Peepo! is a book that presents images of home. And the home is a
nostalgic one: the details in all these domestic scenes are not of contemporary life
in the Britain of the 1980s, but authentic representations of daily life in the Britain
of World War II, and they show not the life of the well-to-do but of struggling
working class people, with their clothes drying by the fire and their crowded
housing and thrifty management.

‘What research did you do for Peepo!’ [asked an interviewer of Janet
Ahlberg].
‘I have a wonderful book, the Army and Navy Stores catalogue
(1939–40), with beautiful engravings of every conceivable
household object—and prices. I get waylaid every time I look in it.’
... Incidentally, having invented the mother’s dress in Peepo!, she
[Janet] subsequently found pretty well the selfsame garment on an
old clothes stall in Leicester market (50p).

(Ahlberg 1996 p 21)

No-one expects the child reader of Peepo! to recognise the wartime clothing and
domestic items. Even in the year of its publication it would have been the
grandparents, not parents, of young children who experienced the delight of
recalling their own similar memories. The illustration on p 11, for example,
shows the view the baby could glimpse of his father carrying coal in a bucket, his
mother pouring porridge, and his grandmother hanging out washing; and
‘every conceivable household object’ is a period piece, whether it is the humble
coal bucket, the box of Oxo cubes, tea cosy, mother’s purse, or father’s
handknitted jumper (see Plate 2). It is an eloquent statement of the market for
books for preschoolers that ‘the best book ever published for babies’ should be
providing images of a beautiful longed-for home in the past, the past of the Blitz-
era London that Lowenthal’s Londoner recalled as a time of ‘pure, flawless
happiness’ (1985 p 7). The two-generation gap which I observed in the case of the model steam engine is applicable also in the case of *Peepo*; it is possible to conclude that the time-span of two generations is a safely distant one, so that only pleasant reminiscences of a longed-for home in the past are retained, not the troubling ones.

Creating longed-for homes for children

In examining the nostalgic worlds created in many picture books, it is necessary to analyse the pervasive concepts of ‘home’ so frequently evoked in and by them. ‘Home’ is an emotionally charged and evocative word, when used in any of its senses, whether referring to a small living space such as apartment or house (or even smaller, a room), or extending into family, community or nation.

Advertisers know the strength of appeals to ‘home’. A recent colour magazine advertisement for Natuzzi Store (‘Natuzzi Store’ 2002 pp 40–41) has as its verbal text ‘There’s a Natuzzi Store where you’ll feel at home right away. Where you’ll find a whole world of styles and colours to make your own dream living room a reality . . . You’re welcome.’ The visual text is a photograph in warm, earthy ochre tones of an interior: this interior is occupied by a young woman, relaxing on a smart leather sofa, and a playful child bouncing on a footstool. Outside, peering through the large glass windows, are three smartly dressed young adults who are admiring (enviously?) the scene within. There is an ambiguity about the interior scene, because although the relaxed posture of ‘mother and child’, shoes kicked off and toys strewn on the floor, work to suggest that this is a real-life living space, the items of furniture have labels firmly attached and imply a shop window. The implication is the double one, that customers will feel ‘at home’ in the actual store itself while choosing what to buy, and that their ‘own dream living room’, when they have made the selection, will have a quality of at-homeness.

In the wider world of literature, ‘home’ is a vital underlying theme; in fact one critic claims ‘the search for the location in which the self is “at home” is one of the primary projects of twentieth-century fiction in English’ (George 1996 p 3). As
has been referred to earlier in this chapter, the concept of ‘home’ is a significant one in children’s literature, and is closely linked to nostalgia. The German words *Heimlichkeit* (being at home), and *heimlich/unheimlich* (homely/unhomely) are expressive of the deep desire by all humans for belonging; but the word *unheimlich* has particular connotations from Freud’s use of it, roughly translated into English as ‘uncanny’ or ‘Gothic’ (Kuznets 1994 p 123), and connected with the diagnosis of anxieties. Nevertheless, the positive noun, *Heimlichkeit*, eloquently encapsulates the state that adults would wish for the children under their influence. (The related noun, *Heimat*, or ‘Homeland’, was used as the title of a German television series¹⁰ about civilian life during World War II, which was as popular with German viewers as similar television series, and the picture book *Peepo!, have been in the UK).

Watkins claims that an important function of literature for children is to provide a sense of *Heimlichkeit* or being-at-home for them. This claim, quoted in chapter 1, that the stories we tell our children, shape the way they find a ‘home’ in the world’ (Watkins 1992 p 183), is associated by Watkins with both personal and social identities; similarly Bloch stated (as was also referred to in chapter 1) that individuals alone cannot achieve the goal of forming a home (Bloch 1988 p xxvii). This communal home-formation is, on the reader’s side, the equivalent to the process mentioned above, the choosing by an illustrator of some images from the past that are personal and some that are communal. This idealised—and communally supported—home is fed with the concepts and details that the adult creators provide in Australian picture books. Although particular physical houses, such as the traditional Australian cottage examined in chapter 5, can provide frequently used image banks of rich connotations, it is too narrow a definition to see ‘home’ solely as a place of residence. It is preferable to define ‘home’ as embracing both the house of abode and the country/nation referred to by Johnston (1999 p 13), but also including areas between these two. The picture book ‘home’ (as was mentioned in chapter 1) is a continuum of places, a continuum beginning at the child’s bedroom (sometimes with the bed itself) and

¹⁰ The series *Heimat* was made in 1984 by the director Edgar Reitz; it was a 15-hour chronicle of life in the village of Schabbach from 1919 to 1982; while much of the action occurs in the time of Nazi power, Nazism plays a very minor role in the series.
house or flat, and stretching into public areas occupied by the child, including
school, parks and playgrounds (areas that will be further examined in chapter 6)
and reaching out to include the 'country/nation', so that 'home' truly combines
the personal and the communal. And such a definition of home, as a continuum
from the small and personal to the large and communal, invites the process of
mapping, so making a link with Watkins' other concept, that of the 'map of
meaning'.

Such delineations of 'home' suggest the comfortable place/s that all adults of
goodwill would wish for the children they are associated with. While in most
cases the picture book representation of 'home' is of such a benign place, it must
be acknowledged that some representations of 'home' are not so positive.
Alienating conditions are occasionally presented in picture books, more usually
in the social home than in the personal one. A notable example (not included in
the sample for this thesis, as it was not a winner or honour book in the CBCA
awards) is the book *Way Home* by Libby Hathorn and Greg Rogers (1994), which
depicts a boy who has rescued a cat and is making his way with it, past threats
from humans, cold and traffic, back to a makeshift sleeping place in a deserted
building in the middle of a city. The boy, Shane, has personalised this space with
his meagre possessions, so it appears less alien than the surrounding cityscape
that provides the backdrop to most of the narrative. Nevertheless, the title of the
book and repeated mentions of 'home' within the text contain obvious ironies.
*Way Home* is unusual in that it presents confronting images of home as a site of
lack—especially lack of physical comfort and lack of family—whereas, as further
chapters will show, the books in the sample overwhelmingly depict a sense of*
Heimlichkeit* in time, place and the details of surrounding life. Most picture book
creators present positive images, founded it seems on their attachment to a past
home (McGillis 2001 p 3), which serves as foundation for the depiction of a
benign place of reflective nostalgia.

**Conclusion**

In arguing the link between nostalgia and children's books this chapter has
traced the history of the term and the diversification of nostalgia into other
paradigms; it has examined some adverse connotations of nostalgia, but concluded that the concept of *reflective nostalgia* as posited by Boym is useful in exploring the nostalgia which forms an integral part of children's books, particularly picture books, in their production, marketing and reception. Both *nostalgia* and *home* are linked to concepts of *time* as communicated in children's books, and picture book time has general characteristics of circularity rather than the linearity of time in the adult, western world. It is the dominance of circular time or *kairos* that will be examined in the following chapter.
Chapter 3

Time

Introduction

Chapter 2 claimed that nostalgia is an integral part of children's books, particularly the picture book. This chapter will argue that the treatment of time in picture books is a strong contributor to their inherently nostalgic character. The chapter uses as a base the differentiation of two concepts of time, kairos and chronos; the former the circular, mythical time of the past of humankind or of individuals, the latter the linear time of the modern western adult world. Links between kairos and the rural are explored in the four terms ‘Arcadian’, ‘pastoral’, ‘idyllic’ and ‘utopian’, all rich in nostalgic references. Kairos is shown to evoke nostalgia, clearly linked with the rural, in politics and marketing, and in memoirs of childhood. An examination is made of Nikolajeva’s categorisation (2000) of children’s books into three types, based on the kairos/chronos dichotomy: kairos or Arcadian books, often employing iterative frequency; carnivalistic (mostly in kairos but with ‘break-out’ incidents); and chronos (with new-found awareness of sex and mortality). The chapter proceeds to extend Nikolajeva’s analysis, which treats verbal texts only, to the depiction of time in illustration; it is proposed that the term ‘iterative’ be extended to apply to visual art, and the characteristics of iterative illustrations are analysed, revealing that they express nostalgia for a past in which things ‘used to be’. The books in the sample will then be categorised in terms of which time predominates, and analysed accordingly.

A nostalgic concept of time: kairos as opposed to chronos

During the transformation of the seventeenth century concept of nostalgia into that prevailing in the twentieth century, as outlined in the previous chapter, an emphasis on place came to be replaced by an emphasis on time, so that nostalgia can now be defined as ‘a yearning for the beautiful, longed-for “home” of the
past, as viewed from the unattractive present in which one feels not-at-home'.

This definition highlights the importance of concepts of time to an understanding of nostalgia, both in culture generally and in children's books in particular. By examining the specific time prevalent in the majority of the picture books, it will be demonstrated in this chapter that nostalgia is an inherent quality in them, not an accessory or incidental characteristic.

Discussion of ‘time’ in literature is commonly reliant on the distinction drawn by Mircea Eliade (1955 and 1963) between circular and linear time; for this distinction, the Greek terms *kairos* and *chronos* are employed. Eliade identifies *kairos* or ‘sacred’ time with religions which preceded Judaism and Christianity, and claims that those who practised such religions experienced time as circular, reversible, ‘a sort of eternal mythical present that is periodically reintegrated by means of rites’ (Beane and Doty 1975 p 34). Judaic scriptures recount the progress of a people towards a point of fulfilment with the advent of the Messiah, and Christianity, while claiming that the Messianic prophecies have already been fulfilled, is the faithful heir to Judaism in accepting the linear time of history (Beane and Doty 1975 p 79). The western tradition, derived from these concepts of Judeo-Christian religion, has come to be overlaid by the development of capitalism, which brought its own changes to the way time is perceived and measured. *Chronos* or linear time now dominates the modern western (adult) world\(^\text{11}\). In the binary opposition of *kairos* and *chronos*, the former is the ‘time’ of the distant past, repeated rituals and non-capitalist societies, while the latter is the ‘time’ of progress, money-making, and efficiency.

In modern societies pervaded by *chronos*, the very idea of the linear, efficient, capitalist *chronos* has come to be viewed by many as a component of the

\(^\text{11}\) There is not always a simple opposition, however, between pre-Christian and Christian concepts of time. Some Christian mystics have shared ideas of the circularity of time with earlier traditions, emphasising the repetition of patterns in nature and in human life. Saint Francis of Assisi in his *Canticle of the Sun* prays:

> Lord, we offer thanks and praise
> For the circle of our days.
> Praise for radiant brother sun,
> Who makes the hours around us run...

(Lindbergh 1998)
'unattractive present' from which the longed-for past is viewed nostalgically. Boym states that nostalgia is a 'rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress' (2001 p xv), and she sees the reaction of those whose lives were becoming disrupted by changing conceptions of time as contributing directly to the spread of nostalgia (2001 p 7). Underlying much yearning for a desirable past is the concept, sometimes covert and sometimes overtly acknowledged, that not only was this past a better time, but 'time' itself was different then: simpler, repetitive, circular, the kairos of earlier beliefs. This yearning for kairos includes some components of longing for a mythic past of the whole of humankind, and other components of longing for the past of an individual—for one's own childhood. In both areas, as chronos has come to be associated with modern life, capitalism, cities and adulthood, strong links are perceived between kairos, the rural and childhood.

Nostalgia for the days of kairos underlies the development of many modern thought patterns: the beginnings of anthropology were influenced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's concept of the 'noble savage', a human who is 'fresh from the hands of the Maker' and has not undergone the degenerative process of civilisation (Emile 1762); and the birth of sociology was marked by Ferdinand Tönnies's extolling the virtues of early community over the newer, economic forms of human interaction (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft 1887). Even theorising about the growing and cooking of food can employ the language of kairos, with claims by Camporesi that the growth of urban mercantile society and the work patterns of capitalism required adherence to the clock time of the merchant class, but during this period of change the peasant farmers, particularly in Italy, continued to produce food as it had always been grown, while they remained 'entangled in the magical net of cyclic time and the hypnotic rituality of return, unaware of the enlightenment notion of progress' (Camporesi 1993 p 42).

12 Camporesi also makes the point that calendars and clocks give political power (1993 p 41), and those possessing them can impose their organisation on society; in a similar manner, I claim, the power of adults over young children is enhanced by the adults' knowledge of the gradations of hours and days.
Rousseau's 'noble savage' and Camporesi's peasant in the 'magical net of cyclic time' are examples of the pervasive rural/kairos/desirable; urban/chronos/unattractive dichotomy, which long predates the writings of Eliade. Clustering around the concept of kairos, or circular time, are ideas of rural innocence for which the terms 'Arcadian', 'pastoral', 'idyllic' and 'utopian' are often employed. Every one of these four terms is to some extent related to place, but they all refer also to an imagined time, original, pure and nostalgic. As these terms are important both in the theorising of kairos and in its application to children's literature, they will be examined here for their origins and connotations.

**Kairos and its rural links: Arcadian, pastoral, idyllic and utopian**

Four terms which recur in evoking kairos, often overlapping in their nostalgic references to a mythical earlier and better time, are 'Arcadian', 'pastoral', 'idyllic' and 'utopian'. Although varying, each of the terms implies the existence of a time in which people felt (or will feel) a greater degree of Heimlichkeit, that desired sense of belonging discussed in the previous chapter.

The first is a term from classical literature. Arcadia was originally a mountainous district in the Peloponnese; and 'for Classical poets Arcadia was the symbol of rural serenity, the harmony of the legendary Golden Age' (Cuddon 1979 p 53). Virgil's *Eclogues* described an ideal rural life in Arcadia, with shepherds and shepherdesses, remote from the cares of 'real life', devoting themselves to their flocks and their songs. Renaissance Italian writers, and in England Sir Philip Sidney, revived the Arcadian tradition. A painting by Guercino in the seventeenth century showed a tomb with the inscription 'Et in Arcadia ego', which was generally taken to mean 'I too have lived in Arcadia', and became a favourite tag in poetry and prose\(^\text{13}\).

Pastoral, literally meaning 'pertaining to shepherds', is a term originally applied

\(^\text{13}\) Some modern scholars translate the inscription as 'Even in Arcadia there am I [Death]', which puts rather a different complexion on things!
to a particular mode of literature first found in the works of the third century BCE writer Theocritus, who wrote for a sophisticated Greek readership his *Idylls*, narratives and poems about the lives of shepherds and farmers. Latin pastorals, with their scenes of idyllic rural life, were influential in Elizabethan England; Spenser, Marlowe and John Fletcher made notable contributions to the genre, and a number of Shakespeare's plays show pastoral influence. Several of Milton's works follow pastoral convention, especially *Lycidas*, and later poets who were influenced by the tradition include Blake, Wordsworth, Goldsmith, Shelley and Tennyson. The pastoral is seen as possessing curative powers: 'Pastoral literature traditionally demonstrates the human need for the healing power of the simple, rural, or rustic life by contrasting that life with the complex, urban or urbane one' (Kuznets 1983 p 156). Pastoral 'displays a nostalgia for the past, for some hypothetical state of love and peace which has somehow been lost...it reveals a yearning for a lost innocence, for a pre-Fall paradisal life in which man existed in harmony with nature...it is probably not entirely a coincidence that, as the mytho-poetic attractions of pastoral happiness diminish, so Utopia begins to acquire a particular interest for people' (Cuddon 1979 p 490).

Theocritus called his narratives, referred to above, *Idylls* or 'little pictures', and the term 'idyll' came to suggest 'a descriptive piece of poetry or prose, usually with a pastoral or rural scene' (Ousby 1996 p 467). Perhaps most famous in English are *The Idylls of the King*, published by Tennyson in 1859. The term 'idyllic', like 'Arcadian' and 'pastoral', has benign and nostalgic connotations, suggesting an untroubled innocence far removed from the hurly-burly everyday of modern life.

The fourth term, utopian, differs from the others in that it is not irrevocably linked to images of a rural past, although it is often used synonymously with those terms. The name 'Utopia' was devised by Sir Thomas More for his imaginary republic in the work of the same name, published in 1516 (Cuddon 1979 p 733). But the idea of a place where everything is perfect, an earthly paradise, is of great antiquity—Homer described the Elysian Fields in the *Odyssey*, and Plato devised an entire state in his *Republic*. The heavenly city envisioned by St Augustine, and other Christian writers' paradies, often
contained materialistic descriptions with town planning and an emphasis on gardens. By the nineteenth century, the influence of the French and Industrial Revolutions encouraged a revival of interest in both literary utopias and experiments in putting schemes into actual practice. H G Wells wrote several utopias. Utopias, unlike pastoral and Arcadian forms, usually have carefully worked out political systems; and they do not always evoke the past, engaging sometimes with imagined futures, although there can frequently be overtones of nostalgia in descriptions of utopias which imitate the mythical past. The converse or dystopia has been envisioned, mostly in the twentieth century, notably by Aldous Huxley and George Orwell, and frequently in science fiction: it is commonly characterised by arid urban scenes in which there is an absence of the world of nature.

Although these four terms have some differing connotations, and the term ‘utopian’ is potentially more evocative of the future than the past, all four are used with some degree of interchangeability in both general and critical discourse, and all are linked with nostalgic concepts of kairos and a longed-for mythical and rural past of both humankind and individuals.

Nostalgic kairos in politics and marketing

The discourse of politics enlists nostalgia for kairos, often expressed with reference to one or more of the terms discussed above. As was pointed out in chapter 2, nostalgia is associated generally with conservative politics, with the search for a legitimising past; and it has also been observed (Dahl 1999) that in recent ‘new right’ politics, there is a strong fear of reflexivity (the classic intellectual strategy of delayed reaction), and a desire to return to ‘earthly rootedness which is preferable to intellectualism’ (Dahl 1999 p 177). According to Dahl, Gerhard Schulze (1993), a writer of the European right, sees new societies as so burdened by individualisation, and by hunting for the new, that a revival of cyclical time would be helpful, so that people could be reassured that they could ‘take what was given yesterday as still valid today’ (Dahl 1999 p 180). Dahl also sees Rollo May (1991) as calling for a revival of kairos, in ‘a wish to return to
something lost, if not paradise, so at least to pre-modern patterns of thought' (Dahl 1999 p 189).

In Australia too there is a popular discourse of nostalgia for *kairos* and the Arcadian. The former Governor-General, Dr Peter Hollingworth, has been quoted as claiming:

> My own experience tells me that rural people are not subject to trends in the same way as city people being constantly bombarded with new consumer products and views. Rural people are innately more religious, I believe, belief revolving around the seasons, the dying and rebirthing of nature and harvest festivals... It is the social cohesion you have in the country... It has a rich quality about it that is almost impossible to hold onto in the city setting...

(Lewis and Glendinning 2002)

Hollingworth’s claim, of the superiority of the rural over the urban, appears to be based on the concept that the cyclical, close-to-nature quality of rural life makes people not only more religious but also more communal.

As well as in the world of politics and public discourse, the evocation of cyclical time, with its nostalgic pastoral/Arcadian links, is a powerful element in much modern marketing, especially in the areas of real estate and travel. For example, in discussing the marketing strategies of Shell for selling petrol in the UK, Wright states:

> The countryside is equated with cyclical time, with colour and the seasons, and as such is repossessed in bright advertising images and in a marketing approach which differentiates ‘Summer Shell’ from ‘Winter Shell’... The countryside is a place of strange allure now, a utopian zone which in its ‘historical’ capacity still holds residues of a former world: traces of an Albion in which time is cyclical but to which the motorist can still make his progressive way.

(Wright 1999 p 129)

In Australia also, much marketing of such products as holiday ‘getaways’, four-wheel-drive vehicles, and clothing such as that supplied by ‘R M Williams, The
Bush Outfitter', depends on associating the outback with kairos and the pastoral. The implication is always that by buying a particular product, or visiting a particular holiday destination, the purchaser will be able to recapture the mythical Arcadian world of cyclical unmeasured time.

**Kairos and childhood**

It is common for writers about childhood, whether theorising or in memoirs and recollections, to refer to a seemingly eternal circular time. This circular time is associated with ideas of childhood as 'a vast and boundless calm' (Inglis 1981 p 50); and Inglis quotes Edwin Muir's words about his own childhood: 'That world was a perfectly solid world, for the days did not undermine it but merely rounded it, or rather repeated it, as if there were only one day endlessly rising and setting' (Muir quoted in Inglis 1981 p 50).

Charmian Clift shifts the nostalgic metaphor slightly from the circle to the dome as she writes of a childhood spent in the microcosm of a bay on the edge of Kiama; and she links this metaphor to the idea of eternal preservation from decay:

> Morning then was a long time, or even, if you came to think about it, a round time—symmetrical anyway, and contained under a thin, radiant, dome-shaped cover that was perhaps the celestial pattern for all the dome-shaped covers which in those days still preserved such sentimental mementos as bridal wreaths, cake decorations from weddings and christenings, funeral ribbons, army biscuits carved with camels, sphinxes modelled from matchsticks, golden keys presented at twenty-firsts, babies' shoes, and small bullet-dented Bibles that had been worn over soldiers' hearts.

(Charmian Clift *The End of the Morning* p 1 quoted in Wheatley 2001 p 14)

Her biographer extrapolates from this passage, and from her other writings about her childhood, that:

> In fact, Charmian's preferred view of her own childhood combines two different mythic notions of Paradise: the Judaeo-Christian ideal of Eden before the Fall is merged with the pagan ideal of the Golden Age. Thus childhood is seen as a time of primordial
innocence and bliss, an existence lived in a garden so enclosed, so perfect, that unhappiness is excluded. Simultaneously, childhood is seen to encompass a wild freedom which looks back to Olympus and beyond. It is, in short, presented as an Australian pastoral: *et ego in Kiama* . . .

(Wheatley 2001 p 73)

This Arcadian mythical time, referred to by writers such as Muir and Clift, provides a kind of ultimate *Heimlichkeit*, and is associated not only with an apparent endlesness, but also with a special quality of innocence, with exclusion of any knowledge that would interfere with the charmed time of childhood. In other words, the world of *kairos*, the rural and childhood, has not been intruded upon by the world of *chronos*, of modern life, capitalism, cities and adulthood. Nostalgia for Arcadia has been conflated with the idea of childhood itself, as stated by Scutter:

> Just as the country is seen as a place of idyllic retreat from the overwhelming urban complex, so childhood is seen as the simple place in memory, a great good place to which the jaded and threatened adult may return for healing and restoration, and in which children may yet live untouched by the corruptions of experience.

(Scutter 1991 p 51)

This mythical childhood time is used, just as pastoral associations were shown earlier to be used, by the world of marketing. A recent advertisement for Peugeot cars features a photograph of a young girl alone, looking absorbed and happy as she kicks a stone along on a hopscotch grid which has been chalk-outlined and numbered by hand; the text is headed ‘When was the last time you felt this good?’ and proceeds: ‘Remember when all you needed was a piece of chalk and a patch of playground to enjoy yourself? That was once-upon-a-time, before life became complicated. But what if . . . *what if* something simple could again be a highlight of your day, something as everyday as getting into your car?’ (Peugeot ad 2001). The writer of this ad has used the evocative linguistic formula ‘once upon a time’ that announces a fairytale (see below), and hyphenated the words into a compound noun that stands as a synonym for
The promise of this advertisement is that by buying a Peugeot car the driver will revert to an Arcadian circular time of simplicity and innocence that can be accessed ‘every day.’

**Kairos and chronos as a means of categorising children’s books**

Maria Nikolajeva has used the distinction between *kairos* and *chronos* as the basis for a systematic categorisation of children’s books. In *From Mythic to Linear* (2000), Nikolajeva rejects the more usual categorisation of children’s books by genre (such as fantasy, adventure or animal story), and instead categorises books according to the way time is depicted within them, resulting in a division of the body of children’s literature into three kinds:

1. utopian, Arcadian or pastoral works, characterised by *kairos*;
2. carnivalesque or ‘time out’ works, where the circular, mythical pattern of time is temporarily broken, in play, not in a real rite of passage;
3. narratives which go ‘beyond the point of no return to idyll’ (Nikolajeva 2000 p 219); these irreversible narratives tell of real initiation into the adult world of *chronos*, and are usually YA (Young Adult) novels.

These three categories, although applied by Nikolajeva to novels only, are applicable to picture books and will form the basis for classification, as described later in this chapter, of the picture book sample.

Traditional children’s fiction creates and preserves the conventions of the first, the pastoral kind, according to Nikolajeva (2000 p 4). Many classic texts for children, including *The Wind in the Willows* (Grahame 1908), *Le Petit Prince* (Saint-Exupéry 1943) and *Finn Family Moomintroll* (Jansson 1948) are Arcadian, pastoral works. Nikolajeva accounts for the frequency of the Arcadian in such texts with the analogy, mentioned above, between the past of the human race and of individuals: ‘The circular character of narrative time in archaic thought has been reflected in children’s novels because the Arcadian time of individual childhood is similar to the mythical time of the childhood of humankind’ (2000 p 10). This Arcadian nature of classic children’s literature has particularly been noted in the
case of *The Wind in the Willows*: the world of this book is ‘a place where sex, money and politics do not exist—they are banished to the Wide World where nobody with any sense ever goes’, according to Blount (1974 p 149); so that the map of meaning provided by *The Wind in the Willows* is one of binary opposites, of the good, secure River Bank, and the undesirable, threatening Wide World. And Carpenter draws attention to the whole strand of English writing for children which emerged in late Victorian and Edwardian days and to which belong the great names of Kingsley, Carroll, MacDonald, Grahame, Potter, Nesbit and Barrie (with Milne as a latecomer), and which, similarly to *The Wind in the Willows*, ‘dealt largely with utopias, and posited the existence of Arcadian societies remote from the nature and concerns of the everyday world’ (Carpenter 1985 p 16). More recent classic novels for children, especially from the USA, have also represented the *kairos* of childhood, with two outstanding examples being *Charlotte’s Web* (White 1952) and *Tuck Everlasting* (Babbitt 1975). The latter takes as its overt theme the circularity of time, and the dire consequences if this circularity should be interfered with; the first sentence of the novel uses an explicit image of the wheel of time: ‘The first week of August hangs at the very top of summer, the top of the live-long year, like the highest seat of a Ferris wheel when it pauses in its turning’ (Babbitt 1975 p 3).

Johnston also refers to *The Wind in the Willows*, applying to it the Bakhtinian term *chronotope*\(^\text{14}\), and states that the book has ‘the specific insular idyllic landscape’ (Bakhtin 1981 p 103) of a pastoral *chronotope*, being structured in terms of ‘a time saturated with its own strictly limited, sealed-off segment of nature’s space’ (Johnston 2002 p 156). This ‘sealed-off’ nature of the pastoral classics is significant; as is shown in the following list of defining features of Nikolajeva’s first category, one is the ‘autonomy’ of the setting, and the fifth and sixth features are defined by absences, by characteristics of the outside world that have not been allowed to penetrate the idyllic world of *kairos*.

The first category in Nikolajeva’s classification, the Arcadian, has seven distinguishing features (Nikolajeva 2000 p 21):

\(^{14}\) For further discussion of the *chronotope*, see footnote 17.
1. the importance of a particular setting;
2. autonomy of felicitous space from the rest of the world;
3. a general sense of harmony;
4. a special significance of home;
5. absence of repressive aspects of civilisation such as money, labour, law or government;
6. absence of death and sexuality;
7. and finally, as a result, a general sense of innocence.

When adults speak nostalgically of their memories of childhood reading, it is often to the Arcadian classics that they refer—*The Wind in the Willows* and other titles by the authors listed by Carpenter (see above). It is the books of *kairos*, with 'a general sense of innocence' that evoke nostalgia. The reasons that some particular children's books are especially nostalgia-producing for some individual adults are complicated and perhaps unfathomable. As a bookseller I found that adult customers who had moved a long way from their childhood homes would sometimes express nostalgia for particular books associated with this childhood; and on two occasions I even saw adults burst into tears at the mere sight of a copy of a beloved childhood book—a French person on seeing *Le Petit Prince* (Saint-Exupéry 1943), and an Australian who had migrated from the northern hemisphere on seeing *Miss Jaster's Garden* (Bodecker 1977). These two books differ in many ways, and probably have in common more of associative value for the adult customers concerned than literary characteristics, but it may be significant that both have gardens as a major theme, so representing a vanished or vanishing Arcadian world.

In the preceding chapter, it was claimed that nostalgia is an experience of adulthood, not childhood. Nikolajeva makes the point that the Arcadian classics may reflect the nostalgia of the adult writer and the adult 'coreader' rather than appealing to the child reader: 'It is . . . doubtful that young readers will be seized by the same longing for the times gone by, since they have not experienced them, either personally or through literature. This is especially true about a contemporary, chiefly urban young audience' (Nikolajeva 2000 p 22).
Nonetheless, as daily life for most Australian children becomes increasingly urbanised and detached from the world of nature, a nostalgic appeal to the charm of the Arcadian may be convincingly presented in the words of a child narrator. The Australian writer, Jackie French, has set her short novel for children, *The Cafe on Callisto* (2001), in a near future when people must live underground and the main character’s mother has died in water riots; the remaining members of the family travel to Callisto, a planet where good things still grow naturally, in a land of forests, orchards and farm animals:

Everywhere you looked there were these great strong-looking people pruning fruit trees or harvesting huge baskets of corn... It took me a while to get used to treading on grass and flowers—tiny flowers bloom all through the grass on Callisto...

It was like something out of my picture books when I was a baby, about some fantasy life that people had lived about two hundred years before. But this was true and real!

(French 2001 p 74)

The flowers in the grass and the growing of one’s own food belong to a nostalgic past, which the author evokes by combining a date reference (‘about two hundred years before’) with the concept of a ‘fantasy life’; and the literary reference is specifically to the world of ‘picture books,’ already for the young narrator distanced, nostalgically, in her babyhood.

**Iterative frequency in verbal texts**

The writer of the Peugeot ad, referred to above, used the formula ‘once-upon-a-time, before life became complicated...’ thus summoning up a host of associations through the use of the commonest opening phrase for fairytales in English. In verbal texts, the evocation of *kairos* is frequently contributed to by the use of such specific linguistic devices. In narrative the linguistic formulas used at the beginning of traditional tales include ‘*in illo tempore*’ and ‘once upon a time’; and endings such as ‘they lived happily ever after’ or, in German ‘*und wenn sie nicht gestorben sind, so leben sie noch heute*’ (‘and if they have not died, they are still alive today’).
Another such device is the use of iterative tenses, and although a complete iterative (repeating or ‘frequentative’) tense does not exist grammatically in English, the use of continuous past tenses using ‘used to’, ‘would always’ etc, and some use of iterative present, and occasionally future, are employed for this purpose. Nikolajeva quotes an example of the use of the iterative in the Arcadian classic *The Wind in the Willows* when the calm existence of winter is described: ‘During his short day [the Rat] sometimes scribbled poetry . . . there was a great deal of storytelling . . .’ (1908 p 50 quoted in Nikolajeva 2000 p 33).

While not always strictly adhering to the formulaic beginnings and endings of traditional tales, picture book texts commonly begin and end with expressions that signpost the setting in *kairos* of the events in the narrative. Words and phrases such as ‘always’, ‘used to’ or (in ending sections) ‘still’ are often employed; these are examples of the iterative frequency which Nikolajeva claims is often used both in ‘archaic heathen texts’ and in children’s literature (2000 p 9). Some examples from the sample picture books are—

**Beginning:**

Because James loved William so much, Jessie tried to love him too. She *always made sure* William had a tasty piece of fish and a fresh bowl of milk.

*(The Very Best of Friends* p 6)*

**Endings:**

*If you listen carefully* when the sun is going down and the world is still and quiet, *you might hear* ‘clickey-click, clickey-clack’ as my grandfather and his friend Jake *sit together and knit* . . .

*(The Long Red Scarf* p 28)*

and

*From then on*, the farmyard was a peaceful place.
When Hector’s tail grew back, he couldn’t help showing off. ‘Cock-a-doodle-doo!’ he crowed. ‘I’m the boss.’ But when he saw Maggie, he knew he would never rule the farmyard again.

(Hector and Maggie pp 30-32)

[bold styling in all quotations my addition]

The effect of the use of the iterative beginnings and endings is to ease the events of the narrative in and out of undifferentiated *kairos*, when certain customary states always existed; the reader is assured that the great cycle of *kairos* still holds, or still will hold, as in the quotation from *Hector and Maggie* with its iterative future. A famous example referred to by Nikolajeva (2000 p 6), in this instance also making use of an iterative future tense, is the closing passage of A A Milne’s *The House at Pooh Corner* (1928 p 176): ‘... But wherever they go, and whatever happens to them on the way, in that enchanted place on the top of the Forest a little boy and his Bear will always be playing.’ In this single sentence are included a number of elements of nostalgic, Arcadian text: the Forest is (in this instance, unlike some more fearsome forests) the longed-for rural place, the ‘little boy and his Bear’ evoke the innocence of childhood, and the use of the iterative (‘will always be playing’) announces that the play of childhood will recur endlessly in *kairos*, undisturbed by the cares of adult, linear time. The ‘enchanted place on the top of the Forest’ forms a vital part of the map of meaning that constitutes *The House at Pooh Corner*; but it is so generally evocative of childhood *kairos* that it has transcended the bounds of this text, and come to form, for many people reared with English language texts, part of a more general map representing important landmarks in childhood itself.

**Iterative frequency in illustration**

The closing passage of *The House at Pooh Corner*, quoted above, uses verbal text to evoke a nostalgic world of *kairos*. What has not been commented on by Nikolajeva in her citing of this passage as an exemplary one for evoking *kairos*, is the significance of the illustration by E H Shepard which faces these words on the printed page. Throughout *Mythic to Linear*, Nikolajeva discusses verbal text but
remains silent on the subject of illustration as an identifier of time in children’s books. It is proposed here to extend the categorisation of children’s books into Nikolajeva’s three groups (Arcadian, carnivalistic and irreversible chronos), to include picture books also, by examining those characteristics of illustration that signal kairos. Just as the iterative in verbal text evokes the repetitive nature of cyclical time, so also in illustration an iterative frequency can be discerned that fulfils a similar role.

Both Winnie-the-Pooh and The House at Pooh Corner were illustrated throughout by Shepard with black-and-white line drawings depicting individual events, until the illustration for the quoted concluding passage, which is in the form of a silhouette (Milne 1928 p 177). In the silhouette (see Plate 3) the figures of the child and bear are shown dancing off together, with their legs kicking up in joyful movement. They are holding hands (Christopher Robin’s right and Pooh Bear’s left are linked), and under Pooh’s right arm is a round object—perhaps his beloved honey pot, or perhaps a ball, a symbol of play. The only other figure in the silhouette is a bird above their heads, shown in flight with its wings curved upwards in a ‘smile’ shape. Below the feet of the two dancing figures is flower-filled grass, the kind of surface referred to earlier in this chapter in the nostalgic quotation, suggestive of Arcaedia, from French (2001 p 74): ‘... treading on grass and flowers—tiny flowers bloom all through the grass on Callisto ...’ The silhouette technique used by Shepard is particularly conducive to generalisation—the viewer is encouraged to forget the individual characters of the narrative, Christopher Robin and Pooh, and see the figures as representatives of Child and Child’s Companion, eternally playing in a ‘felicitous space’ where no problems intrude from the adult world (see no 2 in Nikolajeva’s list for the Arcadian category, quoted above). The illustration is quite small, set unframed against a background of a complete white page, so that there is an implication that the two dancing figures will recede further and further into the distance—perhaps they will eventually be out of view, but their dancing will not stop. In other words, this is an illustration of iterative frequency, the equivalent in visual terms of the iterative tenses used in verbal text to evoke kairos.
As outlined in chapter 1, theorists of the picture book employ a variety of terms to describe the relationship between verbal text and illustrations. Nodelman describes this relationship as ‘combative’, and stresses the irony at work: ‘the relationships between pictures and texts in picture books tend to be ironic: each speaks about matters on which the other is silent’ (Nodelman 1988 p 221). In commenting further on this relationship, Nodelman states that one specific form of irony is ‘the distance between the temporal movement of stories and the fixed timelessness usual in pictures’ (1988 p 229). There is general agreement that illustrations are not expressive of the passing of time: Stephens claims that in picture books there is narrative dominance of temporality over spatiality, of words over pictures because ‘pictures are grounded in spatial concreteness but indefinite as to temporality, whereas verbal narrative pivots on temporal concreteness and may entirely exclude spatial representation’ (Stephens 2000 p 45). In elaborating on the contrast between time in verbal text and time in illustration, Nodelman calls the illustrations in picture books a form of tableau vivant. Viewers of picture books see ‘... a fixed image that depicts the characters in stopped time’ (1988 p 247).

It seems both useful and possible to differentiate between Nodelman’s two expressions for the time in picture book art, ‘stopped time’ and ‘timelessness’. The first term, ‘stopped time’, can be applied to picture book illustration in general; as will be argued below, except for novelty book ‘gimmicks’, all illustrations are of necessity ‘stopped’. But some of the selected moments of ‘stopped time’ in illustrations are iterative in nature, and fulfil a role similar to that of the iterative frequency in verbal text, and for these illustrations ‘timelessness’ is an appropriate label.

In claiming that there is an iterative frequency in illustration, I am not attempting to diminish the importance of the verbal text in contributing to the kairos effect. But illustrations alone, as will be demonstrated, can manifest characteristics of iterative frequency, to complement the verbal text or engage in ironic dialogue with it; or, in the case of a wordless picture book, to do all the work of supplying the iterative.
‘Stopped time’ and ‘timelessness’

The static nature of illustrations in books is widely taken for granted, and seen as the area in which film, video and computer games can successfully compete with books for children’s attention. The only exceptions to the static nature of illustrations are those novelty books which employ ‘gimmicks’, such as a flap to be lifted or a ribbon tab to be rotated, by which movement from one illustration to the other can be effected, to simulate real-life movement. Even with the help of such devices, the movement possible in books remains repetitive and simplistic by comparison with that of television or film. The one case in which pictures in a book successfully reproduce real movement is in the ‘flip’ books which children themselves make (or used to make), with many pages showing a gradually changing picture which needs to be flipped rapidly—a device which employs (in a crude form) the very technology of the film, with its rapid succession of pictures creating an impression of movement.

In conventional gimmick-free picture books, in which only the flat surface of plain paper pages is available, it is the inability to show movement with any verisimilitude that offers one of the greatest challenges to the illustrator. Many illustrators borrow freely from the traditions of comic strip art, using a number of conventions in their attempts to produce the illusion of movement, such as ‘spurls’ to represent dizziness and ‘skid marks’ to show extreme speed (Watson 2000). Another convention from the comic strip, increasingly used by illustrators, is the placing of a succession of framed pictures on a single spread, in order to show a succession of ‘fixed’ moments in the narrative (see, for example, Dog Tales p 16). Schwarcz uses the term ‘continuous narrative’ to denote a picture in which there are several representations of the same character, building an effect of movement and the passage of time (Schwarcz 1982 p 24). Despite the usefulness of these techniques, every illustrated moment, no matter how well chosen or

---

15 An example is Revolving Pictures, published by Ernest Nister in 1892; a reproduction edition was published in 1979 by William Collins, London. The first picture shows a sad-looking dog with a scarf around its jaw; move the ribbon tab and an overlay picture shows another dog with a scarf around its eyes, and some little girls in party dresses nearby. The text reads

   Toby’s got the toothache, but as you can see,
   Carlo’s playing Blindman’s Buff, as happy as can be.
how often replicated, remains a moment in ‘stopped time’. This is not always
considered regrettable: Maurice Sendak, when working on Outside Over There,
used photographs in the early stages, posing two children in the roles of Ida and
the baby very much as he wanted the final drawings to look, and reported that
he was delighted with the resulting photographs, as they had ‘a super-real

Illustrators always have the problem of being forced to make a choice of a very
few moments of the verbal text to illustrate, within the constraints of the short
picture book format and its (usually) 32-page format. In making a selection of
the moments of ‘stopped time’ to illustrate, illustrators have often chosen
moments of lively action, or the dramatic build-up to it. Very little has been
recorded about this process of selection, but the English illustrator Quentin Blake
has written about the choice of such a moment in Roald Dahl’s Matilda (1988, a
novel, not a picture book in this case): ‘It seemed to me that the moment for
illustration was the one of anticipation, when the teacher lifted the plate [and was
about to smash it on the boy’s head]’ (Blake 2000 p 61). And the Australian
illustrator Andrew McLean, writing about Hector and Maggie, states ‘I wanted a
dramatic double-page close-up after the more distant views of the chase on
previous pages’ (Scobie 1997 p 99). The illustration he is referring to (spread
20/21) shows Maggie the cattle-dog in hot pursuit of Hector the rooster; the
impression of speed is achieved here by drawing both the animals elongated
horizontally, with a number of the rooster’s tail feathers being pulled by the
dog’s mouth, to resemble the ‘skid marks’ of the comic strip convention. The
illustration of this moment in the chase could be described as a picture of speedy
action, but it is in reality an illustration of a single, ‘stopped’ moment within the
chase.

If all illustrations are of ‘stopped time’, those to which ‘timelessness’ can be
attributed comprise a special group. These depict events that are implied as
repeated or frequent, or simply a timeless state of being. Nodelman remarks
about the pictures in The Little House (Burton 1942): ‘They imply that sense of the
eternal sameness of the passing seasons that is one of the most important
sameness' or *kairos* is by means of iterative frequency in illustration. A strong indicator of iterative frequency in illustration is the depiction of activities suggesting routines at certain times of day, or of activities suggesting routines in certain seasons (as in *The Little House*). In illustrative terms, these habitual actions are the equivalent of ‘we used to . . .’ or ‘they would usually . . .’

**Characteristics of iterative illustrations**

Nikolajeva’s list of the seven characteristics of books in the Arcadian category can be taken to apply as a checklist for the iterative in illustrations in picture books. There is just one exception: the first characteristic, ‘importance of a particular setting’, is not applicable because this is an intrinsic characteristic of all picture books. As has been referred to earlier (in chapter 2), Kress states that to draw or otherwise depict visually a person, place or object is to make a commitment greater than that of the writer who uses words (Kress 2000); the writer leaves readers of words to fill them with their own specific meaning, whereas the artist is forced by the medium itself to commit to specificity. While critics refer to the ‘negative space’ of illustrations—Nikolajeva and Scott (2001 p 62), for example, state that ‘it is quite common for picturebooks to have . . . empty areas around characters and objects’, it is almost impossible for any but the most simplistic of picture books to have an indeterminate setting. It is this near-impossibility that leads to the prevalence of nostalgic background, the betrayal of the illustrator’s prepossessions, a betrayal that may seem unheeding or even may be denied. Quentin Blake has written of his work: ‘There is plenty of running about and jumping up and down; and not to hold up these activities, I draw in only as much background as is necessary’ (Blake 2000 p 50); nevertheless the picture book he uses as an example of his lack of attention to background is *All Join In* (Blake and Yeoman 1990), a book of verses in which the settings for the exuberant activities of the characters include a large, comfortable sofa with a many-coloured assortment of cushions, backed by three elegantly framed pictures, and ‘props’ for the action include an assortment of at least ten musical instruments. Even a picture book which its creator claims has ‘only as much background as is necessary’ quite clearly has ‘a particular setting’, one of
Heimlichkeit and a number of objects contributing to comfort and cultural enjoyment.

So, after the characteristic of 'a particular setting' has been removed from Nikolajeva's list applying to the Arcadian (2000 p 21), the amended checklist for iterative illustrations now reads:

1. autonomy of felicitous space from the rest of the world;
2. a general sense of harmony;
3. a special significance of home;
4. absence of repressive aspects of civilisation such as money, labour, law or government;
5. absence of death and sexuality;
6. and finally, as a result, a general sense of innocence.

To these I add the following characteristics of illustrations:

   a) activities suggesting routines at certain times of day
   b) activities suggesting routines in certain seasons
   c) absence or scarcity of items of modern technology

The first two of these additions, depictions of routine activities, clearly correspond to the verbal tenses such as 'used to' or 'would always.' The third characteristic belongs to the group of absences, along with those noted by Nikolajeva: absence of repressive aspects of civilisation, of death and sexuality. The absence of technological items has been remarked as a feature of nostalgic representation in other areas of art as well as children's books. As long ago as 1936 Walter Benjamin commented, in discussing a photographic naturalism which owes much to technology and yet is apparently free of all technical mediation: 'The equipment-free aspect of reality here has become the height of artifice; the sight of immediate reality has become an orchid in the land of technology' (1936 p 235). This particular absence is pervasive in picture postcard and travelogue art, and in films, with 'equipment-free' scenes carefully designed to omit technological features such as television aerials. In examining the work of
designer Ralph Lauren, whose brand of clothing and furnishings evokes a nostalgic ‘invented tradition’, Rybczynski states ‘What is striking about these handsome interiors is the absence of so many of the things that characterise modern life. We look in vain for clock-radios, electric hair dryers, or video games . . . The mechanical paraphernalia of contemporary living has been put away, and replaced by brass-cornered gun boxes, silver bedside water carafes, and leather-bound books’ (Rybczynski 1986 p 11).

The creators of picture books generally present ‘equipment-free’ maps of meaning for their readers too. While it must be acknowledged that the publication dates of the sample picture books preceded the great wave of mobile phone use of recent years, so that the absence of this device in the illustrations is not surprising, other absences are more remarkable. Only one character in one illustration uses headphones to listen to a tape (Greetings From Sandy Beach). Television is present in tiny glimpses of aerials on rooftops (My Place in Space, The Paw); as a sign of boring home life in Counting on Frank and of an undesirable future in Where the Forest Meets the Sea. Only in two illustrations is television associated with harmonious home life: as a not-turned-on set in The Journey Home, and as watched by happy children in Where’s Mum?. Other absences of everyday technology in the picture book sample include the fact that there are no representations of a microwave oven or a computer. The nostalgic, longed-for picture book settings exclude many of the convenient technological tools which are, it can be assumed, indispensable in the daily working lives of the illustrators, and are certainly indispensable in the modern production of the books themselves.

It must be conceded that the nine characteristics of iterative illustrations are of a longed-for, harmonious time, and that theoretically the iterative frequency in illustration could be used to depict repeated, habitual unpleasant activities. But the fact is that in the sample picture books, and in many hundreds of others, I have not found examples of such iterative unpleasantness. Difficult and confronting moments occur in picture books, but as will be shown later in the chapter, they are associated with chronos, not kairos.
Examples of iterative in the sample picture books

Similarly to verbal text, the illustrations in iterative frequency often occur at the beginning or end of picture books; for example, in Annie’s Rainbow there are several pictures in the opening pages showing Annie waiting to find a rainbow, while she is driven in the car or while she is up in her treehouse. One of these illustrations (p 11) shows Annie alone in the landscape except for her dog, and the lack of detail in the picture—it shows only sky, grass, tree, Annie and dog—helps to imply infinite patience on Annie’s part. Iterative words and pictures both function frequently as a kind of ‘default’ situation, at beginning and end—the situation is as it ‘used to be’, before the narrative events of the central part of the book are played out, only to return to a scene of how things ‘continued to be’.

An exemplary illustration to demonstrate iterative frequency is on p 4 of John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat. This picture shows a routine at a certain time of day: the feeding of her hens and ducks by Rose, accompanied by the dog, John Brown. The six animal characters and the one human all appear unhurried and unsurprised by Rose’s sprinkling feed by hand from a bowl. The background is of ‘low tech’ wire fencing, and a gate which consists of two parts, a lower one made of planks and an upper one of chicken-wire, with a primitive latch that has been made from a piece of simple wire twisted to hold the gate shut. This illustration is one of five iterative pictures that form a fairly slow introduction before the arrival of the midnight cat interrupts the Arcadian calm of the life shared by Rose and John Brown; these five pictures, together with the cover illustration and front endpapers, build a composite impression of a round of daily and seasonal activities of great peace and predictability.

Another example of an iterative frequency illustration occurs early in The Very Best of Friends (spread 6/7, see Plate 4), depicting James and Jessie putting on their elastic-sided boots before going out to start the day’s chores on their farm. The iterative frequency occurs also in the verbal text (as quoted above) of this spread: ‘She always made sure William had a tasty piece of fish and a fresh bowl of milk.’ No reference is made in the verbal text to the action of putting on the
[Production Note:
This plate is not included in this digital copy
due to copyright restrictions.]

Plate 4
Vivas, Julie in Wild, Margaret and Vivas, Julie *The Very Best of Friends* Hunters Hill,
Margaret Hamilton 1989 p 7
boots—this is left for the illustrations to contribute. The illustration of the boot routine suggests great physical comfort, as James rests his hand on Jessie’s amply rounded lower back to steady himself while only one of his feet is on the floor, and Jessie places one hand on the wall to give herself similar support. William, the watching cat (depicted on facing page, not visible in Plate 4), is shown as unperturbed and expectant, and his peaceful presence, like that of the animals in the John Brown, Rose illustration, serves to emphasise the iterative nature of the actions played out as part of a daily routine. In Grandad’s Magic, Bob Graham has used a pair of iterative frequency illustrations on beginning and ending endpapers: the beginning scene shows a front view of the old dog Rupert comfortably seated on a rounded sofa, and the end scene shows a back view of him heaving his heavy body once more up onto this sofa. There is an implication that things have now returned to the ‘default’ position, with Rupert at ease on the sofa, after narrative events which included Rupert’s saving of the precious china dog when it ‘settled on his very broad back’ (p 24).

Illustrations such as those described use iterative frequency to evoke a good, harmonious time, of a cyclical life of daily and seasonal routines, in trouble-free kairos.

Classification of the sample books

The nostalgic world of kairos is the dominant world of the picture book sample. Using Nikolajeva’s three categories, and taking note of the characteristics of illustrations as well as verbal text, the thirty books were divided according to their treatment of time. A large majority were found to be set in kairos or mythic time: twenty-three books, of which fourteen are ‘Arcadian’ and nine ‘carnivalistic’. Of the seven remaining, only three books can be classified as clearly set in chronos or linear time; another four are problematic, being classified as taking place in kairos or chronos according to which of two possible readings is preferred, and these will be given a special examination below.
Arcadian picture books

The following fourteen books are characterised by uninterrupted *kairos*. Inherent in both verbal and illustrative texts of these books is the cyclical time of the Arcadian classics referred to by Nikolajeva, and characterised by harmony, autonomy, protectedness from the outside world and so on. Although many of the characters in the twelve books are children, a number are elderly, and this phenomenon will be discussed below.

Belinda
Hector and Maggie
The Long Red Scarf
The Very Best of Friends
Annie’s Rainbow
Marty Moves to the Country
Dog Tales
Crusher is Coming
Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten
Grandad’s Magic
Drac and the Gremlin
Sunshine
The Race
Not a Nibble!

In the above list, the first seven titles have rural settings, the following four suburban, and the last three have urban, school and seaside settings respectively. The subject of the space of picture books will be dealt with in the following chapter, but it is noteworthy here that the largest number of *kairos* titles are set in rural Australia; this fact supports the rural/*kairos*, urban/*chronos* dichotomy posited earlier in this chapter. Of the suburban books, three are by the author/illustrator Bob Graham, whose many picture books depicting family life encapsulate the ‘special significance of home’ of Nikolajeva’s list of distinguishing features. The last title, *Not a Nibble!*, uses a narrative framework of the days of the week, a linear pattern of which at first sight may suggest the intrusion of
chronos, but closer examination reveals that the family of protagonists is shown to be enjoying such a relaxed holiday of repetitive activities that the days-of-the-week pattern serves only to emphasise how free of pressure their seaside life has become.

At least four of the rural books are set on working farms, and of these Belinda and Hector and Maggie are both examples of the depiction of 'the farm of the imagination' (Symons 1984 p 88), with its assortment of animals rarely met except in picture books. It is of books like these that Nodelman writes: . . . 'comparatively few contemporary children have actually seen a living farm animal, except perhaps in zoos, but [such books] . . . depict such animals in rural environments . . . assuming that children are familiar with them' (1988 p 34). And unique to the Arcadian picture book (nowadays) is the mixed farm with horse, cow, sheep, pig and so on all sharing the same yard. So detached from the real experience of city children has such a farm become that it is has been described as 'the farm of children's picture books'. (Symons proceeds to contrast this picture book farm and the reality of most Australian farms, which have always specialised in producing a single commodity for a centralised market—see further discussion in Appendix No 2, Animals in Picture Books).

The farm of our imagination, the farm of children's picture books, is a self-contained unit reaping the sun's energy, with fowls picking up spilled grain, pigs welcoming skim-milk from cows, manure enriching the garden, trees providing fruit successively through the year, willows by the stream used for baskets, flax stripped to tie vines and vegetables . . .

(Symons 1984 p 88)

Belinda begins by using iterative frequency in both illustrations and words to depict routine tasks on such a farm:

[Tom] grows cucumbers and carrots.
He grows pumpkins and parsley.
He grows beetroot and beans,
and lots of other vegetables.
Early every morning Bessie milks Belinda the cow. There is always plenty of milk.

(spread 6/7)

The illustrations are, as usual in Pamela Allen’s books, lacking in detail, and set against an expanse of white background. The few objects of indoor and outdoor farm life depicted include a three-legged milking stool and a wooden bucket, items from a traditional fairytale rather than from twentieth-century technology. When Bessie leaves for her trip to town, she puts on a hat and coat, picks up a suitcase and departs—but by what means of transport? None that is visible. The enclosed world of the farm is apparently autonomous and untouched by troubles from outside; when a problem occurs in farm life, it is an internal one, of Bessie’s refusal to be milked by Tom, and it is solved internally, without resort to outside help.

Similarly Hector and Maggie is set in an Arcadian farmyard, one where in this case the humans are mostly just out of sight. In spread 4/5 the axe is left in the chopping block, the garden sprinkler is on, there is washing on the clothesline, but only animals are visible. The cycle of life, including death, is hinted at in a manner quite unthreatening to humans, by the presence of a cow’s skull near the woodpile. But while the farmyard is momentarily stirred up by the rivalry and chase between the dog Maggie and the rooster Hector, the book ends with the words (spread 30/31), ‘From then on, the farmyard was a peaceful place’, and with an illustration showing one human, a young girl collecting eggs, but otherwise only animals and fruit-laden trees.

Although set in suburbia, not in rural Australia, Drac and the Gremlin encapsulates the concept of kairos most thoroughly of all the books, at least as far as the illustrations are concerned, based as they are on imaginative play in a seemingly endless day of childhood. Two features immediately apparent in the visual world of this book are the ‘felicitous space’ of a large and leafy backyard (and this will be further examined in chapter 4), and the absence of technology evident in the use of improvised play materials rather than modern commercial playthings. Spread 30/31 (Plate 5) depicts the two children and two pet animals as they
[Production Note:
This plate is not included in this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Plate 5
Tanner, Jane in Baillie, Allan and Tanner, Jane *Drac and the Gremlin* Ringwood, Penguin 1988 spread 30/31
complete the play sequence that has formed the narrative of the book. The verbal text states ‘Drac the Warrior Queen and the crafty Gremlin leave the secret palace of the White Wizard for their secret jungle hideout . . .’. The generous-sized illustration covers almost the whole of this double-page spread, with just a narrow margin at the bottom for the verbal text, and the illustration bleeds to the edge of both pages, with the result that the spread, across two square pages, is landscape shaped. There is ample room for framing on either side by the large leaves of Monstera deliciosa, and for the two human figures to be poised well to the sides of the doorway they are about to enter, so that their movement is presented as leisurely and unhurried. The ‘stopped time’ moment of this illustration is that just before the two children will set foot in their improvised cubby (the ‘jungle hideout’); although the girl’s figure is considerably larger, she is shown only from the back so it is the smaller figure of the boy which commands attention, placed as he is in profile, and nearer to the centre, and his body forming a vector parallel to the diagonally sloping corrugated iron wall. This vector leads to the white sheet which forms an entrance to the cool, dark, secret, restful place, which the dog has already begun to enter. This picture has high modality (‘believability’) in Kress and van Leeuwen’s terms—in its colour saturation, depth, illumination and brightness (1996 p 163). The remains of the dress-up costume (the boy’s cape made from a plastic bag), the improvised cubby with sheet and rug draped from branches, and the cane laundry basket on the ground, all suggest that the children are free to take up their play again at any time. There is an apparent contradiction between this Arcadian scene and the final words of the text which appear over the page on p 32: ‘always on the alert for their next perilous mission’; a contradiction quite in keeping with the interplay of discourses (of science fiction/fantasy in the verbal text, and of suburban backyard play in the visual) which is the salient feature of the book. These words sit ironically with the peaceful scene of the illustration, in which the children are anything but militarily ‘alert’, as they enjoy their ice-cream cones, and apparently do not even have to pack away the play materials. However, even in the verbal text with its more chronos-related action, the reference to the ‘next . . . mission’ holds out the promise of continuing the imaginative game, perhaps on the following day; there is every implication that the ‘game/rest/game’ cycle could continue endlessly, in kairos.
Carnivalistic picture books

Nine books fit into the second of Nikolajeva’s categories, that of carnivalistic, in which a ‘time out’ adventure takes place, but the characters then return to the autonomous world of kairos and resume life without any apparent major change thereafter. The concept of carnival was expounded by Bakhtin in his writings about the contrast between the official, hierarchical medieval world and the anarchic festivities of special holidays (Morris 1994 chapter 17). At such times all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions were suspended. ‘Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalised and completed’ (Morris 1994 p 198).

Conventional ranks and hierarchies were overturned, so that the lofty were laughed at and the humble empowered, but only for the duration of carnival, after which normal order was reestablished. There is clear applicability of the concept of carnival to those children’s books in which the characters break out for a short adventure from their usual life of routine, but by the end of the book have returned to the reliability of innocent kairos. (The concept of carnival will be specifically related to food in chapter 7).

The nine books in this category are:

The Journey Home
My Place in Space
Where’s Mum?
Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons
Felix and Alexander
The Paw
The Midnight Gang
Murgatroyd’s Garden
Greetings from Sandy Beach
In this list, the first two are rural, the following six are urban, and the last has a beach setting. In this category it is noteworthy that kairos can be evoked effectively in an urban setting as well as a rural one. Despite its urban setting and a plot based on the problems of building development, Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons retains a strong sense of Arcadia, in its treatment of time as well as in the depiction of Joseph's close association with the pigeons, creatures representative of rus in urbe. The book contains a number of iterative illustrations. Spread 14/15 shows a typical lunchbreak (foreshadowed by the verbal text on p 13, 'At lunchbreak on sunny days') in which the workers from the Prindiville House building are relaxing on the roof, mostly doing nothing. The scene is repeated at the end of the book: spread 44/45 is a reprise of the rooftop scene, with the main difference being extra people swimming in the pool, but essentially nothing has changed—this is the new typical lunchbreak. The verbal text spells out a return to kairos: 'They stayed as happy, permanent tenants' (p 46). A sense of continuity ('stayed', 'permanent') contributes to the satisfying ending of this book.

Two of the carnivalistic books have action that takes place at night: The Paw and The Midnight Gang. Night is break-out time for the seemingly ordinary schoolgirl who becomes a skilful cat burglar, and for the apparently conforming babies who enjoy wild adventures at midnight; both books end with a scene of return to routine life, with the main characters successfully deceiving their families that they have spent the night sleeping peacefully in their beds.

Old age, but not death in Arcadia

Among the features listed by Nikolajeva as characterising the literature of kairos is the absence of death and sexuality—the two areas of life experience which, when comprehended by children, bring about an awareness of the linearity of time, and so result in initiation into the adult world. Nikolajeva states that the characters in kairos books are prepubescent and undergo neither maturation nor death (2000 p 27). To this I add the seemingly paradoxical observation that the Arcadian picture book world is inhabited by many elderly characters. The statistic may seem surprising, in that elderly characters are the main or very important protagonists in eight of the twenty-three books:
The Long Red Scarf
The Story of Rosy Dock
Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons
Belinda
Grandad’s Magic
Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten
John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat
The Very Best of Friends

Close examination of these characters reveals that the situation does not contradict Nikolajeva’s criterion of ‘absence of death and sexuality’: although presented in both verbal text and illustrations as old and in some cases quite physically decrepit, these characters function in the text as equivalent to children in many ways, and are best described as post-sexual, as they do not apparently have sexual relationships; they are not involved in the world of work—which is not to say they are inactive, but they do not ‘go to work’, and the money economy does not seem relevant to their lives; and, perhaps most surprising of all, in most of the texts there is little or no reference to death—the aged characters are presented as apparently immortal elders. There are two exceptions: in John Brown, Rose (as discussed below), the reference to death is a possible, metaphorical reading and may be missed by young readers; and in The Very Best of Friends, the death which occurs is that of James, whose surviving wife or partner, Jessie, has a vexed relationship with William the cat, which is the crucial one for the narrative. This book, the only one to introduce death explicitly, ends on an optimistic note, with the woman and cat accepting each other in a new situation of Arcadian living—and at no point is there reference to the possibility of Jessie’s own death.

*The Long Red Scarf* exemplifies the representation of immortal elders in an Arcadian setting. The narrator is a young child who is never named or shown in

---

16 An exception is the relationship of James and Jessie in *The Very Best of Friends*, who are shown to share a bed, until the death (half way through the text) of James.
the illustrations, and is defined only by her/his relationship to the elderly protagonists, 'my grandfather', 'Grandpa's friend, Jake', 'Great Aunt Maude', and the younger 'Cousin Isobel', who is busily preparing a nursery. By the end of the book (p 31), Cousin Isobel's new Baby Susan has appeared, but the book is so true to the generalisation of 'absence of sexuality' that there is no hint of a father for Isobel's baby.

The world of *The Long Red Scarf* is one of a particular rural Australian setting, in a self-contained 'felicitous space' where an extended family/community appears to live in harmony. The imagery of home in this book contains all the stereotypical elements of rural nostalgia: the outside world and its economy do not intrude on this community—the only transaction that is seen to occur is a friendly act of barter between grandfather and Isobel, as he makes tea and scones for her in exchange for her finding the wool for his scarf. It is noteworthy that neither grandfather nor Isobel goes to a shop to buy the wool; Isobel 'finds' it, presumably somewhere in the homely interior of the house which has room to accommodate a new baby in the attic bedroom. (The wool is shown in the illustration on spread 24/25, spilling out of a capacious basket.) True to the Cornucopia of food present in all Arcadian fiction (Nikolajeva 2000 p 27), the food eaten by this family also seems to be obtained without benefit of the money economy: Great Aunt Maude busies herself with the cows, the water pump and with cleaning the fish that grandfather catches in the river. The overall sense of innocence is complete in this book, despite the absence of any visible character under the age of about twenty-five, except for newborn Baby Susan.

Elderly characters provide post-sexual and apparently undying figures to inhabit the Arcadian picture book settings. They are busily engaged in caring for/relating to children and animals, but they do not enter the world of business and the money economy. Their daily routines in such activities as fishing (*The Long Red Scarf*), milking cows (*Belinda*), and gardening (*The Story of Rosy Dock*) help to reinforce the impression of *kairos*, endless cyclical time.
Remaining in the world of chronos

The theory of time types is especially useful in examining those texts which raise the question ‘Is this book really for children?’ These texts, which usually belong in Nikolajeva’s third category, differ from the carnivalistic in that they offer no comfortable return to innocence: ‘... the protagonist realises that there is no way back, that this is no longer a dream, play or a fancy-dress ball when it is sufficient to wake up ... in order to return to the security of a childhood paradise’ (Nikolajeva 2000 p 205). In terms of The Wind in the Willows (Grahame 1908), as discussed above, the characters in such books have ventured from the security of the River Bank to the Wide World, and are unable to find their way back. Although most commonly novels for teenagers, texts in this category include, according to Nikolajeva, many of Hans Christian Andersen’s fairytales, and, as is argued here, a small number of picture books also.

Only three of the thirty picture books turn their backs firmly on the nostalgic world of kairos, and can be classified unequivocally as belonging to the chronos category:

The Watertower
First Light
Counting on Frank

It is a clearcut matter to classify both The Watertower and First Light as belonging to the world of chronos or linear time. The Watertower begins in kairos (‘nobody could remember when the water tower was built ...’) but is soon disrupted by events described in the verbal text (‘Last summer, a security fence had kept trespassers out’), and, importantly, is also disrupted visually by the page design, which forces the viewer to turn the book around in order to view both words and illustrations. Most significantly, the world of the young narrator remains in a state of disruption at the end of the book. Bubba is obviously lying to his companion, Spike, when he boasts about his time enjoying the water—he refuses to show Spike his ‘water wrinkles’. The implication of the words ‘She’ll be scared something happened to me, won’t she?’ on the last page (p 32) is that
some kind of initiation has occurred, an event which has taken Bubba, and to some extent his companion, Spike, out of the *kairos* of childhood and plunged them into the *chronos* of the adult world. *First Light* is also a picture book that has left behind the felicitous world of *kairos*. Despite the claim on the cover blurb, it is not a book that resolves the father/son conflict, but rather one in which this conflict is displaced onto the sea/mother where it is bound to cause more trouble for all the characters in the story (see fuller description in chapter 6). In neither *The Watertower* nor *First Light* can the characters return to the comfort of innocent, circular time.

*Counting on Frank* is not so easily classified, being the only book in the sample that has a verbal text employing a satirical voice. The reporting by the narrator of his father’s reply about the humpback whales—‘they would get in the way of the television’ (p 10)—is the first example in the verbal text of the narrator’s lack of respect for his parents, but this feeling has been signalled visually from the very first illustration (p 6) with the depiction of the father as a passive do-nothing, slumped in an easy chair. The ‘knowing’ narrator—‘They didn’t know who they were dealing with’ (p 28)—is at all times presented as superior to his parents, with the result that Nikolajeva’s seventh characteristic of utopian fiction (‘a general sense of innocence’) is absent throughout this book.

It needs to be noted here that none of these three books, that move into the world of *chronos*, was published before the 1990s. (Publication dates were *Counting on Frank* 1990; *First Light* 1993; *The Watertower* 1994). This trend towards publication of ‘older’ picture books was a precursor of further developments in the years beyond the end date of the sample. Unease expressed by some adults about awards in the CBCA Picture Book category reached a peak in 1999, when *The Rabbits* by John Marsden and Shaun Tan received the Picture Book of the Year Award; this book was generally acknowledged to be an ‘older’ book, and with its theme of invasion of Australia by destructive ‘rabbits’ fits in the category of books that have moved irrevocably into *chronos*. As outlined in chapter 1 (appendix B), a result of the controversy caused by this award was the setting up of the Early Childhood category in 2001. It seems that a form of nostalgia was at work in arousing the passions of those who argued that the youngest group of
readers needed to be provided for in the award system; although the terminology of *kairos* and *chronos* were not used in the debate, the ‘innocent’ world of picture books for younger readers was the issue at stake.

**Alternative readings: *kairos* or *chronos***?

Some picture books are not easy to categorise in Nikolajeva’s terms; of the sample, the four which allow for alternative possible readings are:

John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat  
Where the Forest Meets the Sea  
Window  
The Story of Rosy Dock

Each of these four can be included in either the *kairos* or the *chronos* group, according to the interpretation, particularly of their endings.

*John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat* contains a number of illustrations in iterative frequency. If the cover art, front endpaper and frontispiece are included in the count, there are eight illustrations depicting the routine of Rose and John Brown’s life together before the disruption of Rose’s sighting of ‘something’ in the garden (spread 8/9). The eight preceding illustrations together include all of the characteristics on those listed as pertaining to *kairos*, if feeding hens and patting the dog are read as childlike activities. Most evocative of an Arcadian, pre-technological time is the picture of Rose under the pear tree with John Brown at her side (p 5). Rose is reading a book; she is seated on a wicker chair, wearing what appears to be an eyeshade with a veil attached, and the fact that she has donned this headgear suggests that she has settled for a longish session of reading. Like Annie in *Annie’s Rainbow* by the same artist, Rose exhibits a capacity for stillness. And as Nodelman (quoted above) remarks of the pictures in *The Little House*, the ripeness of the pears on the tree, the daffodils in flower at its base, and the apparently idyllic weather ‘imply [a] sense of the eternal sameness of the passing seasons.’
The book reverts to the iterative for the illustration on p 15, in which Rose is shown winding up the clock: she has packed up her knitting and is going through a getting-ready-for-bedtime routine. Nothing in the illustration disturbs the idyllic, except for a possibly more alert expression on John Brown's face than, say, in the illustration on p 6. But in the verbal text John Brown expresses denial of the cat's existence. By p 30 the battle of wills between Rose and John Brown is over, as the dog allows the cat to enter the house.

The illustration on p 31 is truly ambiguous, according to which reading is preferred. It can be read as a return to a state of *kairos*, in which there is now a threesome instead of a twosome, but otherwise the household remains the same: idyllic and untroubled by the need to engage with matters of money, sex, politics . . . or death. Or the illustration can be read as a descent into *chronos*, according to a reading that interprets the midnight cat as a symbolic representation of death; by this interpretation Rose is slowly succumbing to death, inevitably although quite resignedly, while the cat has won the battle and is 'purr[ing]' with victory (p 32) at the end. So this book sits in one or the other category according to whether it is read symbolically or not.

The books of Jeannie Baker form a special group for study for a number of reasons. Firstly, after Bob Graham, with four books, she is the most represented with three books in the sample of thirty. Secondly, apart from *My Place in Space*, which can be seen as a book designed to teach readers about astronomy, the three books by Jeannie Baker are the most overtly didactic, as evidenced for example in the end notes. The didacticism in these books, each consisting of photographed collage constructions which the author/illustrator has built from natural materials, deals with issues of environmental conservation or degradation, which can be described as at the very heart of the change from *kairos* to *chronos*. And thirdly, all three of her books on the sample list contain a central ambiguity which means they can be read as either remaining in *kairos* or in *chronos*.

*Where the Forest Meets the Sea* begins with scenes of a perfect Arcadia: the setting is remote, accessible only by water, and the two human characters, father and
son. appear in harmony. Spread 10/11 shows the father engaged in a childlike activity, building a sandcastle. Using the technical device of analepsis or flashback (Nikolajeva and Scott 2001 p 165), the book implies the movement of the young narrator’s imagination into the remote past, ‘a hundred million years ago’, with ghostly figures, animal and human, from the past of the rainforest depicted as overlays in the illustrations. A minor disruption to this kairos—of one endless day and the imagined past—occurs on page 19 with the words ‘I wonder how long it takes the trees to grow to the top of the forest.’ This is the first suggestion of a need to consider the future. The description in words and illustrations of an idyllic day continues, however, until the more important disruption on page 28: ‘But then I feel sad because the day has gone so quickly.’ Here chronos has intruded on kairos, and the jarring effect anticipates spread 30/31, which uses the complementary device of prolepsis or flash forward (Nikolajeva and Scott 2001 p 167) to show an imagined future, again by means of overlays in the illustrations, of development, technology and litter. Although ostensibly given a choice of ending—the ‘bad’ ending of development or the ‘good’ ending of a continuation of the Arcadian rainforest environment—the reader of this book is not free to return to the innocence of the book’s beginning, because it is a characteristic of innocence that, once lost, it cannot be regained. Even if the idyllic landscape of the rainforest is going to be retained, the representation of the ‘bad’ possible ending can be seen as a move away from kairos.

Window, the wordless picture book, is the book in the sample which most clearly treats time as its subject matter. The presence of birthday cards as markers of each two-year interval in the life of the young character, Sam, would suggest a simple tale of chronos or linear time. But things are not so simple. Two narratives can be discerned in Window: the primary or environmental narrative, and the secondary or domestic narrative.

In terms of the theory of time categories, Window can be read as moving from kairos inexorably towards chronos, but with a possible reprieve at the end. The features of the iterative frequency in illustration, as listed above, are nearly all present in the early spreads of this book. The cover illustration, repeated at the end, has an absence of technology and in fact an absence of human characters.
too: it shows a pristine site for making a home in a natural, rural environment. Spread 6/7, in which the reader is made aware that Sam is two years old, shows fencing, gate and some clearing but otherwise retains the Arcadian features of this environment. By spread 8/9 there are other humans present, but it is significant that one of the two women at the doorway of the house opposite is knitting—an activity suggestive of kairos rather than chronos. In later spreads the surrounding population builds up, and people are seen in not so benign activities, and by spread 26/27 the environment is filled with polluting cars, introduced species and factory smoke. But a reading according to the secondary, domestic narrative over the primary narrative suggests that Sam’s childhood and growing up have been favoured by kairos. This child/young man, whose every two years have been measured by the reader, has been apparently wrapped in the protective care of parents, and has had ample space and opportunities for play. At the end of the book Sam’s own fatherly pose at the window of his new house (spread 28/29) suggests hope for his new baby and, despite the backdrop of the city skyline, the new environment has most of the features of Arcadia.

There are conflicting messages also in The Story of Rosy Dock, the third of the Jeannie Baker books. The cover art is evocative of Window as it shows a view from a casement window of what appears to be an old cottage. This picture suggests that, as the title implies also, ‘everything is rosy!’ The viewer’s eye moves upwards from the stone ginger beer bottle containing a bunch of wildflowers (inside, on the window sill), to the grass and flowers growing outside the window and the colourful parrot flying by; then to the more distant sandy river bed, and beyond that, in the upper stratum of the view, the far bank of the river, with ghostly tree trunks and stony textured earth reminiscent of the patterns in Aboriginal Western Desert art.

The verbal text begins in the present tense: ‘People say it’s the oldest river in the world!’ and is a clear case of evoking ‘the mythic past of humankind as a whole’ in Nikolajeva’s phrase. By page 4 there has been some disruption: a change to the past tense, with the introduction of ‘newcomers from Europe’. Nevertheless the illustration here has just one person, the innocuous-looking woman with her
straw hat, small garden trowel and terracotta flowerpots—all ‘low tech’, signs usually of a Arcadian picture book setting.

A return to the present tense (spread 6/7) states ‘The land here is hot and dry . . .’, and other statements on following pages (‘The wind blows’, ‘Hardy any rain falls’, ‘But hidden in the mountains are ancient oases’) will likely be read as iterative. At spread 12/13 the unnamed (white) woman is shown at a waterhole, stripped for bathing, and apparently at home in the landscape. Her saddled pony awaits; on the far bank a wallaby can be seen, and a flock of parrots circles towards the pool. This spread fulfils every one of the requirements for the iterative, Arcadian illustration: the atmosphere is peaceful, the one human character shares the scene with a domesticated animal and other non-threatening animals, there is nothing visible of modern technology except the horse’s saddle and the woman’s clothes (and the glasses she is wearing), and the activity she is engaged in, bathing in the waterhole, is suggestive of routine and also one that children would enjoy.

Another change of tense on p 16 (‘One day . . . the sky cracked open’) should perhaps be a warning to the reader of the end of kairos, but, especially to readers with knowledge of central Australian weather patterns, this could seem a continuation of the Arcadian cycle. Such storms are recurring if not entirely predictable events. The problem is that just this one storm is shown to be ‘bad’, the one that spreads the imported red seed. The reader is pushed into acknowledging an error if the book has been read as Arcadian. This sense of contradiction remains to the very end of the book. ‘The pattern continues . . .’ (p 29) are usually words of peaceful return to kairos, and the rosy dock is even described on the final spread as ‘the plant with the beautiful red seedpods’ (spread 30/31), but this spread shows rabbits in the foreground, a sure signal to Australian readers of the ravages caused by introduced species. The beauty of the illustration itself, and the use of the word ‘beautiful’ in the text, set up a contradiction with the presence of the rabbits, and with the postscript on p 32 detailing the environmental harm caused by rosy dock. The effect is likely to induce guilt in the reader, or at the very least a sense of foolishness, at having ‘mistakenly’ read the text as Arcadian.

101
In each of the three books by Jeannie Baker in the sample, it can be concluded that there is an ambivalence: each can be read as Arcadian, or as plunging into the world of *chronos* with its adult knowledge and irreversibility. In one of the books, *Where the Forest Meets the Sea*, the reader is openly invited to ‘choose your own ending’; the other two books similarly, if not so blatantly, invite such a choice.

It needs to be reiterated, however, that the four ‘problematic’ books just discussed, together with the three clearly set in *chronos*, constitute only a small minority of the sample. Overwhelmingly the preferred *time* of the sample is nostalgic, circular *kairos*.

**Conclusion**

The picture book sample has been shown to consist largely of books set in circular time or *kairos*. The Arcadian, idyllic world may be interrupted in a number of instances by carnivalistic action, but it is restored by the end of the book to the innocent state of *kairos*. Strong links between *kairos* and Arcadia, the longed-for rural place, indicate an elision of time and place in these books; in the following chapter the concept of *space* as thematised place (Bal 1997) will be used to begin an examination of the nostalgic character of picture book *space*.
Chapter 4

Space

Introduction

In the previous chapter it was argued that picture book time is generally *kairos* or circular time, rather than *chronos* or linear time; and that *kairos* is associated with nostalgia for the Arcadian. Just as the preferred *time* in the picture book is *kairos*, so the preferred *space* will be shown in this chapter to be rural, and the least preferred, urban. Bal’s definition of space as ‘thematised place,’ and Bachelard’s ‘felicitous’ space, will be taken as foundations on which to build a construct of the nostalgically desirable *space* of the picture book. This space will be shown to be closely linked to two questions which dominate conceptualisations of space in Australia’s postcolonial literature—the *country vs city* dichotomy, and the defining of *home*. Although other literature has made the shift from rural to urban, picture books have not done so (certainly not within the dates of the sample): it will be shown that picture book space is a space of nostalgia for the Arcadian and felicitous *home* of an imagined Australian rural past. Statistics of the sample will be given to indicate the settings of the books. The chapter will proceed to show that their *maps of meaning* draw a contrast between the pastoral dream and images of the city, which is constructed as undesirable, unhealthy and often threatening. While suburbia and the seaside are both generally seen as ‘in-between’ places of ambiguity, it will be argued that in the picture book world they are nostalgic sites of boundless play for children. Some analyses of picture books with urban, suburban and seaside settings will be undertaken to demonstrate these principles.
Space: thematised place

In the previous chapter it was shown that *kairos* is the dominant time of the picture book. This chapter argues that another of the deeply rooted 'cultural assumptions' discernible in picture books (Johnston 1998 p 25) is that its preferred space is rural space, and the least preferred space is urban; and that while there is ambiguity attached to both suburban and seaside spaces, both can be absorbed into the Arcadian dream of good play spaces for children.

The distinction between place and space, in narratological terms, is drawn by Mieke Bal: '... places are linked to certain points of perception. These places seen in relation to their perception are called space' (1997 p 133). Bal points out that spaces function in a story in different ways—as 'only' a frame, a place of action which can 'remain entirely in the background'; or when the space is 'thematised, it becomes an object of presentation itself, for its own sake. 'Space in the latter case becomes an “acting place” rather than merely the place of action' (Bal 1997 p 136). The fact that the events of a narrative are happening in this particular space is then of shaping influence in the narrative. This shaping influence is developed by Johnston:

“Place” is more concrete and passive, with the emphasis on the “realities” (bearing in mind that “reality” itself is discursive and questionable), but “space” is abstract and active, lending itself to metaphor and to tropes of new alignments and change and even overt manipulation.

(Johnston 1995 p 175)

This distinction between ‘place’ and ‘space’ schematises ideas expressed by Bachelard, who chooses to treat positive space, the likeable space of happy childhood memories: ‘the images I want to examine are the quite simple images of felicitous space ... the sorts of space that may be grasped, that may be defended against adverse forces, the space we love’ (Bachelard 1994 p xxxv). Bachelard claims that the opposite of this ‘felicitous’ space is the measurable and concrete—‘inhabited space transcends geometrical space’ (1994 p 47). This
concern of Bachelard with ‘qualitative space, space that is lived and is transformed by imagination’ is particularly applied to houses, those ‘intimate spaces [that] provide the shelter, the refuge for intimate day-dreaming’ (Game 1995 p 200)—(and will be referred to further in chapter 5).

Such a house may become for many a fiction reader, in Bal’s term, an ‘acting place’ rather than merely a place of action; an example is (rather sentimentally) cited by Ashe and Tuttle:

Houses, especially houses in fiction, are more than bricks and mortar, more than boards and beams, more than just a frame for the events that take place within them. It isn’t Colin or Mary or Dickon that readers of The Secret Garden most want to meet, it’s Misselthwaite Manor, marooned on the moors, and the garden itself, abandoned for years behind high, ivyclad walls.

(Ashe and Tuttle 1984 Foreword, unpaginated)

As with much writing about space, nostalgically constructed, the preceding passage includes implications of the other dimension—time, (‘marooned’, ‘abandoned for years’); significantly, it refers to a country house and its garden that form a shaping influence in a famous story about the power of nature. The ‘time’ element here is kairos, the circular time of childhood; the reader is positioned as not wanting merely to read about Misselthwaite Manor and events that occurred there, but ‘to meet’ the house and the garden, to become part of the space and to experience its becoming part of the reader, in a continuing cycle. This meeting of the two elements of time and space in a work of fiction can be seen to exemplify Bakhtin’s concept of chronotope: the chronotope is an entity of temporal and spatial relationships expressed in a text (Bakhtin 1981). The Bakhtinian imagery is of a space, real or imaginary, metamorphosed by time and suspended in a layered past, that beckons to readers, urging them to revisit (and this concept makes it clear that to treat its two components, ‘time’ and ‘space’, separately, as has of necessity occurred in these two chapters, is an unfortunately
artificial process). Johnston claims of the chronotope\(^{17}\) that it 'explicitly recognises that the representation of . . . perceptions, being subjective, are ideological and value-driven, reflecting personal and sociocultural ideas, attitudes, and experiences' (Johnston 2001 p 348). Furthermore, concepts of subjectively, socioculturally constructed space are significantly connected with ideas of nation.

Postcolonial national space

The thematised space of imagination and literature can be small-scale—one manor house and its garden; or the area on one sandy beach where a mother and child are inscribing a name (see footnote no 17); or large-scale. An important large-scale thematised place is the space of national identity: its thematised character certainly has a tendency to transcend geometrical space or, to quote Bachelard again, 'our native country is less an expanse of territory than a substance' (quoted in Schama 1995 p 244). The idea of one's country as a conceptualised and shaping influence—a 'space'—recurs in literature; David Campbell has the soldier-narrator of his poem (who is serving in a distant country) state:

'The Murray's source is in the mind
And at a word it flows.'

(Campbell 1949)

\(^{17}\) The chronotope is applicable to the nostalgic world of children's books; and it can particularly be applied to the picture book, with its capacity for words (temporal) and images (spatial) to fill each other's gaps or compensate for each other's insufficiencies (Nikolajeva and Scott 2001 p 139). Johnston applies the concept to picture books, using the visual chronotope to refer to the representation of time-space in picture book illustration, and claiming that 'visual markers used to illustrate the relationship of people and events to time and space are easily identified and clearly reflect ideological choices and cultural attitudes' (Johnston 2001 p 348). Examples of such 'visual markers' abound in the sample books. In Window there is a simple device to denote the measurement of time for Sam, the boy whose life unfolds in the 'acting place' of the changing house: on the windowsill is a card with the words 'Happy Birthday: today you are 4' (spread 8/9). Another 'visual marker' appears in The Paw (spread 2/3), with the image of the schoolgirl, Leonie, metamorphosed by the coming of the night: 'at night, she was a cat-burglar'. Another, an image in Greetings from Sandy Beach (spread 22/23), is highly evocative for the adult co-reader: it is the picture of Mum writing Gerald's name in the sand, 'not with a stick . . . with Gerald!'; this image is charged with a specificity of time-space, not just the carefree freedom of holiday play (the father and narrator are in the background, digging holes in the sand with the help of the dog), but the one moment when Gerald is of the size and age to accept his role, as a kind of human signwriter's paintbrush, being dragged along the sand to form the giant (and ephemeral) letters of his own name.
National identity is important universally, but particularly in postcolonial societies. Ashcroft et al emphasise the importance of place and identity in postcolonial literatures:

A major feature of post-colonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. . . The dialectic of place and displacement is always a feature of post-colonial societies whether these have been created by a process of settlement, intervention, or a mixture of the two. Beyond their historical and cultural differences, place, displacement, and a pervasive concern with the myths of identity and authenticity are a feature common to all post-colonial literatures in English.

(Ashcroft et al 1989 p 9)

The colonists themselves, those who have subjugated the original inhabitants, cannot feel at home in the place colonised; they experience Umheimlichkeit or ‘not-at-homeness’, (see chapter 2), which motivates the reconstruction of the social and imaginative world in postcolonial writing (Ashcroft et al 1989 p 82). Wilson Harris, the Guyanese critic, sees postcolonial literatures as constantly struggling to free themselves from a past which stressed ancestry, and which valued the ‘pure’ over its threatening opposite, the ‘composite’; temporal lineality becomes replaced by spatial plurality (Ashcroft et al 1989 p 36). Likewise a number of epistemologies have developed which privilege space over time as the most important ordering concept of reality (Ashcroft et al 1989 p 37).

In the literature of twentieth century Australia, a postcolonial society, it is not surprising, then, to find that questions of identity, space and home are dominant. ‘Who is an Australian?’ and ‘What space does he occupy?’ (and it is typically a ‘he’) are the underlying themes of much Australian literature, both for a general readership and for children. Hodge and Mishra point out that ‘the landscape of Australia has been a dominant presence in art and literature’, providing images of country to represent the ‘context for human actions’, and to represent ‘transformations of people or aspects of people’ (1991 pp 143–144). Commentators such as Falkiner (1992) and Haynes (1998) have studied the close interaction of landscape with art and literature in Australia.
Attitudes to place and space change as postcolonial society develops; Nightingale quotes Stephen Gray’s four phases of perception of place in colonial literature: ‘(1) overseas exotica, (2) distinctively colonial, (3) national identity, (4) marginal multi-cultural environment’ (Nightingale 1986 p 2). Tiffin notes that two motifs of indigenisation are the journey with a native inhabitant into the interior of the ‘new country’; and house-building, ‘establishing a house, home or dynasty on new soil’ (Tiffin 1986 p 22). This acquiring or building of a house on new territory may involve painful yet educative experiences (Tiffin 1986 p 23). Such pioneering discourses are associated with the second in Gray’s list of phases (‘distinctively colonial’) and have generally been completed by the third phase.

By the time of publication of the picture books under consideration in this study, the two earlier phases had been passed, and the third phase, that of ‘national identity’, had arrived, with some gestures towards the fourth stage and some harking back to the earlier phases. The results of all the territory-acquiring and house-building are evident in the third-phase books, while a few rural picture books, which will be analysed in chapter 5, continue to depict the struggle to create—or to perfect—a household.

As claimed in chapter 1, there is a didactic impetus in every book for children (Musgrave 1985), whether overtly or covertly expressed, and one of the areas focused on by this didacticism is the fostering of national identity. The visual world of the picture book is well-placed to represent postcolonial national space, with its repeated images of rural landscape and buildings acting as revision lessons in the iconography of national identity. And nowhere is national identity more evident than in the concept of home.

---

18 Saxby traces the development of books that reflect the first two stages, noting that they were largely for the young but ‘capable independent reader’ (1998 p 384). He outlines some of the reasons for the late development in Australia of publishing for young children (p 385), before chronicling the rise of the nature stories (for younger readers) of the early twentieth century (pp 392-396) and their successors.
Australian concepts of 'home'

In chapter 2 it was claimed that the word 'home' is an emotionally charged word, and that the German word Heimlichkeit (being at home) encompasses the state that adults would wish for the children under their influence. 'In the “hypermodern” world, the individual is always and yet never “at home”' (Benko 1997 p 26); this may be true, but certainly the inhabitants of a postcolonial nation constitute a special, problematic case of preoccupation with definitions and locations of 'home'. Johnston claims that 'home' as place (and space) has particular ambivalences in Australia (1995 p 178). 'The concept of “home” was, until well into the twentieth century, frequently used to denote a place that some had never actually seen or experienced. When it had been experienced, there was often an irreconcilable sense of exile: the other place, the place away from, was the one that felt like home'. (Johnston 1995 p 180). For those of British settler stock, this longed-for 'home' could not have been more physically distant from Australia. Pictures of a home on the other side of the world abound in early white Australian literature, for example, in The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney (Richardson 1917) and in the novels of Martin Boyd. The internalisation of the ‘otherness’ (in imperialist terms) of the Australian environment resulted in conflicting concepts of ‘at-homeness’. The condition of placelessness in settler societies led to a proliferation of narratives about belonging. ‘Writers attempted to transform their experiences of cultural schizophrenia into a restorative dream of home, a healing myth of origin ...’ (Boehmer 1995 p 117): popular choices of subject matter, according to Boehmer, included childhood, homecoming and return. And the ‘restorative dream of home’ was not purely a literary one—Richards points out that Australia is a country of home ownership and of enduring respect for family structures. ‘That Australia possesses one of the highest rates of home ownership in the industrialised world has long been a source of pride to politicians and the press. Australia has also proved one of the slowest, among western countries, to shift from traditional family structures’ (Richards 1990 p 94).

In Australia the ‘restorative dream of home’ continues to rely on rural and Arcadian imagery. ‘The mythology of the bush illuminated a more adumbral
urban reality from the background (the Outback, the Back of Beyond, Beyond the Black Stump), and created a national poetic of place and character and story which was in reality a type of false consciousness and a nationally reductive metonym' (Johnston 1995 p 183). This national, rural mythology, persisting even into the late twentieth century, imbues the picture book world with metonymic images of a felicitous home which is self-contained, distant from urban closeness and free from all that is modern and technological.

The country vs city dichotomy

Australians expect a lot from the country, from rural cities and countryside. There is an expectation that rural Australia will supply the food needs of the largely city-based population; but there is an even more significant expectation that rural Australia will provide a country of the imagination, a good, wholesome—albeit challenging—place to which all can escape, either in reality or in the world of dreams, art and literature.

Falkiner claims that landscape and national identity are 'inextricably linked' (1992 (a) p 15). There was a dichotomy from the earliest days of white settlement between the idea of Australia as an earthly Paradise and the idea of the country as 'a harsh terrain of death and exile'. And even today Australian writing is still marked by 'a dichotomy as to whether the country [ie 'country' as 'nation'] represents a haven of liberty or an uncivilised place of exile' (Falkiner 1992 (a) p 10).

Judith Wright wrote that:

before one's country can become an accepted background against which the poet's and novelist's imagination can move unhindered, it must first be observed, understood, described, and as it were absorbed. The writer must be at peace with his landscape before he can turn confidently to its human figures.

But in Australian writing the landscape has, it almost seems, its own life, hostile to its inhabitants . . .'

(Wright 1965)
This ambivalence encapsulates the white, postcolonial dilemma; it is not a feature of Aboriginal culture. Mudrooroo Narogin, in a study of a poem by the Aboriginal poet Jack Davis, points out that ‘... the primordial split between man and nature as found in European poetry and which is a referent to the dualism implicit in European thought, is absent’ (quoted in Falkiner 1992 (a) p 190). But for white writers, according to Boehmer, colonial perspectives on newly settled lands were directed ‘through the prisms of inherited tropes: Utopia, or the lawless wilderness; the Noble Savage or the unregenerate Primitive; the Garden of Eden or the Holy City ...’ (1995 p 45). In the postcolonial literature of white Australia (including picture books) such dualism occurs, in one of its simplest forms as a ‘city vs country’ debate.

Turner summarises the ‘Nature versus Society’ split as ‘the perceived split between life within an Australian urban, social environment and life which takes place within, and is thus determined by the demands of, the landscape’ (Turner 1993 p 25). Turner claims that the basic opposition between the city and the country, which is seen as a Romantic opposition between Society and Nature, is generally resolved, in the European tradition, in favour of searching for some harmony with Nature. But a specifically Australian conclusion follows: ‘it is proposed that the search so initiated is usually fruitless because of the hostility, vastness, indifference or cruelty of the Australian version of Nature’ (1993 p 25); and this is the cause of the duality at the heart of much Australian white culture. Despite this duality, in the case of almost all poets, writers and artists ‘the country is preferred to the city as the authentic location for the distinctive Australian experience’ (Turner 1993 p 26). The bush, although viewed ambivalently, is seen as a place of greater authenticity and of escape from an unsatisfying society.

In the 1880s and 1890s The Bulletin famously published a series of pieces by Henry Lawson and ‘Banjo’ Paterson, the one claiming to present the ‘real’ bush with all its poverty and suffering, the other a more celebratory picture. ‘Clancy of the Overflow’, published in 1889, has a office worker wistfully considering the life of a drover:

... And he sees the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended,
And at night the wond’rous glory of the everlasting stars.

111
... And I somehow rather fancy that I'd like to change with Clancy,
Like to take a turn at droving where the seasons come and go,
While he faced the round eternal of the cash-book and the journal—
But I doubt he'd suit the office, Clancy, of 'The Overflow'.

(Paterson 1889)

This poem is still remarkably popular and can be recited in its entirety by many Australians. The romantic, 'Banjo Paterson' view of rural life as superior to urban life has overcome the realist, 'Henry Lawson' depiction of the struggle and misery of life in the bush. The romantic view, the cherished 'pastoral dream', has been reiterated by commentators such as the illustrator Robert Ingpen, himself the illustrator of a number of picture books for children, including a version of Clancy of the Overflow (Paterson and Ingpen 1982):

Most Australians live in cities, but they seem to be yearningly conscious of their heritage that lies beyond the suburban sprawl. Countless city dwellers long for a 'place in the country', almost as though they seek refuge from the spirit-eroding suburbs that have engulfed, like lava, the countryside around the shining urban towers... For all practical purposes we are leg-roped to our cities and yet we treasure our country with its open spaces, its laconic characters, its folklore and its ballads. Deep within himself, each Australian cherishes a pastoral dream and somehow feels inferior to those who comprehend the earth.

(Ingpen 1979 p 10)

Along with romantic expressions of the 'pastoral dream', adverse images of the city and suburbs to which most Australians are 'leg-roped' are common. Images such as 'spirit-eroding suburbs that have spread like lava' are in a tradition, not exclusive to Australia, of viewing the city as malignant (see below). And as Ingpen states, the idea of the superiority of country over city has persisted in postcolonial Australia despite the practical preference of its inhabitants for living distant from rural realities. The statistics are clear: in the

---

19 Escaping the 'leg-rope' by buying hobby farms, weekenders and four-wheel drive vehicles is a favourite theme of advertising and popular culture.
The most recent edition of the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Year Book Australia* (2002), the startling figure is given that 84 per cent of the population lives on one per cent of the continent—the coastline. Only 16 per cent inhabit the inland, in the rural Australia that looms so large in the life of the imagination and of literature. This paradox is a persistent and deepseated one: ‘The greatest and most frequently remarked-upon paradox in Australian life has always been that the predominant cultural image is of a nation of bush dwellers, while Australia is and always has been a highly urbanised society’ (Falkiner 1992 (b) p 7).

**Literary shift to the city**

While the images of rural Australia have been persistent, there has been a gradual movement towards urban settings in the literature as a whole, as Falkiner notes: ‘Rather than matching the geographical and demographic development of the nation, Australian literature has evolved in exactly the opposite way: with the bush ethos developing before urban writing established itself as the major force’ (1992 (a) p 7). In the case of fiction for adults, the preference for rural settings declined in the late twentieth century, with writers such as Peter Carey, Frank Moorhouse and Helen Garner treating contemporary urban experience.

The nostalgic forces at work in literature for the young, however, ensured a time-lag in this literary shift: the preferability of rural life and values remained an underlying theme in the work of writers of fiction for young readers for longer than in novels for adults. In the case of one writer, Joan Phipson, whose career as a children’s writer spanned forty years, McVitty says of the values presented in her work:

... rural values are worthier than city values ... earthliness is better than worldliness, innocence better than experience, instinct better than instruction ... ‘civilisation’ (urban society) has lost touch with the living earth and only those who remain close to it and can respond to it can be said to be really living, or to have any chance of surviving.

(McVitty 1981 p 40)
While Joan Phipson represents an extreme in her presentation of the country as good and the city as bad, other writers continued to set most of their fiction in rural Australia—for example, Colin Thiele, Ivan Southall and Patricia Wrightson, whose careers peaked in the 1970s, but whose books were winning awards right up to the 1980s. Late in the century writers of YA (‘young adult’) novels gradually followed the trend set in adult literature and came to set most of their books in the city, so that by the 1990s most Australian novels for older children and teenagers were urban, with a few exceptions such as the books of David Metzenthen.

However, the picture book has not kept pace with these changes: this art form usually associated with the youngest readers has retained rural settings—a clear majority of the sample (as will be shown below, and analysed in chapter 5) are rural. The nostalgic and Arcadian view of rural Australia has been retained in the picture book.

Statistics of the sample

The methodology for the categorisation into the groups was simple: in almost every case the identifiable features were from the illustrations alone (although in the case of Marty Moves to the Country the very title made categorisation especially easy). The location of the housing occupied by the main character/s was the decisive factor. The ‘rural’ and ‘city’ groups were simply divided—a portion of background with grassed (such as in Annie’s Rainbow) or wooded (as in The Journey Home) expanse indicated ‘rural’, and this category included both farm and country town settings. Rows of adjoining or closely abutting houses, or of apartment buildings, were taken to indicate ‘city’. Some books have no outside view of the main characters’ residence (Sunshine, First Light, Counting on Frank, The Midnight Gang), and a decision had to be made based on examination of the interior scenes. The suburban category, with its character of being situated in between the rural and the urban, was unsurprisingly the most problematical. Some of the books have a scarcity of clues about the housing of the main character/s: in Greetings from Sandy Beach, for example, there is only a tiny
glimpse (spread 4/5 and p 31) of the hedge and gate of a suburban house, which is left behind as the main characters leave for their beach holiday. One book (*The Race*) is set in a school, and has no illustrations of characters’ homes, so is not discussed here.

Four books are set by or on the sea. In the case of two books (*Where the Forest Meets the Sea* and *Not a Nibble*) there is no depiction in illustration or text of the home from which the characters have travelled for their outing by the sea; the other two (*First Light* and *Greetings from Sandy Beach*) have some glimpses of home, and are allocated accordingly.

The statistics arrived at are as follows: of the thirty books, the settings of thirteen are rural, six urban, eight suburban, two seaside, one (*The Race*) not included.

Rural settings:

- Annie’s Rainbow
- John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat
- Marty Moves to the Country
- The Long Red Scarf
- My Place in Space
- The Very Best of Friends
- The Journey Home
- Hector and Maggie
- Window
- Belinda
- First Light
- The Watertower
- The Story of Rosy Dock

Urban settings:

- Joseph and Lulu
- Felix and Alexander
Suburban settings:

Crusher is Coming
Drac and the Gremlin
Grandad’s Magic
Greetings from Sandy Beach
Counting on Frank
Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten
Dog Tales
The Midnight Gang

Seaside settings:

Where the Forest Meets the Sea
Not a Nibble!

While further discussion of rural space and the books with rural settings will be left until chapter 5, this chapter will proceed to examine the other kinds of picture book space: city, suburbia and seaside, and the books set in those spaces.

The city, an undesirable space

When it comes to extrapolating from the picture book sample to find maps of meaning that help children ‘make sense of the world’ (Watkins 1992 p 183), the maps show an indisputable preference for the rural. The extolling of rural virtues associated with a nostalgic, Arcadian viewpoint has often been accompanied by a demonisation of the city. If the country represents all that is natural, the city is the site of all that is unnatural and harmful—in Bal’s expression (1997 p 216), ‘the sink of iniquity as opposed to idyllic innocence’. ‘Clancy of the Overflow’, the
poem by 'Banjo' Paterson referred to above, contains images of the city and its occupants that resonate still with many Australians:

... And the foetid air and gritty of the dusty, dirty city,
Through the open window floating, spreads its foulness over all . . .

... and the hurrying people daunt me, and their pallid faces haunt me
As they shoulder one another in their rush and nervous haste,
With their eager eyes and greedy, and their stunted forms and weedy,
For townsfolk have no time to grow, they have no time to waste.

(Paterson 1889)

Words such as 'foetid', 'pallid', 'stunted and . . . weedy' all hold connotations of unhealthiness, and the association of the city with lack of health is a universal one, as Sontag notes:

The metaphor of cancer expands the theme of the rejection of the city. Before it was understood as, literally, a cancer-causing (carcinogenic) environment, the city was seen as itself a cancer—a place of abnormal, unnatural growth. In The Living City (1958), Frank Lloyd Wright compared the city of earlier times, a healthy organism ('The city then was not malignant') with the modern city. 'To look at the cross-section of any plan of a big city is to look at the section of a fibrous tumor.'

(Sontag 1978 p 78)

As well as poor physical health, the city is seen as representing the mechanical rather than the human. Bachelard describes houses in the city, not set in natural surroundings, thus: 'the relationship between house and space becomes an artificial one. Everything about it is mechanical and, on every side, intimate living fleeing' (Bachelard 1994 p 27). And the city has been viewed as especially inimical to children, as referred to in chapter 2 with reference to Sibley's (1995 (a) p 62) citing of the Volkswagen commercial showing a vulnerable child in a 'defiled' city.

Two of the six books in the 'city' category are extreme examples of the distinction between place and space in Bal's terms. Far from remaining 'entirely in the background' (Bal 1997 p 136), the places have becomes 'spaces', highly thematised; the houses in these two books, Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville
House Pigeons and Felix and Alexander, do not just respond to emotion, they evoke it. In Joseph and Lulu, the building is personified and even named in the title; in Felix and Alexander, the buildings are given human characteristics (such as eyes and teeth) in the illustrations. Both these picture books portray the city as an alien environment, and particularly in Felix and Alexander the buildings themselves are threatening and sinister.

Bad skyscrapers: Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons

This book is regarded as one of the forerunners of the modern picture book in Australia, one of the first to emerge with design and layout ‘manipulated to assist in the portrayal of multiple meanings and appeal to multiple audiences’ (Anstey and Bull 2000 p 74). The book is portrait-shaped but taller and narrower than most picture books, so that the book as object, suggestive of the skyscraper, invites the prediction that it will tell a story about urban buildings. The title contains four names, only one of which is the name of a human, that of the wheelchair-bound caretaker and lift operator, Joseph. The other names are those of the lift in Prindiville House (‘affectionately known as “Lulu”’); of the small, old building itself; and the pigeons which nest on the building. So in the terminology of Bal, quoted earlier, even in the title several spaces have become ‘thematised’ (Bal 1997 p 136) to the extent that a building and its lift have been named as characters.

The book is a moral fable about a ‘good little’ building versus ‘bad big’ skyscrapers. In the case of urban buildings the old, the smaller and the characterful are clearly favoured over the new and the anonymous; only in the older, smaller building, it is implied, is a communal life possible. This ideology is consistent with the Arcadian view that the large, efficient and mechanical is inferior to the small, personal and rural; in Bachelard’s terms, quoted above, when everything is mechanical, ‘intimate living flees’. Joseph and Lulu is in the tradition of picture books which flourished especially in the USA in the forties and fifties, with tales about small, personified ‘low-tech’ machines overcoming the threat of redundancy when huge, impersonal ones appeared. An example is The Little Red Lighthouse and the Great Gray Bridge (Swift and Ward 1942) in which
a small lighthouse fears it no longer needed when a huge bridge is built over the Hudson River, New York—but the bridge reassures the lighthouse that its bright lights are to warn aeroplanes, not boats, and the lighthouse is still needed for shipping safety. Similarly, *Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel* (Burton 1942) tells of the threat from petrol, electric and diesel shovels to the ‘old-tech’ steam shovel. And *The Little House*, also by Burton (1946), a book with which Joseph and Lulu has much in common, traces the history of a house ‘way out in the country’ that is gradually encroached upon by urban growth, until ‘she didn’t like living in the city. At night she used to dream of the country and the field of daisies and the apple trees dancing in the moonlight’ (Burton 1946 p 30). The problem is resolved for the Little House by transporting her into a new rural setting, a nostalgic good place where ‘all was quiet and peaceful in the country’ (1946 p 40).

The opening sentence of *Joseph and Lulu*—‘Squashed between two tall towers sat Prindiville House’—immediately establishes the building itself as the focus of interest, just as the Little House was the main ‘character’ in the eponymous book. The personification is continued with the use of the verb ‘squashed’, suggesting the building’s discomfort as the victim of other buildings, the unnamed, depersonalised ‘tall towers’. The ‘tall towers’ are representative of the demonised, unhealthy and threatening city. Visually, the introduction of the ‘character’, Prindiville House, is achieved with an element of surprise. The first word of text, ‘Squashed’, appears alone on p 3, and below it is a black and white illustration of the tops of two buildings. On p 3 there is no other item in the illustration to provide a scale against which these buildings can be measured—they could be small, complete buildings, of one and two storeys only—so it is not until the page turn to spread 4/5 that the viewer learns (through both text and illustrations) that these buildings are indeed ‘tall’. An innovative breaking of an important convention of illustration has occurred at the very beginning of the book, the convention that if pictures need to be read as though joined from spread to spread, this joining is lateral—for example, in *I Went Walking* (Machin and Vivas 1989), spread 6/7 shows some hairs of a tail on the top of the recto page; in spread 8/9 the whole horse is revealed. But the viewer of *Joseph and Lulu* soon realises that pp 3, 4 and 5 need to be read as
though joined to form a continuous strip, a *vertical* strip, and this vertical reading serves to emphasise the height of the skyscrapers and their alienating qualities.

This is not a full colour picture book, but is in black and white with two added colours, purple and brown. The light brown first appears (on p 5) to differentiate Prindiville House from its tall, skyscraper neighbours. This lack of colour, and the intricate pen and ink style of the illustrations on the first pages, are suggestive of architectural drawings; by p 5 an expectation has been set up that this is a book about architecture. The book includes several other features which suggest that the disciplines of architecture and/or graphic design have been influential in its making, all features that were innovative at the time of publication. These include the daring variety of typefaces (p 3, spreads 4/5 and 18/19); on those spreads where a conventional typeface is used (eg spread 16/17) the device of centring the verbal text, which draws attention to its constructedness, suggests a reading more like verse than prose, and also emphasises the vertical nature of the subject matter. There are also some unusual devices on spreads 12/13 and 40/41: firstly, the use of typesetting shaped to depict a literal ‘rise and fall’ of words, and in the second case, text set around the page in a square to depict words being spoken on the telephone by people in the three neighbouring buildings. And from pages 23 to 37 the use of italics signals that the text represents Joseph’s dream flight across the world with Lulu. Two spreads (14/15 and 44/45) show the rooftop scene on top of Prindiville House from a bird’s-eye view perspective.

The narrative problem in *Joseph and Lulu* is that of the fate of a city building, and the problem is solved by the ingenious idea, inspired by a dream journey to Venice, of retaining the smaller building as a bridge between the two skyscrapers. As a result of this resolution, the chief human character, Joseph the caretaker, retains his job; the unnamed occupants of Prindiville House are rehoused in the towers; the ‘tower people’ have their recreation needs fulfilled by Prindiville House; and the pigeons are happy. To enjoy the satisfaction of this resolution the reader needs to be sympathetic to a construct of the city space that views Prindiville House as more attractive and desirable (because smaller and older) than the anonymous, sterile skyscrapers on either side. Several devices, both visual and verbal, are used to harness this sympathy, through colour, shape
and focalisation. Firstly, the more ‘characterful’ small building is coloured light brown, not stark black and white. Secondly, Prindiville House is shown to be home both to an engaging human—the disabled caretaker, Joseph—and to animal life, the pigeons. Thirdly, the activities available on the building’s rooftop are fun: spread 14/15 shows people sunbathing, gardening, playing cricket, playing chess and cards. Against these attractive qualities of Prindiville House are set the unattractive developers (the ‘tycoons’), shown on spread 18/19 with such stereotypical touches as a fat cigar. Spread 20/21 (Plate 6) shows the outcome if the developers were to win: the malevolent skyscrapers and their tycoon owners would smash the small, likeable (so somehow less urban) building.

Interestingly, the only appearance of child characters in this book is the depiction in spread 10/11 of three children among the passengers in the lift ‘Lulu’, who are not mentioned in the verbal text—the implication is that this story is about adult workers and tenants in a city environment, that Joseph and Lulu is about the kind of buildings that children are assumed not to inhabit. In the next chapter the Australian cottage tradition will be examined and a number of books with rural settings analysed. Joseph and Lulu is unlike these books in many ways, but it shares with them the depiction of a building which through smallness and age is able to engage the reader’s sympathy.

‘A tiny creature in a huge city’: Felix and Alexander

The other city book in the sample to treat large city buildings as especially threatening is Felix and Alexander. This book provides a map of meaning that constitutes the city as alien and threatening, beginning with the semiotic implications of the cover. The composition of the cover is divided into three roughly equal portions by contrasting light and shade, with the dividing lines between darkness and light providing vectors which lead to the two characters, one a human and one a dog. A viewer who has not yet opened the book may be inclined to view the darkness as emanating from the two sides of the picture, and flowing down to form a sinister background to the two innocent characters. At a metaphorical level this is not a misreading of the picture, although closer examination of the cover picture reveals that the light comes upwards from a
[Production Note:  
This plate is not included in this digital copy  
due to copyright restrictions.]

Plate 6
Greenwood, *Ted Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons* Cremorne, Angus and Robertson 1972 spread 20/21
torch held by the little black-and-white dog. The ‘light versus dark’ theme has been clearly announced. It is clear also from the cover that one or more buildings are important to this book.

The barrier between inside and outside worlds is salient in the first spread. As will be examined in the following chapter when discussing the verandah, Bal notes the special role played by a boundary between two opposed locations (1997 p 216). The composition of the first spread is dominated by the door from the flat to the landing of the building—the rectangular shape of the door is close to the centre, it is the largest uninterrupted shape in the illustration, and its colour is the brightest except for the (small) red checks on the bedspread. The first sentence of verbal text reads: ‘Alexander lived in a block of flats in the big city.’ This is followed by a sentence about one of the restrictions of this life: he was ‘not allowed’ to have a pet (and Felix is revealed to be a stuffed toy dog). On p 3 facing this text is a picture of the interior of Alexander’s room, and visible from the window is a cityscape with roofs, a little greenery in the foreground, and skyscrapers in the background. The door serves as backdrop to the boy and dog who are facing each other: here in the city this boundary between inside and outside is of primary importance, marking the boundary between the safe and personal and the outside, threatening and impersonal world.

Spread 4/5 emphasises the smallness of both boy and dog in comparison with the big city. The view seen by the ‘too small’ Felix from the window is reminiscent of Jeffrey Smart’s well known painting Cahill Expressway (National Gallery of Victoria, painted in 1962), in which a small human figure is made to appear inconsequential by the sweep of urban street. In spread 6/7, as the text introduces anxiety (‘Felix waited and waited and became very worried’), the illustration reveals the wall behind the bed, with its picture of a grey and impersonal city skyline. The illustration on p 9 consists mostly of a study of the brickwork exterior of the block of flats, dominated by the strong vertical line of the drainpipe. Although the text mentions ‘the garden’, in this spread and the next the only garden items shown are the top of a shrub, some untended grass and a garbage tin. The pervading greyness of the illustration on p 11 connotes a world of dreariness and unfriendliness, as the text sets up the theme of sacrificial
love, even to the extent of the reference to the Crucifixion: ‘a nail tore his side’ (p 10).

The illustration on p 13 (Plate 7) is a turning point in the visual narrative, because it is here that the buildings start to metamorphose into humanoid shapes, with pairs of lit windows for eyes, sharp points of finials or pine trees bristling threateningly, and black gaping mouths. Now, clearly, the buildings are not just a dreary background, but have become characters, actively malevolent. The p 13 picture is composed so that the view is from a high point looking down onto the back of the tiny figure of Felix. He is facing a long, dark grey expanse of street. The houses and footpaths act as vectors to lead the eye to the building which cuts off the street at right angles, forming a shape reminiscent of a prison yard. The end building has a sawtooth roof and a sinister black doorway; the doorway is centrally placed so as to seem the likely destination for the tiny Felix. Smoke-belching factory chimneys enclose the scene, one in close-up at the right-hand near corner, one on the distant skyline.

The author/illustrator has commented about the p 13 illustration:

The picture of Felix walking alone through the darkening streets... evolved from a black and white rough... In the final picture I covered in the background, and I also took the perspective up about thirty or forty feet in the air, so that you look down on Felix. It gives a much greater feeling of a tiny creature in a huge city—and that is what the book is basically about.

(Denton 1987 p 233) [my italics]

In illustration, shapes with sharp edges and points convey action, tension and pain (Kiefer 1995 p 122); the spreads from 12/13 to 26/27 make use of this convention as the city buildings become increasingly ‘the enemy’. Lit sections of windows, and decorative scalloping on awnings become hideous teeth; half-drawn window blinds become lidded eyes. They are reminiscent of the windows in Ernst Ludwig Kirchner’s painting Potsdamer Platz, painted in 1914, and described by Conrad: ‘All that remains of the square is a series of gouged apertures, like devouring eyes’ (Conrad 1998 p 63). The buildings appear to lean
[Production Note:
This plate is not included in this digital copy
due to copyright restrictions.]

Plate 7
in towards the tiny figure of Felix (p 16). Again the technique recalls the work of the German expressionists of the early twentieth century, this time in writing: ‘the facades of tenements converge at sickly angles in Döblin’s Berlin Alexanderplatz . . . ’ (Conrad 1998 p 261). Alexander is found ‘in the grip of a fearsome monster’ (p 18), a monster which is none other than a city building (p 19). In the ‘rescuing’ spread (20/21) the text states: ‘The monster turned to stone under the bright beam of light’ and the viewer sees the building revert to its harmless, built entity. But the threat remains at the edge of the illustrations, wherever the beam of torchlight does not reach: p 25 shows a building leaning towards the seated characters, and a semi-personified row of silhouetted black buildings in the middle ground, behind which rise towers of skyscrapers.

_Felix and Alexander_ has no other characters than the boy and his dog—apart from the ‘fearsome monster’ building. No parents or siblings are mentioned or depicted, and as the pair walk the city streets no other human or animal is visible. This eerie emptiness compounds the threat of the cityscape. Even the homecoming scene, wherein ‘the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of dread’ (Campbell 1949 p 246), is in my view not entirely unambiguous. The picture on p 29 is full of light; Denton has described his technique of adding colours to produce the effect of light in this illustration:

\[\ldots\] so that it became just a big cone of light that went out like that. That technique gave the whole picture a really nice feeling. It feels as though the centre of the light is coming from that, and the whole thing sort of shoots out from there, and the shadows emphasise that feeling. This picture is the key picture in a way.

(Denton 1987 p 234)

Saxby comments on the ending, seeing _Felix and Alexander_ as ‘affirm[ing] that faith and friendship will always find a way home’ (1993 p 178). But the p 29 illustration shows the return threshold as a doorway, canopy and pair of windows which, following the conventions set up earlier in the narrative, could metamorphose at any moment back into an unfriendly face. ‘Home’ itself, as represented by ‘the front door of their block of flats’, is potentially unstable, capable of becoming a threatening monster. This not-entirely-to-be-relied-on,
urban homecoming scene is in marked contrast with that of *The Journey Home* (see chapter 5, and Plates 1 and 21), with its ecstatic scene of the children’s return to their felicitous home, where their parents greet them with mugs of hot chocolate, in a picture that effectively sums up all the joys of rural nostalgia.

Both *Joseph and Lulu* and *Felix and Alexander* present the city as an alien environment, not welcoming to children, and requiring clever strategies for survival. In this way they are precursors of *Way Home*, the picture book (Hathorn and Rogers 1994, referred to in chapter 2) that was to go furthest in representing the city as a menacing place, especially to the young. These books reveal the other side of the coin of Arcadian nostalgia: if the country represents all that is healthy, wholesome, personal and welcoming, then the city is a place where things are, in Banjo Paterson’s terms, foetid, people are pallid, and the very buildings themselves full of threat.

**The suburbs: between country and city**

In discussing the Australian pastoral dream, reference was made earlier in this chapter to ‘the spirit-eroding suburbs that have engulfed, like lava, the countryside around the shining urban towers’ (Ingpen 1979 p 10). Such harsh words are not unusual—adverse criticism of suburbia is a thread running through architectural commentary, particularly that influenced by Robin Boyd, coiner of the term ‘the Australian ugliness’. Both ugliness and conformity are commonly ascribed to the suburban scene. Even those who write in praise of the suburbs often preface their remarks with defensiveness. For example, Peter Emmett, curator of an exhibition of art and architecture entitled ‘Sydney Suburbs’, states, ‘The suburbs represent Sydney’s extraordinary diversity and eclecticism, not the red-roof sprawl of popular derision but the home and heart of how people, over many generations, have chosen to live’ (O’Brien 2000 p 14).

It is as though deference must be paid to derisory remarks about ‘red-roof sprawl’ (surely of ‘elitist’ rather than ‘popular’ derision) before acknowledgement can be made that the suburbs are where people actually live. And the statistics are clear: most Australians do live in the suburbs.
The physically in-between character of suburbia, poised between the rural and the urban, is reflected in theoretical tensions also. The suburban home is viewed even by benign commentators as a compromise, an adaptation of the pastoral to the practical realities of living close to where employment and services are situated. Suburbia is not a solely Australian phenomenon, nor is harsh criticism of it. In his analysis of criticism of suburbia in America, Donaldson points out that suburbia for Americans is an attempt to reconstitute the pastoral, the ‘ideal middle landscape’ between the urban and the wild (Donaldson 1969 p 91). This landscape lies somewhere in the past, in ‘a Jeffersonian world of virtuous yeomen tilling their acres in harmony with benevolent nature’ (p 92). And disillusionment with suburbia can be based on a deep disappointment that it is not an exact copy of this pastoral ideal (p 95), not the desired midpoint between savagery and civilisation, with virtue and health inhering in the suburban plot of land (Donaldson 1969 p 212). Such adverse criticism of suburbia can be seen to have close links to the falsifying or ‘restorative’ nostalgia of Boym’s terminology (2001 p 49), as referred to in chapter 2; the disappointment, in fact, being the disappointment of the impossibility of ‘restoring’ an idealised past.

The idea of owning a house on a plot of its own has, however, been hugely popular in Australia, and is seen by some commentators as a vestige of the white pioneering spirit. The structure of the contemporary suburban home could . . . be seen as a shrunken version of the free selector’s dream; the quarter-acre block is a satisfyingly compromised metonym for “our selection” (Fiske, Hodge and Turner 1987 p 27). In considering the importance of suburbia, it is necessary to return to the country vs city opposition in Australian tradition referred to earlier.

The counter-ideology affirming nature over culture is one of the enduring myths of Australia, signifying a distinctive Australian relationship with the landscape. The openness and friendliness of the Australian people is linked with the outdoors as the natural location for social interaction . . . The outdoors of the suburban home acts as a compressed signifier for this image of Australian existence, renovating our irrevocable urbanism by overlaying it with a sense of harmony with nature . . .

(Fiske, Hodge and Turner 1987 p 44)
This affirmation of nature over culture (or, in the terms used earlier, country over city) is evident in such manifestations as the phrase ‘outdoor living’, beloved of real estate agents; the traditional verandah (which is further discussed in the following chapter) which provides, among other functions, a balance or buffer area between nature and culture, or a way of bringing some of the rural into the suburban; and is especially alive in the ritual of the barbecue. However, other, newer forms of ‘outdoor living’ proliferate in modern suburbia.

As a literary space, suburbia has not figured prominently. ‘Curiously, although it is the most typical dwelling place, few Australian novels . . . have been based entirely in the suburban milieu, unless the writer treats it as an object of satire. Australian fiction writers have always been more attracted to the polarities of Australian existence—inner city or outback life—for subject matter’ (Falkiner 1992 (b) p 8). There is some apparent contradiction in Falkiner’s statement that ‘contemporary realist’ writing has developed ‘with the recognition that most Australians view the Australian landscape looking outwards (or more correctly inwards) from the suburban fringe’ (Falkiner 1992a p 109). In this newer writing, according to Falkiner, a measure of ironic suspicion is brought to bear on the natural landscape.20

These attitudes of ambiguity towards suburbia are all engaging with adult preoccupations about its in-betweenness, its being a place of compromise. When it comes to providing for children there is less ambiguity:

[suburbia] reconciles access to work and city with private, adaptable, self-expressive living space at home. Plenty of adults love that living space, and subdivide it ingeniously. For children it really has no rivals.

(Stretton 1970 p 21)

20 Only one of the picture books, Counting on Frank, shares this viewpoint of ‘a measure of ironic suspicion’. References to supermarket shopping, and to one gum tree in the garden, imply a suburban setting.

I enjoy dinner, not because of the delicious grill Mum cooks EVERY night, or the thrilling conversation.

It’s the peas.

(p 20)
Even that harshest architectural critic of suburbia, Robin Boyd, who could write of the suburbs as ‘continuous rows of buildings on each hand pressing greedily forward over the garden, the brown brick faces only a few feet behind the fences, like a football crowd craning to watch the defeat of the Australian domestic idea’ (1952 p 13), includes in his pen-sketch a description of ‘children playing cricket . . . or [playing] in a broad park with secret stretches of shrubbery and with yabbies in the lake’ (1952 p 13).

Whether or not suburbia is unrivalled in the reality of providing for children, certainly the representation in picture books is of a suburbia where secure and delightful play places abound, with trees and grass providing the opportunities of the pastoral, but with proximity to other children providing handy companionship. Consistent with the deep layers of nostalgia present in picture books, their images of suburbia emphasise an apparent boundlessness of space and time, especially in representations of the traditional backyard.

Examples of 1950s-style backyards still survive, but these don’t exhaust the semiotic effects of this feature on the present. Many Australians still remember the backyards of their youth or hear their parents speak warmly about them . . . The 1950s house with its backyard occupies a semiotic space determined by both past and present . . .

The parents would not normally entertain their friends there, but children were usually instructed to do so there rather than in the house. Children would use it for play . . .

(Fiske, Hodge and Turner 1987 p 47)

In this fifties-style suburbia, according to the same authors, front yard and backyard marked an opposition between adults and children, an opposition signified in more recent times by internal and concealed markers within the house itself (1987 p 49). Certainly the old-style backyard with its Hills Hoist, lawn and one or two large trees has become a nostalgic site for picture book play to occur, in a region away from overt interference by adults, if still benignly watched over by them from afar.
Boundless play: *Drac and the Gremlin* and Bob Graham’s world

*Drac and the Gremlin* was cited in chapter 3 as encapsulating the concept of *kairos*, with its illustrations of a seemingly endless day of play. In this book the other component of the *chronotope*, space, is also apparently boundless, according to the illustrations. The verbal text and illustrations here work in differing genres: the words use the conventions of science fiction, while the illustrations work within the codes of realism. The contrast between the unreality of the text and the realism of the illustrations is aided by the fact that, although the materials used in this book are gouache and pencil (Haddon and James 1996 p 46), the illustrations have the characteristics of oil painting as described by Berger:

> What distinguishes oil painting from any other form of painting is its special ability to render the tangibility, the texture, the lustre, the solidity of what it depicts. It defines the real as that which you can put your hands on ... it can suggest objects possessing colour, texture and temperature ...

(Berger 1972 p 88)

In Kress and van Leeuwen’s term’s (1996 p 163), as mentioned in chapter 3, high modality results from the use of the artistic style of hyper-realism: the hair of the dog’s coat, the flowers of the bougainvillea, the shiny plastic of the ‘Gremlin’s’ costume, all have textures suggestive of ‘that which you can put your hands on’. And all this is set in a suburban backyard, which has the features listed by Fiske, Hodge and Turner (1987 p 49): Hills Hoist, lawn and (in this case several) large shady trees. Such details as the paling fence (p 4), hose and sprinkler, incinerator (both on spread 6/7), and clothesline with clothes pegged on it (p 8) all suggest that this is a suburban backyard with practical functions in the adult world, but they serve as background only, and there are only a few slight glimpses of the house itself, the real adult domain, and one representation only, at the end of the book, of the benevolent mother who has watched over the play from afar. The impression of limitless space is achieved by such devices as the use in spreads 6/7 and 16/17 of scenes from a viewpoint above the small human figures of Drac and the Gremlin, showing them among trees, bushes and treeferns without fences or walls to interrupt the vista. Other means by which idyllic play space is
suggested include the fact that the ‘secret jungle hideout’ is a cubbyhouse, which appears to have a permanent wall or walls of corrugated iron, and further walls improvised with sheets and blankets (spread 30/31). The tyre swing has a whole spread devoted to it (spread 12/13). It plays an important part in the narrative in its sci-fi role as the ‘Anti-Gravity Solar-Powered Planet Hopper’, a grand title that is apparently intended to contrast with the reality of what Anstey and Bull call ‘a very ordinary and common play swing made from a tyre’ (2000 p 101). In fact such swings are not as ‘ordinary and common’ in present-day Australia as these authors claim. Fiske, Hodge and Turner (1987 p 47) list the tyre swing as one of the characteristics of the 1950s backyard: in this book published in 1988 the swing is as metonymically nostalgic as the verandahs and corrugated roofs in the rural picture books (features that will be examined further in chapter 5).

The point of the double narrative in *Drac and the Gremlin*—and it is very popular with teachers—is that children comprehend the contrast between the real and the imaginary. But I claim that, for many readers, the size and freedom in this garden are as fanciful as any sci-fi tale. Tree ferns, jacarandas, expanses of lawn receding into seemingly endless vistas—all these make the ‘real’ world of Jane Tanner’s luscious illustrations anything but the reality available to many children. The backyard as presented in *Drac and the Gremlin* has its existence in the nostalgic Arcadia of suburban dreams of childhood, rather than in the gritty reality of play spaces available in contemporary suburbia.

Another creator of picture books who evokes felicitous suburban space is the author/illustrator Bob Graham who, with four titles, is the most represented in the sample—*Crusher is Coming*; *Grandad’s Magic*; *Greetings from Sandy Beach*; and *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten*. Stephens comments that Graham’s books are ‘the outstanding exception [to the ‘simple cottage’ convention], because Graham characteristically draws a mid-twentieth-century cottage’ (Stephens 1994 p 80). The suburban world of Graham’s child characters is a comfortable one indoors: for example, Pete and Claire have their own bedrooms (*Crusher is Coming* spread 16/17), and Pete has a TV set and a record player in his room. But here nostalgic

---

21 Johnston questions this interpretation, seeing these expanses rather as the artist’s representation of the child’s perception of them (2003 private discussion).
forces are particularly at work in the outdoor scenes, for these ‘mid-twentieth-century cottages’ are portrayed in books published later in the century; and this point would not be so significant—after all, housing is meant to last through the decades—were it not for the gardens, backyards and play space surrounding the cottages, which seem frozen in time to depict backyards more fifties than late-century. There is generous provision of material for ‘maps of meaning’ (in Watkins’ phrase), as a child reader can make imaginary journeys through hedges and gates, or along paths, to find enclosed, ‘child friendly’ outdoor play space. For example in *Crusher is Coming* there is not much exterior of the house shown, but spreads 10/11 and 12/13, and later 28/29, show the front gate, hedge and letterbox of a freestanding house with enclosed play space; and spread 22/23 shows a grassy outdoor area and a treehouse. And as will be shown in chapter 7, in *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten* the happy resolution of a neighbours’ conflict, which is achieved through the offering and acceptance of food, is demonstrated by the opening up of Mr Wintergarten’s house and demolition of the fence dividing it from the Summers’, resulting in an Arcadian ‘double’ neighbourhood play space. Suburbia has been represented, nostalgically, as allowing children endless time and boundless space for their free play.

**Seaside**

In picture book space the seaside, like suburbia, is an ambiguous zone; it has been likened to a verandah:

> The veranda is an interval, a space, where life is improvised. The beach, in Australia, is the landscape equivalent of the veranda, a veranda at the edge of the continent . . . Land and sea run together and the beach becomes a contested zone, neither land nor sea, but a kind of sea-land. Its mixed nature and plurality strike us as enormously exciting.

(Drew 1992 p 84)

This contested zone has not always been associated with pleasure; the place of the sea and the beach in the Australian psyche has been documented (for example by Falkiner 1992 (a) 202 ff; and Drew 1994), to reveal changes of
perception, from the early days of white settlement, when the sea both bounded
the place of exile for many, but was also seen as a link to the 'homeland' [in the
colonial sense of the word] and a possible means of escape; to more recently
becoming a site of pleasure and renewal. Robert Drewe, and subsequently
Geoffrey Dutton, have long argued that the beach has overtaken the bush
tradition, as reflecting an experience in which a greater number of Australians
actually take part (Falkiner 1992 (a) p 210). Dutton sees the bush tradition as
essentially one of dryness, populated by lean, sardonic men (and not many
women) who ride horses, drink and gamble (Dutton 1985), whereas the sea and
the beach contribute moisture and sensuality. The beach is aligned with 'the
natural, the free, the outdoors, the informal, the physical' (Fiske, Hodge, Turner
1987 p 53). The beach, often close to the city, can stand for both culture and
nature, and it can indeed provide a physical bridge between the two.
Furthermore the myth of the beach is 'rooted in an ideal... image of
Australia—classless, matey, basic, natural—rather than a more realistic
apprehension of our urban, artificially structured society' (Fiske, Hodge, Turner
1987 p 58). Drewe speaks of the significance of the beach in different life stages of
Australians, including the summer holidays when 'there is almost a reversal of
roles, in that the children are allowed to stay up late and operate adult machinery
like outboard motors and eat junk food, while the parents are allowed to act the
goat and become children' (quoted in Falkiner 1992 (a) p 210).

So it can be seen that the seaside and beach provide something akin to suburbia
as an in-between place, not quite urban, not quite rural, and like the suburbia of
picture books the seaside provides a place for children to play freely. Moreover,
as Drewe points out, reversals ensure that adults can enjoy seaside play as well.
One of the reversals within family units may be the roles of mother and father:
although it has been claimed that the sea and beach are sites of sensual
femaleness, it is to be noted, however, that the picture books in the sample which
are set (wholly or partly) by the sea all show the father as taking most family
responsibility, not the mother. Three show positive and happy interaction
between father and children (Where the Forest Meets the Sea, Greetings from Sandy
Beach and Not a Nibble!) and one presents a tension-filled relationship between
father and son (*First Light*). The sea and beach may well be replacing the bush as the space for acting out dramas of maleness and toughness.

The two books set entirely by the seaside, with no glimpses of the characters’ normal home environment, are *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* and *Not a Nibble!*. The first (examined more fully in chapter 3) is a didactic book about the environment and its conservation. It is set in the Daintree area of Queensland. ‘The Queensland coast, with its rainforest, coral reefs and tropical islands, represents to some extent the exotic “otherworld” of the Australian psyche.’ (Falkiner 1992 (b) p 12). The young boy character wanders freely in the rainforest, exploring the fauna and also his own imaginative life as he glimpses the ‘ghosts’ of past inhabitants. The beginning and end of the book show father and son together on the sandy beach, and the sharing of making a fire and cooking freshly cooked fish seems to be a bonding ritual for the two.

Similarly, in *Not a Nibble!*, the child characters are seen fishing with their father. The situation is different in many ways from that of *Where the Forest Meets the Sea*: the climate and vegetation are not tropical; the camping ground where they are staying is populous and not remote, and there are shops nearby. But in this book also it is the father who leads the holiday activities. There is a similar pattern in *Greetings from Sandy Beach*—the father takes responsibility for the meals, obviously not the usual routine at home (see chapter 7). Seaside space has provided opportunity for the fathers to change roles and play at being cook and entertainer, just as it has provided an opportunity for the children to play on seemingly endless stretches of sand. The space of these one-day or longer holidays is as nostalgic as a fifties backyard in that the main activity is fishing, the camping/cooking equipment is primitive, and life has been pared down to activities requiring more imagination than technology. The seaside, which is an ambiguous zone like suburbia, resembles it in becoming a playground of nostalgia.
Conclusion

In this chapter it has been argued that picture book space is nostalgic, expressive of yearnings for an Arcadian home. The sample of thirty books has been shown to consist of thirteen set in rural space, eight in suburban, six in city and two in seaside space, so that, unlike late twentieth-century Australian books for adults and teenagers, the majority are rural. Moreover, even those set in suburbs and city express nostalgia for felicitous Arcadian space. The rural picture books constitute such a large and important majority that the following chapter will be devoted entirely to an examination of rural space, and in particular an analysis of the traditional Australian cottage and some of its semiotically significant features.
Chapter 5

The Australian cottage: a particular nostalgic space

Introduction

The preceding chapter claimed that Australian picture book space is nostalgic and Arcadian, favouring the felicitous home of an imagined rural past. The present chapter will proceed to examine rural space, and in particular a specially nostalgic site, the Australian cottage. The cottage belongs to an architectural tradition that has become conflated with ideals of rural detachment from the worldly cares of city life. A catalogue will be proposed of recurring features of the cottage, each analysed for its nostalgic semiotics: corrugated iron, wooden boards, verandah, water tank, improvised swing, and tree house or cubbyhouse. It will be demonstrated that many of the books with rural settings present images of the cottage as a perfectible space; that the cottage is often incorporated into a ‘map of meaning’ that shows it and its surroundings as attractive and welcoming; and that the rural cottage (or its traces) has been transferred into non-rural areas as a recognisable marker of nostalgic, felicitous space.
The idealised house

In chapter 1, Watkins' concept that stories help to shape the way children find a 'home' in the world (1992 p 183) was cited as seminal to this study. The yearning for Heimlichkeit, the deep desire by all humans for belonging, as examined in chapter 2, was seen to embrace a continuum of homes from bedroom to community and nation. And Bachelard's (1994 p 47) distinction between measurable place and inhabited, felicitous space was shown in chapter 4 as relating to the space, usually rural, of the Australian picture book. All these concepts imply that representations of the house in picture books are significant and evocative.

An idealised view of the house as influencing the imagination is expressed by Bachelard:

... the house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind. The binding principle in this integration is the daydream. Past, present and future give the house different dynamisms ... Without [the house] man would be a dispersed being. ... And always, in our daydreams, the house is a large cradle.

(Bachelard 1994 p 7)

These words of Bachelard, idealising 'the house' as a good, protective space, could have been written specifically with the traditional Australian rural cottage in mind. This cottage, as shown below, evokes 'a large cradle' in which all is secure, and beyond its protective role for the individual, this cottage has a nostalgic national role as well, semiotically evoking traditional settler values.

The Australian cottage

The Australian cottage is described by historians of architecture as a building with a specific history and features. Moore, Burke and Joyce (1989 p 91) document the beginnings of the cottage, which originated from necessity, at the
time of the first white settlement. It was a common pioneer experience to have space on which to build, but a paucity of materials from which to construct a dwelling. Transport of building materials was difficult, so use was made of local materials, especially timber, or very light and portable materials such as iron sheeting. Not only the materials used, but the design of the cottage was a product of necessity: in the early days of white settlement, most Australian cottages began as one- or two-roomed, and had rooms added on, usually to the rear, as need or prosperity arose. In remote, rural areas the abundance of available land made detached cottages the norm, but in the growing cities and suburbs they were also popular. The importance of independent, separate dwellings, even if very small, soon became part of Australians’ self-image and was set to endure:

In Australia, the detached single-family dwelling, the private home on its own block of land, has achieved a popularity and dominance rivalled in few other countries. Part of the Australian ethos, it has become a cultural touchstone and a political untouchable which, despite challenges from a changing society and fluctuating economy in the late twentieth century, remains indispensable to the Australian objective.

(Moore, Burke and Joyce 1989 p 6)

The ‘cultural touchstone’ of the detached cottage contains a large element of nostalgia. As will be demonstrated in the analysis of its particular features, the cottage became imbued semiotically with the qualities of the pioneers who built the first examples: capacity for hard physical work, the ability to improvise—to ‘cut one’s coat according to the cloth’, and the Stoic placing of practicality above comfort.

The word ‘cottage’ itself is evocative and nostalgic. To its root definition (SOED) of ‘a small or humble dwelling-house’ have been added connotations of nostalgic charm. The word is described by Moore, Burke and Joyce as [nowadays] ‘a particular friend of the real estate agent . . . the word has a certain romantic

---

22 At the time of writing, this ‘indispensability’ may at last be under challenge, with the proliferation in the major capital cities of apartment blocks rather than detached houses.
connotation which can elicit a positive response among potential buyers' (1989 p 8). The detached cottage, this 'large cradle' of individual and national dreams, with features described below, is still largely evocative of a rural setting, but as will be shown is also occasionally transferred—in whole or in part—into suburban and urban settings.

An analysis of some features of the Australian cottage

There is a core of shared characteristics in the traditional Australian cottage, both as regards the materials from which it has been constructed, and in some design features. In art and advertising each of the features serves to express metonymically a nostalgic colonial past. The significance of these features in both historical and semiotic terms will be outlined; and their pervasive presence in picture books will then be shown in a list of books from the sample that contain each of the features. These features are: corrugated iron, wooden boards, the verandah, the improvised swing, and the tree house or cubbyhouse.

Corrugated iron

The importation and later local manufacture of corrugated galvanised iron had a huge influence on Australian building. Corrugated iron was invented in 1829, and the process of galvanising in 1837. 'The first galvanised iron was imported into Australia in the 1840s... and we have been infatuated by it ever since' (Archer 1987 p 127). It was admirably suited to colonial conditions, and was at first seen as a temporary material that combined qualities of sturdiness with lightness and ease of transport, its widespread use a response to the demand for architecture that was portable. Galvanised corrugated iron was a cheap waterproof covering which was ideally suited to low-pitched roofs; it also could not be eaten by white-ants (Moore, Burke and Joyce 1989 p 43); and it was especially suitable for patching walls or roofs originally built of other materials. By the 1850s special curved sheets were being imported from England, especially the bull-nosed profile which ran straight for three-quarters of its length before dropping to the post line (Drew 1992 p 93). ‘So began an Australian love affair with corrugated iron, lasting to the present day as respect for its utility has joined
with a response to its peculiar aesthetic . . . ’ (Moore, Burke and Joyce 1989 p 43). The ‘peculiar aesthetic’ includes the nostalgia inherent in Australians’ viewing themselves as sturdy pioneers, constructing practical dwellings in remote areas. At the present time a popular roofing material is corrugated, plasticised sheeting made in imitation of the old iron; while presenting modern qualities of lightness and easy maintenance, its design flatters the national sense of pioneering toughness.

The use of corrugated iron is linked to a traditional ability to improvise, to ‘make do’, which resulted from a farflung settler population. In a novel Murray Bail makes corrugated iron represent their colonial history to a group of Australians exiled in Europe. In the words of their tour guide:

Removed from civilisation, it was necessary to make-do. Small comforts required ingenuity. A stubborn, down-to-earth people grew. We saw it reflected in your architecture, A miner, hum, made this cutlery set from corrugated iron as a silver anniversary present for his wife.

(Bail 1980 p 123)

Even in recent times, ingenuity and the ability to improvise are still proudly presented as Australian characteristics derived from a pioneer and convict past. The inventor of the Triton workbench, interviewed for a newspaper article, states: ‘Great ideas, not only Hills Hoists and Triton workbenches, have come out of this country because we were founded on the remnants of English prisons and we had to improvise and make do’ (George Lewin quoted in Safe 2001 p 15). The pervasiveness of corrugated iron as metonymous of colonial identity may refer to skills of improvisation and patching up, not only in practical matters but in culture also. Boehmer has described some pioneer fiction as demonstrating ‘that the identity of a colonial immigrant in a new country is made up at random, using whatever cultural materials lie closest at hand—outmoded codes of ethics, newly adopted social habits, survival tips from strangers’ (1995 p 220).

A famous quality of corrugated iron roofing is its ability to magnify the sound of rain, and this sound is referred to in many Australian memoirs of childhood. The
sound is described as ‘deafening peace’ by Roland Robinson in his poem which uses the imagery of corrugated iron to suggest security and contentment:

A corrugated iron shack. One room.
Tree-posts its uprights, saplings, axe-trimmed, its beams and rafters. It stands fast, no matter how the huge hands of mountain winds grasp it. Rain is tumult, deafening peace on the roof.

... The kettle sings on the ‘Waratah’ stove. Pots and pans gleam on their ledge above. You wish dawn not to come. You will sleep, a child, as the hoarse wind cradles you in the trees, as the arm of the mountain holds the light of the farm.

(Robinson 1962)

This poem evokes a nostalgic pioneer past, in which strong men trimmed with axes the timbers for simple iron-roofed cottages; and also a nostalgic personal past, as the cottage metamorphoses its adult occupant into a child, sleeping peacefully through the tumultuous storm. The corrugated iron roof has helped the cottage to become the ‘large cradle’ referred to by Bachelard (1994 p 7).

From the 1970s on, the Australian architect Glenn Murcott attained fame with his designs for his verandah-houses, in effect made up of a linear sequence of spaces, which were radically different from most domestic architecture up until that time; and as a building material he favoured corrugated iron. ‘Murcott chose corrugated iron for his houses because it was light and economical and evoked the hard delicate character of native foliage and the grey-green of the eucalypt. It also supplied a continuity with the historical settlement of the landscape’ (Drew 1992 p 216). The imagery of corrugated iron remained so closely linked to national identity that the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympic Games in the year 2000 included a sequence featuring this material. And Father Ray Wilson, Anglican vicar of Mont Albert parish, Melbourne, has manufactured a characteristically Australian Christmas crib scene with ‘the Holy Family in a corrugated iron hut...’(Murray 1999).
This pervasiveness of corrugated iron is reflected in the sample picture books: of the thirty, eleven feature houses with clearly discernible corrugated roofing. The depiction of such a roof provides connotations of rural sturdiness, continuity, and nostalgia for a pioneering past.

**Wooden boards**

Another material associated with the settler past is the wooden building board. Early settlers used local timber, often crudely cut, to build simple cottages. Later in the nineteenth century came widespread use of milled boards. ‘With good sources of timber and steam-sawmilling techniques, the weatherboard cottage rose to considerable popularity’ (Moore, Burke and Joyce 1989 p 40). Like corrugated iron sheeting, timber boards were light, portable, and relatively quick to install, and also shared the characteristic of appearing less permanent than stone or brick. And just as with corrugated iron, timber boards have had a nostalgic revival in popularity assisted by their metonymic significance as representing the nation. In a newspaper article about the saleability of timber cottages (in the city and suburbs), Elliott writes of one cottage: ‘The selling point was its charm and weatherboard character, which [the renovator] believes is an identifiable Australian style’ (Elliott 2000 p 6).

Timber boards have sensual characteristics, not all of which can be conveyed in illustrations, but can be described in verbal texts. Writing particularly about the elevated wooden houses of Brisbane, and the impression they make on children, David Malouf comments:

The houses are of timber, that is the essence of the thing, and to live with timber is to live with a material that yields at every step. The house is a living presence . . . responding to temperature in all its joists and floorboards, creaking, allowing you to follow every step sometimes, in every room . . .

Children discover, among their first sensual experiences in the world of touch, the feel of tongue-and-groove boards, the soft places where they have rotted, the way paint flakes and the wood underneath will release sometimes, if you press it, a trickle of spicy reddish dust.
You learn in such houses to listen. You build up a map of the house in sound, that allows you to know exactly where everyone is and to predict approaches . . .

(Malouf 1984)

The attractiveness of weatherboards to illustrators may derive from this idea of a ‘living presence’, as well as connections with a pioneering national past. Certainly, as will be shown below, the weatherboard cottage is a favoured residence of major characters in picture books. One of the sample, *Marty Moves to the Country*, has an opening endpaper which consists solely of a close-up of external horizontal weatherboards, with one window, some pegs holding old leather harness, and with even the nail holes on the boards discernible, signs of continued use over many years. In illustrated novels, too, wooden boards are commonly used to indicate the home of the more likeable character: an example is *A Box of Chicks* (Moloney 2002), with its black and white illustrations by Novak showing a contrast between the ‘imposing houses . . . all perfectly tidy’ (Moloney 2002 p 37) and the organic appeal of the weatherboard cottage occupied by Mrs Roach who ‘loved growing things’ (pp 38/39). The weatherboard cottage here alerts the reader to the fact that Mrs Roach will act as the rescuer of Mervyn from his difficult situation: a person who lives in a weatherboard house, it is implied, can be relied upon to be good-hearted and neighbourly.

The verandah

Another similarly significant feature of the traditional Australian cottage is the verandah. The popularity of verandahs in Australian colonial architecture has been documented by Drew, who claims that whereas vertical structures in buildings can be read as imperial, the horizontal lines of bungalow and verandah represent colonial openness and flexibility (Drew 1992 p 82). Such flexibility is not only a matter of appearances: the practical advantages of the verandah include both screening the house from rain and harsh sun (particularly useful if the house is a weatherboard one), and the provision of emergency accommodation, a common need especially in remote areas where guests must be offered beds for the night. Again, as with corrugated iron and weatherboards, verandahs are
markers of the need to improvise, and in this case the ‘making do’ is twofold: they have often been tacked on to an existing cottage with materials to hand; and the use to which a verandah is put will vary according to family needs and seasons.

The dominant semiotic signal made by the verandah is of ambiguity, of in-betweenness. As mentioned in chapter 4 (in analysing Felix and Alexander), Bal states that ‘a special role is played by the boundary between two opposed locations’ (1997 p 216); the verandah, in Bal’s narratological terms, has much in common with those important boundaries, doors and windows. In the terms of Joseph Campbell’s analysis of the mythical journey, the verandah serves often as a threshold; in Campbell’s terms (1949 p 245), the verandah is a site for farewells and greetings, for setting forth on a journey and for homecoming after it is completed. Sibley, in discussing borders in spatial geography, describes ‘zones of ambiguity’ (1995 (a) p 33), which in the home may be an entrance, hallway or passage which provides a link between the public and the private. ‘If you admit strangers to the house, are they confined to an entrance area or allowed to enter a living space?’ (Sibley 1995 (a) p 34). These ‘boundaries’ are often signposts for problematic areas of social life, and the in-between nature of the verandah, neither fully indoors nor fully part of the outdoor world, makes it clearly classifiable as a zone of ambiguity.

The Australian verandah evolved into a place of ‘underlying ambiguity, [with] its mixture of outside and inside, public and private, male and female, since it is neither one thing nor the other’ (Drew 1992 p 107). The female occupation of verandahs has been frequently commented on; for example Falkiner entitles the chapter in which she examines the writing of Miles Franklin and Katharine Susannah Pritchard ‘The View From the Verandah: The Female Experience’ (1992 (a) p 148). Drew states that the verandah was neutral territory but often occupied as female, with horses and men on the outer edges (1992 p 112). ‘There was a need in a rough-and-ready outdoors society for a place where family members—whose attire frequently rendered their presence indoors

---

23 This ambiguity of the verandah has also been extended to the larger areas of suburbia and, more particularly, the seaside, as claimed by Drew (1992 p 84); see ‘Seaside’ section, chapter 4.
unwelcome—could foregather and share meals' (Drew 1992 p 43). Verandahs also functioned as refuges for the down-and-out, the loner, the social outcast, those on the edge of society; and notoriously, Aborigines were commonly allowed access only to the verandah, whether on the station or the pub (Drew 1992 p 139). Patrick White perceived the verandah as a place for another marginalised group, the old, in its role as a final stage for old people who are no longer engaged in life's struggles but sit and watch the world while they await the approach of death. In summary, according to Drew, the Australian verandah was a place of 'non-specific diversity' (1992 p 129). This in-betweenness is a feature of city verandahs as well as rural ones:

A verandah is not part of the house. Even a child knows this. It is what allows travelling salesmen, with one foot on the step to heave their cases over the threshold and show their wares with no embarrassment on either side, no sense of privacy violated... Verandahs are no-man's-land, border zones that keep contact with the house and its activities on one face but are open on the other to the street, the night and all the vast, unknown areas beyond.

(Malouf 1985 p 20)

As well as signalling an in-between zone, the verandah has come to be a marker of national identity. It was claimed in chapter 4 that concepts of national identity are particularly important in postcolonial societies; and the verandah, in similar fashion to the use of corrugated iron, has taken on the role of a shorthand expression for Australia. This process began as early as the 1880s, according to Drew (1992 p 76); and he claims that the appropriation of the verandah to signify Australia, used often today in advertising, is suggestive of an easy out-of-doors kind of existence, and these suggestions imply 'continuity of the family and the nation' (Drew 1992 p 137). The nostalgic associations of such an easy existence are expressed in the poem by Robert Brissenden:

They don't build houses like that any more—not
With verandahs the way they used to: wide verandahs
Running round three sides of the place, with vines
Growing up the posts and along the eaves—passion-fruit, grape, wisteria—and maiden-hair fern in pots,
And a water-bag slung from the roof in the shade with the water
Always cool and clean and tasting of canvas.
Comfortable worn cane chairs and shabby lounges,
Beds for the kids to sleep in, a ping-pong table,
A cage for the cockatoo the boys had caught
Twenty years ago by the creek, a box for the cat
And a blanket for the old blind dog to doze on—
There was room for everything and everybody,
And you lived out on the veranda through the summer . . .

(Brisssenden 1980)

The language of nostalgia (‘They don’t build . . . any more’; ‘the way they used to’; ‘you lived out on the verandah . . .’) in this poem implies a yearning for a personal past and a wider national past as well. The nostalgia inherent in the Australian verandah is not surprising in the light of its strong Arcadian and pastoral associations—the verandah is, after all, a ‘site where the human encounters nature’ (Drew 1992 p 590).

It has been observed that in newer Australian houses other nature–culture markers (such as the barbecue) are replacing the verandah:

A revealing marker of a shift in Australian attitudes to the nature–culture opposition is the fate of the traditional verandah. The verandah is still common in the country and is still found in colonial houses currently being gentrified in our cities’ inner suburbs. . . In many ways it signifies an ideal balance between nature and culture, while also collapsing the private–public opposition by turning the outdoors front verandah into a living and entertaining area. [Yet many houses have had the verandah closed in]. There is also a countertrend, so that many are now being restored and opened up, but the resolution offered by the verandah seems to be rejected as a norm [in newly built houses], and a sharper version of this opposition between outdoor–indoor reasserted.

(Fiske, Hodge and Turner 1987 p 42)

If verandahs are no longer being built as ‘a norm’ in modern housing, then—in line with the phenomenon (referred to in chapter 2) that as a social artefact becomes obsolete, it is turned even more into an object of nostalgia and contemplation—the surviving or restored verandahs are all the more eloquent as markers of a nostalgic nationalism. The verandahedor cottage is an important
narratological space in ten of the picture book sample—in other words, exactly one third—and of these, nine are rural cottages. As discussed below, the verandahed city cottage, in *Where’s Mum?*, suggests a kind of transported rurality, evoking not only a past era of the nation’s history but a remote, pastoral space as well.\(^\text{24}\)

**The water tank**

The iron water tank is a marker of rural tradition also. Like the other features mentioned, the water tank speaks of both rural necessity and the past; it is, in fact, frequently constructed from corrugated iron. As town water became available in many settlements, the water tank took on a less vital role, becoming disused or serving as provider of additional water. The present-day real-life state of water tanks is complicated by the banning until recently by most urban councils of their use, and a contradictory resurgence of interest in their use to conserve water. ‘Once a familiar part of the suburban landscape, the backyard water tank is being looked to as the key to heading off a predicted water supply crisis in Australia’s largest cities . . .’ begins an item in *UTS News* (Knight 1999 p 5); and government reimbursements have been offered in some states to residents who install a water tank for domestic use.

Water tanks have special associations with childhood. In a child’s map of a rural backyard, the tank and its surroundings would be an important feature, in that there was often a shady place under or around the tankstand where children would play, in cool seclusion, and observe the frogs and other creatures attracted to such a damp spot. Of the eight books of the sample that include water tanks seven have rural settings, with one book, *Hector and Maggie*, showing in a number of illustrations (as spread 22/23) the workings of a windmill that feeds

---

\(^{24}\) The present writer’s own house in the suburbs of Sydney is a verandahed, weatherboard cottage. The visitors who admire it most are often Australians who grew up in the country. One such visitor exclaimed: ‘This is so like home! We had a verandah just like this when we were kids, and we kept our bikes there!’ Both time and space had been evoked for her by the (city) verandah.
the tank, obviously an essential part of the farm’s economy. Where’s Mum? is, once again, the urban exception. Published in 1992, this book predates the new wave of interest in water tanks in cities, the revival that is perhaps an example of the putting to practical purposes of the principle of positive or reflective nostalgia (Boym 2001 p 49) discussed in chapter 2.

The improvised swing

Unlike the features discussed above, both the swing improvised from old materials, and the tree house or cubbyhouse, are objects made specifically for the enjoyment of children. The former may be rigged up in a few minutes, while the latter may range from a quick and easy platform to a major building project, such as the tree house depicted in Annie’s Rainbow. Both imply some adult energy and interest devoted to the entertainment of children; so the swing is suggestive of ‘good parenting’. Attention has already been drawn (in chapter 4) to the tyre swing in Drac and the Gremlin. In Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten, the tyre swing apparently did not exist before the Summers’ arrival (the first endpaper shows the unoccupied house without it); but soon after their moving into the house, it appears (spread 4/5) on the largest tree in the garden, a metonymic sign of happy family life.

Swings have usually been suspended from a strong branch of a tree close to the house; this characteristic of being not part of, but not far from the house (as will also be claimed for the cubbyhouse) is important for the ‘maps of meaning’ constructed by young children. The swing or other play item is an extension of the zone of Heimlichkeit in which a child can play with some degree of supervision, and yet is detached enough to allow some independence—a good halfway point, perhaps, between home and the outside world that is, in the words of Sibley (1995 (b) p 126) quoted in chapter 1, ‘seeping in’ to the child’s world.

Swings may be made from wood or an old disused tyre, and the act of improvising, of building from pre-used or found materials, links the swing to the use of corrugated iron and wooden boards in the structure of the house. This
leads to the semiotic connection with nostalgia for a rural past in which builders would 'make do' with what was available, rather than buy a piece of expensive ready-made play equipment. But a second impulse to nostalgia is present in the image of such a swing, because it implies a child to make use of the swing, and this child may no longer be around—or young enough—to do so. An example of such double nostalgia is in the book *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat*: a tyre swing appears in two illustrations (endpapers and spread 16/17), but the household of Rose and her dog includes no children, so the swing is reminiscent, perhaps of Rose’s own childhood, more likely of that of a child/children of her own, now grown up and absent.

As mentioned in chapter 3, Fiske, Hodge and Turner (1987 p 47) list the tyre swing as one of the characteristics of the 1950s backyard. This simple, no-cost tyre swing may be destined to become even more a site of nostalgia, as I have been informed that it is no longer permissible in many local council areas because of the belief that it may harbour spiders which could endanger children.

**The tree house or cubbyhouse**

Marcus claims that the search for a secret place is a universal need of childhood; that memories of such a place are strongest in adults recalling the middle years of childhood, approximately from six to twelve. 'There are few people, recalling this period of their life, who do *not* remember some kind of secret place they made or found' (Marcus 1995 p 24). Such secret places take many different forms, but fulfil the same needs:

> Whether these places were called forts, dens, houses, hideaways, or clubhouses, whether they were in the home or were found, modified or constructed, they all seem to serve similar psychological and social purposes—places in which separation from adults was sought, in which fantasies could be acted out, and in which the very environment itself could be molded and shaped to one's own needs. This is the beginning of the act of dwelling, or claiming one's place in the world.

(Marcus 1995 p 25)
As well as the preponderance of secret places in adult memories of childhood, there is a tradition in children's literature of describing places of 'separation from adults'. Sometimes the place is one that adults do not bother to enter, such as the secret garden of Frances Hodgson Burnett's eponymous novel (1911); sometimes the place is physically inaccessible to adults, as for example in the Australian short novel for children, *Callie's Castle* by Ruth Park (1974), with its special place in the cupola which only children are small enough to enter. The concept of a place of safety is also an attractive one, or even a necessity for some children. One critic, Juliet Dusinberre, sees children's books themselves as possible places of exclusion of adults: referring to Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885), Kenneth Grahame's *Dream Days* (1895) and Kipling's *Rewards and Fairies* (1910), she states, 'These writers give children not a dream place to be inhabited by tired adults, but a piece of ground which is their own, from which they can exclude adults, tired or energetic as the case may be' (Dusinberre 1987 p 200).

As secret places for children to be separated from adults, tree houses and cubbyhouses in some aspects resemble verandahs, being in-between places usually not too distant from the house itself, and with some degree, even if slight, of adult supervision (as was also claimed above for the outside swing); the cubbyhouse may for a while have served as a meeting place for adult and child, as most have required some adult input into their construction. They also share with verandahs the ambiguity of being not quite inside, not quite outside. And connections can be made between the popularity in Australia of the detached single-family dwelling, and the improvised cubbyhouse: 'If the Great Australian Dream is a home of one's own, then the other great dream—the one dreamed by kids—is another type of shelter that can be knocked up on a weekend with a bag of nails, a bit of rope and a stack of old planks' (Allenby 2002 p 16). It is probable that the 'dream . . . dreamed by kids' is at least partly a nostalgic dream on the part of the adult builders of the tree house, a dream (like so many of the other components of the Australian cottage) compounded both of a personal

---

25 'A safe place. Children, who control little else in their lives, have always been drawn to the concept of a place of their own where they can be lords and ladies in their own kingdoms . . . [such as Never Never Land, Wonderland, Oz—and Burnett's secret garden] . . . For Burnett and the Romantic writers, the best sort of place was one that was close to nature, a preferably secluded spot where one could find peace' (Misheff 1998 p 131).
nostalgia and a wider, national nostalgia for a pioneering, improvising past (see below for analysis of Annie’s Rainbow treehouse in relation to other houses).

Summary of features

To sum up, all the features described above are primarily the result of pioneering, ‘make do’ building practices in a rural environment. They represent a nostalgic view of Australia’s rural past, and their presence in contemporary picture books can be seen as part of a representation of an Arcadian view of childhood.

To the semiotic significance of these features must be added the important fact that many illustrators apparently prefer to draw cottages with these features rather than the strictly geometrical lines of more modern, urban buildings. In my work as an editor, I have had illustrators remark on the attractiveness of adding the vertical lines of verandah posts, or the pleasing cylindrical shape of the water tank, to break up the harsher lines of more stark modern buildings.

Features as represented in the sample

Stephens claims that ‘the humble, nineteenth century cottage—a simple oblong, with a simple corrugated-iron hip-roof, and a separately roofed verandah running across the front—is the basis for the vast majority of domestic homes depicted in Australian picture books’ (1995 p 104). While not all the rural cottages in the sample conform to this architectural pattern, certainly the features discussed above occur with remarkable frequency. Following is a list of these features, with a list of picture books from the sample which show each feature in the residence of the main character/s. It is to be noted that all the books belong in the rural group (as categorised in chapter 4), except for the few marked here with an asterisk, denoting a city or suburban book with such a feature.
Corrugated iron roof:

Annie’s Rainbow
John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat
Marty Moves to the Country
The Long Red Scarf
The Very Best of Friends
The Story of Rosy Dock
Hector and Maggie
Where’s Mum?*
The Journey Home
Window
The Watertower

Wooden boards:

Annie’s Rainbow
John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat
Marty Moves to the Country
The Very Best of Friends
The Journey Home
Hector and Maggie
The Watertower

Verandah:

Annie’s Rainbow
John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat
Marty Moves to the Country
The Long Red Scarf
The Story of Rosy Dock
The Very Best of Friends
The Journey Home
Window

151
Belinda
Where’s Mum?*

Water tank:

John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat
Marty Moves to the Country
The Story of Rosy Dock
The Long Red Scarf
Hector and Maggie
Window
The Watertower
Where’s Mum?*

Improvised swing:

John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat
Grandad’s Magic (spread 10/11)*
Drac and the Gremlin*
The Journey Home
Window
Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten*

Tree house or cubbyhouse:

Annie’s Rainbow
Window
Crusher is Coming*
Drac and the Gremlin*

The list above could be even longer if it included features not in the house of the main character/s—for example, *My Place in Space* does not anywhere depict the main characters’ house, but shows shops and houses with corrugated iron roofs, verandahs and water tanks (eg spread 8/9); and corrugated iron forms the
walls/roof of the cubbyhouse in *Drac and the Gremlin*. Similarly definitions could be extended—for example, *The Journey Home* shows no tree house or cubbyhouse but a sandpit (p 3) which functions similarly as a children’s play space; and in *Marty Moves to the Country*, Marty is shown to find refuge, perhaps temporarily, not in a specially built tree house or cubbyhouse, but in an old corrugated iron water tank now lying on its side on the ground (spread 14/15). But even without these additions, the remarkable total of 46 instances of such features gives a statistic of approximately 1.5 instances per book. Furthermore, some other features of traditional rural building that appear in the sample remain uncharted. Examples include the outdoor ‘dunny’ or freestanding toilet; the post-and-rail fence; the ‘chookhouse’ (often itself roofed with corrugated iron; and the open fire, with or without a visible woodpile of logs ready for the burning.

The conclusion can be drawn that the Australian cottage is extremely popular with the creators of picture books, and its features are favoured as denoting a national discourse of rural nostalgia.

The Australian cottage as perfectible home

Because of the strongly idealistic component of the pastoral world (as shown in chapter 3), with its benign images of a life free from urban cares, the Australian cottage, this ‘large cradle’ of individual and national dreams, works as a kind of shorthand to suggest a perfectible existence. Stephens claims that the cottage and its features metonymically express both geographical setting and the myth of stability of Australian life (Stephens 1994 p 70). Such stability can underlie the narrative implication that only one aspect of life needs to be changed in order to bring about an perfect Arcadian existence. Some of these near-perfect homes will be examined here—two by the illustrator Ron Brooks, two books depicting working farms, two that introduce feminist themes, two that engage overtly with the theme of defining ‘home’, and one that presents death and anger—and all making use of the Australian cottage to maintain an optimistic underlying discourse. Only in the books by Jeannie Baker will the cottage be shown to have different semiotic implications.
(a) Brooks’s perfectible cottages

Two books illustrated by Ron Brooks exemplify the use of the Australian cottage to suggest the perfectibility of rural life. The first, Annie’s Rainbow, engages thematically with the desire to possess a rainbow, and ends with Annie’s domestication of the rainbow by taking home a painting of it to place on her bedroom wall; an attempt, surely, to capture the wild or creative aspects of human nature.

The illustrations of Annie’s house and its environment show an orderly world, one in which only the addition of the rainbow is needed to make everything perfect. Three houses and their surroundings form the main features on a map of Annie’s world. There are two full-size houses, the house occupied by Annie and her parents, and the ‘old house at the top of the hill with a big garden all round it’ (p 16), the site of Annie’s meeting with the world of imagination in the shape of the artist who makes the rainbow for her. When Annie’s tree house (p 8, and see Plate 8) is included as the third house, there is a gradation of the buildings, with the house of imagination as the largest, the house of everyday life of medium size and the tree house, place of solitary play, the smallest; but all three have a number of features of traditional Australian cottages as defined above, and Annie’s tree house has the satisfying quality of being a smaller ‘echo’ of the other, full sized houses. The tree house is a marvellous construction, with many right angles. Vertical boards, a red roof, a neat doorway and a small square window—all are impressive, but most impressive of all is the verandah to the tree house, which has a pattern of diagonal cross struts, apparently surrounds the tree house completely, and is secured to the tree in an ingenious fashion. The tree house appears new—there are no signs of shabbiness or repair—so the viewer can assume it was custom made for Annie by a skilled builder.

In the illustration the long, twenty-five-runged ladder serves the function of a vector leading the viewer’s eye from the patiently waiting dog below, to Annie
[Production Note:
This plate is not included in this digital copy
due to copyright restrictions.]

Plate 8

Brooks, Ron *Annie's Rainbow* Sydney, Collins 1975 p 8
who is up on the verandah of the tree house; and the ladder also seems to act semiotically as a demarcation—this is a private place, where access is denied to adults. Annie looks out from the verandah (in search of the rainbow, according to the verbal text), and she appears, like a sea captain, to be surveying from on high her own surroundings, her own map of meaning. This map apparently includes the other two houses. The largest house is glimpsed only partially (p 16) through a thicket of trees—just its door, four windows on the upper floor, and solid brick chimney can be seen, along with the fact it is built of weatherboards; a long, very neat white picket fence encloses this house, a fence only slightly grander than the almost identical one surrounding Annie’s own house.

A study of the house occupied by Annie and her parents appears on p 13. On the left hand side of the composition the house is shown facing the viewer, with Annie running from the house to the rainbow which arches away to the upper right hand side. The house and Annie occupy only half of the illustration, leaving the rainbow and its surrounding grass and sky to fill all of the remaining space, with the effect that the house appears very isolated and self-sufficient. The house itself is neat and trim, with its white vertical boards; red corrugated iron covering the rooftop and the verandah overhang; and verandah posts topped with half fan shapes. The front door is open, and on either side of it the windows have waisted curtains pulled back, so that although Annie is shown alone as she sets out on her quest, the implication is that at least one parent is at home. The effect of all three buildings in Annie’s Rainbow, with their Australian cottage features, is to present a nostalgically idyllic world of good nurturing, for Annie to leave and return to.

The second book illustrated by Brooks, this time with verbal text by Jenny Wagner, is John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat, which was published two years after Annie’s Rainbow, and shows considerable development in sophistication of design and illustration. This book (already discussed in chapter 3 for its treatment of kairos) shows a cottage with five out of the six features on the checklist, the fullest representation of any in the sample. The endpaper illustration for John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat (see Plate 9) is the same for front and back endpapers. It is composed of two halves: a front view of the house (on the recto
[Production Note:
This plate is not included in this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]
half) and a view of the side yard (on the verso), but with the picket fence running across three-quarters of the spread and maintaining continuity. The viewer is in the position of a visitor who has just arrived outside the front gate, so that the house is seen exactly front on. This viewing position—the frontal point of view—has been remarked upon by Stephens (1994 p 73) as a kind of setting of the scene: ‘The frontal angle says as it were: “what you see here is part of our world, is something we are involved with”.

The three main characters are visible in this endpaper scene: in the foreground Rose, standing right at the gate, and the dog facing her from the other (gateless) gateway, the vehicle entrance; and in the middle ground, just discernible on a horizontal tree branch, the dark shape of a cat. Although these three characters can be seen—and two of them probably noticed—the main presence on the endpapers is the house itself. The largest figure, Rose, is depicted as less than a third the total height of the spread, and the viewer’s eye is drawn from the figure of Rose up to the triangular shape of the pediment above the front door, and to the symmetrical shape of the roofline and the pair of chimneys on left and right; so the viewer may accurately predict that the house is to be a major preoccupation in the narrative, that it will figure as ‘space’ and not merely ‘place’.

Rose’s house is closely related to Annie’s house in Annie’s Rainbow, having like it a corrugated roof, horizontal boards and a verandah supported by timber posts. Like Annie’s house, Rose’s has a neat picket fence across the front, although there are a couple of pickets missing, and around the sides and back of the house the fence is of the more humble post-and-rail variety. Both houses appear to have trees growing close by, within the fences, but the area outside the fenceline is cleared and treeless. Annie’s Rainbow treats the domestication of creativity, metonymically represented by the rainbow; John Brown, Rose expresses the accommodation of another disturbing principle, expressed in the symbol of the black cat, which may be read as representing the alien, the unknown, or quite simply death itself (see discussion chapter 3). In both books the disturbing principle is taken into the interior of the house—the door is opened to the rainbow or the midnight cat—and this visitor is incorporated into the inside, it is taken home.
Brooks claims that Rose’s home is ‘a salute to [his] paternal grandparents and their weatherboard hessian-lined house in the country’ (Brooks 2000), and many lovingly depicted details evoke a nostalgic rural simplicity. In the endpaper scene, to the left behind the house can be seen a water tank and an outside ‘dunny’; there are two freestanding sheds (one presumably the chookhouse); an axe at rest in a woodblock; a dovecote; a clothesline of the traditional kind with an adjustable post at each end; and a swing made out of an old tyre hanging from a tree branch. Barely visible beneath a distant tree is an old truck of the kind that was used for carrying milk cans. Spread 10/11 presents the scene of the endpapers,—house and yard—but this time in side view, and at night time. Some more of Rose’s surroundings are revealed: there is an old car in the shed, covered with a blanket or tarpaulin, and at the front of the house is a traditional Australian windmill. This night scene emphasises, even more than the endpaper scene, the remoteness of Rose’s house.

The colours used by Ron Brooks in these illustrations accord with Stephens’ remarks about colours used in books with a ‘historical landscape’: ‘a palette dominated by ochres, yellows, orange-reds and muddy greens—apparently forming or acknowledging a tradition derived from colonial and Australian impressionist painters’ (Stephens 1994 p 72). As to the interiors of Rose’s house, with the hessian-lined walls, simple wooden furniture and domestic objects such as the smoker’s stand (p 6), these are as nostalgic as the interiors of Peepo! referred to in chapter 2, providing an equivalent, Australian insight into working class décor of the 1930s and 1940s.

Although the subject matter of John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat is more disturbing than that of Annie’s Rainbow, the nostalgic Arcadian setting provides a similar structure of reassurance.

(b) Perfectible working farms

Such a structure of reassurance is supplied also in two books that show human households as background to dramas in which animals play the main parts:
Belinda and Hector and Maggie. In both books the depiction of the nostalgic cottage reassures the reader that, while cows or dogs may be unsettled, on the human scene all is stable and well ordered.

Belinda begins (p 5) with a study of Bessie and Old Tom against a background of the exterior of their farmhouse, neatly settled in among trees and with hills behind it. The house has a steeply pitched red roof with vertical finials; a generous verandah; and a central door and windows symmetrically placed on either side. The shape of the house is simple and reminiscent of children’s own drawings. The effect of this stylised depiction of a nostalgic farmhouse is to provide stability and confidence that all will turn out satisfactorily in the end. Hector and Maggie is the most serious study of a working farm, complete with shearing shed and an assortment of animals. The title page illustration provides a literal map of the space that is to occupied by the narrative, in the form of an aerial view of all the farm buildings: the viewer sees the roofs of the house and sheds, as well as the chook yards, woodpile, tank stand and windmill, all of which are to play important roles in this story—a farmyard story, as the main characters are all animals. Apart from this aerial view, only a small portion of the farmhouse is shown in the illustration on p 5, and this shows horizontal boards, a corrugated roof, one window with flowers in front of it, and a domestic water tank; again, as in Belinda, these nostalgic features confirm to the reader that the conflicts in the story will be resolved.

(c) Traditional cottages as the space of ‘feminist’ tales

The fact that ‘Australian picture books show a strong interest in versions of continuity within change’ (Stephens 1994 p 72) is nowhere more evident than in the books with rural settings that purport an engagement with feminist themes. In these books the maps of meaning provided by the illustrations, replete with details of nostalgic background, present messages contrary to those of the verbal text.

Marty Moves to the Country is the book in the sample that most faithfully presents the post-colonial motif (referred to in chapter 4), defined by Tiffin as ‘establishing
a house, home or dynasty on new soil’ (1986 p 22). Although the verbal text of this book tells of the difficulties of adjusting to country life, the pictures use warm tones and symbols of stability to encode a superiority of rural over city values. The narrative is, for the year of publication, full of modern play materials (a skateboard, a motor bike) and more importantly the challenging notion that the young male narrator must accept (eventually) that his best friend could be a girl; but the cottage which his family has made their home shows all the signs of looking back to an Arcadian past. This cottage is bought, not built, by the young narrator’s family—‘It was an old wooden house with verandas along the front and back’ (spread 8/9)—but a busy program of renovation is soon under way (spread 18/19). The illustrations include only one city scene (p 11), an ostensibly wistful glimpse by the ten-year-old narrator back to his sorely missed urban life (‘I’m a city boy and I wanted to stay right where I was’); but the illustration is in cold tones, blues and greys, and shows the narrator walking out of the picture with his dog and skateboard, but no human companion; all signs of his being not so reluctant after all to return to his new rural home.

A spread before the title page shows in close-up the external wall, a window and a glimpse of the verandah boards of a weatherboard house. The sepia tones are uneven, there are nail holes and some patches on the wall, and a board with two wooden pegs, from one of which hangs an old piece of harness; another piece of board leans against the wall, as though in readiness for another repair job. Every detail speaks of improvisation, patching up, making the best of things. A small frontispiece opposite the title page shows another building also with many Australian cottage features: corrugated roofing, a verandah and a water tank; and this picture is met again on p 17 where it is identified as the schoolhouse. Marty Moves to the Country uses two buildings, domestic and school, to emphasise the rural tradition; they both speak eloquently of the reliable and rural, offering reassurance that even in the face of great change (such as inter-gender friendship!), nostalgic values will prevail.

The Long Red Scarf is another instance of a picture book in which a ‘progressive’ quasi-feminist message in the verbal text is counteracted by signs in the illustrations of a deep nostalgia. This book (as discussed in chapter 3) presents a
harmonious extended family; clues in the text reveal that it is 'my grandfather' who occupies the Australian cottage, but it is not entirely clear from the text whether two other characters, Maudie and Cousin Isobel, live there as well. As the narrative draws to a close, in spread 28/29 (see Plate 10), a view is presented of the cottage, shed and yard; the cottage has a verandah across the front on which grandfather and his friend Jake are shown sitting knitting. This spread, more than any other in the book, is filled with symbols of male rural life: there are neat garden beds in front, and at the side of the house there is a tank on a tank stand, a woodpile and an axe, and, filling more than half the spread, the side yard with its shed (also with a water tank), and four old farm vehicles in various states of disrepair. These traditional symbols of male rural activity provide an effective contrast with the depiction of the old men performing the traditionally female task of knitting. The foreground of the spread shows the side fence, of posts and barbed wire, and on the central post is a magpie; to the left of the magpie two rabbits are visible in some scrub which may be blackberry—both rabbits and blackberry signs of questionable maintenance in rural Australia. Perhaps the men's taking up knitting means that other more manly pursuits are being shamefully neglected. In Stephens' terms, of 'continuity within change', here again the 'change' presented as satisfactory in the verbal text is more than counterbalanced by the implication, in the illustrations, that changelessness is the preferable state.

(d) 'It was good to be home': defining and seeking the perfectible home

Two books engage overtly with the theme of defining and seeking home, and the titles of both signal this theme from the start. As My Place in Space unfolds it becomes clear that the 'space' of the title is on one level astronomical space, the space of planets and galaxies, and the book is a didactic one teaching basic concepts of astronomy. But the book deals also with the concept of belonging, of 'being at home' in one's environment, and in that sense could be entitled (in Bal's terminology) My Space in Place.

This book was published in 1988, the bicentenary year of Australia's white settlement, and a year in which there was a preoccupation with defining 'home'
[Production Note: 
This plate is not included in this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Plate 10

Power, Margaret in Hilton, Nette and Power, Margaret *The Long Red Scarf* Norwood, Omnibus 1987 spread 28/29
in Australian culture. In children’s literature the book *My Place* had appeared (Wheatley and Rawlins 1987; see Appendix No 1 to this thesis) and was receiving awards and much publicity, as had another book with the same title in the general market for adult readers, one of the first autobiographies by an Aboriginal author to gain a wide readership (Morgan 1987). Just as *My Place* (Wheatley and Rawlins 1987) teaches history by beginning with the experience of a contemporary narrator, so *My Place in Space* teaches astronomy by beginning with a young character, Henry Wilson, who is a representative Australian Everychild who gives an accurate positioning of his ‘home’ for the benefit of the bus conductor and other passengers. This book comes nearest of all in the sample to constituting a literal ‘map of meaning’, with its emphasis on placing one’s home at the centre of an ever-expanding ring of places, earthly, universal and beyond (see further analysis in chapter 6). The book contains some interesting contradictions: the articulate Henry Wilson is well able to answer the conductor’s mocking questions about knowing where he lives, but the home he defines so accurately is not shown in the illustrations; a signpost on the road points to ‘Gumbridge’, the town in which Henry and his sister Rosie live, but within the time frame of the book the bus does not leave the (unnamed) town two kilometres away from it. Nevertheless the verbal text is filled with the terminology of mapping, from ‘The town of Gumbridge is just over the river from here, about 2 kilometres east of the hills’ (p 8) to ‘Our local Group of Galaxies is just part of a huge group of galaxies called the Virgo super Cluster’ (p 22).

Spread 6/7 (Plate 11) shows the unnamed town from which the bus is due to depart, with many of the humorous touches for which Roland Harvey is known. The small town is bordered with paddocks with animals. There are verandahed shops; an old style church and graveyard; people playing sport on a ground with a stepped pavilion; a freestanding ‘dunny’ toilet; and even a horse trough. So although the main characters’ residence is not shown in the book, this spread shows a ‘home town’ which contains many of the traditional markers of nostalgic Australianness. In a book with such up-to-date astronomical information, this spread presents a scene like a film set for a period film: there are no electricity wires or TV antennae visible anywhere, a clear case of
[Production Note:
This plate is not included in this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Plate 11

Harvey, Roland and Levine, Joe in Hirst, Robin and Sally; and Harvey, Roland and Levine, Joe *My Place in Space* Fitzroy, The Five Mile Press 1988 spread 6/7

The Journey Home, published one year after My Place in Space, also overtly engages with the defining and advocating of ‘home’. Most of the book is taken up with a fantasy journey undertaken by the child characters, Wild and Woolly, and their accompanying dog, as they visit such fairy tale characters as Prince Charming and The Little Mermaid. The book has an episodic structure, with a spread devoted to each night spent by the children as the guests of a different character/s. The narrative has elements of the heroic journey in the terms of Joseph Campbell (1949), especially in the setting forth and the homecoming, but the journey does not follow Campbell’s heroic pattern in that there are no trials which the children need to overcome (except the very fact of separation from home, perhaps a trial in itself for children apparently so young). Again, as with My Place in Space, this book is replete with visual references to mapping. In telling of Wild and Woolly’s journey, the book builds a ‘map of meaning’ both literal—a map that could be drawn, of landmarks and compass points; and figurative—a guidebook to places of magic and the imagination. The map of the children’s ‘real’ environment includes the overview on the front cover, with its panorama of the country they must traverse on their homeward journey; and map-like locations in the imaginary world include the description of Prince Charming’s castle with its drawbridge which ‘hung over a rushing stream’ (p 13). In this neatly structured picture book, each fourth verso page (pp 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24 and 28) includes three strip pictures, and some verbal text, that describe advances in the children’s progress, in geographical phrases such as ‘over the wet and soggy marsh’ (p 16) and ‘round to a sheltered bay’ (p 20).

The narrative begins with a scene (p 3) of the children digging in their home sandpit; later spreads, particularly 28/29, and the cover art reveal that their home has a rural location. The strip vignette on the back cover (repeated on p 28) is of rolling hills, some trees and only one building, the tiny distant cottage with its windows lit up. The front cover art (referred to above) is a study, with the two travellers and their dog in the foreground, of an idyllic valley with some
cultivated paddocks, some grazing land, and the sea in the distance. Three, perhaps four, tiny distant roofs peep from between trees. The scene is enclosed in an oval frame which suggests the framing of a valued, gem-like object; Moebius comments (1986 p 150) that 'a character framed in ... circular enclosures is ... likely to be secure and content ...' Within this oval the distant cottage—which will be later revealed on p 29 as the children’s home—is in the top left-hand corner of the composition, which in Kress and van Leeuwen’s terms is the quadrant of ‘the ideal/most highly valued, the given’ whereas the children themselves in the lower left foreground occupy the quadrant of ‘the real, the new’ (Kress and van Leeuwen 1991 p108). This compositional analysis is consistent with the concept of the modern-day child characters, Wild and Woolly, making their way back, after their travels, to the nostalgic cottage of their national past.

In the light of the biographical details of the author/illustrator, the cover scene may be interpreted as an illustration of her own ideal place:

Alison Lester grew up near Wilsons Promontory in southern Victoria where her home looked out over the sea and the whole family rode horses every day... Nowadays she lives at Nar Nar Goon North in a house which looks out on cleared and wooded ranges. There kookaburras fly, magpies nest, bellbirds sing and Harley, the cat, is kept indoors.

(Scobie 1997 p 91)

The opening text (p 3) of The Journey Home states: ‘One day Wild and Woolly dug such a big hole in their sandpit, that when they fell into it, they came out at the North Pole.’ This opening fits the description by Campbell: ‘the mythological hero, setting forth from his commonday hut or castle, is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds, to the threshold of adventure’ (1949 p 245). The threshold in this case introduces an oft-used motif in children’s literature, the idea of digging through the centre of the earth to the other side—to the Antipodes if from Europe, or to an exotic country, usually China, if from Australia. In the year before the publication of The Journey Home, Donna Rawlins had published Digging to China (1988), a picture book which tells of a girl called Alexis who intentionally
digs to China. But Wild and Woolly, unlike Alexis, stumble accidentally into the 
North Pole; they then do not spend time looking about or engaging deliberately 
in adventures: the text of the second spread (4/5) is: ‘Immediately they set out on 
the journey home . . .’, and so begins a pattern of repetition in each spread of the 
words ‘They came that night . . .’, which serve to introduce a catalogue of fantasy 
locations.

Again at the end of the narrative the homecoming scene has some heroic 
elements. ‘If the powers have blessed the hero, he now sets forth under their 
protection . . .; if not, he flees and is pursued. . . At the return threshold the 
transcendental powers must remain behind; the hero re-emerges from the 
kingdom of dread . . .’ (Campbell 1949 p 245).

. . . hurrying on to home.

They came that night to a house they knew. 
A welcoming light shone through the open door. 

‘You’re home at last!’ cried their parents. ‘Come inside and stay.’
Wild and Woolly had mugs of hot chocolate before climbing into 
their very own beds.

It was good to be home.

(pp 28–32)

These children have been given no ‘transcendental powers’, except the ability to 
see and converse with figures such as Father Christmas and Prince Charming. 
But the threshold-crossing scene is climactic in both words and illustration. The 
threshold is now located not at the sandpit but at the verandah of the Australian 
cottage: the illustration (p 29; see Plate 1, frontispiece to this thesis) shows the 
‘welcoming light’ of early evening flowing from the windows the ‘open door’ of 
the cottage at which the children’s parents are waiting. This view of the cottage is 
the only one (except for the strip vignette mentioned before, which is too tiny for 
details to be visible) to show the front, with its horizontal boards, corrugated 
roof and verandah posts. It is not so dark that the details of the house’s 
surrounding cannot be picked out: the distant hills and nearer paddocks and 
trees; the grass, sandpit and large tree (complete with tyre swing) of the yard;
the vines neatly growing up the verandah posts and the garden beds at the verandah edge; the children’s bikes, the ball and the dog’s water dish and bone. The composition of the picture is such that the children are shown in profile, running (preceded by the dog) along the path to the door; the figure of the mother is at an angle half facing the children and half facing the viewer, and flanking her at the windows at either side are the father and cat. The eyes and hands of each of the six figures (four humans, two pets) form vectors linking in a shallow V–shape of meeting; this vector is contributed to by the angle of the pathway, by the placing of the mother’s feet and even by the angles of the corrugations of the iron roofing. The word ‘Welcome’ printed on the doormat in this picture is surely one of the most redundant in any illustration!

As in My Place in Space, there is no sign of twentieth century technology in this exterior scene—no electric wiring, no TV aerial. The following spread is of the interior (p 31) and reveals, among more traditional comforts such as a bulky sofa and a grandfather clock, the up-to-date amenities of electric light, TV and a sound system, even a box of tissues on a shelf; and the parents are dressed in modern comfortable clothes. But the exterior scenes of the Australian cottage, and the welcome the children receive across the threshold of the verandah, are rich with connotations of nostalgic yearning for a rural and idealised Australian home.

The Journey Home concludes with the words ‘It was good to be home’, the phrase incorporated in the title of this thesis, and these words and the accompanying illustration (p 32, see Plate 21) form a key representation of the rural home as a felicitous space (as was claimed in chapter 4, when contrasting this scene with the urban homecoming in Felix and Alexander). The illustration here shows the children’s bedroom: their wooden beds have hearts carved in head and foot, the dog is asleep on the mat between them, there are books and soft toys; but also visible are a backpack and a picture on the wall of distant mountains and a lake, so that the suggestion of further journeys is layered onto the deep domestic comfort of this conclusion.
(e) Perfectibility in the face of death and anger

The Very Best of Friends is also about household perfectibility, in this case the gradual acceptance by the female character, Jessie, of the realities of death and grieving. At the beginning of the book, James, Jessie and James’s cat William live happily together on their farm: two illustrations show the exterior of the farmhouse, both emphasising the horizontality of the house as it nestles into a gentle slope, and the wide, sprawling verandahs with their bullnosed iron roofing, shabby but welcoming.

The death of James occurs abruptly in the middle of the book, and Jessie is left alone except for the animals; she shuts out the cat and the two characters, animal and human, grieve in their different ways. As Anstey and Bull point out (2000 p 183), the illustrations change with this turn in the narrative. The earlier illustrations are full of light, with translucent colours, and ‘lines are curved and the form of the illustrations is soft, round and comforting. The characters are always in close proximity, intertwined or leaning on one another.’ The verbal text announces a change in mood: ‘And late at night William prowled the country roads and fought with cats and hunted anything that moved. He grew mean and lean, and he hated everything and everyone’ (p 24). The visual text illustrating this spread changes in both colour and line; the colours change to grey-green and black, and ‘lines . . . are dominated by jagged diagonals, properties of line which are associated with loss of balance or control, anger and destruction . . . ’ (Anstey and Bull 2000 p 185). Despite this ‘jaggedness’ of illustration and verbal text, the ending of this book, with the accommodation of woman and cat, is predictable within the semiotics of the rural setting. Such a verandahed house, in the Australian picture book, cannot for long remain the site of irreconcilable difference.

In all the types of picture book discussed above—(a) to (e)—there is a constant thread, of the benign presence of the cottage. The features of the Australian cottage have come to serve as a shorthand for the good, protective space; the characters in the book, and indeed the reader, can literally ‘rest assured’, with the house, in Bachelard’s term (1994 p 7), providing their benign, protective ‘cradle’.
Baker's depiction of the cottage as environmental threat

The only exceptions to the benign depiction of rural cottages in the sample are two books by Jeannie Baker, *Window* and *The Story of Rosy Dock*. As claimed in chapter 3, they present a world in which the rural environment is admirable until spoiled by human occupation. The first book, *Window*, traces the changes in one area from pioneer settlement to suburban growth; the second, *The Story of Rosy Dock*, is set in central Australia and charts the course of an introduced species and the harm it causes to the natural environment. In both cases the rural house of the main character is presented as an attractive dwelling, with many of the 'Australian cottage' features which in the other books denote protective space. But the 'myth of stability of Australian life' (Stephens 1994 p 70) represented by these cottages cannot withstand the overarching, didactic narrative in each of these books, the narrative teaching that the very presence of (white) humans in the environment is regrettable and will lead to irrevocable harm.

Rural markers in a city context

Stephens claims that the Australian cottage is an 'architectural form which is commonly associated with country or town landscape, but which conveniently survives within metropolitan centres where it functions as a rural trace' (1994 p 69). *Where's Mum?* is a picture book set in the city, as the frontispiece announces, but with the main characters housed in an Australian cottage. The illustrations are mostly interior scenes of a family home in which father and children await mother's return from work, the house becoming the meeting ground for the worlds of reality and fantasy, with characters from nursery rhyme and fairy tale overlaid onto the everyday world of after-school snacks and television.

There are two pictures of the exterior of the house. One is the cover picture which shows the verandah and front fence; and the other is the frontispiece on p 1 (see Plate 12), which, like the view in *Hector and Maggie* mentioned above, is a kind of aerial map, in this case of the house in its urban surroundings. Like the

---

26 The *trace*, a concept central to Derrida's writings, will be examined in chapter 6.
[Production Note:
This plate is not included in this digital copy
due to copyright restrictions.]

Plate 12
Smith, Craig in Gleeson, Libby and Smith, Craig Where’s Mum? Norwood, Omnibus
1992 p 1
‘establishing shot’ in a film, this illustration takes in a wide scene, looking down on houses, church, street, railway line, and, in the distance, factories. Most of the houses shown are rows of terraces, but several clues (including its location in centre foreground, and the use of the salient colour, red) suggest that the house in which the action is to occur is a larger, freestanding house, with several of the ‘Australian cottage’ features listed above. It is larger than the terraced houses nearby, but is not as dull in design as the neighbouring large building which is a block of bland mid century flats. Scenes such as those on spread 6/7 and on p 17 show the closely built-up environment surrounding the family’s house, but the house itself is quite large, and as shown in spread 28/29 has elaborate stained glass surrounds to the front door, which opens onto a spacious entrance hall.

The house in Where’s Mum? serves as ‘a rural trace’ in Stephens’ terms, so much so that it has been transplanted by the illustrator complete with the unlikely old style iron water tanks at the back doors of it and the next-door house (p 1); as discussed above, a problematic feature at the time of publication. Behind the rows of nappies hanging to dry on the clothesline, a flowering hedge marks the boundary with the next building. This ‘transplanted’ house may be seen as reflecting the biography of the author, Libby Gleeson—from country childhood to city adulthood (Nieuwenhuizen 1991 pp 48–75). The conservatism of the house provides a pull against the book’s progressive ideology of working mother, childminding father, a pull resembling that of the cottages cited in section (c) above. As in all the rural examples, the Australian cottage retains connotations of a nostalgic past: it is just that in this case the nostalgia has, apparently, survived the roar of city traffic.

Conclusion

In this chapter it was argued that the rural Australian cottage is a pervasive image in the picture book, and its specific features contribute to a concept of a nostalgic, perfectible space suggesting a felicitous existence. One especially desirable aspect of the yearned-for past is the strength of the family, community and neighbourhood. The following chapter will examine the nostalgia at play in
all these aspects, both in a theoretical examination of the concepts, and as exemplified in the books.

Note

Appendix No 1 to this thesis analyses two further examples, beyond the sample, of books featuring buildings that convey an enduring dream of space, both personal and communal, to represent the nation and its desirable past.
Chapter 6

Family, community and neighbourhood

Introduction

The preceding chapters have argued that the time and space of the Australian picture book are imbued with nostalgic yearning for an Arcadian, felicitous existence, and that the rural Australian cottage is a particularly significant expression of this nostalgia. It has been claimed that a common component of the picture books is a nostalgic background. Against such backgrounds picture books are peopled with characters, and the remaining chapters of this thesis will examine some semiotic features of these characters and their relationships, arguing that these contribute also to the nostalgic thrust of the books. In the present chapter an analysis will be made of the concepts of family, community and neighbourhood, key concepts in the relationships depicted in the books. It will be claimed that the family of picture books is based not on up-to-date images but on those of the ‘golden age’ of nuclear family life, the 1950s, and that these images themselves are idealised and speak always of a nostalgic Arcadia. An examination will be made of the history and development of the concept community, with its implications of intimacy and optimism, and its links to neighbourhood. The concept of cultural embeddedness will be proposed, to describe the rich network of family and community in which picture book characters function. While evidence of the families, communities and neighbourhoods of specific picture books will be cited, this chapter will claim that in the case of three groups of characters, representation is only by trace: mothers, Aborigines, and people of non-Anglo ethnicities.
Nostalgic concepts of family

Central to this whole study is the search for those elements that constitute the 'home in the world that, according to Watkins (1992 p 183) is shaped by narratives. One such element is family: 'home' and 'family' are concepts that often overlap, and the two terms frequently occur in tandem or are used interchangeably. As claimed in chapter 2, 'home' can be applied to a continuum of spaces, from 'bedroom', through 'house', all the way to 'nation'; and similarly 'family' can have an outward movement, extending like a ripple in a pond from a centre of immediate, nuclear family, to extended family, neighbourhood, and community.

A widespread nostalgia can often be discerned in association with the term 'family'; cultural artefacts intended for both adults and children pay tribute to a longed-for family life of some bygone time, especially in terms such as 'family tradition', 'family custom', 'family gathering', and 'family heirloom'. Definitions of family nearly always contain a kernel of the past: for example Peel (1998 p 1) claims 'They [family] are the people, seen and unseen, who made the past we come to know; we live in the small worlds they created.' In chapter 2 it was argued, firstly that nostalgia does not need to be fed by memories of good times; and furthermore that middle-class families in the western world were, at least until the late nineteenth century, supported by the labour and unprotected status of the less well-to-do. The idea of the family as a nurturing unit for the (potential) protection of all children is a recent development.

Australia, particularly, as a postcolonial society, has been preoccupied with concepts of 'home' (chapter 4) and this has frequently been linked to a similar preoccupation with the concept of 'family'. Some practical consequences are the continuing (at least until very recently) high rate both of home ownership and of retention of family structures (Richards 1990 p 94); and the popularity of researching one's family tree, which can be attested to by librarians and genealogical societies.
Australian families in the ‘golden age’

Many of the nostalgic references to family in Australia are linked to a specific period, the ‘golden age’ of families in the 1950s. This ‘golden age’ consists of elements of historic reality on which an imaginative construct has been elaborated. The rebuilding of civilian, peacetime life after the end of World War II included, in Australia as in the USA and Britain, a renewed emphasis on the family. In these countries, after a short period of immediate postwar instability, with its temporary boom in divorces, a trend towards ‘settling down’ developed; a golden age of family life—or of a certain kind of family life—reflected ‘a generally optimistic mood about the stability of family life at a time when there were many other reasons for optimism’ (Goldthorpe 1987 p 42). Men and women recovering from experiences of war pinned their hopes on the next generation, and, often with memories of harsh deprivation themselves, proceeded to spend money on their children (Fabian and Low 1980 p 188). The post-war boom provided favourable conditions for marriage and household formation: the rate of Australian home ownership soared from 53 per cent in 1947 to 71 per cent in 1966 (Gilding 1991 p 113); and, as has been pointed out in chapter 5, the preferred type of house was the detached single-family house on its own block of land. Such houses were located mostly in the expanding suburbs, and the imagery of family from this time is the imagery of suburbia. ‘Significantly, the “golden age” of the small nuclear family in the 1950s and 1960s coincided with greater prosperity, especially the security of income which allowed more people to attain—and then defend—the independence and private intimacy they desired’ (Peel 1998 p 3).

The refashioning of ideas of motherhood beginning at the second half of the twentieth century contributed to this ‘settling down’ trend. Increasing precision in contraception resulted in more time and resources being spent on each child; and at the same time experts in psychology and child care were warning of the dangers of maternal deprivation. Parents, and mothers especially, were often described as literally living for their children; ‘the child-centred family’ had its origins at this time (Gilding 1991 p 94). The lengthening of children’s schooling,
from the 1940s when most children left school at fourteen, contributed to the dependency of the younger generation. The child-centred nuclear household, highly privatised, with father/breadwinner, housewife/mother and dependent children, reached its highwater mark in the post-war decades. Gilding points out that such a nuclear family was constructed as classless, especially as it appeared in images of the ideal, child-centred family in advertising, such as in *The Australian Women's Weekly*, images supported by the economic growth of the period (Gilding 1991 p 121).

While these images were ostensibly egalitarian, they were of white families of Anglo origin; there was little acknowledgement of the growing number of migrants entering Australia at the time, and almost none of Aboriginal people. This was a time when assimilation was the official government policy for both Aboriginal people (those of lighter colour skin) and for migrants. Racial absences will be examined in a later section of this chapter.

Politically and economically in Australia the 'golden age' of family is associated with the long prime ministership of Robert Menzies. The period is familiar to Australian adults through advertising, art, literature and film, and through photograph albums of 'baby boomer' childhoods. Typical images consist of a family of two parents with two or three children and a dog, in a suburban backyard complete with Hills Hoist, happily relaxing as the children play at chasing each other with the garden hose. The present Prime Minister, John Howard, notoriously tried to revive some of this imagery early in his term of office, with an advertising campaign that included pictures of a smiling family, outside their house which was enclosed by a picket fence; this advocacy of 'picket fence' family values has been the cause of considerable mockery by his political opponents. But behind the picket fence, frozen in time, the father, mother and children of the Australian suburban nuclear family constitute an image of stability and happiness that endures in many cultural representations.
Changes to family since the ‘golden age’

In the decades following the 1950s, a number of influences contributed to major changes away from the ‘golden age’ model of family. These included the ‘counter culture’ of the 1960s; legal reforms of the 1970s with no-fault divorce, and of the 1980s which placed de facto unions on almost the same footing as marriage; and the trend which began in the 1970s to delay marriage and child-bearing. There were rising expectations by women of equality in marriage, and more marital dissolution with its different consequences for men and for women (including a rise in poverty for the latter). Blended families became common, but so did one-adult households; and by the end of the century nearly one in five Australian children was living in a home with a single parent (Shanahan 2000), a fact that clearly belies any claim that a persisting 1950s family model reflects present-day realities.

Another major change was the entry into the workforce of many mothers. By 1990, 56 per cent of married women with dependent children contributed to family earnings (Gilding 1991 p 126). Mothers’ participation in the workforce continues to increase (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1999), and although women are more likely to work full-time as their children grow older, 15 per cent of those with children under five are in full-time work, with another 28 per cent working part-time. And by 1996, almost half of Australian children under 12 were in some form of child-care, formal or informal.

While changes such as these have affected the real-life experiences of many Australian children, it is claimed, particularly by Bittman, that the changes have enabled the preservation of many elements of the ‘traditional’ family, including the subordination of women’s aspirations to those compatible with motherhood. While stating that two influences not so often remarked on have influenced most change, namely falling family size and the ageing of the population, Bittman (1992 p 438) also states that the greatest change is not in the composition of families themselves, but in commentators’ attitudes to them:

Whereas mid-century writers viewed it [the nuclear family] as the family . . . contemporary commentators assume a plurality of
family forms . . . Thus the nuclear family has lost its monopolistic position, while retaining a powerful cultural pre-eminence based on the personal experience of the majority.

(Bittman 1992 p 439)

The monopolistic position of the nuclear family has certainly been lost in the real world of present-day Australia; however, as will be shown below, its cultural pre-eminence clearly survives in the many backward glances to the 1950s in the picture book.

The changing family in children’s fiction

In Australian children’s literature in general (in novels rather than picture books), Saxby comments on the conservative representations of the family until the late 1960s: ‘the parents, homes, schools, institutions and social groupings in our children’s books tended, in the main, to reflect conservative, stable, middle-class, white, Anglo–Saxon origins and outlooks’ (Saxby 1993 p 10). Saxby further records ‘the vast majority of the families appearing in the fiction of the 1940s through to the sixties were, despite passing problems and the growing pains of some of their members, happy, united and purposeful’ (Saxby 2002 p 443); and he sees these fictional lives as influenced by the realities of their authors’ lives, as recorded in such documents as the memoirs of Eleanor Spence and Colin Thiele (two esteemed novelists for young readers). The contrast between these conservative representations and more recent treatment of the family, is noted by Lees and Macintyre: from the 1980s Australian children’s fiction has dealt with separated and blended families, and ‘the family as bulwark against change is less likely, as optimism for the future is eroded’ (Lees and Macintyre 1993 p 157).

Such a contrast does not apply, however, to the picture books in the period of the sample. As is the case in other aspects of life represented in these picture books from the 1970s to the late 1990s, the strong pull of nostalgia is at work, and the families depicted reflect the ‘powerful cultural pre-eminence’ of the nuclear family, remarked upon by Bittman. The ‘golden age’ nuclear two-parent family, and the traditional roles of the mother, retain their dominance here, and
representations of characters not of white racial background are almost non-existent; all of these trends will be shown below in analyses of the sample.

Community and neighbourhood

Extending from the world of the family, in the expanding ripple effect, is the community or neighbourhood of those living nearby. As maps of meaning are constructed of a child’s world, according to Sibley, as quoted in chapter 1, the world gradually ‘seeps in’ (Sibley (b) 1995 p 126). Both ‘community’ and ‘neighbourhood’ are terms applicable to this ‘seeping in’ world, and both also carry strong connotations of nostalgia. ‘Community’ has been a term of favourable connotations for more than a century. Ferdinand Tönnies, one of the fathers of the study of sociology, published in 1887 his book Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft, in which he defined the word Gemeinschaft (community), as a social group residing in a particular locality and sharing a culture, in opposition to the word Gesellschaft (society), a more formal social structure. Tönnies’ thesis was based on ideas which had been expounded through the centuries, by Plato in his Republic, by St Augustine in describing the ‘City of God’, by medieval thinkers and by a number of German scholars preceding Tönnies; but Tönnies theorised a whole social structure—or rather, pair of structures—based on the dichotomy of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft. In Gemeinschaft (community), according to Tönnies, human relationships are intimate, enduring and based on a clear idea of each person’s standing; kinship, neighbourhood and friendship are its three main pillars. Nostalgia for a particular place is linked to the concept of Gemeinschaft: ‘Community makes for traditionalistic ways and at the very core of the community concept is the sentimental attachment to the conventions and mores of a beloved place’ (Bell and Newby 1971 p 24). Gesellschaft (society or association) refers to the large-scale, impersonal and contractual ties, such as corporations or unions, which Tönnies and succeeding sociologists saw as on the increase in modern industrialised countries.

On the whole the passing of ‘community’ was deplored and regretted by the sociologists. The opposition between ‘community’ and ‘society’ included the rural/urban dichotomy, already examined as such an important component of
Australian thought (chapter 4). A few early sociologists were optimistic about the new urban societies: the early Durkheim, and Karl Marx, saw the modern city as preferable to the rural village of the past, with Marx counting the end of 'the idiocy of rural life' as a positive achievement of capitalism. The sophistication, rationality and tolerance of the urban world were seen as positive achievements of the Gesellschaft by the Chicago School of Robert Park and Louis Wirth (Gusfield 1975 p 91). But Durkheim's later work laid the foundation for a view of urban societies as destructive of human cohesion based on common identities (Gusfield 1975 p 89). Community and society were seen as a dichotomy in which society had many disadvantages, and a nostalgic glorification of the virtues of small communities of the past prevailed; a community in this idealised view was understood as 'the spontaneous and impassioned unity of, say, a primitive tribe in contrast with the calculated unity of a modern factory' (Tinder 1980 p 16). This view of the past was based on a romantic conception of history, a depiction of the small community of pre-industrial life as more kind and humane than that of industrialised cities.

... the ties of the community, real or imagined, came from [sociologists'] images of the good life ... there was frequently a pervading posture of nostalgia—of praising the past to blame the present ... The impersonality and anonymity of industrial society were highlighted by reference to the close personal ties of the community.

(Bell and Newby 1971 p 22)

The inferred results of loss of community frequently formed a litany of undesirable characteristics, such as 'alienation; estrangement; anomie; rootlessness; loss of attachment ...' (Plant 1974 p 1). In western society in the later years of the twentieth century there was a movement associated with the concept of community, a movement which was 'a revolt against progress and modernisation, a rejection of individualism and of economic growth as alienating, a longing for the warmth, comfort and humanity of a real community' (Kamenka 1982 p viii). The enduring influence of ideas of longed-for, traditional community can be discerned in such areas as the commune movement in
western countries during the 1960s, and the anti-globalisation protests of the present day.

The second ‘pillar’ of Tönnies’ Gemeinschaft is neighbourhood, in which a group of people base their relationships on living close together; the outstanding example of an association of this type is the rural village community, where ‘the proximity of dwellings, the communal fields, and even the mere contiguity of holdings necessitate many contacts of human beings and cause inurement to and intimate knowledge of one another’ (Tönnies 1955 p 49). Even by the time of Tönnies’ writing, in 1887, this kind of life with ‘communal fields’ was threatened by modernisation; but as a nostalgic ideal the ‘neighbourhood’ concept has continued to exercise appeal.

Christian societies had inherited the idea of an obligation to respect and assist neighbours from early Jewish teachings, as was implied in membership of a ‘holy nation’ (Exodus 19: v 6); but Jesus’s teaching extended the reach of ‘neighbour’, with the shocking idea that a despised Samaritan should have behaved as a good neighbour (Browning 1996 p 266). The parable in which this point was made has left a residue in Christian—and post-Christian—societies, whereby, while the anti-racist principle of the parable has been largely lost, the obligation remains of decent behaviour to one’s neighbours, those living in proximity.

Nostalgic ideas of ‘neighbourhood’ and ‘neighbourliness’ are particularly strong in concepts of child-rearing and education. The television series Sesame Street is perhaps the best-known exponent of the desirable neighbourhood, having transferred the close, reliable community associated with the rural village to densely populated urban streets. The Sesame Street idealised neighbourhood includes proximity—characters live so close to each other that they are able to ‘drop by’ for visits; and responsibility taken by adult characters for the children in the local area. Similarly in the nostalgic world of the picture book, there are frequent glimpses of a local community as a rich and stable backdrop to the lives of the characters, who through physical proximity are able to walk or go by bicycle to their friends’ homes or communal places, rather than needing to travel by car.
Cultural embeddedness; and the trace

For the concept of a character or characters firmly supported by a network of family, neighbours and community I propose the term cultural embeddedness. The term ‘embeddedness’ is used in linguistics, and has been used in narratology with reference to embedded verbal texts, for example by Bal (1997 pp 52-56), who also extends the concept to that of embedded visual text (1997 p 163)\textsuperscript{27}. However, here the specific term cultural embeddedness is applied to the implied world of the picture book, with its culturally embedded characters shown to be surrounded by ever-widening rings of caring family, neighbours and remoter community members. If characters are depicted as alone, the implication is that such aloneness is through choice. Child characters have parents, and often siblings, ready to support them in their needs, and other relatives and caring adults ensure that this support is extended into a reliable microcosm. The following analyses will provide evidence of the nuclear family, extended family and neighbourhood in which most characters are culturally embedded.

According to Derrida, the trace in language is a ‘presence–absence’ (Kamuf 1991 p 43); this principle of the trace\textsuperscript{28} can be extended to the visual as well. In picture books the cultural embeddedness of characters, as so much else, is revealed through tiny clues in the illustrations; in Keck and Philpotts’ words (1998 p 50), ‘at times the information [about family and society] is not in the text and is only absorbed through reading the illustrations’. This information includes the trace of the near or recent presence of a character not presently on the scene. The three

\textsuperscript{27} Stephens also describes picture book characters as ‘embedded’ in the landscape (1995 p 99).

\textsuperscript{28} Derrida’s concept of the trace is a complicated one, linked to his discussion of Condillac’s theory of ‘absence’: ‘The sign is born at the same time as imagination and memory, at the moment when it is demanded by the absence of the object for present perception (Kamuf 1991 p 88); and to the affinity of fiction and dreams: ‘When we have rounded a certain corner in our reading, we will place ourselves . . . where . . . what is left is only the writing of dreams . . . There remain only traces, announcements and souvenirs, foreplays and aftereffects . . . ‘ (Kamuf 1991 p 184). Oliver summarises the concept as ‘language gives us traces of something beyond language’ (1997 p xx). The trace as ‘presence–absence’ is, I claim, especially applicable to the semiotics of illustration, and is echoed in Johnston’s statement (1998 p 25) that illustrations disclose ideologies through the ‘seen but unnoticed’ aspects of life.
groups of characters, discussed below, that are discernible only by trace are mothers, Aborigines and people of non-Anglo ethnicities. The first group, of mothers, will be shown to differ from the other two groups, in that the not-quite-visible mothers add to perceptions of embeddedness of the child characters.

The nuclear family: children and parents

The most frequently occurring social setting in which picture book characters are embedded is a family group with two parents. In the sample of thirty books, fifteen show a family of mother, father and one or more children. A further five books show one parent with one or more children (of these, two show a father with one child). So a total of twenty of the thirty books show a child or children with parent/s. Two of these twenty books, and one other without visible parents, show grandparents named as such. Of the five books which show only one parent, there is no evidence for deciding whether the family is a one-parent household: perhaps the mothers who are shown with the children in the daytime scenes of three books have partners; perhaps the fathers who are shown, in one book making breakfast and in another on an outing with his child, are partnered. The viewers of these books do not know these things, nor do they know, if the parent depicted does have a partner, whether that partner is also parent to the child/ren. The depiction of family in these latter books is consistent with the contention that 'while the majority of children's picture books still tend to portray the happy nuclear family, increasingly this is left open to interpretation within both the text and the illustrations' (Keck and Philpotts 1998 p 53).

The next largest group of books in the sample is that with no child characters, but main characters who are middle aged or elderly. Five books fit this category, and of them two depict heterosexual couples, and three depict single persons living alone.

The remaining four books include one with brother and sister as main characters (no parents named or seen, but no evidence of their non-existence, either), two with a boy character functioning alone, and another book in which two boys (not
brothers) function together, and there is just a trace of the mother of one of them (see below). Of these four books, one is set entirely at school and the viewer has no way of knowing about the family situation of the main character. For all of these books it could be the case that the characters are members of traditional two-parented families.

One sign of conventional parental relationships figures in several of the picture books: the double bed. There are scenes of couples occupying double beds in three of the books (Sunshine, Dog Tales, The Very Best of Friends) and of these the first two are parents whose children are nearby, and, in the case of Sunshine, climbing into the parents’ bed in the morning to read and share breakfast. Rose’s bed in John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat is also a double one, but she is shown alone in it when she sickens (spread 28/29) and is sitting up sadly, close to the photograph which surely depicts her late husband.

An overriding sense of the child characters’ embeddedness in a caring family is reached through the many signs that they are being ‘parented’ in positive and practical ways. Parents are shown grooming their children (Murgatroyd’s Garden), taking them on interesting outings or holidays (The Midnight Gang, Not a Nibble!, Greetings from Sandy Beach, Where the Forest Meets the Sea); encouraging them through challenging experiences (Marty Moves to the Country, Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten); playing indoor games with the children (Not a Nibble!) and reading books to them (Sunshine). Importantly parents are shown making meals for them, given them home-cooked afternoon tea when friends come to play (Crusher is Coming) or greeting them with open arms, hot cocoa or ice cream cones on returning from adventures (The Journey Home, Drac and the Gremlin)—and the significance of the giving of food is explored further in chapter 7. ‘Off stage’ (not within the scope of the verbal or visual texts), parents have apparently built tree houses and erected tyre swings (see chapter 5); and provided numerous pets. Perhaps most desirable of all, parents are shown as having time and energy to expend in supporting children in imaginative play, in Where’s Mum? and Drac and the Gremlin. The latter book even includes a scene of children’s play involving the garden hose, that item referred to earlier as evocative of the ‘golden age’ of the suburban family: on spread 6/7 the verbal
text states that Drac is chasing the Gremlin 'across the bubbling seas,' and the illustration shows the misty spray of a sprinkler. The composite impression of all these parental behaviours is that the picture book children are all members of child-centred nuclear families like those of that same 'golden age'.

The two books portraying an activity shared by just one child and one parent are *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* and *First Light*. These two books differ from each other in many respects: the former represents an apparently contented father and son, enjoying the peacefulness of an unspoiled environment, whereas the latter shows a troubled relationship played out while father and son are engaged in activity which is the father’s choice, not the son’s, as is discussed below. It is remarkable, however, that the books have in common the father-and-son pairs of characters, both pairs seeking recreation with boats, fishing and the sea; as claimed in chapter 4, dramas of maleness are enacted at the beach or on the water.

The one book, with a young child character, which shows him as lacking embeddedness in family or community, is *Felix and Alexander*. As discussed in chapter 4, boy and toy dog are shown as alone and unprotected in the streets of the alienating and threatening city. The existential loneliness presented in this book is emphasised in the scenes of home with an absence of adult company. Alexander and Felix are shown in their flat (pp 3 to 11) before the troubling adventure, and returning to it afterwards (pp 28 to 31), without any sign of another human presence. Another effect of this aloneness, as well as emphasising their vulnerability, is the highlighting of the two friends’ dependence on one another. If a welcoming parent were shown at the front door of the block of flats, the bond between boy and dog would not seem so powerful or so necessary. *Felix and Alexander* is an extraordinary book, being the only one in the sample to feature a young character apparently quite ‘unparented’ even at the conclusion of the narrative. It makes an significant contrast to the two books that show a girl adventuring alone at a distance from home. In one of these, *Annie’s Rainbow*, the main character walks alone for some distance before meeting the artist who paints a rainbow for her; parents are shown at the very beginning of this book (p 7). In the other, *The Paw*, Leonie the schoolgirl becomes a cat-burglar
by night and undertakes many daring exploits, but on her return home is offered breakfast by her father. None of the books shows a girl character as so thoroughly alone as Alexander in *Felix and Alexander*.

But even in the case of *Felix and Alexander*, the main human character is not friendless, having his faithful dog to accompany and aid him. In this way (see Appendix No 2) he resembles the old woman, Rose, whose dog John Brown keeps her company in her isolated cottage (*John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat*). Even the unnamed old woman in *The Story of Rosy Dock*, alone in her cottage, without other white companions (although with Aboriginal neighbours; see below), is accompanied by a pet cat.

The majority of characters are embedded in families that are not only supportive but also largely untroubled by major needs or crises. The 'general sense of innocence' (Nikolajeva 2000 p 21) referred to in chapter 3 as defining the Arcadian world of *kairos*, is reflected in the benign family situations presented in most of the thirty books. Nearly all the larger difficulties and disadvantages of real life are absent: poverty, foreignness, unemployment, major family conflict (except in *First Light*), and disability (except for that of Joseph in his wheelchair in *Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons*). Even given the powerful nostalgic thrust towards the *kairos* of imagined childhood, the absence of one feature of family life does seem surprising, such is its influence in present-day real life: the pressure of parents' work. I was surprised to find no clue in words or pictures as to any father's or mother's occupation, except for that of caring for children: so all-pervading is the 'golden age' child-centredness depicted, that parents' work in the wider world is not present even in a trace. Two of the books with older adults as main characters, discussed below, show a couple, man and woman, as farmers, but neither of these couples has any children now living with them (*Belinda*, *The Very Best of Friends*). There are no scenes in any of the books of fathers rushing off to work or wearily returning, perhaps at odd hours after shift work. To find such a scene it is necessary to turn to a book not in the sample, *Tucking Mummy In*, with its rare depiction of Dad arriving home from work, in this case with his tradesman's tool bag (Loh and Rawlins 1987). Only two books, *Where's Mum?* and *Sunshine*, show a mother setting out to, or
returning from, an activity outside the home, which in the first case is stated to be work (but undefined work), and in the second could possibly be read as such. The ‘real world’ statistics quoted above, that 43 per cent of mothers of children under five are in the workforce, make this aspect of family life a startling omission from the world portrayed in picture books; and a significant finding to emerge from close study of their nostalgic background.

siblings

siblings occur frequently in the picture books, but, consistent with the ‘golden age’ stereotype, small families are generally implied: three books have families with three children; eight books families with two children; and nine have single-child families. Three books show families in which there are children but it is not possible to deduce the number of children.

Three of the books are tales of siblings adventuring together: *My Place in Space* (where the characters are named in the verbal text as brother and sister?); *The Journey Home* and *Drac and the Gremlin*, in which the implications of the illustrations are that Wild and Woolly, and Drac and the Gremlin, are brother and sister. All of the books by Bob Graham include siblings—in each book the main character is one of two children, having one younger sibling of ‘toddler’ age, except for Rose in *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten* who is the oldest of three children including one toddler. As well as in Bob Graham’s books, toddlers appear in *Dog Tales*, and *Where’s Mum?*, and form the ‘gang’ in *The Midnight Gang*. This latter book is exceptional in that the main characters are younger than in all the other books, and presumably younger than the children to whom the book is read. Usually the focus is on the adventures of the older sibling (for example, on the narrator in *Greetings from Sandy Beach*, rather than on the younger brother Gerald) and the toddler siblings function as amusing ‘extras’. Babies too young to be mobile feature in only two of the books: ‘new Baby Susan’ in the closing spread (30/31) of *The Long Red Scarf*, and the babies in arms who begin and end *Window*, the young Sam (spread 4/5) and his own newborn child (spread 28/29).
A picture book trace: (a) the mother

As claimed earlier, in some books most or all of the deduction of relationships must be made from the visual text. In the search for family members there were a number of instances of elusive parents, especially mothers; here Derrida’s principle of the trace, already cited, is a useful conceptual tool. It seems that in constructing maps of meaning for young readers, picture books have mapped a world in which the mother is nearly, or just, out of sight, but ever ready to provide material comforts that contribute to children’s cultural embeddedness.

In the world of classic, international picture books, *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak 1963) contains the quintessential motherly trace. The reader learns that ‘his mother’ disciplines Max at the beginning of the narrative by sending him to his room; but although she appears in none of the illustrations, she is surely the provider of Max’s supper at the conclusion of his adventures (see chapter 7 for further analysis of maternal food-provision). In the Australian sample, *Annie’s Rainbow* provides an example of the opposite case: a mother who, unlike the *Where the Wild Things Are* mother, is not mentioned at all in the verbal text, but who can be (barely) discerned in the illustrations. Close scrutiny of the illustration on p 7 reveals both a man and a woman in the front of the car, while Annie sits in the back; but the verbal text for that spread refers only to ‘they’ and ‘her father.’ From a reading of the book as a whole, the reader ascertains that Annie is embedded in a family with two parents, a room of her own, a fine tree house, and the freedom to walk to a neighbouring house in search of adventure; but the mother’s contribution to this childhood is largely unspoken and invisible.

In *Drac and the Gremlin*, on the other hand, although here also the word ‘mother’ does not occur in the verbal text, the mother’s role in the narrative is a significant one. It takes an alert reader (and perhaps several readings) to realise that the expression ‘as wise as the White Wizard’ (p 2) refers to the mother. The White Wizard figures in the children’s imaginative play, being seen as having metamorphosed into a ‘flutterwing’ (p 14). In the concluding pages of the book (spread 26/27), a back view of the mother’s head is shown in the illustration, and
on the following spread her hands appear, passing over the ice cream cones as a
‘reward’ to the two children. This mother speaks ‘in role’ as the White Wizard,
saying to the children ‘You have saved the planet. . . We are very grateful. Please
accept as your reward our highest honour, the Twin Crimson Cones of Tirnol
Two.’ She cooperates with the play even to the extent of using the royal plural
‘we’—she has, after all, been said to inhabit the ‘palace’.

The mother as trace is a strong component of *Window*, where the first two
spreads include representations of the mother; firstly holding the baby Sam up to
the window, and secondly outside in the backyard, hanging washing on the
clothesline with Sam as toddler playing at her feet. Thereafter the mother
disappears from direct view but traces of her presence abound, abstracted into
the generally nurturing surrounds in which the growing Sam is embedded.
Similarly in *Marty Moves to the Country*, the mother is a shadowy figure:
sketchily depicted in illustrations (p 6, p 18, p 27); giving unappreciated advice—‘Mum
wasn’t much help either. “Nothing is all bad,” she said’ (p 19); and named as co-
donor with Dad of the longed-for bike. The jokey misogyny of the narrator’s
tone is encapsulated in his comment on his father’s advice to ‘’get to know girls”
. . . What can you expect from a man who married one’(p 19). Such jokey
misogyny is also apparent in *Counting on Frank*, with its one visual depiction of
‘Mum’ as part of the family surrounded by a sea of peas (p 21), and references to
her in the verbal text as the owner of a portable television (p 12), cook of the
grill eaten every night (p 20), and shopper for the family food (p 27). At the end
of the book, the narrator, his father and his dog are shown on a plane to Hawaii,
having won the flight in a guessing competition—and the mother is apparently
not accompanying them on the trip; a fact that seems to take maternal invisibility
to new heights! (and see below for analysis of the mother’s miniaturisation in
*First Light*).

In all these cases the elusive mother is clearly providing practical support for the
family members; she is a marginal character in the narrative, just as real-life
mothers are expected to be marginal in the ‘golden age’ model of family life, but
behind the scenes can be relied on to maintain food, shelter, clothing and nurture
for the family. It appears that radical changes have not occurred in the roles
played by picture book mothers since the study of American picture books which were winners or runners-up for the Caldecott Medal from 1950 to 1970, quoted by Tunstall (1992), in which all but four of the 25 pictures of women characters throughout the books were shown wearing an apron. Nor does the Australian situation seem to have changed since, in the words of Reeder (1981), ‘the literature chosen as representative of the best in Australian children’s books does not fully reflect the social developments of the last thirty years with regard to sex-roles.’

Grandparents and extended families

As mentioned above, siblings appear in the books of Bob Graham; his books also commonly feature grandparents, and two of the three sample books with grandparents in sizeable roles are his creations. This author/illustrator has himself commented on his desire to present whole families: ‘Ultimately, when my story is written and the pictures are done I like it to have the feeling and the authenticity of opening someone’s Family Photo Album and peering inside. Then I call it “finished”’ (Graham 1999 p 440). The family photo album Graham has in mind is apparently not of the nuclear family in isolation, as his picture books commonly treat relationships with extended family and neighbours. The grandparents in Greetings from Sandy Beach stay at home (possibly to mind the house) while the father, mother and children have their (brief) holiday. The grandparents are seen only at farewell and arrival time, but they are obviously important to the family: ‘Mum cried’ at farewelling them (p 4), and on the family’s return, Mum is shown staggering up the front steps to throw herself into Grandad’s arms.

In the other book by Bob Graham to feature grandparents, Grandad’s Magic, the children, Alison and Max, are shown as firmly embedded in a three-generation family, with stability and reliability even to the extent of a weekly ritual Sunday lunch. Considerable trouble is taken to prepare a traditional roast, with the table specially set—having the appearance, in this book published in 1980, of a ‘golden age’ family of the 1950s. One critic says of the book ‘Grandad’s Magic is a bittersweet tale of the decline of one’s powers in old age and emphasises the
strong links between the old and very young' (White 1999 p 441); such links are vital to the narrative, as shown in Grandad’s encouraging Alison as she learns to juggle (p 14), but equally important for the depiction of family are the links between the parental generation and the grandparents, as it is clearly the parents who have gone to the trouble of cooking and serving the special lunch. Grandad tries to reenact his youthful trick of removing the tablecloth²⁹ without disturbing the items on it, and the result is a near-disaster, as it is only by its ricocheting off the real dog’s back that the treasured china dog is not smashed, one of the china dogs that ‘were very precious to Alison’s mum. They were very breakable’ (p 6). Mum is described as smiling ‘thinly’ at this event, but the Sunday lunches continue with only minor changes to the ritual—a tactful accommodation has been made across the generations.

In the five books with older main characters, examined below, these older characters may be grandparents, but they are not identified as such, nor shown in relationship with younger people. One book other than those by Bob Graham features a grandparent, and it is the book with the most unusual social configuration, The Long Red Scarf. A family tree of its main characters would possibly be:

```
Grandfather (Stan)———Great Aunt Maude

(Sibling)———(Parent of narrator)

Cousin Isobel———Narrator

Baby Susan
```

The verbal text does, however, allow other possibilities (for example, Cousin Isobel may not be a first cousin, or she may be the child of Great Aunt Maude). Another related mystery in this book is the identity of the narrator, related

²⁹ In an era of the common use of table mats or bare table tops, it is possible to view the use of the tablecloth itself as part of a nostalgic background; without it, of course, there would be no narrative focus.
because the narration does not use expressions such as 'my grandfather' or 'my cousin' which would make the details of the family tree more unambiguous. The narrator is nowhere depicted in the illustrations. The narrator may be a child or an adult, and the reader knows nothing about this narrator except that he/she is either in the relationship of cousin, grandchild etc to these characters, or so close a friend as to feel justified in using the terms of relationship.

*The Long Red Scarf* is the only book in the sample to have an assortment of generations and relationships living under the same roof. A whole spread is devoted to depicting the grandfather's bedroom (spread 8/9), and the architectural details of this room, such as the casement rather than sash-hung windows, suggest that it is in the same house as the attic room that Cousin Isobel is 'paint[ing] in clean bright colours for [her] new baby' (p 14). The verbal text also gives hints that the grandfather lives in the same house as Cousin Isobel, as he engages in conversation with her 'early next morning' (p 14) and 'later that evening' (p 24). The house appears to be a site for inter-generational living. *The Long Red Scarf* has been read as a book challenging gender stereotypes, 'counter-sexist' in Saxby's phrase (1993 p 174). It certainly suggests that a pregnant woman can paint walls and can appear to be managing without a partner, as well as the more obvious textual message that men can knit their own scarves. The most challenging idea the book presents, however, may be that the family structure depicted within it is complicated and elusive, and perhaps more linked to the realities of life in many families than those of most of the other books.

As for relatives other than grandparents, apart from the (adult) cousin Isobel in *The Long Red Scarf*, there is only child cousin named as such, in *Not a Nibble!*, which tells of a family holiday involving two parents, three siblings and the accompanying cousin, Vin. Some of the cast of unnamed children portrayed in the illustrations of *Dog Tales* as playing actively together may be cousins. Like the visiting children in *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten* they appear to live close by to the main characters’ family, and probably could be best described as neighbours. *Dog Tales, Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten* and *The Midnight Gang* are the three books to show children engaged in play with such other children, not apparently members of their nuclear family, but close enough geographically and socially to
form part of the world in which the main characters' lives are embedded. This very geographical and social closeness may itself be read as a further item in the catalogue of components that make up the nostalgic background of picture books.

**Older child as main character**

An analysis of the age of the main characters reveals that all the child main characters are apparently of pre-puberty age except for those in *The Watertower* and *First Light*. *The Watertower* is in the genre of science fiction, and presents the two boy characters, Spike and Bubba, as touched by something strange and mystical. They are away from their families except for the scene in which Spike enters Bubba's window to retrieve some spare pants, and the only family relationship revealed in the book is the fear Bubba has that his mother will find out about his lost pants as she 'could land a wallop like nobody else in town' (p 15); and his later mentioning that she 'will be worried' about his late return (p 32). These maternal traces construct the mother/son relationship as caring and disciplinary, but they form a very minor element in the book as a whole.

*First Light* is the only book to examine closely the relationship between an older child and his parent/s. As shown in chapter 3, this is one of the exceptional books which moves into, and remains in, *chronos* or linear time.

The back-cover blurb of this book reads:

A boy and his father go fishing before first light. The boy would rather be at home but his father insists. In the eerie dawn, the sea seems ominous and threatening... *First Light* is the story of how a father and son are brought together by the mysterious power of the sea.

The implication of the blurb is that this picture book has a happy ending, that the relationship of father and boy has had difficulties but will be all 'plain sailing' from now on. As well as this implication in the peritext, there are a number of clues within the verbal and visual text of the book itself to an optimistic reading. These include the words:
His father released the oars and looked back. He saw his son's fear. 'I'll do it,' he said, understanding. ... The boy stood to return to his place, but his father shook his head, stopping him. 'Davey,' he said, sitting beside him. 'See, it's almost dawn. We'd get back faster if we took an oar each. There's your plane, remember?'
Together the oars lifted. Together they dipped to break the surface of the sea . . .

(pp 29–32)

Such words as 'understanding' and 'together' imply a closure in which father and son move closer together, having overcome their differences. Visual clues to this closure include the art on spread 30/31, with its full colour study of the father and son making eye contact as they row cooperatively; and the 'flying free' motif, represented by the boy's model aircraft (spread 4/5), the gull mentioned and depicted on p 32 ('a gull swooped low, the sweeping span of its pale grey wing catching the first clear light of morning'), and the endpapers which are filled with repeated shapes of gulls with wings outstretched.

A reading of *First Light* informed by psychoanalytical study suggests, however, that father and son together are left with a huge unresolved—if now shared—problem (Mills 2001 p 90). Such a reading, inspired by Freud and Lacan, seems particularly applicable to a work in which the characters are never named but referred to throughout the verbal text in archetypal terms such as 'the boy' and 'his father'.

Almost all the illustrations show the figure of the father as looming over his son in a threatening manner. The illustration on p 8 shows only the father's torso, clad in his heavy outdoor jacket, and the faceless father is here gripping a serrated breadknife, poised at the moment of cutting a slice of bread. The dominating (castrating?) father is shown here as wielding power not just over his son, but also over his wife. The only female human in this book, the wife/mother is an extreme example of the maternal trace, being not only almost invisible but literally shrunken as well—she appears as a tiny figure reflected on the shiny kettle. If the rectangular shape of the body of the kettle is considered as
a frame, the mother's has shrunk away to the very left of it, and is overpowered even by the shape of the cup and saucer which are reflected as bigger because they are apparently closer to the reflecting surface. This miniaturisation of the mother is given extra point by the dominance of the knife image, as a vector from the top left hand corner leads down the knife blade and handle to her shrunken body. The text also gives, in a dialogue between the parents, a few brief words spoken by the mother in defence of the son, and then 'His father cuts her off.' So both verbal and visual text reveal a 'cutting off' of the mother. She does not reappear (except, perhaps, symbolically) in the book.

According to the psychological reading of Mills (2001 p 94), the water and its creatures may be seen as representing the female. The boy's thoughts (p 15) suggest a sensuousness: 'The surface of the sea is a skin, he thought, a smooth, silky skin.' On the same spread (p 14) the illustration shows many humanoid squid, with pathetic eyes. The squid are merely bait to the father, to be sliced as 'lump[s] of mottled flesh' (p 17). By spread 18/19 the boy has moved to the position of the father: 'I could take a knife and cut it, [the sea] he thought, like silk, like skin . . . and he would have, but his father stiffened and sat up, lifting the rod high.'

From this turning point in the narrative, with its (embarrassingly?) phallic symbolism, the father and son are apparently united in their exploitative approach to the sea and its contents. The picture on p 20 shows the boy's face as animated for the first time, as the two males enjoy the fishing (and phallic) victory: 'The rod arched almost double, its tip dipping towards the water.' In the foreground of the illustration are the bloody, hacked remains of a squid. When the dinghy is lifted mysteriously by some underwater force (spread 24/25), the father's face is at last revealed. The moment of 'understanding' between father and son (and this word is used on p 29) is, according to this reading, as a result of the boy's acknowledgement that the sea contains 'something big and black and awful' (p 29). In the earlier scenes in the book, the father has been depicted as 'big and black and awful' to the boy, but now this fear has been displaced (Mills 2001 p 97). In other words, the optimistic ending of this picture book shows father and son united against the female principle, against all that the symbols of sea/water creatures/depth represent. The boy's mother from now on will be
seen as the true monster. The ‘flying free’ ending does not seem so untrammeled and optimistic when read in this light.

Mills’ reading of First Light may appear to place it in an entirely different category of family representation from the other books, with their cheerful families eating, playing and holidaying together. However, even in the world of chronos, literary purposes can be served by harking back to the ‘golden age’ of families. Mills claims that First Light is concerned with ‘voyeurism, sexual intercourse, mutilation, castration and murder, and resorts to abjecting the maternal in order for the boy character to attain manhood as defined and recognised by the father’ (2001 p 98). It may well be that such ‘abjecting’ of mothers, until only a trace remains, is a direct result of the dominance of the ‘golden age’ model of family life.

Within the narrow confines of the (usually 32-page) picture book, it is rare for a large cast of characters to be introduced. One, two or three human characters are the norm, with others serving as incidental figures. But in the case of First Light it seems that the absence of any other characters serves to emphasise the unhealthy relationships within the narrator’s family. The (unnamed) boy and his father, and his almost invisible mother, play out their relationship against a backdrop of the natural world, without meeting up with any other humans—this book could have as its subtitle No Neighbours. The experienced reader of picture books could retain concern for this boy character, whose life so obviously lacks cultural embeddedness.

Older adults as main characters

At first sight it may seem surprising that picture book creators, in making maps of meaning for young readers, so frequently focus on main characters who are old. This phenomenon was attributed, in chapter 3, to the association of the post-sexual generation, just as much as the prepubertal one, with the Arcadian world of cyclical time or kairos; weight is given to this argument by the fact that all these books, with the exception of Joseph and Lulu, have rural settings.
The image of an old person living alone in a rural setting exemplifies what Bachelard describes as 'hut dreams'. These dreams—or, more accurately in Bachelard’s terminology—day dreams, are descended from an age-old fascination with the life of rural hermits, and in hut dreams ‘we hope to live elsewhere, far from the over-crowded house, far from city cares’ (Bachelard 1994 p 31). Bachelard links ‘hut dreams’ with the adult reader’s memories of childhood houses; it is not surprising that writers and illustrators of picture books should choose to evoke these dreams when imagining a world for child readers. The solitary but safe world inhabited by the older characters evokes a ‘hut dream’ existence similar to the imaginative world of a child in the ‘forts, dens, houses, hideaways …’ (Marcus 1995 p 250) and tree houses, referred to in chapter 5 as such strong sites of nostalgia. Perhaps the placing of older characters alone seems sufficiently credible, while they play out what would be incredible fantasy in the case of a young child character, the aspiration to manage one’s own daily life untroubled by others—in other words, to play ‘cubbies’ for real.

But how solitary is the existence of these apparently self-sufficient older characters? The older people living without younger companions include two couples who live on farms, in Belinda and The Very Best of Friends. In the latter book the death occurs of James, the husband or partner of Jessie, and she is left alone with William the cat to mourn James’s death; so the book shares, at first, some characteristics with Belinda, and in its second half joins the category of the two other books depicting old women living without human companions: John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat and The Story of Rosy Dock. Just one book portrays a man living alone, Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons. The only one of these books to make mention of a family member outside the couple is Belinda, in which the scene is set for Old Tom’s difficulties in managing alone when

One day Bessie packed her bag,
put on her hat and coat
and went to stay with her daughter
who lived in the city.

(p 8)
Bessie’s ‘daughter in the city’ is one kind of link; there are numerous links of these characters with animal companions; but other varied communal links and embeddedness in networks are shown as well. Joseph, the caretaker of a city building in Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons, is most connected communally of the live-alone older characters: at the beginning of the book he is shown being greeted each morning with ‘welcome shouts’ of ‘Good morning Joseph’ (p 12), and when he at last arrived at an idea for the future use of the building, Joseph ‘tried it out on the twenty-eight tenants, who were all delighted . . .’ (p 40), and the book ends with Joseph’s staying on as a ‘happy, permanent tenant’ clad in a special uniform, evidence surely of respect from the whole tenant body. Jessie in The Very Best of Friends is shown to have a hobby that builds community even though distant from neighbours: in the evenings she ‘wrote letters to her one hundred and one pen-friends’ (p 13), and after James’s death it is a sign of her healing when she resumes emptying the letterbox and continues her correspondence. Rose seems the most isolated—she has a telephone (illustration p 25) but is not shown using it, and the car in the garage (illustration p 11) is barricaded in, in a manner that suggests it has not been driven for years; nevertheless Rose puts the milk bottles out each evening and takes in the full ones next morning, showing a practical connectedness to the community at large.

**Neighbourhood in the suburbs**

As has been argued, the model family of the ‘golden’ age is a suburban family; and this model extends into the depiction of the ideal neighbourhood as a suburban one. This neighbourhood consists of self-contained family houses, each with its own garden and play space, and retaining ‘the independence and private intimacy’ referred to by Peel (1998 p 3). But part of the suburban ideal also includes some proximity to other houses, and being situated close enough to each other to enable the occupants to walk easily from house to house and to facilities such as parks, schools and shops—to those aspects of community, in

---

30 Architects, developers and planners map communities by asking the fresh milk question, according to Macken, as ‘the workability of a community can be summed up in the question: can you get a litre of milk within a five-minute walk, or does it take a litre of petrol to get a litre of milk?’ (Macken 2002 p 31)
Sibley’s term, that first ‘seep in’ to a young child’s life. Such proximity, and the favouring of walking, travelling by bicycle or bus rather than going by car, is central to much of the nostalgic imagery of neighbourhood. In this matter, as in depiction of extended families, the books of Bob Graham display an exemplary nostalgia for a ‘golden age’ way of life; his books in the sample present child characters clearly embedded in neighbourhood communities as well as in supportive families. In Grandad’s Magic the house occupied by Alison and her family is located on a corner, and there is a generously wide footpath; pedestrian traffic is represented by a woman with her baby and young child on the path (spread 10/11). The block of flats next door is a compact old-style one, not a tower, and there are neighbours relaxing on balconies there. In Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten the new house into which the Summers family are moving has an almost identical corner location. The first endpapers show their house neatly bordered by footpaths along which both adults and children are walking, in this case observing the removalists and the family as they move furniture and possessions into the house. Neighbourliness is developed as a major theme in this book, with much play on fences, doors and entrances and the broaching of borders by the children’s football. ‘Mr Wintergarten’s front gate had not been opened for years’ states the text of p 13 (see Plate 13), and significantly Rose is shown in the illustration pushing the resistant gate open. Encouraged and helped by her mother, Rose, with bunch of flowers in hand, is about to enter the domain of the man with a reputation as an ogre. And all the neighbouring children are gathered around to watch this courageous act. Another Bob Graham book, Crusher is Coming, represents an accessible neighbourhood, with Peter and Crusher walking in by the front gate to Peter’s house after school, and being greeted by Peter’s mother (spread 10/11). After playing at Peter’s house, Crusher, Peter and little sister Claire walk to a corner store, and behind the counter with its display of sweets stand a man and woman ready to give personal service (spread 24/25). Both the act of walking home from school, and the closeness of the friendly neighbourhood store, constitute a nostalgic picture of suburban life.

In another suburban book, The Midnight Gang, the main character lives within convenient reach of a green and attractive park with old-style play equipment.
Plate 13

Graham, Bob *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten* Ringwood, Penguin 1992 p 13
Baby Brenda first goes down the driveway and out through her gate, and then 'she and her gang toddle up the road to the park' (spread 8/9). Nostalgia is at work in the depiction of the climbing frame, slippery-dip and swings, all of a type now removed from most playgrounds as likely to be unsafe. Baby Brenda returns next morning to the park with her mother and big sister Vanessa (spread 30/31), this time pushed in a pram while they walk.

The freedom to join neighbouring children in their play is also a feature of Dog Tales, with its many scenes of groups of children playing together. There are seven children in some scenes (p 11 and p 18); spread 22/23 has a total of nine children busily washing all the dogs; one scene (p 17) shows two children with a cat up in a large street tree, with one of the dogs pawing at its trunk, and in the background, on the opposite side of the street, three houses can be seen behind their neat fences, so that the viewer is led to believe that the children and their playmates are occupants of these or similar houses in this pleasant leafy street. The next widening ring of community is represented by the postman, depicted (p 28) in uniform with his neat shoulder bag; his presence provides a benign link to the larger world beyond this neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood in the country

The characters in rural books lead lives embedded in neighbourhood and community as well. In My Place in Space the extension outward, like ripples in a pond, of ever-increasing circles from a centre of self, becomes the key concept in an overtly didactic book. At the end of the book (pp 27-31), this is spelled out in the use of the traditional, playful device with which children have for generations labelled their school books, starting from their own name and working outwards to place themselves in an ever-expanding context. One possible result of this jocular labelling is an awareness of one's smallness in the world at large, and My Place in Space emphasises this awareness in the astronomy lessons of the didactic final spreads, which include the use of the phrase 'solar neighbourhood' in its specific scientific sense. Earlier in the book, however, the core idea of one's place in the universe is expressed in the long-drawn-out dialogue between Henry and the bus conductor, witnessed by all the other passengers on the bus; this
dialogue provides an example of communal interaction through the use of public, rather than private transport. The illustrations also show a neighbourhood which is anything but vast and impersonal. As mentioned in chapter 5, Henry and Rosie Wilson's home town is not depicted, but there are many scenes of the town from which they are catching their bus. Spread 4/5 shows its busy street life, with people shopping, walking dogs and riding bikes, but with one man simply leaning against the verandah post of the hardware shop, and absorbed in reading a book, his leisurely pose suggesting an unhurried era. The following spread (6/7; Plate 11) shows a group of people playing a team sport on a sports field, and another group, perhaps training for football, running together. The activities shown in these spreads are used in characteristic Roland Harvey manner to poke gentle fun at the diversity of humans and their doings, but there is also an underlying sense of community in these nostalgic scenes, with the inter-connectedness of the human characters serving as a contrast to the possibly alienating concept of being two tiny figures in a huge universe.

Another rural book, *The Long Red Scarf*, as well as portraying the extended family already discussed, presents a neighbourhood in which Grandfather and his friend Jake apparently live within easy reach of each other's houses, and of their favourite fishing spots. Grandfather is shown riding his bike to go fishing (spread 2/3), and at the conclusion of the book he is once again on his bike setting out with fishing equipment, this time accompanied by the walking figures of Jake and Cousin Isobel, who is carrying Baby Susan—in no instance is car travel required.

As well as the other themes treated in *Window*, the growth and deterioration of neighbourhood serve not only as a shaping device of narrative, but as an ideological shaping device. The early spreads show the home of a pioneering family, apparently isolated from the company of others; the increase in population is shown to lead to some benefits in terms of community, in that by spread 14/15 there is a scene of three children playing with a skipping rope on the paved area outside the building opposite Sam's house. This scene shows cooperative play by a group of happy children, in an apparently safe space—there is little traffic; in a 'neighbourhood' sense, this spread marks the
high point of *Window*. In spread 22/23 Sam exchanges raised-hand greetings with another young man who is outside Sam’s back yard, seated on a motor bike. By spread 24/25, however, connections by Sam’s family with others seem to be decreased: Sam and his girlfriend are shown standing with their backs to the street, facing inwards to the viewer (and to the window itself, with the now elderly cat on its sill). Behind the central characters, out on the street beyond the fence, people are moving about, pushing shopping trolleys and carrying objects apparently bought in the shops; the population seems to have grown too large for friendly engagement. As well as its overt lessons about environmental degradation in the scientific sense, *Window* appears to be making a case for the desirability of sparser settlement for reasons of community.

**Neighbourhood in the city**

Although urban surroundings are generally presented as alienating and impersonal, some books depict a microcosm of community within the less hospitable whole. In the case of *Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons*, the peritext sets up expectations of an engagement with the theme of community—on the back flyleaf, below a photograph of Ted Greenwood, the author/illustrator, are the words: ‘He is concerned about the way we live, about our relationships with each other, and he thinks people should enjoy living . . .’ And from the beginning of the narrative, when the text states that the lift is ‘affectionately known as Lulu’ (p 10), there is the implication of a community of occupants sufficiently at home in the building to have a nickname for their lift. The rumour that each of two tycoons hopes to demolish Prindiville House to build ‘another skyscraper to add to his empire’ (p 16) leads to a certainty that this community of occupants is doomed, that the change will result in ‘Prindiville’s end’ (p 17). The solution, to keep Prindiville House as ‘five floors of fun and fitness’ (p 42) is a neighbourhood solution: it enables Joseph and the pigeons to stay on as ‘happy, permanent tenants’ (p 46), and there is the expectation that not only will the tenants of the small building be able to continue their pleasantly communal life there, but the community will be enlarged beneficially by the access of the tower block tenants to the swimming pool and other attractions. By any purely commercial measure, the piece of city real estate that is the
land occupied by Prindiville House would surely make a much higher return if redeveloped into a ‘skyscraper’; but the solution is embraced for its benefits, to be measured not commercially but communally.

Neighbourhood, and the acts of walking or using public transport rather than cars, are also features of Where’s Mum?. As claimed in chapter 5, this book is set in an Australian cottage ‘transplanted’ from country to city. The frontispiece, the map-like ‘establishing shot,’ includes some tree-covered parkland, just one parked car and another car moving along a street, with some distant traffic on the bridge spanning a railway line—hardly the traffic-dominated life of urban reality. This almost car-free beginning prepares the reader for the scenes in which Dad walks the children home past other pedestrians (spread 6/7), while Mum is shown waiting at a bus stop (p 13). The final scene (p 32) of Dad offering cups of tea to the fantasy characters can be read as an enactment of the ritual of ‘inviting the neighbours in’, in a nostalgic evocation of the small, personal community. Although these neighbours are the characters of nursery rhyme and fairy tale, they have been brought into the children’s home environment and added to the community in which their lives are embedded.

Another element of neighbourhood is introduced in the urban book Murgatroyd’s Garden, where it is shown to include the world of sounds: the illustrations as well as verbal text make many references to the auditory environment. The streetscape of close-by house fronts (spread 6/7) reveals many occupants and passers-by visibly responding to the uproar made by Murgatroyd (the device is used of visually representing Murgatroyd’s loud screams as a strong wind, so that curtains are blown and people can hardly walk upright). The word ‘neighbourhood’ is used in the verbal text: ‘They could hear Murgatroyd’s screams across the road and down the street and even in the next neighbourhood’ (p 7); and the neighbours serve as a barometer of the progress of Murgatroyd’s cooperation. A reversion to a contented (and literally harmonious) neighbourhood is implied later in the book when the boy is no longer screaming at having his hair washed, and the occupants of nearby houses are shown happily playing their violin, horn and concertina (spread 16/17).
Holiday neighbours

Neighbourhoods, of a more temporary nature, form at seaside holiday places also. In Greetings from Sandy Beach, the bikers, the school children and the narrator's family form an unlikely community, which the narrator is clearly reluctant to see disbanded at going-home time. Not a Nibble! shows a similar formation of community, although this family is more self-contained in most activities. In the camping area 'the lady in the caravan next door' asks a friendly question of Susie (p 12); there are other people fishing, apparently companionably, with Dad and the two children at the bottom of the pier (spread 18/19); the narrator converses with 'Mr Blonski the newsagent' (p 20) and 'an old fisherman' (p 25). The importance of the holiday neighbours grows as Susie needs to share her enthusiasm at seeing the whales: 'Everybody raced to the end of the pier' (spread 26/27) and the illustration shows eleven people crowded together to watch the creatures; and afterwards Susie talks of her find at the milk bar, the newsagent's and the baker's (spread 30/31). As was argued in chapter 4, seaside holiday space has its own nostalgia; and the formation of such temporary communities contributes richly to the evocation of a yearned-for time of easier pace and relaxed sharing.

School communities

The school is a special case of community, unlike family and neighbourhood in that for children most attention is focused on their acceptance or rejection by members of their own age group; and the children themselves remain largely unaware of the contribution made by adults to their social acceptance. This is demonstrated in the two picture books that are set in school (one entirely, one partially), the only books in which a major theme is the need of a child to belong in a group of peers. The Race, which is set entirely in school and shows no scenes of the home life of the deaf boy, Greg, engages from the start with his need to belong:
Greg was like a piece of jigsaw that did not quite fit no matter which way it was turned. He was a puzzle because he did not quite belong. There was an emptiness around him, a gap between him and others. He seemed to be in a world of his own.

(p 6)

The new teacher ‘knew he wanted to belong’ (p 17) and ‘wanted to help Greg fit into his place amongst all the others’ (p 18), and it is through the ministrations of this caring adult that Greg’s problem is solved. The resolution of the problem, through the new teacher’s recognition of his deafness, is expressed in terms of Greg’s previous isolation, and present hope of joining the school community: ‘Greg knew that he would not be alone any more’ (p 32).

*Marty Moves to the Country* contrasts the narrator’s former sense of belonging, of being safely embedded, in his city surroundings, with his new sense of loneliness when the family has moved to the country. Initially Marty complains that he will miss the ‘things you can only do in the city’ such as meeting friends, playing football and riding a skateboard (p 11). The school is perceived by Marty as the answer to his new isolation: ‘I was so lonely I couldn’t wait for the holidays to finish and school to start’ (p 15). Then when he finds that the other members of his school class are girls, Marty feels a different kind of isolation; his acquiring a motor bike, and a best friend across the perceived gender barrier, contribute to his new feeling of ‘belonging’. In this book, as in *The Race*, adults (either schoolteacher or parents) provide support and practical solutions to the child’s isolation from peers, and a resolution is reached wherein the main character is seen to be on the brink of comfortable embeddedness within a community.

**A picture book trace (b): Aboriginal people**

Both the issue of representation of indigenous Australians (treated in this section), and that of the representation of other racial and cultural diversities (treated in the following section), are major issues to be engaged with in the critical study of children’s books. In the brief sections here I am able only to give a simple over-view of these matters, as they apply in the sample books. As claimed earlier in this chapter, when discussing references to the family, picture
books generally lag behind children's novels in their representation of the realities of life in Australia. This out-of-dateness is found in racial composition as well as in family structure. The near-absence of ethnic groups, other than white Anglo-Australians, in the sample books, is at first sight surprising, but can once again be attributed to the nostalgia at play in the picture book, the art form that has consistently been slow to respond to societal change. The traces of these two groups differ from the traces of mothers analysed above. The mother's recent or imminent presence is an important element in several picture books, contributing to the cultural embeddedness of child characters; whereas the traces of these two racial groups, where they do appear, are on the margins both of time and space.

The books in the sample present almost exclusively white Australian characters. There are a few minimal traces of other ethnicities, as cited in section (c) below. But the developments in the treatment of indigenous Australians, recorded by Bradford (2001 p 191) as occurring in children's texts (mostly fiction and biographical narratives) in the 1990s,—'books that rehearsed the possibilities and dilemmas of reconciliation . . . through narratives involving various forms of crosscultural relations', are scarcely to be found in the picture books, certainly not among those that became winners or honour books in the CBCA system. Admittedly two earlier texts that recount Aboriginal Dreamtime stories, *The Rainbow Serpent* (Roughsey 1975) and *The Quinkins* (Roughsey and Trezise 1978) were Picture Book winners; in the process of selecting the sample (described in chapter 1, Appendix A) they were among the books deleted, as not likely to reveal ideologies of contemporary Australian life. Another relevant book that achieved success was *Tjarany Roughtail* (Greene, Tramacchi and Gill 1992), a rich, multi-layered text including stories, illustrations and much cultural information, but as winner in 1993 of the Eve Pownall Award for Information Books (and not of the Picture Book award) does not fall within the scope of the sample.

Of the sample books, it is those of Jeannie Baker that once again prove an exception to general trends. Two31 of them include an element of Aboriginal

---

31 Possibly the third as well: in *Window*, spread 18/19 has two tiny female, dark-skinned figures looking into Sam's backyard.
presence. *Where the Forest Meets the Sea*, as stated in chapter 3, uses analepsis to present the imagined past of the rainforest. Two spreads, 20/21 and 24/25, include ghostly Aboriginal figures: the first in the form of playful children in the 'ancient tree', and the second, a (nearly transparent) figure, fully painted-up for ceremony and holding a boomerang. The degree of camouflage of these figures makes them exemplary 'traces' in Derrida's terms. But their consignment to the distant past of the rainforest is made even more complete by their placing in a context that includes the trace of a dinosaur (spread 14/15). In colonial discourse theory, these Aboriginal figures seem as firmly 'outside both history and modernity' (Bradford 2001 p 16) as the figures discussed by Bradford in books of the 1950s.

*The Story of Rosy Dock* has been discussed in chapter 3 as presenting ambivalent messages. Like other books by this author/illustrator, the book includes important peritextual components, and readers are certainly directed to understand the central message of the book as a concern with introduced plant species, as the endnote gives information about the rosy dock species and its introduction to Australia, and concludes: 'Without their normal predators, some non-native plants and animals multiply so quickly they change whole landscapes and push many native plants and animals to extinction' (p 32). But if attention is paid to the apparently extreme isolation of the main character, if focus is shifted to the lack of engagement of this woman with her neighbours, then a reading of this book also can be made in the light of postcolonial theory. The central character in *Rosy Dock* appears to have chosen not to engage with the Aboriginal people living nearby.

Bradford argues that 'postcolonial theory ... works to enhance the reading of mainstream picture books produced by non-Aboriginal writers and illustrators' (1996 p 94) and examines *Possum Magic* (Fox and Vivas 1983), finding that in this book 'reference to indigienity is bypassed', so that 'Australia' is reduced to 'white Australia', and furthermore that the book celebrates the hegemony of the coastal cities of Australia (Bradford 1996 p 101). Superficially *The Story of Rosy Dock* appears to be very different from *Possum Magic*. It is set far from the coastal cities, in the desert heart of central Australia. The white woman who is the central
character of the narrative is introduced only as ‘another settler’ (p 4), but the illustrations build an impression of her as a hardily independent pioneer, surviving in isolation against a backdrop of harsh dry country. The discourse of the verbal text is concerned only with the relationship of this woman to the natural environment; at no point are Aboriginal people mentioned. In the illustrations, however, Aboriginal people appear on three spreads and on the final endpapers. Spread 6/7 (see Plate 14) shows a group of five Aboriginal people sitting in a circle on the dry riverbed, as a sixth approaches, followed by a dog, and carrying something on her head—perhaps some water, as the verbal text for the spread is ‘The land here is hot and dry. Water is precious.’ These six Aboriginal people are in the middle distance and to the extreme right of the spread, and in the foreground and on the left the ‘settler woman’ is seen watering her fenced-in garden. The woman is turned with her back to the Aboriginal group; her turned back, and the distance between her and the group, indicate lack of desire for communication. Spread 16/17 shows the early stages of the big storm, and a black woman talking to the white woman across the divide of the front fence; the verbal text of this spread does not refer to this encounter but implies that the conversation may be a warning to the white woman about the impending flood. Spread 18/19 depicts a black man in the role of rescuer, paddling across the floodwaters on a raft towards the woman stranded on her rooftop; the distance between the two human characters is large, and the viewer is left doubting the outcome of this rescue attempt. Certainly if the white woman is to survive the flood, it will be only as a result of the neighbourliness of someone she had turned her back on earlier.

After this spread no human characters appear in the book—both verbal text and illustrations discuss only the world of nature, the river, birds, and plants—until the final endpapers which show the woman’s cottage abandoned to a family of cats, with its fences broken and an armchair stuck up in a forked tree. Four Aboriginal children ride by on horseback by the side of the riverbed, now dry again. None of these Aboriginal people (on the three spreads or the endpapers) is referred to in the verbal text. While the absence of the Aboriginal characters from the verbal text may seem not as extreme as their absence in Possum Magic, in which ‘the absence of reference to indigenous cultural practices . . . constructs
[Production Note:
This plate is not included in this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]
Aboriginal culture as invisible or even as absent' (Bradford 1996 p 103), their silencing in *Rosy Dock* serves to place them in a category not far removed from the flora and fauna of the area. This reading is consistent with the words of the opening spread:

> For thousands of years
> almost nothing here changed

(p 3)

which presage the appearance of the newcomers (p 4); and with the words quoted earlier from the endnote. The narrative has told of an almost unchanging landscape, disturbed temporarily by a white woman’s occupation and more permanently by the plants she introduced, but there is an underlying implication that is very close to that of *terra nullius*, the white Australian’s popularly held view of the land as being unoccupied until the arrival of white settlers.

These two books, the only ones of the sample to include Aboriginal figures, do not name these figures or refer to them in the verbal text: they are present purely as visual traces in an otherwise white world.

**A picture book trace: (c) ethnic diversity**

Commentary on the state of children’s books in general suggests that multicultural Australia is well represented. Writing as far back as 1986, Crewe is able to report that

> In the 1970s and 1980s there has been a marked increase in the number of characters from different ethnic groups in Australian children’s literature. Changing government policies on migration as well as changes in societal attitudes and values, both inside and outside Australia, have influenced these developments in literature.

(Crewe 1986 p 1)

However, in the list of 53 children’s books, with characters from migrant ethnic groups, examined in Crewe’s study, only one title is a picture book, *Stephen’s*
Tree (Hathorn and Laroche 1979). Much later, in their comments on Australian children’s literature in general in the 1990s, Lees and Macintyre describe great progress since the days of nineteenth century representations of racial ‘types’:

Stereotypes, notions of Anglo-Saxon superiority, ethnocentrism, and the view of immigrants as untrustworthy aliens or inscrutable foreigners are now rarely found . . . What it means to live at the ethnic, social, and economic periphery of society is now being explored.

(Lees and Macintyre 1993)

While it may be true to claim that ‘to live at the . . . periphery of society’ is being explored in fiction for older children, the situation in the picture books of the sample cannot be so described. Here the claim by Stephens (1995 p 100) is found to be true, that these books present ‘a centripetal society . . . that is characterised by homogeneity rather than diversity’. Some individual books that were published during the period under study, but that did not win Picture Book awards, include My Place (Wheatley and Rawlins 1987), which is examined in Appendix No 1; and Mr Plunkett’s Pool (Rubinstein and Denton 1992) a picture book that represents a suburban street as a microcosm of multiculturalism. But books in the sample are much more monocultural.

In the sample books, apart from the traces of Aboriginal people discussed above, there are three kinds of trace of ethnicities other than white:

(i) Six books reveal in the illustrations alone, with varying degrees of clarity, that some of the characters (mostly peripheral) are darker than white skinned. These characters include the policewoman in The Paw (p 4); some of the schoolchildren in Marty Moves to the Country (p 16); two of the unnamed children (one boy, one girl) in the cast of characters interacting with the (named) dog characters in Dog Tales; and some of the schoolchildren who spill out from the bus to the beach in Greetings from Sandy Beach. In Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten, two of the neighbouring children, who arrive to tell of the ‘stories in the street’ about Mr Wintergarten, are the dark-skinned Emily and Arthur (and they are the only named dark-skinned characters in the whole sample). The final instance is the
appearance in *The Midnight Gang* of one dark-skinned baby among Brenda’s gang (Brenda is the only named baby of the four); this unnamed dark baby is the only character, not white-skinned, to appear on the cover of any of the sample books.

(ii) In one book, *The Watertower*, one of the two main characters is a boy named Bubba D’Angelo (p 5); his mother is referred to in the verbal text as Mama D’Angelo (p 15) and is apparently depicted, as a stereotypical mother figure, looking out of the window (p 25). Bubba’s ethnicity is in no other way referred to.

(iii) There are ‘imaginary’ or ‘fairy tale’ characters that appear in *The Journey Home* and *Where’s Mum?*. In the first, the Gypsy Queen is thus named, but she is depicted as fair-skinned (spread 26/27); in the second, some of the fairy tale characters that have followed Mum home are depicted as dark-skinned and ‘exotic’ (p 21).

In all of these instances, only number (ii), and Emily and Arthur in *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten*, are named characters. Otherwise, it is only through poring over the detail of the illustrations that even the above-mentioned few traces of non-white characters are discernible. The characters represented in the sample books are predominantly those of the old white Australia; the maps of meaning provided by them are conservative maps, in their representation of race just as in their representation of the family and neighbourhood of the ‘golden age’.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that picture books depict characters whose lives are *culturally embedded* in networks of family, neighbourhood and community. These networks hark back to the ‘golden age’ of nuclear families and to an idealised Arcadian close-knit community. It was argued that the picture book world is inhabited by mostly white Australian characters, with Aboriginal and other ethnic groups (like mothers) discernible only through the *trace*. The following chapter will continue the study of semiotic features of the characters’ lives,
examining two features that overtly celebrate community, food and clothing, and finding in their representation further evidence of the nostalgic impulse in picture books.

Note

Appendix No 2 provides a brief analysis of some non-human characters, the animals in picture books, using Leach's (1964) taxonomy; and makes claim that their representation also contributes to the nostalgic content.
Chapter 7

Nostalgic representation of food and clothes

Introduction

Through this thesis it has been argued that the disclosure of homes in the world in picture books is made by many visual details, including ‘aspects of the everyday’ (Johnston 1998 p 25). This chapter will analyse the functions of two semiotic features of everyday life, food and clothing, which are both external, visible markers, manifest in illustrations, of that cultural embeddedness in family, neighbourhood and community which was posited in the previous chapter. It will be argued, based on a categorisation by Nikolajeva, that the three main functions of food are symbolising security, symbolising community and acting as a magical agent, and all will be shown as closely linked to nostalgic representations of childhood. Although semiotic theory about clothing stresses its communicative function, the fact that children’s clothes are chosen by adults leads to some differences from adult clothing. It will be argued that the same categories applied to food can be applied to the semiotic functions of clothes: clothes denote security, community, or can act as magical agents, with a special category of magical function the use of dressing-up clothes. This chapter will provide further evidence for the claim that throughout most picture books can be discerned a nostalgic background.
1. Nostalgic representation of food

Introduction

Throughout the earlier chapters, it was argued that illustrations reveal the extent to which children can find ‘homes’ in the world. The provision of food in picture books, as in real life, its adequacy and the manner in which it is provided, is an eloquent marker of the at-homeness of the characters.

At the most basic and universal level, food is necessary to maintain life, and the human character, real or fictitious, who does not eat will not survive. It can be argued that the realisation that food is essential to life underpins all treatment of food in literature: in the words of Doody, food in literature ‘reminds us not just of our imagination, but of need’ (Doody 1996 p 421). However, the functions of food that are semiotic, that go beyond mere eating for survival, have ancient origins and are deeply interwoven in the lives of all peoples: these include the activities of cooking, serving and eating food, and food-related communal ceremonies. The anthropologist Lévi-Strauss devised a complete typology of cultures based on attitudes to food, with an emphasis on the oppositions of human/animal, raw/cooked and animal/vegetable (Lévi-Strauss 1983); and Telfer, writing of the philosophical treatment of food, claims that the emphasis in traditional philosophy on the pleasures of food is misleading, as food and eating are valued for many other reasons (1996 p 37). When we eat, ‘we are not merely consuming nutrients, we are also consuming gustatory (taste-related) experiences and, in a very real sense, we are also “consuming” meanings and symbols’ (Beardsworth and Keil 1997 p 51). The widespread treatment in literature of food and its acquisition, preparation and consumption is always replete with cultural significance, so that even the search for food for sheer survival, such as that undertaken by Robinson Crusoe to keep himself alive when alone on his island (Defoe 1719), becomes overlaid with ritual significance; in other words
Crusoe’s hunting, goat husbandry and grain-growing are cultural acts.\footnote{Crusoe managed to breed goats and keep them in an enclosure. His experience with cereal crops was somewhat different. He had forgotten that he had emptied out a bag containing dust and husks, and was surprised when ‘I saw about ten or twelve ears come out, which were perfect green barley of the same kind as our European, nay, as our English barley’ (Defoe 1719 p 58). This discovery occasioned a burst of theological reflection: ‘It startled me strangely, and I began to suggest that God had miraculously caused this grain to grow without any help of seed sown, and that it was so directed purely for my sustenance on that wild miserable place.’ When he realised that the barley had appeared where he had emptied out the bag ‘my religious thankfulness to God’s providence began to abate too’ until he at last concluded that it was the work of Providence that he had emptied the bag in a place where conditions were right for the barley to germinate and grow. \textit{Robinson Crusoe} is, after all, from a modern perspective, an archetypal story of colonisation, so the reader does not expect Crusoe to learn to eat the local plants, and is not surprised that Crusoe needs not just European but English barley to feel secure about his survival.}

For real-life human children, without the skills to be their own Crusoes, to hunt or grow their own food, the primary need is to be fed by others, and the symbolical meaning of food as this primary need of children is manifest in children’s literature (Nikolajeva 1997 p 13). Nikolajeva elsewhere summarises the three main functions of food in children’s books: ‘Food can be a \textit{magical agent} allowing the protagonist to enter the magical world. It can be the central \textit{symbol of security}, in the first place by its connection with home. Further, it can be a \textit{symbol of communion}, of belonging to a certain group’ (Nikolajeva 2000 p 16; italics inserted by the present writer). In this chapter an examination will be made of these three major functions claimed by Nikolajeva, whose analysis is in reference to novels for children; but the order of the three functions will be changed to reflect their relative importance in the semiotics of the picture book, so that food will be examined firstly as symbol of security; secondly as symbol of communion, of belonging; and thirdly as magical agent. In treating the functions of food in this order, a pattern will be discerned once more of extending rings, like ripples on a pond moving outwards from a centre, just as was observed previously in relation to concepts of ‘home’ and ‘family’ (chapter 6). At the heart of the imagined world of nostalgically perceived childhood is the infant embedded culturally in the secure world of home and family; extending from this centre are the rings of a supportive neighbourhood and community; and from this base the child can step out to worlds of magic and adventure, secure in the assurance of a safe return.
For children the need for food is always associated with dependence on adults, and an essential part of childhood security is confidence in the provision of food, the knowledge that an unfailing supply will be provided by parents or parent figures. This unfailing supply is linked to the Progenitrix, Mother Earth in all her generous fecundity, who in myths teaches humans to sow and bake bread; as Nikolajeva points out (2000 p 15), there are many remnants of these myths in the form of the Cornucopia, an unfailing supply of food such as that supplied by Elisha in the widow’s cruse of oil (2 Kings ch 4), or the magical mills or bags or tablecloths of folktales. Furthermore Nikolajeva maintains that the Cornucopia, the unlimited supply like a mother’s breast, remains unquestioned while the child stays in the security of childhood, but ‘the frequent appearance of food [in story] signals the subconscious fear that one day food can wane’ (2000 p 16). So the idea of a limitless Cornucopia is clearly linked with the nostalgic, Arcadian childhood of kairos or circular time, the childhood depicted in the majority of picture books (see chapter 3).

Consistent with the pattern of expanding rings from a secure centre (emphasised in chapter 6), the strongest sense of security occurs when food is provided by the mother; as will be shown, in picture books this maternal giving of food can be from mother to human child or from mother figure to pet animal. Provision of food by the father implies security, but mixed with some sense of carnival. As the rings expand into the wider neighbourhood, other semiotic meanings of acceptance and community are added.

a) Food as symbol of security: maternal provision

The mother as food-provider remains at the centre of the nostalgic picture book world, and secure child characters in the picture book know that the Cornucopia will not fail—they do not need to be anxious about food, confident that it will be supplied, in most cases by the benevolent mother figure who may or may not be present in the verbal or visual text. Both the food itself and the careful and affectionate manner in which it is served are significant signs of secure childhood. As was claimed in chapter 6, the maternal trace is frequently an element in the picture book, and it is exemplified in the international classic Where the Wild Things Are (Sendak 1963). In the words of McGillis (1996 p 64), the mother in this...
book 'functions as something of a superego'; she initially uses food deprivation as a punishment for the misbehaving Max:

```
his mother called him "WILD THING!"
and Max said 'I'LL EAT YOU UP!'
so he was sent to bed without eating anything.
```

(1963 p 6)

But at the end of the book Max arrives home from his adventures to find his supper waiting for him: it is visible in the illustration (p 37, see Plate 15), neatly served on a small cloth-covered table in his own bedroom (in a bowl with an under-plate, a separate plate for bread—or layer cake?—and a glass, probably of milk); and in the final words of the verbal text, 'it was still hot' (p 38); so this mother, this model of a 'good provider', has (apparently) slipped into the room, placed the food there and slipped out again. The temperature of the supper serves several narrative purposes, including the possible suggestion that all of his imaginative adventures with the Wild Things have taken Max only a very short time as measured in the mundane world; and including also the implication that this mother can change rapidly from 'superego' to forgiving and nurturing, and has even timed things so that the supper is at perfect temperature. Referring to the phrase 'it was still hot', Moebius states that 'here "it" emerges as unspeakable and unseeable motherlove' (1986 p 146).

A slightly more visible mother figure, that of 'Mother Hubbard', occurs in another international classic picture book, *Each Peach Pear Plum* (Ahlberg and Ahlberg 1978), created by the same author and illustrator as the previously analysed *Peepo!* (chapter 2). In *Each Peach Pear Plum*, with its simple rhyming text based on the characters of fairy tale and nursery rhyme, Mother Hubbard appears in both verbal text and illustrations early in the book (spreads 6/7 and 8/9), but does not reappear until the end—at first, in the form of a maternal trace with the appearance, next to the nostalgic cottage (p 27) of a large, crusted pie invitingly displayed on a blue-and-white checked tablecloth under the fruit trees, a pie that is apparently, like Max's supper, 'still hot', as there is a curl of steam rising from its centre. The following illustration has the pie at its centre, and the
Plate 15

[Production Note:
This plate is not included in this digital copy
due to copyright restrictions.]
foot and apron of Mother Hubbard can be glimpsed as she appears at the righthand side of the spread, struggling under the weight of a pile of small bowls. The ending is a scene of a shared, celebratory meal (spread 30/31), with all the characters who have appeared earlier in the book assembled around a veritable Cornucopia, the huge and apparently limitless pie: more than a dozen characters are shown finishing off servings of the pie but the dish still contains a generous portion. The benevolent mother figure sits, teacup in hand, smiling at the eaters, and she is dressed still in white cap and apron, the signs of domestic servitude. Mother Hubbard, like Max’s mother in Where the Wild Things Are, has apparently set everything to rights with the ungrudging preparation and supply of limitless food, but in her case it is not just a single child who has benefited from her provision, but a wider community of characters.

In the Australian sample, Marty Moves to the Country demonstrates the reassuring sense of security provided by a mother figure serving food and drink for children. The boy narrator, encouraged by his teacher, reluctantly invites home Josie, who needs help with her maths, and the scene of their working on the maths in front of the fire is full of awkwardness (spread 20/21). Then, on the following spread, the verbal text states: ‘Mum brought in lemonade and cake’ (p 22); like Max’s mother in Where the Wild Things Are she is not a visible presence in the illustration, but the motherly trace is discernible in the glasses, plate and jug shown in the illustration—the jug, rather than a bottle, suggesting that Marty’s mother has gone to the trouble of producing homemade lemonade. Such maternal generosity reassures the reader that Marty’s problems will soon be surmounted, and this prediction is borne out by his cheerful enthusiasm (p 25) when he sees Josie’s motor bike.

Symons, historian of changes in Australian food, claims that a group of foods described as ‘dainty’ rose in popularity in 1940s and 1950s Australia, as differentiation was occurring between men’s and women’s attitudes to eating. Daintiness, unlike the dominant model of male consumers as ‘lazy eaters and sudden drinkers’, embodied ‘feminine’ qualities like ‘lightness, prettiness and gentility’ (Symons 1982 p 139). A picture book mother, whose offerings belong to this ‘dainty’ group, is Peter’s mother in Crusher is Coming. She appears in both
verbal text and illustration, carrying a tray to the bedroom and offering Peter and his after-school visitor ‘fairy cakes and tea’ (spread 14/15, see Plate 16). The ‘lightness, prettiness and gentility’ of these offerings, and the two curly-haired female characters who accompany them (Peter’s mother and sister), all appear at the left of the spread, and form a contrast with the elements of masculinity and toughness to their right, including the skull-and-crossbones motif hanging on Peter’s door. In this confrontation between the female and male manners of serving and eating food, the female is to predominate. The cups and saucers (not mugs) and delicate iced cakes are to have a perhaps unexpected appeal for the big, tough Crusher, and the picture on the following spread (16/17) shows that all the drinks and food have been consumed. Peter’s mother has generously provided food and has helped to ‘tame’ Crusher (or perhaps reveal his already tamed nature) with the dainty food; Crusher proceeds to play imaginary, small-scale tea parties with Peter’s younger sister Claire (spread 22/23). As a final overturning of the tough male stereotype, when they have walked to the sweet shop Crusher takes on some of the maternal role himself, asking ‘What would your sister like?’ and buying an ice-cream for Claire (spread 24/25). Peter’s mother, like Marty’s mother in Marty Moves to the Country, Max’s mother in Where the Wild Things Are, and Mother Hubbard in Each Peach Pear Plum, has not only provided food in the manner of the Cornucopia, but apparently taken time and care to prepare homemade delicacies for her young dependants. All these mother figures show a nostalgic excess of beneficent maternal provision.

The suburban Arcadia of Drac and the Gremlin, as claimed in chapter 6, contains throughout most of the book the trace of a benevolent mother who has provided opportunities for play, and apparently watches from afar over the happily playing children. The mother is shown in the illustrations only from p 27. As Stephens comments (1992 p 192), when she hands ice cream cones to the children, the mother uses this ice cream as a reward for the children’s cooperative and imaginative play.

‘You have saved the planet’ says the White Wizard. ‘We are very grateful. Please accept as your reward our highest honour, the Twin Crimson Cones of Tirnol Two.’

(p 29)
The illustration that these words accompany, spread 28/29, shows a high degree of sensuousness in the presentation of food; the two children reach out for delicious-looking pink ice creams, and there is a close-up study of the mother’s hands holding the cones with their glistening contents. This mother is a Progenitrix who provides food beyond the necessary, and again it is served with aesthetic care.

Kress and van Leeuwen, in their grammar of the semiotics of the visual (1996 p 47), claim that contrasting shapes have different semiotic implications, angularity representing the manufactured world and curved shapes representing organic growth. An item in the ‘organic growth’ category that occurs frequently in picture books is the teapot: although most teapots are in reality ‘manufactured’, they are represented as close to spherical in shape; and the traditional rounded teapot conveys a strong semiotic implication of the organic, the female, the maternal. Teapots also evoke the concept of the maternal role, not only in providing for the family, but in creating and staging the ‘family-meal-as-event’, which can be seen as ‘counteracting the centrifugal forces which push apart the activities of the individual family members’ (Beardsworth and Keil 1997 p 82); the teapot implies the sharing of a drink brewed and served in unhurried ceremony, not the rushed, individual product of a teabag. Such maternal teapots form an element of nostalgic background in Marty Moves to the Country (p 27) and in The Very Best of Friends (spread 12/13); the latter teapot, rounded and blue, is placed on a bench just behind Jessie’s chair, with two cups next to it and the animals’ dishes below, the whole suggestive of shared domestic peace. In John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat (spread 8/9) the spherical teapot on the hob of the fireplace suggests not only domestic comfort, but also Rose’s keeping up of standards even when without other (human) companions. In other instances, pots of tea have been brewed by male characters: in The Long Red Scarf (spread 24/25), where gender-role reversal is a dominant theme throughout; in Sunshine (p 12), where the pot (perhaps a teapot, perhaps a coffee pot) provides part of the breakfast shared by the family in bed; and in The Paw, where the sharing of a pot of tea by Leonie and the old gentleman after his ordeal demonstrates forgiveness and companionship, as well as his wealth, for the pot is a fine silver one (p 25).
every case the teapot carries implications of the organic, the maternal, and nostalgia for the unhurried pace of kairos.

‘Mothers’ providing food for animals

The mother figure may be providing for animal characters which have taken the place of children in some picture books. Two instances of such ‘mothering’ are in John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat and The Very Best of Friends, both of which depict a woman living alone except for animal companions (see also Appendix No 2). In these books the significance of the ‘mother’/pet food-giving appears to be equivalent to the cases of mother/child food giving, a sign of nostalgically benign family life.

John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat centres on the giving and withholding of food, and the relationship between Rose and her pet dog may be read as equivalent to that of a mother and a young child. The first illustration (p 3) shows food for both human and dog, with John Brown’s bowl on the floor and Rose’s own food on the table; but the subservient position of the dog’s bowl is counteracted by the fact that it is in the centre of the picture and in the foreground, and also by the almost front-on position of the dog himself to the viewer: clearly Rose’s most important role is as provider for her dog. Her own food, in the form of a loaf of bread with its rounded shape echoing the comfortable curves of Rose’s body, is nostalgic in its simplicity. In the second illustration (p 4) Rose is again ministering to the needs of those dependent on her, in this case the chooks and ducks; and food appears again on page 5, with its Arcadian illustration of Rose at rest under the pear tree, with its ripe pears visible among the foliage. These first three images of the book build a composite impression of a felicitous existence for both Rose and her ‘children’, encapsulated in the verbal text as “We are all right, John Brown,” said Rose’ (p 7); and, as mentioned previously, by the marker of domestic contentment in the form of the round teapot on the hob in the evening (p 9). But this comfortable situation is shattered by the arrival of the midnight cat, and the sharing of Rose’s maternal care when she instructs John Brown: “Go and give it some milk” (spread 10/11). The milk bottle carrier shown on page 15 contains two bottles ready for Rose to put out, probably an increase on the normal needs of this household of two; and
the contest that develops—with Rose giving milk to the cat and John Brown tipping it out, can be seen to parallel sibling rivalry, with the two animals competing for Rose's maternal provision. The dog's persistence seems to be successful, as shown in the meal scene on spread 20/21, with John Brown now sitting on a chair, which brings him to an equal height with Rose. Although Rose is eating her meal with knife and fork, and John Brown's food dish is underneath his chair, there is a new equality in their relationship; or as he takes his place opposite Rose, he may have reached even more than equality, for it is Rose who is depicted with her eyes lowered, not meeting the dog's gaze.

Although John Brown has been assertive to Rose, he remains as dependent on her for sustenance as an infant, as is demonstrated in the scene (p 24, see Plate 17), a study in emptiness, wherein John Brown waits alone in the kitchen for breakfast, after Rose has taken to her bed. All the (nostalgically old-style) utensils are lined up on their rack on the wall, the kettle and large cooking pot sit in place, and the dog’s food dish is bare. Once again, as in the first illustration (p 3) this bowl is in central position, as was the cat’s bowl in the spread showing Rose attempting to feed it despite the dog’s wishes (spread 16/17). The text—'nothing happened’—and the bare kitchen express a deep lack in John Brown's life now that Rose has turned away from activity. His measurement of time is by missed meals—'He thought all through lunch time and when supper time came, he was still thinking' (spread 26/27); and it is 'an hour past supper time' (p 28) when John Rose gives in to Rose's desire to admit the midnight cat to the house.

As discussed in chapter 3, *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat* may be read as ending with Rose's approaching death. Such a reading is consistent with the lack of food images in the closing pages—a woman meeting death with equanimity will no longer be expected to have an interest in food. Rose, at first the provider, the 'mother', to all her animal dependants, has attempted to include the cat in this circle, but has been thwarted by John Brown; she then starves both herself and John Brown until he agrees to admit the cat; and (presumably) she finally starves herself contentedly until her death. In Nikolajeva's terms (2000 p 16), as quoted earlier, this book has such frequent appearances of food that it must be signalling
[Production Note:  
This plate is not included in this digital copy  
due to copyright restrictions.]

Plate 17

Brooks, Ron in Wagner, Jenny and Brooks, Ron John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat  
Harmondsworth, Penguin 1977 p 24
a fear of its possible disappearance, and, by the end, has moved away from the comforting nostalgia of the Cornucopia.

The other picture book in which the giver-recipient relationship is between human and animal is *The Very Best of Friends*; it centres, like *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat*, on the giving and withholding of food, and, as in the previously discussed examples, not just the act of food-providing, but the manner of presentation, is significant. As outlined in chapter 5, the death of James, the male human character, occurs abruptly in the middle of the narrative; in fact this death is literally the turning point, the very centre of the book, spread 16/17 of 32 pages. Thereafter the focus is on two characters only, Jessie and the cat William, and once again the providing of food is a measure of ‘maternal’ care. Before James’s death, Jessie has ‘always made sure that William had a tasty piece of fish and a fresh bowl of milk . . .’ (p 6), and the ‘two shining food bowls’ are shown in the illustration (spread 12/13) below the table with its teapot and cups. But after the death, Jessie ‘didn’t keep [William’s] bowl full of milk’ (p 19), the bowls appear outside the door (p 21) and Jessie puts out leftovers only (p 27). The recovery, first of Jessie, and consequently of the cat, is shown by Jessie’s bringing in the two bowls, washing them and putting them under the kitchen table (p 28). The penultimate illustration (spread 30/31) shows a contented domestic scene, with Jessie sitting on the sofa writing letters, while the cat William ‘snuggles beside her and purrs like an engine.’ Jessie’s own plate (with what appears to be an apple core) and cup and saucer are on the floor at her feet, an unprecedented levelling of her world to William’s. His elevation to the sofa, while her eating utensils are on the floor, is an equivalent scene to that cited above of John Brown being raised to chair level (spread 20/21 *John Brown, Rose*). The visible sign of care is *well-presented* food which has been offered to William during James’s lifetime, denied after his death, and restored when Jessie herself has recovered from the loss.

**Carnivalesque treatment of food**

Carnivalesque treatment of food in literature need not be manifest in orgiastic feast scenes, but can consist of a more subtle overturning of normal routines. As discussed in chapter 3, the concept of Carnival was expounded by Bakhtin as a
contrast between the anarchic festivities of special holidays and the normal, hierarchical medieval world (Morris 1994 chapter 17). Stephens has included in his study of the carnivalesque in children's books the observation that

The carnivalesque children's feast—whether 'midnight feast' or birthday party or food-fight—celebrates a temporary liberation from official control over the time, place and manner in which food is consumed.

(Stephens 1992 p 122)

In the classics of children's literature in the English language, the most famous carnivalesque scene associated with food is the picnic in *The Wind in the Willows*, in which the Rat shows hospitality to the Mole:

[Rat appears] staggering under a fat, wicker luncheon-basket. 'What's inside it? asked the Mole, wriggling with curiosity. 'There's cold chicken inside it,' replied the Rat briefly; 'coldtonguecoldhamcoldbeefpickledgherkinsalsafrenchrollscress sandwidgespottedmeatgingerbeerlemonadesodawater—' 'O stop, stop,' cried the Mole in ecstasies: 'This is too much!' 'Do you really think so?' inquired the Rat seriously ...

(Grahame 1908 p 13)

The 'ecstasies' of Mole over such a picnic demonstrate joy not only at the contents of the luncheon-basket, but also child-like anticipation of freedom to enjoy the picnic with his new-found friend—in this aspect the two animals are enjoying 'liberation from official control' on their picnic excursion.

The most overtly carnivalesque book in the picture book sample is *Dog Tales*, which has as central characters a 'family' of five dogs. Unlike *The Wind in the Willows*, this book does not treat the animal characters as hardly-disguised humans, but is a straightforward celebration of exuberant, doggish energy. Dogs are 'helter-skeltering around' (p 21) engaged in all sorts of activities that are forbidden to children in most families; one of the dogs, Josh, steals a leg of lamb
from the table (p 5, p 9) and another shares food with the cat (p 16); altogether the atmosphere is lively, 'full of beans' (p 14), and perhaps conducive to envy in young humans for the untrammelled lives of the five dogs. But such excess of food, and freedom from adult constraints, are rare in the picture book world; rather, the carnivalesque is represented by subtler upsets, such as the father’s taking on of the mother’s traditional role, or the use of satirical language, as shown below.

Fathers as carnivalesque food providers

The father as food-provider plays a more mixed role than does the mother: he both represents security, but also overturns normal expectations of food-provision, thereby furnishing the most common expression of carnival in the picture books. In Sunshine the co-operative efforts of father and child to prepare and share breakfast play an important role in building an impression of the child’s embeddedness in a close and caring (apparently one-child) family; the fact that the child is encouraged in competency is demonstrated in spread 12/13, where she is pictured making careful progress towards the bedroom, carrying a bowl of cereal while her father carries a tray with other breakfast provisions. The earlier scenes in the kitchen have culminated in a carnivalesque revelation, that the very young child is more skilled domestically than her father. The father has been absorbed in reading the paper while also trying to make toast (spread 10/11), and the child competently pours her own milk onto the cereal, eats it and then alerts her father to the fact that the toast is burning. The humour is gentle, but the message that men are not entirely competent domestically is implied.

Where’s Mum? maintains implications of the carnivalesque throughout, with its surprising blend of the everyday and the fantastic, and its final celebratory scene. While the father is shown as a generous provider of food, the scenes are chaotic as he struggles home with the children after school, arms full of shopping (bread, eggs and fruit), and the children relax near the kitchen bench laden with muesli, orange juice, and plums (spread 14/15). The cat is fed by this father (p 25); and hot drinks borne by him provide a satisfactory end to this fantasy, with the nine cups and mugs on a tray (p 32), so that an observant reader can count to see that
each guest is provided for. But the illustrations succeed in showing domestic matters on the brink of being out of control, from the scene (spread 10/11) with the eggs falling from the father’s arms, and the baby eating some biscuit found on the floor; this book is also suggestive that the father in his role as food-provider does not represent the unmixed security of the mother.

As claimed in chapter 4, the seaside can provide a bridge between nature and culture, an in-between place where roles are frequently exchanged, including those of parents. *Greetings from Sandy Beach*, the picture book about a camping trip to the beach, derives some of its humour from the mention (in the verbal text) of the meal ‘cooked’ by the father: ‘Dad cooked the dinner—Camp Stew out of a tin’ (p 24); and the humorous effect is achieved partly from the implication that this family normally eats *proper* meals, at home, cooked by the mother. The simplest seaside meal of all is in *Where the Forest Meets the Sea*, where father and son have moved away from all other (present day) human company. Towards the end of the book the narrator walks towards his father:

My father has made a fire
and is cooking the fish he caught.
I like fish cooked this way.

(p 26)

The reader can assume that the fire has been lit on the beach with the help of a modern packet of matches, and also that the father and son will leave the beach at the end of the day (in their dinghy with its outboard motor) and return to the comforts of a late twentieth century lifestyle. But for this moment, as they share the meal, the two appear to have returned to a lifestyle closer to that of the earlier people glimpsed, in ghostly form, by the boy in his journey through the forest. The two fish being cooked are still intact (spread 28/29, see Plate 18), complete fish with eyes, fins and tail still visible, and the sparse charcoal fire is a stylised triangle of logs. The father and son, both clad only in shorts, are alone on the sand with their fire and their fish, in a scene which could almost be from any century. This simple meal is carnivalesque in that there are none of the usual
[Production Note: 
This plate is not included in this digital copy 
due to copyright restrictions.]
trappings of a modern picnic: no bags, cutlery, plates, seats or rugs, no female company and no signs of a motherly presence. The child is secure in his enjoyment of parental provision, but with the added enjoyment of being away from the normal and the routine. The nostalgia at work here, as elsewhere in Baker's work, presents an imagined Arcadian past as a contrast to the possibly not so good future. 'Choice of food can be an assertion of values and principles', according to Telfer (1996 p 37); Where the Forest Meets the Sea uses representation of food for didactic purposes to assert the value of 'good', natural food such as that enjoyed by father and son, with 'bad' food, represented by a Coca Cola can and a paddle pop, in the environmentally degraded future imagined by the narrator (spread 30/31). A similar dichotomy occurs in Window, for example in the illustration that includes a truck advertising 'Deli Cups' near the small building with a sign on its door announcing 'No bread' (spread 14/15); in the world of Baker's picture books, the 'Deli Cups', like the hamburger wrapper and McDonalds chip packet (spread 22/23), the 'Pizza' and 'Baked beans' signs (spread 24/25), represent bad foods—bad nutritionally and environmentally—unlike the nostalgic simplicity of homemade bread or fire-cooked fish.

Inadequate food provision metonymous for bad parenting

Inadequate provision of food by parents is metonymous for inadequate parenting, resulting in a lack of security for the child character. Failure in food-provision need not be as starkly inadequate as a failure to provide sufficient food, but rather a matter of unattractiveness of the food and the circumstances in which it is served. A book presenting bad food-provision is Counting on Frank, which, as discussed in chapter 3, is the only book in the sample to employ a satirical tone. Stephens claims that carnival in children's literature often appears in parody or non-canonical forms, and that playful and taboo language are used to mock adult authority (Stephens 1992 chapter 4). The use of humour derogatory of the narrator's parents is signalled early in Counting on Frank, and reaches its most mocking in the meal scene (spread 20/21). The illustration has as background—more than a third of the spread—a massed quantity of green peas, in a scene of carnivalesque excess; all the characters are nearly submerged in
peas, the parents up to their waists, and the boy and dog almost up to their shoulders. The verbal text states:

I enjoy dinner, not because of the delicious grill Mum cooks EVERY night, or the thrilling conversation.

It’s the peas.

The plates hold chops, potatoes, pumpkin and peas, staple foods of white Australians in the ‘golden age’ of the family; the vegetables are the ‘sturdy’ varieties listed by Symons as traditionally grown on Australian farms (1982 p 86), and the peas themselves look suspiciously like the frozen kind, ‘pre-prepared foods’ (Symons 1982 p 195). The parents’ faces are shown as grotesque, and each is about to eat a forkful of peas, with knife raised perpendicularly, in a kind of choreographed unison. The dull, out-of-date foods (in a book first published in 1990), and the dull manner of eating, imply general dullness of character. The boy and dog, eyeless in their sunglasses, have expressions of resignation on what can be seen of their faces. In the verbal text, the boy narrator fantasises about the quantity of peas that would have accumulated if he had knocked fifteen of them off his plate each night. The boring nature of the food provided in this family recurs in spread 24/25, with ‘At breakfast I have a glass of orange juice and two pieces of toast’, and an illustration dominated by giant slices of toast. Neither the boy nor the dog in Counting on Frank is in danger of starvation or even malnutrition (spread 26/27 shows the dog food cans in huge quantity), but there is aridity in both range and presentation of their foods. Although a humorous book, there is a bitter undertone to this satire, an implication that parents who feed their son and dog in this manner are flawed parents and fit objects of ridicule, and the blame seems to be sheeted home particularly to the mother, who, as stated in chapter 6, is notably absent in the final scene of setting out for a holiday destination.

First Light is a study of a father-son relationship, a relationship, as claimed in chapter 6, that remains full of unresolved difficulties. The fishing expedition serves to reveal the inadequacy of the father’s care for his son, just as the pre-
dawn breakfast scene has revealed the mother as a tiny, distorted and inadequate figure. The boy characters in Counting on Frank and First Light are both apparently adequately fed in terms of physical need. It is the presentation and the psychological surroundings of the meals that are inadequate, pointing to failures of parental care.

b) Food as symbol of belonging and community

The function of food described by Nikolajeva as being 'a symbol of communion, of belonging to a certain group', can be observed as applying first to the extended family, and then to a widening circle of community members. Belonging and community are especially manifest in the 'family-meal-as-event', referred to above, which counteracts the forces pushing family members apart (Beardsworth and Keil 1997 p 82). In the world of advertising it is common to feature a nostalgic scene of three generations eating together, demonstrating 'agrarian and homely values', according to Symons (1982 p 195). Three generations at the table imply security, community and cultural embeddedness for both old and young.

Grandad's Magic shows such a three-generation meal, in this case the regular and ritual Sunday lunch of an extended family; many aspects of this book seem to hark back to the 'golden age' of family life (see chapter 6). The plot development and humour of the book depend on the presentation of this meal scene as a much more formal one than the family are likely to engage in on other days of the week. The food itself is a traditional roast dinner, one of those reassuringly conservative dishes claimed by Goody to have 'a very special importance... in situations of social change' (1982 p 152). Not only the menu is ritualised, but so is the table setting complete with the china dogs, which are moved each Sunday from their normal place on the mantelpiece to take up a position to 'guard the fruit.' Food plays a further role in the narrative in the form of the placatory box of chocolates brought by Grandad on the visit following the near-disaster, a gift for Mum 'who had such a shock last week', but even with this gesture, Grandad does not score a success: Rupert the dog and Max the baby have eaten most of the chocolates by the time Mum discovers them! Despite these misadventures, in
the benign world of Bob Graham's creation the 'family-meal-as-event' continues to be celebrated.

In the two picture books with seaside holiday settings, food functions to bond people together, either within the extended family or with those who formerly were strangers. Among the nostalgic pleasures of seaside holidays are those of pre-technological life, so fish caught and cooked at the family's own campsite figures in such evocations. In *Not a Nibble!* a close up illustration shows the 'big black frying pan' with a day's catch in it (p 8); the fish is cleaned by Dad and cooked by Mum in a fine balance of holiday carnivalesque and secure home routine; and on the rainy day everybody eats sausages and bacon and eggs (spread 16/17). Meals in this book demonstrate belonging and unity, with the cousin enfolded in the family.

In *Greetings from Sandy Beach*, food figures in the relationship of the narrator's family, at their campsite by the sea, with the frightening-looking bikers, the 'Disciples of Death'. At first the parents warn the children to keep away from them, but after the bikers show the family how to put up their tent (while Dad 'looked nervous and smiled at them a lot'), the Disciples' ice-cream sticks are used for a game of boats in the rock pool, in which both bikers and family are shown participating (p 26). Finally, as the family is about to leave for home, 'The Lady Disciple bought us a raspberry Icy Pop each' (spread 28/29, see Plate 19). The family are already obliged to the bikers for their help with erecting the tent, and have enjoyed playing together, but it is the giving and receiving of food that cements the relationship of acceptance: this food act has become, in Telfer's terms, an 'act of friendship and love' (1996 p 37), and the family has extended its acceptance to treat as members of their community these people who such a short time ago were seen as alien and threatening. So significant is the sharing of food in *Greetings from Sandy Beach*, that the final page presents the Icy Pop sticks, both in the illustration and in the verbal text, as 'souvenirs' to be treasured by the narrator.
[Production Note:
This plate is not included in this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]
c) Food as magical agent

The third function of food, as magical agent, derives from ancient and pervading traditions that link food with religion and myth, so that 'every meal is by definition a ritual act' (Nikolajeva 2000 p 14). Remnants of these traditions occur in story, in the form of sacrificial or specially potent meals, or in more trivial forms of magic foods that bring about minor changes. In the widening circle of the child’s world, this function of food leads away from the secure world of kairos, and can threaten quite fearful adventures. Perhaps best known in the world of children’s classics are the shape-changing food and drink in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*: the bottle marked ‘DRINK ME’, which makes Alice shrink, and the cake, marked ‘EAT ME’, which makes her grow taller (Carroll 1865 pp 10 and 12). Varied readings can be made of the semiotic significance of these magical foods and drinks, including the perception of a link with the sacrament of the Eucharist. But even in the case of magically change-inducing food, in the picture books a return to security follows such adventurous episodes.

An analogy with the Eucharist, especially in its aspect of feeding the faithful, appears in one of the picture books, *Felix and Alexander*, which does not overtly treat the subject of food. As argued in chapter 4, the city is an alienating and threatening place for the boy and toy dog, Felix; Felix has shown his faithfulness to Alexander to the extent of being wounded and shedding his stuffing, which provides a trail to be followed home (just as the breadcrumbs provide in the traditional fairy tale ‘Hansel and Gretel’). This sacrificial giving of himself is repaid when, at the end of their adventures, Alexander ‘feeds’ Felix by putting more stuffing in to replace what has been lost (p 30).

In other books more light-hearted food magic occurs; and two books contain food scenes that embrace all three symbolic implications, of security and communion, as well as of magical agent. In *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten*, all three symbolic functions are served by some home-cooked cakes. This book reads like a folk tale or fable, with its series of contrasts between the appropriately-named Summers family and Mr Wintergarten; it is a picture book rich in intertextual
references, such as to Oscar Wilde’s story ‘The Selfish Giant’ (1891) and film
versions of Little Lord Fauntleroy (Burnett 1886). At an archaic level the character
of Mr Wintergarten recalls an ogre who eats children (p 12). Whereas the
Summers family produced ‘a carpet of flowers’ on the day they moved into their
new house, their next door neighbour lives in a house that ‘the sun never
touched’, and the illustrations show contrasts between the greys and black on the
Wintergarten side of the fence, and the bright greens, yellow, red and pink on
the Summers side. When Rose bravely visits Mr Wintergarten to ask for the ball
that went over the fence, several pictures use colour contrast dramatically—as
Mr Wintergarten is seated alone at his huge dining table, the browns and greys
are relieved by the colour of Rose herself in three of the pictures, and, after she
has left his house, the colourful flowers and plate of cakes she has left on the
table. These cakes are a powerfully symbolic food: they provide security for Rose
to approach the ‘ogre’ in his den, especially as they are mother-derived (the
illustration on p 12 shows Rose’s mother taking the cakes from the oven); they
form a contrast both to Mr Wintergarten’s usual (physical) diet and a contrast to
his usual social isolation; and they act as a magical charm to effect the
rejuvenation of the old man.

‘Well, honeybunch,’ Mum said, ‘you can get your ball back. Why
don’t you just go and ask him?’

‘Because he eats kids,’ said Rose.

‘We’ll take him some hot cakes instead,’ said Mum.
‘And maybe some flowers.’

(p 12)

When Rose eventually reaches the interior of the gloomy next door house, she
says “I’ve brought some flowers, and hot fairy cakes from my mum.” The
cakes have now had three adjectives associated with them: ‘hot’; ‘fairy’; and the
affectionate name of ‘honeybunch’ has moved forward in the reader’s mind to
link with the cakes themselves; so they are characterised respectively by being
fresh and home-cooked; magical and dainty, as implied by ‘fairy’, with
connotations of the ‘feminine’ qualities referred to earlier as claimed by Symons
(1982 p 139); and sweet. Altogether the cakes form an idealised, nostalgic gift. By

229
contrast, the dinner Rose finds Mr Wintergarten eating is ‘cold, grey and uninviting, with bits of gristle floating in it and mosquitoes breeding on top. But Rose could see that he wasn’t eating children’ (p 18).

The acceptance of the magical cakes causes a turnabout in Mr Wintergarten, as he gathers the strength and interest to kick the children’s ball over the fence, and any lingering doubt about a happy resolution is put to rest by the final endpaper scene, of the opening up of Mr Wintergarten’s house and demolition of the fence dividing it from the Summers’, and this ending is consistent with fairy tale tradition; but at a simpler level the cakes have functioned as signs of neighbourly acceptance. The turning point for Mr Wintergarten is the thoughtful moment when ‘He sat on his front step in the sun. “No one has ever asked for their ball back,” he said to himself. “Or brought fairy cakes”’ (p 22). Like the food given by the ‘Lady Disciple’ in Greetings from Sandy Beach, the cakes brought by Rose have become for Mr Wintergarten ‘a symbol of communion, of belonging to a certain group’; so these cakes can be seen to fit all three categories of the functions of food—security, community and magic.

All three functions are served also in The Journey Home. As analysed in chapter 5, this book recounts an episodic journey as the children, Wild and Woolly, are shown hospitality by a succession of characters from fantasy. Although not stated explicitly, the journey takes the shape of a week, as there are seven different places of overnight stay, and seven meals, each appropriate to the host, as follows:

a  Father Christmas  roast turkey, plum pudding  
b  The Good Fairy  angel cakes, sugar kisses  
c  Prince Charming  royal trifle, rhubarb fool  
d  The Little Mermaid  sea grapes on mother-of-pearl dishes  

The books of Bob Graham are replete with food symbolism. As well as the four sample books, with their roast dinner (Grandad’s Magic), bikers’ food offerings (Greetings from Sandy Beach), fairy cakes and tea (Crusher is Coming), and hot cakes (Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten), there are, for example, the ‘fairy cakes and camomile tea in fairy cups’ offered by Annabelle’s Mum to the tiny visitors in the recent Jethro Byrde Fairy Child (2002).
The Pirate King: salami sausage, pickled cucumbers

The Gypsy Queen: goulash, dumplings

the children’s parents: mugs of hot chocolate

Once the pattern of this book has been recognised, the child reader can enjoy anticipating what foods might be served by the host. These foods are ‘magical’ in that they are offered by hosts from fairy tale and fantasy; but they do not bring about change like the *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* or *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten* foods. They certainly represent acceptance on the part of these hosts: ‘Come inside and stay’ are the formulaic words spoken by each host immediately upon the children’s arrival, and each meal is served without any hesitation. The appropriateness of each meal is matched by the manner of serving, with such details as neatly pointed tablecloth (Prince Charming), tiny delicate cups and plates (the Good Fairy), and salami cut into slices with the help of a dagger-like knife (the Pirate King). The *formality* of the meal scenes at the various hosts’ homes is in contrast with the affectionate informality of the homecoming scene, where the children are securely embedded in familiarity; the magical foods offered by the fantasy characters have provided excitement for child characters and readers, but the return to *kairos*, to the Australian cottage and the welcoming parents, is marked by the comforting and mundane mugs of hot chocolate, which Wild and Woolly clutch as they sit on the capacious sofa, literally enfolded in their parents’ arms (p 31).

**Conclusion**

In the preceding analyses, it has been shown that in every case the representation of food is charged with significance. There are a few exceptional books that use inadequate food provision to point to deeper inadequacies in the characters’ lives. But on the whole the representation of food in the sample books—through the security of maternal provision, or the carnivalesque but reassuring paternal provision, or through food functioning semiotically as a marker of belonging and community, or as a magical agent—all these representations contribute to the general nostalgic depiction of these *homes in the world*.
2. Nostalgic representation of clothing

Introduction

Just as food was shown to be a powerful communicator of semiotic messages of nostalgia in visual and verbal art, so in representations of clothing, a parallel pattern can be discerned, based on expanding rings from a nostalgic, secure centre, moving outwards to a wider world.

The significance of clothing as a semiotic code has been acknowledged since the work of Barthes (1957), and was first developed in detail by Lurie (1981). Clothing theory always emphasises its communicative functions; as clothing is obviously concerned with exteriors, it is impossible for it not to emit signals:

Dress is not trivial. It is a necessary form of communication ... and we use it all the time to convey unspoken signals to those around us. ... the way we dress conforms to a whole range of moral and social customs and attitudes ...

(Wilson and Taylor 1989 p 11)

Moreover the language of clothing is multiple and nuanced:

Clothing is not merely what we wear to cover ourselves. It can be a complex system of communication, a language we use to describe ourselves. Clothing does more than protect us from exposure or insulate us from temperature. It can denote occupation, class, age, gender and personality. It is a visual language that signifies and provides information at a glance ...

(Pfanner 1996 p 1)

All of the aspects of the semiotics of clothing mentioned by Pfanner can be analysed in the clothing of adults, but the clothing of children is complicated by the fact that most clothes, for younger children at least, are chosen for them by adults. The provision of clothing for children can be seen as analogous with the categories for the provision of food (Nikolajeva 2000 p 16), being usually the
province of the mother and similarly implying security, from which centre the next step is a sense of belonging to a wider community. The following examination of clothes will examine these semiotic functions of clothes; and, furthermore, it will claim that a parallel to the magical agency of food is discernible in the function of clothing as evoking the magic of colour association, in creating special locales, and in dressing-up games, which play a special role in freeing children from the normal constraints of parent-chosen clothing.

Clothes indicating security and comfort

As has been argued in previous chapters, nostalgic concepts of childhood emphasise opportunities for innocent and untrammelled play in an Arcadian environment. Just as the secure child, according to Nikolajeva, does not need to be anxious about food (2000 p 16), the secure child does not give much thought to clothing, as long as comfort and freedom to move about are provided. A spectrum of clothing can be observed, according to degrees of comfort and freedom, with the most comfortable being represented by bare feet, then pyjamas or other nightwear, beach shorts or swimming costumes, comfortable play clothes such as shorts, T-shirts or track suit pants, and at the end of the spectrum, formal clothes in which the child would feel least secure and comfortable.

When maps of meaning depict good spaces with freedom for children to play, then places where children can go barefooted are shown as the most desirable of all. Barefootedness is associated with nostalgic implications of innocence and freedom, not only from the restraints of adult regulation, but from such modern dangers as broken glass or used syringes. Some, but not all places of such freedom are by the sea or at a swimming pool. Both father and son in Where the Forest Meets the Sea are barefooted, not just on the beach, but in the scenes of exploring the forest as well, emphasising this book’s nostalgic yearning for a simpler past in an unspoiled environment. In Greetings from Sandy Beach all the characters are shown in the simplest and coolest of beach wear—and the levelling quality of such clothes is commented on by the narrator: ‘Fancy seeing your teacher in just a pair of flowery shorts’(p 22)—with the exception of the bikers
who are distinguished by their ‘uniform’ of helmets, boots and goggles (see below). In *Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons*, the sunbathers clad in only the slightest of swimming costumes are city workers who are enjoying a lunch-hour interlude of Arcadian enjoyment.

Away from the beach and water, barefooted play suggests the delights of *rus in urbe*. The children in *Dog Tales* are mostly barefooted, as are the two children enjoying idyllic play in *Drac and the Gremlin*. The babies in *The Midnight Gang* run barefoot to the local park for their midnight frolics; and in their case it not only the feet that are bare—the only items of clothing they are wearing, apart from the single: on one of the four, are their nappies. Baby Brenda, the leader of the gang, manages to shed even her nappy, so that by p 6 she is entirely naked. Brenda dons her nappy again (see Plate 20) only after returning through the cat-flap, so signalling a return to adult-imposed clothes and other restrictions. This is the book in the sample with the very youngest cast of characters, and their complete or near-nakedness is an important factor in the representation of their untrammeled freedom. Though the babies meet dangers, they are the exaggerated mock-dangers of pet cat and dog, not any real threats to their enjoyment of romping in the moonlight. Nakedness is rare in picture books, and the only other instance in the sample is the woman in *Rosy Dock*, who is shown (spread 12/13) apparently about to enjoy a plunge in the waterhole near her cottage in central Australia. One result of the woman’s nakedness is to emphasise her solitariness, as she is clearly unconcerned about possible observers; another is to emphasise her whiteness, and hence alien nature, in contrast with the brown surrounding rocks, and to remind the viewer that all the other human characters
[Production Note:
This plate is not included in this digital copy
due to copyright restrictions.]
shown in this landscape are Aboriginal.\textsuperscript{34}

Next in comfort to being barefooted—or entirely naked—is to relax in pyjamas or nightgown. Pyjamas signal at-homeness: in The Journey Home, the final scene (p 31) is a contrast to the exotic locations visited by Wild and Woolly throughout the book, and their comfortable pyjamas (and the towel wrapped around the girl’s head, apparently after hair-washing) show that now they have really come home. In The Very Best of Friends, there is symmetry between the early scene (spread 12/13) in which Jessie and James are clad in pyjamas and enjoying a comfortable evening with just their pets for company, and the later scene (spread 30/31) in which Jessie has at last reached an accommodation with the cat, and is now again able to relax in pyjamas and continue with her letter-writing hobby.

The pastoral—at least in the Australian version—is associated with comfortable clothes that are easy to move about in; and a short cut to marking a character as a rural Australian is to show somebody wearing elastic-sided boots, with their characteristics of being easily put on and taken off, and their propensity for adapting to the shape of the owner’s feet. Examples of elastic-sided boot wearers in the picture books include Dad in Not a Nibble! (spread 14/15), James and Jessie

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item In The Story of Rosy Dock, there is a ‘clothes’ narrative about the impact of white settlers on the land, and it on them. The settler woman appears first (p 5) kneeling among her flower-pots, and dressed in a dark shapeless skirt, mauvy-beige shirt, knitted socks and lace-up shoes. She wears glasses, and a straw hat with a feather in the band, the only element of clothing that shows jaunty individuality. The hat is later shown (p 8) blown away by the ‘great spiraling willy-willies’ of the desert, and then (spread 10/11) being absorbed by the forces of nature—symbolic, perhaps, for the fate of invasive white humanity. There are two major subsequent appearances of the settler woman, and in neither is she clothed in any conventional sense. In spread 12/13 she is naked except for her glasses, and apparently enjoying the water of an ‘ancient oasis.’ Her shirt, skirt and shoes are on the ground near her saddled horse; the appearance of the woman’s white body is startlingly unexpected in the scene of ochre and red landforms, palm trees and parrot flocks. Spread 18/19 shows the woman trying to escape the floodwaters, huddled on the roof of her cottage, still wearing her glasses and shoes and socks, but enveloped in a large shapeless coat so that no other clothes can be seen, as her black would-be rescuer paddles a raft towards her. Her fate is uncertain but the following spread, 20/21, confirms the loss of her trunk in the floodwaters. The narrative of the white woman’s occupation of the land can be summarised: she arrives clad in sturdy clothes which are apparently suitable for settler life, but even these do not stand up to the extreme challenges of the weather; she is seen at her happiest in an unclad state, emulating the indigenous people by bathing naked; she attempts to find refuge from the flood by wrapping herself in a coat, but it is unlikely that it affords sufficient protection (and if she is rescued, it is by an Aboriginal man). This ‘clothes’ narrative forms a parallel to the verbal narrative of the dispersal of the rosy dock seeds.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
in *The Very Best of Friends* (p 7), and Jake and Great Aunt Maude in *The Long Red Scarf* (p 23). Another sign of comfortable rural life is the navy blue work singlet, worn by the shearer in the nostalgic shearing-shed scene in *Hector and Maggie* (p 21), and affected by Sam as a young father in *Window* (spread 28/29). Both of these items of rural clothing—elastic-sided boots and navy singlet—originated as comfortable and practical clothing for working or playing out-of-doors, but have been taken up by a wider section of the population for their pastoral and nationalistic associations, acquiring a wider semiotic significance as nostalgic symbols of rural life. Sometimes there is nostalgic slippage in details of clothing, a time-lag in the representation of rural life: for example, in *Marty Moves to the Country*, the clothes worn by the child narrator are generally such neutral items as brown trousers, white shirt and green jumper (p 24); but in the scene set in the school grounds (p 29), Marty, in shorts and bare feet, has slung over his shoulder a leather satchel of the type used by schoolchildren up to about the 1950s (and likely associated by the illustrator with memories of his own schooldays).

As claimed in chapter 3, a number of picture books are peopled by elderly characters who are equivalent to children in many ways, apparently living in an Arcadian *kairos*, so the clothes these characters wear can be considered as equivalent semiotically to those of the child characters. Elderly characters in books with rural settings, such as Rose in *John Brown, Rose, and the Midnight Cat*, the old woman in *The Story of Rosy Dock*, the old couple in *Belinda*, and the elderly characters in *The Long Red Scarf*, are all shown as dressed for comfort, in clothes that signal a lack of interest in sexuality or fashion. Old shapeless skirts or work trousers tied with rope for a belt, practical shoes or boots, and a faithful sunhat—their clothes appear more suitable for outdoor activities than for a life of social events. *The Long Red Scarf* is unusual in emphasising the need for warm clothes, especially for early morning fishing expeditions, and the illustrations in this book with its theme of hand-knitting include many woollen garments.

**Neutral clothing**

A point of difference between real-life clothes and those of picture book characters is that the clothes of picture books do not usually reflect fashion changes as real-life clothes do, even for young children. Pfanner claims that the
language of clothing is fluid, subject to constant changes that are ‘often understood not by deliberate study, but by a kind of social osmosis’ (1996 p 1); but such changes are rarely reflected in picture books. As well as the generally observed tendency to nostalgic background that has been claimed throughout this thesis, there is also a specific (and probably deliberate) motive driving illustrators to resist including the most recent fashions in their picture books, and this is the desire not to include elements that date the book too precisely, making the book appear out-of-date very soon.

Lurie states that ‘the sports clothes of the adult are the everyday clothes of the child’ (1981 p 45), although certainly in an informal society such as Australia’s it could now be claimed that the sports clothes of adults and children have moved closer together in style than was the case in 1981. Children now in both real life and literature are usually clad in simple outfits of T-shirts and shorts or jeans, clothes that betray little of regional or class difference. Pfanner uses the term ‘neutral’ to describe such clothes, and claims that to illustrate children in neutral clothes must be a conscious decision to make characters more universal, citing the examples of illustrators Ardizzone (UK) and Van Allsburg (US) as well-known exponents of such neutrality (Pfanner 1996 p 18). The clothes worn by child characters in such books as Dog Tales, The Race, The Journey Home, and Not a Nibble! are clearly comfortable and practical, and fit Pfanner’s definition of ‘neutral’. There is one important exception to this ‘neutral’ quality of clothing, and that is the use of clothes to differentiate girls from boys: girls are often differentiated by their more complicated clothing, which does not allow for so much freedom of movement, such as pinafore dresses with tights (eg Dog Tales p 6; Grandad’s Magic p 7), or a nightdress with tucks and frills (Sunskime) worn by a girl character where a boy would have simple, comfortable pyjamas.

Clothes indicating community

Because of the outwardness of clothes, their immediate visibility, their semiotic function as indicating a sense of belonging to a certain group is even more instantly recognisable than that of food. Clothes can indicate belonging to a family or small group, to a generation, to a region, or to an occupation. Familial or small group identity can be expressed by matching or similar clothes. In The
Very Best of Friends, the scene showing James and Jessie using each other as support while putting on their boots (p 7, see Plate 4) includes humour, as the red shirt curving over Jessie’s bottom emphasises James’s use of this curve as a leaning-place; but ‘belonging’ is indicated too, as the striped socks worn by both characters, in contrasting colours but so similar, and their matching elastic-sided boots, serve as semiotic shorthand for their satisfactorily comfortable relationship. Similarly in Felix and Alexander the spots on Alexander’s jumper match the spots of Felix’s coat (p 3), signalling a strong bond between the two characters.

Generational belonging is particularly apparent in the case of older characters. Old people, as has been claimed, are often shown in comfortable work clothes, sometimes with eccentric details such as the braces and beanies worn in The Long Red Scarf (p2, p 5). But an older person will dress more formally than other generations when it comes to a special event, so Grandad in Grandad’s Magic is shown in tie and three-piece suit whereas the father is wearing an informal jumper. Regional belonging in Australia is most commonly shown across the country/city divide, and, as has been pointed out, comfortable work clothes such as elastic-sided boots have come to indicate belonging to the nostalgic pastoral world.

Occupational belonging has many sub-groups, not only related to jobs or professions. An example of the use of clothes as semiotic code for occupation is the depiction of Crusher in Crusher is Coming, with his V-necked sports top with a coloured stripe around the V. The reader has already been informed, in the verbal text, that Crusher is coming to visit Pete’s house after football practice; any doubts about Crusher’s toughness and sporty nature are dispelled by the illustrations (eg p 17) in which he can be seen in the football top and track pants with holes at the knee; he also has a bandaid on his forehead (presumably covering a sporting wound), and is shown on his departure (p 28) carrying his football boots, with the laces tied together and slung around his shoulder. Pete’s top has the sleeves rolled up too, apparently in emulation of Crusher, but the plain blue of Pete’s top suggests that he is not a member of a team. Uniforms can be official ones, such as that of Leonie, the schoolgirl who appears so
innocuously conformist in the half-title illustration in *The Paw* (p 1), before her transformation into a cat burglar at night. Or they can be the self-imposed variety: as mentioned earlier, the bikers in *Greetings from Sandy Beach* wear a distinctive uniform, with long hair, helmets, goggles and high boots, their outfits clearly setting them apart from the other, lightly clad occupants of Sandy Beach. After initial hesitation on the part of the narrator’s family, sharing takes place across the divide of family/biker groups (see above); and the trying on by Baby Gerald of a biker’s helmet (p 29), like the offering and eating together of food, marks some degree of communal acceptance.

As well as indicating belonging, uniforms can be restrictive, however. Joseph in *Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons* ends up with a uniform (p 47) which has status, with its epaulettes, braided cuffs and cap with embroidered logo, but this uniform is probably less comfortable than the clothes he wore before the building was revamped, when he favoured a soft scarf around his neck (p 8). Being acknowledged as important in urban society is not without its price, as Joseph must now dress more formally, similarly to the ‘tycoons’ in their stiff, formal business suits (spread 18/19), who inhabit the outer edge of the spectrum from secure nostalgic comfort. Such formal clothing is reminiscent of the clothes that are so thematically central in many of the books by the classic English picture book creator Beatrix Potter. She used the clothes worn by her anthropomorphised animals to signal their moving into areas of ‘civilisation’ and unnatural behaviour, and the animal characters often show distress at the burden of the clothes. In *The Tale of Mrs Tiggy-Winkle* (1905) and *The Tale of Tom Kitten* (1907), the animal characters move from the natural and unclothed to the contrived, clothed, human–like world; in Tom Kitten’s case, his socially ambitious mother dresses him for a special occasion in ‘all sorts of elegant uncomfortable clothes’ (1907 p 18), so that he must walk on his hind legs, and when out of his mother’s sight he happily sheds the clothes and reverts to his natural kitten–like state. ‘For Potter clothes are usually a matter of anxiety and are often downright constricting or hostile to life’ (Scott 1994 p 77). The picture book *Counting on Frank* treats clothes in a similar manner, when in one brief section (spread 18/19) they represent the impedimenta of parental expectations weighing on the narrator. He and his dog, Frank, put on ‘every article of clothing in my
cupboard’ (p 18), piling on layer upon layer, so they are unable to move, and the
description shows them so restricted by clothing that the effect is humorous but
also distressingly claustrophobic, so far are they removed from comfort and
freedom.

Magical clothes: colour

The original purpose of clothing was magical, claims Lurie (1981 p 28); and
vestiges remain of this magic in such items as the seven league boots of
traditional fairy tales. Several kinds of magical significance can be found in
picture book clothes, through the use of colour, or through transformative
‘dressing-up’. Although this magical function may appear removed from the
secure base of comfortable, ‘at home’ clothing, evocations of this nostalgically
secure base commonly recur even in the ‘magical’ picture books.

Contrasting colour is an important narrative device in illustration, with bright or
different colours resulting in salience; salience creates hierarchy in composition,
regardless of placing, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996 p 213). But
colour is also used symbolically, with much evocation of the fairy tale tradition,
especially with white, black or red. All such symbolism is strictly culture-bound; a
striking example is Lurie’s claim that the colour white implies purity and
innocence (1981 p 185). In the western tradition this may be so, but, world-wide,
there are many other cultural implications associated with the colour white.
Certainly white has been used by a number of illustrators as depicting ‘purity
and innocence’ in European fairy tales. There is a recurring motif in both
traditional tales and in more recent children’s literature of the idealised mother,
often in sharp contrast to the bad mother (or stepmother), who is physically
unattractive and strict and forbidding. An example from a modern classic picture
book is found in How Tom Beat Captain Major and his Hired Sportsmen (Hoban and
Blake 1974), with Aunt Bundlejoy Cosysweet who wears a flowing long white
dress, and has long fair hair and a flowery hat, in sharp contrast to the forbidding
Aunt Fidget Wonkham-Strong who ‘wore an iron hat, and took no nonsense
from anyone’ (Hoban 1974 p 3). Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten uses this motif of the
idealised mother, and she is dressed in white clothing. Rose’s mother’s long
white dress (see Plate 13) even evokes the angelic, as well as the Arcadian freedom, youthfulness and generosity—all implied as attractive qualities in both a mother and a neighbour—suggested by her luxuriant red curls, not quite kept in check by her headband tied at the side in gipsy fashion, and her sandals and row of bells around one ankle, and woven bag with flowers spilling from it. White carries other implications, too: in Annie's Rainbow it is the child character, Annie, who is dressed always in a white dress, and even white socks and shoes; the effect is a removal of the book from realism to the fantasy tradition, with an evocation of the magic world of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (Carroll 1865), in which the illustrator John Tenniel showed Alice always clad in white dress, pinafore and stockings; so it is no surprise to learn that Annie meets a small man with a skull-cap, tall boots and the ability to grant wishes (p 26).

Lurie's statement that black can imply gloom and guilt (Lurie 1981 p 187) must similarly be read as culture-bound. Once again it is in Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten that this western symbolic use of colour is used to strongest effect. Mr Wintergarten, whose house is full of signs of gloomy decay, is himself dressed in a black suit, a formal evening suit with tails, so the white singlet and black slippers that accompany it are suggestive of being shabby and uncared-for, rather than the freedom and casualness that such accessories would imply if worn, for example, with shorts. The father in First Light also wears black, and his black duffel coat and rolled-up trousers (p 20) can be read (according to traditional western colour association) as suggesting a life-denying threat to others' development.

The most commonly occurring colour for the main character's clothes is red, and magical connotations are not so universal in the case of this colour; the popularity of cover art depicting the main character dressed in red suggests that the choice of colour is for narrative purposes, to make clear the salience of the main character to prospective readers. Covers with red-clothed characters include The Journey Home, Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten, Grandad's Magic, Murgatroyd's Garden, The Very Best of Friends, First Light, Counting on Frank, The Race and Not a Nibble!; and the cover of The Long Red Scarf features the long, curling scarf of bright red. Red can imply success, however: Greg, main character
in *The Race*, wears a variety of colours (blue, white, yellow) but is shown in a red shirt in the triumphal scene (spread 30/31) when he at last wins his race; and similarly in *Not a Nibble!* the main character, Susie, wears other colours throughout the illustrations but is shown in red when smiling triumphantly after spotting the whales (p 32). Two books use red clothes to evoke the fairy tale 'Little Red Riding Hood', *Sunshine* with its little girl in her red dressing-gown, and later leaving the house with a red hooded coat, suggestive (because of connotations of the fairy tale character) of innocence and perhaps vulnerability; and *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten*, with its closer links to the fairy tale, as Rose in her red clothes plays her role in carrying food to an old housebound person.

**Magical clothes: 'dressing-up'**

There is a more overt connection between clothes and magic, however, and it is through 'dressing-up'. 'Dressing-up' is popular both as a game for children and as an activity depicted in the illustrations of picture books. Scott makes the point that dressing-up gives children an opportunity to explore possibilities not otherwise open to them:

> Parents, who represent the social world, control their children's wardrobes and thus their earliest images of themselves, first seen as reflections in the mirror. As children grow, they may be encouraged in self-expression and self-identity or restricted in the development of a sense of self by parents who either allow them or forbid them to choose what they want to wear. Dressing up is such a popular game because, by changing their appearance, children can explore various selves and various options for future roles in the world.

(Scott 1994 p 72)

Dressing-up, as a game for real-life children, complies with a nostalgic view of childhood as a time of innocent pleasures, as it is an activity requiring only the simplest of materials but plenty of imagination. And for illustrators of picture books, as well as providing narrative possibilities, the dressing-up of characters allows for visual variety (especially in contrast with the 'neutral' clothing discussed above). Dressing-up activities shown in the picture books can be
divided into two categories: firstly, adventures of characters in the book, which the reader is invited to believe are truly engaged in by the characters (*The Paw, The Journey Home*); and secondly, games or ruses which are played by characters in the book, with the reader invited to be aware that they are games (*Drac and the Gremlin, Belinda, Where's Mum?).

*The Paw* is the story of a schoolgirl who completely changes her identity by dressing differently at night. Like a werewolf, or like Max in *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak 1963), whose wolf suit allows him to make a nocturnal journey to a magical place where he can dominate the Wild Things, the mild and conventional 'day-Leonie', when changed into her cat-burglar suit becomes the fearless 'night-Leonie'. The illustrations at the beginning and end of the book show a conventional Australian schoolgirl, either in uniform of checked dress, shoes and socks, straw hat and backpack (p 1), or in pyjamas of dark blue with white spots (p 31). In all the other illustrations, Leonie wears her cat costume, which is tightly fitting, with a long tail and a matching cap complete with ears and whiskers, and a 'bum belt', gloves, soft white boots and 'super-suction pads' for her knees (p 17). Leonie's movements in *The Paw* have a sensuousness reminiscent of that depicted by the English illustrator Cicely Mary Barker in her Flower Fairy books, as described by Scott (1994 p 74): '[Barker] suggests a whole body contact that envelops the child in the natural covering', with its capacity to inspire imitative play: '... the visual metaphor of flower-inspired dress may even suggest to the imaginative child that by dressing up in similar fashion he or she could enter into and become part of this fanciful pastoral world' (Scott 1994 p 76). Leonie's costume does not evoke such a pastoral world, but it similarly suggests an enveloping in a different *persona*, which could inspire imitative play.

In *The Journey Home*, central to the narrative are the elaborate outfits of the hosts, such as the tutu, pink slippers, wand and headband with fairy 'antennae' worn by the Good Fairy, or the Pirate King's frilled-neck shirt, bandolier of bullets, red waistcoat, and tricorne hat with skull and crossbones: these costumes define the characters as the stereotypical inhabitants of many rhymes and stories. The costumes worn in some scenes by the child characters—for example, the boy wears a crown and a striped top with medieval collar at Prince Charming's castle;
and at the Little Mermaid’s dwelling, the girl wears a bra top, a grass skirt and a sea star headress—belong to the second category, costumes that are understood by the reader to be ‘dressing-up’ clothes, like the improvised costumes of the children at play in *Drac and the Gremlin*. To believe that the children in the latter book are *really* ‘Drac’ and ‘the Gremlin’ would clearly be a misreading of the book, as the illustrations depict a world of backyard play, not of space invaders. The children’s ‘neutral’ play clothes have been added to here with improvised costumes and props: the boy has a plastic garbage bag fashioned into a simple tunic, and carries a round metal garbage-tin lid as a shield; the girl has a white cloth draped around her shoulders as a kind of cloak. The simplicity of these make-do costumes, utilising items to hand, contributes strongly to the nostalgia of this idyllic picture of spontaneous play. *Belinda* uses dressing-up clothes as pivotal to the narrative, too; they provide a solution to the dilemma of how to persuade Belinda the cow to allow Tom to milk her in the absence of Bessie. The scene in which Tom moves awkwardly, in his ‘drag’ costume of Bessie’s clothes, derives much of its humour from the contrast with Tom’s usual clothes of the stereotypical rural male: singlet, shorts, boots. The reader must understand the nature of donning costume to understand the joke, and to enjoy a feeling of consequent superiority not only over Belinda, the tricked cow, but also over the ignorant Bessie as she suspiciously examines her pink dress which has mud on its hem (p 32).

Dressing-up clothes and a cardboard crafted animal appear from the start in *Where’s Mum?*, prefiguring and serving as metonyms for the world of imaginative narrative. Jess wears a brown paper hat with false eyes drawn on it, he has an improvised green cape round his shoulders, and his face has a drawn-on moustache with curly ends. The simplicity of the materials from which these play costumes are made contributes to the nostalgic background of this book, just as it did to *Drac and the Gremlin*. Jess’s costume suggests untold imaginative possibilities: the cape hints at superhero status, the hat extends Jess’s stature, and the moustache implies a swashbuckling adventurer, perhaps a cavalier or pirate. Annie’s red cardboard creature, made from a square box, has a snout, unmatching eyes and a jagged hairline, and red-and-white striped cylinders as legs. As the family members discuss possible adventures that may have befallen
Mum, and the adventures are shown in facing illustrations to those of the domestic after-school routine, every spread except 16/17 retains in the artwork some vestige of the costume or cardboard animal, until from spread 22/23 to the last page these disappear, except for one appearance of the cardboard creature on page 27 (perhaps representing ‘the big bad wolf’ of the verbal text and facing art). The worn-home or brought-home products of play at kindergarten have served as triggers to the imaginings of Annie and Jess, as well as visual links for readers with the characters of fairy tale and nursery rhyme. As these characters come to inhabit the book, the triggers from dress-up costume and devised toy are no longer needed; for example, the turbaned man in a red jacket, with his gunbelt and leather gauntlets, sports a moustache of just the same shape as Jess’s painted one, which has been almost entirely washed off in the bath (p 27). The fairy tale characters have been tamed, and the magical world of dressing-up absorbed by the domestic world of Annie and Jess, with its secure embeddedness in family and community.

Conclusion

Clothes, like food, are clearly visible in picture books; and they similarly evoke security, community and magic. In all these areas, nostalgic representation predominates in the picture books. The clothes worn by the majority of characters allow comfort and freedom to play, and so to feel ‘at home’ in their environment. In some instances clothes represent belonging and acceptance in a community; only a formal uniform or clothes suggesting too many parental expectations will restrict this freedom. ‘Dressing up’ encourages imaginative play, but the characters return from the dress-up world to the secure base of their home in the world.
Chapter 8

Conclusion

'It was good to be home'

They came that night to a house they knew.
A welcoming light shone through the open door.

'You're home at last!' cried their parents. 'Come inside and stay.'
Wild and Woolly had mugs of hot chocolate before climbing into
their very own beds.

It was good to be home.

(The Journey Home pp 28-32, see Plate 21)

This scene, from which the thesis subtitle is taken, is an exemplary one of
nostalgic homecoming, both in words and illustrations. The exterior view of their
cottage, with the two child travellers approaching it, and the welcome they
receive across the threshold of the verandah, are rich with connotations of
nostalgic yearning for an idealised Australian rural cottage, and the life implied as
culturally embedded in it. The final scene of settling down to sleep is full of
benign images as well: the children, Wild and Woolly, are falling asleep,
surrounded by soft toys and warm bedding, and with the dog lying comfortably
on the mat nearby. There are also healthy signs (as was claimed in chapter 5) that
their journeymings are not over (in the picture on their wall of enticing scenery,
and in the backpack hanging from a bed end). Here is a scene ripe for
interpretation in the light of reflective nostalgia: Wild and Woolly are fortunate
not only in their felicitous homecoming, but in their at-homeness in a space that
is not a restrictive place where they must remain shackled, but a base where they
can be refreshed before starting off again. Also reassuring, and perhaps most
[Production Note:
This plate is not included in this digital copy
due to copyright restrictions.]

Plate 21
Lester, Alison *The Journey Home* Melbourne, Oxford University Press 1989 p 32
hope-inspiring of all to the eyes of an adult with an interest in children’s reading, is the presence of books in the bedroom scene: each child has a personal bed lamp, books are standing on the chest of drawers, and a book lies open on the floor, probably dropped from a tired hand just before falling asleep. Wild and Woolly, like other fortunate children, have the permeating presence of books in their lives (and indeed it may have been their familiarity with books that led them on the imaginative journey to meet the characters of traditional tales),—another firm basis on which to build, according to the tenets of reflective nostalgia.

**The thesis journey**

This thesis can be described as a journey too; and, like many journeys, the exploration that led to it began with an aim that occasionally appeared mist-shrouded, and that even shifted from time to time, but became much clearer after some early progress had been made.

At first, the purpose was a generalised search for representations of societal ideologies in Australian picture books. I brought my own personal framework of critical analysis to bear on the sample, especially on the illustrations: this framework was constructed with the aid of such eclectic influences as Bader’s definition, the emphases on ideology of Hollindale and Stephens, the semiotic analysis of Nodelman, and Kress and van Leeuwen’s grammar of visual codes. Gradually, the influence of Watkins’ two images (1992) grew stronger, maps of meaning and ‘homes’ in the world; and explorations of the concept of home, in particular, led to engagement with the concept/s of nostalgia\(^{35}\). The Australian picture books disclosed a much stronger and more pervasive seam of nostalgia than I had predicted. In an overwhelming majority, the time of the picture books was *kairos* (Nikolajeva 2000), and their space was a benign, often perfectible, rural space. This space, this time were represented with remarkable frequency through the visual markers of the traditional Australian cottage. Many visual

---

\(^{35}\) As the pace of change continues to grow, nostalgia-driven films, books, architecture and travel (certainly in Australia) attract large clienteles. Theoretical analysis of nostalgia is relatively undeveloped, and will increase, I predict.

247
details, including those of food and clothing, showed the characters, their families, community and neighbourhood as partaking of a cultural embeddedness.

Reflective nostalgia and children's books

The revelation of such a weight of nostalgia meant that the distinction between restorative or negative nostalgia, and reflective or positive nostalgia (Boym 2001) assumed increasing importance. Reflective nostalgia encourages not just looking back, but looking back to gain inspiration for moving forward. The motivation to provide good things in children's culture can harness reflective nostalgia, and a positive result will be the continued production of picture books by Australian writers and illustrators. This will be a worthwhile project in McGillis's terms (2001), as adults build on a positively nostalgic view of the past, to produce books that give pleasure to children in the present and offer them a vision for the future. The academic study of such books will similarly be another worthwhile project.

Reflective nostalgia allows for truthful facing up to weaknesses. It needs to be acknowledged that the picture books of the sample revealed some important absences, or near-absences (as argued in chapter 6), with three groups present only in form of the trace: mothers, Aboriginal characters, and characters of other diverse ethnic groups. Fuller representation of all these groups is a vital necessity for truthfulness and authenticity in picture books.

Suggestions for further study

Future studies could engage with a number of questions, and following are some suggestions.

Examining changes after the sample date

As argued in chapter 1, Appendix B, the Australian picture book is not a static form. Changes have continued to occur, perhaps increasingly, in the period after
1997, the closing date of the sample. There are four main areas of changes that I have observed, suggestive of topics that warrant investigation.

Firstly, books with urban settings may be increasing, and these books may be based on an anti-pastoral ideology. For example, _In My Backyard_ (Hilton and Spudvilas 2001), a book shortlisted for the 2002 CBCA Picture Book award, begins its verbal text, 'In my backyard there are mountains and metal streams', while the illustrations show tall buildings and streams of traffic flowing across an urban bridge, and in the foreground a child looking at himself in some reflective surface. The book continues with a kind of urban glossary, with ‘plane’, for example, equalling ‘bird’. The ‘wild, tame jungle’ of a modern city is presented as a happy playground for a group of children. A second example of an urban book, _Jethro Byrde Fairy Child_ (Graham 2002), one that was shortlisted in 2003, shows the meeting of a young human girl with tiny fairy people in the concrete and weeds of her backyard. Both books celebrate childhood and imaginative play, with implications that the city is not threatening or alien, but on the contrary a space where imaginative play can flourish.

Secondly, the number of picture books set entirely, or almost entirely, in _chronos_ rather than _kairos_ may be increasing. Certainly since the freeing up of the Picture Book award category from any age-limitation (see chapter 1, Appendix B), such books are receiving commendation by the CBCA judges. An example is _The Red Tree_ (Tan 2001), which was a CBCA Honour Book in 2002, a book that presents a study of the world view of a child who is deeply depressed (with admittedly some relief at the end). Another is _In Flanders Fields_ (Jorgensen and Harrison-Lever 2002), shortlisted by the 2003 judges, which is a picture book depicting an incident during the Christmas truce in World War I, and revealing the grim realities of trench warfare.

Thirdly, with the growth in publication by specialised Aboriginal presses such as Magabala Books in Broome, and IAD Press in Alice Springs, picture books representing contemporary Aboriginal life may be appearing in greater numbers, to add to the already substantial number of picture books retelling Dreamtime stories. An example of such representation is _Going for Kalta_ (Edwards
and Day 1997), the story of an expedition to catch sleepy lizards in Yalata country, South Australia, illustrated with photographs of the members of the expedition.

Fourthly, perhaps a greater variety of other ethnic backgrounds is at present, or will be soon, revealed in picture books. It is the case that a range of voices is to be heard in fiction for children and teenagers, with novels such as those of Melina Marchetta, David Phu An Chiem (with Brian Caswell), Archimede Fusillo and Irini Savvides. But as analysed in chapter 6, in the case of the picture books, neither the verbal text nor the details of illustrations have (until 1997) represented the ethnic realities of modern Australia. A parallel may be drawn between developments in Aboriginal representation in picture books and that of other ethnicities. It may be the case that picture books still favour the method of presentation of cultures, other than Anglo, through the retelling of traditional stories, just as Dreamtime stories have been dominant in Aboriginal representations. Recent examples of the two approaches are: a traditional story in picture book form, *Ah Kee and the Glass Bottle* (Salanitri and Wu 2001); and a representation of modern Vietnamese-Australian immigrant life, *The Wishing Cupboard* (Hathorn and Stanley 2002).

If the four changes outlined above *are* occurring, are they permanent changes to picture book trends? Will the nostalgic, rural, *kairos* books, with Anglo-Australian ethnocentricity, so dominant throughout the period investigated, be found to be characteristic only of the years up until 1997?

**Study of the award system itself**

The sample selection for this thesis has been based on CBCA award system. Will these awards continue, and if so, in a similar form or very changed? If they do not continue, and other means evolve by which adults acknowledge children’s books as valuable, a result may be that the books chosen are permeated by quite different ideologies.
Comparison with picture books of other countries

How does the sample compare with books from other countries and cultures? A fruitful field for study is the inter-cultural examination of picture books, such as that undertaken in the UK by Cotton (2000). Another question to be examined is whether nostalgia is a characteristic to be observed throughout picture books worldwide, or is more dominant in post-colonial countries, perhaps particularly in Australia.

Study of the same or similar books, from different theoretical bases

It is possible to adopt approaches to picture book study that are different from the approach of determining societal ideologies through an emphasis on the visual elements. The sample books for this thesis were not subjected to aesthetic analysis; nor were they examined for their child appeal. These are two possible approaches among others; such suggestions by no means exhaust the possibilities of further study in the rich field of picture books.

Conclusion

This thesis has enlisted a personal framework of eclectic critical methods, particularly applied to the visual components (while never intending to detract from the importance of their verbal texts), in the study of picture books. In the search for the maps of meaning and homes in the world presented in the books, it was found that the pervasive ideology is nostalgia. Each area of analysis served to build a composite picture of a nostalgic world, its time that of kairos, and its space Arcadian. This felicitous, idealised rural space was especially manifest in the traditional Australian cottage. There was benign representation, through such markers as food and clothing, of the ever-widening rings of childhood, from secure nuclear family to community and neighbourhood. Immersing myself in the thirty books of the sample meant, almost without exception, being absorbed in a world that was secure and stable, and in which troubles and anxieties were mostly minor and happily resolved. This composite picture book world was one in which it truly was 'good to be home'.

251
Appendix No 1

Two picture book homes in the world, outside the sample

Two books which do not fall within the confines of the sample, but both engage so overtly with the concept of homes in the world that some discussion of them is required here, are My Place (Wheatley and Rawlins 1987) and Amelia Ellicott’s Garden (Stafford and King 2000). Neither My Place nor Way Home was a winner or honour book in the Picture Book section of the CBCA awards. As well as being winner of the Junior Book of the Year Award in 1988, My Place was given a special award, the bicentennial Eve Pownall Award, which was initiated and funded by the NSW Branch of the CBCA and presented as an adjunct to the national awards in that year. As mentioned in chapter 5, section (d), the question of national identity received much attention at this time, when the bicentenary of white settlement was being celebrated. Critical reception of My Place concentrated on two features of the book. Firstly, the book is a ‘back to front’ history, beginning with 1988, the bicentenary year, and moving back by ten-year intervals as each spread depicts the life of a child inhabiting the same place in urban Sydney. Saxby called this backwards movement ‘a stroke of brilliance’ (Saxby 1993 p 93), and described the book as ‘the most straightforward but imaginative piece of history we have, breathtakingly simple yet complex in concept, ranging as it does over two hundred years of Australia’s social history’ (Saxby 1993 p 473). Secondly, critics remarked on the centrality of Aboriginal Australia to the book. The first narrator, Laura in the 1988 spread, is an Aboriginal child who has come to the city from Bourke. The last narrator, in the 1788 spread, is Barangaroo, an Aboriginal child who describes her people’s regular sojourns at the place with the good oysters.

Saxby, as well as praising the design and the repeated features such as the map (1993 p 93), also comments on the multicultural nature of the book.

My Place . . . is entirely about the process of social and cultural change. One of the most potent factors in the changes that occur to the street and inner-city district which is ‘my place’ is the kaleidoscope of races that from 1788 to 1988 inhabit the area. Although the wheel turns full circle and the Aboriginal people are
there in 1988 as they were in 1788, the changes in their lifestyle are the results of the sum of the cultures which have come to Australia in the past 200 years—English, American, Chinese, German and Greek—as well as of the events affected by those cultures. My Place is the most comprehensive and significant overview of multicultural Australia, in terms appropriate to young people, that we have as yet.

(Saxby 1993 p 429)

Several narrative spaces are important throughout the book, with the special characteristic that these spaces remain constant while the time changes with each spread. As a map of meaning this book presents constant revisions of the same core map, showing both changes that have occurred in each decade, and the varying perceptions of each young narrator. The Port Jackson fig tree is one central space, and is mentioned (in the verbal text) by each of the child narrators. The opening and closing spreads depict the huge fig tree, firstly protecting Laura’s family as they enjoy a birthday meal enfolded in its roots as well as sheltered by its branches (spread 4/5); and finally as Barangaroo surveys her world from its branches (spread 46/47). The big tree which survives from 1788 to 1988 is shown—for almost all of its long life—as a secret place for children (like the cubby houses discussed in chapter 5): early narrators tell of climbing it to gaze out and dream of distant places, or of swinging on a swing hanging from its branches. The narrator for the 1938 spread, Col, says: ‘when my mate Thommo still lived here, we nicked some wood from the old house and built a fort in the big tree’. And the tree shelters the 1838 narrator, Davey (p 34, see Plate 22) and his class difference, as he relishes dropping figs on the heads of the ‘snobs’. The only spread to show the tree as accommodating both adults and children is the first (or chronologically, final) spread, in which the modern Aboriginal narrator, Laura, states ‘We sat in the outside bit, under the tree, and it felt just like home’. The illustration shows the family enjoying McDonalds food while enfolded by the capacious roots of the fig tree: adults and children together are sharing in this birthday celebration. Only the Aboriginal community is shown as comfortable enough to share the children’s private space.

But although the expression ‘my place’ is associated with this tree, and also with a wider neighbourhood area as shown on each narrator’s map, the particular
Plate 22
Rawlins, Donna in Wheatley, Nadia and Rawlins, Donna *My Place* Blackburn, Collins Dove 1987 p 34
house occupied by the narrators from 1888 onwards is also an enduring space in
the book. It is not a detached house like the Australian rural cottage, but one of a
pair of terraces built by Victoria’s father; with its iron lace balcony and picket
fence in front it goes from stylish modernity when newly-built to shabby
poverty in the 1930s; and in the 1950s spread the backyard is shown, complete
with Hills Hoist and table laden with food as Michaelis’s Greek-Australian family
hold a christening party for his sister Sofia. My Place is a multi-faceted book,
moving decade by decade through the history of one area of one city but also of
the nation as a whole. One aspect of the book is its celebration of the Australian
dream of ‘home’ ownership—Victoria’s mother calls the house ‘a Dream Come
True’. She is one of the adult characters who appear throughout the book, but
the main focus is always on the child characters and their success at claiming a
home in the world for themselves.

The more recent picture book, Amelia Ellicott’s Garden by Liliana Stafford and
Stephen Michael King (2000), has as its focus an older adult character, her own
home in the world and the changes that occur to it when a multicultural
neighbourhood is formed. Amelia Ellicott is shown to be the survivor in her
street from an earlier era. Now she decries the changes that have occurred:
visibly the building of a block of flats, and the unspoken change of ethnicity:
‘“This used to be such a select neighbourhood”, she says’ (p 6). Amelia Ellicott’s
house is a freestanding one, not quite conforming to the Australian cottage
model as it does not appear to be weatherboard and the roof is tiled; but it is
surrounded by trees and garden, and she has a chicken house with a corrugated
iron roof. The occupants of the flats, with their names making up a catalogue of
migrant ethnicities—Tony and Donna Timponi, Adrian Popa, Lin Li, the
Martinovitches and Nicolae Butau—all have their own nostalgic dreams of what
they could do with a little corner of Amelia’s garden, but there is no
communication between Amelia and the newcomers. And then a disaster
occurs—a terrible storm uproots Amelia’s garden and unroofs her chicken
house. ‘She runs outside just in time to see the wind fling the sheets of
corrugated iron against the fence’ (p 23). The neighbours all rally round to help
Amelia clean up the mess, and there is an optimistic, indeed utopian, ending as
Amelia now has friends to admire her chickens, and the neighbours gain access
to land to fulfil their dreams of growing things. A multicultural community has been built.

The illustration on p 26 (see Plate 23) is a significant one, depicting the neighbours helping to carry the sheets of iron back into the garden ready to rebuild the chicken house. It is through the act of carrying the iron sheeting, and cooperating to reroof the old Australian’s chookhouse, that these newcomers show themselves worthy of the title ‘true Aussies’. The rural trace has shrunk somewhat to the humble chicken house, but it certainly has not disappeared. *Amelia Ellicott’s Garden*, like *My Place*, expresses its own version of nostalgic Arcadian dream although in built-up surroundings. Here the rural tradition combines with neighbourliness and community to build a new, felicitous space.
[Production Note:
This plate is not included in this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]
Appendix No 2

Animals in picture books

Introduction

Animals are related to the concepts of community and neighbourhood, and cultural embeddedness, and they contribute to the nostalgic content of picture books. The important topic of the representation of animals in children’s books is here treated only briefly and simply, as it applies to the sample. Books with no human characters were eliminated from the sample (see chapter 1, Appendix A), so no attempt is made here to analyse the area of anthropomorphism.

Animals contribute to nostalgia

Animals appear with great frequency in items of culture intended for children, in their toys, books, films and games, and contributing to their physical, cognitive and emotional development; and Hindley claims that animals provide images with important applications for the development of children’s capacity to think for themselves and capacity to relate to others (Hindley 1999 p 194). Certainly from the times of Aesop, the oldest and most imitated teller of animal stories in the western tradition, who ‘used the attractive power of animals and narrative to get at his audience in a peculiar way’ (Blount 1974 p 34), animal tales have been popular and influential.

Animals contributing to nostalgia

Animals play a part in many picture books, either as major characters usually interacting with humans, or playing less important roles as part of the nostalgic background. The nostalgia represented may be for an ideal natural world in which native animals roamed free, for an ideal pastoral world in which an assortment of farm animals provided for human needs, or, most commonly, for a childhood (or second childhood) in which animal pets offered loyal and understanding companionship.
Many classic tales of the English nursery, such as those by Beatrix Potter, Alison Uttley and Kenneth Grahame, have animals of the countryside—badgers, otters, rabbits, foxes and squirrels as their main characters, usually speaking and acting in human-like fashion. This English animal world carries its own nostalgic weight, as claimed by Blount:

Things being much better then is the theme of much English poetry, and because our society is an urban one, the better time belongs to the immediate but vanished past when the towns were smaller or the countryside larger. The whole process of human living is to see the rural past vanishing perhaps never to return, as if one were, from an ever faster non-stop train watching a series of stations fly by, all as lovely as Adlestrop, hardly noticed until gone. A countryside populated by small, indigenous animals is many people’s wish, hope, and memory; but such a place, if it is to give imaginative satisfaction, has to be happy and romanticised.

(Blount 1974 p 131)

The animal story tradition was influential in Australian children’s literature also, reaching its peak in the middle years of the twentieth century, with Leslie Rees’s series of animal biographies, including the first winner of the Book of the Year award for children (The Story of Karrawingi the Emu 1946). Because of the selection criteria for my sample, several books that are heirs to this tradition have been omitted, including Who Sank the Boat? (Allen 1982) which is an animal fable, and Possum Magic (Fox and Vivas 1983), the best-selling Australian children’s book which deals with questions of national identity through a cast of indigenous animals.

Leach’s animal categories

According to the anthropologist Edmund Leach, animal categories are employed to discriminate areas of social space in terms of distance from the human. The sequence proposed by Leach is: self, pet, livestock, ‘game’ and wild animal (Leach 1964 pp 36–39). Leach himself applied these categories to children’s literature, in an analysis of the series about Babar the elephant by Jean and Laurent de Brunhoff (Leach 1962 pp 181–182). According to Leach it is the ambiguous categories that attract the most intense feelings of taboo; he locates pets as an
intermediate category, unavailable for eating, ‘man-animal’. Using Leach’s taxonomy as a starting point, I have divided the animals in the picture books into four categories, working in order from the most distant to the closest to human:

a) wild animal—native Australian fauna, and, in binary opposition to them, introduced wild species
b) ‘game’—represented in the sample only by fish
c) livestock—animals of the ‘picture book farm’
d) pets—the most commonly represented, in both rural and suburban books

The categories will be discussed in order, arguing that each is treated nostalgically.

a) Wild animals

It is paradoxical that wild animals, those in the category furthest from ‘self’, are represented as nostalgically as animals in other categories; they are used in Australia as a means to nostalgic representation of the nation. In western literature and art there is a tradition of wild animals symbolising power and/or freedom, but this tradition has been overtaken in Australia by the use of wild, native animals to symbolise two desirable states: environmental conservation, and Australianness. Introduced wild animals are seen as a threat to both these states, while birds, and in one instance whales, continue to be used as symbols of freedom.

Eric Rolls’ They All Ran Wild (1969), an account of the importation into Australia and proliferation of the rabbit and other pests, brought to public attention the threat of introduced species; and a discourse of the tension between native and introduced species has since become a major cultural theme. A binary classification of ‘native: good’ vs ‘introduced: bad’ is now entrenched in the minds of both adults and children. The representation of native animals, such as kangaroos, koalas, wallabies and wombats, has come to suggest either a nostalgia for a past when such species occupied an Australia untouched by white occupation, or a victory (however temporary) over the forces working towards
their extinction. Introduced species, especially rabbits, pigs and feral cats, are regarded as threats to native flora and fauna and to the land itself.

The only books in the sample to include a number of wild animals are those by Jeannie Baker. A few native animals appear in the early spreads of Window, and are gradually replaced by introduced species, especially cats; by spread 10/11 the kookaburra on the fence is outnumbered by the rabbit in the hutch and the cat in the tree. This replacement of native by introduced species forms an important part of the book’s discourse of unfortunate change. Where the Forest Meets the Sea presents only ‘good,’ native species, such as crab (p 5), parrots (8/9), butterflies (12/13), snake and goanna (18/19), large spider and cassowary (22/23) as representatives of present-day rainforest wild life; presumably they will disappear if the ‘bad’ imagined ending occurs. The Story of Rosy Dock follows up the theme, introduced in Window, of the replacement of native species with introduced ones, which appear as a contrast to the native animals, just as the rosy dock plant itself is shown to be in opposition to the native flora. Wild animals include the wallaby in the cave above the waterhole (12/13), the goanna clinging to a tree-trunk in the flooded river (20/21), kangaroos on the floodwater ‘island’ (22/23), and emus, white cockatoos and pelicans (26/27). Introduced species include horses (12/13 and final endpapers) and the camels which share the flood ‘island’ with kangaroos (22/23). The dog following the Aboriginal woman (6/7 and 16/17) falls into an indeterminate category, perhaps native dingo or perhaps introduced. Most obviously introduced, and threatening, is the cat which accompanies the old woman, and is the focus of a complete visual subnarrative. This cat belongs, initially, in the category of ‘pet’, but as the narrative progresses the cat interacts with native animals in the ‘wild’ category and ultimately replaces
some of them\textsuperscript{36}. The victory of rabbits, among other introduced species, in this book foreshadows another picture book, *The Rabbits*, published after the sample (Marsden and Tan 1998), in which quokka-like native animals narrate a tale of their land suffering invasions by rabbits who arrive by sea and wear colonial military uniforms. The introduced species in Baker’s books are ‘bad’ in their effect on the environment; the rabbits in Marsden’s book are ‘bad’ also in their allegorical significance as representing white colonial (human) invaders.

Birds recur in art and literature as a powerful symbol, representing freedom or escape from the gravity-bound lower world (Ferber 1999 p 27). Birds are the most omnipresent ‘wild’ animals in the picture books. The pigeons in *Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons* come close to being Joseph’s pets, as he is shown feeding them from his hand, and letting them perch on his head and shoulders (p 8). But they are never shown as caged—the only cage in the book is the old-style lift, ‘a birdcage for people birds’ (p 10); the pigeons come and go freely to different parts of the city (p 23). The pigeons represent for the wheelchair-bound Joseph the ability to soar upwards, and in the dream sequence they take him right around the world in his search for a solution to the problem of Prindiville House and its proposed development. ‘[Birds] have always been a favourite device for prophecy and warning’ (Blount 1974 p 97), so it is appropriate that the pigeons should be the means to Joseph’s ‘idea which might

\textsuperscript{36} The cat first appears in the opening endpapers—while the old woman unpacks to move into her new home, the cat is shown sitting on a fencepost with its back to the viewer, its eyes apparently fixed on a flock of cockatoos, so its role as predator is clear from the beginning. Then the cat (p 5) is shown holding a lizard by the tail; it is mostly hidden behind the form of the old woman while she is kneeling and holding the trowel she has used to dig a hole for the ‘plant she especially loved for its beautiful red seed pods’ (p 4). The cat is so closely associated with the old woman, in nearness and gesture, that the viewer is encouraged to link the two actions, the planting and the attack on the native lizard. The fate of this particular lizard is not disclosed, but the more general result of this scene, as a metonymous representation of introduced animal threatening native Australia, becomes clear as the book unfolds. The subnarrative of the cat as pet may seem to end with the flood scene (spread 18/19), in which the old woman holds the cat protectively while waiting for rescue on the roof of her house; no cat appears in the following spreads, and the viewer is left to wonder whether cat and/or woman survived the flood. But the final endpapers show the deserted and derelict cottage, with four cats now replacing the human occupant—apparently the old woman’s cat is mother to a litter of three kittens. Two birds remain instead of the flock of parrots, the landscape is covered with rosy dock plants instead of the diverse grasses and bushes of the opening endpapers; the lounge chair is stuck in the forked tree, and at the base of the tree is a solitary crutch, symbol of lameness on the part of the old woman and her civilisation. Spread 30/31 has shown the landscape overrun by rosy dock and by rabbits; the rabbits’ dominant position in the foreground is the animal equivalent to the introduced plants stretching to the horizon.
save Prindiville House' (p 38). Seagulls occur in other books; they occupy the boundary between land and sea, and can evoke the freedom of holidays for many Australians. There are seagulls in *First Light*, *Greetings from Sandy Beach* and *Not a Nibble*. In the latter book, on the cold day when Dad and the children were huddling in the lee of a boat to shelter from the wind, 'They teased the seagulls and tried to feed the one with the missing leg' (spread 14/15), and this humane effort to interfere with the birds' natural pecking order helps to place the father as a 'soft' male character, one who moves between the role of father teaching his children to catch 'game', and a gentler role also shown in his encouraging Susie's exultation at just seeing the whale.

In the rural books there are surprisingly few wild animals. Apart from the books of Jeannie Baker, the only one with a variety of wildlife is *The Long Red Scarf*, with a number of birds, and a scene of wallabies by the creek at night (spread 18/19). In *Dog Tales* one of the domesticated dogs, Hamish, is shown having captured a snake (p 30). *The Very Best of Friends* includes feral cats, which peer out from under the planks (spread 24/25), and their world is shown as a malevolent one that the neglected William has joined: 'He grew mean and lean, and he hated everything and everyone' (spread 24/25). William's rejection by Jessie has pushed him from the category 'pet' (in Leach's terms) into the furthest category, 'wild animal.' In *Annie's Rainbow* there is a 'trace' of wild animals: where the viewer might expect to see remnant kangaroos, there is only a drum (p 6), with the inscription 'KANG' on the side in large letters; the same or a similar drum is used by Annie to stand on so she can reach the hollow in the tree to post her letter (p 10). This brand name, probably 'KANGOL', may be a sign of mourning for a species, when all that remains is a portion of their name, used for a commercial product.

The suburban books have only insects and birds as wild life: *Counting on Frank* with its mosquito, *Crusher is Coming* with its few fawn-coloured nondescript birds (spread 22/23), and, as may be expected in the luxuriant garden of *Drac and the Gremlin*, some more attractive non-urban species, a green parrot and white butterfly.
The wild animals in *Where’s Mum?* all belong to the world of fairy tale, conjured up in discussion between father and children as to what may have delayed Mum: a troll dressed in an ‘animal-skin’ printed suit, a wolf in striped trousers, and three companionable-looking bears riding bicycles—none at all threatening in appearance, even the troll with his spiked club, because all the creatures are humanoid.

Whales have recently moved categories (in the western world), from being considered as game to being seen as wild, ‘deservedly’ free creatures. *Not a Nibble*, as well as belonging with the other fishing books (see below), has as its climax a scene of whale-spotting. The huge figure of the mother whale dominates the illustration (spread 28/29), as her ‘magnificent crusty head’ rears up out of the sea, her baby by her side. More than four fifths of the width of the spread is taken up with these figures; the scale of the huge whale figure and uncluttered background contrasts sharply with all the other spreads in the book, with their busy, holidaying humans, and the effect is to focus attention on the whale’s wildness and freedom. The verbal text has led up to this scene by repeating the words ‘catch’ and ‘caught’; in the concluding report by Susie to the others who had not seen the whales, the dialogue changes from ‘catch’ to ‘spotted’:

‘Guess what!’
‘You caught a fish?’
‘Better than a fish. Anyone can catch a fish!’ said Susie, hopping from one foot to the other.
‘Bigger than sixty fish! Bigger than our house!’
‘Pull the other leg,’ said Tucki.

‘No,’ said Dad. ‘It’s true!’

‘I spotted two whales!’ said Susie.
‘A mother and a calf!’

(p 31)

This triumphant ‘spotting’ rather than ‘catching’ foregrounds the recent tendency in children’s literature to move such creatures from ‘game’ to ‘wild’. Comparable

b) Game

The category 'game' in Leach's terms is an almost unoccupied one in modern Australia. Foxes, rabbits and feral pigs are hunted in rural areas, but such introduced species, as discussed above, are on the whole represented culturally as environmental threat rather than nutritional opportunity. The only 'game' in the picture books is the fish pursued on recreational fishing expeditions. Fishing is shown as a pursuit nostalgic in its masculinity, and specifically in its fatherliness. The five books about fishing all show men in charge of the expeditions; four of these are the father of the main child character, one the grandfather. The women or girl characters may accompany the men (*Greetings from Sandy Beach, Not a Nibble!, The Long Red Scarf*), but their roles are minor. Three of the books show 'bonding' between male characters as they fish: the two elderly men in *The Long Red Scarf*, and father and son, willingly in *Where The Forest Meets the Sea*, reluctantly in *First Light*.

The fishing books can be ordered in ascending order of the difficulty of the activity:

- *Greetings from Sandy Beach*
- *Where the Forest Meets the Sea*
- *Not a Nibble!*
- *The Long Red Scarf*
- *First Light*

In the first book, the purpose of the weekend trip to the beach seems only incidentally to be for fishing, and it is mentioned as one among other playful activities: 'Dad caught a rather small fish' (p 27). The father in *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* has caught the fish by the time the child narrator returns from his walk in the rainforest: 'My father is cooking the fish he caught'. In *Not a Nibble!
the father calls for companions each morning as he sets out to fish, and good
catches are usually the result. *The Long Red Scarf* shows more challenging fishing
expeditions by 'my grandfather' and his friend, Jake, both elderly but tough-
looking men, who are shown 'down by the river, late one night' sitting on a log-
bridge (6/7), and later in a small dinghy with rods and net, each landing a
sizeable fish. The fifth book, *First Light*, presents a fishing expedition as
contentious between father and son37 (see analysis in chapter 6). Common to all
these scenes of male fishing expeditions is a pervasive nostalgic background: the
father/grandfather in each is in comfortable, shabby clothes—shorts, in the first
three books, and in the other two, warm old clothes, with woolly hats and rolled-
up trouser legs; they all have well-used fishing gear; and they all seem (except for
*First Light*) to be contentedly recapturing a sense of *kairos*.

c) Livestock

Livestock, which constitutes the middle category in Leach's taxonomy, consists of
animals bred for human consumption. Animals which technically are 'livestock,' I
claim, are represented, nostalgically, in the sample as closer to the category of
'pets.' The world of the picture book is characterised by nostalgic depiction of
small-holdings with their animals known by name to the farming family. In the
real world of modern mechanised farming, farmers have very little personal
rapport with the animals; Serpell argues that this lack of personalisation is
intentional, as the animals are so badly treated that it is a way of minimising the
farmer's distress. 'On a small-holding with a milch cow, a couple of pigs, a small
flock of sheep, and a dozen or so fowls, the farmer and his family are likely to
get to know the animals individually, whether they wish to or not' (Serpell 1986
158).

37 *First Light* has three differentiated kinds of animal imagery. First there are the wild
animals which interest the boy enough for him to keep them or their images in his bedroom: the
reptile (apparently alive) in a water tank, the poster of a *tyrannosaurus rex*, the model
dinosaur skeleton on his floor, the 'Save the Whales' poster on the wall (p 9). This latter is the
most obvious indication of the boy's opposition to his father's interest in robbing the sea of its
living creatures. It is noteworthy that the verbal text in the opening spreads is of the boy's
interest in model-making, but the illustrations suggest his strong interest in the living world of
wild animals as well. The second group of images consists of the creatures treated as 'game' on
the fishing expedition. The third group of animal images is of birds: the endpapers of stylised,
silhouette seagulls, and the gull which occurs in both visual and verbal text on the final page (p
32), symbolic of the human characters' flying free of their fears and conflicts.

264
In children’s literature the Arcadian tradition is expressed in nostalgia for an affectionate coexistence between humans and animals. *The Little Wooden Farmer* (Dalgliesh and Lobel 1968) is an influential US classic picture book expressing such nostalgia. At first the ‘little wooden farmer with his little wooden wife’ live in a farmhouse with no animals; they gradually stock their farm with the animals on their wish-list: a cow, two sheep, a pig, a rooster, a hen, a dog and a cat. When all these animals have been acquired, the farmer and his wife are ‘very happy’. Their farm has the characteristics of smallness, diversity and self-sufficiency which were to reappear in many picture book farms. The ‘farm of our imagination, the farm of children’s picture books’, as claimed by Symons (1984 p 88) is very different from real-world farms (as discussed in chapter 3); it is represented in the sample by *Belinda, Hector and Maggie* and *The Long Red Scarf.*

The farm in *The Very Best of Friends* has elements of such an idealisation, but more realistically specialises, with ‘fifty cattle, twenty chickens, four horses and three dogs’ (p 5); it shares with the other books, however, no hint that any animal is destined for the slaughterhouse. The only references, in verbal or visual text in any book, to the food-providing purpose of farm animals, are to milking and egg-gathering.

Hens seem to be particular favourites with illustrators. Every ‘chook’ in the picture books is a contented-looking free range chook, a nostalgic representation in times of real-life battery farming. The smallness and manageability of chooks, which make them possible livestock on real-life smallholdings or suburban blocks, also make them attractive additions to the nostalgic background of picture books, where they can represent nurturing qualities in humans. The rural books which include chooks are *Hector and Maggie, The Long Red Scarf, The Very Best of Friends* with its ‘twenty chickens’ (spread 4/5), *John Brown, Rose* and *Dog Tales* (the latter two books have ducks as well). *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten* shows the Summers family as the owners of two unusual suburban animals: a chook (just one) and a sheep, that follow the children and even sit on the roof to

---

38 Two picture books, published later than the sample, represent chooks both as companions for an old apron-wearing woman living alone in suburbia, and as ‘ice-breakers’ in establishing neighbourly relations: *Mrs Wilkinson’s Chooks* (Peguero and Spoor 1999) and *Amelia Ellicot’s Garden* (Stafford and King 2000), the latter discussed in Appendix No 1.
watch the sunrise (spread 4/5). The eccentricity of their animals (no dog or cat for this family!), when added to their surname, the rapidity of growth of their flowerbeds, and their hospitality, builds a picture of an idealised pastoral family, living close to the earth even in suburbia.

d) Pets

Pet-keeping is sometimes denigrated because of the suspicion that pets are substitutes for ‘normal’ human relationships, but this charge is denied by Serpell, who states there is ‘no good evidence that the majority of pet-owners are any different from anyone else’ (1986 p 33). Pet dogs and cats, I claim, serve three main narrative functions: as ‘substitute humans,’ interacting emotionally with human characters; as companions to child characters, to be outgrown when no longer needed; or as social ice-breakers. A huge proportion, twenty-one of the thirty books, include dog/s and/or cat/s: sixteen include dogs, by far the most commonly represented animal; five have cats as the only animal; and three show households with both a dog and a cat.

(i) Pets as substitute humans

Dogs and cats have maintained their popularity as pets in real life because of their powers of nonverbal expression. ‘By seeking to be near us and soliciting our caresses, by their exuberant greetings and pain on separation, by their possessiveness and their deferential looks of admiration, these animals persuade us that they love us and regard us highly’ (Serpell 1986 p 114). Picture book dogs and cats are depicted as similarly ‘expressive’ of a range of emotions.

Dramatic interaction between humans and animals characterises three books: John Brown, Rose; The Very Best of Friends and Felix and Alexander. The first two books focus on the interaction of an animal with a human character who is an adult, and only the third has a child character interacting with his dog (actually a toy dog, but treated here as a ‘pet’ because in his behaviour Felix is a loyal pet rather than an inanimate toy). In the first two books the interaction of Rose, and of Jessie, with the pet animal charts the human character’s psychological health.
While in *The Very Best of Friends* both Jessie and William, human and cat, share a deterioration in physical and emotional health until they come together in companionship, *John Brown, Rose* is the book in which the pet is nearest to being a substitute human. Like the cat, Puss in Boots, in the traditional fairy tale, he understands human behaviour and is able to manipulate it to his own ends. ‘The behaviour of the cat in Puss in Boots is that of a human in a cat’s skin . . . He is the Clever Servant, and has all the initiative and all the ideas . . .’ (Blount 1974 p 25). John Brown is a not quite so clever servant—it takes him a while to work out what Rose needs (spread 26/27), but once he has discerned her needs, he is accommodating to them and in the process secures his own satisfaction also.

_Felix and Alexander_ presents a pet that is magical; he is introduced as ‘Felix, a toy dog’ but he reveals the qualities not only of a real live dog but of a human friend, as ‘He packed his torch into his suitcase and went out to look for Alexander’ (p 6). Felix, as discussed in chapter 4, shows devotion to the point of sacrifice, exemplifying perfectly the steadfastness referred to by Blount as desirable in a pet: ‘Human is what the child wants his toy or pet to be, the substitute friend or brother, like himself but exempt from all the dreary rules attached to childhood and growing up, the eternal confidant or companion, steadfast and unchangeable’ (Blount 1974 p 170). Such pets contribute powerfully to the nostalgia of picture books.

(ii) Pets as companions to child characters

Most pets in picture books play more everyday roles as companions and playmates, and the majority are dogs. Dogs have always been treasured for their loyalty (Ferber 1999 p 59), and loyalty and patience are shown by dogs such as

---

39 The relationships between Jessie and William, and between Rose and John Brown, may be seen as in the tradition of that of a witch and her familiar. ‘Familiars were regarded as demonic companions who carried out the witch’s evil intentions in return for protection and nourishment’ (Serpell 1986 p 45) The idea of the familiar, and the prevalence of women (usually poor and old) among witches were both ideas peculiar to England, not found in continental Europe. The familiar could be a human, but most often was a small animal: hedgehog, foal, toad, weasel, or most commonly cat. ‘In almost every single case of witchcraft which was brought to trial in [England], the accused was implicated by the fact that he or she possessed and displayed affection for one or more animal companions (Serpell 1986 p 45).
Frank (Counting on Frank), Wild and Woolly’s companion (The Journey Home), and the playmates (Crusher is Coming, Drac and the Gremlin, Dog Tales). Of the sixteen books with dogs, five make no mention of the dog in the verbal text, but it appears as an important element of nostalgic background. Two of these books, Annie’s Rainbow and Marty Moves to the Country, show a pet dog faithfully following the main character in her/his activities, seemingly playing the role of companion of immaturity, until the dog is replaced by more exciting events\(^{40}\), in the one case the fulfilment of an imaginative goal, in the other a satisfactory human friendship.

In The Midnight Gang, pets are presented humorously as playing the role of wild animals to the babies as they creep at night ‘past the slobbering monster that sleeps in its kennel’ (p 6), and ‘past the hairy beast that dozes in a rickety-rackety chair’ (p 7). On these pages the animals so described are barely visible in the darkness, but on the babies’ return ‘just as the sun is coming up,’ ‘the hairy beast lick-licking itself’ and ‘the slobbering monster crunch-crunching on a bone’ (Spread 22/23) are clearly seen as cat and dog, serving as answers to a riddle for those young child readers who did not discern their identities at the start of the book. The mismatch between verbal text and illustration, in Nodelman’s terms (1988), serves as an elementary introduction to such picture book irony.

\(^{40}\)In Annie’s Rainbow, the small black dog would seem destined to play a major role in the narrative, as its framed picture appears in the illustration of Annie’s room opposite the title page; and the dog is shown accompanying Annie in every illustration up to p 12. Annie sets out from home to walk across the grassy sward to the place of fantasy, and in that scene (p 13)—and thereafter—the dog is no longer at her side. The book concludes with another illustration of Annie’s bedroom, this time with the large picture of the rainbow which she has brought back home, and this picture has replaced on the wall the small picture of the dog. So Annie’s dog, which has not ever been mentioned in the verbal text, has disappeared also from the visual text as soon as her imaginative goal has begun to be fulfilled. Similarly Marty Moves to the Country promises to be a ‘boy and his dog’ story, as although the dog is not mentioned in the verbal text, it appears in the cover illustration and early spreads: a pale-coloured active dog which accompanies Marty in the city scene (p 11) and to the new home in the country. Except for the school scene (spread 16/17) the dog is apparent in each spread until 20/21: this is the scene in which Josie has arrived at Marty’s home to obtain help with her maths homework. The dog is to appear in only two further illustrations, and again its necessity seems to have disappeared once Marty has solved his problem of friendlessness in the new environment.
(iii) Pets as social ice-breakers

Animals can make strange situations and people less alarming (Serpell 1986 p 83). To western eyes ‘the reassuring image of the pet is a cultural symbol of safety and security’; and in many societies a person’s temperament may be assessed by the condition of his livestock (Serpell 1986 p 84). This characteristic is used as a narrative device by Bob Graham in several of his books. *Greetings from Sandy Beach* has two dog characters, one belonging to the narrator’s family, that is left behind when they set out—‘Dad cried about leaving our dog’ (p 4)—and the other belonging to the Disciples of Death, the unsettling neighbours at the beach. The narrator is immediately attracted to the Disciples’ dog: they ‘had a dog with goggies that rode up on the petrol tank. It was the best thing I ever saw in my life’ (p 11). The depiction of the dog in words and illustration, together with the narrator’s voiced admiration for it, all combine to make the strange situation and people less alarming: the ‘reassuring image of the pet’ has softened the bikers in the eyes of the narrator (and reader). By contrast, Mr Wintergarten in *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten*, is first judged by his fierce pet, ‘a dog—big as a wolf!’ (p 14); but the dog is tamed with a fairy cake (p 22), and ends up by being as benign as the now-tamed Mr Wintergarten himself.

Lack of animals as sinister

Almost all the sample books have some animal presence, so the lack of animals in the town in *The Watertower* contributes to its eerie atmosphere. In a real country town, at least one of the men outside the pub would be likely to have a dog at his heel or by his car; and the roadside stall selling pumpkins and other vegetables is set against a backdrop of empty paddocks. The only animal to appear in this book is the black cat sitting on top of the car (spread 24/25), a traditional symbol of ill fortune; its presence contributes to the accumulation of ‘spooky’ details which unsettles the reader, giving premonitions of something evil at the climax of the book.
Bibliography

a) The Picture Book sample

1 Greenwood, Ted *Joseph and Lulu and the Prindiville House Pigeons* Cremorne, Angus and Robertson 1972
2 Brooks, Ron *Annie’s Rainbow* Sydney, Collins 1975
3 Wagner, Jenny and Brooks, Ron *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat* Harmondsworth, Penguin 1977
4 Walker, Kate and Treloar, Bruce *Marty Moves to the Country* Ryde, Methuen 1980
5 Ormerod, Jan *Sunshine* Harmondsworth, Penguin 1981
6 Denton, Terry *Felix and Alexander* Melbourne, Oxford University Press 1985
7 Zavos, Judy and Zak, Drahos *Murgatroyd’s Garden* Richmond, William Heinemann Australia 1986
8 Graham, Bob *Crusher is Coming* Sydney, William Collins 1987
9 Baker, Jeannie *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* Lane Cove, Julia MacRae 1987
10 Hilton, Nette and Power, Margaret *The Long Red Scarf* Norwood, Omnibus 1987
11 Baillie, Allan and Tanner, Jane *Drac and the Gremlin* Ringwood, Penguin 1988
12 Hirst, Robin and Sally; and Harvey, Roland and Levine, Joe *My Place in Space* Fitzroy, The Five Mile Press 1988
13 Wild, Margaret and Vivas, Julie *The Very Best of Friends* Hunters Hill, Margaret Hamilton 1989
15 Lester, Alison *The Journey Home* Melbourne, Oxford University Press 1989
16 Graham, Bob *Greetings from Sandy Beach* Melbourne, Lothian 1990
17 Clement, Rod *Counting on Frank* Pymble, Angus&Robertson 1990
18 McLean, Andrew and McLean, Janet *Hector and Maggie* North Sydney, Allen & Unwin 1990
19 Baker, Jeannie *Window* London, Julia MacRae 1991
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Graham, Bob</td>
<td><em>Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten</em></td>
<td>Ringwood, Penguin</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Allen, Pamela</td>
<td><em>Belinda</em></td>
<td>Ringwood, Penguin</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Gleeson, Libby and Smith, Craig</td>
<td><em>Where's Mum?</em></td>
<td>Norwood, Omnibus</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Crew, Gary and Gouldthorpe, Peter</td>
<td><em>First Light</em></td>
<td>Melbourne, Lothian</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Prior, Natalie Jane and Denton, Terry</td>
<td><em>The Paw</em></td>
<td>St Leonards, Allen &amp; Unwin</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>McLean, Andrew and McLean, Janet</td>
<td><em>Dog Tales</em></td>
<td>St Leonards, Allen &amp; Unwin</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Crew, Gary and Woolman, Steven</td>
<td><em>The Watertower</em></td>
<td>Flinders Park, Era</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Mattingley, Christobel and Spudvilas, Anne</td>
<td><em>The Race</em></td>
<td>Sydney, Ashton Scholastic</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Honey, Elizabeth</td>
<td><em>Not a Nibble!</em></td>
<td>St Leonards, Allen &amp; Unwin</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Wild, Margaret and James, Ann</td>
<td><em>The Midnight Gang</em></td>
<td>Norwood, Omnibus</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Where one name only appears, that person produced both verbal text and illustrations; where there are two, the first is the writer, the second the illustrator; except for *My Place in Space*, which has two writers, Robin and Sally Hirst, and two illustrators, Roland Harvey and Joe Levine.
b) Other children's books referred to

Ahlberg, Janet and Allan *Each Peach Pear Plum* Harmondsworth, Kestrel 1978


Allen, Pamela *Who Sank the Boat?* Melbourne, Thomas Nelson 1982

Babbitt, Natalie *Tuck Everlasting* New York, FarrarStraus Giroux 1975

Blake, Quentin and Yeoman, John *All Join In* London, Jonathan Cape 1990


Brisley, Joyce Lankester *Milly-Molly-Mandy Stories* London, Harrap 1928

Burnett, Frances Hodgson *Little Lord Fauntleroy* 1886

Burnett, Frances Hodgson *The Secret Garden* 1911

Burningham, John *Come Away from the Water, Shirley* London, Jonathan Cape 1977


Burton, Virginia Lee *The Little House* Boston, Houghton 1942

Burton, Virginia Lee *Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel* London, Faber 1942

Carroll, Lewis *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* illustrated by John Tenniel, London, Macmillan 1865

Caswell, Brian and Chiem, David *The Fall Story* St Lucia, UQP 2002

Dalgliesh, Alice and Lobel, Anita The Little Wooden Farmer New York, Macmillan 1968

Defoe, Daniel Robinson Crusoe 1719


Fox, Mem and Vivas, Julie Possum Magic Norwood, Omnibus 1983

French, Jackie The Cafe on Callisto Mascot, Koala Books 2001

Fusillo, Archimede The Dons Ringwood, Penguin 2001


Grahame, Kenneth Dream Days 1895

Grahame, Kenneth The Wind in the Willows London, Methuen 1908

Greene, Gracie; Tramacchi, Joe and Gill, Lucille Tjarany Roughtail Broome, Magabala Books 1992

Hathorn, Libby and Laroche, Sandra Stephen’s Tree Sydney, Methuen 1979

Hathorn, Libby and Rogers, Greg Way Home Milsons Point, Random House 1994

Hathorn, Libby and Stanley, Elizabeth The Wishing Cupboard South Melbourne, Lothian 2002

Hilton, Nette and Spudvilas, Anne In My Backyard Port Melbourne, Lothian 2001

Hoban, Russell and Blake, Quentin How Tom Beat Captain Najork and his Hired Sportsmen London, Jonathan Cape 1974

Hutchins, Pat Rosie’s Walk New York, Macmillan 1968

273
Jansson, Tove Finn Family Moomintroll London, Ernest Benn, English translation by Elizabeth Portch 1958 (originally published 1948)

Jinks, Catherine and Andrew McLean You’ll Wake the Baby! Melbourne, Penguin 2000

Jorgensen, Norman and Harrison-Lever, Brian In Flanders Fields Fremantle, Fremantle Arts Centre Press 2002

Kipling, Rudyard Rewards and Fairies 1910


Loh, Morag and Rawlins, Donna Tucking Mummy In Gosford, Ashton Scholastic 1987

Machin, Sue and Vivas, Julie I Went Walking Norwood, Omnibus 1989

MacIntyre, Elizabeth Hugh’s Zoo New York, Knopf 1964

Marchetta, Melina Looking for Alibrandi Ringwood, Penguin 1992

Marsden, John and Tan, Shaun The Rabbits Port Melbourne, Lothian 1998

Milne, A A Winnie-the-Pooh London, Methuen 1926

Milne, A A The House at Pooh Corner London, Methuen 1928

Moloney, James and Novak, Jiri Tibor A Box of Chicks Camberwell, Penguin Books 2002

Newbery, John A Little Pretty Pocket-Book intended for the Instruction and amusement of little Master Tommy and Pretty Miss Polly . . . author not established, but published by Newbery, London 1744

Nister, Ernest Revolving Pictures London 1892; reproduced London, William Collins 1979
Park, Ruth Callie’s Castle Sydney, Angus and Robertson 1974

Paterson, A B and Digby, Desmond Waltzing Matilda Sydney, William Collins 1970

Paterson, A B and Niland, Kilmeny and Deborah Mulga Bill’s Bicycle Sydney, Collins 1973

Paterson, A B and Ingpen, Robert Clancy of the Overflow Adelaide, Rigby 1982

Peguero, Leone and Spoor, Mike Mrs Wilkinson’s Chooks Milsons Point, Random House Australia 1999

Potter, Beatrix The Tale of Mrs Tiggy-Winkle London, Frederick Warne 1905

Potter, Beatrix The Tale of Tom Kitten London, Frederick Warne 1907

Pownall, Eve and Senior, Margaret The Australia Book Sydney, John Sands 1952

Rawlins, Donna Digging to China Gosford, Ashton Scholastic 1988

Rees, Leslie and Cunningham, Walter The Story of Karrawingi the Emu Sydney, John Sands 1946

Roughsey, Dick The Rainbow Serpent Sydney, Collins 1975

Roughsey, Dick and Trezise, Percy The Quinkins Sydney, Collins 1978

Rubinstein, Gillian and Denton, Terry Mr Plunkett’s Pool Milsons Point, Random House 1992


Salanitri, Joan and Wu, Di Ah Kee and the Glass Bottle Maleny, Greater Glider 2001

Savvides, Irini Willow Tree and Olive Sydney, Hodder Headline 2001
Sendak, Maurice *Where the Wild Things Are* New York, Harper & Row 1963

Sendak, Maurice *In the Night Kitchen* New York, Harper & Row 1970

Sendak, Maurice *Outside Over There* New York, Harper & Row 1981

Southall, Ivan and Greenwood, Ted *Sly Old Wardrobe* Melbourne, Cheshire 1968

Stafford, Liliana and King, Stephen Michael *Amelia Ellicott's Garden* Hunters Hill, Margaret Hamilton 2000


Tan, Shaun *The Red Tree* South Melbourne, Lothian 2001

Wagner, Jenny and Brooks, Ron *The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek* London, Longman Young Books 1973

Wheatley, Nadia and Rawlins, Donna *My Place* Blackburn, Collins Dove 1987

White, E B *Charlotte's Web* New York, Harper 1952

Wilde, Oscar 'The Selfish Giant' London 1891

Yolen, Jane and Schoenherr, John *Owl Moon* New York, Philomel 1987
c) References

Ahlberg, Allan *Janet's Last Book: Janet Ahlberg 1944–1994 A Memento* (printed for private circulation by the author) 1996

Allenby, Guy 'Out on a Limb' in *Sydney Morning Herald* 10 January 2002 pp 16–17

Anstey, Michèle and Bull, Geoff *Reading the Visual: Written and Illustrated Children's Literature* Sydney, Harcourt Australia 2000

Archer, John *Building a Nation: a History of the Australian House* Sydney, William Collins 1987

Ariès, Philippe *Centuries of Childhood* translated from the French by Robert Baldick; London, Jonathan Cape 1962


Ashe, Rosalind and Tuttle, Lisa *Children’s Literary Houses: Famous Dwellings in Children’s Fiction* Limpsfield, Dragon’s World 1984


Bader, Barbara *American Picturebooks from Noah’s Ark to the Beast Within* New York, Macmillan 1976

Bail, Murray *Homesickness* London, Macmillan 1980

Bakhtin, Mikhail ‘The Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel’ in *The Dialogic Imagination* Austin, University of Texas Press 1981
Bal, Mieke *Narratology: Introduction to the Art of Narrative* Toronto, University of Toronto Press 1997

Barthes, Roland *Mythologies* Paris, Editions de Seuil 1957


Bell, Colin and Newby, Howard *Community Studies* London, George Allen and Unwin 1971


Birkerts, Sven *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age* Boston, Faber and Faber 1994


Blake, Quentin *Words and Pictures* London, Jonathan Cape 2000


Blount, Margaret *Animal Land: The Creatures of Children's Fiction* London, Hutchinson 1974

Boyd, Robin *Australia's Home* Melbourne, Melbourne University Press 1952


Bradford, Clare ‘Centre and Edges: Postcolonial Literary Theory and Australian Picture Books’ in Bradford, Clare (ed) *Writing the Australian Child: Texts and Contexts in Fictions for Children* Nedlands, University of Western Australia Press 1996 pp 92–110


Brissenden, R F *The Whale in Darkness* Canberra, Australian National University Press 1980

Brooks, Ron Unpublished interview with present writer, Canberra May 2000

Brooks, Ron ‘Drawn from the Heart’ in *Island* No 91 Summer 2002–3 pp 7–19


Butts, Dennis (ed) *Stories and Society: Children's Literature in its Social Context* Basingstoke, Macmillan 1992

Campbell, David ‘Soldier’s Song’ in *Speak With the Sun* London, Chatto & Windus 1949


Camporesi, Piero *The Magic Harvest: Food, Folklore and Society* Cambridge, Polity Press 1993 (translated by Joan Krakover Hall)


Children's Book Council of Australia *Judges' Report* Mt Lawley WA, CBCA 2001

Children's Book Council of Australia *Awards Handbook* Mt Lawley WA, CBCA 2002 (a)
Children's Book Council of Australia Judges' Report Mt Lawley WA, CBCA 2002
(b)

Clift, Charmian The End of the Morning unpublished work 1962, quoted in Wheatley, Nadia The Life and Myth of Charmian Clift Pymble, HarperCollins 2001


Cotton, Penni Picture Books Sans Frontières Stoke on Trent, Trentham Books 2000

Crewe, Judith Children's Literature for a Multicultural Australia Ultimo, Library Association of Australia 1986

Cuddon, J A A Dictionary of Literary Terms London, Andre Deutsch 1979


Denton, Terry 'A Light in the Darkness' in Alderman, Belle and Owen Reeder, Stephanie (eds) The Inside Story Canberra, Children's Book Council of Australia ACT Branch 1987, pp 224–236


Doody, Margaret Anne The True Story of the Novel New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press 1996

Doonan, Jane Looking at Pictures in Picture Books Stroud, The Thimble Press 1993
Drew, Philip *Veranda: Embracing Place* Pymble, Angus&Robertson 1992


Drewe, Robert *The Drowner* Sydney, Macmillan 1996

Du Boulay, F R H *An Age of Ambition* NY, Viking 1970

Dusinberre, Juliet *Alice to the Lighthouse: Children's Books and Radical Experiments in Art* Basingstoke, Macmillan Press 1987

Dutton, Geoffrey *The Beach* Melbourne, Oxford University Press 1985


Elliott, Tina ‘Wood stock’ in *Sydney Morning Herald* ‘Domain’ 15 April 2000 p 6

Fabian, Sue and Loh, Morag *Children in Australia: an Outline History* Melbourne, Oxford University Press 1980

Falkiner, Suzanne (a) *The Writers’ Landscape: Wilderness* East Roseville, Simon & Schuster, 1992

Falkiner, Suzanne (b) *The Writers’ Landscape: Settlement* East Roseville, Simon & Schuster 1992

Ferber, Michael *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1999

Fiske, John, Hodge, Bob and Turner, Graeme *Myths of Oz: Reading Australian Popular Culture* North Sydney, Allen & Unwin 1987

Flanagan, Richard *Gould's Book of Fish: A Novel in Twelve Fish* Sydney, Macmillan 2001


Gilding, Michael *The Making and Breaking of the Australian Family* North Sydney, Allen & Unwin 1991


Goody, Jack *Cooking, Cuisine and Class: a Study in Comparative Sociology* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1982

Graham, Bob 'Bob Graham Comments' in *St James Guide to Children's Writers* Detroit, St James Press 1999, p 440


Grylls, David *Guardians and Angels: Parents and Children in Nineteenth-Century Literature* London, Faber and Faber 1978


Haddon, Ann and James, Ann *Making Pictures: Techniques for Illustrating Children's Books* Gosford, Scholastic 1996


Haynes, Roslynn D *Seeking the Centre: The Australian Desert in Literature, Art and Film* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1998
Hewison, Robert *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* London, Methuen 1987


Inglis, Fred *The Promise of Happiness: Value and Meaning in Children's Fiction* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1981

Ingpen, Robert *Marking Time: Australia's Abandoned Buildings* Adelaide, Rigby 1979

Ingram, Anne Bower 'Development of the Australian Picture Book' in Alderman, Belle and Reeder, Stephanie Owen (eds) *The Inside Story: Creating Children's Books* Canberra, Children's Book Council of Australia, ACT Branch 1987 pp 134–146


Johnston, Rosemary Ross 'Children's Literature Advancing Australia' in *Bookbird* Vol 37 No 1 1999 pp 13–18


Kamenka, Eugene *Community as a Social Ideal* London, Edward Arnold 1982

Kamuf, Peggy *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds* Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf 1991


Knight, Michael 'Backyard solution to looming water crisis' in *UTS News* November 1999


Kress, Gunther unpublished address at Reading Pictures Symposium, Cambridge September 2000


Kuznets, Lois Rostow *When Toys Come Alive: Narratives of Animation, Metamorphosis, and Development* Yale, Yale University Press 1994

Lanes, Selma G *The Art of Maurice Sendak* New York, Abrams 1980


Lees, Stella and Macintyre, Pam The Oxford Companion to Australian Children’s Literature Melbourne, Oxford University Press 1993


Lévi-Strauss, Claude The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a Science of Mythology Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1983

Lewis, Daniel and Glindinning, Lee ‘Sydney? Wouldn’t move there for quids’ in Sydney Morning Herald 23 July 2002

Lowenthal, David The Past is a Foreign Country Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1985

Lurie, Alison The Language of Clothes New York, Random House 1981


Malouf, David 'A First Place: The Mapping of a World', The Fourteenth Herbert Blaiklock Memorial Lecture, 26 September 1984

Malouf, David 12 Edmondstone Street London, Chatto & Windus 1985


Marcus, Clare Cooper House as a Mirror of Self Berkeley, California, Conari Press 1995

May, Rollo Ropet efter myten Stockholm, Rabén & Sjögren 1991

Meek, Margaret Learning to Read London, Bodley Head 1982


Misheff, Sue ‘Beneath the Web and Over the Stream: The Search for Safe Places in Charlotte’s Web and Bridge to Terabithia’ in Children’s Literature in Education Vol 29 No 3, 1998


Modjeska, Drusilla The Orchard Sydney, Macmillan 1994


Moore, Robert, Burke, Sheridan and Joyce, Ray Australian Cottages Port Melbourne, Hamlyn 1989

Morgan, Sally My Place Fremantle, Fremantle Arts Centre Press 1987

Morris, Pam The Bakhtin Reader London, Edward Arnold 1994


286
Muir, Marcie  *A History of Australian Children’s Book Illustration* Melbourne, Oxford University Press 1982

Murray, James ‘Rocker of ages’ in *The Australian Magazine* 18 December 1999 pp 32–34


‘Natuzzi Store’ advertisement in *Sydney Morning Herald Good Weekend Magazine* 27 April 2002 pp 40-41

Niall, Brenda ‘Short cuts lose their way’ (book review) in *The Australian* May 23 1996 p 13

Nieuwenhuizen, Agnes  *No Kidding: Top writers for young people talk about their work* Chippendale, Pan Macmillan 1991

Nightingale, Peggy (ed)  *A Sense of Place in the New Literatures in English* St Lucia, University of Queensland Press 1986

Nikolajeva, Maria ‘Two National Heroes: Jacob Two–Two and Pippi Longstocking’ in *Canadian Children’s Literature* no 86, vol 23: 2 summer 1997

Nikolajeva, Maria  *From Mythic to Linear: Time in Children’s Literature* Lanham, Maryland, Scarecrow Press 2000

Nikolajeva, Maria and Scott, Carole  *How Picturebooks Work* New York, Garland 2001

Nodelman, Perry  *Words About Pictures* Athens, University of Georgia Press 1988


Oakley, Barry ‘2050: A Fable’ in *The Sydney Morning Herald Spectrum* July 29, 2000

287
O’Brien, Geraldine ‘Art is where the heart is’, interview with Peter Emmett, curator of ‘Sydney Suburbs’ Exhibition at Museum of Sydney, in Sydney Morning Herald 5 April, 2000 p 14

Oliver, Kelly The Portable Kristeva New York, Columbia University Press 1997


Paterson, A B ‘Clancy of the Overflow’ 1889


Pfanner, Louise Between the Buttons: The vocabulary of clothing used in children’s picture books Unpublished thesis UTS Kuring-gai Campus 1996


Prentice, Jeffrey and Bird, Bettina Dromkeen: A Journey into Children’s Literature Melbourne, J M Dent 1987

Probyn, Elspeth Outside Belongings New York, Routledge 1996


Reeder, Stephanie Owen ‘Sex-role Stereotyping in Australian Children’s Book of the Year Award Winners 1950–1980’ in Reading Time 1981, pp 10–16

Reeder, Stephanie Owen Waltzing the Magic Home: Reading the Visual Language of Australian Picture Books paper delivered at CBCA NSW conference, Sydney 9 October 1999

Richards, Lyn Nobody’s Home: Dreams and Realities in a New Suburb Melbourne, Oxford University Press 1990

Richardson, Henry Handel The Fortunes of Richard Mahony: Australia Felix London, Heinemann 1917

Robinson, Roland ‘The Cradle’ in Deep Well Sydney, Edwards and Shaw 1962


Rolls, Eric They All Ran Wild Sydney, Angus & Robertson 1969

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques Emile 1762


Rubio, Mary ‘As the Twig is Bent, So Grows the Tree’ in Canadian Children’s Literature Winter 1997 No 88, Vol 23


Safe, Mike ‘Apprentices’ Master’ (interview with George Lewin) in The Australian Magazine 27 January 2000 pp 12–15

Saxby, Maurice The Proof of the Puddin’: Australian Children’s Literature 1970-1990 Sydney, Ashton Scholastic 1993

Saxby, Maurice Offered to Children: A History of Australian Children’s Literature 1841-1941 Gosford, Scholastic Australia 1998


Saxby, Maurice Unpublished note to the present writer 2003


Schorsch, Anita Images of Childhood: An Illustrated Social History New York, Mayflower Books 1979

Schulze, Gerhard Die Erlebnisgesellschaft Frankfurt/New York, Campus 1993

Schwarcz, Joseph H Ways of the Illustrator Chicago, American Library Association 1982

Scobie, Susan The Dromkeen Book of Australian Children’s Illustrators Gosford, Scholastic Australia 1997


Shanahan, Dennis ‘Family Decline and the Welfare Trap’ The Weekend Australian April 1, 2000

Shulevitz, Uri Writing with Pictures: How to Write and Illustrate Children’s Books New York, Watson-Guptill 1985

Sibley, David (a) Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West London, Routledge 1995


Sontag, Susan Illness as Metaphor Harmondsworth, Penguin 1978


Stephens, John ‘Modality and Space in Picture Book Art: Allen Say’s Emma’s Rug’ in CREATA vol 1 no 1, June 2000 pp 44–59

291
Stewart, Susan *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press 1984


Sutherland, Robert D ‘Hidden Persuaders: Political Ideologies in Literature for Children’ in *Children’s Literature in Education* 1985, Vol 16, No 3 pp 143–157


Telfer, Elizabeth *Food for Thought: Philosophy and Food* London Routledge 1996

Tennyson, Alfred *The Idylls of the King* 1859


Tiffin, Helen in Nightingale, Peggy (ed) *A Sense of Place in the New Literatures in English* St Lucia, University of Queensland Press 1986

Tinder, Glenn *Community: Reflections on a Tragic Ideal* Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press 1980

Tönnies, Ferdinand *Community and Society* translated by Charles Loomis, London, Routledge 1955 (first pub as *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* 1887)

Tunstall, Gillian *The Image of Mothers in Contemporary Children’s Picture Books* School of Teacher Education, University of Technology, Sydney 1992

Turner, Graeme *National Fictions: Literature, film and the construction of Australian narrative* St Leonards Allen & Unwin 1993


292
Watson, Ken 'Text, Ideology and the Young Australian Reader' in Papers Vol 1, No 3, Dec 1990

Watson, Victor Wiggles, Squiggles and Speech Balloons: Reading in Tintin unpublished address at 'Reading Pictures' Symposium, Cambridge September 2000


Wheatley, Nadia Unpublished interview with present writer 12 July 2001 re research for A Banner Bold

Wheatley, Nadia The Life and Myth of Charmian Clift Pymble, HarperCollins 2001

White, Kerry 'Bob Graham' in St James Guide to Children's Writers Detroit, St James Press 1999, p 441


Wright, Judith 'Australia's Double Aspect' in Preoccupations in Australian Poetry Melbourne, Oxford University Press 1965

Wright, Patrick 'Trafficking in History' in Boswell, David and Evans, Jessica Representing the Nation: A Reader London, Routledge 1999 pp 115-150