Editorial

Christine King

I was very excited when approached by Jill May and Janet Alsup with the idea of helping launch a new online reviewing publication for children’s literature. There are print children’s literature review journals that are now available online, but this is the first one we are aware of that attempts to use the Internet as its sole medium. Use of the Internet facilitates a novel approach to the Internet audience; a scholar writes the initial review and then a parent or practitioner test drives the product, as it were, by sharing the book with a young audience and making a field report on the work’s reception.

The first two issues have covered literary areas not frequently addressed in children’s works in the United States. The first was devoted to multinational children’s literature with guest pieces provided by scholars and authors from India, Israel, and Australia. Books reviewed were written by authors and illustrators from Mexico, Central America, Australia, Israel, and the United States. The aim was to provide authentic multicultural voices and an international perspective that is often lost in the strength Western, and particularly US, publishing market. The second issue concentrated on the topic of social realism. This is a relatively common theme in young adult literature, but it is not frequently tackled in children’s literature. The theme of this latest issue is fantasy literature, a genre beloved by generations of children. There are many books with wonderful illustrations published in this area, which made selecting works for review an arduous but enjoyable task for the editors.

When we started to work on First Opinion—Second Reactions, I was the education subject specialist in the Purdue University Libraries. Although I had had an interest in children’s books for years as a teacher, and later librarian and parent, I had never worked directly with the selection of children’s literature until I came to Purdue. I was thrilled to be able to get involved in this area. Purdue has an old and extensive collection of children’s books inherited from the College of Education and it now primarily collects what I refer to as “the best of the best,” ones that have won major awards such as the Caldecott Medal, Newbery Medal, or Coretta Scott King awards. However, the collection provides an excellent overview of the development of and trends in children’s publishing in the twentieth century and beyond. Working with First Opinions—Second Reactions has given me the opportunity to broaden my knowledge of children’s literature, learn a lot more about the publishing world, and gain a great deal of pleasure in selecting books worth reviewing.

At the end of 2007, I left Purdue, following my spouse to Ames, Iowa. I am now a librarian at Iowa State University. I am still working as an education subject specialist. Although ISU has a fine children’s collection, I am no longer involved in its selection and care.
a day-to-day involvement in the selection of review materials for *First Opinion—Second Reactions* is no longer possible, I am stepping down as a coeditor. I have greatly enjoyed working on it and have learned a great deal about the considerable effort needed to get a journal, even a virtual one, published. I look forward to seeing many more interesting issues published by the two remaining founding editors.