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The Need for Global Literature

Gardening and cooking: These topics often bring pleasure, as most of us love food, and virtually every culture has its delectable specialties. Many people enjoy and take pride in raising their own produce; for some, it is a necessity. The late 1990s saw the publication of four children's books that used these motifs to demonstrate and celebrate the diversity of our society. In Erika Tamar's (1996) *Garden of Happiness*, the Lower East Side of New York City becomes the setting of a community garden for Puerto Rican, African American, Indian, Polish, Kansan, and Mexican neighbors. In *Seedfolks,* by Paul Fleischman (1997), a Cleveland, Ohio, neighborhood garden brings together 13 strangers from Vietnamese, Rumanian, white Kentuckian, Guatemalan, African American, Jewish, Haitian, Korean, British, Mexican, and Indian backgrounds. *Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice,* by Sylvia Rosa-Casanova (1997), portrays how a Puerto Rican grandmother's pot of *arroz con pollo* transforms into a multicultural feast with the help of white, Italian, black, and Chinese neighbors in one city apartment building. Another urban dwelling forms the setting in Judy Cox's (1998) *Now We Can Have a Wedding!* when Jewish, Japanese, Chinese, Italian, and Russian neighbors contribute to a multicultural banquet for a Greek-Mexican wedding.

Cities in the United States often are the places where small communities encompass such diverse cultures, so perhaps it is unsurprising that these four books use similar premises. In addition, according to U.S. Census ACS demographic estimates for 2006 to 2008, the whole nation is becoming rapidly more diverse, with whites comprising about 74% of the population, Hispanics/Latinos (of all races) 15%, African Americans 12%, Asian Americans 4%, Native Americans 1%, and mixed race 2%. (Because of rounding and the inclusion of Hispanics/Latinos in multiple categories, the percentages total more than 100%. See U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.) Most noteworthy, the Hispanic/Latino population is growing at the fastest rate, followed by growth among Asian Americans and mixed ethnicities. These numbers also highlight at least two trends: the speedy increase in racial diversity as whites drop to the lowest growth rate and the rise of mixed-race individuals. Moreover, as reported by *Newsweek* ("Stirring the Pot," 2009), by 2050, the white proportion of the population likely will decline to 47% of the total, and the Hispanic/Latino population will rise to 29%. Clearly, our society is indeed evolving multiculturally.

We also are becoming more global, with an estimated 12.5% of the population in 2006 to 2008 being foreign-born, a segment that has grown by nearly 6.6 million since 2000. Compared to 1900 when 86% of immigrants arrived from Europe, in 2007, 53% were Latin American and just 13% were European ("Stirring the Pot," 2009). In addition, we are growing more diverse linguistically. According to 2006 to 2008 census estimates, nearly 20% of the population age 5 and older, speak a non-English home language, and of these, 62% speak Spanish at home. Indo-European (everything from French to Russian and Hindi) and Asian/Pacific Island (Chinese to Tagalog) languages rank distant third and fourth places, respectively, after English and Spanish (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.).

Likewise, although statistics are unknown regarding how many Americans travel or live abroad each year, many do or have done so, which is likely becoming more common in an age of globalization. As noted by Bartholet and Stone (2009), "For the generation of Americans coming of age now, some of the most significant opportunities—for work, investment, recreation and learning—will be global" (p. 52). In addition to actual travel, there is growing use of the Internet for social networking and other real-time exchanges from around the world. Thus, the demographics show a context in which the need for global perspectives is increasingly compelling and ever more relevant in children's lives.

The Importance of Global Literature in Children's Lives

Arizona Houston Hughes (the protagonist in *My Great-Aunt Arizona*, by Gloria Houston, 1992) taught her students not only to read words and figure with numbers but also "about the faraway places they would visit someday," even if only in their minds. She understood the importance of a global perspective in education, and as an avid reader, she also would have recognized the power of books to bring the world to the most remote places, such as her small village in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Children develop rapidly in every way throughout the elementary grades, and, according to Evans (1987), these students "are not only developmentally ready but . . . [the elementary years] might be an especially important age to include global concepts in the curriculum" (p. 548). To understand why, let's consider how international literature can benefit four aspects of child development: cognitive, emotional, moral, and social.

Cognitive Development

When little Alice (in *Miss Rumphius*, by Barbara Cooney, 1982) declared that she would visit faraway places when she grew up, she displayed a child's natural curiosity and need to learn. Global books can help to satisfy those needs and prepare children for the places they will go. They can learn about the world, its people, and their lives, histories, cultures, hopes, dreams, and challenges. These stories stimulate children's imaginations and broaden their horizons, as the exemplary teacher, Sister Anne (in Marybeth Lorbiecki's, 1998, *Sister Anne's Hands*), knew when she took her second graders "to the library to visit islands in the ocean and countries across the sea." Through reading, children can learn to recognize similarities and differences between themselves and children in other nations and develop critical thinking as they analyze these comparisons. Such learning and skill development generates cognitive growth.

Emotional Development

Beyond engaging the intellect, global books also elicit emotions. As children learn about others' lives and make comparisons to their own, they can develop empathy for other people and appreciation for differences. Many young children everywhere can identify with

Jamela's predicament (in *Jamela's Dress,* by Niki Daly, 1999) when her imagination overcomes her sense of responsibility as she envisions herself a queen wrapped in Mama's new dress fabric and parades down the street. Even with a setting in a predominantly black township in South Africa, this is a familiar story of play and its feelings of delight and wonder. However, such total immersion in the fantasy of the moment also can sometimes generate feelings of dismay, regret, and even loneliness, and offer catharsis to readers who have experienced similar emotions. All these emotions will not seem "foreign" to most American children. Jamela could easily be friends with Max (in Maurice Sendak's, 1963, *Where the Wild Things Are*), and most youngsters can empathize with both characters. Empathy, an essential element of emotional development, enables children to identify with and share the feelings of others. For instance, in *From Another World*, by Hans Christian Andersen Award-recipient Ana Maria Machado (2005), set in contemporary Brazil, Mariano and his friends experience empathy for a slave's ghost as they solve a mystery and learn some history about their country. Readers, in turn, will empathize with the characters in this book. Through reading global literature, children can develop emotionally in positive ways.

Moral Development

Cognitive and emotional development also pave the way for moral development. Elementary children are developing their sense of right and wrong. They may be ready to consider moral dilemmas that extend their sense of fairness beyond their own self-interests (Kohlberg, 1976). Global books offer rich opportunities for young readers to vicariously experience ethical problems and explore issues of justice and equity. Even children who have never experienced segregation or being made to feel shame about their skin color may be outraged by the cruelty and injustice in Dianne Case's (1995) *92 Queens Road* when young Kathy is ordered to leave an apartheid-era whites-only beach in 1960s South Africa because of her ethnicity. They can make historical connections between Kathy's experiences and Cassie Logan's in the segregated American South of the 1930s (in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry,* by Mildred D. Taylor, 1976) or the little girl who is forbidden from drinking at the "whites only" water fountain in a segregated Mississippi town (in *White Socks Only,* by Evelyn Coleman, 1996). Through reading and discussing these books, young readers can grow in their moral reasoning.

Social Development

Finally, children also develop socially as they learn to take multiple perspectives. This can happen through both reading—different books on the same topic or themes, for example—and discussing global books. In one such book, *Samir and Yonatan,* by Daniella Carmi (2000), readers witness two different perspectives when a Palestinian and an Israeli boy become friends in a hospital. They also can hear their classmates' different interpretations, especially if they include children from Arab or Jewish backgrounds. Teachers will need to establish an atmosphere of trust and respect in the classroom for this kind of exchange to be positive, however. (See *Building Character Through Multicultural Literature: A Guide for Middle School Readers,* by Rosann Jweid and Margaret Rizzo, 2004, for a discussion guide of this book.) As Hazel Rochman (1993) asserted, "Books can make a difference in dispelling prejudice and building community . . . with enthralling stories that make us imagine the lives of others" (p. 19). Such literary experiences can widen children's sense of community to encompass the world, and global literature can play a vital role in children's social lives.

The Contemporary Context

In addition to the importance of global literature already discussed in this chapter, there are other reasons for instilling a global perspective in children. We live in a global community, in which the peoples of the world are becoming increasingly interdependent. The everyday lives of children are no longer limited to traditional national borders. Global communications provide instant news and information about wars and conflict, natural disasters, famous personalities, sporting events, and all aspects of life. Lawmakers, as well as educators, have recognized the need to educate U.S. students for global citizenry. In his 2009 State of the State address, Ohio's Governor, Ted Strickland, indicated that as part of his P–12 school reform package the curriculum should "add new topics including global awareness" (para. 98). The state of Wisconsin has formed a statewide International Education Council, and Idaho has created a task force that focuses on ways to enhance global awareness. What reasons are precipitating the current emphasis on global awareness? Why is it important for children to possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become successful global citizens? The many reasons regarding this need can be clustered into several areas: economic, environmental, world health, national security, and international immigration. In the following

sections, we explain each area and present a brief example of how international children's literature relates to it.

Economic Reasons

In his international best seller, *The World Is Flat,* Thomas Friedman (2007) discusses the forces that have created a more level playing field for all countries in terms of equalizing economic opportunity. Friedman identifies 10 forces that have flattened the world and points out that multinational companies, outsourcing, and the advancing technologies have changed the way we view world economics. In the United States, the amount of money spent on importing goods has now exceeded the amount of revenue received from exporting goods. Although the United States is certainly among the strongest economies in the world, recent world events have necessitated a critical look at our economy and its relation to others in the world. In addition, the vast number of people throughout the world who live in poverty is a great concern. Many young children in various parts of the world must work to help support their families, sometimes forgoing their own education. For elementary children, these economic reasons relate to social studies concepts like goods and services, the world of work, and careers. Ted Lewin's (2006) book *How Much? Visiting Markets Around the World* transports readers to Thailand, India, Peru, Egypt, and New Jersey. Through text and colorful, detailed illustrations, children can compare and contrast these outdoor markets as people buy and sell their wares.

Environmental Reasons

In recent years, attention increasingly focuses on environmental issues and how we can sustain our planet earth. These concerns affect all countries and peoples around the globe. Many topics are included in this area, such as biodiversity and endangered species, climate change, global warming, energy sources, natural disasters, conservation, and pollution. Children need to gain knowledge about this area as they become the next generation to seek ways to solve these challenges. Children are interested in the rainforest, endangered animals, conservation efforts, and going green. Teachers can share international books that provide diverse perspectives on these subjects and describe worldwide efforts to address these concerns. Teachers can introduce students to international conservation efforts by sharing *Quest for the Tree Kangaroo: An Expedition to the Cloud Forest of New Guinea* (2006). Author

Sy Montgomery teamed with biologist and photographer Dr. Nic Bishop to present this fascinating account of the expedition, illustrated with color photographs. The book's final section, "Conservation at Home and Around the World," suggests what young readers can do.

World Health

The 2009 H1N1 flu scare certainly raised attention to world health and how disease can spread quickly from one country to another. A host of world health issues exist, such as infant mortality, hunger, HIV/AIDS, other infectious diseases, and safe drinking water. The United Nations has established eight specific goals to achieve by 2015 including several in the area of health: reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases (World Health Organization, 2010). The United Nations observes World Health Day on April 7. Children can easily relate to this universal concern about health as they experience illness themselves and deal with health issues of parents, grandparents, and others close to them. For instance, nine-year-old Kati in Thailand copes with her mother's serious illness, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (known as ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease) in the translated book, *The Happiness of Kati,* by Jane Vejjajiva (2006). This book will prompt much discussion among children.

National Security

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, radically changed the way Americans think about national security and have led to many new laws and public policies. In addition, children are bombarded with televised news about war and conflict around the world, some of which involve the United States directly. Books can help children to gain insight into countries that are engaged in war and relate to children living in lands experiencing conflict. Tony O'Brien and Mike Sullivan (2008) traveled to Afghanistan to interview children who, like their U.S. peers, desire peace and education. In their photoessay, *Afghan Dreams: Young Voices of Afghanistan,* Nadira, age 11, who lives in Kabul, describes how she has "been working on the carpets for six years. Because of the work I don't go to school" (p. 42). Tajalaa, age 8, lives "on the peak of a mountain with my mother and one small brother. There is no electricity. We live with a lamp and carry our water up on our backs" (p. 53). Young readers can begin to understand how living in a war-torn country affects the daily lives of children like themselves.

Children need to recognize the human consequences of war and how many innocent people are negatively affected. For instance,

Alia Muhammad Baker, the Chief Librarian of Al Bashra, Iraq's Central Library, became a true heroine when she rescued the library's books in 2003 at the start of the Iraq war. Children can learn her story in *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq*, an informational picture book by Jeanette Winter (2004).

Figure 1.1 Classroom Vignette: Lives in Hiding: Identification Through Character and Point of View (Grades 6–8)

I wanted students in my language arts class to examine their attitudes about human rights, prejudice, and responsibility to others while learning literary elements, such as characterization and point of view, as they read *The Upstairs Room*, by Johanna Reiss (1972), and *The Diary of Anne Frank*, dramatized by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett (1956).

The students initially worked in groups to complete a K-W-L (know, want to know, learned) chart on the Holocaust, followed by a whole-class discussion to share their charts and thoughts about the issues. Finally, the students were told to imagine this scenario: "The government issued a statement saying you and your family, because of your religious faith, will be deported to another country to help rebuild their war damage, and they promise it will only be temporary and then you will be allowed to return home after the war. Additionally, the government issued a warning that anyone caught attempting to escape or hide will be put to death." Students silently lined up on the side of the classroom that represented what they would do: escape and hide or do what the government told them to do, for fear of being punished. A debate then ensued regarding the students' choices, with some students changing sides after hearing their peers' opinions.

Next, books were distributed to the students who had chosen the "escape-and-hide" side of the classroom, as I explained to them that they were like the main characters in our books because they went into hiding. After a book talk introducing each book and including some of the information from the groups' K-W-L charts, the students from this side of the classroom received their books.

Writings from students confirmed that these texts encouraged them to identify with the narrators' perspectives. For example, Ben wrote about point of view: "Without Anne's diary and Annie living to write her story later, I wouldn't have been as interested in hearing about what they lived through, but because they were really telling their own stories, it made me want to keep reading. I should write about my life for generations to come. It would not be really my story if my mom or dad wrote about my life. No one knows what's really in my mind but me, even though we all live in the same house."

Many students commented on how brave and inspiring the characters were. Wanqui wrote, "Both main characters have positive attitudes throughout the texts. They try to make the best out of their situation, even though they are living in terrible conditions. I've had challenges in my life and it's like Anne and Annie let me know that even though my case wasn't as bad as theirs, I should try to be positive and think of the future too." Darin wrote, "Although they were young, they made a difference in our world. Anne Frank died, but she is still an author and also a teacher sharing her life experience with us. Annie lived and went on to write a book of her experiences. Without these books, we would not have known how kids our age were affected by actions of others." Thus, comparing and contrasting the main characters in the two texts allowed my students to understand that people are all the same, yet different, and that we may have different coping mechanisms.

Teacher: Angela R. Thomas, NBCT, Grades 6–8 language arts, Attica, Ohio

International Immigration

The United States is truly a nation of immigrants, and increasing numbers of students attend school whose native language is not English and whose cultures differ from the mainstream culture of the United States. Some children have come to the United States by choice; yet others are refugees fleeing terror and persecution. Immigration policy has been debated by state and federal legislators and has become a controversial topic in the United States. Books can provide children insights into the thoughts and feelings of immigrants. The award winning children's author and illustrator Peter Sís (2007), who defected to the United States as an adult, reflects on his childhood in Czechoslovakia in *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*. In the British book, *Making it Home: Real-Life Stories From Children Forced to Flee*, compiled by Beverley Naidoo (2004), children from Kosovo, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Congo, Liberia, Sudan, and Burundi tell their own stories of forced migration and life as a refugee in new countries, like the United States.

Our world is shrinking, and today's children will become adults in a truly global community. Children's books can support their understanding of the world and help them develop a global perspective. The next section of this chapter provides background and context for the current status of global children's literature and the availability of these books in the United States.

History and Availability of Global Children's Literature

According to Publishing Central (2009), 29,438 children's books were published in the United States in 2008. Of these, some originated in other countries. Exactly how many is difficult to determine, but they represent only a small percentage (less than 5%) of the total number of books. Although all genres of children's books are distributed in the United States and translated into English, picture books, classics, and folk literature dominate the market. For example, on the 2008 New York Times 10 Best Illustrated Books list, three are international. The author/illustrator of *Ghosts in the House* (Kohara, 2008) lives in London. Canadian publisher Groundwood publishes two of the books: *Skim* (Tamaki, 2008) and *The Black Book of Colors* (Cottin, 2008), a translated book originally published in Spain.

Many of our beloved children's classics like *Heidi* by Johanna Spyri (1880/2002), *The Adventures of Pinocchio* by Carlo Collodi (1881/1988),

and *Pippi Longstocking* by Astrid Lindgren (1945) are all translated books. In fact *Pippi Longstocking,* first published in Sweden in 1945, is an example of the enduring popularity of classics. Florence Lamborn translated the book into English, and Viking published it in the United States in 1950. Since then, the book has been issued in paperback, packaged in boxed sets with other books about Pippi's adventures, and made into a DVD. There is even a Pippi Longstocking doll and costume. In 2007, Viking released a new translation by Tina Nunnally of this beloved book.

Figure 1.2 Profile: Astrid Lindgren

The passionate, famous Swedish writer, Astrid Lindgren, made an impact worldwide with her amusing children's books. Born as Astrid Anna Emila Ericsson in Vimmerby, Sweden, on November 14, 1907, Lindgren grew up on a farm with parents who encouraged her to read literature every day and develop a creative imagination. This freedom and encouragement guided her toward a career as an editor at Raben & Sjorgren from 1946 to 1970 and as a world-renowned author of such classics as *Pippi Longstocking* (1945), *The Brothers Lionheart* (1973), and *The Children of Noisy Village* (1947). Lindgren is recognized as the foremost Swedish contributor to modern children's fantasy, according to *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (Clute & Grant, 1997). During her time as editor, Astrid Lindgren also inspired and influenced the translation of the world's best-known books for Swedish children.

On the writing side of Lindgren's career, her stories, especially the ones about Pippi Longstocking, have been introduced to the world through reprints in over 90 languages. Loved by children from around the world, Lindgren would receive 150 letters a week from her young fans, to most of which she would then respond personally. Pippi Longstocking, named by Lindgren's daughter, has become an icon for independent and spunky girls. As a nine-year-old girl living on her own, Pippi inspires readers to search inside themselves and find the courage to do and be whatever they want. Some adults may criticize the lack of parental control in the tales of Pippi as outlandish and unrealistic, but Lindgren wanted children to be seen as human beings without being oppressed. Just being "loved" was Lindgren's foundation for good behavior in children.

As a warm, independent role model, Lindgren was known for her humanitarianism and activism for children's rights. She felt it was important for her books to portray loving relationships, freedom, and empowerment for generations of children. In 1994, based on this philosophy of life, Astrid Lindgren received The Right Livelihood Award, given by The Right Livelihood Award Foundation, designated for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people. This prestigious prize has become widely viewed as the "Alternative Nobel Prize." Among the other awards this author received in her lifetime were the Hans Christian Andersen Award (1958) for her contribution to children's literature, the NILS Holgersson Plaque (1950), the Swedish Academy's Gold Medal (1971), and the German "Friedenspreis des Deutschen Buchhandels" (1978). The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, described in Resource B on the companion CD, is named in her honor. Astrid Lindgren died on January 28, 2002 at the age of 94.

—Julie McWhorter

Other classics, such as *The Secret Garden*, by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911/1988); *The Tale of Peter Rabbit,* by Beatrix Potter (1902); and *Winnie-the-Pooh,* by A. A. Milne (1926), were first published in England before gaining popularity in the United States. Some of the earliest recipients of the coveted Newbery Medal were set in foreign countries. In 1925, *Tales from Silver Lands*, by Charles J. Finger (1924), received the medal for a collection of 19 folktales retold by the author who learned of them when he traveled in Central and South America. The *Trumpeter of Krakow*, by Eric Kelly (1928), the 1929 Newbery recipient, is historical fiction with the setting of the 1462 Kraków, Poland, fire. The 1933 Newbery, *Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze,* by Elizabeth Foreman Lewis (1932), recounts the story of Fu Yuin-Fah, a Chinese boy who dreams of becoming a coppersmith. So, attention to global books is not new to children's literature in the United States.

However, before these classics came folklore—the oldest oral stories of humankind and sometimes described as the root of all literature. These tales include Aesop's fables; Greek, Roman, and Norse myths; Mother Goose nursery rhymes; King Arthur legends; and ballads and folksongs. Some of the most well-known tellers of folktales have written in languages other than English: Charles Perrault (French) and the Brothers Grimm (German). Thus, English versions of these beloved stories all necessitated translation. Beyond these familiar examples, though, all world cultures have their own traditional literature, handed down from generation to generation, from creation myths, pourquoi tales, trickster and noodlehead stories, and hero and tall tales, to variants of well-known folktales, such as Cinderella. Folktales from diverse international cultures are prevalent in the United States, some first published in the United States and others imported from their countries of origin. Comparing the motifs and themes across this collective body of world literature reveals the commonalities and distinctiveness of each culture's literary heritage.

Fantasy novels first published in other countries are also readily accessible in the United States. Simon Boughton (2006) of Roaring Brook Press points out that: "It's no accident that fantasy fiction—from C. S. Lewis to Philip Pullman to J. K. Rowling to Garth Nix—is internationally popular; in creating their own worlds, they have a universal setting. And successful fantasy deals with large universal themes" (p. 17).

Nonfiction books from other countries have also become more available with increased attention to that genre in the United States. London-based Dorling Kindersley (DK) now publishes its nonfiction titles in 51 languages. These extensively illustrated books feature innovative, appealing formats and cover a wide range of topics.

The publisher is well known for its popular "Eyewitness" books sold throughout the United States.

The history of the international children's book movement is highlighted by important milestones, some of which we describe in Resource B, Resources for Locating and Learning More About Global Children's Literature, on the companion CD, which lists publishers, organizations, journals, and awards dedicated to international children's literature. You are introduced to Jella Lepman, profiled in this chapter, who established the International Youth Library in Munich, Germany, in 1948, and founded the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) in 1953.

In the United States, Mildred L. Batchelder was the driving force in the international book movement. A librarian, she worked at the American Library Association for 30 years and is the namesake for the Batchelder Award (see Resource B on the CD). The American Library Association instituted this award in 1966 to honor the most outstanding translated children's book that was first published in another country.

Perhaps inevitably, more books from the English-speaking countries of the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand are distributed in the United States than those first written in other languages and requiring translation. In addition, more books are translated from European countries than from other parts of the world. A review of the Mildred L. Batchelder Award recipients since 2000 indicates that three books are from Germany, two from France, two from Japan, two from Israel, and one from Holland.

More recently, since 1971, the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, a professional organization with over 22,000 members worldwide, has supported the writing and sharing of children's books. Its members include writers, illustrators, editors, librarians, and publishers and booksellers who work in the field of children's literature. In addition to regional chapters within the United States, there are more than 50 chapters throughout the world.

Another important aspect of the international book movement is the international book fairs where publishers share their books. The premier book fair for international children's books is held in Bologna, Italy, in late March or early April. At the Bologna Book Fair, publishers of children's books around the world gather to meet each other, share ideas, and conduct business. These publishers buy and sell rights to books for translation, copublication, and other collaborative arrangements. At the Fair, there are extensive displays and exhibits, awards are given out to books, and speakers share insights. Other book fairs dedicated to children's books occur throughout the

world—in Cairo, Egypt; Moldova; Cape Town, South Africa; and for the first time in Dubai in 2010. The Biennale of Illustrations in Bratislava, a prestigious juried exhibition of original international children's book illustrations, takes place biennially in Slovakia. The world's largest book fair, held in Frankfurt, Germany, in October, is also a place where children's publishers exhibit and exchange rights and licenses. In the United States, the annual BookExpo America, held in New York, is a comprehensive publishing event and place for the international buying and selling of children's books.

Global Literature Defined

Careful readers may notice that we have used the term *global* (as opposed to *international*) exclusively. That is intentional, because *global* is arguably more inclusive and probably best fits our definition of global literature. Our view of global literature is that it is *world* literature either set outside the United States or written by persons other than Americans with settings that are unidentified. We only consider books by Americans with clearly identified settings outside the United States as global literature. Thus, literature that is first published in another country (either in English or translated into English) would only be one kind of global literature. As already described, *Jamela's Dress* (Daly, 1999) fits this category.

A second type of global literature is written by immigrants to the United States with settings in their home countries. Peter Sís's (2007) memoir of his experience growing up behind the Iron Curtain in the former Czechoslovakia (*The Wall*) is a good example of this type.

Books written by authors in other countries but originally published in the United States constitute a third variation of global literature. Some of the books by internationally popular Australian author Mem Fox (2000), such as *Harriet, You'll Drive Me Wild*, which was originally published by Harcourt, exemplify this group.

A fourth category consists of books written by American authors with settings in other countries. Jane Kurtz, who grew up in Ethiopia living with her missionary parents, devotes much of her career to promoting literature about that country. Her picture book, *Only a Pigeon* (1997, coauthored with her brother Christopher Kurtz), authentically captures contemporary daily life in Addis Ababa and typifies this kind of global book.

Finally, due to globalization, books in languages other than English and about other countries are more available in the United States (sometimes through independent book sellers or online bookstores)

than in the past. We particularly note when these books have English editions or are bilingual texts.

In sum, our definition of *global* literature focuses on books that are *international* either by topic or origin of publication or author. Although we recognize its close connections with multicultural literature, we specifically distinguish global literature from books that portray parallel cultures *within* the United States. Likewise, the goals for global literature, while similar to goals for multicultural literature, extend beyond our national perspective, as addressed next.

Goals for Global Literature

Perhaps Jella Lepman's (2002) goal, for children's books to build bridges of international understanding after World War II, is ultimately most important. If she could sustain that vision arising from the ashes of the Holocaust, one of history's darkest hours, surely it is still worthy and attainable today. Such a bridge from self to others, from the familiar to the foreign, from the near to the far is captured by French literary critic Paul Hazard's (1944) assertion that "children's books keep alive a sense of nationality [and] . . . also . . . a sense of humanity" (p. 146). Thus, literature portrays both what makes every culture unique (or its "nationality") and also what is universal (or our "humanity"). Rudine Sims Bishop's (1994) metaphor of books as "mirrors" and "windows" captures these same concepts and offers two major related goals for the role of global literature.

Figure 1.3 Profile: Jella Lepman

Jella (pronounced *Yella*) Lepman (1891–1970) was the founder of the International Youth Library (IYL) in Germany and a cofounder of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) in Switzerland. Her story began in the aftermath of World War II. The U.S. military came to Lepman to help see to the needs of German children who suffered most from the war. When she returned to Germany for the first time—a Jew, she had fled to England during the war—she wondered what she could do to restore the humanity destroyed by Nazi atrocities. Even though she shuddered at the thought of visiting former Nazi centers, Lepman bravely drove around the ruined streets and buildings in a military jeep with the company of a soldier driver. She visited adults and children affected by the war to see and listen to what was needed most. On her journey, she encountered starving children with no families or homes. They recounted the horror of war without any traces of emotion. Lepman knew that these children needed the power of books to help bring back hope and humanity to their shattered lives.

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Jella Lepman envisioned a traveling exhibition of the finest children's books from around the world. Her first challenge was to secure funding for her project. With strong determination, Lepman tirelessly typed letters to European countries requesting children's books for the exhibition. She could hardly contain her happiness when crates of books began to arrive from Switzerland, Italy, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, and other countries. Soon, the books were shelved in a historical building in Munich.

On the opening day, long lines of children streamed through the exhibition building. With beaming faces, children giddily held and leafed through the book collections. In other cities in Germany, the traveling exhibition generated similar enthusiasm. The children couldn't put down the books and begged to bring them home. It became clear to Lepman that the need for a permanent children's book library was urgent. Her idea generated support and donations from abroad, and 1949 marked the establishment of the IYL in Munich. Lepman's vision of establishing a library for the children of war-torn Germany was finally realized. With its international children's literature collection, the library serves to promote cross-cultural understanding.

The IYL project was so impressive that the United Nations invited Jella Lepman to work with children and book experts of many nations to help promote books. She became a world peace ambassador. Children's books allowed her to reach out to many different nations, such as Iran and Turkey. At an international children's book conference in Germany, Lepman and her friends joined together to establish the International Board on Books for Young Children (IBBY) in 1953. Today, Lepman's legacy is still alive. IYL continues to house the international children's book collection and sponsor traveling book exhibitions around the world. Meanwhile, IBBY is dedicated to bringing books to children around the world.

Young readers can learn more about Jella Lepman in *Books for Children of the World: The Story of Jella Lepman,* by Sydelle Pearl (2007). This picture-book biography describes Lepman's efforts to "build a bridge of peace" through children's literature. Lepman wrote about her life in the adult book, *A Bridge of Children's Books* (1964/2002).

—Tati L. Durriyah

One important goal is for literature to offer readers a realistic and authentic mirror of their own lives and experiences. If children recognize themselves reflected accurately and sympathetically in the books they read, they may develop positive self-images and sense of worth. Children need access to books that fulfill these needs, for by self-reflection, they can gain insight and a sense of efficacy. They also can benefit from catharsis by understanding that they are not alone and that others have shared similar experiences. *All* children need a "mirror."

On the other hand, restricting one's gaze to a reflection can be limiting and distorting. Reading *only* about children "like me" teaches readers "to view themselves and their lives as 'normal,' to interpret their own cultural attitudes and values as 'human nature,' and to view other people and other lives as exotic at best, and deviant at worst," cautions Bishop (1994, p. 4). Thus, as a second goal,

all children need literature that opens "windows" onto lives and experiences that are different from their own. Children's abilities to understand, value, and celebrate diversity evolve from recognizing their places and their particular experiences as part of the universal whole of humanity. Global children's books can support both of these goals.

Conclusion

Stories (both fictional and factual) help humans to organize experiences, to make sense of them, and to learn from them. In fact, narratives are probably the oldest teaching tool in history. We use them to pass on knowledge and wisdom because they capture our imaginations, engage our interest, and enliven our ideas. We innately, it seems, *want* to tell and hear stories, as known by teachers of young children, who exhibit intense desire to share their own life stories! This desire is a powerful motivation for learning.

The strength of stories for learning is not limited to literacy instruction; narratives can enhance learning across the curriculum, as we demonstrate in this book. And, stories are not limited to one genre or even to fiction; biographies, information books, poetry, and folktales contribute their own benefits. Throughout the book, we suggest specific titles to illustrate our points. Remember, for more information about these books (including approximate interest levels), refer to An Annotated List of 341 Children's Books Cited in the Book on the CD that accompanies this text.

As technology advances and opportunities for global communication expand, the value and importance of international children's books will continue to grow. In Part I, we share specific books, curricular connections, and ways to integrate global literature in all areas of the curriculum, beginning with a literary thematic framework.