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## Frame of Reference

David Beagley, editor

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### ***It was twenty years ago today ...***

Well, not actually Today, because that needs to be April 2nd, but this issue of *The Looking Glass* marks the **20th anniversary** of this journal. Twenty Years, Yes!!

It was twenty years ago that (Sgt Pepper and Beatles references notwithstanding!) Annette Goldsmith said "Welcome to *The Looking Glass: New Perspectives on Children's Books*, the journal that combines traditional and modern subject matter for a general and academic audience -- and has fun doing it" in the first editorial, and here we are, still striving to that aim!

Annette, and her team from The Toronto Centre for the Study of Children's Literature (TCSC) that was operating at the Faculty of Information Studies, University of Toronto at that time, began this online journal with a group of enthusiastic practitioners in this area children's and YA literature: authors, illustrators, academics, librarians, booksellers, IT experts, indeed anyone who was keen and willing to help.

From the start, *TLG* used a format of sections (that we still call "columns", as we hark back to traditional print presentation!) to allow contributors the freedom to express themselves and their ideas individually and idiosyncratically. Along with serious academic analyses and challenging opinion pieces, we had recipes, acrostics, reminiscences and gossip all under headings that reflected the very broad (and accurate) use of the term "magazine" - a store or collection of topical items on a particular subject aimed at an audience as varied and enthusiastic as its contributors.

And enthusiasm, more than anything, is what has driven the contributors to publishing *TLG* over the years. Annette handed the editorship over to Jane Goldstein after 5 years, with a well-established team of editors, reviewers and supporters who built strongly on the early foundations. While *TLG* was now operating on its own, without any formal affiliation, the webpage delivery developed as the internet was really taking off, and people were beginning to realise the potential of this medium.

After another 5 years, it fell to me to add my ideas to *TLG's* direction, and with the assistance of La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia (who currently host us), the format became an open access journal using the Open Journal System developed at Simon Fraser University in Canada. The previous "collection of web pages" format was flexible, but was growing very large and unwieldy and made finding individual articles difficult. This change of format has moved *TLG* firmly into the academic journal field, and it is now indexed in Google Scholar and EBSCOhost as well as the general internet. It is still freely accessible worldwide and strives to maintain both its independence and its high standards of scholarship.

This is not easy. It is still run by volunteers - chief among them Caroline Jones, who has been with *TLG* since near the very start. Her work on **Alice's Academy** ensure that the articles selected for that column are challenging, erudite, and make a real and ongoing contribution to commentary on children's and YA literature. This issue's new Alice piece is a discussion by Keith Moser of Mississippi State University of Shel Silverstein's classic *The Giving Tree* through the lens of the theories of the contemporary French philosopher Michel Serres - ["The Problematic Quest for Happiness in the Modern World: A Serresian Reading of Shel Silverstein's The Giving Tree"](#). Moser explores the progressive disenchantment of the character "Boy" throughout the narrative and asks the reader to ponder its question of whether the modern world is conducive to any type of genuine or lasting happiness at all.

To celebrate our 20 years, we are reprinting key articles from past issues to mark the 5, 10, 15 and 20 year periods. Two **Alice's Academy** articles feature here. Shandel Gamer's ["Will I remember this?": David Wisniewski's Golem"](#) from Vol.3, no.1 in 1999, not only analyses this haunting picture book but places it in the wider scope of Golem literature in Judaic tradition. Annette Wannamaker's ["Men in Cloaks and High-heeled Boots, Men Wielding Pink Umbrellas: Witchy masculinities in the Harry Potter](#)



[novels](#)" (vol. 10, no. 1) visits the character and series that is the largest single topic over all our articles, JK Rowling's *Harry Potter*, and examines the gender elements that pervade the young wizard's world and story. Use our search option to find other considerations of the Potter-world, such as racism in Lana Whited's "[1492, 1942, 1992: The Theme of Race in the Harry Potter Series](#)" (vol. 10, no. 1), crime and punishment in Janet Iafrate's "[Expelliarmus!: Retaliation and peaceable outcomes in the Harry Potter series.](#)" (vol. 13, no. 3), or cultural traditions in James Washick's "[Oliver Twisted: the origins of Lord Voldemort in the Dickensian orphan.](#)" (vol. 13, no. 3).

**Emerging Voices**, under several titles, has been a key defining feature of *TLG* since its very beginning. One of the major problems faced by new commentators in any academic area is getting their ideas out into the public arena, having to compete with experienced writers well practised in "The Caucus Race". We offer this column to these newbies under exactly the same peer-reviewed processes as **Alice**; they must satisfy the same rigorous standards as the more senior voices, but they have a more open and supportive avenue to get into print.

Our featured **EV** articles from the past come, firstly, from vol. 14, no. 1 with Duncan Olenick's "[Haunted: Architectural Manifestations of Adult Phobias and Admonitions in the Haunted Houses of Children's and Young Adult Literature](#)" which shows how picture books, particularly, can mix the bizarre and scary with the familiar and recognisable for their young readers. Emma Hayes' "[The Secret Garden and the Gaze](#)" (vol. 19, no. 1) offers a critical reading of this classic to demonstrate how appearance and looking facilitates both Mary's and Colin's transformations.

One of our more recent columns is **The Tortoise's Tale**, which offers discussions on learning, education and pedagogy, and here Mark I West looks at a classic from an intriguing perspective in his "[Playing Pirates with Tom Sawyer: The Intersection of Reader-Response Theory and Play Theory](#)". He argues that a century before these interpretations of childhood behaviour were voiced, Mark Twain's observations of children at play mirror these modern views.

**Jabberwocky** is the column that allows for more personal and exploratory studies and is delighted to offer Sophie Masson's "[Mapping the undiscovered country: a brief introduction to contemporary afterlife fiction for young adults](#)". Sophie, who writes in both English and French, has had over 60 novels published internationally and is currently examining the way that Death and the Afterlife are being used as an active space in stories, especially in YA literature.

Reviews are always an important element in sharing scholarship and in **Curiouser and Curiouser** this issue, Patricia Schnase considers Sara K. Day's "[Reading Like a Girl: Narrative Intimacy in Contemporary American Young Adult Literature](#)", especially its concept of "narrative intimacy" as an indicator of the relationship between author and reader.

With the usual news and announcements in **The Caucus Race**, that is our 20th year anniversary issue! *The Looking Glass* aims to be a voice for you, the community of enthusiasts, scholars, practitioners, and advocates for Children's and Young Adult Literature. It is you who keep us going, and we will always welcome your assistance as writers, reviewers, editors or just supporters. We want to keep going for another 20 years!

David Beagley

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